

**T**WO MONTHS AFTER my initial attempt to start a freelance career, I awoke in the middle of the night with what I believed was a salable idea. Having spent many days printing and filing market information, writing and rewriting bits of articles, I finally had my first marketable pitch.

Excited by my idea, I quickly put together an article about a self-help experience that had gone wrong. Not too original by normal standards, but it had a unique perspective – the experience in question was with my dog. Rather than take her to the veterinarian when problems arose, I tried to treat her ailments holistically. My efforts made her feel worse, however, and I was eager to share this information with other pet owners so they could avoid the same mistake.

In my hurry to submit “Self-Care Can Go Too Far,” I overlooked the inclusion of

one essential element – the professional opinion of a veterinarian. Rather than contacting a professional to verify my findings, I focused on my own interpretation of the situation.

The editor of *Pets: Part of the Family* magazine was quick to respond, stating that she could not use the article without a veterinarian’s assessment.

Fortunately, my veterinarian was able to see my dog on short notice and the editor was delighted with the revision. I sold the 400-word piece for \$200 and, with this clip under my belt, felt more confident in approaching new editors.

I have since published numerous articles on a variety of topics, but the lesson will remain with me. No matter how hot or fresh an idea, before I submit any article for consideration, I make sure to include the necessary professional input. ❖

## A Second Chance

by *Diona L. Reeves*