

## Advice for Cultivating Your Inner Editor:

Here's some advice culled from great editors and trainers to help you switch from your composer brain to your inner editor:

From Studio 360 editor [David Krasnow](#):

Read the script out loud slowly to someone you love (or better yet, someone you don't love) and give them a quiz. Don't ask if it's good, what they think of it, or any subjective assessment—ask them *specific questions* about what they understood. Have them summarize the story. Ask specific content questions. Ask what's the best line in the story. Is there a line you know is great but they don't remember? Then you buried it or misplaced it, and the impact was lost. This person will be listening THREE TIMES more closely than any other listener, so if they don't understand it, you've got to change it.

If you didn't write from an outline, then go back and try to post-outline it. See how what you've written frames out. What are the scenes? Can't do it? Do things kind of ooze into each other? Oops.

Any place where you squeezed in tape that you loved but were afraid it didn't really fit? I bet you ten bucks it doesn't fit.

At the 2008 Third Coast International Audio Festival, NPR and Homeland Productions editor [Deborah George](#) offered some “thought exercises” to help us hear our work like an editor:

You're at a dinner party, and you have a great story to tell. On one side of you is an enthusiastic young person who really doesn't know much about what you're talking about...but is really receptive to hearing your story. On the other side, you have a really sophisticated person who knows a great deal about the story you're going to tell, who may even have been to the place you're talking about, and perhaps written on the subject themselves. You have to converse with both of those people. You have to keep both of them engaged and entertained.

Think about three things that you love in your piece...whether it's a juicy bit of tape or a sound or some gorgeously crafted phrase. And imagine your story without it, and imagine whether it will still work without it....See if it still holds together.

Imagine your story at a different length. How would you tell the story if you only had four minutes versus half an hour? Or if you have only four minutes, imagine it at half an hour? How would your piece change? Are there central core aspects that stay in? What are the things that don't stay? What are the things that you would add to it?

Finally, check out these ["ten yellow flags"](#) for radio copy from the amazing Canadian trainer David Candow, as presented at the PRPD in 2005. As Candow puts it, "The problem we face with writing for radio is that our years of scholarship have taught us to write for the eye. Therefore, when we read what we have written, we accept it because it was meant for the eye. [...But] we simply don't talk like we write. What we write, someone has to speak."