

Skim *Is There A Book Inside You?*. Click to get a look at each chapter

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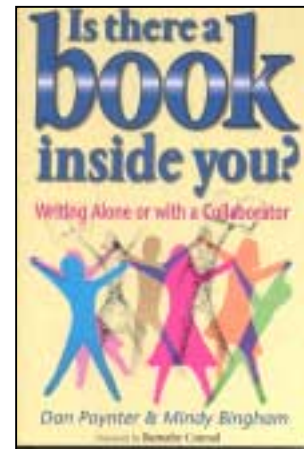
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Chapter 1

WHY YOU SHOULD WRITE A BOOK

Chances are you already know *why* you should write a book. Maybe the inspiration for your project struck all at once while you were driving the car, taking a shower, feeding the baby or digging in the garden. Or perhaps your idea developed over a period of time, as a series of incidents convinced you that a particular book needed to be written.

For Mindy Bingham, inspiration came as she stood at the front desk of the Girls Club of Santa Barbara. Mindy was touched when a single parent, struggling financially, exhausted and disillusioned, arrived to pick up her daughter. Living in poverty and feeling that she had no control over her own life, the woman had tears in her eyes as she asked Mindy, “Why didn’t someone tell me what it would be like when I was growing up?”

As Mindy turned from the desk, she vowed to do something to help young women take charge of their lives—not just the teenagers in her care but as many young women as she could reach. And she knew the best vehicle for accomplishing her goal would be a book.

A book is the only immortality. — Rufus Choate
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Dan Poynter’s first book idea developed while he was managing a parachute loft in 1962. There were technical voids in parachute design and many misconceptions about parachute function. Dan was having a hard time getting his questions answered, so he set out to learn all he could about parachutes and skydiving. He began recording what he learned in a monthly column in *Parachutist* magazine.

A year and a half later, Dan realized that he was becoming an expert in the field, and that one way to help the skydivers and parachute designers was to put the answers they had been seeking in a book. The information he gathered eventually became a 592-page manual with 2,500 illustrations.

You should write a book because there is something you need to say, or you feel there is something other people need to know. Books are the carriers of ideas and information. They are the key to personal growth and increased satisfaction. Books unlock the mind. When you write a book, you become a part of the elite community that creates our culture and keeps it alive. And there are a lot of people and books in that community. According to a 1997 *Wall Street Journal* article, “A staggering 1.3 million book titles are now in print, 140,000 of them first published in 1996 alone.

The chapters which follow will tell you how to author your book and get it into print, even if you do not have the time, temperament, talent, training or territory to be a “writer” in the traditional sense of the word.

Just the knowledge that a good book is awaiting one at the end of a long day makes that day happier. —Kathleen Norris.

As in many other parts of our lives today, tradition is playing a smaller role in the book business. In the past, books were luxuries available to only a few. Now they are necessities, bought and read by the millions of people who realize the importance of knowledge in a technological world such as ours. As John Naisbitt and Patricia Aburdene said in *Megatrends 2000*, “In fewer than ten years the growth in information has only quickened.” The information boom continues to accelerate, but as the authors point out, “Without a structure, a frame of reference, the vast amount of data that comes your way each day will probably whiz right by you.” That’s why it is important to be aware of the changes surrounding you. Some of the megatrends mentioned that are influencing our lives include a renaissance in the arts, global lifestyles and cultural nationalism, the religious revival of the new millenium, and the triumph of the individual. For anyone interested in authoring a book, these facts point the way to many new opportunities. Packaged information is becoming increasingly specialized. More and more books are being printed in smaller and smaller quantities. The information in them is going out of date faster, but books are being produced more rapidly by computerized equipment.

The new source of power is not money in the hands of a few but information in the hands of many. —John Naisbitt in *Megatrends*.

In general, consumers feel pressed for time so they expect to gain knowledge through shorter and slimmer books. People want to know “how to” and “where to” and they will pay well to find out. This hunger for the written word extends to works of fiction as well. Perhaps because they do not have the time actually to get away, readers reach for a book when they want escape, adventure or romance.

(more)

Chapter 2

CAN YOU AUTHOR A BOOK?

Yes, you can author a book. Your knowledge and experiences are unlike those of anyone else in the world. No one looks at things in quite the way you do. Why not pass on this unique information by putting it in writing? If you have technical knowledge, a special skill, or just an interesting way of saying something, there are people waiting to buy your book.

Some people are natural writers, some are authors, and some are both. The writer is the person who puts the words on paper, while the author is the idea person. An author without interest or ability in writing can still produce a manuscript by teaming up with those who can provide the needed services—writing, researching, editing, typing and so on.

Not that it will be easy. Authoring a book may be the most challenging project you have ever taken on. But it offers rewards unlike those you will get in any other endeavor.

The first rule of writing is to keep things manageable and in perspective. Most people have to work for a living and therefore can spend only a short period of time each day on their book. Trying to keep the whole project in mind, they become confused and feel overwhelmed. Often, they simply give up, feeling they will never be able to complete their manuscript. There are several tricks to overcoming this hazard. Break a mammoth project down into bite-sized chunks. Never start at page one where the hill looks steepest. Find a work-method that is compatible with your temperament, time, talent, training and territory. Then concentrate on one section at a time and do a complete job on each one.

WHO AM I TO WRITE A BOOK? This question requires some self-reflection. You are qualified if you fall into one of these categories.

- **The Expert** is someone who has years of experience in a specific field. Experts are usually teachers, technicians or researchers. By teaching, we mean lecturing, training, writing, consulting and spreading the word. The expert has developed forms, hand-out materials and unique ways to describe the peculiarities of the field. The technician has spent time performing the occupation or activity in a hands-on fashion and can relate to the needs of the person who wants to get started in the field. The researcher usually has some recent information to share.

Some people dream of worthy accomplishments, while other stay awake and do them.
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Authoring a book may come easiest to experts because their subject is already known well to them. They have a ready market because those new to a field are eager to learn what they have to say. The expert's main problem is likely to be finding enough time for writing. They tend to be extremely busy people.

But there are reasons to try to find the time. Writing a book in your field is a learning experience. It will make you better at what you do by forcing you to reorganize, reduce, condense and clarify what you know.

Michele Jackman and Cheri Jasinski owned their own management consulting firm. Their entertaining and informative lectures and workshops were well known and highly regarded. Because of the demand for their expertise, they lead fast-paced, sometimes exhausting lives. By committing one of their favorite workshops to paper, Michele and Cheri were able to serve more people.

They completed the first draft of their book, *Super Unleaded: The Accountability Process for High Performance People*, by videotaping their day-long workshop, hiring a typist to transcribe the tape and then editing the hard copy for flow and understanding.

- **The Innovator** takes a well-known, published subject and adds a new dimension to it. Innovators are often experts who notice areas in their field that need improvement, clarification or a new approach.

While director of the local girls club, Mindy Bingham looked for material to help adolescent girls understand their career options and opportunities. When she tried to use the existing adult material with the teenagers, she discovered a “reality gap.” They could not even understand why they needed to know about careers. They based their current life decisions on the notion that someone (a husband or the welfare system) was going to take care of them when they grew up. Mindy decided that a book was needed to dispel this myth and awaken young women to their future responsibilities. *Choices, A Teen Woman’s Journal for Self-awareness and Personal Planning*, a self-published work, sold over 40,000 copies its first year and has sold over a million since then, because there is nothing else like it.

I never cease to be amazed at the huge number of folks who have valuable information between their ears who don’t consider packaging and selling it.
—Russ von Hoelscher.

(more)

Chapter 3

WHY DO YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK?

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM YOUR BOOK? Evaluating your motives will help you decide on your topic, your approach and even if you should carry on with your project. Authors have many different reasons for spending the countless hours necessary to produce a book-length manuscript. They may seek fame, fortune or self-actualization. They might want to help others, or record some kind of history or knowledge. You should be clear about your motives for writing a book before you begin.

- **Fame** in the traditional sense of the word conjures up thoughts of gala author parties, television talk show appearances, and whirlwind author tours. But fame can also mean being recognized in your community or in your profession. The most satisfying type of fame for many people is when their peers recognize them as being successful in their field.

It takes lots of energy to maintain the high profile that goes along with fame. As an author of a recognized work, you will be asked to speak to groups, spend time away from your family and to give up part of your personal life. Some authors love the attention, while others begin to resent the extra demands on their time and energy.

- **Fortune.** According to *The Columbia University Study of American Authors* only 5 percent of the 2,239 writers surveyed earned over \$80,000 and only 10 percent over \$45,000. Of those authors surveyed who wrote for a living, only 28 percent earned \$20,000 or more each year. Do not let these figures discourage you; just be realistic in your approach to authoring and about the word “fortune.”

Writing is the only profession where no one considers you ridiculous if you earn no money. — Jules Renard

Writing a book is an investment. After it is published, it will earn money while you are off doing something else. But how much money is it likely to earn? And how much time are you going to have to spend on it before it earns anything at all? It is important to consider these points carefully if you are writing for fortune.

Maybe you define fortune as “just earning a livable income” from your writing. You may be writing in hopes of getting away from that nine-to-five job, in anticipation of a whole new lifestyle. Most authors have other sources of income, at least to begin with. Forty-six percent of the writers surveyed in the Columbia study had full-time jobs in another field.

Many successful authors only write in their spare time. For them writing is recreation as well as a source of income. Writing provides a creative outlet while it supplements the family income.

One way to make more money on your investment is to turn your book into a business by publishing yourself. Self-publishing requires a greater commitment of time and money but may earn you up to four times as much as the common royalty would. See Chapter Seventeen on self-publishing.

- **Self-actualization** is when you need to write the book because you have a mission to accomplish. Perhaps you have a strong feeling about a subject and want to make a statement. Or perhaps you dream of seeing your name on the cover of a book. Friends may have said just once too often, “You should write a book about that.” Maybe you want to record your family history or leave something of yourself behind. Producing a book could be the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.

Evelyn Haertig spent 12 years on expensive, full-color definitive treatises on *Antique Combs & Purses* and *More Beautiful Purses*. A retired high school teacher and antiques dealer, she discovered there were no authoritative works on the subjects. She and her photographer husband examined collections around the world. Now she and her books are world authorities on the subjects. Because of the great up-front (travel) costs, she has yet to make money on the project, but her books will be her legacy. They were something she had to do.

Helping others. Do you want to make life better for other people? Do you have a message or a methodology you think needs to be heard? Most authors of these kinds of books work in the helping or service professions.

(more)

Chapter 4

WHAT KIND OF BOOK DO YOU WANT TO WRITE?

You probably would not be reading this book if you did not have some idea of what you want to write. Before you make a final decision on your topic, take a look at some of the books being written today.

WHAT KIND OF BOOK WILL YOU WRITE? Will it be fiction (romances, children's books, westerns, mysteries) or nonfiction (how-to's, cookbooks, history, art books, travel)? Once you decide on the type of book you plan to write, check the resources in the Appendix. There you will find the titles of several books devoted to the writing and production of books on specific subjects, with more detailed information than we could possibly include here.

FICTION may be generally categorized as mysteries, suspense novels, adventures, westerns, romances, historical novels, science fiction, juveniles or young adult, children's books, Gothics and general novels. See FOD/WEB Document 606: *Publishing Fiction & Poetry* (see Appendix).

Fiction is an art and comes from emotion: nonfiction is a craft and comes from information.

- **Children's books.** With twenty million youngsters under five years of age in the U.S., there is a large market for children's books. Many couples are delaying the start of their families until they are established in their careers. Therefore they have more disposable income to spend on their children. These parents tend to be well-educated. They value books and learning and want their children to enjoy reading.

Children's books and juveniles may be categorized as follows:

Ages 3-4 through 7-8:	Picture books
Ages 8 through 12:	Fiction and nonfiction
Ages 9 through 12:	Humorous novels
Ages 11 through 18:	Special interest books

Children's books may be the most difficult to write. You must be accurate (children are not as forgiving as adults) and you must have a keen understanding of the children of the current generation.

In writing for children, you have a greater responsibility, because children are less able to discriminate between good and bad ideas. For example, authors have a responsibility in their writing to be nonsexist, nonviolent and to promote self-sufficiency—particularly for girls. Fantasies should be constructive. Think back to your own childhood. Which stories are still with you—which books shaped your life?

Children's books are written to be read, adult books are written to be talked about at cocktail parties. — Lloyd Alexander

Illustrations can provide half the charm and interest of a picture book, so most children's book writers must be artists or must collaborate with an artist. See Chapter Twelve on collaboration and the Appendix for books on how to write for children. See FOD/WEB Document 610: *Children's Books* (see Appendix).

- **Romance novels** account for 55 percent of all paperback fiction published. This fiction offers release and escape for millions of people. Readers like the action, sex and romance, and many identify with the characters.

Romances are written for different audiences. Historical romances are longer stories with more adventure and historical background material, period romances concentrate on a certain historical period, and contemporary romances have a modern heroine.

(more)

Chapter 5

IS YOUR TOPIC A WINNER?

If you want to sell a book, not simply to write it or see it in print, you must evaluate the market size and research the competition before you make a final decision on your topic.

Once you are convinced that the subject is a good one, you are ready to choose a working title and write your back-cover copy. These exercises will give you something to hang on to, something to guide your project as you get on with the meatiest part of authoring a book.

IF YOUR CHOICE IS NONFICTION, picking a subject is your first step. You may already know what it is; you may, for example, wish to record a lifetime of experience in your field of expertise. If you come up with more than one book idea, select the easiest one with the easiest-to-reach market.

Selecting a topic is not a weekend adventure. Your book and its subject will be with you a long time. If you produce a recognized work, you will become identified with it. Think about what you want to be doing three years from now.

Whether or not you have settled on a subject, go through the following exercise.

A book is a success when people who haven't read it pretend they have.

BOOK TOPIC/AUTHOR EXPERTISE EVALUATION

Book topic:

Author's area of expertise:

To help you decide whether the book topic is right for you, write yes or no in front of the following questions:

- Is your information on your subject up-to-date?
- Do you work or participate in the field, or are you recently retired from it?
- Do you receive daily feedback on your expertise from your customers, people in the field?
- Do you read all the literature, attend all the conferences and continue to collect information?
- Do you have practical expertise as well as the required theoretical knowledge?
- Do people in the field recognize you for your contributions?
- Do you have a reputation for originality and innovation? Have you received any awards or patents in your field?
- Do you have the organization and discipline necessary not only to produce a book but to project the image of an authority?
- Are you businesslike?

If you have answered yes to a large percentage of the questions, you are on your way.

CONSIDER THE ELEMENTS necessary for producing successful nonfiction:

1. The subject is interesting to you. If you are interested in the subject, working on it will be exciting. If you are not interested, the work will be drudgery and you are not likely to do a good a job.

2. You have the necessary expertise and the information is available. Remember, nonfiction depends upon past experiences, research or, best of all, both. The book should be on a subject in which you are an expert or would like to become an expert. You have spent years working at, specializing in and learning something, and there are thousands of people out there willing to pay good money to get the short course on it. Write what you know!

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Chapter 6 WHAT WILL YOUR BOOK LOOK LIKE?

YOUR NOTEBOOK. To help you visualize your book and make your manuscript portable, lay it out in a binder. This is like framing a house before adding the interior decoration. The finishing work will be easier and more fun once you can see where you are going. Find a three-ring binder and place a label on the cover with your name, address, telephone number and a plea for the binder's return if lost.

Make a page for each of the sections listed in this chapter and fill in as much information as you now have. Keep adding as you progress. The collected information does not yet have to be neat; the important thing is that now you have a place to store your material. As you add pages, as the book fills up, you will have more work to carry with you. When you find a few idle moments, open the book, draft and revise it, bit by bit. Tighten your writing, change words, cut out those that fail to add to your message. Revise and improve.

PARTS OF A BOOK. Most books are divided into three main parts: the preliminary pages or "front matter," the text and the "back matter."

The entire industry is between the writer's thoughts and what the reader sees on the page. — Writers Connection

Pull four or five different types of books off your shelf and compare them as you read further about each part of the book. Older hardbound books usually followed convention.

There are two pages to each sheet or leaf of paper. The "verso" pages are on the left-hand side and are even-numbered, while the "recto" pages are the opposite.

THE FRONT MATTER is that material placed at the beginning of the book. It includes everything up to the start of Chapter One.

ENDPAPERS may be plain or printed, are usually of heavier paper, and are glued to the inside front and back covers of a hardbound (casebound) book. They hold the book together. Occasionally endpapers are printed with relevant maps. Your binder will not require endpapers.

TESTIMONIALS and other sales copy are being seen more and more on the first page of softcover books. This is important sales material. Think about the endorsements and testimonials you might like to have. Leave a blank page here so you can add testimonials and review excerpts to the second edition.

THE HALF TITLE or bastard title is often the first printed page found in hardbound books. It contains only the title and it is a right-hand page.

There was a time when books were produced and sold without covers; it was up to the buyers to have the books bound if they wished. The half-title page served to protect the title page and to identify the volume. The custom of

including a half-title page persists even though the original reason for it no longer exists.

THE FRONTISPIECE is a photograph found on the reverse of the bastard title page. Often this page is left blank instead or it is used more economically to list other books by the same author.

A book is like a garden carried in a pocket. — Chinese proverb
--

THE TITLE PAGE is on the right-hand side and lists the full title and subtitle. This page may also include the name of the author or editor, the publisher, whether this is an original or revised edition, and the year.

PEN NAMES seem to be a major preoccupation with new writers. There are few good reasons for changing your name when you write. If you are writing porno books, do not want your boss to know you are moonlighting or wish to conceal your sex (readers seem to prefer female names on romance novels), you might have a reason. But pen names spread you too thin and confuse your readers. As you write, you will establish a following. Using more than one name means establishing a readership for each. If your work is not good enough to sport your name, is the material good enough to print? It may be better to spare the tree.

If you do select a nom de plume, make sure it is not being used by another writer. Check the directories in the reference section of your public library

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Chapter 7

GETTING READY TO WRITE Organization and Research

ORGANIZATION. Many people want to “write a book.” Most people have the ability, some have the drive but few have the organization. Therefore, the greatest need is for a simple system, a “road map.” In Chapter Six we laid out the structure for your book. In this chapter we will help you get organized.

You may be anxious to put your first words on paper, but important preliminary work remains to be done. The steps described in this chapter can make the difference between a rewarding authoring experience and a frustrating one, a well-thought-out book and a poorly produced manuscript. The basic organizational plan in this book will provide direction, promote drive and uncover ability you never knew existed.

AFFIRMATIONS. Most of the successful people in the world are people with positive attitudes. They are the people who give themselves the “I can” message. Affirmations are positive statements made to yourself that affirm your

beliefs. Constant repetition will lead to their acceptance by the mind and establish them in your conscious and subconscious.

The best time for planning a book is while you're doing the dishes. — Agatha Christie

Sports psychologists use this technique for athletes. Think of the pole vaulter going for a new height. The athlete will stand at the beginning of the runway and repeat to himself, "I can go over the top." You need to go through the same process as you begin your project. Begin by making affirmations to yourself as you get up each morning and as you sit down to begin your project. Some statements you might use are:

"I am writing this book."

"My idea for this book is a good one."

"I am in control of my book project."

"I am following through with my book project."

"I am the successful author of a book."

"I am researching this project extensively."

"I am an author."

"My book is being published."

If you repeat these or appropriate affirmations daily, your subconscious will begin to accept them as truths and you will find it easier to take the appropriate action to achieve your goal.

SETTING GOALS that are measurable and have a timetable attached is another process used by successful people. When writing, it is easy to procrastinate. Goals and a timetable will help you stay on schedule and moving in the proper direction. Listing goals and objectives helps you break the project into smaller pieces, making it appear more manageable and realistic.

Just as you need a timetable, you need to be able to measure each step toward your goal. If your goal is very specific, objectives will often suggest themselves. If you want to lose 15 pounds in ten weeks, you will need to lose a pound and a half each week. If you want to write a first draft of 15 chapters in ten weeks, you will have to write an average of a chapter and a half each week.

If your goal is to complete the manuscript of a ten-chapter career counseling book for high school students in one year, some of your objectives might be:

- To spend three months on the preparation and research stage of the book

- For the first draft, to write one chapter per week
- To locate six peer reviewers—two high school counselors, one business personnel director, one concerned parent and two high school students

YOUR WRITING TIMETABLE You might like to adapt the following timetable to your own needs. After each objective write in a proposed completion date. This will help you see how you are doing. Adjust your plans and expectations if you are not able to keep up with this schedule.

(more)

Chapter 8

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

All you really need to create a book are paper and pencil. A desk with good lighting, a computer, photocopy machine, cordless telephone, scanner, Internet access, camera, reference books and a filing cabinet will make the job easier. When you shop for equipment, buy the best you can afford. You will have it for some time, and nothing is worse than a cheap tool which performs poorly or which breaks just when you need it. Plumbers have the best tools, and so should wordsmiths.

Office machinery have created a revolution in the process of gathering and writing information. The machines cut out the laborious, repetitive work and allow you to concentrate on the creative aspects of the writing project.

REFERENCE BOOKS. Dictionaries and other reference books are much less expensive at used-book stores. The books you should have are listed in Chapter Ten.

OFFICE FURNITURE, too, can be purchased much more cheaply secondhand. Make sure your desk and chair are good quality, comfortable and fit you.

We have discussed manual methods of writing a book. Now, since so many people have access to computers and other office machinery, we will describe their use in manuscript generation. Consider how the following items might be useful to you.

COPY MACHINE. The photocopy machine is a very useful tool for research. When setting off for the library in the search for information, always take a pocketful of coins for the copy machine. Photocopy the lists and other useful information you find rather than hand-copying them onto index cards. Use the same method when doing research at home. Build the information piles with these photocopied notes as described in Chapters Seven and Nine. Use the “pilot system”.

Of course, the copy machine is also useful for making duplicates of your manuscript. An extra copy of your work should always be stashed in a safe place. And you will need copies of sections of the manuscript to send off for peer review.

Use the local copy shop or purchase your own machine. To find a copy shop, get out the *Yellow Pages* and look under “Copying & Duplicating.” Call all the shops in your area to compare prices. Usually those shops situated near colleges are the most competitive.

Prices of copy machines have fallen tremendously in the last few years. If you are making copies on a daily basis, owning your own machine will pay for itself very quickly. Copies will be cheaper, you will save gas and, more important, you will save time. You will be able to work when you want to, and this means you will finish book sections and other projects sooner. It is also more private.

COMPUTERS. The computer is your most important tool. You will use it for Internet research, writing, typesetting and promotion. Get the best you can afford.

COMPUTER RESEARCH. Nearly all the resources, information and people you need to contact can be found on the Web. Today, many writers and researchers avoid the trip to the library and do all their research from home. Copying is easier. Much (non-copyrighted) material can be copy-and-pasted into the manuscript.

When Dan Poynter was revising *The Expert Witness Manual*, he needed the latest edition of the *Federal Rules of Evidence*. He found the document on the Cornell University web site. A quick copy and paste saved him a trip to the law library, photocopying and a lot of retyping.

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Chapter 9

HOW TO WRITE A BOOK

It is not our intention to teach you the mechanics of writing; there are far too many good books available on working with words. Some are listed in the Appendix. However, this chapter outlines a proven writing system and reveals a number of inside tricks, tips and techniques used by successful authors.

If you haven't already done so, you must decide where your talents lie and what parts of your project you want to perform by yourself. Are you an idea person or are you a writer? Do you enjoy writing or do you want to be a published author without the “pain” of writing? If you plan to do most of the writing yourself, try the following system. You may plan to hire help, but unless you are hiring a ghostwriter or contract writer, you will still do most of the

organization of the project yourself. Read this chapter in order to understand the system and consider the organization.

WRITING THE BOOK YOURSELF. Creating your own material is easy if you have a system; all it takes is organization and discipline. Following the system outlined below, creating copy becomes challenging fun and allows you to easily see the progress you are making—which is encouraging. This method may be of some help in writing fiction, but it was developed specifically for nonfiction.

Work is the price you pay for money.

TO GET STARTED, assemble your notes by cutting, sorting and taping. Take one chapter from your “pilot system” piles and lay the paper strips out in logical order. Connect the strips with Magic Transparent Tape. When adding your thoughts, never write on the back of a piece of paper. You want to be able to lay out all your materials where you can see them.

WRITE from the pasted strips. Read the whole pasted-up section to grasp the overall theme. Then boil the material down and use your own words. Think about the section and how you might improve the message. Can't you say it better with fewer words?

Do not just write from the strips sentence by sentence. Some of the material is not yours so that might be plagiarism. For organization, list the main points and rearrange the pieces. If you are having trouble with a section, arrange it as best you can and come back to it later. If you still cannot bring the message together with a few well-chosen sentences, you may have to call another expert for his or her explanation of the subject matter. If you cannot reach the colleague or are otherwise still having trouble with a section, put the pile back on the floor and pick up an easier, more interesting pile. Skip around.

Begin every story in the middle. The reader does not care how it begins, he want to get on with it. —Louis L'Amour.

You have selected your subject and your audience—do not lose sight of who you are writing for. Talk to your audience, follow your outline and make sure your manuscript says what you want it to say—completely but concisely

Many books should start off with an “action” chapter. Like the introductory part of a speech, the beginning of a book should arouse readers and whet their appetite. Too many authors want to start from the “beginning” and put a history chapter first. Readers want to know where to and how to. Do not lose them in the first chapter.

Do not start to write with Chapter One—to do so makes book writing look like an impossible mountain climb (with you at the very bottom). Select the chapter pile that looks the shortest, easiest or most fun. It may be the smallest pile or the most interesting one. Once you have written it, take the next most interesting chapter and so on. Soon you will be past the halfway mark. You will be encouraged and will gather momentum. Using this approach, you will

probably find yourself writing the first chapter last. This is as it should be, as the first chapter usually serves as an introduction. You cannot know what it should say until the rest of the work is drafted. Many authors wind up completely rewriting and reslanting the first chapter because they wrote it first.

Do not be concerned with your writing style the first time around. The important thing is to get your thoughts down. Often these first impressions are the best; they are complete, natural and believable. Later you will make corrections, additions and deletions. Major changes will require rewriting, while minor corrections will only need some proofing marks. Sentences and paragraphs will be added by cutting and pasting in the new material. With your book set up in loose-leaf binder form, it will be easy to add material.

(more)

Chapter 10

REVISE AND EDIT, edit, edit . . .

REVISING AND EDITING your manuscript involves refining, adding, rearranging and cutting material as well as checking punctuation and spelling. Some writers say drafting a book consists of 10 percent writing and 90 percent rewriting.

You will have to complete at least four drafts to make sure that your work is as thorough, concise, correct and readable as you can make it. These drafts are labeled as follows:

- First draft — rough draft
- Second draft(s) — content edit
- Third draft — peer review
- Fourth draft — copy edit

The first or rough draft was described in Chapter Nine. The object was to compile the research materials, put them into your own words and get them onto the hard disk. Now you can see where the holes are. The project is quantified and you can see what needs to be done.

Second draft: content edit. Perform this step yourself. It is not uncommon for this edit to take as much effort as writing the original manuscript. You must be extremely critical at this point, so take your time.

Look for places in the manuscript that need more information or more attention. Review all your original research material to make sure nothing has been left out. Do any further research necessary to fill the holes that appear. Delete the parts that are irrelevant to your purpose. Keep the theme and goal of your book in mind and do not stray from them. Clean up what you have written.

If at first you don't succeed, you are running about average. —M.H. Anderson.

Do not try to do all the rewriting at one time. Carry your manuscript with you in a binder and do what you can when you can. Editing can be fun, and it is far easier than the original writing. You have the rough draft on paper, now all you have to do is refine it. Skip around and work on whatever section interests you. Whenever you get a good idea, write it down and put it in the appropriate place in your three-ring binder.

Whenever you lose momentum, re-enter a page with a lot of handwritten notes. This clean-up work has a stimulating effect.

It may take several drafts to polish your work. So what is defined as the second draft could amount to a number of iterations (this book went through eight-second drafts).

SECOND DRAFT EVALUATION

You have completed the second draft editing stage when you can answer “yes” to all the following questions:

1. Does my manuscript have all the information needed to give the reader a clear understanding of the subject?
2. Is the information included the most current?
3. Is the manuscript easy to read and understand?
4. Is the order of the material logical and not redundant?
5. Is my manuscript targeted to the market I defined when beginning my book?

If you are writing a work of fiction, ask yourself these questions as well:

1. Are the times and locations of my story always clear?
2. Are my characters memorable and do they have distinct personalities?
3. Have any of my characters been lost in the manuscript? Will the reader have trouble tracking them?
4. Is there a strong conflict that continues to build interest?
5. Is my theme clear without being preachy?
6. Does the story entertain?

I can't understand how anyone can write without rewriting everything over and over again. I scarcely ever re-read my published writings, but if by chance I come across a page, it always strikes me: All this must be rewritten; this is how I should have written it. —Leo Tolstoy.

(more)

Chapter 11

THE END IS IN SIGHT Finishing the Manuscript

WHEN TO CONSIDER YOUR BOOK FINISHED. If the book is 100 percent accurate and 99 percent complete, go to press. That one last photo and that one extra item can wait for the revised edition. Waiting for one more piece can go on forever. If you delay the publishing, you may miss the market.

THE PROPER LENGTH OF A MANUSCRIPT is precisely what you need to cover the topic completely without being wordy or redundant. Many people feel 128 pages is a minimum and 256 might be a maximum. Some books are too long.

Nonfiction books are not just words. They may have illustrations, tables, resources, blank pages or other supplementary material. Make sure the book has enough “heft” to be considered a book but not so many pages that it becomes expensive to produce and threatening to the reader.

Many publishers still want the finished manuscript to be laser printed, double-spaced on one side of 8½" x 11" white paper.

Start each chapter about one-third of the way from the top of the page and make it appear just as you want it in the book by listing the chapter number and title. At the top of each page, type your name and the chapter/page number. Leave about a one-inch margin all around the page so you and the editor will have room for penciling in notes.

PROOFREADER'S MARKS are standardized to enable you to communicate clearly with your editor, typesetter and printer. A complete set of marks can be found in your dictionary under “proofreader’s marks.” Stick to the standard marks. If you make up your own, you will only confuse those who must understand them. Use these marks throughout the editing/proofreading process.

ARTWORK. Illustrations consist of line work and halftones. Line work is a clean black-on-white drawing without any shading. Line drawings may be pasted directly onto the boards unless their size must be enlarged or reduced. Halftones are made from photographs, or drawings with shading, by taking a photograph of them through a screen. You will notice the result by looking at a printed photograph through a magnifying glass. A screened photograph is composed of many tiny dots of various sizes (shading).

If you need line work and cannot draw, you can hire a commercial artist. Most typesetters have illustrators on their staffs or know some. These artists usually work inexpensively. See the collaboration chapter for a discussion of hiring and paying illustrators.

Your layout artist or printer may also have a large file or discs of “clip art,” and you may find something there you can use. Clip art drawings are provided commercially on a large variety of subjects that may be used without further copyright permission. However, most clip art seems dated. Many people lift art from reprints of old Sears catalogs and other publications where the copyright has expired. Depending on your subject, you may find useful drawings in certain military and government publications that are in the public domain.

(more)

Chapter 12

HOW DO YOU AUTHOR A BOOK WHEN YOU CAN'T WRITE?

There is a difference between being an *author* and being a *writer*. An author creates material, while a writer commits material to paper. There are many authors with a lifetime of experience and there are many very good writers who do not have the experience or expertise required to produce a book-length manuscript. The solution is to introduce these two types of people. Combining the knowledge of the expert/creator with the talent and training of the professional writer makes the odds of producing a superior product very favorable. Some people cannot write because they:

- Do not have enough time
- Do not like to write
- Consider themselves idea people
- Do not have the patience
- Do not have the training to be polished writers
- Cannot make the emotional commitment to this type of solitude and perseverance

Lee Iacocca like other celebrities did not write his two bestsellers all by himself; he had two different writers. And it was announced in 1998 that basketball star Shaquille O'Neal was "writing" a children's book for Scholastic, Inc. The title: *Shaq and the Beanstalk*.

If you cannot afford to take time from your career to become an expert writer, it may be more practical and cost-effective to leave the writing of the manuscript to a writing professional. If, for example, your "other" work pays you \$100 per hour, it does not make economic sense to spend time doing work you can buy for \$25. You may decide to hire a keyboarder, editor, co-author, ghostwriter or other collaborator.

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork. —Peter DeVries.

TEAM APPROACH. Behind most authors is a small army of support troops. They may be content editors, copy editors, technical editors, readers, researchers, indexers, proof-readers, literary scouts, agents, librarians, publisher's representatives, translators or anyone else who offers a service connected with book writing. You have to decide what kind of help you need and what you can afford. To help you, we will relate some actual partnership stories.

(more)

Chapter 13

FINDING AND WORKING WITH A WRITING PARTNER

If you have decided not to go it alone, here are some tips for finding and working with a collaborator.

WHAT TYPE OF PARTNER DO YOU WANT? Do you need a little light proofreading help? Does your work require major editing? Do you want someone you can work with to get your message down on paper in readable form? Re-evaluate your strengths and limitations by reviewing your author workplan chart in Chapter Two. Do you need a co-author, ghostwriter, contract writer, editor, researcher or keyboarder?

If your book is nonfiction, you want a nonfiction writer, not a poet. The applicant should have a track record; do not hire a novice. Look for someone with experience in writing books, not just short magazine articles.

Draft a job description, establish a work timetable and make up a rough contract. Clarify in your own mind what type of help you need and what you want to have done. Prepare for the interview by having a job description, work schedule and contract drafted.

DRAFTING THE JOB DESCRIPTION. Your job description should include the following:

1. Job title
2. Working title of the book
3. Required qualifications for the position
4. What examples of the applicant's work you would like to see
5. A draft of your work timetable
6. How the writer will be credited in the book
7. Duties of the applicant; if hired
8. Salary or remuneration schedule

WHERE TO FIND A WRITING PARTNER. Start by looking in the *Yellow Pages* under "Writers," "Editorial Services" "Secretarial Services" and "Word Processing Services"; try this right now. Notice how easy it is to find help. Check *Literary Market Place* under "Editorial Services." Here you will find a number of agencies and individuals offering a wide variety of collaborative help.

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Chapter 14

NEGOTIATING AND CONTRACTING WITH COLLABORATORS

Signing a contract with your collaborator may seem excessively businesslike—as though you do not trust each other. If your collaborator is a close friend or spouse, you may be tempted to skip this chapter altogether. Don't! Written agreements are often more important when people are close.

The object of a writing contract is to clarify the thinking and positions of both parties while arriving at a mutually beneficial agreement. You and your collaborator will be working together closely for a long time, so both of you have to feel the agreement is consistent and fair.

First-time writers will be eager to become published and may not be terribly concerned about the contract—initially. Many creative people are not business or commercially oriented. It is imperative that contract negotiation and signing be taken care of before the writing begins. Write a rough draft of the contract and ask your potential partner whether it is generally acceptable. Remember that people who write contracts slant them their way. You have an advantage if you draft the contract rather than accept a contract written by the other party. Here is a sample contract with a discussion of some of the items to be considered when an author (you) contracts with a writer.

A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's printed on. —Samuel Goldwyn, founder of MGM.

CONTRACT WRITER WORK AGREEMENT If your collaboration is with a contract writer or ghost, use this contract writer agreement and alter it to fit your situation. This draft will save time by helping you to clarify your own thinking. Then take it to a contract attorney who is familiar with copyright law and book publishing. Most lawyers work by the hour, and editing your contract will take less time than starting from scratch.

DRAFT OF A CONTRACT WRITER AGREEMENT

This agreement is made between _____ (the Writer) and _____ (the Author).

It is agreed that Writer is to write for Author a book approximately _____ words in _____ length, _____ provisionally titled _____.

It is agreed that the Author will supply all information that the Writer may require to complete the book.

(more)

Chapter 15

WRITING AND YOUR PERSONAL LIFE

For many people, writing a book is a stressful time. Tempers run short, relationships are strained and sleep is fitful. Some authors turn to pills or drink to help them cope with their situation. Some find their resistance to colds and other communicable diseases is lower during this time. What is so stressful about writing a book? Here are what some authors say:

“Writing is a very solitary endeavor. It is a tedious effort that requires total concentration.”

“The permanence of the written word in a book makes you vulnerable. A bad review can not only ruin your sales but it can undermine your self-esteem.”

“You have to be able to take criticism for a creative work that you have spent months or even years completing. You know this while you are writing.”

“As you get closer to the completion of your work there is an inability to think about anything else. You become addicted to getting it done. It puts a strain on your relationship and your health.”

I've given my memoirs far more thought than any of my marriages. You can't divorce a book. — Gloria Swanson

“I tend to punish myself mentally until I get it down on paper.”

“Writing? Oh it's easy—just sit down at your computer and open up a vein.”

Remember, not all stress is negative. The adrenaline rush that stress creates also helps your mind and body operate at their peak. Stress may be affecting your writing adversely if:

- You make every excuse you can to keep from sitting down at your computer.
- Any small distraction breaks your train of thought and you give up for the day.
- You are tense and irritable with those around you—family, friends, and colleagues.
- You can't relax and you are not sleeping well.
- You are over-indulging in food, cigarettes, alcohol or drugs.
- You wish you had never started this project.

If you find these things happening to you, you know it is time to take a break from the project, from a few days to a few weeks. It is time for a fresh perspective.

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Chapter 16

YOUR PUBLISHING OPTIONS

Once your book is written, you have to decide how to get it into print. Fortunately, there are several choices. Read about your options and then see the evaluation chart at the end of the chapter.

You may approach a large New York general publisher, a smaller specialized publisher or work with an agent. If you decide to self-publish, you will go to a

book printer. If you choose to go your own route, you will become one of the many “small presses.” As you expand your list of titles, you may find yourself with a thriving business. With drive and desire, you could one day even become a major conventional publisher. Now let’s take a look at the choices by starting with some definitions.

“PUBLISH” means to prepare and issue material for public distribution or sale, or “to place before the public.” The book does not have to be beautiful, it does not even have to sell, it needs only to be issued. Salability will depend upon the content, packaging and promotion.

A “PUBLISHER” is the one who puts up the money, the one who takes the financial risk. He or she has the book printed and then distributes it, hoping to make back more money than has been invested. The publisher may be a big New York firm or a first-time author but he or she is always the investor.

A “BOOK” by international standards is a publication with at least 49 pages not counting the covers. The U.S. Post Office will accept publications with eight or more printed pages for “book rate” postage. Books should not be confused with pamphlets, which have less than 49 pages, or periodicals. Magazines and newspapers are examples of periodicals. They are published regularly and usually carry advertising.

THE BOOK PUBLISHING INDUSTRY in the U.S. consists of more than 53,000 firms, by R. R. Bowker’s count, but there are many thousands more publishers who do not bother to apply for a listing. For example, over 130 book publishers are located in Santa Barbara, California, but the *Yellow Pages* list just 10 percent of these one- and two-person firms.

About 22 publishers are considered to be the major companies, and most of them are located in New York City. Altogether, more than 60,000 people are employed in book publishing in the U.S. Sales amount to nearly \$24-billion per year for the over 1.2-million active titles listed in *Books in Print*. Even though most of the titles are reprints of older books, the volume of brand new titles still amounts to over 300 each day.

THE BIG PUBLISHING FIRMS concentrate on books that anticipate audiences in the tens of thousands. Many houses were absorbed by much larger soap and oil companies in the 1970s but were sold in the early 1980s when the companies found that book publishing was not as predictably profitable as other media. A look at the economics of big publishing will help us to better understand their problems. It has been estimated that some 350,000 book-length manuscripts are written each year but that only 110,000 go into print. Many of the larger publishers receive 15,000 to 20,000 unsolicited manuscripts each year. Reading manuscripts takes an enormous amount of editorial time, and a very high percentage of the submissions are poorly written or do not fit the publisher’s line; they are a waste of editorial time. Simon and Schuster says that over the years it has published less than one percent of all the unsolicited manuscripts it has received and then with modest success.

All of us enjoy being the hot publisher of the moment—and in paperback that designation can change every three weeks. —Susan Petersen, President, Ballantine Books.

The 12,000 bookstores do not have the shelf space to display all of the 110,000 new (original and reprint) titles published each year, so they concentrate on the books that move the best. Consequently, most publishers figure that even after selecting the best manuscripts and pouring in the promotion money, only three books of ten will sell well, four will break even and three will be losers.

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Chapter 17

SELF-PUBLISHING

IN SELF-PUBLISHING, the author bypasses all the middlemen, deals directly with the printer and then handles the marketing and distribution. He or she maintains complete control over the product. The self-publisher invests time as well as money, but the rewards are greater. The self-publisher gets it all.

Self-publishing is not new. It is almost a tradition. Many authors have elected to go their own way after being turned down by regular publishers. Others have decided to go their own way from the beginning. Well-known self-publishers include Mark Twain, Zane Grey, Upton Sinclair, Carl Sandburg, James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Stephen Crane, Mary Baker Eddy, George Bernard Shaw, Edgar Allen Poe, Rudyard Kipling, Henry David Thoreau, Walt Whitman, Robert Ringer, Richard Nixon and many, many more.

IS YOUR BOOK A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR SELF-PUBLISHING? Some topics are especially likely to be successful in a self-published format. Your book might be if it is:

- Of interest to a specific group of people that you know how to reach.
- Likely to take a while to catch on with the public because it deals with a topic that is new or different.
- Of local or regional interest.
- Full of information needed by a certain group of people (cat owners, rose gardeners, do-it-yourselfers).
- Written specifically for your colleagues or your students.
- A philosophical or political treatise.

Since 1969, Dan Poynter has sold well over a million copies of his books, while Mindy Bingham's first book netted \$112,000 in its first year. Today Mindy's company, Academic Innovations, founded in 1990, has sales of over \$1.5 million with her 5 self-published titles. Naturally, they are strong advocates of self-publishing.

There are thousands of small author-publisher firms, many of them in California. Small press publishing is not “poverty publishing.” Some are growing and some are withering, but practically all are hanging on. They are proving that a self-published book is not inferior to one marketed by a big New York firm. Some self-publishers are very successful and some are making a lot of money.

Self-publishing is not difficult. In fact, it may even be easier than dealing with a publisher. The job of the publishing manager is not to perform every task, but to see that every task gets done. The self-publisher deals directly with the printer and handles as many of the editing, proofing, promotion and distribution tasks as he or she can. What he can't do, he farms out. Therefore, self-publishing may take on many forms depending on the author's interests, assets and abilities. It allows you to concentrate on those creative and business areas you find most challenging and fun.

Properly planned, there is little monetary risk in self-publishing. If you follow the plan, the only variable is the subject of the book. Poetry and fiction are difficult to sell, but most nonfiction topics sell and can be profitable. In fact, many authors publish themselves because this method provides the best return on their labor. The big publisher only gives the book a short time to flourish or fail. The self-publisher, on the other hand, uses the first year to build a solid market for a future of sustained sales. While a big publisher may sell only 5,000 copies total, the self-publisher can often count on sales of 5,000 or more each year, year after year. Here are eight good reasons to self-publish:

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Appendix

Specialized books on writing and publishing

Audiotapes

Magazines

Writers Conferences

Writers associations and clubs

Web sites for writers.