

Write Now!

Should You Join a Writer's Group?



The Author Series from Praeclarus Press



Writers are a solitary bunch. It's often hard for people who don't write to really understand what writing is like. Writers' groups can be a nice source of fellowship. If you are thinking about joining a group, however, be wise in your choice. Consider whether the characteristics of the group are compatible with your goals. Are the other members writing things that differ from

your genre (e.g., you want to write non-fiction and other members are writing poetry)? If they differ substantially, the feedback might not be as helpful.

Also consider the quality of the feedback being offered. Writing, especially in the early days, is a fragile thing. You want to be able to show it to people who are going to be supportive and helpful. This is true whether you show your work to one person or many. Unfortunately, some writers' groups attract people who have never gotten their work published, but nevertheless feel free to offer scathing comments to everyone else. This you do not need! In order to be your most creative, you need to be unafraid to make mistakes—even big ones. If you're worried about getting torn apart in a group, you're likely to be more cautious and less creative. So I'd advise you steer clear of groups with an overall negative tone.

Judging by the number of authors who profusely thank their writers' groups, it's fair to say that many authors find them helpful. With some caveats, writers' groups can be good for you, too—especially if they help you keep your writing on track.

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