The Editing Traveller's Orientation

Editing is not one task. It is a series of different kinds of attention applied in the right order.

This book organizes self-editing into Ten Dimensions. Each dimension represents a specific layer of focus — not a step, not a checklist, and not a one-time pass. You will move between them as needed, sometimes returning to the same dimension more than once.

Use this page as a map, not a schedule.

The Ten Dimensions at a Glance

1. Clarity — What the Reader Understands **Focus**: meaning, logic, and comprehension
This dimension asks: Is the story on the page the story the reader receives?
Clarity comes before polish. If the reader is confused, nothing else matters.

2. Terminology — Knowing What You're Doing **Focus:** editorial literacy
Understanding editing terms helps you aim your effort correctly and avoid fixing the wrong problems at the wrong time.

3. Toolkit — Tools That Support the Work **Focus:** practical resources
This dimension covers dictionaries, thesauruses, style guides, software tools, and (optionally) AI — not as replacements for judgment, but as aids to it.

4. Reading Aloud — Hearing What You Wrote **Focus:** rhythm, flow, and hidden errors
Reading aloud and text-to-speech bypass familiarity blindness and reveal issues your eyes routinely miss.

5. The Personal Style Sheet — Consistency and Memory **Focus:** tracking decisions
Your style sheet is your manuscript's memory: names, spellings, formatting choices, world-building rules, and recurring details.

6. The Philosophy of Editing — How You Approach the Work **Focus:** mindset and intention
Editing is not punishment. This dimension addresses emotional resistance, attachment, and the purpose behind revision.

7. Voice Work — Preserving What Makes the Writing Yours **Focus:** tone, rhythm, and authorial presence
Here you strengthen voice without sanding it down or homogenizing the prose.

8. The Editing Landscape — Knowing Where You Are in the Industry **Focus:** context and expectations
This dimension explains editing levels, professional roles, realistic costs, and how self-editing fits into modern publishing.

9. Pitfalls — Common Self-Editing Traps **Focus:** avoiding damage
From over-polishing to attachment to "darlings," this dimension identifies mistakes that stall or weaken manuscripts — and how to escape them.

10. Completion — Knowing When You're Done **Focus:** stopping well
This dimension helps you distinguish between necessary revision and endless tinkering, so you can release the work with confidence.

How to Use This Map

- You do not complete one dimension and leave it forever
- You may visit several dimensions in a single editing pass
- Some dimensions matter more at certain stages than others
- The order is intentional, but flexible
- If you feel stuck, overwhelmed, or unsure what to do next, return to this page and ask:
- Which dimension am I actually working in right now?
- That question alone will save you time, energy, and frustration.

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