

# **Chapter One: How to Write A Book in 30 Days**

## **1 Start writing**

- Developing good writing habits
- Creating a writing schedule

Is this your year? Is this the year you will become a published author? That's what I want for you. This year (at least until we're done) I'm going to begin at the beginning of the writer's process and take you through to a finished book with your name on it.

What are the steps from idea to finished book? Let's begin at the beginning.

1. Begin. Write your idea down. Don't worry about grammar, spelling or even having your ideas in order; just write. The physical/mental act of writing will begin to let your ideas flow to the paper. You'll find that where you may be stuck in your conscious mind before you begin, will actually start flowing up from your subconscious mind as you begin to write. When you go back to read what you've written you'll be surprised at how much was in there waiting to get out. Step number one: simply begin to write.

2. Continue. One writing session, although it felt really good once you began, doesn't make a book. Writing is a habit and habits are practiced regularly – that's why we call 'em habits. Set aside a time each day or each week when no one or nothing else has a prior bid for your time. Dedicate that time to writing. When I wrote my first book, 'Breaking the Treasure Code: The Hunt for Israel's Oil,' I had a full time job running a manufacturing company. Saturdays and part of Sundays (thanks to my gracious and patient wife) were my writing days. The manuscript was complete in a few months and I was ready to publish. But I never could have done the writing if I hadn't set aside those days every weekend. Now I run a publishing and media

company and I spend weekends with family and on home projects. My regular writing time is now each morning a few hours before the rest of the world wakes up. When I fall out of the habit I don't write. When I stick to the habit I write; it's as simple as that. Step number two: Make your writing a habit that you practice at a certain time on a certain day or days and stick to it.

3. Don't get lost. This world offers a million distractions a key stroke or a ringtone away. Writing time is your time and it's for writing; not for checking out something on the Internet (if you're doing 'research' on the Internet during you're writing time, you're not writing, you're procrastinating – stop it). Don't allow yourself to get distracted by outside interruptions. Turn off your phone, shut down your e-mail and eliminate all beeps, buzzers, vibes or tones in your life that signal someone or something else wants your attention. The reason I write super-early in the morning is easy, the rest of the world is asleep. This time is for you; for transforming your thoughts to words on a page. Step number three: Turn off or turn away all distractions.

4. Read what you've written. Before your next writing session, take a minute or two to read what you wrote during your last writing session. Don't judge the quality of your writing

and don't edit what you wrote previously (that comes later), just take a few minutes to see the thoughts you put into words last time. This will help you remember where you left off and squirt a little starter fluid into the carburetor of your 'thoughts to words' machine. It will make beginning your current writing session easier and, hopefully, create a flow and continuity between what you wrote last time and what you're writing this time. Step number four: Read what you wrote last session before beginning this session.

5. Stick to the point. A book that has no central idea, that lacks flow and continuity, that doesn't take the reader from beginning to end in a comprehensible progression is just a diary. It might be good therapy for you but you'll have an audience of one. The reason you're writing is to express an idea to others (your readers). They need a starting point, a clear path and a finish line. That's one reason for reading what you wrote last time before beginning your next writing session, so you don't wander off the path you're trying to build for your reader. Step number five: Stick to the point; you're writing a book, not a diary.

If you're stuck somewhere in this process, let me know by commenting below; we'll work through it. If you've got some great ideas or something that has worked to keep you writing,

let us all know! Share your ideas in the comment section below.

Next week we'll talk about building a blueprint for that path you want your readers to follow. But that's next week. This week – write!

## 2 Gather Ideas

- Using PostIt notes

You've begun to write on a regular schedule; that's awesome! But you've got so many ideas, so many things you want to include in your book. How can you corral all those ideas into some manageable sequence that makes sense to you and, more importantly, makes sense to your reader? At this point it can be difficult to even know where to start. When I'm just beginning a book I try, at first, just to get my ideas out of my brain and in front of my eyes. I don't worry about their order or if they fit or if they're important to what I want the book to eventually become. Nothing matters now but getting them out. For this task I use an 'analog modular capture and recording system' ... otherwise known as PostIt® notes. This exercise is easy, productive and amazingly liberating! All we're doing is getting our thoughts out. What are the pieces (eventually

they'll be chapter candidates) of information that will make up the central theme or message of your book? Remember they don't have to be perfect, in order, or even right ... they just have to be out there. Now that you have a stack of PostIts® with all the ideas or 'pieces' in front of you, out of your brain and onto paper, you can begin sorting the pieces, but we'll cover that next week, your job today is to grab some PostIts® and start writing! \*Technical note: I love real PostIt® notes – something about the analog experience. But after I've written and sorted my PostIts® I need to transfer the info into a digital format so I can keep them organized without losing them. It would save me some time if I could do my PostIt® note exercise digitally from the get-go rather than transferring ideas from my brain to bits of paper, and then to my digital files. I'm an Evernote® fan and I can write PostIt-like notes in Evernote®, but the software is clunky when it comes to moving the bits around during the sorting process. Now I'm trying Scrivener® – seems to be made for that. More on this next week too. Let me know how your PostIt® note exercise goes. – See more at: <http://www.truepotentialmedia.com/blog/write-a-book-in-30-days-organizing-your-thoughts/#sthash.BsiD8G1D.dpuf>

- Non-linear thinking

### 3 Plotting your course

- Arranging your ideas - logical progression

Last week we talked about getting our ideas out on paper via our 'analog modular capture and recording system'... otherwise known as PostIt® notes! You can click [here](#) for an image of my notes for the upcoming book 'Write a Book in 30 Days' – I'll be doing this right along with you as we go through the series. Now it's puzzle time! We've got our ideas out on paper squares where we can sort, rearrange, look for continuity, look for ideas that don't belong, look for redundancies, look for redundancies, etc. Imagine that you and a friend have planned a series of visits where you can explain your message (the theme of your book) to her one visit at a time. Your friend doesn't know anything about your message and it's going to take more than one visit for you to unveil it in full. What are you going to share with her on that first visit? How are you going to introduce her to your idea – get her set up for future visits? Do you have an idea written on one of your PostIt notes that introduces her your message for the first time? That's PostIt note number one. What would you share with your friend on

her second visit? You've already introduced her to your message during visit one; what is the next idea you want to share with her that will lead, eventually to the core of your theme? That's PostIt note number two. Imagine a third visit, and so on. As you tell your story from beginning to end, you will see a logical progression unfold before you, like stepping stones on a path (going through this exercise you may need to add a PostIt or two, or take a few away). Remember, your friend doesn't know anything about your story, you can't assume that she has the same context you do as the author – that's why you have to begin at the beginning, introduce your message and lay it out, step by step in logical progression, using your PostIt notes as the stepping stones. You can click here to see how I arranged my PostIt notes for 'Write a Book in 30 Days.' Technical note: I've been busy learning Scrivener and it's pretty neat! I'll continue to use this as we go forward and share my progress with you. Here's what my PostIt notes look like on Scrivener. - See more at: <http://www.truepotentialmedia.com/blog/write-a-book-in-30-days-plotting-your-course/#sthash.lV2q6G9S.dpuf>

- Culling out duplicates and irrelevancies
- Note: include infographic



## 4 Creating an outline

- Thinking linear

Now that you've got your PostIt notes or index cards arranged in a logical progression, like stepping stones leading down the path you want to take the reader, it's time to put those 'stepping stones into an outline.

An outline is basically arranging your 'stepping stones' in a linear fashion on a single document. It will be easier to use a digital document, like a Word file, to create your outline rather than trying to create it on a sheet of paper. Putting the ideas you've written on the PostIt notes or index cards into a linear format on a single document will help you to see if the logical progression of ideas still holds up. There may be some additional rearranging to do once everything is laid out on a single page; it's easier to move ideas around on a digital document.

- Creating sub-ideas (bullets)

Bullet Points - once you've got your ideas listed in order on the document you may want to add some bullet points to each

idea to further develop it. This will help in the next step when it comes time to flesh out each idea. Your outline is also a good place to make brief notes; for example, if you need to research a certain subject or article you can add "research Amazon bestsellers" as a bullet point for a particular idea.

My example outline below shows my basic ideas, sub-ideas and notes, laid out in linear fashion, ready to begin creating Chapters. We'll do that next!

#### How to Write a Book in 30 Days (Outline)

##### 1. Start Writing

- Developing good writing habits
- Creating a writing schedule

##### 2. Gather Ideas

- Using PostIt notes
- Non-linear thinking

##### 3. Plotting Your Course

- Arranging your ideas - logical progression
- Culling out duplicates and irrelevancies
- Note: include infographic

##### 4. Creating an Outline

- Thinking linear
- Creating sub-ideas (bullets)

- Notes
5. Creating Chapters
    - Fleshing out ideas
    - Testing your ideas
  6. Determine Your Audience
    - Who is your reader?
    - Is there a market for your message?
    - Note: research Amazon bestsellers
  7. Determine the Benefit
    - What value are you offering the reader?
    - Why should the reader choose your book?
  8. Determine Your Book's Theme
    - Idea vs. Theme
    - Audience and benefit
  9. Research
    - What you don't know
    - Where to find out
    - How to document other people's work
  10. Write Craft
    - How to use words
    - Cut mercilessly
    - Note: include recommended reading
  11. Balancing Chapters

- Size and style
- Segues (funny word!)

## 12. Concluding

- Wrapping up your idea
- Giving the reader 'take-aways'

## 13. Introduction

- Preparing the reader
- Why we do this after the book is written

## 14. Endorsements

- Social proof
- Tapping endorsees early

## 15. Tying Your Book Digitally

- Creating a connection
- Digital magnets

## 16. Frontmatter

- Packaging the book
- Thanking/acknowledging

## 17. Backmatter

- Next opportunity
- Call to action

## 18. Author Bio

- People connect with people
- What not to include

- Notes

## 5 Creating Chapters

Review:

The first step we took on this journey was to simply 'begin writing' - to develop the habit of writing on a regular schedule. In the end, writers write. If you're not writing regularly you may want to be a writer someday, but you're not a writer now.

Writing regularly and writing a book are two different things, though. A book is an idea or collection of ideas, structured around a central theme in logical progression, in long form (let's say from 30,000 to 300,000 words).

Collecting those ideas and structuring them around a central theme in logical progression is what we've been doing in our last three steps - the ones that come after 'begin writing.'

Those next steps are:

- gather ideas
- plot your course

- create an outline
  
- Fleshing out ideas

Now that we've developed a habit of writing, gathered our ideas, plotted our course and created an outline, we can get down to the business of writing a book! This is the good part; it's also the 'work' part. Let's begin, shall we?

At this stage we'll begin putting flesh on the bones of the skeleton, the structure, of our outline. Using the outline you've created from our last session, simply begin at point (1) in the outline, or your first bullet point under point (1) and begin writing what's stored up inside you. Nothing happening? Nothing 'stored up'? That's a common feeling ... more like a universal feeling among writers when they face a blank screen. Here's the cure: just begin writing. Don't worry, don't think; just begin writing. Whatever you write now is just between you and the screen; nobody is looking over your shoulder, nobody is judging it. Ernest Hemingway said, "There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed." He also said, "The first draft of anything is sh\*t." If Hemingway admitted it, it's okay for us to face it. Just pick your first point on the outline and begin writing. This exercise, besides putting flesh

on the bones of your book will reveal two valuable results:

1. It will reveal everything you know about the subject - things you didn't consciously know you knew, but, as I said earlier, have been 'stored up' inside you that the writing of them has brought out. This is an amazing phenomenon that happens when writers write - what comes out often surprises the writer more than anyone!
2. It will reveal what you don't know about your subject - we'll get to that in a later session. Right now, your only job is to write - outline point by outline point - everything that comes out. No judging, no re-writing, no 'researching' (also known as procrastinating). All that comes at a later stage.

Here's an example of fleshing out our sample outline. See how I've begun fleshing out the outline I created last session? Now it's your turn. Get started!

In our next session we're going to take a short writing break and talk about writing for your audience (a lot of starving writers hate this part, that's why they're starving). Who's going to buy this book you're writing and why we need to talk about it now, before we go any further.

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Testing your ideas

## **6 Determine your audience**

- Who is your reader?
- Is there a market for your message?
- Note: research Amazon bestsellers

## **7 Determine the benefit**

- What value are you offering the reader?
- Why should the reader choose your book?

## **8 Determine your book's theme**

- Idea vs. Theme
- Audience and benefit



## 9 Research

- What you don't know
- Where to find out
- How to document other people's work

## 10 Write Craft

- How to use words
- Cut mercilessly
- Note: include recommended reading

## 11 Balancing Chapters

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