



WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID?

Ten Things that Make Editors Cringe – and What to Say Instead

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“I’ve written a best seller.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - It sounds both presumptuous and naïve.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I believe my book will resonate with this specific audience but also has broader appeal, similar to (insert best-selling title).”

“My spouse/friends love it.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - Of course they do! They love *you*.
 - They may not be your target reader.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I’ve workshopped it through my writers’ group, whose members all write and read in this genre.”
 - “Pieces of the work have placed in these competitions.”
 - “I can get endorsements from (insert names).”



“It’s a little bit romance, a little bit fantasy, a little bit thriller...”



- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - A first book is only going to be shelved in one place
 - Readers looking for any one of those elements will likely be disappointed.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I read extensively in my category, and this book fits in well with reader expectations.”

“What kind of books do you sell?”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - You should know this before you sit down to the conversation; otherwise, you’re wasting both your and the editor’s time.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I’m a big fan of (insert two or three names of authors who are published by the imprint in your genre.)”



“It’s better than the garbage being published today.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - One person’s garbage is another person’s treasure.
 - This editor *works* in publishing.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I read extensively in my genre, and this will fit in well with what today’s reader wants.”

“I’m willing to do a book tour/be on *Good Morning America*.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - Book tours cost money, and publishers don’t spend that kind of money on first-time authors.
 - Who *wouldn’t* be willing to be on a national TV show?
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I’ve developed a marketing plan I can execute in concert with your promotion department.”

“There’s nothing out there like this book.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - If that’s true, there’s probably a reason a similar book hasn’t been published yet.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “It’s similar to (insert successful book published in the past three years), with this twist/unique angle.”

“It’s a very timely book.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - Time-sensitive books would be stale by the time they work their way through the acquisition and publishing process.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “This book will be of special interest given this important anniversary coming up in three to four years.”
 - This book has eternal themes.”

“It’s perfect right now and won’t take any editing.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - There is no such thing as a publishable first draft.
 - Every traditional publishing house edits authors’ works.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I worked hard on revisions before pitching you. I’ve developed a thick skin on changes.”

“This book will make both of us rich.”

- ◆ Why not to say it:
 - It is more likely you both will be struck by lightning.
- ◆ What to say instead:
 - “I’m working to build a career and a long-term relationship with a publisher. I’m in this for the long haul and have plenty of ideas for other books.”

QUESTIONS?

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Thanks for coming! Best wishes!