

The 2019 #PBChat Mentorship

Visit justincolonbooks.com for more info.



Cori Doerrfeld grew up wanting a career in animation but couldn't be happier working as an author/illustrator. She has worked with both local and national publishers on everything from baby board books, to picture books, to graphic novels. Her titles include *Little Bunny Foo Foo: The Real Story*, *Maggie and Wendel Imagine Everything*, *Good Dog, Wild Baby* and the award winning *The Rabbit Listened*. Some of Cori's favorite things are animals, old tin lunch boxes, nachos, and long, long walks. She lives in Minneapolis, MN with her husband, two kids, and rescue dog, Rufus.

Cori Doerrfeld will be accepting applications for: fiction picture book manuscripts/dummies with a word count less than 700 words by a woman. I would love to work with someone who is both an author and an illustrator but it isn't necessary.

1. **If you had to wear the same t-shirt with one word on it for a year, what word would you choose?**

I think I would just pick "Hello". I start random conversations with people so often it seems like a good fit.

2. **If you had your own talk show, who would your first three guests be? Bonus points for sharing the name of your show and what it would be about.**

I would have three of my mom friends. I would call it "The Mom Show". I will never forget how lonely I was after I became a mom and how many questions and fears I had. I would love to have a show that features regular moms who have lived through the ordinary, and extraordinary, share their experiences and knowledge. I want women and mothers to feel more united and empowered.

3. **If you could instantly become an expert in something (non-writing-related), what would it be and why?**

I would love to be able to speak several languages. I love words, I love being able to communicate with people and it would be amazing to be able to understand all the little nuances and meanings that only exist in other languages.

The 2019 #PBChat Mentorship

Visit justincolonbooks.com for more info.

4. What are your five favorite picture books not written and/or illustrated by you?

- a) Barbapapa by Annette Tison and Talus Taylor the original book has been one of my favorites since childhood.
- b) Swimmy by Leo Lionni
- c) Alma and How She Got Her Name by Juana Martinez-Neal
- d) Sylvester and the Magic Pebble by William Steig
- e) Leo: A Ghost Story by Mac Barnett and Christian Robinson

5. What is the toughest feedback you've ever received?

The toughest feedback was back in college when a professor told me that I don't make art, I make images in a tone that implied I was less than, or making worthless drawings. Now people can call what I draw whatever they want. It seems to be doing just fine.

6. What are some of the most important you've learned so far?

Absolutely the most important things is to never take anything personally. You have to grow a very tough skin and keep going no matter what is said to you, what rejections you get, or what groups you're exclude from. You need to create your own definition of success and stick to that. You can never measure it against what other people are doing or achieving.

7. What writing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?

I am still in awe of what The Rabbit Listened means to people. It is hard to put into words how proud I feel that I created something that helps people. From inmates that want to connect with their children, to divorcing couples, to people grappling with the loss of a loved one...I get so many messages.

8. What are your dreams and goals as an author?

My goal for a while now have been to maintain my career so I could be home with my kids. Now that they're both in school, I am making goals to connect with more creators and travel!

9. What are your strengths as a mentor?

I am good at critiquing work that has a clear story or style. It can be rough, but the "heart" should be there. I enjoy helping people pick out what is really working for them and then pushing it further. I try to be honest but supportive. I can critique both text and illustrations.

10. Who are you not the best mentor for?

I would not work well for someone who has no idea what stories or art they want to create. You need to know who you are as a creator and what you ultimately want from pursuing writing/illustrating. At the same time, I need someone who is willing to be flexible. You have

The 2019 #PBChat Mentorship

Visit justincolonbooks.com for more info.

to be willing to change what isn't working...and not take it personally. I am also kind of scatter brained, so if you are not good at pestering people...we might not be a good fit.

11. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?

I love funny people and those that lean more towards the twisted, unexpected. But really just someone who is open to feedback, who will listen, who wants to hone their skills and create something unique!

12. What is your feedback/critique style like?

I typically type up a document that describes what is working, what isn't working, and then suggestions on how to improve what needs work. If it is text, I write up examples of how to change the text. For art, I draw on or alter the art to help show what I mean.

13. During the mentorship, how will you help your mentee and their stories develop?

I will focus on critiquing text and illustrations but will also answer any questions a mentee might have about the industry or the path I took to get where I am today. I am hoping to help someone polish an idea to the point they could either submit it to an agent, or an editor. I do not know a lot about query letters or social media tricks.

14. What type of relationship do you hope to establish with your mentee?

Something where we both feel comfortable about the relationship. That we understand and respect each other. I admit, I can be a busy person, but I am excited to do something beyond straight up work.

15. What is your style of communication like?

I like to email. I usually start out formal, but get more casual as it seems appropriate. I tend to use a lot of exclamation marks!!!!!!!!!!

16. While reading prospective mentee's manuscripts, what do you hope to experience?

I hope I read something that is different than anything I've ever read before, something that makes me feel something new!!!

17. What will you look for in the applications you receive?

As I've mentioned, I will look for someone with confidence in what they are doing. I want it to feel original and true to that person's voice. I want to feel that what they are writing means something to them.

The 2019 #PBChat Mentorship

Visit justincolonbooks.com for more info.

18. What about the idea of mentoring excites you most?

Really I am just excited to do something different and help someone! Just like when I became a new mom, I wish there had been someone to help me when I was just getting started in this industry. It was really difficult to figure everything out on my own.

19. Is there anything, author-related, you wish people would ask you about? If so, what, and how would you respond?

I guess I wish people asked more questions about how difficult it is to be an author. Usually people just want to know how they can get published.

20. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?

If writing/drawing is literally a part of who you are, if it is your safe space, your home...something you just do because you have to...we should work together.