

# **The Insider's Guide to Starting Your Book:**

**12 Questions You Must Answer *Before***

**You Write Your First Word**

**Coaching Session #1**

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Sign up for Diane's monthly newsletter, containing more insider's tips on publishing and promoting your book you won't get anywhere else:

<http://www.wordstoprofit.com>

**Your Book Publishing Coach blog**

(writing tips, publishing pointers, book marketing tactics, promotion strategies):

<http://yourbookpublishingcoach.com>

**Diane's *Abundant Gifts* web site:**

[www.abundant-gifts.com](http://www.abundant-gifts.com)

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## The Insider's Guide to Starting Your Book

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## **A Word from Diane Eble, Your Book Publishing Coach**

Congratulations for taking your first step toward writing your book!

I mean it. Not many people get this far. Too many are content just to dream ... or too busy to give themselves and their dreams the attention they deserve. They're the ones who "die with the song still in them."

You are different. Not only are you smart enough to take action, but you understand that the quickest route to success in any endeavor is to get help from people who have successfully done what you want to do. Nobody should try to reinvent the wheel when not only wheels but turbocharged engines have been invented, and there are expert pilots equipped to get you where to want to go safely and quickly.

I am only one such pilot equipped to helping you get to your goal of successful author (whatever success means to you). One of my goals as a book publishing coach/consultant is to also introduce you along the way to other people who can also help you. Through me, you will have at your disposal a whole network of people who will help you write, publish, promote and sell your book, depending on your goals and needs.

This coaching session is the beginning of a customized plan of action to get you from where you are now, to where you want to be. Please answer the questions very honestly. That is the only way this document will help you find the publishing path that is right for you.

### **Why Are These Questions So Important?**

The questions in this manual will lay the groundwork for absolutely everything you do from here to get your book written, published and successfully sold. They will make your future tasks at least ten times easier. (If you get to the point where you need to write a book proposal, for instance, you will instantly see how these questions relate to that task, and will make the proposal almost write itself.)

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Different answers will lead to different ways to proceed, but remember—this is your book, to be written for your purposes.

Please know that this document is based on 27 years of publishing experience. More, actually, because I've also been privy to many stories from other authors, agents, editors, publicists and other publishing professionals and their stories.

When you are finished with this document, you may keep it and use it to map out your own next steps, based on research you do yourself. Or you may fax or email it back to me

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if you feel you would like my further input. Either way, you will be more equipped to become a successful author than 90 percent of the people who set out to write and publish a book. Many people who are already published have never bothered to answer these crucial questions—to their detriment.

Not thinking through these issues ahead of time inevitably leads to some kind of roadblock or even failure later on. Trust me—I learned the hard way!

Two suggestions before you start working your way through this manual.

First, I want you to think of some reward you will give yourself when you are finished answering these questions. Something very, very nice. An experience you rarely give yourself—perhaps a professional massage, or a weekend away with spouse, a special friend, or just on your own. A nice dinner at a high-class restaurant. Whatever—just, decide right now what reward you will give yourself when you are finished.

Why do you need to reward yourself? Because this document is no cake walk. I'm giving you an unvarnished view of the book publishing world—what you need to know now, before you start, to become a successful author.

When you have worked through these questions, you will know without a doubt whether publishing a book is right for you or not. I promise that. You will never “die with the song within you” because you will have made a wise choice, one way or another, as to whether this is the right path for you at this time.

Second, I want you to pace yourself. You will need to do that anyway to write your book, so why not start now? Give yourself a realistic time frame, both in terms of minutes or hours per session, and in terms of the date by which you hope to finish. So maybe you can spare two hours on the weekend, or half an hour every night before bed. Whatever. Pick a time commitment you can live with, and pace yourself accordingly.

Finally, your action steps—what I want you to respond to in writing—are spelled out in **bold** in a text box. At the end of this document, you will see the **Workbook** section in which you are to fill out your answers. Just print out those pages and fill them in as you go through this manual (or copy and paste your answers into the Workbook section, whichever is easier for you).

Okay, that's it. Let's get started!

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### #1: Why do I want to publish a book?

There are all sorts of reasons why a person wants to publish a book: Gain fame, make a fortune, create an impact, leave a legacy, give witness to an amazing story, teach others what you know, document family history, establish yourself as an expert, secure higher speaking or coaching fees, express yourself, gain recognition for your knowledge, and any number of other reasons.

Exercise 1.1. What are your reasons for wanting to write and publish a book? You may have one, two, or ten reasons. List them below. At this point, just **jot them down in no particular order**.

Exercise 1.2. Now, **go back and number them**, 1 being the most important reason, and so on to your least important reason.

This next exercise may seem like the same question as above. That's okay, please just do it.

Exercise 1.3. **Write out below what you hope to gain by becoming an author.** (**Important:** Write down whatever comes to mind first.)

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Now it's time for a little education.

Whatever your reasons for writing a book, when you seek to get it published you should clarify which group you fall into, as outlined below. Doing this is crucial to deciding which route to take.

**Reason #1 for getting published: To have a book out there with your name on it.**

You've always dreamed of this, and if you can make it happen, you'll be very, very happy.

This is a fine goal. An attainable goal. Just know that there are financial realities attached to it (which we will look at in Questions 8 and 9).

**Reason #2: To establish my expertise, as an adjunct to my current business.** This too is a very attainable and worthy goal. In this case, you are really talking about *creating an asset*, something that will earn you income to supplement and empower your current business. You can create as many of these assets as you like, once you get the hang of it. There are all sorts of ways to monetize your expertise and a book is one of the best.

Because this is your goal, you will approach everything else in a particular way—how you publish and market your book, how you promote and publicize it will be different from someone in either of the other two categories.

**Reason #3: To build a career as an author.** If this is your true desire, know that it will take a commitment, as you will soon see. You are talking about transitioning into the *career* of being an author, which may need to include speaking, constant promotion, development of other information products, etc. Question #11 will be especially important to you.

Exercise 1.4. **My prime motivation for getting published is:**

- Simply to have a book in print.
- To establish my expertise and create an asset for my current business
  - To build a career as an author.

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## #2: Who is my book for?

Unless you just want to write to express yourself (and you don't need to get published to do that), you are writing to communicate *to* someone.

Who is that someone?

In this case only, there is a “wrong” answer. That “wrong answer” is “everyone.”

Mostly because you can't market to “everyone.”

For instance, one could argue that my book, *Abundant Gifts*, is for “everyone.” But really, it's not. It's for people, usually women (most book buyers are women anyway), of a certain spiritual sensibility. They are open to spiritual things, hungry to experience God in their everyday life, imaginative, take a somewhat subjective vs. objective approach to life, and love stories. Some people “get” *Abundant Gifts* and attest that it's totally changed their lives. (Two people have even given me very valuable gifts just because of what it did for them.) Other people just can't “get into it.” That's okay. They are not my ideal audience.

Take a tip from one of the most successful books of all time: *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. While “everyone” could potentially buy this book, after the first one took off, the savvy authors and publisher realized the value of marketing to specific audiences. Now you have Chicken Soup books for practically any kind of “soul” imaginable, with no end in site.

So, who is your book for?

Here's an important distinction. Your book may actually have two different audiences: a buyer and a reader. Sometimes they're one and the same. But not always.

For instance, my book, *Men in Search of Work and the Women Who Love Them* was written for both men and women. However, the buyers were women.

If you have a children's book, your intended reader is a child, but the buyer would be the parent.

If you have a gift book, the buyer would be the person who would buy it and give it.

**Exercise 2.1. Imagine your ideal reader. Describe him or her in as much detail as you can.**

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Exercise 2.2. **Where is your ideal reader? How can he/she be reached?**

Exercise 2.3. **What else does your ideal reader buy?**

Exercise 2.4. **What does your ideal reader read?**

Exercise 2.5. **How does your ideal reader relate (or not) to the Internet?**

Exercise 2.6. **What else do you know about him or her? Age, income, hobbies, family status, etc.**

The more you know about your ideal reader, the more you can target both your writing and marketing toward him or her. This is the secret of good communication in general, and of creating and promoting best-selling books in particular.

Remember that your buyers may not be the same as your reader.

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Exercise 2.7. **Describe your buyers in the same ways you did your ideal reader.** Where are they, how can they be reached, why would they buy your book, for whom would they buy your book?

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### **#3: What is my book about?**

Of course, you have a certain kind of book in mind.

Is it a business book? What will it teach others to do?

A novel? What kind? Is it a romance, western, mystery, literary novel?

A how-to book? What does it teach others to do?

A children's book? What age range? Will there be illustrations?

A book of poetry? What are the poems largely about?

A cookbook? What kind?

You get the idea.

At this point, your book may be only a vague idea. That's okay. Write what you know now. Write freestyle, not worrying about how you sound. If you know how to "mind map," do so here. (This will be the topic of a future article in my newsletter. There's nothing like it to beat writer's block!)

Here's another trick if you're stuck. This is a proven "writer's block" buster that I promised you I would include in this coaching session. Even if you have no trouble writing freestyle or mind mapping, this is a fun exercise to do. I encourage you to try it. (By the way, you can use any of these three techniques—free writing, mind mapping, or the exercise below, to answer any of the other questions in this manual.)

For this, you will need a timer that you can set for 5 minutes.

Got your timer? Okay, here are the steps:

1. What three words come to mind when you think about your book? Write them down now. First three that come to your mind (no cheating!).
2. Set your timer for 5 minutes.
3. Now, write as fast as you can, without thinking, starting with any one of the three words and including the other two words somewhere in your first paragraph. Write whatever comes to mind.
4. When the timer goes off, stop. (Okay, I'll let you finish your sentence. But I'd like you to stop for now.)

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Whichever technique you use—freestyle, mind map, or the “three-word writing exercise,” describe your book now.

### Exercise 3.1. **My book is about ...**

#### Optional Exercise if you've already written your manuscript:

If your book is already done, I want you to write the front and back cover copy for your book. Imagine how it will look. Brainstorm titles (remember, titles are like headlines of an ad—they must capture attention and promise a benefit to the reader).

### Exercise 3.2. **Front Cover Copy** (feel free to add any graphic elements):

### Exercise 3.3. **Back Cover Copy:**

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**#4: Why will anyone buy my book?**

In order for someone to part with their hard-earned cash, they want to know “what’s in it for me?” How will my life benefit from buying and reading this book?

You must answer this question, or almost nothing else matters.

What is the number one benefit someone will get from reading your book? How will it improve their life, their health, their finances, their business, their self-esteem, their spiritual experience, or whatever it is you’re trying to do for people through your book?

Don’t only mention what they will learn, such as “they will learn how to network more effectively.” Ask yourself, “So what?” What will learning how to network more effectively do for them? Will it help them get promoted, build their business so they can bring in more income and build a more balanced, better lifestyle? Drill down as deep as you can with the benefits.

Again, use a brainstorming technique to come up with at least 10, preferably 20, benefits your book will give the reader. If you use the 3-word, 5-minute exercise, start with three benefits and write about them, then move on to as many more as you can think of.

Exercise 4.1 **The key benefits readers will get from my book are:**

## #5: What makes my book unique?

This is an all-important question, especially if you try to get a traditional publisher to publish your book. Marketing and sales people are familiar with the term USP—Unique Selling Proposition. Publicity people call it the “hook.” It’s the thing that your book does that no other book on your topic does.

Later on, you will have to do some research to fully answer this question. For now, I want you to think about why someone would buy your particular book. Imagine your book on a bookstore shelf, along with dozens of other titles on the same subject. What makes yours stand out?

Hint: look through the benefits you uncovered in the previous step. Which one stands out as the thing that makes your book unique?

For instance, with *MotherStyles*, Janet and I pointed out that most parenting books focus on the child. Ours is unique in that it focuses on the mother, helping her understand her strengths and weaknesses using a tool that’s been used in several other applications (the Myers-Briggs Temperament Indicator, or MBTI), but not in the context of understanding yourself as a parent. Not only did this USP get us published, but it’s the media hook that immediately captured all kinds of attention.

Another example: I wrote *Men in Search of Work and the Women Who Love Them* because there were no other books that dealt with the emotional issues men face when unemployed, no other book that dealt with the issue of underemployment, and no other book that spoke to what the wives experienced.

Exercise 5.1. **What makes my book unique, different from any other, is ...**

**#6: What will my book look like?**

Will your book be hardcover or paperback? Or will it be electronic—an ebook?

Does the binding need to be special, such as a cookbook with a spiral or lay-flat binding?

Is it something more complicated, such as a popu-up children's book?

What are the dimensions of your book?

You may not know these answers now. That's okay. But it would be helpful if you can begin envisioning what your book looks like. An easy way to do this is to visit a bookstore. Go to the section where your kind of book would be, and look at the format of other books like it. Notice that, for instance, business books are mostly hardcover or a 6" by 9" paperback (called trade paperback), while self-help books may be 5 ½" by 8 ½" or even smaller. Novels are either in hardback or smaller paperback (called mass paperback). Gift books run the gamut, but are often a smaller format.

The reason it's important to know what your book will look like is that you don't want it to be too different from others in your subject area. If it is, book buyers won't know what to do with it—and they won't order it if they don't know how to display it.

Also, the size and shape of your book will affect the cost of the printing. Depending on how you end up publishing, it may cost more or less to print certain formats.

Think too about the kind of cover design would work best. If you are published by a traditional cover, they will design it for you, but if you choose to self-publish in some way, you will need to think about the cover design.

**Exercise 6.1. I envision my book as:**

hardcover

softcover

Dimensions:

Special binding?

Cover format:

illustration

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- graphic only (i.e. no photos or illustration, just text treated graphically)
- photo treatment

### #7: Do I want to write it myself?

You may be surprised to know that writing a book yourself is only one of four possible ways to approach it.

You know you can hire a professional ghostwriter, but what about these two other ways to get a book written? They work especially well if you express yourself better speaking than writing:

- Record your ideas and hire someone to transcribe it.
- Speak your book into your computer, using voice recognition software. (I have never done this myself; you would need to research which software works best.)

Exercise 7.1. **Choose the option for getting your book written that most appeals to you:**

- I want to write it myself.
- I want to hire a ghostwriter.
- I want to speak my book into a recorder and hire someone to transcribe it.
- I want to speak my book into my computer and use voice recognition software.

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## **#8: What resources can I invest in my book?**

One of the reasons it's taken you this long to start writing your book is most likely that you don't think you have the time, support, or money to do so. Right?

Well, guess what? Nobody has the time! We're all too busy. As with any other worthwhile endeavor, you have to carve out the time. Squirrel away the money. Say no to some other things so you can say yes to this book that needs to be born.

You've heard the expression, "the only way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time." The only way to write your book is one step at a time.

Just as answering each of these questions is a step, so writing your book is a step-by-step process. I will break it down for you so that you can fit it into your life.

Becoming and being an author is a commitment. Notice I said, "Becoming and being and author," not, "writing a book." Writing the book is only one step. There is also the publishing process, the marketing and promotion and selling your book and anything that comes out of it.

Mark Victor Hansen said, "It's not a book. It's a business." That may seem scary to you. Just remember you are in charge. Your answer to the very first question defined what you want to get out of publishing your book. This answer will also determine the scope of your commitment.

If you want your book to be a lead generator for more business, your main tasks will be to write it, publish it, and incorporate it into your current business model.

If you want your book to become the cornerstone to an expanding information business, you're talking about transitioning yourself into a whole new career and a new business.

If your book's task is to get you higher speaking fees and give you something to sell at the back of the room, again your main task is to produce the book and incorporate it into what you're already doing.

So, revisit your answer to Question #1 and write down how much you can invest in your book

**Exercise 8.1. How much time do you have, realistically, to devote to your book?** How many hours per week, or hours/minutes per day, can you devote to getting the book written? Be as specific as possible, e.g. "I will write for one hour between 10 and 11

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p.m., 5 days a week, plus 3 hours on Saturday between 8 and 11 a.m. “ or “I will write on Friday afternoons from 3 to 6 p.m.”

Money is another issue. Do you have the funds to self-publish, if that seems the best way? Even if a traditional publisher accepts your book, it's likely you will need some funds to market and promote your book at some point. If you don't have the funds, how could you possibly get the needed funds (loan, investor, credit, etc.)?

Exercise 8.2. **How much money do you have to invest in this book?**

Exercise 8.3. **How can you get needed funds you don't now have?**

A less tangible but important resource needed to be a successful author is the emotional and practical support of other people. I always love to read authors' acknowledgement pages; it reminds me of what a team effort any successful book is.

You will need the support of others every step of the way. Emotional support as you write it. Practical support (babysitting, helping with meals and chores) so you can carve out the time to write. You'll want to run your book content by people who represent your ideal readers, for feedback. You'll need people to advise you as to the best resources for the different steps you need to take to publish your book. Once it's written, you'll need people to help promote your book.

Some writers join critique groups, form mastermind groups with other writers or business people, join professional organizations such as Publishers Marketing Association (PMA) or the Small Publishers Association of North America (SPAN).

Some hire coaches, consultants or industry professionals (such as a ghostwriter, editor, designer,, publicist, copywriter) who offer a variety of services to save you time and help you avoid the pitfalls along the way. The cost of their services and/or products is usually more than justified by what the highly specialized information you receive that can shave off years and dollars you would have wasted otherwise. Just pick your experts carefully, making sure they are reputable and truly have experience in whatever it is they're teaching.

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Exercise 8.4. **Who are the people who you know will support you now, and how can they help?**

Exercise 8.5. **What kinds of help do you envision you might need as you go along?**

Exercise 8.6. **Who are the people you can approach and ask for help, either now or in the future?** If you don't know specific people, you can describe their function, such as "book publishing coach" or "someone who knows printers" or "critique group" or "someone who can help me get media contacts."

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**#9: What do I need to get out of this book financially?**

If you hope to make money primarily from writing books, there are ways to do it. But quite frankly, it's best if you don't *need* to make money on your book, at least not right away. Usually you will have to first invest some cash. If in the prior question you realized you don't have many financial resources, there are still ways to get your book published and produced. Don't give up! But don't expect miracles, either.

Ideally, your book is part of a larger strategy of some kind that is designed to earn income. If you hope to make a good living writing books that are traditionally published, we need to talk. It can be done, but you need to get a realistic picture of just what it takes.

Exercise 9.1. **Do you *need* income from the book itself? Why?**

**If so, how quickly do you need it?**

**If not, how much money do you hope to make from this book, and in what kind of time frame?**

## #10: How will I promote and sell my book?

A fellow writer said to me once, “You need to spend at least as much time promoting your book after it’s written as you did writing it.”

I learned the truth of his words the hard way ... through seeing my books go out of print, because neither the publisher nor I did much to promote the book. I liked to write books, not market them—or so I thought. Now I realize that marketing and promoting can be a lot of fun, if you know what you’re doing, and tailor it to your own strengths.

If you think the publisher will do much to market or promote your book, I hate to burst your bubble. The truth is, no traditional publisher will even consider your nonfiction how-to book unless you have a very good marketing plan included in your proposal, and some evidence to back up that you will in fact do those things. The more you’re already doing to promote the information you hope to include in your book, the more interested a traditional publisher will be. Once your book is published, a good publisher will do their best to give it a strong launch, but then it will be up to you after a few months to sustain the momentum (or create it, if they drop the ball).

Note that having a detailed marketing plan ahead of time is less important for novels and children’s books. Traditional publishers will give more help for these. What they’ll look for most is the quality of the writing and whether it’s both like other successful books of its kind, and at the same time unique enough to spark new interest. A tricky balance, to be sure.

If you self-publish, then it’s clear no one else will market or promote the book but you.

Marketing and promotion of books and information is a huge topic and crucial part of being a successful author. If you sign up for my free Your Book Publishing Coach newsletter, each issue will contain advice and information on both topics. (Marketing and promotion are not exactly the same things, at least in my mind, so I cover both.) Also check out my blog at <http://yourbookpublishingcoach.com> regularly. (You can sign up to be notified of new posts.) I will be posting articles on resources that can be very valuable to you. By the way, when I recommend something on my blog, it’s only something or someone I’m personally familiar with—or I’ll tell you. There’s so much hype and garbage out there that you can spend a fortune on courses, seminars, and other information products that are junk.

For now, just think about ways you might be able to sell and market your book.

If you’re a speaker, that’s an easy way to sell books. In fact, there are inventive ways to sell it even before you get booked.

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If your book is fiction, you will have to find novel (sorry, couldn't help it) ways to market your book. Fiction is a bit of a different animal, as are children's books, poetry, cookbooks. There are ways to "crack the code," but the best way is to do everything you can starting now to increase the size of your personal network.

If you're a business person, think about ways you can begin to get better known in your industry, through networking, personal contacts, getting published in industry publications, getting publicity locally, starting a newsletter for clients/customers, and the like.

Exercise 10.1. **What are your current ideas on how you might reach my audience?**

Exercise 10.2. **Write down the names of all the people you can count on to read your book and rave about it to everyone they know.** (If this list is small now, that's okay. You will add to it all along the way as you keep going. That's why I'm leaving you plenty of space!)

Below are some methods of marketing. Some you may already be doing or at least know about, some you might not have heard of or know how to do if you have heard of them. I give them to you now just as a little tool to get you thinking about all the different ways you can market and promote your book. (There are actually many others, but these are the broad categories.) If you don't know much about it, rate it as a 5.

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Exercise 10.3. **How comfortable are you with each of the following** (rate on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being very comfortable, 5 not comfortable at all):

- public speaking/teaching
  - large groups
  - smaller groups
  - workshop setting
- writing newsletters
- writing sales-type copy
- being on the radio
- doing teleseminars
- being on the television
- personal networking
- being on a panel discussion
- promoting online (through my own writing)
- “cold calling” potential buyers—e.g. bookstore buyers, meeting planners for speaking engagements, people who serve the same market as you that you don’t know yet
- writing and publishing articles to promote your book
- writing press releases for the media
- creating podcasts on your topic
- joining organizations
- attending conferences and seminars
- following the media, especially news and talk shows
- keeping up with developments/trends in your field
- talking about your book to anyone you might think would be interested
- learning new things and taking action
- asking others for help when needed
- promoting other people’s work honestly
- visiting bookstores and staying abreast of other authors like you
- writing a regular column (online blog, newspaper, magazine)
- giving a talk about your book in a bookstore
- Other:

If all this seems a bit mind-boggling to you, don’t worry. Again I’ll remind you that it’s a step-by-step process.

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But I don't want to kid you, either. If you want to make money from your book, you must start thinking about some of this stuff. You must realize the commitment involved. Tom and Marilyn Ross, coauthors of *Jump Start Your Book Sales: A Money-making Guide for Authors, Independent Publishers and Small Presses*, assert that "Marketing begins the moment you have an idea, and it never stops."

You might as well know what you're getting into now, so you can make an informed decision as to whether this is a commitment you want to make, after all. More about that in the last question.

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## #11: What else can I sell?

This question too may puzzle you. I just made your brain jump through all kinds of hoops trying to figure out how you could sell your book, and now I want you to think about what *else* you can sell?

Yes.

I want you to actually prosper from your writing.

Let me do a little arithmetic with you for each of the possible scenarios.

**Scenario #1: Traditional Publishing.** If you manage to land a traditional or royalty publishing house contract, you usually receive what's called an advance payment. (Let's say it's \$10,000—a fairly good advance for a first-time author. Perhaps more typical is \$5000, but we'll be more positive.)

“Advance” means “advance against royalties.” If your book sells at \$14.95 (typical paperback trade price), you might net 50 cents per book.

This may shock you. Here's how it breaks down:

First of all, most contracts offer a percentage of “net” sales. This means after they give the bookstores or other outlets their discount. So, if the typical retailer (bookstore) discount is 45 percent (which it is), then you get a percentage of what's left: \$14.95 (price of your book) x .55 (your part after discount) = \$8.22.

Now, royalties are percentages of sales, typically 7.5 percent to 20 percent. (I have been told that for first-time authors “7.5 percent is typical,” so we'll go with that. If I were coaching you, I'd do my best to find you an agent that would get more for you.)

So, \$8.22 (your take so far after retailer's discount) x .075 (your royalty percentage) = \$.617, or 61 cents per book. (Publishers will deduct certain other expenses, so it may be even lower.)

Wait—we're not finished yet! If you published with a traditional publisher and managed to land a contract that gave an advance, you probably had an agent. Typical agent fees are 15 percent, off the top. So, you get 85 percent of your 61 cents, or 52 cents per book.

How many books will you have to sell to earn back your advance? 19,231. Is it easy to sell that many books? No—though it is quite possible, depending on your book, your

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efforts, your promotional savvy etc. Even if you do earn back your advance (most authors do not), you still only get 52 cents per book.

I remember how I felt when I heard best-selling author Robert Allen go through similar figures and conclude: “You need to consider your book your business card.”

I cried. But it woke me up to reality. And pointed me in the direction of finding ways to make money through my writing.

So, are the other options—self-publishing and e-books—any more promising?

**Scenario #2: Self-publishing.** With self-publishing, you do the work, you take the risks, and you reap the reward. *IF* you’re willing to do what it takes.

Let’s say you produce the book yourself and you sell it for \$14.95 per copy. If you print enough of them, you might get the cost down to \$2 or even \$1 per copy (depending on a number of factors, such as the cover, size etc.). How many would you have to sell to make your \$10,000? Only 772!

Of course, there are some trade-offs. You have to pay all the costs upfront. You have to do research on finding a good printer, filling out forms, finding a distributor. An alternative would be to find a reliable Print On Demand publisher who will do a quality job without ripping you off. (These can be hard to distinguish from a vanity publisher, who will definitely rip you off.)

You have to work doubly hard on self-promotion because you don’t have the credibility of a publishing house behind you. But with today’s technology, the self-publishing process is easier than ever, and does offer a viable option for many people.

**Scenario #3:** What about e-books? The economics are similar to self-publishing: you do the work, you reap the rewards. E-book publishing is great if you have specialized knowledge for an audience that is used to buying information online. E-book publishing can make you rich.

It doesn’t work, however, for certain kinds of books. Children’s books and fiction come readily to mind. Most people don’t get media coverage for their e-books. (Though a successful e-book can lead to a publishing contract.) So again, it all depends on what *you* want to do.

Now, why have I given you this lengthy introduction? Only to apprise you of the economic realities of publishing. Since you’ve gotten this far in your coaching session, I believe you can take it.

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Here's a secret I wish I had known years ago: *Your book is only the beginning of your relationship with your audience. You must have other things to give (sell) them if you want to make a living at it.*

Ouch! Did that hurt?

It doesn't have to.

You see, if you like to write, this is actually good news. There are many ways to make money with your writing, if you're open to learning new things and are fairly prolific. There are any number of ways to create multiple streams of income from information that you create, and it can all start with your book.

If you want your book to be part of your existing business (i.e. you're a speaker or business person), then your book is an asset you will create that will serve to bring you higher speaking fees, more business, higher-paying clients, etc. So your product mix includes your speaking or other products or services.

So, finally, let me ask:

**Exercise 11.1. What else can you sell? What other streams of income can come from your book?** (multi-media products, such as audio CD and/or video DVD, teleseminars, subscription audio series, home study courses, training programs, consulting etc.)

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## #12: What's my next step?

Congratulations again!

If you have worked through this document, it's almost time for that prize you promised yourself. Make sure you do whatever is necessary to fulfill your promise to yourself—set up an appointment, make travel arrangements, whatever.

Now, the question is, where do you go from here?

First, you must decide whether you want to proceed with publishing your book. Now that I've given you the sometimes hard realities of publishing, do you want to proceed? Do you want it badly enough to do whatever it takes?

If the answer is no, please—do not feel bad about it! There may be any number of very valid reasons for not proceeding now, or even at all.

The one thing I have never written is a novel. (Maybe because I've edited 26 of them, and I know how difficult it is to write a good one.) Still, someday I do want to write a novel of my own.

I am perfectly at peace with this “someday.” Why? Because I know that it truly is a matter of the timing not being right. I know what's involved, and I know now is not the right time, given the many factors of my current life.

This “peaceful someday” is very different from the “someday I'll write my book” that's simply an excuse. The difference is whether or not you've weighed all the factors.

You have now weighed all the factors. You have faced the sometimes hard realities of getting a book published.

Keep in mind that you have already worked through some of the hardest issues you will face in getting your book written and published.

How do you feel?

Are you ready to go full steam ahead (with help, of course, if needed)?

If so, then I can tell you with confidence that **you have what it takes to successfully publish a book.** Proceed with anticipation, eagerness, and confidence.

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If you feel overwhelmed ... don't despair yet. Give yourself some time to absorb all you've worked through, and see what comes after "overwhelmed." That will be a truer landing place for you. I encourage you to return this document to me anyway. You may feel it's impossible to continue, whereas I may see all kinds of options when I look at your answers.

If you have concluded that publishing isn't right for you t this time, please don't feel bad. Keep this document and revisit it when circumstances shift.

It took Janet Penley, my coauthor, 11 years before she was ready to writer *MotherStyles*. If she had written it before then, I doubt it would have been as good or successful a book. She needed the time and experience with her material, I needed the time and experience with publishing, to make it the ground-breaking and helpful book we believe it is.

Keep in mind, too, that there may still be some things you can do now to pave the way in the future, even if you feel you just can't devote the time to a book now.

For instance, you might decide to keep abreast of happenings in your field. Subscribe to the newsletters or journals, join an organization, keep jotting notes about your novel in a file or notebook. You never know when things may suddenly come together for you.

Jan Karon dreamed for years of quitting her advertising career to write fiction. She finally made the break, but it took her years. It then took more years of hard work not only writing, but promoting, to get to the best-seller status she enjoys today.

This is a journey, my friend. You've already traveled far on it.

Unless you've made a firm decision *not* to publish after all, you are now ready to put the pieces of the puzzle together and figure out the best way for you to meet your goals. I'd be privileged to be a part of that process.

If you haven't already checked out my web site, [www.wordstoprofit.com](http://www.wordstoprofit.com), I encourage you to do so. There are all sorts of resources there for you to check out, including my blog and newsletter archives. (Note: Do not get "Jump Start Your Book: 12 Questions You Must Answer Before You Write Your First Word"—it is essentially this workbook.)

**May I suggest that your next step be to sign up for a follow-up consult in which we go over your answers? You may do so by going to the following link:**

**<http://www.wordstoprofit.com/InsidersGuideSpecialOffer.html/>.**

If you're not sure you're ready for a coach, email me at [diane@wordstoprofit.com](mailto:diane@wordstoprofit.com) and ask for the coaching documents I send to clients. One of them is called, "Are You Ready

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for a Book Coach?” I also send other helpful resources to help you think through whether coaching is right for you at this time.

I hope you have enjoyed and benefited from this process of thinking through your book. Again, accept my heart-felt congratulations for getting this far. I truly am proud of you!

Sincerely,

*Diane Eble*

P.S. I hope to get to know you better and serve you in whatever way I can to help make your dream of being a published author come true. Visit <http://www.wordstoprofit.com> for many helpful resources to guide you on your way.

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