

# Having Fun with Revisions

*. . . All good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere. Start by getting something—anything—down on paper. A friend of mine says that the first draft is the down draft—you just get it down. The second draft is the up draft—you fix it up. You try to say what you have to say more accurately. And the third draft is the dental draft, where you check every tooth, to see if it's loose or cramped or decayed, or even, God help us, healthy.*

—Anne Lamott, from *Bird by Bird*

Keeping in mind Anne Lamott's and Annie Dillard's words of wisdoms about the writing process and revision, let's try to revise our writing drafts, trusting that at times the ongoing process of revision will make them stronger.

**Step one:** Open your writing document and *Save As* it again, this time adding in parentheses (just for fun) or (playing around) or (an experiment) or (revision #2) behind the title. Now you can do whatever you'd like to it, knowing full well that you still have the original should you get carried away or realize that your revisions are making your piece worse instead of better.

**Step two:** Have fun. Go nuts. Cut and paste. Reword. Experiment. Add. Subtract. Below are some suggestions for things that I like to experiment with as I revise my writing. We should also consider the feedback offered in class, as well as the feedback offered outside of class. But we should also be deliberate about trying to make substantive changes that make our writing stronger, more interesting, more effective.

## Visual

- Spacing and indents
- Play with fonts, italics, quotations, asterisks

## Additions

- Insert a thought shot
- Insert a snap shot (blow up a moment)
- Add three new details
- Play around with different types of imagery (aural, olfactory, tactile)
- Add some figurative language
- Experiment with rhetorical techniques (chiasmus, repetition, questions)
- Add some weird dialogue
- Add an epigraph (lyrics, quote from somewhere, sayings and aphorisms)
- Footnotes?

## Subtractions

- Eliminate some of your "to be" verbs and passiveness
- Take out some words that seem unnecessary

**Voice**

- Pretend you are an author you admire and write from his or her voice
- Be the Devil's Advocate, and write from his or her perspective
- Play around with multiple voices / narrators
- Read your piece out loud, listening if there are sounds you would like to emphasize or add.
- Change your perspective from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> person (or vice-versa)

**Based on Peer Feedback**

- Pointing & Gravity—Do you want to focus your Center of Gravity, or clarify it? Do you want to expand on a passage or phrase that resonated in your peers' minds?
- What did peers want to hear more about? Were there any confusing parts that you think you should clarify to get your point across?