

# HOW TO WRITE, PUBLISH, AND MARKET YOUR OWN BESTSELLER

*A Practical Guide*

*by*  
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**PART ONE:  
GETTING STARTED**

To publish a book without an understanding of the marketplace would be tantamount to taking a safari across the continent of Africa without a map or any knowledge of what is required to stay alive. It is for this very reason that most authors do not realize their goals and dreams. If you are an author, your ultimate goal is to publish your work, have people read it, and sustain yourself financially. That doesn't happen solely on the basis of great writing skills. It happens when great writing skills are combined with meaningful knowledge of the marketplace.

At the very outset, you must establish the goal of your book. You want people to read it! Nothing else you do, no matter how great, how efficient, how cost effective or how brilliant, will mean anything if the book is not read. At every step of the project the qualifying question cannot be "How much will I save?" or "Do I like the colors on the cover?" The question must be, "Will this cause someone to pick the book up and read it?" To answer that question, you must understand the market and marketing. You must be willing to lay aside your personal preferences, ego, and ignorance and obtain the right information in order to make qualified decisions. And you must always remember that no matter how great your message, if people do not pick up your book and read it, all of your effort is wasted!

Every area of the marketplace is changing. There was a time when there were few options in the field of writing and publishing. Today, however, the options are vast. Those who gain knowledge of the market and act accordingly can now influence millions of people in an arena that was once reserved for the elite.

Those who succeed and prosper in any market are the ones who anticipate changes and adapt to new opportunities. Publishing is no different. It's a new day, with new opportunities and new pitfalls. But you have in your hands the very tool you need to succeed in today's market.

In the past, a writer fell into one of two categories. If you were already famous, had a large natural market, and distribution was guaranteed, you could possibly obtain an advance on royalties and have no out-of-pocket expenses. If, however, you were unknown with no guarantee of distribution, you paid for everything. The publishing company would oversee the artwork, editing, and advertising, but there was a catch! In the end, you were left with the burden of purchasing enough of your own books to insure the publisher would never lose a penny. While this is more than fair when a publisher does a good job, it can be disastrous in the hands of the wrong publisher!

At times, publishers have worked from a philosophy that says, "We will do your book, put minimal effort into advertising, and if it takes off, we will get behind it." Of course, *to get behind it* meant, "We will sell to those who ask." Usually, if you wanted any major advertising done, the cost came out of your own pocket. You had to have the money and the guts to gamble on your own project and trust the publisher to spend your money wisely. Thankfully, there are publishers who produce. To the dismay of thousands of authors, there are publishers who do not understand the emerging marketplace, and even their most sincere efforts will produce minimal results. When authors discuss this approach, they call it the "throw mud on the wall and see what sticks" method.

Authors write for the passion of their message. But you must understand that publishing is a “for profit” business. Publishers have employees, overhead, and expenses that must be paid. Few authors understand these financial risks. Failure to see the publisher’s risks and facilitate a win-win scenario is a shortcoming that usually costs, and seldom pays.

The young idealistic author thinks he or she can receive a cash advance on their project, or at least have their book published with no out-of-pocket expense. Seldom do publishers feel so strongly about a message that they gamble their own money. If you do not have a market that guarantees the sale of your book, it would be very bad business for a publisher to “front” your project. If you expect this, you will be deeply disappointed and embittered. This does not make the publisher the enemy. It is simply knowledge you must have in order to choose the most effective publisher for your project. As you will learn, publishing doesn’t stop when the books roll off the press. In fact, the real work has only begun. Getting the book into the hands of the reader is the real science!

In the world of standard publishing, like most corporate scenarios, there is always a winner, and usually a loser. In the past, the loser was never the publisher. In this scenario, antagonism tends to emerge between the publisher and the author. The mentality of “in order for me to win, you must lose” prevails. When this happens, both parties usually lose. Wrong expectations feed the idealism of the author, fueling the enmity between the author and publisher. With the information in this book, you will not have any surprises as you move your project toward publication. You can make intelligent choices about how to publish and market your book. You will have knowledge and options. You will be able to avoid the most common areas of conflict. And should you work with a publisher, you will have the keys you need to bring about a harmonious, prosperous relationship.

There is, of course, another way to approach publishing. The author assumes all the responsibility for printing, layout, artwork, cover design, and the myriad of unexpected details and expenses involved in publishing a book. While the hopeful author is seduced by the dollars he hopes to save, he seldom recognizes that complete self-publishing is likened unto performing surgery on oneself. It is almost never a good idea!

Millions of books have been printed but never read. Garages and closets all across America are filled with books that were printed only to have the dream fade faster than the cheap ink on inferior paper inside the ugly cover. All the dollars hoped to be saved were lost. But even more tragically, the message was lost. That one inspired idea someone was so passionate about that he or she was willing to put it into print is sitting in a garage not being read. The high cost of a dashed dream is much, much greater than any amount sought to be saved through self-publishing.

Publishing is a science. Simply getting a book printed is far from having it truly published. There are all manner of variables that determine if anyone will even pick up your book. Then, there are numerous factors that determine whether it will be read after it is purchased. If the goal is to simply print a book, anyone can do it! But if the goal is to inspire people to purchase, read, and be moved by your message, you need publishing... not just printing.

You can make intelligent, informed choices to fulfill your publishing dreams. You hold in your hands the map to guide you through your writing, publishing, and marketing journey. The world is waiting for your message. Now it’s time for you to make it happen!

## The Ultimate Goal

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Every year, numerous people seek my advice about writing and publishing. The most difficult thing about giving advice is buried in the fact that the new author really doesn't know what questions to ask. In fact, many who have already been published still don't really know what questions to ask. Therefore, they rarely realize the value of what is being communicated. If they knew what questions to ask, what issues were really important, they would get more of the results they desire from their publisher. This book is designed to help you know what to ask!

Good publishers love to work with people who understand the process. It is a joy to a publisher to find a well-informed author with whom they can partner for the accomplishment of their shared goals. Sadly, the gap between what authors expect and what publishers offer can be enormous. This does not mean the publisher is dishonest. It means the new author simply doesn't understand what is being offered, what to ask for, or what to expect. Much of the tension between author and publisher boils down to ignorance. The majority of disappointments experienced by authors are rooted in false expectations.

Full service, reputable publishers love authors who can partner with them, understand the business, and contribute to the overall process. All the things I suggest in this book can be easily incorporated into your publishing contract/agreement if you simply ask. Reputable publishers are not seeking to withhold anything from you. They simply need to know what you want!

Don't allow yourself to become overwhelmed by this chapter. The subject matter I will be covering has blindsided many authors because of their general lack of information and knowledge of the ever-changing arena of publishing, marketing, and distribution. All of this new information can make the emotional resistance to writing and publishing formidable. Be assured, however, that by the end of this book, you will know what to do and how to do it!

As simple as it sounds, to ask the appropriate questions one must recognize the difference between a written book, a printed book, a published book, a marketed book, a sold book, and a read book. Each of these is a phase in a process, but none of them are the ultimate goal.

The ultimate goal is to write, print, publish, and market a book that is purchased, read, and inspires the reader. This book is designed to help you reach that goal and enjoy the influence that comes with it.

The skills that are needed at each stage of the process are very specific. It is the job of the publisher to have contact with the appropriate people who will accomplish each of these phases in the most effective way possible. Should you decide to self-publish, it becomes your job to make each of the publishing phases happen in a way that leads you toward your ultimate goal. Failure at any of these points will not keep your book from being published, but it could keep your book from being purchased and read!

To write your book, you will need to capture your ideas. Your skill as a writer will determine what assistance you need. You can actually be a very poor writer and still have your ideas written and presented in an amazingly enjoyable, readable manner. Your

inspiration does not have to die because of your lack of skill. All you have to do is capture your thoughts.

Many authors use a ghostwriter, someone else who does the actual writing of their book. Through a series of interviews and some rough notes, many ghostwriters have turned raw ideas into masterpieces. But ghostwriters can also work to simply spice up the work of an average author.

When it comes to printing, the printer is not necessarily the person who should tell you what to do. They know how to print, but they may not know about the marketplace. Making decisions on the size of the book, how many pages it should be, and even the dimensions of the book are a science. At different times, certain sized books tend to sell better than others. The type of font, the cover stock, the weight and type of paper are all part of the puzzle of effective marketing, which is key to the ultimate goal. If the font in your book is not the best choice, people will discontinue reading it even after they purchase it! Simple font choice is just one decision that is essential to your goal.

I once had a self-published book that was doing very well in sales, which attracted the attention of an international publisher. They “picked up” the book and reprinted it. In an effort to save money, a smaller font was chosen, decreasing the size of the book. Although the material was the same, the sales declined dramatically. Reputable publishers want to make your project a success. They don’t make money unless you make money. Bad publishers just want to get your book printed!

Then there is cover design. No matter how good the content, the cover and title are what determine if your book leaves the bookstore shelf. A bookstore is like a grocery store. There are thousands of items on the shelf, all begging for your attention. The choice of cover and title are the last bits of marketing strategy. In a store with thousands of books on shelves with dozens of creative covers, your cover must be so powerful that it captures the reader’s attention in a quick glance! Statistics show that you only have a five-second window in which to grasp the attention of a potential buyer. The second glance is paramount in compelling the buyer to purchase.

In a linear concept, marketing and distribution comes next. Linear thinking is one that sees each phase as an independent action, one having little to do with the other. This is a place where even the most experienced publisher may get confused. Publishers tend to know how to market and distribute books to retailers. Naïve writers think their ship has come in when they hear that a particular bookstore chain is placing an order for a large quantity of their books. On the contrary, this could be the beginning of a problem – a serious problem!

Just because a particular retailer carries your book doesn’t mean it is going home with a reader. And if your book doesn’t go home with a reader, it will be sent back to the publisher, which means he gets what the industry calls a “charge back.” That means the money the retailer paid for the book, including the royalty paid to you, must be returned.

To reach your ultimate goal, there must be what we call “end user marketing.” The end user is the person who takes the book home and reads it. Doing everything right but failing at this point means you won’t reach the ultimate goal. Your perfectly written book with the dazzling cover may sit on the shelf of the most powerful retail chain in the world and never be read.

This book will tell you what you need to know to accomplish all of these goals. Additionally, it will give you the freedom to choose professional publishing or self-

publishing. Should you choose to work with a publisher, you will know the right questions to ask in order to evaluate their services. You will also be in a position to negotiate a far better contract. But maybe, most importantly, you will be in a position to collaborate with your publisher for a much more successful project with fewer conflicts.

Again, don't be overwhelmed. The goal of this book is to assist you in getting your inspiration to completion and have it read by as many people as possible. With every page, you're getting closer to your goal!

There was a time when writing and publishing seemed to be privileges bestowed only on the elite. In that limited era, many great life messages were lost. The market was one-sided. There was little diversity of opinion and the perspective was sometimes one-dimensional.

Throughout my years, I have heard life lessons told by the obscure, the poor, and the silent majority that could have helped millions. But they had no money, no writing skills, and no natural market. There was no profit in their message, and so it was lost to the world.

Today we live in a world where it is possible for anyone to make his or her voice heard. Anyone can get their message to the masses if they know how. What would have cost hundreds of thousands of dollars just a few years ago can now be done for pennies on the dollar. There has never been a better day to publish your book!

So what is the ultimate qualifying factor for who should write a book? Anyone who has a message can write a book! What is your life message? What is the life lesson you have learned that you are passionate to share? What is your idea that might make a great novel? The one question to ask yourself is this: “Is my passion for the message great enough for me to take the time to write it down?” If so, you are a writer... but only if you actually start writing!

Neither notoriety nor fame are prerequisites for writing a book. The fact that you have something to say, something you are so passionate about that you are willing to discipline yourself to write, is your credential. Don’t question yourself! Don’t worry about anything except writing! Writers are people who write!

Some of the most incredible, life-changing books have been written by obscure people who wrote one book and were never heard of again. Had they not persevered to put their knowledge into print, generations would have lost the one great insight they brought to the world. One act of discipline turned a life story into a legacy. One developed idea became a novel. One expression of passion forever changed the world of the writer, and the readers.

One of the greatest success stories of our time is the woman who wrote the *Harry Potter* series of children’s books. The first novel was written by a single mom looking for ways to generate income. Until *Harry Potter* was published, J.K. Rowling was completely unknown. The discipline to write her first novel stemmed from a seventeen-year project that eventually made her wealthy and famous beyond her imagination. Her story should be an enormous inspiration to every aspiring writer. Your inspiration could be just as great, just as incredible, but you have to write!

Don’t second-guess your qualifications. Simply ask yourself one question: “Am I passionate enough about what I have to say to do the work required to write my book?” Especially in the beginning stages, don’t burden yourself with the wrong questions. Don’t worry about how it will be published. Don’t be concerned about the money. Only concern yourself with the message. The answers to all questions will come when you need to know them. Until then, they are simply bits of useless information that may intimidate more than inspire. You do not need the answer to any question until it is time to take that step!

To concern yourself with all those useless questions – and they are useless until you are ready to take the corresponding step – will only serve to squelch your creativity and clutter your mind. Today, you do not need money. You need thoughts, and those come as you think and write. The more you write, the more creativity will flow!

Don't even ask yourself what you are going to write unless your question is, "What will I write today?" You will learn in a subsequent chapter that creativity flows easily enough if you do not create negative pressure by asking the wrong questions at the wrong time. Or, perhaps I should say, by asking the right questions at the wrong time!

Before I had written and published my first book, I had the opportunity to talk with a successful author. I shared my passion to write.

He responded by asking, very poignantly, "What are you writing at this moment?"

"Nothing yet" I replied, "But I'm going to..."

Before I could finish the sentence he interrupted. "No, you're not!"

"Not what?" I asked.

"You're not going to write anything!" he quipped. "If you're a writer, you're writing. If you're not writing, you're not a writer!"

His remarks embarrassed and infuriated me! In fact, they infuriated me so much that I went home and began writing! That was in 1977, and I haven't stopped since. If you are a writer, a person who has a message, a story, or an idea about which you are so passionate that you are committed to putting it in writing, then *start writing!* When you write, you are a writer!

No two people are the same. Therefore, everyone will process differently. By process, I mean thought processes, learning processes, writing processes, and every other area that requires a systematic approach. Whether you know it or not, you have a system, a way of doing things. Learning to work with your natural system is usually best for the creative process. You will only write creatively in the process that works for you!

Don't ever let anyone tell you, "This is how you should do it." You're the only one who can know how you should do something. In fact, the very word "should" indicates obligation. Never do what you *should*; do what works for you! Do what is effective.

What other writers have to offer are ideas, suggestions, and models. You can observe someone's approach and see if it might work for you. You can take bits and pieces of a lot of different approaches and develop your own. But the key is to discover your process and begin. Most of your process will come through trial and error, so be ready to adapt and adjust continually. But in the end, the process must be your own!

This book is not designed to tell you what you should do. It is designed to give you options that work. It is written to stimulate your own creative processes. It is a toolbox, but you decide which tools you want to use.

Everyone who writes does it differently. Choosing your writing style is all about creativity. You must determine what facilitates the greatest degree of personal creativity for you and work from that perspective. If you try something and it does not work, keep trying different approaches until you find something that does.

Some people create a very precise outline of the entire book before they begin to write. Others write one chapter at a time. Some jot down random thoughts until they are ready to start. There are as many different ways to write a book as there are people who want to write. The most essential key is, "Get started!"

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." The material falling into your hands at this very moment may indicate you have gotten serious enough to begin. Beginning is the first and most important step in finishing. As Lao Tzu, a Chinese philosopher, so aptly stated, "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step." Starting is that single step!

Let's revisit my story about the writer who pushed me into my first step toward becoming author. I want to expand the conversation a little more. I want you to put yourself in my position and imagine that it's you having this conversation with me.

When I was pondering the idea of writing my first book, I was fortunate to meet a young, successful writer. He was very prolific and had already achieved a very impressive level of success. As I previously mentioned, I told him I was "going" to write a book. His reply startled me, "No, you're not!"

"Yes, I intend to write a book."

Again, he came back with, "No, you're not!"

At this point, I was beginning to get more than slightly annoyed. He could hear it in my voice as I emphatically stated, "Yes, I am! I'm going to write a book!"

"Jim," he said as he looked me squarely in the eyes, "everybody's *going* to write a book that they never start. Either get started or admit that you're not really serious."

I caught the essence of what he was saying. His direct words had hit the target. From there, I started writing my first booklet. Today I have published seventeen books, several booklets, fourteen workbooks, hundreds of magazine articles, several mini-booklets, hit the bestseller list, and have about thirty more books that are written in rough drafts. All of that has happened because I had someone “jar me” enough to actually start writing.

I assume you bought this book because you are starting today. This is your first serious step toward completion. Or maybe you have been writing already, but just haven’t found your “pace.” This is a good step. As you read the pages of this book, you will formulate a plan. Ideas will begin to emerge from your own heart and mind. As they do, write them down. Follow my first law of writing, “Always be ready to write.” This means that when an idea comes to you, write or record as much of it as you can at that moment. Never let a good idea escape.

Creative ideas emerge like diamonds in a magic bag. They mysteriously appear. There is no explanation for their timing. They are a gift from God. The bag, however, has a small hole. If we don’t check the bag regularly, a diamond will be created and fall through the hole without us ever realizing the magnitude of the treasure we’ve lost.

Our mind is that bag. Incredible ideas emerge in our mind through the day and night. But, like that bag, we are so preoccupied with the affairs of daily living that we don’t even notice when they appear or when they fall through the hole. Take the first step in creative thinking and acknowledge that you are a creative thinker. Take the second step. Always have a notebook, PDA, or recorder with you to save your ideas.

When an idea comes, don’t evaluate it. Just record it. Anything you think would be a good chapter title, paragraph, or any thought that relates to a topic of interest, record it. Don’t question whether you will ever really use it. To do so shifts your thoughts from the creative part of your brain to the analytical part. In a split-second, that idea will slip from your brain into an irretrievable area of lost memories. Treat ideas as precious. They are your writing future.

Keep pen and paper beside your bed. If you awaken in the night with a thought, write it down. If you have a dream that inspires an idea, write it out immediately. Dreams can slip from your conscious thought within minutes of awakening. When you are in conversation and you have a thought, stop at that moment and write it down. I have never had anyone get offended because his or her conversation stimulated an idea that I thought was so good I had to write it down immediately.

As quickly as you can get to a computer, record your ideas into files. An idea is only as good as your ability to retrieve it at will. As someone once said, “The most faded ink is clearer than the brightest memory.” In other words, scrap paper in a drawer is unlikely to ever turn into a manuscript. Categorize your thoughts into files by topic. When you begin writing, you’ll have a plethora of creative, original ideas to choose from.

Many times, I have the essence of each chapter for a new book recorded in files before I even start writing. With this method, I have found that writing the book is little more than organizing and expanding thoughts that I have already written down, organized, and held onto for years.

Your approach may be to start with a title and write an outline. You may start writing random chapters that you eventually realize fit into one concept. You may write seemingly scattered thoughts. You may have a concept that you develop from thoughts that occurred to you over a period of time. You may have a subject and do research. But

you must choose the course that inspires you and facilitates your greatest creative process.

Don't try to figure out your process before you begin. Just begin! Your process will discover you. It will occur organically as you take action. You're not a writer when you are published; you are a writer when you write. The moment you start writing and see yourself as a writer, your creativity will begin to increase. In time, you will have a process that works for you, feeds your creativity, and gives you a lifetime of creative writing!

## 5 The Starting Point

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For most people, starting is the hardest part. But remember, once you overcome inertia, it gets easier and easier. The more you write, the more you want to write. The more ideas you commit to paper, the more ideas will come to you. Every time you have a negative or fearful thought about writing, just relax and say, “Ideas will come.” Don’t create any negative barrier or embrace any destructive thoughts.

New writers usually make the beginning process too hard. The starting point is as simple as a single idea in the form of a sentence or phrase. Or, you may just have a title. Anything that makes it possible for you to grasp the general idea is enough to get you going. The key is to write what you have. Write, don’t just think! When you commit anything to the page, you are writing. That’s what makes you a writer, which is the first step to becoming an author. Don’t qualify it. Don’t analyze it. Just write it! Even if it ends up being something you never use, the act of writing starts the creative process.

It is so important that you learn to work with and cultivate inspiration. Inspiration can appear in an instant, be crystal clear, and be lost in a breath, if not acted upon. Nothing limits inspiration like questions for which you have no obvious answers. Asking yourself any question is like turning the wheel of the car. It takes your mind in a different direction. When questions emerge, don’t try to answer them. Stick to the creative flow. Anything that moves your mind from the point of inspiration will cost you the idea that has leapt from your heart! The mind only needs one moment of inspiration. It will then yield pages of thought. If you feel the question is important, write it down so you will remember it and come back to it at an appropriate time, but not when you are writing.

Writing is often like a brainstorming session. In the creative stages, all you are doing is gathering thoughts and ideas. There should be no critique placed on those thoughts or ideas. They should simply be cataloged for future review and analysis. When the flow of creativity stops, the ideas can be organized, analyzed, and qualified for use. But never create and refine an idea in the same session! The moment you start asking yourself questions that have to do with refining and qualifying, your mind shifts into a different mode. You are no longer creating, you are now refining. In that one instant, the flow of creative ideas stops.

Some people prefer to write by hand, others prefer to type. Choose the method that works best for you by starting with either a blank sheet of paper or a blank computer screen. Take a few minutes to think about the subject you have chosen, and then write every random thought that comes to your mind about that subject. You are now having a private brainstorming session.

You may want to question numerous people about your subject. What comes to mind when they hear a certain sentence? For example, if your chosen subject was the political process, you could ask fifty people, “What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, the political process?” Once you have interviewed fifty people, you will now have questions, concerns, and opinions of others about your subject. After gathering information from fifty people, you will have a wealth of information to consider. This is one of many tactics that can help ignite the creative flow!

Have you ever wondered how some of the great songwriters come up with so many creative ideas? Sometimes they go into the studio, turn on a recorder, and just “jam.”

Jamming is when a musician, or group of musicians, plays music strictly by inspiration. It is totally unplanned. They simply play non-stop. They don't worry about mistakes. They just play! Then they go back and listen to the ideas that emerged during the jam session. Now they are in the discovery mode. They discover what can be developed into a hit song. Had they stopped to analyze every idea that surfaced during the jam session, they would rarely have ever created that elusive hit song. Without questioning, just write your ideas as they come.

Skip Scarborough, a very successful songwriter, told me a story about working on a song. As he "jammed," Anita Baker was walking down the hall and heard one line from his song. She asked if she could use it. Of course, Skip agreed. She took that one line, wrote a completely different song around it, and it became a huge hit, in which he shared the royalties and recognition! Sometimes we may reject all but one line, but that one line can be the nugget that gives rise to massive success!

At the beginning, all you are doing is *starting*. You're not trying to write your book. You are simply initiating the flow of ideas. You are discovering the seeds that will grow into ideas, which will develop into chapters, which will one day become a book, which will ultimately touch a life!

No matter what your goal, no matter what your process, the most important step is starting! Start today and never stop.

## 6

### Why Should I Write?

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Everyone writes for his or her own reason. One reason isn't nobler than another. Just know that it is all right to have your own reasons. Your reasons are, in fact, the only reasons that will motivate you. The moment you take on someone else's "ought to" your motivation will disappear.

Many wonderful books have been the outgrowth of personal journaling. Many people journal as a way to process their thoughts and achieve mental clarity. But it is amazing how many of these people do not feel they have the ability to write. Journaling is writing. It is not publishing, but it is writing. With the help of an experienced publisher, every page of your journal may have the potential to be expanded into a book.

I was watching an interview with a very popular recording artist who had just released a hit album. When asked how such deeply personal songs came about, she said she took her journal and collaborated with another songwriter. There could be ten bestsellers in the pages of your journal right now!

Everyone has the same problems, faces the same issues, and deals with the same world you face. They may be asking the same questions you are asking and answering in your personal diary. Your thoughts could be the light that leads someone from the darkness to a new life. The craziness of your life could be the inspiration for a screenplay! The irony of your day could be the spark that ignites a hilarious novel. A question you ask yourself about the evening news could be the next *New York Times* bestseller. Everyone is asking the same questions. Writers verbalize for others what they are silently thinking and asking!

Your reason for writing may be no more than the need to bring clarity to your thoughts. That's reason enough. But someone who looks at those thoughts from a more objective point of view may see the pages of a great bestseller. Many hit songs are written in collaboration with a personal journal and a songwriter. Likewise, many great novels emerge from a person expanding their personal journey into a literary work.

Some people write as a way to leave a legacy to their children or to the world. We all learn life lessons along the way that hold the keys for others to have a better quality of life. Someone may need our perspective to see his or her way to a better future. The same chains that held us in the past could be the very strongholds that cause hopelessness in someone else. That means our answers have the ability to inspire hope! We only pass through this world once. We have the power to choose the mark we will leave. Your words in a book could be your legacy to a better world for millions.

Publishing a book significantly raises your credibility factor on several planes. Written words seem to carry more weight than spoken ones. When people see your words in a book, they value them more. The fact that they spent money for your book changes their receptivity to the very words you may have spoken dozens of times. To them, it is now much more influential just because it has been written and published.

While lecturing at a college in the Philippines, the president confided, "We have to monitor all the books we place in our library." He went on to say, "The students think every word in a book is true. They believe it couldn't be written and published if it were not true."

As a speaker, publishing changed my credibility and immediately increased my influence. From the very first book, people began to treat me differently. They wanted to put me in better hotels, give me larger honorariums, and listen just a little closer to what I had to say. All this because I was published!

When a new employee is handed a book written by the president of the company, you better believe the level of personal responsibility goes up. This employee knows he is working for a professional. The moment a pastor places his published work in the hands of a visitor, that pastor is likely to make the most powerful impact possible. The same is true for the teacher, the lecturer, and for anyone who is seeking to communicate his or her ideas. Publishing increases credibility and influence.

The person who feels they have a unique message should always publish their work. There are frightening statistics that report the incredibly low amount of content that people remember after sitting through a lecture. Some studies indicate that we can only hold on to an inspiration for about twelve hours if we do not take specific steps to internalize and process the idea. A unique message followed by a book will solidify the message and move people to action.

A written message has an altogether greater level of acceptability than a spoken message. Our verbal communication is littered with a formidable number of communication detractors. Once while appearing on a television program in an area where I was widely accepted, the host of the program took a very negative view of my message. Later, when we became friends, she confided that it was because of my accent. She couldn't believe that a person with a Southern accent could actually be knowledgeable!

Your accent, your clothes, your hairstyle, your facial expressions, the tone of your voice, and thousands of other variables come into play when you are speaking. You may remind the listener of someone they dislike. These associations cause the listener to stereotype you. Who knows all the reasons a listener may decide to tune you out?

When someone reads a book, they create their own mental image of the speaker. If they agree with the message or are sympathetic to the cause, they begin to assign positive mental images to the writer. They see her or him dressed a certain way, looking a certain way, and speaking a certain way. They create positive, desirable associations. They can make you far more appealing in their imagination than you could ever be to them in person.

When your book is marketed properly, you expand the scope of your influence beyond your natural market. In subsequent chapters, we will discuss your natural market. Likewise, we will consider ways to get your message into an arena that you might never be able to reach alone.

By expanding our influence through publishing and marketing, our book works for us when we sleep, when we are on vacation, when we are present, and when we are absent. In some countries, one book will be passed around to dozens of people. This multiplication factor is the result of other people's influence, not your own. People you have never met will influence others you may never meet to read your book. That's multiplication.

If you're worried about the inherent lack of profit in book sharing, stop! They may not purchase the first book of yours they read, but they will probably purchase the next one. Over eighty percent of the people who read one of my books purchase a second

book. This usually occurs within thirty days. An incredible number of my book sales are direct results of someone letting a friend read a copy for free!

All of these are reasons to write. You should decide which reason motivates you. Find any reason that stirs up a great enough passion to move you through the process.

## Part One Summary

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### IT'S A NEW DAY IN THE MARKETPLACE

- Decide what approach serves you best to fulfill your goals.

### THE ULTIMATE GOAL

- The ultimate goal is to write, print, publish, and market a book that is purchased, read, and influences the reader.
- Determine the help you need at each stage of the process before moving forward.

### WHO SHOULD WRITE A BOOK?

- What is the message that burns inside you?
- What is your life lesson?
- What is your unique experience?
- What are you passionate about enough to start and finish a writing project?
- You're a writer because you write, not because you have been published! Just write!

### DISCOVERING YOUR PROCESS

- Just start!
- Write any and every idea, phrase, title, or sentence.
- Collect information.
- Organize information.
- Learn about personal brainstorming.
- Trust the creative process. Don't try to figure it out!

### THE STARTING POINT

- Don't make it too hard!
- Yield to every inspirational impulse.
- Interview qualified people.
- Collaborate with other creative people.
- Never stop writing.

### WHY SHOULD I WRITE?

- Keep a journal.
- Leave a legacy for your children.
- Increase credibility.
- Spread a unique message.
- Expand your influence.

PART TWO:  
WRITING

Creative writing must flow from creativity. Duh! Well, let me explain. You must learn to facilitate a creative mindset in order to write creatively. Every writer has numerous variables that play a role in creating the stage for creativity. It is essential that you identify and comply with the things that facilitate your greatest creativity.

While physical comfort is important, it is not nearly as important as emotional comfort. For example, when I was younger I couldn't stand to write in a cluttered office. Today it doesn't bother me as much. But when I was younger I would clean and organize my entire office. The clutter kept distracting me.

I have found that I write best early in the morning. I often rise at 3:00 or 4:00 am and write for a few hours, then go back to bed for a short nap before going to the office. In the early hours, there is nothing for me to do at the office. There are no phone calls, emails, or text messages. I am free from mental demands. It just works for me.

I like certain types of mood music when I write. In fact, I have music and programs on my computer that help me get into the **alpha state**. The alpha state is simply a shift that occurs in the brain. Our brain waves slow down and we become less controlled by our intellectual limitations. It is the state people enter into when they meditate, worship, or just kick their feet up and relax. In this relaxed state, the mind more freely creates. There is little struggle with the critical aspect of our thinking. I nearly always have some type of meditative music playing when I write. I greatly credit that as one of the reasons I seldom ever experience writer's block.

I have also found that I love to write near the ocean. Many times, I will travel to Florida to induce a more creative state. I open the patio door to hear the soothing waves and feel the fresh ocean breeze and the words effortlessly flow onto the computer screen. Studies show that near the ocean, or in the mountains, there are more negative ions in the air, which tend to have a soothing emotional and physiological affect. Find the place that makes it easy for you to write, whether it is another state or another room in your house.

While writing, stop and play as often as you need to. Attempting to force the flow stops the flow. You can't make yourself be creative. You can only facilitate creativity. I have developed the art of non-distracting interruptions. I don't want the kinds of interruptions that cause my mind to shift into another mode. But the moment I sense interruption in the creative flow, I stop and play.

Playing refreshes the mind, that is, after all, the goal of entertainment. Entertainment should refresh us to accomplish the tasks of life. When it becomes more than that, it detracts from life. I have solitaire on my computer. I often stop and play a game of solitaire in the middle of a paragraph or chapter. In fact, I may play several hands. But as soon as I feel relaxed, I start writing again.

I have about ten guitars hanging on the wall in my study. I find playing music to be very relaxing. I will often stop writing and do finger exercises or even work on a musical arrangement. The momentary entertainment always refreshes me. You must develop your own creative distractions. You know it's the right thing for you when it relaxes and stimulates creativity, yet does not distract you.

Never allow yourself to get stuck! It's better to stop writing than to get stuck. There are several meditation programs that are incredible for stimulating creativity. There are

some designed specifically to break you through your “stuck states.” **Learning Strategies** is an innovative company that specializes in programs that develop nearly any aspect of creativity thinking! I have used their programs extensively.

I know the book, article, poem, or lyric – whatever I’m writing – is inside me. I know it can flow forth in a very coherent manner. All I have to do is get my intellect out of the way. Nothing accomplishes this like peaceful meditation.

Be careful to stay in the creative mode. When ideas begin to flow, they usually flow faster than I can type or write. Besides developing my own style of shorthand typing, I allow myself to make a lot of mistakes when I am “in the flow.”

When you are flowing creatively, don’t make corrections. Don’t worry about punctuation. Don’t do anything that disrupts the flow. That said, if these things, punctuation and misspelled words, distract you... correct them. Do what works for you. One of the first laws for maintaining the flow is, “Creativity first, then quality.”

After you’ve written as much as you want to write, leave it alone. Walk away from it! Let it “cool down.” I am rarely able to make my text better unless I disassociate from it for a time. Writers can seldom make their own corrections. In our minds, we read the words not the way they are written, but the way they were intended. As long as we are in the origination mode, we don’t expand our ideas beyond the original thought.

However, after spending a few hours, or even a few days, away from what we’ve written, we can come back with a new mindset. We are able to read it more like a stranger. We then see much of what we have missed, or we are able to expand our ideas more clearly.

In the early days, I had a great method for developing clarity. What I write makes sense to me. It just doesn’t always make sense to anyone else. So, after doing a basic spell check, I would ask five different people to read my manuscript.

I gave them very specific instructions. This was not for punctuation and spelling, this was an edit for clarity and creativity. I would have them write notes in the margins. “This doesn’t make sense,” or “You need to expand this thought,” or “Do you have a reference for this?” They could ask or say anything that related to the content. Very few things I did helped to better prepare my manuscript and develop my writing skills. I would diligently review and consider every comment. From these questions and statements, then I would do my first rewrite.

After this stage, I was ready to work with an editor. Working with a professional editor was a great experience. We worked on a very organized writing schedule. Every day, she would send me the chapter she had edited along with notes, suggestions, and questions. If we needed to, we would talk about her thoughts and input. That morning, I would finish my rewrites and send them back to her for a final review. While I was working on rewrites, she was working on the next chapter. By maintaining a daily schedule, we sustained tremendous creative momentum and consistency of thought!

By maintaining a continuous even pace, I never felt rushed. I never felt the weight of a deadline. By using tools to nurture and refresh your mind, you can avoid writers block, too. In time, creativity becomes as natural and predictable as breathing.

Chapters are the skeleton of your book. They are the framework that holds everything together and coordinates the movement from one central idea to another. Good chapters build one upon the other, leading people down a pathway of consistent thought. Chapters are like steps that lead to the grand entrance of a beautiful building. They must be designed to take you to a specific destination.

There are a few simple rules for writing great chapters. Following them will ensure the reader has a positive experience. First and foremost, chapters should be short! People are not willing to give up large amounts of time readily. Time is one of the most sacred investments an individual can make. It is the one thing they can never recover.

An average reader should be able to complete one chapter in a comfortable 10-15 minute timeframe. Longer chapters will discourage people from reading your book. If the chapter is too long, they will postpone reading until they have larger blocks of time, which too often never happens. I can't tell you how many people have expressed positive remarks about the fact that all of my chapters are short.

Remember, the goal is not just to write a book, it is to get people to read it. Just as there are many factors involved in getting them to *begin* reading, there are many strategies designed to *keep them reading* your book! Unless a person is an avid reader, every time they pick up your book, they have to overcome inertia. If there is any negative factor for them, they will put it off for a more convenient time. Guess what? That time may never come.

A great chapter should be about one thought. The chapter is not the book. The chapter, whether in a novel or an instructional book, is where you take a person through one complete idea. After just a few minutes, when they lay the book down, you want several positive things to happen. You want the reader to have one thought that sticks in their mind. If it is an instructional book, you want to have led them to one basic conclusion or cornerstone of your theme.

Completing a chapter should be like eating dessert at a restaurant. There must be something in each chapter that engages the reader and makes him or her want to come back... soon! Like a great dessert, it is so good that your view of the meal as a whole is positive. You find yourself thinking about the experience and are eager to return.

I love to use a chapter to cause a person to ask a key question. I may never ask the question itself, but in my books I compel readers to ask themselves certain questions. I know what questions they will have to ask. By asking these questions, they reach specific conclusions.

Besides the personal help that comes to them, they have my book on their mind after they lay it down. The developmental process continues long after they have stopped reading. If we, as authors, are able to stimulate inspiration, the reader will possibly process the information in their sleep. The degree of impact our book has is all about our ability to engage their mind and imagination.

Every chapter is a stepping-stone in a thought process. It is a piece of the puzzle. Like every puzzle, they will only see its full beauty when each piece has been placed in the right arrangement. The chapters don't give the conclusion, they lead to the conclusion. By bringing the reader to small conclusions, each chapter leads the reader to prepare his

or her mind for the ultimate conclusion of the book. It is a consistent train of thought that keeps the mind engaged every step of the way!

If there is too much information in a chapter, laying the book down is an escape from a task. Too much information can cause the reader to feel overwhelmed and actually stimulate the fight or flight mechanism. They may never understand why they have negative feelings about your book; they just know it feels like a task instead of a joy. If reading is a task, people will not pick the book up again.

A short chapter with one clear conclusion engages the mind and captures the imagination. The reader cannot escape it. His reading experience is positive and enjoyable. At the end of every chapter, he finds himself wanting to come back for more.

The chapters of your book are the main ideas. These may evolve as you write, or you may start with them all in mind. Perhaps, as it is so often with me, it can be a combination of the two. Regardless of how they come, here are some good suggestions and rules for writing great chapters.

Once you have your title or theme, simply ask yourself, “What are the main things I want to say about this topic?” Then write every thought. Those individual thoughts usually need massive expansion. The expansion of these thoughts usually becomes chapters. They won’t necessarily be all of your chapters for the entire book. But as you write, you often discover more ideas that need to be explored and developed.

At first, your chapters will probably be conceptual statements or phrases. You can turn those into chapter titles later. At this point, you are simply deciding what needs to go into the book. Some of these statements will join together to create one chapter, while others will need expanding to create several chapters.

Next, you want to take a very creative step! Organize these thoughts into the order you think they should take. Then read each sentence, phrase, or chapter title to see if it flows consistently. Could a person read the title of the book and these chapter titles and realize on some level what you are trying to say?

Most people scan through a book before they purchase it. You should be aware that they will only pick the book up if the title is compelling or if the artwork is gripping. The only exception to this occurs when you are a public speaker and offer your books for sale at a speaking engagement. When you are selling books from your own product table, people have already bought into you as a person. But the majority of people who read your book will never see or hear you, so it’s all about the title and the cover!

People do not realize how incredible the human brain is. We can take in thousands of bits of information per second. But most of that information is processed subconsciously. In fact, some studies indicate that 88% of the mind’s functions occur at the subconscious level. This means that we are not actually making very many conscious decisions.

An email circulated a few years ago that you may have seen. In it was a paragraph in which all the words were misspelled or had vowels left out. Yet, as you read it, your mind made the corrections and you read the words without trouble, as though they were written perfectly.

The brain’s ability to gather, assimilate, and organize information can work for you if your chapter titles are consistent and inspiring. When a person thumbs through a book, their mind is actually reading the book. That’s why we pick up a book, flip through the pages, and just lay it back down and never know why. Our mind took in thousands of bits of information and we made a subconscious decision before we had time to consciously

understand it! Likewise, that's why we feel like we should purchase the book without really knowing why. We've already read the book. We just don't realize it!

If all your chapter titles read like sentences that support the book title, the mind of the reader will get the point and the person will want to read further. If the chapter titles are interesting and provocative, you will not only engage the reader's subconscious mind, but the conscious mind as well. This is almost a sure sale!

The chapter titles are very important. You want to make every title interesting enough to entice a person to read the book. This is where a good publisher can help you. Publishers know what sells. They team you with editors that help you develop your ideas and concepts to make them more compelling. It's how they make their living. They will work with you to make your book more creative and interesting. Very few people have the resourcefulness to do all of this alone, thus one of the many reasons to use a resourceful, creative publisher.

Every page of your book must hold the reader's interest. With the turn of each page, there is the possibility that your book will be laid down and never picked up again. On the other hand, with each page positive anticipation can build that endears the reader to your writing. Every page can be a milestone.

The goal, as we have stated, is to have people read your entire book and reach the realization or message you have chosen to convey. In the case of a novel, the goal is to have captivated the mind of the reader with an enjoyable story that provided pleasurable entertainment value. But once the book is purchased, we do not want the reader to begin the book but never finish.

People keep reading because your book continues to present interesting thoughts. It is an enjoyable read. It engages the mind and captivates the imagination. And last, but not least, it must meet the expectation for which they purchased it. It must live up to the sales pitch that caused them to risk the money they spent and the time they have already invested in reading!

We have previously discussed the need for great chapters and chapter titles. Now we must look at paragraphs. Great chapters are made up of great paragraphs. Paragraphs are ideas, in sentence form, capsulated in one segment of consistent thought. Writing great paragraphs is as important as writing great chapters.

Paragraphs are much like chapters. Chapters move the reader through the entire book to progressively reach the "master" idea. Paragraphs, on the other hand, lead the reader through a series of thoughts that serve as stair-steps to the main idea behind the chapter. Each paragraph builds sequentially upon the preceding idea to reach a specific conclusion or revelation. Each paragraph should be an enticing morsel that is too delicious to be left on the plate.

When writing a novel, it is understood that the paragraphs are the telling of a story that must be laid out in a precise manner in order to build the suspense of the reader. Poorly placed paragraphs are like telling a joke and delivering the punch line before the setup. If thought is not delivered in a sequential manner, it becomes disorganized and hard to follow. The reader will lose interest and your published book will be in danger of being set aside and never read completely.

So, the first rule of writing a paragraph revolves around the first sentence. The first sentence of each paragraph must entice the reader to read the rest of the paragraph. Studying speed-reading in high school helped me to identify proper structure in writing. As a speed-reader, I was taught to read the first and last sentence of each paragraph. If the paragraph was very long, I scanned the middle sentence. By reading in this manner, one should be able to acquire the substance of an entire book.

I soon began to see that poorly structured paragraphs made this impossible. As a college teacher grading papers, I would often read a paper in this manner. If I could not grasp the main thought of the paper and follow a sensible sequence of thought by reading the first and last sentence of each paragraph, I would give the paper a failing grade and move on. If, on the other hand, the paper held my attention and made sense based on this criterion, I would read the entire paper. When previewing a book that I may want to read, this is one of my personal methods. Ultimately, if I cannot read a book enjoyably in this

manner, I will not purchase it! After all, if the person didn't know *how* to write, it is highly possible they didn't know *what* to write.

Each paragraph should be able to stand alone by reading the first and last sentence. The first sentence should introduce the idea being presented. The last sentence should wrap up the thought. But the first and last sentences read alone, without anything else, should be enough to convey the main idea. The other sentences simply serve to expand on that idea.

The title of the book is the guideline for each chapter. Likewise, the title of the chapter is the guideline for each paragraph. After writing the chapter, the writer should read the chapter title and the first sentence of each paragraph, asking the questions, "Is this sentence consistent with the title?" and "Are the sentences arranged in the right sequence to explain the thought and build anticipation?" If not, you may need to rearrange the order or even omit sentences or paragraphs.

After satisfying the previous criteria, read the chapter title along with the first and last sentences of each paragraph and determine the consistency of thought. If reading the title and first and last sentences are sufficient to deliver logical, consistent thought, you have a well-structured paragraph that, provided the material itself is interesting, will keep the reader positively engaged and anticipating every word.

Riveting reading is when a person just can't put your book down. They are so engaged they must read as much of the book as possible in each sitting. That's what I want to hear, "I couldn't put your book down!" or "I read that book at least five times." Then there is the platinum compliment: "I reread your book at least once a year."

For a book to inspire riveting reading, you must have a combination of many important factors in place. There must be an ample amount of detail and a degree of colorful, creative content. You need to appeal to both hemispheres of the brain, detail and creativity!

There is an old adage that says, "Information tells, inspiration sells." In addition to having your facts right and meeting the analytical requirements of the reader, there must be a consistent emotional appeal equal to the book's advertising. I like to understand my market before I write a book, but it doesn't always happen that way. Sometimes, after a book is written, it becomes the job of the publisher and/or distributor to link it to a specific demographic. The advertising, including all graphics, must be aimed at the target market. A book written for men will not sell if the cover is effeminate. Everything about the packaging of the book must be aimed at a specific market.

The sales pitch is key to moving your book. The sales pitch is written on the back cover, or inside the dust cover. This pitch is used in ads designed to promote sales. Not only must the sales pitch be creative and compelling, it must highlight key aspects of the book. While being the key to moving your book from the shelf to the cash register, the sales pitch also creates expectations.

Horrifying, intriguing, hilarious, or any other adjectives used to describe the book at the point of sale must deliver at the point of contact – the reading! If you know the market you are attempting to reach, everything in your book's literary style, font type, visual presentation, layout, and size must be appealing to that market. This is another area where resourceful publishers can make the difference between a printed book, a published book, and a purchased book. They can make your book consistently appealing to a specific market.

Now, what I'm about to tell you is one of the greatest secrets to writing a bestseller! Once you know what your book will be about, the general idea, write the most compelling advertising copy you can create. Then, make sure all those selling points are included in your book. Don't write your book and then hope you can figure out what will make people want it. Write the sales pitch first, so you already know why people will make the purchase. This doesn't change what you write; it merely expands what you include!

When working with an innovative publisher, involve him or her in this process. Check your ego at the door. Let other creative people have input into your project. As Solomon, one of the wisest men in the Bible, said, "There is success in a multitude of counselors." Write an advertisement for your book and ask one hundred people to read it. If they all say they would purchase the book based on that ad, you now know the secret formula of contents that must be included.

While allowing these one hundred people to read your ad, ask them to tell you what it would take for them to purchase your book. What do they want to see in a book of this type? They will tell you what needs to be included for your book to sell.

I recently saw an interview with actor Will Smith. Mr. Smith's career has been almost flawless. It seems as though he somehow had insight into the future of music, television, and movies. This informative interview revealed that it was not a mysterious ability to see the future that made him a success; it was a thoughtful review of the past.

My jaw dropped as I heard this simple, yet profound approach to success in his movie career. He and his manager identified the common denominators in the biggest blockbuster movies of the past. They found that action, special effects, and a romantic subplot were the three main ingredients in a blockbuster hit! Mr. Smith simply used these criteria to evaluate and choose potential scripts. This easy, insightful logic made him one of the highest-paid actors in the movie business today.

When evaluating Will Smith's career, don't forget his enormous talent! But remember, there are scores of great talents in Hollywood. What separates some of the highest paid actors from the others, are the movies they choose. Likewise, being a great writer is not enough. If your books are boring, they won't be read after they are purchased. Find out what people want in your book. Discover the ingredients of previous books with similar topics that have been bestsellers. Include that in your advertising.

Write your book to match your advertising, but start with your advertising. This does not compromise your material. It just tells you what to add to your material to make people want it. Consider how health books are advertised. "On page 24, find the cure for cancer that has been kept secret by the large drug companies." You and I both know that page 24 may not answer any real questions, but this "teaser" creates enough intrigue for us to buy the book. Planned advertising provides one of the best ways to ensure that your book is riveting.

After you have written your book, there must be an editing process. Before undergoing the general editing that is provided by most publishing companies, you, the writer, should do a vocabulary edit. Vocabulary keeps the reading experience enjoyable. It is another aspect of keeping the mind engaged. All writers must work continually at expanding their vocabulary. Learning Strategies Corporation offers an excellent tool called "[Million Dollar Vocabulary](#)" that can be a tremendous tool in developing your vocabulary.

We all tend to use a basic vocabulary with a limited number of words. Sometimes, I feel like some writers have only two adjectives: "fabulous" and "incredible." As meaningful as these words may be, they become somewhat dull when used repeatedly. We must find ways to expand our limited vocabulary.

While traveling in Australia several years ago, I mentioned to a friend that I was considering my first novel. He gave me some books by Stephen Donaldson, a prolific, colorful, creative writer. He suggested that it would be beneficial to my career as a writer to experience this author's style. And that's just what it was, an experience! I *experienced* every page of his novel as if I were part of the story.

From that time until now, I have sought, even in my instructional writing, to be more colorful. I want people to *experience* my writing, not just read it. Remember, facts tell, but stories sell! No matter what type of writing we choose, we must connect with the reader through storytelling.

Until recently, most books on management and leadership were written in a laborious, textbook-like style. They were filled with facts and statistics that could cure the most stubborn cases of insomnia. While I knew I needed the information, I could hardly bear the idea of trudging through the endless stream of data to find the few facts buried inside, like treasure at the bottom of a mine.

Then, a few years ago, in a stroke of genius, books like “The One Minute Manager” and “The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey” exploded onto the scene and revolutionized leadership books. By putting facts into story form, they were able to model instead of simply explain the key principles of leadership and management.

Vocabulary and creative writing make it possible to combine facts and stories in a way that keeps the mind engaged, conveys the key points, and says the most in the fewest words possible.

After writing your manuscript, do an edit for creativity and vocabulary. Pass it around to others who can help you spice it up. Find the person you know with the best vocabulary and let them help you say it with flair. Make corrections based on the input you receive. Then, when it is submitted to the publisher for editing, they will once again polish and adjust it to turn it into a riveting reading experience!

Truly great books are never the work of one person. Every great writer has a publisher who employs an editor and works with a distributor and an ad agency, all of which provide input regarding the content and look of the book. A team of creative people makes a book great!

Good writers become great writers by putting their ego on the backburner and learning to be part of a creative team. Everyone has their own specific reason for yielding to their ego. Regardless of how it is masked, refusal to adapt, adjust, make needed changes, or listen to objective input is just ego. Remember the proverb, “All the ways of a man seem right in his own eyes, but the end of his ways are destruction.” Ego has given birth to more inferior projects than any other cause.

There are endless resources available to help us increase the quality of our ventures. There are throngs of creative talents that can be hired to help forge a great book, but you must be willing to listen, learn, and adapt.

Inspirational writers may be the worst. Some have egos that hide behind a pious façade of spirituality. “I can’t change it; that’s the way God gave it to me.” If that’s the case, God has inspired more failed writing projects than anyone in history. If you hear these words emerging, just acknowledge that it’s ego and get over yourself.

One year I had two very talented students who both wanted to produce a musical project. I gave them both the same advice: Get a reputable producer. Hire studio musicians. Collaborate with good songwriters. Follow the direction of the producer. Make the suggested changes. Park your ego!

One of the students heeded these words and produced a great album that sold out very quickly. The other made an inferior attempt to produce it on his own, relying solely on his personal talent. He saved money by getting his buddies to play on the album. He thought he couldn’t violate his creativity and inspiration by letting others change what he had been inspired to write. His albums remained stacked in his closet for years. I don’t know if he ever sold them all.

You can be either student. Your experience can go either way. The determining factor may not be your talent; it could be your ego! You have the same opportunities that are available to every other writer. You can make your book good, or you can make it great. Collaboration is the key. Expand and magnify your abilities through the talents and skills of others. Be a team player and achieve greatness.

After writing a book, it is good to let it cool off for a while. The mind does not usually spot its own mistakes. If you edit your own writing, you will probably overlook the same misspelled words and incorrect punctuation. But even worse, you will make the same assumptions about how well your ideas have been developed. After I write something, I prefer to set it aside until I am almost completely detached from it.

When I feel ready to come back, I read the manuscript and find incredible gaps in the flow. I spot the overuse of certain words. I see that many aspects are not explained properly. Some ideas need more developing, while others lead away from the intent and must be removed. The cooling-off period allows me to read it objectively and see what I couldn’t when I was in the creative mode.

Next, you want to do a content edit. A content edit is where you give your book to at least five people and ask them to critique it for content. Be sure to explain, “This is a rough draft. I have not yet edited for punctuation and grammar. I am not asking you to look at those things, I am asking you to consider the clarity of the content.”

In a content edit, I want to know if it makes sense to the reader. Are my ideas fully developed? Is it persuasive? Does it flow well? Based on these goals, I ask them to write notes in areas where clarification is needed. Do I need to spend more space developing an idea so the thought is more clearly established? Does the presentation need to be more persuasive and emotional? Does it read smoothly and keep you engaged?

After that, I take each of those marked-up manuscripts and consider their input. By selecting people with varied personalities and backgrounds, you can get a well-rounded view of your manuscript.

Never get a non-professional to do the final edit for grammar and punctuation. Opinions on punctuation are just that – personal, diverse, and sometimes bizarre. Sometimes it is only the writer who can determine the use of commas. He or she knows where they want the reader to pause for reflection. So reserve grammar and punctuation editing for the professionals. If you are using a computer, be sure to run a grammar and spell check on your text each time you make changes. This forces you to reread your text, which makes the job easier for the editor.

Good publishers have great editors. As we will discuss in a subsequent chapter, the type of editing needed depends on the writer and his writing skills. If the publisher recognizes that your manuscript has great content, but lacks flair, he can team you with an editor who can make you sound extraordinarily eloquent. Teaming the writer with the right editor is one of the many values of utilizing a great publisher, and a key in making a good book great!

## Part Two Summary

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### *The Writer's Checklist*

#### Phase One

1. Check for Congruence
  - Read each chapter title to determine that they all support the title of your book.
  - Read the title of each chapter and the first sentence of each paragraph and ask yourself, “Does each paragraph support the chapter title?”
  - Remove each chapter that does not support the title. Save them in case you want to use them to create additional chapters.
  
2. Check for Clarity
  - Read the first and last sentence of each paragraph throughout the book and ask yourself, “Did this paragraph follow the thought of the opening sentence?”
  
3. Check for Persuasiveness
  - Read each chapter title before each paragraph and ask yourself, “What absolute, clear-cut decision does a person reach at the end of this paragraph?”
  - Are there any paragraphs that introduce questions that detract from the main point of this chapter? If so, remove them and create new chapters.
  - Read the first and last paragraph of each chapter and determine if you have reached the conclusion you intended.
  - Does the last chapter of the book cause the reader to reach your intended conclusion?
  - Did you use enough personal stories and practical examples to cause the reader to *experience* your book?
  
4. Check for Application (when writing an instructional book)
  - Did you provide enough practical steps that show the reader how to apply what they have learned in the book?
  - Are you assuming the reader has knowledge they may not have?
  - Will the reader really know what to do when they have finished the book?
  
5. Check for Readability
  - Can each chapter be read in less than 15 minutes by the average reader?
  - Are you using a combination of stories and examples that make the reader feel a personal connection?
  - Are you introducing too many thoughts in any chapter?

#### Phase Two

6. Have five objective people read your manuscript. Provide a manuscript with large margins and ask them to make notes on:

- Any part they don't understand.
  - Anything that needs more explanation.
  - Any area that needs more examples, technical support, etc.
  - The flow – is it comfortable and easy to read?
  - Grammar, spelling, and sentence structure suggestions.
7. Run your spell check and grammar check one last time.
  8. You are now ready to give it to a publisher or professional editor.

PART THREE:  
THE PUBLISHER

### The Three Types of Publishers

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This book is a work of passion. I want to help everyone live their dreams and reach their goals. I want to be a part of launching thousands of life stories that will help millions of people. Because of my success as a self-publisher, then as an author being published, and at one time even an owner of a publishing company, my advice is often sought by authors. Putting this advice in written form makes it possible for me to help thousands of people I will never personally meet.

Advice, like all things, is not static. What I did in 1984 and what I do today is very different; therefore, how I advise someone today is different than how I would have advised them in the past. However, I have not changed my goals or my values. But I have changed my process. Processes must change in order to be effective in the current market! Ultimate success always requires adaptability and flexibility to meet the needs of the current market.

When I published my first work, it was a different world. Everything cost more and took longer. We wrote manuscripts on typewriters. Typesetting machines, layout tables, and dozens of other antiquated pieces of equipment have all been replaced by computers. The entire printing process has been completely revolutionized in the past 20 years.

In those days, we didn't have the publishing options available to us today. I didn't have the money to work with a publisher. In fact, I could not have found a publisher to accept my manuscripts. I did whatever I could to fulfill my goals and bring me success within the resources and opportunities in the market that existed.

It may be best to start by getting a picture of what is available in publishing today. My perspective is not the only way to view this subject, and there are certainly people who would present it differently. This is not meant to represent a complete picture as much as it is a conceptual overview of the publishing options currently available.

I divide the publishing options into three categories: *traditional publishers*, *partnership publishers* and *self-publishers*. As previously stated, publishing is not mere printing; it is a process designed to take your manuscript through a process that moves it from an idea to a finished product that is read by as many people as possible, all the while having accomplished your goals for writing and publishing.

When the new writer thinks of a "book deal," they are usually entertaining some erroneous mental picture with only a slight resemblance to reality. Here is the illusion: if I come up with a great idea, I will take it to a publisher who will write me a check and make my book a success. This concept is loosely based on what I call the *traditional publisher*. Of course, this glossy urban myth is as close to the real thing as the television version of romance is to falling in love – not even close!

The traditional publisher prints textbooks, novels, and biographies, to name just a few genres. When I first thought of writing, I had the idea that I would write a book and that a publisher would read it and give me a generous cash advance at the signing of the book deal. I would then relax on the beach while they were required to turn my manuscript into a bestseller. It all seemed pretty simple. But my idea of a book deal soon had a head-on collision with reality!

When reality does not meet our expectations, the first response is to fight against reality by finding fault. "If they cared about my message, they would publish my book!" is the cry of the wounded idealist. Ignorance about the publishing process fuels

unrealistic expectations and false accusations. This is one of those “curse the darkness or light a candle” situations. Working with reality is the only way to enjoy the success it offers. Now that you have read this book, you know what the reality is and what options are actually available. You can make a choice that fits your situation and move forward. And because I will actually make it possible for you to meet the people who can help you, you are already on the inside track!

There are dozens of ways a traditional publisher works. Sometimes, they do purchase all the rights to your project, take total creative control, put together a marketing plan, and you simply stay in step. This is great when writing novels, textbooks, and biographies.

This form of publishing is essential for certain types of writing. Understanding this particular process may give you the patience to endure it. Traditional publishing is much like being an actor. While you are writing and waiting for the publisher to move forward with your project, you wait tables, continue to teach, or do whatever you can to make a living. You spend years writing your great novel and submitting it to publishers. If it is good, you may eventually find one who purchases the rights. Then it is at the publisher’s discretion to make any changes and decide when or if it will ever be published. As painful and arduous as it sounds, it is merely the process that is standard for certain types of publishing.

A school or organization sometimes commissions textbooks. They work with the publisher while you work with the organization to fulfill its objectives. You are paid a fee upfront and usually receive a smaller royalty.

All this is to say that there are some situations, especially for the writer who has an established market, where you are paid some money upfront. This is rarely where the new writer starts. Sometimes the type of material being covered and the scope of your natural market dictate the type of publisher you will need.

Then there is what I call the *partnership publisher*. Partnership publishers seem most predominant in inspirational markets. They work best with people who have some natural outlet. Partnership publishing has changed so much in recent years that it has become possible for nearly anyone to get professional publishing within a limited budget.

A great partnership publishing company has various packages, all of which can be customized to meet your specific needs and match your budget. Partnership publishers ask you to purchase a certain number of your books, at a very reasonable discount. This upfront capital keeps them from having to bear an unhealthy financial risk on an author who has no established commercial market. The services you require and total number of books printed will determine how many books they ask you to purchase. The package is tailored to meet your needs and resources.

Some people balk at the upfront capital required by the partnership publisher. It may seem somewhat prohibitive at first. But in the marketing section, you will discover ways to raise most, if not all, of your capital. I have printed numerous books without spending one dollar out of pocket. When you break down the numbers, you realize that you only have to sell about 10% of the total number of books printed to recover your initial investment. After covering your upfront costs, you make a profit from the remainder of the books that are sold. Plus, you make a royalty from the books the publisher is able to distribute.

Partnership publishing provides the best of both worlds. It gives you the opportunity to collaborate with someone who has the skills, resources, and contacts you do not have, while you remain an active force in taking your books forward. As you will see later when I discuss marketing, there are a number of things you can do to create phenomenal synergy with your publisher. Because partnership publishing is entrepreneurial in nature, both parties have a great incentive for success!

*Self-publishing* is when the author seeks to oversee every step of the process from writing to distribution. Self-publishing is usually done because of an extreme lack of finances, lack of awareness of the options, or an incredible need to control every element of the process. There are rare occasions when self-publishing works. But when you consider everything that one has to know in order to successfully take a manuscript from computer file to bestseller, you see that the task is too vast for most people.

The greatest drawback to self-publishing is by no means limited to the overall quality of the book. The greatest issue in self-publishing is in distribution. Even if you somehow manage to produce a great creation, it will probably not be widely distributed. In today's market, a self-publisher can rarely get his or her book into any of the major bookstore chains. Advertising in major outlets is difficult and expensive. Self-publishers seldom create influence beyond their immediate, natural market. This doesn't mean it is impossible, it just means it is difficult!

When I first began publishing my books, they looked terrible. It's a wonder anyone ever purchased them. I did, however, have an edge. My books were initially sold from a product table in meetings where I was one of the speakers. They were not purchased because of the look, but because of personal, direct influence.

Those who have a natural market can sell self-published products. But my question is, "Why would you want to?" Even if you manage to produce a quality product, why would you want to take on an enormous task that could be handled by a qualified professional?

Publishing has changed so much that a writer can now work with a partnership publisher and accomplish all of his or her goals, quickly recovering their initial investments while enjoying national and international distribution. For most people, partnership publishing is the most sensible way to take a book from a dream to a bestseller.

## Fifteen Factors for Selecting a Great Publisher

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The rules that apply to any healthy business relationship apply to the one that exists between a publisher and an author. Clearly establishing all agreements, goals, and processes is the foundation for a great partnership! Ignoring these rules leads to an overabundance of misunderstandings and failed expectations.

Perhaps with your publisher you will learn the one thing you need to know more than anything else in order to build partnerships in all areas of life: communication, communication, communication! Take nothing for granted. Make no assumptions. Talk, plan, dream, and communicate often. Then commit all plans, goals, and agreements to writing. This is not the path of suspicion and mistrust; it is the process for good business and successful partnerships. Clear communication insures a peaceful, productive partnership.

Contractual agreements are essential for survival and success in today's business environment. Publishing and marketing is a vast field with numerous variables that must be effectively planned, clearly defined, and concisely written. On the rare occasion that someone willfully or ignorantly breaks his or her word, a thorough contract gives you the protection and clarification you need to resolve all conflicts and misunderstandings while moving on to productivity.

Contracts are not a judgment on another person's character. It is not a statement of lack of trust. However, no matter what is said, the only services you can expect from your publisher are those that are written into the contract. There are often certain options that cannot be written into a contract. These are usually based on variables that are impossible to determine with any degree of precision. But those are not agreements that can be enforced. These should be the exception, not the rule.

Legal protection, however, should be the least of your motivations for writing these agreements. Committing all things to writing is necessary for the primary function of developing a synergistic plan that insures success for everybody involved. The contract should be born out of the business plan. It should be the roadmap to success, not the legal handcuffs used to force the agreement. If someone has to be forced to keep his or her agreement, there isn't a partnership.

Make no mistake; the publisher wants a partner, not a client. The publisher makes money when you make money. They want your book to be a bestseller as much as you do.

There are two things great publishers recognize. First, the publisher's client is the author, and second, the author and the publisher must be partners. These are the key factors that form the foundation for an incredible joint venture.

The author is the publisher's client. The outlets that sell your book are the clients of the sales/marketing/distribution department(s). Great full service publishers understand this and keep the lines clear.

Since many publishers have gotten in on the marketing side of the game, the author often has a great advantage. But it is essential that you, the author, know the difference between the two services of publishing and marketing. I assure you that by the time you finish this book you will not only know the difference, you will know how to work as a partner in every aspect of the process!

A publisher who is involved in marketing and distribution can help multiply your market exponentially. They have spent decades and millions of dollars developing outlets you could never reach on your own. Other authors have paved the path you now walk. Your publisher's reputation will open many doors that you could never open. A great publisher can do more for you than you will ever imagine!

There isn't a "one size fits all" publishing process. In recent years, the process for publishing and marketing has radically changed. There are now market opportunities that didn't even exist a year ago. If a publishing company has a cookie-cutter process that doesn't allow you options, keep looking!

Your publishing needs will vary based on your writing skill, business experience, financial resources, natural market, marketability of your product, and numerous other variables.

Here are fifteen factors for selecting a publisher:

1. Look at their other products to determine the quality of their work. Are their graphics attractive? Do they have really eye-catching covers that jump off the shelf at you? Are they modern? Do they have real appeal?
2. Select a publisher who has a good reputation, particularly in the field you seek to publish. Some publishers have carved out a very specific place in the market.
3. Have they ever published any bestsellers?
4. Contact a number of other authors who they have published. The publisher will gladly supply you with a list of references. Ask them tough questions. "Were you satisfied with the project? How is it to work with this publisher? What are the main problems you had in working with them? What was the best part of the process? Have you been pleased with their performance since the book was published? Would you use their services again?"
5. Determine the amount of creative control you have over the project. Be sure it is something you can live with. Make sure they cannot change what you have written beyond basic editing without your consent.
6. With all reputable publishers, you will receive a royalty on books sold by that publisher. Make sure that you understand their royalty structure. How much and how often will you be paid? How often will you receive reports? Check with other authors to see if the company pays their royalties in a responsible manner. Remember, it is never acceptable to ask another author how much he is paid in royalties. There are too many variables in determining a royalty structure. What they pay someone else and what they pay you would not be a fair comparison. A clear understanding of the royalty structure will eliminate future misunderstandings.
7. Find out how much you have to pay for your book when you buy it. How many will you have to purchase? How will they be paid for?
8. Do you pay storage and/or warehouse fees?
9. What happens if the book doesn't sell?
10. In the event you are dissatisfied with the arrangement, is there a buy-back clause?
11. What is their marketing strategy?

12. If the publisher handles marketing and distribution, ask for a list of distributors and outlets he will consider using.
13. Find out what kind of marketing support, if any, the publisher is willing to provide. Are there any additional marketing and/or promotional fees you might be asked to cover?
14. Before signing, it may be wise to have an attorney or someone experienced with publishing review and explain your contract. Always be ready to question the parts of your contract that are unclear and renegotiate those that seem unfair. An honest publisher will work with you as much as possible. Those who do not budge or give in on any issue may be trouble.
15. Discuss and reach an equitable agreement about the rights to your book in every form: electronic, video, audio, and international. These are all negotiable.

Make sure you enjoy the initial process. It's like dating; if it doesn't go really well in the beginning, it's probably not going to get much better. It's also like marriage; you may not get this much special attention once the deal is done!

Don't be so eager to publish that you make a bad deal. Take your time. Make this a good experience for you and the publisher. At this stage, you're not just looking for a publisher; you're looking for a partner, someone you can work with for a long time.

Remember, getting your book printed isn't the ultimate goal! You want it to be published, distributed, read, and enjoyed! The partnership with your publisher, along with your combined market strengths, should guarantee the desired outcome. If not, wait until a better opportunity comes along.

Building a thriving partnership with your publisher is as important to your ultimate goal as any part of the writing, publishing, and marketing process. To be a great partner, you must first know your part. Then, of course, you have to be willing to do your part. The effectiveness of an author and publisher are multiplied exponentially by their degree of synergistic efforts. Knowing and doing your part could be the very thing that turns your manuscript into the next bestseller!

As an author, your first and most important goal is obviously to write a great manuscript. Give it your heart and soul! But once the manuscript is complete, become a great partner. One of the primary frustrations of partnership publishing is due to the fact that few authors truly understand their part in a successful joint venture.

Your value as a partner can be realized by answering the question, “What am I bringing to the table?” Or maybe we should ask it like this, “Other than my manuscript, what resources can I contribute?” The challenging work starts when you finish the rough draft of your manuscript. “Beyond the manuscript, do I really have anything to offer?” is another valid question.

Now you can educate yourself in the very things publishers wish you knew. After working with dozens of publishers and authors, I can help you close the gap between you and your publisher. I can put you on the same page and increase your effectiveness. You don’t have to operate in the dark. You can be an innovative partner who brings meaningful resources to the table. And I promise you this: becoming an author your publisher enjoys working with will result in special treatment!

The following are just a few things that all publishers wish their clients knew:

1. The idea that the publisher is going to make it all happen for you is a cloud without rain. Unless you are very well-known and have an extremely large natural market, a publisher cannot *make* your book fly off the shelves into the hands of potential readers. As previously discussed, this usually only happens in the realm of traditional publishing and with a highly influential author.
2. First person, positive, consistent, creative communication is essential to the entire process. Many authors appoint a “middleman” like an agent, secretary, or assistant to help with the project. These people often unwittingly become the channel of miscommunication. While there are obviously some functions where these middlemen can assist, they can never replace your creative voice.
3. You are the creator of an elaborate multidimensional work of art. In so many areas, no one can speak for you. Every person added to the line changes the communication to some degree. Turning your work over to a middleman is like giving your child to a nanny to raise. You gave birth to it, but in the end, if you don’t raise it, it will never be your heritage.
4. Trust the publisher’s expertise. The publisher often brings decades of experience to the table. They have a global view, you have a cultural view. Unless you have already successfully gone through the process, many of your opinions must be surrendered to the more knowledgeable and experienced publisher.

5. Adjust your attitude for success! Some research indicates that the two predominate traits found among the truly successful are flexibility and adaptability. Be flexible and adaptable in the creative process. Allow editors, proofreaders, and co-writers to do their job.
6. While providing first person communication, in a spirit of creative flexibility you must also be committed to a workable schedule. There is no time this is more crucial than during the rewriting process. Be cooperative and timely. Your book is on a schedule. It is essential that you keep pace with the dozens of others who must coordinate their every step to make the process work.
7. Create a writing schedule when working with editors and proofreaders. Treat that time as an appointment. Don't put off creative writing. Do it when you're most fresh and alert. When editors or proofreaders give you feedback, ask questions or request changes, try to meet their needs within 24 hours. Keep the creativity flowing while it is fresh on everyone's mind!
8. In order to create and sustain real synergy, you must know, state, and stay true to your personal goals. Goals create priorities. Priorities can never be plainly defined in the absence of a clear goal. There is not a wrong goal. You may want to make a great living. You may write to entertain. You may want to help people. You may simply want to meet some deep personal need for recognition. Make sure you have chosen a publisher who shares your vision and make sure they know your true goals.
9. Declaring your goals is the pathway to a synergistic partnership of peace and productivity. When misunderstanding and conflict abound, someone usually has an undeclared agenda that is inconsistent with the stated goals. The publisher sets out to accomplish the stated agendas. Working with unstated ones is like having two horses yoked together pulling in opposite directions, sabotaging the greatest efforts. You should not only state your goals, you should put them in writing at the outset of the partnership.
10. Issues about money must be clearly resolved in the beginning of the process or mistrust will reduce every effort to a struggle of suspicion and greed. In partnership publishing, you will make a financial investment. In a subsequent chapter, you will see how easily and quickly it can be to recover your initial investment and make a profit!
11. There is no fast money in publishing. No matter what you invest, the publisher has invested more. No matter what you bring to the process, the publisher will bring more. Neither you nor the publisher starts making "real money" until the book goes into reprint.
12. Based on the agreement, the publisher usually pays all the costs for editing, proofreading, ghostwriting, pagination, cover design, printing, advertising, shipping, sales commissions, distribution costs, and dozens of other hidden expenses. Their initial expense is huge. In partnership publishing, you agree to purchase a certain number of your books. That amount of money is negligible compared to what the publisher is providing. The money you invest doesn't quite make everything happen. And remember, if you do not believe in your project enough to invest financially, why should a publisher?

13. Suppose your book does fly off the shelves. Is the publisher making piles of money? Not yet! The publisher sold those books to bookstores or distributors on a 60 or 90-day account. He has paid you royalties on the books sold. Now he has to come up with enough money to reprint the book, pay shipping, and start the entire process again. At this point, he has not yet recovered his cost from the first printing.
14. Never expect what is not in the contract. Reputable publishers are not trying to swindle you out of anything. In fact, I have found that most will be as flexible as possible. They are willing to make adjustments that will help the process, but the contract is the way they establish their budget, create schedules, and plan marketing strategies. It is your responsibility to know your part, discuss every aspect of the project, and reach the best agreements possible. Signing that contract says, "I accept and am fully committed to this plan." Work the plan you have. Create a success and renegotiate your next book more to your liking!
15. You are the main promoter of your book. Unless you are well-known, it can take time to build a retail market. Your personal efforts create all the initial sales. Seize every opportunity to promote your book and mention it in every possible setting. Make appearances on local and regional television and radio programs. Arrange to get in front of groups who have an interest in your project or subject matter.
16. Understand your marketing power. You can be sure a good publisher recognizes the marketing power of the author. Your publisher should be more than willing to consult with you and offer any marketing strategies that could be conducted on an author level that would multiply the marketing effects.

This is by no means everything a publisher wishes a client knew, but it is a great starting point to becoming a great partner to the publisher you have chosen. Discuss these things and simply ask, "What else do you want me to know to assist you in this endeavor?"

“A penny saved is a penny earned!” We all know the saying. Applying that same logic to avoiding mistakes creates an exponential value beyond our wildest expectations. A mistake avoided isn’t just a decision made right. A mistake avoided saves the time to identify and correct the problem. It saves the emotional battle over whom to blame. It saves you the money it costs to make the mistake and the money it takes to correct the mistake. It can save you the frustration and self-doubt that could undermine your entire dream. A mistake avoided is like an introduction to a parallel universe where all things work for you instead of against you!

Mistakes are costly in so many other ways. They cause disruption in the creative flow. Mistakes often lead to professional conflicts that sabotage the business relationship. They drive costs through the roof while allowing crucial timelines to slip by without creating meaningful milestones of accomplishment.

You are equipping yourself for success as an author. You have been learning what to do, but now you will learn what not to do. This chapter is designed to help you avoid the “Ten Fatal Mistakes” of partnership publishing. Then, as a bonus, I share the one super fatal mistake.

Most mistakes authors make revolve around a few basic issues: 1) inaccurate information, which leads to, 2) false expectations, which lead to, 3) lack of trust, which undermines the synergistic relationship. Your publisher is only successful when you are successful. All great successes become so by working with teams. Teams give you the opportunity to do what you do best, and allow others to fill in the weak spots. Avoiding the ten fatal mistakes catapults you toward ultimate success!

When you enter into a relationship with a publisher, you’re working with a professional who, provided you have made a good selection, knows what he or she is doing! There is a saying that floats around the professional world that goes something like this, “Hire a professional; don’t pretend to be one.” One key ability of a professional is to know their limits. You be professional in this one area. Recognize your limitations and the strengths of others. Then be willing to yield to the expert in a given area.

Not all mistakes are avoidable, but here are the ten fatal mistakes that *can* be avoided.

1. Thinking that your book has to be perfect before taking it to a publisher.

Nothing is farther from the truth. In many arenas of publishing, very few authors write their own books. They often bring notes from personal study, lectures, or sermons. The publisher works with assistant writers who develop that “sack” of rough ideas into a great book. As one successful publisher confided, “Mega-bestsellers are usually written by professional ghost writers.”

Don’t bury your life lesson just because you lack writing skills. To varying degrees, we all lack some writing skills. That’s why every author who has been published works with editors, proofreaders, co-writers, ghostwriters, or assistants. We all need the team around us to make our projects better.

## 2. Overdeveloping a project before presenting it to a publisher.

While this follows the previous thought, it is important to understand the subtle differences. The aforementioned mistake usually means you get discouraged and quit before you get your project published. Many wonderful projects have drowned in the sea of perfectionism! This mistake, however, stems from spending far too much time and money with the wrong people before you get your project finished.

The term “wrong people” has nothing to do with their skill level. It has to do with their ability to work with a publisher in terms of prioritizing and sequencing. Chiefly, it has to do with the loss of synergistic coordination with your primary partner, your publisher!

Publishers work with writers, editors, and proofreaders who understand the process. Plus, they get much better rates for these services than you or I! Too often, after all the time and money is spent, the publisher still has to spend money a second time with people who better understand the goals of this particular project.

Publishers have a “stable” of writers and artists. They are able to match authors with writers and artists who understand their subject matter, who flows with the author’s writing style, and who works well with the publisher. This translates into fewer dollars spent, more reasonable timelines, a better project, and better marketing.

## 3. Failure to provide complete, concise, consistent communication.

At each stage of the project, the type of communication needs to be changed. But most assuredly, every stage needs a lot of communication. The willingness to communicate is one of the ways I identify a publisher I want to work with. It can only be a partnership if there is communication and cooperation.

Lack of communication at the beginning of a project is directly proportional to the unfulfilled expectations at the end! In the beginning, before dollars are spent and schedules have been planned, everything must be discussed. Too often, authors withhold their opinions until the end of a project. Input at the beginning of a venture is essential. Input at the end of a project is frustrating. “After the fact” input is criticism, not communication.

## 4. A localized mentality.

If you want to be read by the world, you’ve got to communicate in a way the world understands. The overuse of localized vernacular, local examples and cultural concepts can alienate the majority of your readers. Be sure to expand and explain those thoughts and concepts that other groups of people may not understand. Unless they contribute to the quality of your project, omit them entirely!

Localized mentality shows up in a lot of ways. For example, it is possible for even an autobiography to be too personal. Your deep, individual opinions on politics, social issues, and religious preferences may alienate groups if presented in a dogmatic manner. Even your own examples and experiences may be too small. Many writers combine or expand experiences in order for them to more effectively convey the point. This is unacceptable when written as an autobiography, presented as fact. In order to protect

confidentiality, writers change identities, combine stories, or change information without altering the truths they contain.

**Too personal** makes it small! You are looking at the people around you; your publisher is looking at the world. Take it to another level of imagination, think global!

#### 5. Departing from the plan.

You are in a partnership. Partners do business by developing and working a plan. Without a plan, no one really knows what to do or when it should be done. Remember why you wanted to write. Stick to those goals. The goals you explained to the publisher birthed the plan he is working. To make any changes without prior agreement is a recipe for disaster and failure!

#### 6. Failing to trust your publisher.

You chose your publisher for a reason. Unless you discover that reason to be false, trust your publisher; they have done this more times than you. I am not telling you to be passive, neither am I saying to be silent. Keep coming up with creative ideas. But remember, you can only have creative ideas for the phase you are in or those ahead. You can't change what you've already done without creating cost and scheduling issues. You can think ahead all you want, but trust your publisher to tell you what they need *now* and give it to them.

Be careful of over-trusting the opinions of people in your group or culture. People around you think like you do. They like what you like. That's why they are around you. Trusting their opinions more than your publisher's is a common fatal error! Many wonderful book covers and titles have been lost to the opinions of unqualified family, friends, and coworkers!

#### 7. Being too opinionated or dogmatic.

My first essay in English 101 received a "C" instead of an "A" simply because I used the word "most" instead of "many" to describe something. My teacher, whom I so deeply appreciate today, wrote a note on my paper that said, "Unless you have done research or have statistics, this is just an opinion that has been falsely stated as fact." If it is not fact, do not say or imply it to be.

Allow your reader room to reach conclusions. Leave room for their own thought processes. Don't make them choke down your previously determined ideas with no opportunity to think it through.

Don't make your writing too "Americanized." The entire world doesn't love us as they once did. Also, examples that work here may not work anywhere else in the world! Keep in mind that you are thinking about writing to the people you already know. Your publisher is thinking about the billions of people you do not know.

Even if you are fully committed to an idea, principle, or belief, you have to determine, "Am I writing to the ones who believe this or to the millions who do not?" Being too matter-of-fact only serves to alienate the "non-converted."

## 8. Failure to play the long game.

Too many people only play a good short game! That's because they plan for a short game. They think that what happens in the next six months is the proof of a project. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Unless it is your plan to simply publish one work, you have to keep the long game in view!

Your first book is no indicator of what will occur in your following works. Your first book often reaches little more than your natural market. But it creates name recognition, helps to build future markets, and opens new doors while accomplishing your ultimate goal!

Subsequent books actually aid the sale of your earlier works. Have you ever noticed how you'll hear of an author who hits the bestseller list and then seemingly follows it up by writing a new book every few months? Many times, the books that follow the bestseller are the ones that were actually previously written. They paved the way. At one time, 86% of the people who purchased one of my books bought another within thirty days, and an incredibly large percentage would buy every book I had. The long game is the winner's game! You can be the tortoise, or you can be the hare.

The ultimate long game occurs when an author's influence is greater after his death. As tragic as that may be, it is still one way to fulfill your purpose for writing! Keeping that in mind, write in a manner that makes your work **timeless**. Don't put too much emphasis on time factors unless it is essential for your purpose.

## 9. Forgetting how powerful you are.

The inspiration that brought you to write is powerful. It motivated you to overcome inertia, conquer obstacles, and face fears. Occasionally, as a project is moving through the process, we lose touch with that passion. We forget how powerful we are when we are connected to our inspiration. This often occurs within the first year of your book rolling off the press.

Unless you're in it for the long haul, you think you've already lost the game when you don't have a bestseller within a few months. But "distance runners" stay connected to the motivation. They talk about their book and look for ways to generate promotion. They realize that every contact is a potential door. Each time you interact, talk about the book.

**You** have to be the main promoter of the book. Your passion is the ultimate motivational force. As long as it is important to you, it will be important to others. It is up to you to keep it on the minds of others. In the section on marketing, we will address ways in which you can keep taking your published work to the world.

Many prolific writers undermine their creation simply by not waiting long enough before launching a new work. Writers are always writing, and it's good to be preparing for your follow-up project. However, be sure you do not lose the passion that moved you to write your initial project. If starting something new robs your passion for your previous project, it will be difficult to lend your inspiration to your published work.

Remain positive. Keep the vision. Stay attached to your purpose. Above all, never forget how powerful and contagious you are!

## 10. Putting too much in the publisher's hands.

This is by far the most fatal of the ten mistakes. This is *your* vision, *your* purpose, and *your* dream! If it dies as your dream, it usually dies completely. Your publisher wants to be your partner, not your surrogate. They want to assist you in your dream, not create a dream for you. Writers, proofreaders, editors, and graphic artists are not “taking over” when they interject creative ideas; they are expanding. They are not replacing you; they are joining your team. They are contributors who serve you best by their creative contributions. In the end, it is always *your* project!

Above all, **the super fatal mistake is failing to ask** your publisher, your partner, what he or she sees as the most fatal mistakes authors make when working with them. No matter what the similarities, every publisher is different, offering various services and support. Make sure you know how to work with them.

By reading and adhering to what you have learned in this book, you will be the perfect partner, especially for the partnership publisher.

Remember this: No matter what arena of life you're in, mistakes can be avoided by consultation, communication, and preparation!

Trusting a publisher with your life story is a sacred trust. Once the level of trust has been determined, there is still a huge question that must be answered before you are ready to commit to a partnership. There are many people I like, whose business concepts I enjoy, and who talk a great game. Regardless of all the factors that make you feel “warm and fuzzy” about a publisher, you be confident that he is able to provide the services you need to reach your ultimate goal, taking a manuscript from your mind to the reader’s hand. Can they deliver the goods? Can your publisher turn your dreams into reality?

There are numerous obstacles to creating a great work. A full service publisher will help you break through the barriers that have made the publishing and distribution of your book seem like an impossibility. When the needed skills are present, they take that which is beyond your grasp and put your goals within reach! But this only happens if they offer the services you need.

A great publisher that has truly become your partner is doing much more than a publishing job. They are teaming up with you to bring significance to this life endeavor. They are combining all their resources with yours to create a win-win scenario.

In a win-win scenario, everyone’s goals are realized. A great publisher has goals. Those goals may be financial or more purpose driven. Regardless of these personal goals, however, a great publisher will work to develop the “shared vision” in which everyone’s goals are fulfilled.

Some companies influence the author to fulfill the goals of the publisher at the cost of personal dreams and objectives. A great partnership publisher will, however, preserve your beliefs, life message, and personal goals while fulfilling their own. As a partner, you must also help them realize their publishing goals. You must be committed to their success as much as you want them committed to yours. Everyone must win for there to be a true partnership! Find the company that can preserve your goals while providing the services that fit your needs.

The publisher must offer a full array of services that take your idea from conception to completion. A full service publisher will work with you at every stage of the project to maximize its potential. He will remove the mysticism and educate the writer while developing the project.

This level of partnership requires a complete commitment to communication by both parties. As we previously mentioned, the author must make this a priority. He must be the key contact person for the project. Likewise, in great partnership publishing, the author is able to talk to the key person for that phase of development. He must have access to the people who are developing the ideas.

Having a true, shared vision and a sense of trust lay the groundwork for the following. Here are the primary services you are looking for:

**Development.** Developing the idea is the starting place. Every project is ever expanding. Full service publishers know how to help you expand your idea to reach a broader audience, make a greater impact, and more clearly say what you desire to communicate. Regardless of the role you play in actually writing your book, the publisher helps determine the best means of turning your thoughts into a well-written manuscript.

Through a team of professional writing assistants, editors, and proofreaders, every aspect of development occurs.

**Graphic design.** A great full service publisher will retain a number of graphic designers to help develop the perfect visual look to convey your message. Cover design, title, and packaging are the primary elements that cause a complete stranger to pick up your book and consider making a purchase. Great publishers pick the best people with the most compatible ideas for each project.

**Printing.** Then your project must be printed. As I've already mentioned, this process is far more involved than merely using ink to put words on a page. There are a number of critical considerations that must be determined, including the appropriate paper, cover stock, font, and book dimensions. A full service publisher puts a great degree of planning, based on current market trends, into this phase of the project.

**Marketing and Distribution.** Marketing and distribution are last in chronology, but by no means least important in getting to the ultimate goal. While this will be more fully covered in the next section, suffice it to say that this is the difference between being published and having your book read! Some publishers have a set method of "distribution," and that's all they offer. A great partnership publisher will work with your goals, financial resources, and market prospects to develop a marketing and distribution plan that maximizes every opportunity.

Then there is one of the most important aspects of a full service, partnership publisher: **Variety.** All of the services a publisher offers must be presented in a variety of packages that fit the writer's skills, budget, and natural market. Every author must be able to tailor-make their publishing package to some degree. Whether you are publishing your work for as few as a hundred copies or you are hoping to produce the world's next mega-bestseller, your publisher must have a publishing package that is designed to fulfill your objectives!

Obviously, there are many details like UPC and ISBN numbers, registering with the Library of Congress, and a host of other details that must be handled properly. These are not areas that require creative partnership, though a publisher will know how to take care of them. The services I have described are an absolute must for the creative process to be fully realized.

## Part Three Summary

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### THE THREE TYPES OF PUBLISHERS

- Traditional Publishing
- Partnership Publishing
- Self-Publishing

### FIFTEEN FACTORS FOR SELECTING A GREAT PUBLISHER

1. Evaluate the quality of their work.
2. Make sure they have a good reputation in your chosen field.
3. Have they ever published a bestseller?
4. Check for references.
5. Determine the degree of creative control you retain.
6. Know the royalty structure.
7. How much will your books cost you?
8. Do you pay storage?
9. What happens if the book doesn't sell?
10. What is the buy back agreement?
11. What is the marketing strategy?
12. Talk to retail outlets for references.
13. What kind of marketing support will be provided?
14. Have a qualified person review the contract.
15. Discuss rights to your book in every form.

### SIXTEEN THINGS PUBLISHERS WISH YOU KNEW

1. The publisher can't make it all happen. This is a joint effort.
2. Maintain up-to-the-minute, positive, creative communication.
3. This is *your* work.
4. Trust the publisher's expertise.
5. Be flexible and adaptable.
6. Define and keep a joint production schedule.
7. Provide 24-hour turnaround on changes and answers.
8. Create synergy by stating and staying true to your goals.
9. Communicate your goals.
10. Resolve and be content with your financial arrangement.
11. There is no fast money in publishing.
12. Understand the publisher's financial burden.
13. Quick sales do not mean everything gets easier.
14. Do not expect what was not agreed upon in advance.
15. You have a responsibility to promote your book.
16. You are the marketing force behind your book.

### AVOIDING THE TEN FATAL MISTAKES

- Thinking that your book has to be perfect before taking it to a publisher.
- Overdeveloping a project before presenting it to a publisher.
- Failure to provide complete, concise, consistent communication.

- A localized mentality.
- Departing from the plan.
- Failing to trust your publisher.
- Being too opinionated or dogmatic.
- Failure to play the long game.
- Forgetting how powerful you are.
- Putting too much in the publisher's hands.

#### PUBLISHER SERVICES

- Will it be a win-win relationship?
- Can I maintain my personal goals, message, and beliefs?
- Will I have close involvement in each stage of development?
- Do we have a shared vision?
- Can the publisher help me develop my book for a greater impact?
- Can I get assistance at every stage of the project?
- Will we work together to create a great cover?
- Are all factors in the look of the book considered for the market I seek to reach?
- Is the publisher working to expand my market potential?
- Can I tailor-make the “package” to meet my financial resources, creative desire, and ultimate goal?

**PART FOUR:  
MARKETING**

What is marketing? Encarta World Dictionary defines marketing as “the business activity of presenting products or services to potential customers in such a way as to make them eager to buy.”\* This is probably as good as any general definition.

Marketing is the final and defining step in this continuum of effort that began when you involved yourself with a publisher. It is the process of reaching your ultimate goal of taking your project from conception to completion! Marketing is what actually puts your book in the hands of the reader. Once that happens, it all boils down to the quality of your writing. Every other step up to this point was taken so that the customer would read, enjoy, and possibly be influenced by your book. These are the satisfied customers who become word-of-mouth marketers for you. No kind of marketing is more powerful than word-of-mouth!

Even though this is rather broad, for the purposes of this work we will say that marketing involves:

- Reaching a target demographic
- Advertising
- Sales
- Distribution
- Fulfillment
- Promotion

With a full service publisher, the marketing began with the look, feel, and packaging of your project. Your publisher was thinking about the end from the beginning. Hopefully you, too, were looking at the end result, the ultimate goal. In a well-executed project, every decision is made with the end in mind.

I would recommend that every person who hopes to have far-reaching influence expose themselves to training in marketing. Every few years, my writing partner and I take a marketing course of some kind. It helps us to partner with publishers, distributors, and media buyers. It even helps us write more effectively! But for now, listen to your publisher and be as creative as possible.

In the beginning, there are three markets:

- Your natural market
- The publisher’s market
- The market you create

The first two markets are maximized by identifying and seizing existing opportunities. Your natural market is where you recover your financial investment. It is the first opportunity to create sales momentum. If you have a large enough natural market, it could conceivably grow beyond your expectations.

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The second existing market comes from the publisher. Through years of business, publishers have several channels or outlets through which books are sold. The farther one moves from their natural market, however, the greater the risk... and the greater the cost. All of the channels available to the publisher involve risk and cost!

Publishers sometimes contract sales agencies that seek to place your book into the traditional outlets like bookstores, Wal-Mart, or other retail outlets. They may work with distributors who place your book in a catalog, which is then distributed to retailers. There are, however, advertising costs for being placed in such catalogs. Then, when the salespeople make sales, at wholesale prices, they are paid a commission. As previously mentioned, these are all out-of-pocket expenses for the publisher, with no remuneration for 60 to 90 days.

The publisher will also work to create an Internet presence for your product. Amazon.com and other online companies are more than glad to place your book in their store. However, this does not guarantee that anyone will see or purchase your book. Driving people to the website is a twenty-first century marketing art!

Finally, there is the market you create. In some cases, for additional fees, a publicist can be hired to arrange interviews on television and radio programs. Based on the size of the viewing/listening audience, the publicist will charge a fee. There is always the hope that the exposure will sell more than enough books to cover the costs.

Your scope of opportunity is based on the amount of money you are willing to spend and the expanse of your creative ability. Of course, radio and television depend on your powers of personal persuasion. The publisher or publicist can only create the opportunity; in the end, your inspiration must sell the audience.

There are many other forms of advertising that are available. To name a few, there are retail magazines, wholesale magazines, radio ads, television commercials, direct mail, and e-mail. All of these are part of the market you create. They all involve time, money, and massive amounts of creativity.

You make your resources available to your publisher, or a qualified person, to develop a marketing strategy. Be sure, as much as possible, that no matter what strategy you end up using, all responses can be measured. When you can identify where you get your best results, you have struck "pay dirt!"

A great full service publisher will bring all his resources and contacts to the table to help you create your bestseller. And I can assure you that if your book is good, you can develop a workable strategy and even pay for it. In the 1970s, I used to see late night commercials for a singer, Christy Lane. I had never heard of her, nor had I ever met anyone who had heard of her. Yet she was selling millions of albums through television advertising.

Great advertising and one spectacular "gimmick" formed the backbone of Domino's Pizza. They guaranteed that your pizza would arrive hot, in so many minutes, or it was free. They made no claims about the taste. Many people who build wildly successful companies simply find a niche in the market, create a product that meets the need, develop great advertising, and throw bundles of money into it.

I only bring this up to show you a dichotomy. I want you to realize that few bestsellers just happen. They can be created, but they require money, time, effort, talent, creativity, and a lot of risk. I also want you to know that you can partner with your publisher to create a bestseller. It's very possible!

But, if you're like most of those who publish, you will take a more methodical, long-term approach to marketing. By combining your natural market and your publishers market it is entirely feasible that you can create the momentum that leads to enormous long term success!

In partnership publishing, you are entering into a joint venture with a publisher. Your investment is both intellectual property and capital. By this time, you are aware of the costs, risks, and expenses of the publisher. You should already have a clear understanding of why you must bring funding to the project.

As a writer and former publisher, I have to ask any author, "If you don't believe in this project enough to invest in it, why should anyone else?" You are providing a manuscript or an idea. The publisher is wisely spending the money you bring to create a brilliant and desirable finished product... and, in the beginning stages, makes very little money for his or her efforts.

Your intellectual property is the manuscript or idea. The publisher's intellectual property is everything it takes to make your work a success. The financial investment made by both you and the publisher is what it takes to create a new market for your material.

Many writers balk at the idea of spending thousands of dollars for their project, but what they fail to see is how quickly they are able to recover their investment and make a profit! Let's say you spend \$20,000 in initial publishing fees. Suppose that covers all the costs, plus gets you 3000 books. If you sell those books at an average of \$15 each, you only need to sell 1334 books to recover your initial investment. But here's the good news: from the remaining 1666 books, you will make a profit of \$24,990.

But wait! It doesn't stop there! There's a factor we call "up sell." Up sell comes from all the additional products and services you now have to offer based on the initial successful transaction. Remember, over 80% of the people who purchase one of my books buys another within 30 days. Between the initial sale and the up sell, you could recover your costs and make \$50,000 to \$100,000 profit in your first year utilizing up sell!

Now I'm going to give you my #1 secret for recovering your costs really quick! I call it the Prepublications Marketing. If you remember, I told you to write your sales copy before you write your book. You should have a great ad developed just from your initial ideas. This accomplishes two things. First, it insures that you write a book that has market appeal. Second, it means you can start promoting the book before it is even written.

While speaking in a rather large business meeting, I proved this method. Several people asked similar questions about their business. I saw there was a need in this particular group... an opportunity. (This is one way to identify a potential market; find the need and meet it!) So, when I went back to speak for my next session, I announced that if they wanted to pre-purchase my soon-to-be-released program, they could purchase it that day at the prepublication price of \$19.95. All I asked was that they leave me their name and mailing address so that I could send them the first copies when they rolled off the press.

The inspiration for the program I intended to produce came only minutes before I was to speak. In fact, I quickly outlined it on a napkin before I forgot. I was honest in the fact that it had not been published and that I had given them a special price. I delivered the program right on time, just as I had promised, but it did not cost me a cent to produce. The 300-plus prepublication purchases paid for all the production costs!

Every time I release a new book, I have a prepublication promotion. I write a good ad and get it into as many hands as possible. I use email, direct mail, and special announcements during speaking engagements. I mention it everywhere I go, and it works. Your warm market is a group of people that already know and trust you. They are already interested in what you have to say. The size of your natural/warm market determines how much of your initial cost can be collected before you ever take a dollar from your own pocket! As long as you do not abuse this trust, this will be an unending resource you can use to fund future projects!

This is just one example of how you can use innovation to fund your endeavors. This is also a model of the perfect partner when working with partnership publishers. Your ability to fund projects and recover costs is as vast as your imagination, and your courage!

Just as you have opportunities unique to your life and occupation, publishers have many natural outlets. By partnering with a publisher, you have immediate open doors that you may otherwise never discover. There are opportunities that are reserved for proven reputable publishers. Self-publishers are turned away at the door unless they have monumental success through their own endeavors, which is rare! Then there are opportunities created through the reputation of your publisher.

I told you how I began my own publishing endeavors. As I previously explained, I would never advise anyone to follow that same process. The opportunities are too vast today to go the self-publishing route. It is much more financially feasible to work with a publisher today than it was in 1984. In those days, there were two big distributors that were impossible to circumvent if you ever hoped to create bookstore sales: Ingram and Spring Arbor. They would not accept any of my early material until I had a level of success that met their criteria.

These are two of the primary sources for most bookstores. If you are not in their catalogs, you will never have nationwide distribution in bookstores. It took years for me to meet the criteria necessary to be placed in their catalog. When you work with a reputable publisher, these criteria are met automatically. Your book is placed in these two distribution companies, along with a host of others that weren't there when I began. What took me years to accomplish can happen for you on your first day.

For instance, your publisher can get your book into the Ingram catalog if it is of secular interest. Alternatively, your publisher can get your book into Spring Arbor or Anchor Distributors, as well as other Christian distributors, if your book is a Christian-themed or inspirational book. He can also negotiate cross promotions between the secular and Christian entities. The publisher may focus the initial marketing thrust through Christian-based distributors such as Spring Arbor, Anchor, or STL Appalachian, depending on which of those is most compatible with your ideology. These distributors open the door to Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, Amazon.com, and all the national chains. Spring Arbor and Anchor place you in national and foreign religious markets.

The next automatic step in the process is to begin negotiating placement for your book with the "dot-coms." Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Books-a-Million, and Christian Book Distributors can lend you a worldwide presence. A full service publisher will have relationships with **Internet marketers** who can help create your online presence. This involves the use of YouTube, Facebook, MySpace, GodTube, and plenty of other mainstream sites where you can present your product or message.

Some publishers have special relationships with Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, Costco, Walgreen's, or other major chains. When all the factors are right, they can sometimes make special arrangements with these companies regarding your book.

There are also magazine and catalog promotions. As we will discuss in an upcoming chapter, there are ads designed to get retailers to buy your product and there are end-user ads that work to persuade the man on the street to buy from the retailer. A full service publisher can do market research to determine the effectiveness of all of these efforts. Fortunately, a good publisher has years of previous marketing programs on which to build your marketing plan. Every author who has worked with your publisher has paid a

price to prevent your failure. But more important, they have laid the groundwork for your success!

This is by no means an exhaustive list of what a full service publisher can accomplish, but it does cover most of the basics. Be sure when you determine the publishing package that best meets your needs that you determine which of these services are available.

One of the major dynamics that has changed to create new market opportunities is the emergence of the Internet. The Internet offers you potential access to the entire world with the click of a button. It can be a low-budget and highly effective means of reaching the masses. When used wisely, the Internet can be one of the best end-user marketing resources available. However, like all things, there are costs and risks.

Through the Internet, you have the opportunity to create a larger than life presence. Just like the artwork on your book cover, though, it can make you look better... or it can make you look worse. I have seen good businesses host websites that hurt their image. On the flip side, I have seen small and relatively insignificant businesses create an online presence so compelling that they soon fulfill the virtual identity that once existed only in the mind of the creator!

Because you have chosen to invest in your future by reading *How to Write, Publish, and Market your own Bestseller*, you have given yourself the opportunity to get on the inside track and have your Internet needs evaluated by an innovative **internet marketer**.

The Internet, like any form of marketing, requires the implementation of knowledgeable strategies and specific skills. Having a website or a video on YouTube doesn't mean anyone will see it. There are a host of tactics you can employ to support sites and products you place online.

Whether designing a book cover or a website, there is one essential mindset that must drive the entire process... marketing! I have worked with dozens of graphic artists who thought an attractive book cover was enough to sell a book. Because they focused solely on "appearance," and not marketing in a larger sense, they totally missed the point.

The marketing mindset must steer the hand of the person developing your Internet presence. It is more than a look. There are dozens of "marketing keys" that make the difference between someone logging on to your website and purchasing your product!

In fact, there is a science behind Internet marketing. Each additional click of the mouse reduces the probability that a purchase will be made. In this visually driven world, video sometimes sells better than text. True Internet marketers understand the mindset of people who purchase online. They design websites and Internet ads that are compelling to this specific segment of society. Opening the door to the Internet is an adventure in marketing. On the day I launched my web store, my first order came from Singapore, for over \$1000! I knew I had struck the "mother lode."

What follows next are some suggestions to help you optimize your opportunities to take your book to a global market.

- Each book should have its own website or Internet TV Channel. **CyberTV** out of Orlando, Florida has created incredibly affordable Internet television sites. An Internet television site makes it possible to combine text and video to optimize your purchase appeal.
- The book's title should be considered for the website's URL. Never make it hard for people to find your site. This is why it's so important for the URL to be the book title; it keeps it simple. You can create a link from your personal website if you want. But to do so, your book title would be buried deep inside

another site. This makes it very difficult to find; you cannot fail to optimize the resources that drive purchasers to your site.

- Your site should contain excerpts from the book. This gives people a chance to get a preview of what they are purchasing. Great marketers are famous for pulling out teasers that whet the appetite and compel people to make the purchase.
- Videos or audio from the author is a great tool, especially when the author can create passion for the book. Having direct communication from the author not only promotes the book; it helps to connect the user with the author in a personal way.
- Testimonials or positive comments from readers have incredible influence. There are few marketing tools more powerful than a satisfied customer.
- You must have one-click purchasing capabilities available in as many places on your site as possible without being obtrusive. People are impulse purchasers. The impulse can disappear with one too many clicks.
- Create SEO – Search Engine Optimization. The book's site should be submitted to *all* search engines. One keyword on any search engine should take inquirers directly to your site. Everything you do, every promotion, should drive people to your site!
- Determine what Internet promotions would work best for you. You can use e-blasts, PPC (pay-per-click) campaigns, or ad banners, but all of these must be strategically planned or they will be expensive and non-productive.
- Use the Internet to stay in touch with your reading audience. Blogs, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and even online conferences are among the many online possibilities at your disposal.

An **Internet marketer** is to a web designer what a publisher is to a printer. While one encompasses the other, they are far from the same thing. Utilizing the experience of an Internet marketer will make the difference between strategic planning or throwing your money to the wind and hoping for the best! An Internet marketer will show you how to use e-letters, press releases, mailing lists, chat rooms, and all the other resources available on the Internet. The key is: knowing what to do, where to spend the money, and what is proven to get results.

In an entrepreneurial partnership, performance drives incentive! Both parties become inspired and motivated by the performance of the other. When two parties are being asked to invest time and money, they want to know their efforts are reciprocal. They want it to work. They have entered into this relationship with the intention of making investments for the purpose of shared success. But they want to see meaningful effort by their partner!

The more effort you put into this project, the more confidence your publisher will have. The more confidence he has, the more time, effort, and resources he will bring to the project. If you have learned any lesson from this book, you will have rejected the idea that the publisher will “make it happen” apart from you. By now, you know what to do to create a synergistic effort for ultimate success.

When determining what you can do to partner in the marketing process, know that it is not a black and white issue. There are many different levels of possible involvement, and some of them are overlapping. It’s not a straight line. It’s more a continuum than a linear series of efforts. Whatever you do, it should be done as a partnership with your publisher, with as much planning as possible.

When the two of you are planning your efforts jointly, there is an immense opportunity for synergistic success. For example, if you have the opportunity to speak or make some type of public appearance in a certain area, the publisher can sometimes work through his connections there to multiply the results. If you make an appearance on a television or radio program, the publisher may be able to get a local bookstore to have a book signing or run additional advertising. The number of ways to partner in your marketing efforts is unlimited. There are no boundaries. The main thing is, work together!

If you have an unlimited budget, the list of considerations for promotion is endless. As we previously discussed, there can be publicity, advertising, and promotion in a variety of media outlets, including magazine ads, special placement in catalogs, and other promotional material. In some cases, the publisher can co-op with a bookstore chain to launch special promotions throughout the entire chain. Occasionally, an influential publisher can get your books placed on end-caps or front tables in retail outlets. They can even arrange to have your book placed on the front or back cover of their respective catalogs.

If your budget is not limitless, which is far more likely, you can still strategically plan how to get the biggest bang for your buck. There are so many variables in planning a marketing strategy that it’s difficult to address them all. Less creative publishers have a one-size-fits-all approach. They will provide the same services for every author based on the amount of money he or she is able to spend.

Your warm market (or natural market), personal skills, and vocation should all be considered when developing your marketing strategy. Some people simply have more natural opportunities than others. If you are a motivational speaker or a preacher, you have people who come to hear you speak. You have venues through which you can work. The joint efforts of your publishers will make each of those opportunities greater!

Because many of the available options for moderate to lavish budgets have already been discussed, we will focus more on things you can do when funds are very limited. These are the efforts that require the greatest amount of creativity. However, they can have surprising results.

Co-op or partner with groups that have similar interests. The theme of your book will help you identify groups, clubs, churches, or businesses that share your passion. It brings credibility to their cause when a published author endorses them. A five-minute “pitch” for your idea can stir a lot of interest in a group that already embraces your ideology or interest.

There may be certain events or times of year when there is more awareness for your topic or story. Find ways to seize the moment. I once worked with a publisher for a special effort on a relationship book I had written. The publisher provided display boxes. I placed the book in nail salons, tanning salons, beauty shops, and any other place I could that catered to women. The fact that Valentine’s Day was just around the corner capitalized on the mindset of customers who frequented these shops. This translates into sales.

There are a number of special events that create opportunities. A fellow author, who was relatively unknown, wrote a short self-help book. Since he had no inroads into the bookstore market, he got creative. Many conferences pay their overhead by renting booths or tables to individuals with products. For over a year, he had a table at every conference I attended. Any time he knew I was speaking, in any sized venue, he requested to set up a table.

By selling books on tables at conferences, he not only created a bestseller, he made incredible amounts of money. Within a couple of years, he had sold so many copies that he was approached by a distributor who offered him a lucrative distribution deal! This is just one example of people I know who created their own bestseller with nothing but passion, creative imagination, and diligence!

Book clubs represent another respectable way to sell a lot of books. Some years ago, one of my staff members had the idea that we start book clubs. We promoted them on the Internet, and they took off! We sold directly to the book club online. This meant that we made a retail profit instead of wholesale on each book. It also meant that most orders were for five to eight books instead of one. In addition to that, there was the up sell of support materials we developed to assist book clubs to be more successful.

After your book is released, you can sometimes create a strong local interest: *Hometown writer makes good*. That’s newsworthy in many cities. A great press release, an interview on the morning shows, and a book signing party at a local bookstore can be a great launching pad.

Before the Internet existed, I wrote a spiritually-based self-help book, but had no outlet to take it to the marketplace. Because I didn’t meet the criteria, I could not get it picked up by the major distributors. Once again, I got creative. I would drive to Atlanta every week and search the Yellow Pages on microfilm for nondenominational and interdenominational churches. I would copy the pages, bring them home, and give them to a direct market telephone team. They would use a script I had written and make cold calls. We averaged shipping one hundred books per day, with very few returns.

I have often been inspired by musicians who cut albums or CDs and literally went from nightclub to nightclub, selling them out of their trunk. Many times, the major labels

couldn't find a way to get the product to the people, and yet stars were made by selling CDs from the trunk. In today's world, there have been numerous musicians discovered by placing videos online. People who want it bad enough find a way to make it happen!

Whatever you do, do something! And remember, your publisher has a world of experience. He has worked with hundreds of authors. He probably has hundreds of ideas you could try. Never forget that performance drives incentive. The more you try, the more the publisher will try!

For several reasons, I've saved this topic for last. End-user advertising is one more topic where I want to drive home the need for you, the writer, to become strategic about your role in developing your market.

There are two primary types of advertising in publishing. There is advertising aimed at retailers, and then there is end-user advertising. Advertising aimed at the retailer gets books *into* bookstores. End-user advertising gets books *out* of the bookstores. The former motivates the retail outlet to purchase the book for resale, while the latter motivates the reader to purchase your book from an outlet.

There must be a balance of these two types of influence, or you create the most dreaded scenario in publishing... returns! Just imagine, for a moment, the incredible amount of money your publisher invests in trade magazines, book shows, and retail outlets. Perhaps he does such a good job that 20,000 of your books are purchased by these retail outlets. In fact, he has done so much better than originally expected that he must now invest in a second printing.

But suppose the end-user, the person who purchases from retail outlets, neither knows who you are or knows about your book. Those books will sit on the shelves for a few weeks and collect dust. When it is time to pay the bill, 60-90 days later, they will simply send them back to the publisher. Now all the money your publisher has allotted for promotion has been spent. You're dead in the water! There is no budget left to market your book!

You have to do all the things we mentioned in the last chapter, and more, to influence the end-user! You must create an image and continuously proclaim your message to the end-user while the publisher is cultivating the wholesale market.

Timing is everything in advertising. One of the greatest books I have read on the subject of advertising discusses the need to create momentum. The author explained that it is better to do enough things consistently for a few weeks than it is to dole out a little at a time over a long period. Create and sustain momentum!

Besides the money you spend with the publisher, you may want to use your own profits to fuel the fire. I have personally used direct mail, email, media, events, holidays, telemarketing, magazine ads, and articles to create and fuel end-user awareness for my products. Submit articles to magazines that tend to cater to your particular interest. Very often, if you are advertising in a magazine, they will publish your article. When people read your article and see your ad for the book, they will either purchase directly or start searching the bookstores.

I once had a small newspaper run a weekly health column I wrote. It helped their paper and it was free publicity for my project. What started out as a single article lasted for more than a year! That's more than fifty free ads that would have cost over \$500 each! That's \$25,000 worth of free advertising. While working on a similar project, I offered community health services to youth and teens. Over a period of a few months, all three local television stations and the local newspaper wrote stories about what I was doing.

Some publicity directly supports your book, while other strategies create and develop name recognition. Name recognition, when based on a consistent type of service or

behavior, is powerful. If your name becomes synonymous with health, people will want to read your health book. If your name is synonymous with success, readers will rush to the bookstore to purchase your success book.

While your publisher is working to create a wholesale customer base, you should do everything possible to influence the end-user. Do anything that sells you or the book to those people who will rush into the bookstore and purchase your book!

## Part Four Summary

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### MARKETING 101

- Marketing is the business activity of presenting products or services to potential customers in such a way as to make them eager to buy.
- Work with your three markets:
  1. Your natural market
  2. The publisher's natural market
  3. The market you create

### RECOVERING YOUR INVESTMENT

- Recover your investment by maximizing the opportunities in your natural market.
- Raise your needed capital with a prepublication promotion.

### MAKING THE MOST OF MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- Cooperate with your **publisher** to maximize the publisher's natural market.

### BUILDING AN INTERNET PRESENCE

- Create a global presence on the Internet.
- Have a dedicated web site for your book.
- Use the services of an **Internet marketer**.
- Post your book on every available Internet outlet.

### GETTING CREATIVE IN YOUR NATURAL MARKET

- Maximize momentum by creating a synergistic marketing strategy with your publisher.
- Select the natural market opportunities that match your skills and resources.

### END-USER ADVERTISING

- Keep a good balance of industry advertising and end-user advertising.
- Identify the end-user activities that match your skills and resources.