

The *Workbook* contains forty skill-building exercises, chosen to help you hone your editorial skills and judgment over a full range of tasks from catching simple errors to straightening out tortured syntax to enforcing bias-free language. The answer keys are detailed, and fully commented to provide the reasoning behind the choices made; it is much as if you were looking over a shoulder and listening to the thought processes of an experienced copyeditor as she does her work. The exercises may be done as hard copy but are also available as downloadable files so they can be done onscreen.

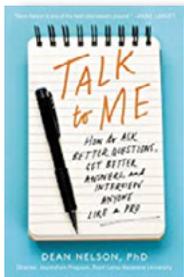
The work is very well indexed, making certain items easy to locate. The work also includes a rich collection of useful back matter—glossaries of copyediting and grammar terms, and an extensive annotated bibliography of useful references to style manuals, dictionaries, usage guides, organizations, and more. Working copyeditors will especially appreciate the handy customizable checklist of common editorial choices for recording style preferences for use with their projects.

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Patrick Lufkin is an STC Fellow with experience in computer documentation, newsletter production, and public relations. He reads widely in science, history, and current affairs, as well as on writing and editing. He chairs the Gordon Scholarship for technical communication and co-chairs the Northern California technical communication competition.

Talk to Me: How to Ask Better Questions, Get Better Answers, and Interview Anyone Like A Pro

Dean Nelson. 2019. New York, NY: HarperPerennial. [ISBN 978-0-06-282520-9. 380 pages. US\$16.99 (softcover).]



Dean Nelson takes the reader through the entire interview process, from deciding whom to interview to following up after writing your article to ensure accurate quotes. In between, we learn about preparing for the interview, structuring questions, handling difficult interviewees or topics, taking notes and recording your discussion, as well as different types of interviews: on the record, off the record, on background and not for attribution. He provides helpful tips and examples from his own and his students' work on each of these topics. Besides interviewing scores of people in the US,

Nelson has also worked with interpreters in far-flung locales—a detail the translator half of my brain found particularly interesting.

Beyond hearing about Nelson's own advice and experience, we also learn how other journalists approach these issues—and sometimes contradict his advice. For example, Nelson writes a structured list of questions before an interview, but he also quotes a colleague who only plans his first question and leaves the rest open-ended. Similarly, while emphasizing the importance of having a record of the interviewee's answers, Nelson discusses various approaches to doing so—from two voice recorders plus handwritten notes to notes only. He recommends recording plus notes, to guard against equipment failure or mishearing/incorrectly writing down a quote.

Talk to Me: How to Ask Better Questions, Get Better Answers, and Interview Anyone Like A Pro includes case studies—excerpts of interviews conducted by famous journalists—with Nelson's commentary on these. While most are examples of how to do it well, the book concludes with an interview done badly, again with comments about what went wrong and why. In this case, the interview turned into an argument between interviewer and celebrity guest. There may be people whose views you find so repugnant that you do not want to talk to them. That's fine, Nelson says, but you need to consider beforehand: "What line will you not cross?" (p. 356).

Many of the Nelson's own experiences involve people who are not used to speaking to the media. You may need to ask painful questions, but you also must be a mensch (a good person), as we say in Brooklyn. "Your own humanity matters as much as the humanity of your sources," Nelson reminds us (p. 45). This may mean reminding non-celebrities that anything they tell you may be published. While journalists often intrude in ordinary people's lives, they may also help them cope with traumatic experiences. Nelson reminds us: "The point is that you asked, you listened, and you acknowledged that their voices mattered" (p. 375).

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