

**How To Write A
Book On Anything
In 14 Days or Less...
GUARANTEED!!**

A Professional's Guide

**The complete, no-holds-barred Success
System for getting your marketable book
written faster than you ever thought possible,
and succeeding as a published author!**

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Introduction

My friend, I envy you. As a person you've gained so much experience and expertise but now you're about to embark on an even bigger adventure. You're going to write your book. And frankly, who knows where that will lead. Certainly it will be an exercise in expression and achievement. But it could also be an enchanting marketing effort and perhaps even a profit center all by itself.

Whatever you want it to be, I'll be right here to help you achieve your goals.

I used the word 'envy' when I began this introduction because I remember the first time the lights went on for me and I started using the very techniques I had developed and gathered. It was an amazing experience. I get that same feeling every time I start writing using the techniques you're about to learn.

And every time I stand before an audience of professionals I feel that same envy. I know that by the time they've finished the seminar with me, they're all going to arrive at a writing position they only dreamed of.

I should also tell you that this manual is a work in progress. It is complete, just as it is, in your hands. It contains all the information you could want to write your book faster than you ever thought possible.

But it is a manual that is far better than the manual that was produced last year. Almost monthly, I make changes, offer improvements, and introduce new strategies and new ideas. I'm constantly trying to improve this success manual.

That's why it's produced in the form you see now. This manual format allows me to give you the latest version with the most up to the minute changes. You're not getting a manual that is years old, with antiquated information. You're getting the very latest thoughts. In many cases, you're reading much of what I was evolving just last week!!

No other manual can give you that kind of timeliness.

And it's for that very reason that I ask one concession from you. Don't get hung up on any spelling errors or grammatical imperfections. If they exist in your manual, they will be remedied in a later version. But if I waited until the text was perfect, I'd never be able to bring you this manual-because I'm constantly changing it.

I also want you to know that the technique for writing a book in 14 days applies to both fiction and non-fiction. Both can be written at unbelievable speeds.

Unfortunately, many times as you're reading along in a chapter, you'll get the distinct impression I'm talking about non-fiction when you want to write fiction. Or you'll be convinced that I'm talking about fiction, when you want to write non-fiction.

Please understand that in virtually every chapter of this manual, I'm talking about both fiction and non-fiction. But to do so simultaneously would require too many literary gymnastics. So I might focus on fiction to give you an example. But understand that the same technique would work for the non-fiction counterpart. And vice versa.

Please try the techniques. They work over and over again. I have students all over the world who are successfully writing their books with these techniques.

The ONLY reason you could possibly fail to write your book is that you decide not to follow the guidelines.

I look forward to seeing your book, and to hearing about your success!

Steve Manning

Chapter 1

Why you **MUST** write your book in the shortest possible time and create the greatest marketing tool you'll ever produce!

A Special Note:

Ever read a book and the first thing the author did was apologize for using the masculine pronoun, "he", throughout the book, hoping you'd understand that the author meant both genders. It was just that using one consistently was more convenient? Well, I haven't done that. But I have used the concept of non-fiction more than fiction. Not to worry. All the techniques in this system work equally well for both fiction and non-fiction. It was just more convenient to use one rather than trying to go back and forth.

He handed it to me and told me it was his number-one reason for success as a consultant. It was the reason he didn't have to make cold calls. The reason he never had to explain what he did. The reason he had instant credibility with clients and prospects alike.

He said he couldn't believe how many doors it opened for him, how many opportunities arose that hadn't been there before. It was the very basis for his high six-figure income.

"As soon as I had the book in hand it became an instant and incredibly powerful marketing tool for me," says Tom Stoyan, sales consultant. "Any time anyone asked me what I did I just handed them my book. I told them if they liked what was inside my book, then they'd like me, because that's who I am. And my consulting practice took off from there."

Why there simply isn't any better way to spend your marketing time if you're a consultant or a professional

If someone came to you with a machine and told you they could turn your \$5 bill into a \$10 bill, and after looking at the process you discovered it was legit and you really could buy \$10 for \$5, there wasn't any catch--in fact, they actually guaranteed your success--what would you do?

If you were a normal, breathing, thinking, human being, you'd get as many five-dollar bills as you could find. You'd clean out your bank account, mortgage your house, and borrow from banks, friends, and strangers. You'd set up partnerships, climb mountains, cash in your securities, and sell your furniture!

Well, that machine is what you've got in your hands right now. You've got a book, a machine, that will literally show you how to produce the most powerful marketing tool you or your business will ever encounter. Just days from now you'll have that marketing

tool and you'll be using it to harvest more revenue, bring in more clients, rocket your own career and experience more success than you may have thought possible.

Your book is the most important marketing tool you can have because it gives you and your business instant credibility. It differentiates you from every other consultant, or professional with whom you compete. It can be turned into a client magnet, a success vacuum that sucks up leads and deposits them right on your desk.

And so much more

Okay, you're not interested in writing a non-fiction book. You're much more interested in writing fiction.

How would your life be changed if this morning you had just appeared on Good Morning America? Or the Today Show, or Regis? What if you enjoyed the success of being a published author of fiction, with publishers eagerly waiting for your next book, so they could offer you substantial advances?

You'll find that information in this book as well! This writing success system has been designed to help you write your book, fiction or non-fiction, in the shortest period of time possible. If you want to write fiction, you're sure to realize the benefits that come with notoriety and celebrity. But let's spend a few moments letting you in on the lesser-known benefits of your non-fiction book.

How you are perceived when you've got your book

Think of it in your own terms. When you meet someone who has "written the book" on a subject, you "know" they're the expert. They're the person to go to if you've got a problem in their specialty. They've been anointed by the publishing industry. They've been on your favorite local and national radio shows and television programs. Hey, they're even celebrities.

You're also convinced they'll give you the value you're looking for through the business service they provide. If they're the experts, if they know more than anyone else, then their insights, their talents, their services, must be worth far more than everyone else's.

After all, if it weren't true, they wouldn't have a book out on the subject, right?

Look around. Are there other consultants with a book on that topic? Not likely. And if there are, this latest author is the one uppermost in your mind.

It's even part of our language: "She wrote the book on it," has become shorthand for saying she knows more about the subject than anyone else on the planet. And if you want the right information, the right answers to your questions and the solutions that make sense for you, she's the one you **MUST** contact!

So this consultant or professional has successfully done what every consultant or professional wants to do: Separated himself from all the competitors in the prospect's mind, in the minds of those who can logically be expected to send money or business their way.

That's what makes writing a book the most powerful marketing tool any consultant or professional can create. It gives you **EXACTLY** what you've been trying to develop with your marketing.

It creates massive awareness of your talents in the minds of those who can do you the most good--your clients and prospects. That awareness, that celebrity status, that credibility, can easily be translated into business, career success, profits, or any other advantage you can think of.

The author/professional is the expert. That's how clients and prospects view them. In our society, if someone publishes a book, that means someone in authority--an editor, or publisher-- declares that what the professional has to say is worthy of publication.

Your book is the ultimate endorsement, or referral or testimonial. And endorsements, referrals or testimonials eclipse all other marketing strategies!

If you were looking for an expert, chances are you wouldn't be looking at ads, or scouring your mailbox for a sales letter. You'd go to one of your friends and ask them if they knew anyone who was good. Someone whom they respected. Someone talented enough to do the job and give you the results you're looking for.

Your friend's recommendation would mean a lot to you. And if your friend were an expert in that specific area, the recommendation would be even more powerful.

So it is with your book. Your prospect is looking for a recommendation from someone in authority. Someone who's opinion they trust. In our society, anyone with celebrity status has a 'halo effect'. If they are a television personality or journalist, or if they're in a position of power, they must also know a great deal about what you're interested in.

That isn't logical, but that's reality. So if a publishing company decides to publish your book, if an editor decides to accept your manuscript, or if a radio or newspaper or television station decides to review your book or interview you, you've past the credibility test for your prospects. You have been anointed as THE expert in your field.

The publisher, or the media, has indirectly given your name, your business, as a referral to all who are listening, watching or reading--and may need your help. How else would you explain why a consultant gets on a program like Sally Jessy Rafael and, simply because she's the author of 'the book' on the subject, gets 30,000+ calls seeking her advice, her insight and her services!

It wasn't necessarily because she said anything insightful. She was tacitly endorsed by the host of the show, the show itself, and the book publisher.

If you're not getting these kinds of results with your present marketing system, then you MUST write your book right now!

Your prospects see you as the expert. As accomplished. As successful. Whether you are or not is completely irrelevant. They PERCEIVE you as successful. Therefore, you ARE successful.

And people want to deal with those who are ALREADY successful. That's why the late Howard Shenson, consultant to consultants, was constantly advising consultants and professionals to appear successful already, if they wanted to succeed! When was the last time you saw a brain surgeon knocking on doors trying to drum up business? "Excuse me sir. Do you, or any family member, need your brain operated on?" Not likely!

And still more benefits to you. Publicity, business opportunities and a never-ending income or prospect stream.

Why your book is the magic key for unlimited publicity and no-cost promotion

The media's favorite interview is the celebrity. Like it or not, when you become author of your own book, you also become a celebrity. You get all the natural benefits that go with celebrity status.

Let me give you an example. As the editor of a small trade magazine, I'm well known in a specific industry. Unknown beyond, but well known within. I stride into a hotel for an industry convention, and none of the hotel staff recognize me. That's to be expected. As I near the convention floor, people accost me, shaking my hand, asking me to stop for a moment, complimenting me on my last feature article. People whom I've never met in my life!! I'm into the convention and I'm being ushered to the complimentary buffet. A business person is asking me if I'd be available to test drive one of his new products, and on and on.

That kind of celebrity pays huge dividends in business relationships and new business for my other services. If your prospects know who you are, and respect you before you even start, doesn't that minimize your marketing efforts substantially? And if they hold you in awe, it's much easier to negotiate a fee, or a condition of a sales contract.

More to the point, with your book you're inviting potential clients to call you with their problems, or their challenges. You've created a never-ending stream of potential clients who have already verified in their own mind that you're the expert who can help them most.

I can't think of one single marketing strategy that will improve your business position better or faster than writing a book. So it just makes sense that you should write it in the shortest amount of time. You obtain instant expert status, recognition among most--if not all--of your prospects, and a constant flow of people who are calling you--rather than you calling them.

That's an enviable position to be in as a marketer.

When professionals ask me how they could best spend their next 14 days, I tell them their first task is to write the book that will promote them to the top of their profession.

With the techniques you'll discover in this book, it will take you only a matter of days to accomplish, and when you consider the alternatives, well, the choice is obvious.

If you've been using direct mail--which, by the way, I think is particularly effective at generating leads--you spend a lot of money every time you to send out a mailing.

And, you've still got the problem of proving your expertise to those limited few who receive, open, read and respond to your mailing. After the mailing has hit, you've got to start over again from square one.

Cold calling? You must be joking. In the time it takes you to write your book, you'll make, at best 1,000 cold calls. And, again, if you're lucky, you've got 30 or so people who are 'sort of' interested in what you have to offer.

Even then, after you've gone through those leads, you've got to start all over again.

Advertising? Yep, that works... sometimes. It also costs, and you've got to keep spending. Often the ads don't work or the leads don't pan out--and there's still that question of credibility. The professional who places an ad has nothing like the credibility of the published author.

Just a final comment about advertising. Advertising does work. And it works very well. If it hasn't worked for you, it's not because the concept of advertising is faulty. It's because your ad is faulty. But that's another book.

How your book develops a never-ending stream of profit potential for your business

Your book, however, just keeps on bringing them in, month after month, year after year. If you've published your book with a traditional publisher, you're actually MAKING money on this whole process, rather than spending it.

When you look at all your alternatives, your benefits, your costs and your long-term value, it's clear. If you spend just 14 days producing your book, (part-time) you'll be harvesting the benefits for months, maybe years, to come.

I can't tell you how often a professional tells me he or she would love to write their book. They already appreciate the value of the book. And they know if they had one ready, it would be the most important weapon in their marketing arsenal. "But," they whine, "We just don't have the time."

My first instinct is to say that regardless of how much time it takes, they should block the time on their calendar (you know, the one that's hanging on your wall with all the blank squares on it) and get on with the job at hand.

Instead, I offer them one of my seminars, usually as my guest, and suggest they invest just three hours to learn the techniques and skills necessary (the same techniques you'll be mastering in upcoming chapters) to write their book in just 14 days... or less.

You see, if you have the right techniques, you can get the job done easily. If you follow the strategy that has worked for others, time and time again, you'll get the same results my students and clients get.

Here's an example of what I mean. Let's say you bake. If you want to make a perfect apple pie, first find a recipe that will give you a great apple pie. The rest is simple.

No one is asking you to create your book-writing recipe from first principles. The recipe already exists. All you have to do is follow each step, in the right order, and 'hey presto', you'll always end up with a book.

In the chapters that follow, I'll give you the winning recipe that will always give you the book you need, in record time.

So you see, it really has nothing to do with having enough time to write your book. Starting now, you'll have that time. As soon as you finish reading this book, you'll wonder why it took you so long to write those first three pages you've had tucked away in your drawer for these many years.

Three weeks from now, you'll probably be starting your second book.

I've taught literally thousands of people how to write the book of their dreams, the book that will advance their career, earn them a promotion, or get them more prospects than they ever thought possible.

Just a few days ago, one of my students, David Dick from Toronto, called me and said the techniques I teach will even work for a doctoral dissertation.

I paused and asked him if he really did that. He said yes, (but it had taken him three weeks instead of just two). I asked him if he had given the dissertation to his professors and, again, David said yes. The upshot is that David now has Ph.D. after his name and his professors want me to give lectures to them, their colleagues and doctoral students!

"Why should I listen to this guy?"

Whenever I lecture, one of the first graphics I use states clearly "Why should I listen to this guy?" And you might be thinking the same thing.

I've committed my life to helping people just like you write more effectively, and to developing techniques and strategies that make it easy for you to accomplish your goal of writing your book.

I've been a professional journalist for almost two decades now. I've written more than 1600 feature articles for magazines, making me arguably one of the most prolific magazine writers on the continent. Eight books, more than 30 Special Reports, two audio albums and countless pieces of corporate communications.

I live to write, to develop the written word, to derive from it all that is possible and to use it effectively as the most important business tool we've ever been granted.

When you start from that position, is it any wonder you develop techniques that get the writing job done faster, faster, and faster still?

I've developed techniques that allow anyone, regardless of your writing background or history, to write effortlessly and easily. High school English teachers invite me in to lecture and I get standing ovations after I show students that writing can be fun, exciting and not the drudgery they thought it was.

More important is my commitment to your personal success. You see, I won't be happy until you've got your book written and you're using it as an effective marketing tool. As I say to so many who introduce me all over North America, my biggest goal is to help you write your book as quickly as possible, and to turn the experience into a sheer delight!

The concept of speed writing evolved by necessity, rather than through conscious effort. I was being asked to write more and more, produce more and more copy for corporate clients, write more magazine articles and larger reports for still more clients.

And all the time I was hoping to start writing books that, as I've already mentioned, I knew would put me front and center before my prospects.

One day I started a conversation with a young author named David Onely. His first novel was a fictional account about a space-shuttle disaster (long before the Challenger mishap). And it was doing quite well on the bookstands.

After exchanging a few banalities, mercenary that I am, I came right out and asked him how much money he had made from the book.

Bear in mind he had spent an entire year researching and writing his manuscript.

"You mean including the advance and all the royalties?"

"Yep!" I tried to look non-chalant.

"About \$10,000 all together..."

I'm sure David had more to say, but I really can't remember anything after that. \$10,000 for an entire year of work!

That was when I started developing a strategy that would have the best possible book produced in the shortest possible time.

If \$10,000 was all I could expect from the sale of a book, there was no way I could spend several months, let alone years, producing it.

The next element occurred one evening as I talked with my wife (a schoolteacher) who wanted to develop a better way to write extensive comments on her students' report cards. She was having difficulty developing different comments for each student.

I suggested that instead of trying to develop something off the top of her head, she simply write down questions that could be answered for every student. For example,

'How is the student doing academically?' Or 'Is the student progressing at an acceptable rate from the last report card?' Something like that.

"Now," I said, "you no longer have to think about what you want to say. Just answer the questions for each student. And when you're finished, erase the questions and you'll have lengthy, pertinent and useful comments.

Thus began the vital insight. That it is far easier to write in response to a question, than it is to create and present information.

Introducing: The Writing Response

The final key came when I encountered the work of writers Allen and Ellie De Ever, who introduced the idea of using three essential words to ignite the strategy I've developed called the Writer's Response. A strategy that obliterates writer's block and puts your writing ability on automatic pilot.

I've yet to have anyone see this technique, try it for themselves, and not be blown away by the simplicity and the productivity.

But the important insight is that this information is totally transferable. Teachable. In minutes, even those who thought they couldn't write, can produce volumes of intelligent, cogent, publishable material

You don't need any additional talent. Nor do you need special training other than what you'll find in this book. All that is required is that you have a realization of what a book will do for your professional career and be willing to apply some very basic principals to achieve the result.

Of course it may not take you just 14 days to write your first book. It may take you 20 days, maybe even 25, depending on how enthusiastically you approach the subject. Then again, you could be a quick study and be sitting with a manuscript in your hands just a week from now!

You'll also need a bit of time (for 5-minute practice rounds I'll show you) to get your mind into the writing swing and activate your own Writing Response.

Your second and third books (sounds interesting already, doesn't it) should take you no more than 14 days on average and perhaps even a bit less. Just for the record, the shortest time I've taken to write one of my books is six days. But that was working full out on my keyboard. Nevertheless, I'll show you a way to write your book easily, at even faster rates.

Oh, one more thing. You won't suffer any chest pains with these techniques. You won't be putting a strain on your marriage, nor will you have to devote yourself to writing 10 hours a day for those 14 days. In fact, you should be able to finish writing an entire book in under 30 hours, once you've mastered the entire Writing Response technique.

No, it doesn't matter whether you write by hand, or on the keyboard, or dictate, but I will be covering the advantages and disadvantages of all of those techniques. And, no, you don't have to sit for 30 hours straight just to get the writing done. One of the wonderful things about this strategy is that you can actually break your writing up into just five-minute intervals.

Still, there's one thing I can't provide for you. That's your commitment to start, continue and finish the job of writing your book. If you are a professional consultant or service provider who wants to succeed I shouldn't have to spend any more time explaining why the writing of your book should be a top priority for you.

Of course, one of the benefits of The Writing Response is that you really don't need that much motivation. One of my students called me a week or so after the class and told me I should advise future students that they wouldn't get much sleep. Not because she was that dedicated, but because once The Writing Response strategy kicks in, it's difficult to stop!

What qualifications must I have to write my book?

What you need to succeed as an author is vital information that your clients must have to accomplish their goals. And if you've got fresh information, or a fresh perspective on seasoned information, that can work in your favour as well.

If you've been a consultant for any length of time, you already have that pre-requisite covered. You already know far more about your specialty than any prospective client. By now, you have a profound and exact understanding of the information they need to succeed.

Now, here's a revelation that may shock quite a few readers. Often consultants will say they don't want to give away their information in a book because if they do, the prospect would have little reason to call them.

The truth, however, is just the opposite. The more information you distribute the more insightful knowledge you distribute to prospects, the more likely they are to call you to get more, or to get you to reiterate the same information.

You see, consultants actually get more business the more helpful they are to their clients and their prospects.

Next comes your attitude. You've got to be totally committed to helping your prospects get the results they so richly deserve. And if that can be conveyed through the pages of your book, great. But, more likely, your book will only point out the solution to the reader. The implementation strategy will still be yours to distribute as a consulting service.

You must also get used to a phrase Robert Ringer first coined in his book, "Winning Through Intimidation, back in the mid 70's: The Leapfrog Theory of success.

Meaning you don't have to 'pay your dues' as the saying goes in just about every industry. Instead, you can simply assume the position of being far more skilled and talented than any of your contemporaries.

This may sound somewhat arrogant, but it's true. There is absolutely no correlation between the value you provide to a customer and the length of time you've been a consultant.

So if you've been a consultant in your field for only a matter of weeks, but you want to establish your place far and away ahead of the pack, then write your book with the knowledge that the Leapfrog Theory of Success stands behind you. I'm not saying you don't have to be competent... you do. But there's no relationship between competency and length of time served.

Overall, you've got to be committed to helping your clients get the benefits your service provides. And if you can do that, your book will be a winner. You'll be able to truly exploit this fantastic marketing opportunity.

What if I can't think of anything to say?

One of the biggest challenges facing consultants and professionals is the ability to say something new or different. To distinguish themselves from the pack.

In most cases, simply restating the information you have is sufficient to overwhelm your prospects with your expertise in an area. Most consultants make the mistake of thinking what they know, everyone knows. That's not the case at all. So getting the basics out in your book is your first step. And yet another reason why you **MUST** write your book.

Next, I've no doubt you've been developing your own strategies, your own techniques, and you have a sheaf of your own experiences. Each unique, each special and each able to contribute to the success of your prospects efforts.

That kind of insight also makes you special and unique.

Then there's the element of creativity. Any professional can expand on the body of knowledge already out there, simply by asking themselves, 'what if'. What if we did that, or what would happen if we didn't to this?

When you expand the body of knowledge, you've gone beyond what is commonly known and you further distinguish your contribution and unique position in the industry.

Then there's the creation of what I call your own technology. 'Technology' was the term used, initially, by Tony Robbins to describe a specific strategy.

You can do exactly the same. In a later chapter I'll be giving you the rules for developing your own, unique, acronym, so you will be the first in your field to create and develop a new technology that may well become the rage in your industry. A technology that could help countless thousands.

Let me give you some examples: NLP, TQM (Total Quality Management), TCV (Total Customer Value), SPIN Selling, and so on. You'll learn exactly how you can develop your own acronym and turn it into an outstanding book, as well as a constant stream of publicity for yourself.

If you're still stuck for what to say when you write, let me give you just two words of advice: mind power. Your mind is far more powerful than you ever thought it could be. Ask it virtually anything and, like Aladdin's genie in the lamp, it will give you the results. There are more ideas in your particular field, whatever that field is, than you ever thought there could be. All you've got to do is assume that posture and start harvesting the results.

Helping you develop those topics, those ideas--pulling them from your mind until your mind yields an avalanche of new topics for you and your prospects, will be my job. Stay with me and you'll discover just how easy it can be.

If you're worried about not having the ability to write, I've got good news. You do. And it's yet another reason why you **MUST** begin to write your book. If you can put words on the page, regardless of the technique, then there are as many books inside of you as you want to produce. One, 10, 20, even 100 or more.

Most of us know we can write when we're seven or eight years old. And we hold on to that knowledge until we're in our mid to late teens. Then we're told, directly or indirectly, that writing is difficult. To do it correctly requires years of harsh study, monk-like dedication and a ferocious commitment to creativity.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

That child in you had it right. Writing is easy, it's fun, and it's always (literally) right at your fingertips.

As for creativity, believe me, you have more than your share. In fact, when I teach these methods at seminars, I prove to audience members that they can easily develop 30 different story ideas in about 60 seconds. And that's without any effort at all.

Your writing talent is unlimited if you'll take the most important step of effective writing: develop a non-critical attitude to what you produce. Perfectionism, self doubt, old memories will only serve to limit your writing talent and discourage you. I'll let you in on a secret: pretend you're the greatest writer in the world (don't tell anyone, just keep it to yourself) and you'll be astounded by how your writing improves.

Even more important, you must adopt a non-critical attitude AS you write. Too many people THINK when they write and the result is self doubt AS they are putting the words down on paper. My strategy, as you'll soon discover, is to get you writing as fast as you possibly can, without even thinking about going back to fix a word, or editing as you go.

This strategy will return time and time again throughout this book: the faster you write, the better you write. As soon as you learn that you CAN produce your book, that the writing process is well within your grasp, you owe it to yourself, and your prospects to get your information, your insight, your perspective out as quickly as possible.

A question of quality

If you're concerned about literary quality, if you're concerned that writing a book in just 14 days will produce something inferior, know this unassailable rule of life: There is no relationship between the amount of time you spend on something and the inherent quality or value within it.

That's not commonly known in our society. Especially with books. People naturally assume the longer you take to create something, the more value and the higher the quality.

Rossini's "Barber of Seville"--probably his greatest work--was composed in 14 days, Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" was produced in 72 hours, Mozart wrote most of his work without revision. In fact, most of the non-biological things you're most proud of creating in your life were probably accomplished in a matter of days.

Conversely, I've seen people work on a painting, a quilt, and, yes, they're writing for months or even years. And still obtained virtually no level of quality.

Just to ensure you don't run afoul of this myth in our society, after you've written your book in 14 days, simply tell everyone you've been working on the book for years. They'll instantly see the quality within the work.

How to create real literary value

If your book is going to have long-term value, it must be client focused. It must be oriented solely to helping your clients and your prospects get the results they want and need. There must be no skimping on this strategy. If you hold back, your readers will know.

You must also fill your book with as many reader benefits as you possibly can. That's the real criteria when it comes to the quality of your book.

In the realm of non-fiction, the reader judges the book not on how beautifully it reads (although that's always a nice bonus) but on the results he or she gets based on the information you present.

That means realizing your book must be constantly presenting solutions to reader and prospect problems. Your prospects buy and study your book not because they've nothing else to do with time or money. They want solutions. Your book's 'quality' level will be judged entirely on that basis.

Just to add a note of reality to the process, writing a book in 14 days does not include any research you have to do. Nor does it include editing. Nevertheless, I'll be giving you some wonderful information on both those topics so you'll minimize the research you do to the bare minimums. If you've ever found yourself mired in research, only to discover you don't have the information you need, sweep that thought from your mind. My research technology will give you the answers you need in record time, with the least amount of effort. It becomes CHILD'S PLAY.

As will my SNAP editing process. You'll be able to trim the fat from your writing and ensure your manuscript is tight, precise and focused.

To give you still more of a reality check, the actual writing of your book will be the easy part of accomplishing your goal. Selling your idea to an agent or a publisher, going the self-published route and promoting your book relentlessly will also be explained.

In short, this book is more than just your recipe for writing fast. What good is a manuscript that sleeps in your attic and collects dust? I want you to profit from it. And I'll have specific information to help you do just that.

After all, you're special. You have unique information your prospects need, and deserve. And you owe it both to yourself and to your prospects to succeed with the most aggressive marketing tool there is for consultants and professionals.

Sadly, there are consultants and professionals who haven't got a book to use as their biggest promotional tool. Sad, because every time I ask why, they never say because they think having one is a bad idea. They never tell me they don't write their book because they think it would be a bad investment of their marketing efforts.

They say they don't have time.

Well, now time is no longer an issue. Now you have precisely the time you need to write the book that will rocket you to business success. And in the pages that follow you'll get the recipe that will awaken this potential in you.

But I want to write Fiction!!

And many people do. I've yet to encounter the professional who will not pull me aside and tell me that, although non-fiction is the book that will do her the most good, fiction is where her heart is.

She won't rest until she writes and publishes that great romance, or that horror story, or the whodunit that's been seething within.

The good news is that all of the techniques, all of the strategies, all of the ideas in this book apply to both fiction and non-fiction. That's because the rationale behind buying a book is exactly the same for the reader... regardless of whether they want fiction or non-fiction.

They each want the book to give them something. With the non-fiction book, it's a piece of several pieces of information. With the fiction, it's a great story.

This book covers both. If there are differences, or if there are areas where one type of book must be considered separately from the other, I'll make sure you know.

In the next chapter, you'll discover...

Chapter 2

The 20 Great Myths and Mistakes Most Professionals, Consultants and Writers Make When They Begin Their Book, How You Can Avoid Them and why this could be the most liberating chapter you ever read in your life!

Every day dozens, sometimes hundreds, of professionals, consultants, and would-be writers, just like you, approach me and tell me they've got to write their book.

Then they tell me all the excuses they have for not writing it.

Even months after they've taken my course, spoken with me on the telephone, or heard me speak at their association meeting, and congratulated me on the outstanding techniques I've delivered, I'll ask them if they've written their book yet. And then out will come that barrage of excuses.

Usually I smile at them, encourage them to call me if they have any questions, then we part company... but they're still no further ahead.

One day, I could take it no longer. I was talking with a professional who wanted to write her book but just 'hadn't got around to it.'

"Haven't got around to it? Think of all the media you're missing out on. Think of all the business you're letting walk into the competitor's office, think of the notoriety, the credibility you're delaying. Whatever goals you've got right now could be made real, sooner if you had that book. And how much money are you leaving on the table every time you DO get business because you're not perceived as THE EXPERT in your field?"

"And if you don't want to be crass about it, if money doesn't mean a thing, then let's be altruistic. You could be helping hundreds, perhaps thousands, more people than you are right now if you could get your message out with a book.

"NOW tell me why you 'haven't got around to it'."

She stared at me. The lights had finally gone on. She immediately realized her objective *must* be writing that book in the shortest time possible.

So, while this chapter probably contains the least amount of 'how-to' information in the entire book, it may well be the most important. If it motivates you, if it strips you of any excuses you've got right now for not writing that book, then it's done its job. If it doesn't, then give me a call at 905-686-4891 and I'll be only too happy to yell at you, while I dispose of your own, individual, excuses.

1. You feel you just don't have enough time.

You're just flat out wrong on this one. You do have enough time. In fact, you have more than enough time. Take a look at all the professionals and consultants and fiction writers who have written books and used them to advance their career. I can tell you with 100% certainty that they have the same number of hours in the day as you do.

However, we get caught up in the demands of each day as it comes along. We make the mistake of hoping that tomorrow there will be a free hour or two so we can work on 'our book' only to discover tomorrow has just as many spontaneous fires to put out as there are today.

The only way you'll have the time required to write your book is if you block out the time needed to write your book. That means you schedule time for writing, just as you would if you had sold time to a client. Only the client is yourself.

If you turn to your calendar and schedule one hour, or 15 minutes or whatever, for tomorrow, and treat it with the same gravity and importance as you would a meeting with an important client, do it every day, your book WILL be written very quickly.

The next problem regarding time is that you think you need at least a couple of hours to do anything significant when it comes to writing. That's wrong. With the techniques you'll discover in this manual, you need no more than five minutes to advance your book significantly.

In our busy schedules, who can find a spare hour or two. Not me, and probably not you. But can you find five minutes while you're waiting in a lobby, or in an airport, or for your spouse? Can you find five minutes between appointments? Have you ever found yourself finished with one time-sensitive task five minutes before you had to get to the next time-sensitive task?

If you can see yourself having the odd five minutes free, then you've just discovered more than enough time to write your book.

Don't say you can't do it. I'll show you how.

And, if you're thinking about getting depressed regarding the length of time it will take you to actually write the book, if you can get excited about something 'you've heard' takes years before you see the result, you can put that one out to pasture as well.

Your book will take about 25 writing hours to produce, complete, from beginning to end. No, I'm not saying you must sit down at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning and continue writing until 9:00 a.m. Sunday, only to collapse in a heap until you recover. All I'm saying is you've got to commit a TOTAL of just 25 hours to your book to ensure its completion.

So, if you can write for two hours each day, your book will be finished 12.5 days from now. If you write for 1 hour and 48 minutes a day, you'll hit the magic 14-day schedule in the title of this book.

Of course, if you can write for only 10 minutes a day, (a leisurely pace to be sure) about the same time you devote to either shaving or putting on your make up, your book take a little longer to complete.

Interestingly, if you write for just 10 minutes a day, you could easily produce two books a year. Have you got a spare 10 minutes?

2 You're sure you have no writing ability

This is just flat out wrong! Everyone has writing ability. If you can talk, you can write. Good writing is just the literary version of good talking. If you've got something of interest to say, then you've got something of interest to write. The challenge you face is not developing writing ability, but thinking you MUST develop writing ability.

You've already got it. That's because the fundamental rule for effective writing is to write the way you talk. Any time I discover bad writing, the reason can always be traced

to a violation of this rule. Any time you read writing that is 'lousy', however you perceive that, the reason is the words don't sound as if someone is actually speaking them.

Writers, particularly professionals and consultants, always want to sound sophisticated when they write. They want their writing to be the best possible, so they do everything they can to use words they'd never use in common speech, to develop constructions their 8th grade teacher told them about, to be grammatically perfect, and more.

Unwittingly, they're actually moving further away from good writing.

Write the way you talk. The quality of your writing will go right through the roof!

I'm going to return to this point a little later on, but I wanted to underline the importance of this concept.

If you write the way you talk, you will always write well. If your writing is something less than what you want, then it's usually because you're not writing the way you talk.

Now a point you'll hear several times in this book. The faster you do something, usually, the better you'll do it. Those who do something really well, usually also do it very quickly.

If you write quickly, you will be writing the way you talk, and that means you'll be writing well. Therefore, **THE FASTER YOU WRITE, THE BETTER YOU WRITE!**

Here's another secret about writing ability. When you're explaining something, try to use simple language. Don't use big words just so you'll 'appear' sophisticated or intelligent. Those who understand the big words also understand the small words. Those who understand only the small words, will get the message very clearly if you use those small words.

3 You can't find a clear direction

Direction is another problem many writers have. They don't know where they're going, so they never know if they're headed in the right direction. And they certainly never know when they arrive.

That means your book is, at best, a series of wanderings with more than a few detours that lead to nowhere.

First, you've got to have a good topic for your book. With that in hand, you know exactly where you're headed. And the topic has to be specific enough to get the job done for the reader, but not so general that you're trying to be all things to all people. Leave that for your next book.

That has a lot to do with focus. If you know, going in, exactly what your book will be about, if you can focus just on the essential elements of your book, you won't wander. That means a more cogent, more concise offering for your reader. Your reader will enjoy the book more and will get a lot more from your writing.

But you've also got to have a solution for your reader if your book is non-fiction. After all, that's why your reader is reading your book. They're usually looking for a solution to a specific problem they have. You must give them a step-by-step account of exactly what they've got to do and also any of the challenges along the way. If you do that, you'll have a presentation that leaves the reader anxious for your next book.

For fiction, you must have a winning story, or plot: an entertaining series of events that leads the reader to the exact point you want him or her to be.

Only when you've got all those things in combination will you have your book direction nailed down. But if you don't, if you're missing one of those elements, then your book will be like what we see offered on the shelves of so many bookstores. Ethereal, unpredictable, and rambling. Not what the reader was looking for at all.

4 You don't have a deadline set for the accomplishment of your writing

Someday, someone is going to do a study on the impact of deadlines on our society. And when they do, they're going to discover deadlines are one of the essential ingredients to anyone's success.

In our society, the deadline is the great creator of productivity. The closer we get to a deadline, the more productive we become. If you don't believe me, think about the last time you had company coming over to visit. You knew they would be at your place tomorrow, but did you prepare? Not at all. When you suddenly realized they were scheduled to arrive in 90 minutes, things really started to happen.

The closer we get to a deadline, the more productive we become. You've probably already noticed that in your work, or in your academic days. Who started an essay three months before it was due? No one! But everyone was working at an astounding pace when the essay was due in three days.

Everyone is like that. And everyone suffers as a result. But it needn't be like that. You can actually use deadlines to your advantage. Especially in writing.

When I write, I know the closer I am to a deadline, the more productive I become. Ideas flow like water, where once there was only barren rock.

To take advantage of this fact of human nature, I strongly recommend you give yourself just five-minute deadlines. If you give yourself a five-minute deadline, you'll be productive almost from the word go. You know you'll be writing as fast as you can for the next five minutes. It's not so long that you can't do it. But it's long enough for you to accomplish great things.

Believe it or not, I can write about 300+ words in five minutes. Just about all of my students, even the beginners, can write at least 200.

Here's something you'll become even more aware of in the months and years ahead. As we move more and more towards the era of voice recognition (you talk while the computer 'listens' and transcribes) we will find the writing of a book even easier.

No longer will we have to 'try' to write as we talk, we'll actually be talking our book into our computers. This will dramatically reduce the time it takes to write a book and you'll easily be able to write 200+ words in just two minutes, rather than five!

5 You're not really clear about your topic

Yet another problem for the writer. A problem that goes hand in hand with not being focused is not being clear about your topic.

You're always writing in response to a problem the reader has, or an entertainment need. You'll have to identify the problem, and then work towards solving the problem, or providing for the need, for the reader.

If you're a consultant now, you already know what problems your potential clients are having. If you don't know about those problems, you better find out. It's not difficult to do. Just ask a few dozen what their biggest concerns or challenges are. They'll tell you.

Then you've got to provide the reader with the answers for those problems And they must be presented in a manner that is both unique and innovative, as well as memorable. I'll be telling you how to accomplish all of those things in the pages that lie ahead.

You see, you can't just answer the questions the way they are usually answered. If a person is having trouble studying, and you tell them they've got to spend more time at the desk with adequate lighting and preparation and a plan, well, that's the obvious answer but if you present it that way, you'll not get any notice from the reader. They've heard that before. What they want is a magic wand, a single pill, something they've never heard of before (a secret). And you'll be able to give them just that.

You've also got to present these answers in a simplified version. The simpler, the better. Simple answers are easier to remember and they've got a real powerful ancestor. Everyone knows the closer an answer comes to the truth, the simpler the answer always appears. The fewer the words, the more powerful the answer.

6 You don't have sufficient motivation to write a book

Motivation is another concern many professionals have when they write their book. They just can't maintain the writing discipline most writers would say you need. Good news on two fronts there. To begin with, the "writing Machine Method" doesn't require you to have that much motivation. You simply plug into all the elements and then turn the Writing Machine on.

So motivation becomes an after thought.

I've tried to make this method so simplistic you really don't need any motivation to accomplish the writing of your book.

Of course, if you still think you need motivation and you can't arouse it, it's because you've got impotent goals. Your goals don't motivate you to accomplish those things you want to accomplish. Revise those goals. Start to visualize the benefits of having written your book.

Writing your book, or books, could be the most important achievement of your life. Your book can open doors, bring you clients, give you the credibility and the notoriety to accomplish great things. I truly believe, outside of taking care of personal matters with your family, there's nothing more important than creating the books that will be your ticket to fame and success.

When you've got that kind of insight into your efforts, motivation becomes an easy element to bring into the writing mix.

7 You've tried, but your outline is never adequate

The outline is one of the biggest problems facing a writer. Not the creation of it, but the development of what to do after it's in front of you.

After you've created an outline you have, well, an outline. Not much more. You don't have any way of transforming that outline into a book. There are no guidelines at all. I've taken care of that with the Writing Machine Method. You aren't left simply with an outline. We go several steps beyond that.

You see, if you have an outline for your book, you're left with the feeling that the outline is, somehow, inadequate for your book. That's because it is.

You simply can't write a book from an outline. There isn't enough information there, no matter how detailed it is.

The structure for your book doesn't exist in an outline, nor does the focus. You want to move from your outline to your book in the shortest time possible, and that's what the Writing Machine technique does for you. You go from outline to several more steps that transform the unwieldy outline into a perfect map for the creation of your book from start to finish.

And there's virtually no effort involved. Believe it or not, all the thinking is done already when it comes time to transform your 'outline' to a book.

Wouldn't that be a nice change from what you may be used to, or from what you've encountered so far in your writing?

8 You don't believe you have sufficient talent to write a book.

Talent is another element professionals concern themselves with. Naturally, if you're a good consultant or professional, you know it takes a certain amount of talent to be successful in your chosen field.

In writing, however, the challenge is somewhat different. The writing process really requires little or no talent.

In fact, I often tell my students that the less talent they have for writing, the more likely they are to be a success in the field.

That's because people with writing 'talent' always get bogged down in the process of writing beautiful prose. You really don't want that for your book

What you want is clear thinking, the presentation of ideas in a logical structure. In most cases, your solution to a problem is presented in a step-by-step and followable manner.

That usually happens when you write as quickly as you possibly can and when you get out of the way of your mind. Simply write down the words as they flow from your brain.

Talent has nothing to do with that process.

Of course, when you finish your book I insist you tell everyone about the talent you have, that it was naturally acquired and that you pity all those writers out there who weren't born with the talent you have. Keep reality a secret. It helps the rest of us maintain the mystique.

Fiction writing--as you might suppose-- demands slightly more talent. But not much. I'm constantly amazed at how wonderfully competent any writer can sound if they just get out of the way of their brain and let the words flow--fiction or non-fiction.

9 You don't have a strategy for successfully writing your book

While talent is certainly not a prerequisite for writing your book, realize that you must have a strategy for successfully writing your book. That strategy will take you from the beginning to the end and every point in the middle. You must know exactly what your finished manuscript will look like long before you ever start writing.

The Writing Machine allows you to do just that.

Many of my colleagues believe the method I've developed limits their creative input. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The creative input takes place at the mental level. It takes place when you step aside from your mind and simply let it write the words it wants to.

That's where real creativity lurks. Often, when they do this successfully, my students will actually marvel at how creative they really are. Not surprising. When you hold the reins of a horse tight, you'll never allow it to perform to its maximum ability. But when loosen your grip... wondrous things happen.

When you have a strategy for your writing, you'll never wander from the point you want to make. You'll always be on track and displaying the information precisely.

Writers who have no strategy, who feel the right way to write a book is to simply sit down and begin the process, always come away unfulfilled, disappointed.

With a strategy, you'll never encounter the disappointment of writing 10 or even more pages only to find they don't 'fit' into the book and so they have to be disposed of.

The strategy will simply get you through the process of writing your book in the shortest possible time and give you the best possible book you have to offer.

10 You keep running up against 'writer's block'

If I had a nickel for every time I've heard a writer lament about 'writer's block' I'd be writing this from the sunny climes of the French Riviera.

Writers are almost obsessed with this malady that besets them virtually every day of their writing life.

They're always disappointed when I tell them writer's block is a device of their own creation. They make it. And they like it because it gives them an excuse for not writing.

For those who have never encountered it--and frankly I never have--let me explain what writer's block is, based on the symptoms so frequently displayed.

The writer wants to write, but can't think of what to write. He doesn't know where his story or his book is going, so he has no idea of what element is next. In fact, writer's block sets up a kind of paralysis.

Even the inadequate, although perfectly plausible, solution of stopping the story at that point and writing in a different part of the book, doesn't work. The writer is frozen in a trance-like state.

So, the writer simply assumes today is not the day for him or her to write because the cloud of 'writer's block' has descended.

Sad.

Writer's block is the result of very poor planning on the part of the writer. The problem arises only when the writer has no idea what to write next. If you told the writer what he wanted to say next, or what he wanted to explain, he'd have no problem writing it.

Therefore, one can only assume, correctly, that writer's block always stems from a poorly planned 'outline' for the book. If the outline were more precise, more exact, more detailed in its nature, telling the writer what comes next, there would be no writer's block!

11 Despite your convictions, there's an element of uncertainty you have to contend with.

Then there's the problem of uncertainty. The problem the writer faces when they're not sure about what they should say next.

This can take many forms. And it's always based in insecurity. Most consultants, who are established, don't have to worry about this. However, those starting out, or those not so secure in their own thinking, have the problem of uncertainty.

Is what they're writing correct? Will it always give the necessary solutions to the problem? Is it of a quality that will be accepted by colleagues, peers or potential clients?

Let's get this rubbish out of the road immediately.

If you're sincere about helping others, I can tell you what you're doing is about as good as it can get! You've already devoted hours to learning what you already know and realizing other facts as you go.

There's nothing wrong with the substance of your writing. It's perfectly usable. The moment you sit down to write a book, you should assume the substance of your material, no matter how new you are to the industry, will have some positive impact on the industry.

The quality will always be great. Why? Because the book written--regardless of the quality--is always infinitely better than the outstanding book that languishes in the mind of the layabout.

Of course, you've got to realize the longer you're in this industry, the more you'll have to say. But that's always going to be the case.

If you want to create certainty, simply adopt the personae of the certain person. Become certain. Pretend, for lack of a better phrase. And, as is so often the case, you will become what you think you are.

12 You feel inadequate and unworthy of the task

"But who am I to take on the task of writing a book on this topic?" I can hear your bleat even now. "I'm not worthy!" Hey! No one is asking you to lead the chosen people to the Promised Land. All you're doing is writing a book. Believe me, you're up to the task, you're worthy enough and you can do it very well.

Any potential ridicule you suffer because you write this book, will be more than offset by accolades you receive from its completion. Besides, if there are others more worthy, how come they haven't written their book? And if they have, how come they've written only one!

You become worthy if your book has sufficient benefits for the reader. Make sure you deliver on your promise, stated in the title. And make sure you deliver so many benefits in the pages of your book that your reader is, frankly, overwhelmed and delighted with what they get.

Those around you need to learn. And you've got the information they need.

Once again, it may come down to the adage of 'fake it until you make it' Pretend you have all the talents and worthiness you need to 'deserve' to write this book.

If that strikes you as odd, or if you're can't see the merit of that--if you want to wait until you truly 'know it all' before you write your book, realize you'll be waiting forever. Because the more you know, the more you realize you don't know. You'll never reach the point where you are the person who knows 'everything' there is to know about your topic.

That person doesn't exist and never will. Start where you are, with what you have and with what you know.

13 You don't have a starting point for your book.

Writing your book doesn't have to be difficult. Even the starting point is pretty much laid out for you. Too often consultants or professionals will tell me they don't know where to start writing. The reply:

Always start from the most interesting point. And if you don't know which point in your story is the most interesting, just think of several areas of your story, then do the old Miss America process.

You remember, where they start out with ten, then choose the best five, then the best three and finally they have the winner.

The same process is used to get to the most interesting point in your story. Start with 10 points you think are the most interesting. Out of those 10 which five are the best, then the best three and finally, you know exactly where you're going to start your story.

Now, why do I ask you always to start from the most interesting point? Because your reader (and for many that could start with the agent who will work on publishing your book), will see your first page first and want to be grabbed by the lapels and transported to a wondrous land of excitement and possibilities.

If you think he or she will wait until page 55 or page 12 or even page 2 before they dismiss your book as not worth the effort, you've got another think coming. Agents want to be transported from the very first paragraph, from the very first sentence of the first paragraph.

The only way you can do that is to start from the most exciting point of your story. To do otherwise is to run the risk of being dismissed as an author who can't get to the point quickly.

Always start from the most exciting point and your agent, editor and reader will always declare that your books are full of information and never full of fluff.

14 You don't have a finishing point

I still remember the conversation I had with the writer. He had an immense manuscript and was telling me he still had a lot of work to do on it before it would be finished.

"You mean editing?" I asked.

"No, some more writing."

It looked to me to be plenty thick enough and didn't need any more content. When I asked how long it would be before he finished, he didn't have any idea.

The purpose of writing a book is to write a book, it is not to keep on writing until you fall, exhausted, onto the floor. You must have a finishing point. You must know when you'll be through. Otherwise, you'll be writing forever.

If you don't know your destination, you'll never know when you arrive.

Your finishing point must be the complete solution of the specific problem your book sets out to solve. It is not supposed to be the definitive work on anything, nor is it designed to be a work that answers all the questions of the universe. If the reader wants still more information, they can get your subsequent book, or your special report on the matter in question.

And don't forget you've got to close with pure poetry so your reader knows you're ending and can appreciate the finish of your book. I'll get to that in a little while.

For now, it's enough that you should know your book doesn't go on forever. It will never answer every question there is, nor should you be trying to do so. You want it simply to answer the question it was designed for... and no more.

15 You're stuck in research

At least 10 per cent of my students in every class, and sometimes as high as 20 per cent, get stuck in the research trap. They can't write the book because they haven't done sufficient research. Unfortunately, they can never write the book because they'll never do 'sufficient' research. That's because no matter how much research they do, it will always open several doors to other areas... that need to be researched.

This 'dog-chasing-its-tail' problem can be easily solved... STOP IT!!

People get into the research trap because they have no idea what they're looking for. If they have no idea what they're looking for, then everything is possibly the answer.

You must know exactly what you're looking for down to the specific date or time or place. And that's all. The most important ingredient in successful research is knowing what you're looking for. The second most important ingredient is knowing that everything else is irrelevant and you don't need it for your book.

Next, the writer gets too comfortable doing research. Hey, as long as they're stuck in that library, they never have to come out and write. They've always got a viable excuse for not writing the book--they're doing the research essential for the book's success.

Sorry, that's not the way you do it. When we get to the research section of this book, you'll find there's a compelling way to do a minimum amount of research and it will leave you with little choice but to do the least amount of research possible and still have every single bit of essential research for your book--with not one irrelevant word.

Believe it or not, the secret lies neither in how much you research, nor in what you research, but rather in WHEN you research.

16 You're a perfectionist

Woe unto the perfectionist. They accomplish nothing, a perfect nothing and create nothing. They, too, are mired in a quagmire of their own creation.

I have just three words of advice for the perfectionist--GET OVER IT!!

Nothing is ever perfect. No will it ever be perfect. If you think any book you produce, if you think any book anyone has ever produced or ever will produce is likely to be perfect--or even approached perfection--you're wrong. Your book will be published, imperfect.

Once you realize that, you don't get as hung up on perfection. It's not that important.

Even the pursuit of trying to minimize the imperfections is flawed.

And frankly, it doesn't matter. If your book goes out with several flaws in it, welcome to the publishing club. If you think your book will be perfect, I'm looking forward to seeing it. It will be the first.

As for your writing career, let me give you some very sound advice I've already mentioned elsewhere. The completed mediocre book is infinitely more exciting than the uncompleted piece of perfection.

In fact, your book should not be perfect. It must leave the reader wanting to know more. It must leave the reader wanting to discover still more angles, and possibilities.

The very imperfection of your book, the incompleteness of your presentation, should leave the audience wanting to get hold of your next book as soon as possible.

As the great entertainer Al Jolson said, "Always leave them wanting more!" That's the way it should be with your book. Stop trying to perfect a book that will never be perfect.

If you struggle to perfect, you will never accomplish.

17 You're sure you 'can't write'

"But I just can't write!" comes the lament. Sure! I've seen so many people who will tell me they can't write, and when I tell them exactly what to do and give them a deadline of five minutes, they always shock themselves by coming up with something so powerful they're absolutely astonished.

If you can talk, you can write your book. If you can hold a pen, or talk into a tape recorder, or dictate to someone who can take shorthand, or if you can speak into a computer equipped with voice-recognition software, you can write a book.

But more powerful than that, if you can put together a few thoughts, you can write the most powerful book ever written on your subject, and you'll have a book people love to read again and again.

You don't have to be talented, you don't have to be skilled. All you need is the ability to put your thoughts on paper or on the computer screen.

If you don't believe me, stick with me for a few more pages. When we get to the five-minute-writing exercises, you'll see exactly what I mean.

If, when you begin writing your book, you feel the least bit self-conscious, here's what you do. Write your book, but don't tell anyone what you're doing. Just do it on your own, away from the prying eyes of family or friends. When the book is ready, in a few weeks, (or less) announce to one and all that you've been working on this book for several years (I always count the fanciful thought processes that start years before I ever decide to actually write a book). They'll line up to congratulate you.

"They laughed when I told them I was going to write a book, but when they saw the finished volume, their laughter turned to looks of amazement."

18 You don't know what readers want

This is a real concern. I'm not treating it nearly as glibly as I've treated the other members of this family. If you only THINK you now what your reader wants you're in for a big surprise. You'll likely miss the mark and create a great book, well written, on a subject no one cares about.

What you want is a book everyone wants and which catapults you to the level of fame and notoriety that ensures your success in other endeavors.

Start by asking people. Write down several titles of books you want to write. Which one of these, based solely on the title, would they want to buy and read?

Make sure you give these 100 or more people a selection of several titles you're skilled enough to write about. What you think is important is largely irrelevant. You want to write the book people want. You can't force them to read the book you think important.

Once you've got the book you want to write, know that the reader doesn't want to read your eloquent ruminations on that subject. They want answers. Solutions to their problems. You've got to focus on that relentlessly. If you waver for only a brief moment

from that prescription for success, you'll lose the reader and they'll reconsider the worth of the book they have in their hands.

You've got to continually be delivering both benefits and results to the reader. After they finish reading your book, their only complaint should be it was too short, they wish they could read another on the same subject that had as much information (surprise! that's your next book, and it will be available in about, oh, 14 days or so!).

You get that reaction only by packing your book with the solutions, the answers, the benefits, the results and the objectives the reader wants and thought they would get when they started reading your book.

19 You just CAN'T

For whatever reason, you believe, or have convinced yourself, you just can't write the book. Well, here's a news flash for you. If you don't write the book, I'll guarantee someone else, perhaps someone less qualified (certainly less worthy) will write the book.

I'll also guarantee they won't cover the topic or say it half as well as you could have. In our society there is something I call Literary Coincidence. Ten or more people all having the same idea for a book at the same time. Those who hesitate in the writing of their book are bound to be disappointed when they discover at least one individual who didn't hesitate.

But on a more altruistic level, what you've got to say is really important. It could well change the life or lives of your readers. You've got something that could add benefits to their lives, make them a better person, or make their lives easier to live or more enriched. You owe it to your fellow citizens to give them (or at least allow them to buy) this information.

Think of it as your duty, your obligation. Any reason you have for thinking you can't write the book should be easily countered by this rationale.

The fact is, you CAN write the book. It's not nearly as difficult as you think--as you've already found out from my seminar (if you attended) or from the pages you're about to read.

20 You think too much research is required

Listen, for the last time, will you please stop thinking about research. Your research into this topic--apart from what you've already done in your life, will be minimal. There will be hardly any effort required to research your book, because I'm going to reduce it to the smallest amount possible.

Research should be the least of your worries when you write a book. Even if you're thinking about writing a historical romance, it's still not that important. It's the story that plays the main role in any book. It's the benefits the readers get that play the main role in any non-fiction. Not the nagging little details.

For the cynics out there, yes, God is in the details. So let God take care of the details. As for you, you should be devoting yourself to writing the book and gaining all the success you know is out there. There is nothing redeeming, personally, or professionally, about doing research--especially research not essential for your book!

Chapter 3

Why your attitude must change, how to do it and what you'll get when you do.

I'm not going to play the game of motivation with you. You're much too sophisticated for that. I'm not going to get you all charged up and ready to write as many as 10 books in a single month... I've seen it done!

But I do want you to understand the importance of your attitude when you begin writing your book, and when you consider writing several books.

There really is no difference between the person who has written a book and the person who has not written a book... except for the obvious. The author is the person who has written a book, and the non-author, of course, has not.

It's really that simple and that straight forward. It has nothing to do with anything except the decision to write the book.

I'll also tell you that the person who writes a single book, can also write several books, even several dozen books. The reason is that they've decided it was possible.

When people ask me how I can continue to write so many books, what they're saying to me is that I must (according to their rules) reach a point of saturation. A point where there simply are no new books left 'in' me. But that's not true at all. I KNOW there are hundreds of books I can write, thousands of books I can write. And it's just a matter of opening my mind and letting it happen. Once I acknowledge that there are hundreds, thousands, of possible books awaiting my arrival, it's a far different matter than the challenge facing the person who believes they don't have a single book in their future.

This whole thing about attitude sounds remarkably glib. Like all you've got to do is 'think' you can write a book and it will happen. (By the way, that's NOT how the Writing Machine strategy operates.)

All I'm saying is you must realize it is an absolute truth for you. There are far more books you can write than you'll ever have time to produce.

How to blow up the single obstacle that's holding you back

I don't care what your goals are; I don't care what you want to do with your book, or how you want it to help in the accomplishment of your professional or personal objectives. There is only one reason you have yet to write the book... And that's procrastination.

Take a look at your written goals. Take a look at your dreams and your aspirations. Now consider what you must do to accomplish those dreams, goals, aspirations, etc. On the list of prerequisites, do you see the word 'procrastination'?

I didn't think so.

You must rid yourself of the procrastination monster once and for all. The Writing Machine concept will certainly help. It will get you from start to finish in record time, faster than you ever thought possible.

But what I can't do, unless I'm standing right beside you, is to get you to sit down and start the process.

Realize that all of the things you could have been, all of the honours or successes you could have had, that were missed, were all missed because of procrastination.

If you're not where you want to be with your book, your writing career, or any other career, it's because of procrastination.

Now some startling information about your procrastination... no one cares! You can procrastinate all you want, you'll just get the negative benefits of procrastination. Your colleagues don't care, your family really doesn't care, and your friends don't care. Frankly, I can't even care. That's the nature of procrastination. It has very little serious impact on others. And an overwhelming impact on the procrastinator.

The only one who really cares if you procrastinate is yourself. You really owe it to yourself to get all the benefits you really deserve for your career. Make the decision to slay the procrastination monster immediately. There are countless books on the subject. Many have excellent ideas. But make it a top priority for yourself right now.

How you can tap into an unlimited number of ideas and possibilities

There are an unlimited number of ideas, themes, book projects, stories, and possibilities in your mind, right now.

Most people don't believe that. They get 'stuck' because they can think of only one idea and no more. They wrongly conclude they have (at most) only one idea for a book and that any more are simply not available to them.

I don't really care if you're in that position now or not. Eventually, you'll conclude that there are no more ideas out there. Everyone gets to that point at one time or another.

When I was the successful editor of a business magazine serving a particular industry, I 'knew' that I had exhausted every idea there was for a potential article.

After I sat down and really thought about it, I had to conclude there was really no end to the number of articles I could write. There was no reason to stop.

Take a look at your favorite magazine and you'll see the same situation. How many months can they possibly go before they say the same thing twice? The answer is 'there is no limit.' Once you realize that, then you'll also realize there is no limit to the amount of information you can use in books, and there is no limit to the number of books you can produce for your readers.

So realize there is no limit to the number of ideas you can create, write about, and produce books for.

Creating the 'Recipe' for your book's success

Have you ever made an apple pie? If you have, you know there's a vital ingredient to the whole process that only a very few would dare do without. It's the recipe for that apple pie.

Even the best of bakers either have the recipe before them, or have it ingrained in their minds. They know exactly what to do, to what extent and when it must be done. That's a recipe for an apple pie.

And any baker, anywhere, can rest assured that if they follow the recipe for an apple pie, at the end of the process they'll always end up with an apple pie. They'll never end up with a pizza, or a loaf of bread, or a chair. They'll always end up with an apple pie.

The same is true for your book. If you want it to be a best seller, then you've got to have a recipe, or a strategy, for making it complete and successful.

Now, before you go off the deep end and declare I'm reducing the writing of a book to a 'formula' know this isn't my intention at all. I'm not trying to stifle your creativity.

I'm just trying to make the production of a good book inevitable for you... as you'll soon see. It's essential that you have a recipe for the success of your book. I'll prove that to you right now.

Have you ever encountered an author who wrote a fantastic book, acclaimed by all the critics and the market as well? Then the next book they produce is an absolute bomb? No body likes it at all. The third book is mediocre at best. But the fourth book they produce is a blockbuster best seller again, and everyone congratulates the author on finding their original 'form' and writing a great book yet again.

The fact is that the author had no idea what they were doing in the first place. They didn't have the recipe they needed for the great book.

They stumbled upon it for their first book, and then promptly assumed it would always be there.

It wasn't and their writing suffered as a result.

There are many writers, such as Stephen King, Danielle Steele, Ken Follett, and others, who simply can't help but write a best seller every time they put pen to paper. That's because they know what the recipe is. They're the literary equivalent of the master baker who has the recipe in her head.

I'll be showing you exactly what that recipe is and how you can capitalize on it time and time again.

How to Leap frog ahead of the competition and destroy the 'paying your dues' myth

This one is going to be difficult for many people to understand. Difficult because the strategy, or rather the dogma, is so well entrenched in our society that most people fight me tooth and nail on this concept. If you want to be among the many, by all means feel free.

Your argument against what I'm about to say won't be the first I've heard. I hope it will be among the most eloquent. But as far as logical, real-world thought is concerned, it will be dead wrong.

In our society there is a myth that before you can become something worthwhile, you must pay your dues. That's the phrase everyone uses... 'Pay your dues.' If you're uninitiated-count yourself lucky-I'll explain it for you.

The road to success (in whatever form you want) is paved with menial tasks, degrading jobs, a profound lack of success, and more than a few opportunities to chuck it all because no one realizes how wonderful you are.

Common dogma dictates you must endure this road of hard knocks, before you arrive on 'easy street' and get the recognition you so richly deserve.

The dogma is promoted, understandably, largely by those who have 'paid their dues' and finally arrived at the level of success they were looking for. Since they achieved success, using this route, they naturally assume this is the right, proper, and ONLY route to success. It is not. It has never been the only route, it is simply the path most traveled and the one held in greatest esteem-particularly by those who have trod it.

I admire those who follow this strategy. More specifically, I admire their tenacity. However, I'm deeply saddened by their stupidity and ignorance of the real world.

There are millions and millions of people who have fought the good fight, paid more than their share of dues, and ended up not on easy street, but rather skid row-or the equivalent, depending on which industry you're discussing.

Paying your dues is not an automatic ticket to writing success. It's not even a good ticket. In fact, it's a lousy ticket.

The trip takes too long, is uncomfortable at every point along the way, yields very few benefits, and you, more often than not, end up no where near the destination you had in mind when you began.

Your success as a writer-non-fiction or fiction-depends entirely on the value you give to your customers... not on the years you spend producing the work..

If you produce a manuscript that is really valuable, no one cares how long it took you to produce it. If it took you one week, one month, one year, one decade, the reader doesn't care. The reader cares only for the value you've offered.

If you don't have the credentials, the paid dues, years in the business or before the typewriter; if you've never published anything before, if you've no 'traditional' right to claim a position of authority... that's okay.

If you can give the value your readers want, then you can claim the position anyway!

Now, for all the cynics and skeptics out there, please note I did not say assume the position even though you have no right to it. I'm saying, simply, that if you have the value, if your writing gives the reader what she is looking for, then you can assume the position. Napoleon did not wait for the Pope to crown him Emperor. He grabbed the crown and placed it on his own head.

You've got to do that with your own writing. You've' got to declare yourself, to yourself and to your readers, the expert in the field about which you write. You've got to declare yourself the expert in the area of fiction you're writing. That, to any sane individual, sounds so outlandish that you'd never do it. But look what happens when you take that approach.

When you do that, something very strange happens. If there is no one in the field who has already assumed that mantel of expertise, then everyone will quickly agree you should have that mantel-except those few who are envious.

If there is already a 'title holder,' then assume the mantel and challenge that pretender to the throne. If you're good, you'll out write them. If you're not, you've garnered sufficient publicity for yourself to make the whole process worthwhile.

The six steps to becoming a powerful writer, even if you've never written before

Okay, now we get down to some of the nitty gritty in the writing process. And I'll lead off with two of the most prolific writers of our time... Isaac Asimov and Dame Barbara Cartland.

Isaac Asimov specialized in science fiction writing. He was both a good writer-by anyone's estimate-and a profoundly prolific writer (take a look at your nearest Guinness Book Of World Records to get an accurate picture).

Within an article in Writer's Digest (an article in which I was used as a source as well) Asimov was asked why he was so prolific. What was it that caused him to have such a wealth of writing, and good writing at that?

His answer was so profound, so useful to budding and veteran writers alike, that I was amazed virtually no one commented on it.

I suspect the answer was so simplistic everyone sloughed it off as a statement shrouded in self-effacing modesty. And missed the power in the words.

Said Asimov, "I guess I'm prolific because I have a simple and straightforward style."

So powerful are these words that they should be engraved in stone and placed on the desk of every writer who has ever thought about producing a book.

"I guess I'm prolific because I have a simple and straightforward style."

Ironically, Asimov could just as easily have said, "I guess I have a simple and straightforward style because I'm prolific."

The two statements are co-dependent.

If you want to be prolific, you must have a simple and straightforward style. But the only way you can have a simple and straightforward style... is to be prolific.

I'll explain...

Do you know ANYONE who does something well? If they do it well, chances are very good they also do it very quickly. Now, this does not mean in order to do something well, you should do it quickly. It means only that those who do something very well almost always do it quickly.

They have mastered the details, they have mastered the techniques, and they have mastered the process and the challenges. With this mastery comes proficiency. And proficiency will always be accompanied by speed.

Now my next point of explanation...

In order to write well, you should write the way you talk. If you write the way you talk, your writing will always be very understandable to the reader.

There will be no convoluted sentences. No \$25 words, where a 50-cent variety will suffice. There will be no misunderstanding. No misinterpretation. When you talk to friends, you don't 'put on airs' in your speech. You speak to be understood, and (with the exception of politicians) you usually are.

And just about every writing instructor, agent, editor, publisher and reader will tell you that if you write the way you talk, your manuscript will be infinitely more readable, publishable and sellable.

You've already mastered the art of talking. You've been doing it ever since you were a few months old, and you've been honing, practicing and developing your talking skills just about every day of your life!

You have mastered the details, you have mastered the techniques, and you have mastered the process and the challenges. With this mastery comes proficiency. And proficiency will always be accompanied by speed.

Does that last paragraph sound familiar? I used it to describe a person who has mastered a skill previously.

You talk relatively quickly because you know how to talk. You know what you want to say and how you want to say it.

Those who know how to do something well, usually do it quickly. You know how to talk, so you talk quickly (by that I mean you don't labour over every word). If you want to write well, write the way you talk...

The logic is inescapable. If you want to write well, write quickly. If you write quickly, you will always write the way you talk (you won't have time to develop the awkward sentence).

If you want to write well... write fast!

If you want to be prolific, write quickly.

If you want to write well, write quickly.

The faster you write, the better you write!

And now to the most prolific writer of our time, the late Dame Barbara Cartland. Cartland produced, when she was writing, about one book every week or so. A phenomenal pace. There are many who would argue that producing a book at that rate would yield no literature of any value. Yet her books are constant big sellers. The public has decided that, despite the speed with which they're produced, the books are quite enjoyable and quite worth the price on the cover.

Cartland's writing strategy is so simplistic, it's almost laughable. She knows what will happen in the story based on her many decades of reading and writing experience. It's an ingrained pattern she follows with every book.

Now, you don't have that ingrained pattern yet. So you'll need a map to get you from start to finish. We'll talk about that a little later.

Knowing where she's going in the book, she simply dictates to a series of three stenographers, who work in rotation, taking dictation and then transcribing.

Cartland not only writes the way she talks, she writes as she talks. She never has to worry about whether she's getting it right. She has no choice. If you talk your book (a subject I will not deal with in this manual) you can't help but write a very enjoyable manuscript. The reader will get the benefit of your actual voice, on paper.

Another writing maxim is one used by virtually every editor on the planet. If you want your writing to be more powerful, omit needless words.

Behold, if you write the way you talk... quickly... you will always omit needless words.

The final step is the easy one. If you have a plan for your writing, a map, then you'll know exactly what you want to write about at every step of the process.

With a writing map, you can produce a book in record time. A publishable manuscript faster than you ever thought possible.

How to create an overwhelming drive to write your book in the shortest time possible.

Now here's a bit of cold water for your otherwise inspired brow. Despite all of the information I've just given you... and I truly believe I've just given you one of the keys to the writing vault... I can't sit by your desk and force you to write your book.

I can only make it remarkably easy for you.

Yet, despite the tools you already have in your possession (and there will be more in the pages to come) you still may not actually get down to the process of writing your book.

This is unbelievable to me, but I see and hear about it daily.

That's also why, when many of my seminar attendees ask me how many of my students have actually written a book, I must confess, the answer is woefully low.

Not because they couldn't write their book, but simply because they chose not to.

So, right now, before we go on to another page, I want you to realize that you must be willing to write the book. There must be an intensity. There must be some sort of ambition, drive, motivation or inspiration that makes you want to write your book.

It doesn't have to be overwhelming. It need not be all consuming. But there must be some reason for you to write your book... otherwise-sadly-it will not be written.

The methods in this book allow you to produce a book that virtually writes itself... but you've still got to make it happen.

Become focused in your pursuit. Know why you're writing your book, and realize that in just a few days, you'll have that finished product in your hands.

Commit to writing for a certain period of time each day. It doesn't matter how long the period-five minutes, 10 minutes, or two hours. But you must remain consistent and persistent. If you're going to write for just 15 minutes each day, then make sure that is exactly what you do. Make sure you never skip a single day of writing. Because if you skip one day, it becomes that much easier to skip the second day. Profoundly easy to skip the third day and then, several months later, you're still without a book.

No, I don't care what time of day you write. If you feel better writing in the morning, great. If the evening feels better for you, then make that the time. But be consistent.

Frankly, it doesn't matter what time of the day you write. I'm just as comfortable writing in the morning as in the evening-those who feel there's a 'best time' for themselves are simply kidding themselves and not giving themselves enough credit for their ability.

But the daily ritual of sitting down and writing, even for a few minutes, will bring that book to reality in very short order.

At this point, of course, you're all dressed up with no place to go. The motivation is there, the drive is there, but you've not got the topic on which you want to write.

That's what the next chapter is devoted to. If you've already got the topic in mind, may I suggest you shelve it (your topic) momentarily and read what I've got to say on this topic.

Too many authors, in their zeal to begin, end up with a book no one wants. Had they simply taken a few moments to consider-or even better, had they simply had the opportunity to read the next chapter as you will-their lives would have been so much more rewarding.

That's why I've devoted chapter 4 to...

Chapter 4

How to select, develop or create the magic topic your readers, clients or prospects simply can't resist

Why the topic of your book selection is critical to your success

Your topic must fulfill your reader's want. And you should underscore the word want in your own mind. Not what he or she needs.

Your book will live or die depending on the topic you select. I can't point this out strongly enough. If you've got a topic no one wants to read about (and, by the way, that

happens a lot more often than you might think) you've got a dead book that no publisher will want to touch. And, even if you self-publish, you'll have an unbelievably tough time making it work.

If you've got the right 'want' you'll be separating yourself from all the other consultants and professionals out there. Those other consultants are the folks who focus on what they 'believe' to be important.

I've read their manuscripts. They fixate on what they know. They wrongly believe that because they've spent years learning about it, it automatically translates into what others 'want'. That's not true.

If you can constantly deliver books your clients or prospects want, then you can use your book as the key to virtually every element of success you desire.

Every successful consultant has a book that focuses on the client's wants. The client will always believe that if you deliver the wants in book form, you can certainly deliver them in a form more tangible for them... and lucrative for you.

If you spend your time working on a topic no one wants, you and your book will be relegated to the trash heap even before you leave the starting gate (or the printing press).

The selection of the wrong topic means hours of work for you and no, or little, reward. Work hard at selecting the right topic for your clients and potential clients.

How to use a 'magic wand' of topic selection

So, how do you select the right topic for your clients? The first step is to realize that regardless of your professional standing, or your position in the industry, you have an option of choosing any, and I mean any, topic you want.

That's often difficult for most writers to understand. They think they must choose a topic with which they're very familiar. That's often the case, but it's not obligatory. It helps the writing, but it's not essential

Start with your magic wand. Ask yourself, "If I was God and could give my readers whatever they desire, what would they most want to obtain?"

Think hard. You've just removed all the limitations for your topic. Now you're God. You can do anything. Produce a book that tells readers anything.

Remember how I phrased that statement. I didn't say, "What would I most want to tell my readers?" I said, "What would they most want to obtain?"

Selection of a great topic has nothing to do with you and your abilities. It has everything to do with your readers and potential readers.

This strategy also allows you to create the most desirable books possible. The readers don't have to fit into what you're offering. You can give them exactly what they want.

Don't limit yourself only to what you know. Part of the fun of creating winning books is knowing you must do a bit of research to get many of the facts. Part of the fun is approaching a new and interesting topic. A topic you may be approaching--in some measure--for the first time yourself.

That way you can be as intuitive and as curious as most of your readers.

How to suspend your own disbelief and develop revolutionary concepts

The development of outstanding topics for your books, and therefore outstanding books, begins when you stop limiting yourself. Stop saying you can't, or you don't know how.

Let me tell you about the book creation process at Rodale Press. These are the folks who publish many health and lifestyle books with contents seemingly impossible to believe... yet there they are.

Here's how it's done. They start in the advertising department and request that a book be produced. The advertising comes first.

Unencumbered by an actual book, the advertising department can run wild with all the ideas creative people normally get. The book will tell readers how to do this, how to do that, how to achieve this fantastic benefit. And each benefit, each statement of what the book will contain gets more and more fantastic, more and more outrageous, yet more and more intriguing for the potential reader. The reader barely believes that such information could actually exist. But if it does, he or she wants it, now!

“You’ll discover how to get 20 clients just 24 hours after you start reading the book, How to get virtually 50% of old clients actively buying from you again, and how to get every one of your competitors sending new clients to your door—even how to make money from clients who decide NOT to buy from you!!!”

Now, armed with a stack of benefits and features that will appear in this new book, the management goes to the editorial department and presents the advertising efforts... along with the request to 'write the book.'

After getting over the initial shock, and the initial tendency to say 'it can't be done,' the editorial department gets to work... and produces just that book.

That's exactly the approach you must bring to your book writing. You've got to believe anything is possible and you've got to believe you can create it. All that's required is a little time and a little effort.

When you're untethered by what you 'know' is possible, your imagination takes flight. And that will always yield the very best book. Don't limit yourself with what you know to be possible, or what you know you can produce. You're about to produce something magical... that's what makes a fantastic book.

Nobody wants another book on that same old topic. They want 'THE' book. The book that will give them the answers they've been looking for. That's what your book will be!

How to make sure your topic is a winner

There are dozens of ways to ensure your topic is one your clients want to read, but the very worst way is to actually ask your friends or peers and solicit their opinion. The next worst is to ask clients. Your peers will tell you anything you want to hear and your clients, well, they've got nothing to gain by giving you bad news. If you've got a client who is especially candid with his or her opinion, you should listen to them. Otherwise, probably not.

Nevertheless, you should use your current clients to give you feedback on your proposed topic. This is the way to do it.

First, develop a list of about 10 topics you're considering. Ask your clients if they'd do you a big favour. Out of the 10 proposed topics, could they please select the one they'd most like to see in print.

When they're given a choice, they'll give you the topic they really want to see most. That should be a great indicator of what to write about.

I do this with my seminar topics. At most seminars, I'll throw up an overhead with about 10 seminar topics I'm thinking about producing. I ask the audience to hold up their hand for the topic they'd like to see most.

I do this with about 1,000 seminar attendees and there is usually a clear winner. That's the topic I develop next.

You also want to make sure there are potential or future books in this area. You don't want to be a one-book wonder. You want the success of your second book to build on the success of your first book... and so on. If you have a topic so narrow it can't allow you to write a second book, that's not a great topic.

The irresistibility factor is very important. Even when I have a topic I feel comfortable with, I'll work it and rework it-using the audience vote method-until I have a topic my readers simply can't resist.

The two-step method for uncovering precisely what your clients want

There is a two-step method I've developed for finding out exactly what clients are looking for. First, I ask them, and then I tabulate responses.

As I mentioned above, you can't simply ask clients what they want in a book. They've never thought about it, they have no idea what's available to choose from, and they really have no vested interest in your book.

You've got to present them with choices. They'll say the second of the list is a topic they really need to know about, or really excites them.

Remember, we're playing a magic-wand game here. You don't have to limit yourself to what you actually know. Just give them options you think they'd like to have.

A further note. How you present these options is just as important as what you're presenting. If I give the audience a series of choices and one of them is, "How to run a business" that's not going to be greeted with much enthusiasm.

But if I say, "How to change your business from mediocre to magical in 30 days" that will get a lot more support.

When they choose, ask them why that choice is important to them. What they would hope to discover from that topic. And if they could be a bit more specific in their choice. You really want to nail them down about what they want.

Just because you've got a clear winner in the voting, that doesn't mean the second-, or third-place topics can't also appear in your book. You want the book to be as exciting as you can possibly make it. So use those other suggestions as well.

T.E.S.T The acronym to ensure you have the best topics possible

Of course you can always come up with a good list of topics without using the voting method. But what happens when you haven't got many clients? Or you don't talk to audiences?

Your first step is to **Talk** to a series of people who, if they are not your clients, you'd like them to be your clients. Tell them you're doing research for your book. That's the truth. People will be more than happy to talk to you.

You want to **Establish** what your client's needs are. They'll tell you that as well. Not on the first question, of course. I remember the marketing consultant who asked his clients what their biggest need was and the response was almost universal... more money. Or more profit.

Well, you must dig a little deeper to find out the real needs. Ask them to explain what they mean by 'more money' or a 'quick divorce settlement' or an easier way to achieve some benefit. They'll tell you.

After you've talked with your clients and established their needs, you've got to get to the **Specifics**. Narrow it to as precise a benefit as you can. That will help you in the writing process.

Finally, **Tabulate** what your clients say. If half of all your clients, or prospective clients, are looking for the same thing, you'd be doing everyone (including yourself) a grave disservice if you focused on anything else.

The master strategy for creating a topic your readers simply can't resist

You can create a topic your readers simply can't resist if you address your reader's biggest need. I'll prove it to you. What's your biggest need right now?. Go ahead; daydream a few seconds before you give me your answer. Have you got it yet? Great. Now, before you is the book entitled **How to Get (your biggest dream) in the Next Seven Days with the Resources You Already Have!**

It's a book you simply can't resist because it promises to give you exactly what you're looking for.

And therein lies a very important message. Don't try to give people everything they want, just focus on **one** of the things they want. That's the benefit the reader will get from the book. I've read countless books that promise the reader everything and come up short, both on the content side and on the credibility side. No book can give me everything... but maybe there is a book that will help me lose weight, or learn to swim, or get more clients, or get out of a messy custody battle, or buy a house more inexpensively... and so on.

You should also make sure of the solution to the problem. The steps that must be taken to get the benefit the book promises are easy to implement. The reader doesn't have to start off being either rich, or a genius, or highly positioned, in order to get what they're looking for... unless of course the majority of your potential readers ARE already in that situation.

The solution must be easily implemented, requiring no Herculean tasks, or biblical feats of will power. It's got to be do-able.

The three secrets to creating a never-ending stream of possible topics

You wouldn't believe the number of times an author, or a would-be author, will come to me and tell me the book he's just written is the be-all and end-all for the topic. This is unfortunate, I tell him, because if it's true, they've got nothing more to write. They can't write anything else because they've exhausted the topic. Sad (especially sad if the publisher enjoyed your book, because he or she was hoping for a second and third as well).

There is no end of topics for books you can write. There is no end because there is no end to the topics. The stream of useable topics ends only when your imaginations says it does.

Just ask yourself, after the reader has obtained the results he wants, what then? What is the next logical step for that person. There's your next book. Or perhaps your reader is likely to have some difficulty with the theory you've just put forth. You've got to develop a workbook, or a second book on the same topic telling them what they should have done if they didn't.

How many times have you seen a book entitled, "More of..." Simply because the first book was so good.

I used to encounter this all the time when I was writing a plethora of magazine articles. After writing a hundred or so of them in a few months, I'd be exhausted and certain there were simply no new topics on which to write. The fact was, there was no end of the topics and I hadn't even scratched the surface. But unless I got myself out of the mindset that the topics were all done, nothing would come.

How to get massive success by exploiting the success of others and create instant recognition for your book

Some outstanding success with books has arisen because authors have capitalized on the success of other books. They take a variation on the successful book's name and, hey presto, you've got name recognition. You can write "the one-minute...." or "The 7 habits of highly effective...." Or how about "the happy...." A title cannot be copyrighted. So you don't have to worry about the legalities of this practice. It's a cheap and effective way of getting a lot more recognition for your book than it would normally have.

Another method used frequently, sometimes not frequently enough, is the technique of getting endorsements from famous or credible people. Most people like to get three, maybe four endorsements. My recommendation is to get as many as you possibly can. Get 20, 30, 50 or more. If you want the ultimate example of this, get hold of a copy of the book, "Swim with the sharks..." by Harvey Mackay. I haven't counted all the endorsements at the front of that book, but he's got dozens of them. And because all these people say it's a wonderful book, you can bet the prospective buyers feel this book must be exceptional. Ironically, it doesn't cost anything to get an endorsement and you can get them very easily. I'll be telling you exactly how a little later in this manual.

The next technique is to follow a particular trend. If everyone is wondering "Where's the beef" or is wondering how you really do spell the word potato (thanks Dan Quayle) then that's a trend you can capitalize on for the topic or the title of your book.

How to create credibility for yourself instantly within your topic

Now, this is going to sound like heresy to many readers of this book. The topic of credibility, the topic of qualifications, the topic of experience always comes up when someone writes a book. People are always asking me, almost rhetorically, "shouldn't a writer know a lot about the topic before he or she writes about that topic?" In a perfect world, absolutely. In the real world, it really isn't necessary.

People aren't looking for your qualifications when they buy and read your book. They're looking for results. You aren't applying for a job-where your qualifications are paramount in many cases. It's just the results that people are looking for.

Now, if you're eminently qualified, you should say so right up front. If you've had outstanding results with people for the past two decades, then make sure you say that. But if you don't have any of those kinds of qualifications, simply remain silent and let your writing, or the information you're presenting, speak for itself.

I'm always astounded by the fact that the writing of the book is often the only criteria people need to shout their opinions from the highest mountain top (or highest rated television show). It's the book that gives you credibility, and not the credibility that makes the book.

As the average age of our population gets older, more and more people are turning away from 'professionals' and are becoming more devoted to those who are logical, but passionate, about what they're doing. They want to follow (read) the work of people who are enthusiastic about what they're doing.

In short, don't get hung up on qualifications. You don't need them to succeed with your book. Don't misunderstand me. They're nice, but they're not necessary.

I've spent a lot of time telling you how to get the best topics for your best-selling non-fiction book. If your interest is also in the area of best-selling fiction, take a look at Chapter 9. That's where you'll find a never-ending stream of fiction ideas and concepts.

Just remember that the topic you choose for your book is a lot more important than you might think. Not only does it allow reach the right reader, but it gives you a head start on...

Chapter 5

Creating and establishing your unique place in your industry

This single strategy will turn you and your book into a winning combination.

There's simply no doubt about it. If you've got the book on your topic, then you can bet your clients will be beating a path to your door. If you don't have the book, then you're just the same, no better no worse, than all the other professionals out there making things happen... or trying to. But if you've got the book, then you're the anointed one.

If you don't believe me, try it out on yourself. You've got to choose between two professionals to help you-either professionally or personally. One is listed in the yellow pages, or has an ad in the local paper, or has even been referred to you by a friend. The second has a book published and available for sale in the local bookstore and you hear about him or her on a local radio programme.

Who has more credibility? Who is the person you think will be most capable of helping you find a solution to your problem? Which one is 'better'?

The choice, of course, is purely subjective. And you'd be right if you said such a decision should be based on their experience, and what successful work they've done in the past.

But that's not how most of the population works. That's not how **you** think... if I caught you in an unguarded moment. You'd pick the person who has the most credibility and, in our society, fame is easily converted to credibility.

If you realize that, you can easily use it to your advantage. If you've written the book on your subject, you have an instant package of credibility that few of your competitors will be able to beat.

In our society, the person who has written the book has an instant advantage over the competitors who have not. If they've written the book, they **MUST** know more about the topic than others. That's because an impartial, authoritative source (the publisher) has chosen this author as being the best person to write this book. If people can't make up their own mind, they'll bow to the authority of an independent who is judged capable of deciding.

This whole process is hysterical when you think about it, because you could very well be your own publisher. That doesn't seem to matter to your prospective clients, however. A publisher has chosen you as the most suited to write this book on this topic.

So, taking a short cut to decision making, your prospective clients will save themselves a lot of time simply by going along with the decision already made by your publisher (you, in some cases).

And even if your book is traditionally published, a publisher rarely seeks out the best and most skilled professional to produce the book on the topic. They get a competent person who can do the job... that's it.

That's why a book can be absolutely instrumental to your success as a professional. If you've written the book, then you've got all the credibility, fame and references you could ever need to take your career to the heights of success.

I often wonder what would happen if a person in any field of endeavor (preferably in a large company) started writing and published books on his field. Then sent copies of his books to all those in the company above him. It wouldn't be long before he would quickly be rising through the ranks, surpassing anyone at or above his level.

And this leads me to my next point... the content of your book (sadly) is largely irrelevant to your level of success. I can't tell you how often I've encountered successful entrepreneurs, or authors, who owe their success in no small way to the books they've written. I can't tell you the number of authors whose success can be attributed **ONLY** to the books they've written, because they've got nothing else to sell. Yet, when I read their books, I find them not only lacking in content, but even lacking in readability. Some are nothing more than glorified workbooks, with more lines to be filled in by the reader, than actual text to be read and ideas to be implemented.

This will sound like heresy to you, and, frankly, I wish it was otherwise, but content in your book is largely irrelevant to your success. It's enough that you've written the book, and presented it in published form.

One of my students will frankly tell anyone listening that the book he has written is responsible for more than six figures of his annual income.

When a potential client calls him and asks him what he does, or can do, instead of getting into a long list of benefits, this author casually states, "Instead of me telling you

everything I can do for you, why don't I just send you a copy of 'my book.' If you like what's in there, you'll like me because that's what I'm all about."

The book goes out and my student gets a new client. Does the client ever read my student's book in its entirety? I sincerely doubt it. I've read his book from cover to cover. There's nothing even remotely earth shattering, innovative, or even new. It's the same old stuff you've already heard a thousand times before.

But because it's now in book form, it has a huge amount of credibility for the reader.

I imagine the recipient gets the book, is impressed by the fact that this guy actually does have a book, takes a look at the price in the upper right hand corner, reads all the glowing endorsements written by my student's friends, and decides that if my student has written a published book, it must be good, and so, too, must the author.

That's not right, and in a perfect world it wouldn't be the case. It's not a perfect world, so there's no reason why you shouldn't take advantage of this opportunity.

Of course, I hope the content of your non-fiction work is absolutely outstanding ... but, sadly, I've found that it's not necessary at all.

Create the revolution: for yourself and your book

Okay, here's the first step for creating the ultimate book in your industry. First, realize that no matter how mundane your topic, no matter how many other books on the same topic are out there, there's no reason why your book can't be the definitive book on the subject, the book everyone else refers to as the 'bible' on the topic.

And, that's what you should be trying to achieve. You don't want yet another book on the topic. You want to create the ultimate book on the topic. After you've created this book, it will be some time before any other professional even thinks about writing a similar book, or any book, on this topic.

And I don't care how many other books are out there on your topic; you must create the **ultimate** book on the topic. So if you're ready to write a book on time management, or sales strategies (both of which have never been touched on before, right?) or something unique, you'll be writing the best book possible.

First, get hold of the top five or ten books on your subject.

Unless your subject is a computer technology you've created yourself, or that just came out a few hours ago, chances are there are at least five books on bookstore shelves, profiling your topic.

As I said, get hold of the top five sellers in your category.

Read them.

There are chapters that will be common to all of them. They will be very repetitions as you read each book. Each one has a chapter on this, or each one has a chapter on that. But they all have those basic, core chapters.

Guess what? You should have those basic core chapters in your book as well. And include the same information. You want to be able to say to anyone who picks up your book that it is at least as good as everything else that's out there. The best way of doing that is to ensure you've covered the same ground other books have covered.

Now, if you've got some original insights into these basic topics, by all means, make sure you include that insight in these chapters. If your revolutionary insights are **ONLY**

in these areas, then you might want to wait until you arrive at a chapter where you can highlight your innovations and give them the full spotlight.

In any case, make sure you can justifiably say your book is at least as good as all the other books out there, because you've duplicated the information that's available in these books.

Now some insight into non-fiction books. We buy non-fiction books for one reason and for one reason only. We want to find the solution to a particular problem. We don't want to know everything about a particular subject, we just want to know the answer to the question that's bugging us.

When computer manuals first thumped onto the stage, their biggest problem was-and remains-their size. No one wanted to pay for, let alone read, all that information when all they really wanted was to simply make a graph, or use their computer modem.

Behold the popularity of the 'idiot' books and the 'dummy' books. These are books that offer the reader a very basic answer to a very basic question. Well, not too basic. After all, you've got to fill about 200 pages to make people see value in the book.

People will buy 200 pages because they want a thorough answer to a specific problem.

When you write your non-fiction book, you'll be giving people the answer to a very specific question.

Interestingly enough, everyone already knows the answer to this question. At least, all your peers know the answer to this question. If you're a lawyer, you and all of your peers know how to make a bullet-proof will, or a great employee contract, or how to set up a trust, and so on. The answer is obvious to just about everyone who's involved in the business.

But it's even more basic than that. No matter what you want to do in life, there is a basic answer about how you can do it effectively. The variety-and the reason a book becomes a best seller-is the way the information is packaged.

I'll give you another example. Everyone knows that if you want to lose weight, there's only one way to do it. You must exercise more and eat less. And I don't care how many times Richard Simons dances across the stage and shoves little cards into pictured slots, or how bombastic Susan Powter gets, the message is always the same. Eat less and exercise more. Everyone knows that. It's the presentation of that information that makes the difference.

If you want to be an expert on time management, the problem is how do I become more productive with the time I have in the day. Answer: work only on those things that yield the biggest benefit. It doesn't matter what system you use, or what other strategies you incorporate. If you work only on those items that give you the most results, then your productivity will soar.

It's sad, really, when you boil it down to that level. But I've found this to be the case no matter what kind of non-fiction book you're writing, or planning to write. The question is ubiquitous. The solution is obvious. It's how you present the solution that makes the book a best seller.

Creating your own 'technology'

Okay, let's create your own technology. This is a feat most people think is reserved only for the geniuses in our midst. Nice to have you aboard, fellow genius. If people ask

you how you developed your own special technology, make sure you tell them it just came to you in a flash of genius.

When I say technology, I mean a specific set of instructions, or steps that will bring your reader the results they're looking for, easily and quickly. Preferably without any effort at all.

If you've ever browsed the non-fiction books in your local bookstore, you'll see there are quite a few technologies out there. Stuff like NLP or SPIN selling and the like. Here's how we create your own technology.

What's the problem in your business that every one wants solved? You've heard it a million times. It's the question you hear over and over again. As soon as someone hears that you're involved with X technology or industry, they want to know how they can, Y.

This is the question your book will answer. This is also the question your technology will deal with. Knowing this question is fundamental to your developing a new technology that will revolutionize your industry.

Now, to make this example come to life for you, I guess I should use an actual example. The problem of me doing this is that you'll say, sure, the example works in the case I cite, but it's different for you. Your business is completely different. Yeah, right.

I don't care what business you're in; there is a recurrent question. It keeps coming up again, and again. If you're a trainer, the question is how can I get the most value for my training dollar... or something similar. That's the one we'll use for our example.

Keep that question in your head. Next, we have to come up with a clean four or five-letter word. It really doesn't matter what the word is, but the whole process works better if it's a decidedly forceful or aggressive word. Something like Power, or Energy, or Smart, or Laser. It could be 'plate' or 'chair,' I really don't care what it is. You just want the word to be memorable and-if at all possible-have something to do with your topic.

I've found that the word 'shoe,' or 'nose' (or any body part for that matter) is simply too funny and can't be used with a straight face. For our purposes, we're going to use the word CHALK.

Remember, it could be any word. The word itself doesn't matter.

Behold, this is the CHALK strategy for getting maximum value from your training dollar. It's an acronym. The "C" stands for... come on, there are no right or wrong answers here. We want to maximize the use of a training dollar, so naturally the C will stand for... um, er, how about "content" Remember, There are no right or wrong answers. I could just as easily have said class size, or calendar, or cash budget. It doesn't matter.

The "H" stands for Heart, or History-your choice. "A" stands for advantages, (or appropriateness, or anything else you want). The "L" stands for longevity. And the K stands for Konsistency (so sue me!)

Okay, here's Manning's CHALK strategy for training value.

C content

H history

A advantages

L longevity

K konsistency

Using these elements any one of your clients can maximize the value their get for every one of their training dollars.

You could use a chapter or two focusing on this technology or a chapter for each of the letters in the acronym. You could develop several technologies and spend a chapter on each one of them.

Now here's the amazing part. Does any other trainer have the CHALK strategy for maximizing training value? Of course not! We just invented it. Does any other trainer have anything even remotely like this? Of course not. Does any other trainer even have a technology of any kind that can be used when selling to a prospective client? Well, maybe two or three... and those are the trainers making the big bucks.

But now you have more than a technology... you're the "founder" of your new technology. You're the trainer who has developed this technology. You're so far advanced from other trainers in your field that you've left them far in the dust. While they're trying to do the same thing everyone else is doing, you're advancing the CHALK strategy for maximizing training value.

What does this sort of thing do for you in the eyes of your clients? You must be joking! Okay, for the two or three professionals who really can't see the obvious, let me walk you through the scenario.

You call a prospective client (or better yet, they call you) and they ask you why you're different. What separates you from every other trainer who's out there? Why should they choose you instead of anyone else?

Your response?

"Well, Mr. Jones, I'm the founder of the CHALK strategy for maximizing training value. You may have read about this technology in industry magazines. I've created a strategy no other trainer has that literally guarantees you will maximize the training value of every dollar you spend. No other trainer offers this technology to your staff."

Does this differentiate you from everyone else who's out there? You bet it does. It's the kind of stuff that every literary agent is looking for (they want to know what's different, not another book about the same old stuff). It's the kind of stuff that will give you an instant win with the publisher. They're also looking for the next new item to come along.

And it will give you the lead every time you talk to a potential client. They'll want to know exactly what you've got and how they can get hold of it.

Now, here's one more strategy before we leave the wonderful world of non-fiction. You've got to sell your non-fiction book right from the start. As soon as your potential reader picks up the book, they should be intrigued by what you're offering. We'll talk about the actual cover of your book later on, but I want you to know that your table of contents can be instrumental in selling your book to the man or woman who picks it off the shelf and starts to thumb through it.

Don't create a table of contents that tells the reader Chapter X is followed by Chapter XI. Tell them what is in Chapter X. What fascinating facts they're going to learn. And why they'd be out of their mind to let this book slip through their fingers. I'll give you an example right now.

Chapter 1

Why a trainer is essential for the success of your operation. When to use an outside trainer instead of an in-house trainer. What to expect from a trainer and how to know if you're getting your money's worth. What should the training contract say and what should you definitely avoid saying in this contract. And much, much more!

The objective of the TofC is to get the reader so intrigued that they simply must get the book to have all the wonderful stuff you're going to provide. It's what I call salt and you'll learn more about it when we get to chapter 10.

Your TofC is actually a very effective marketing tool and you spend a ton of time preparing it. The publisher or agent won't want to read your whole manuscript to find out what's in it. They'll just look at your TofC. So it's actually a sales piece for your book-to both the publisher or agent, and the book buyer.

Chapter 6

Mastering the strategy for writing your book in just 14 days or less

Here are all the details you'll need to make it happen faster than you ever thought possible...

Before we get started, there's something you really should know. It is the very basis of speedwriting and it's a concept that all my audience members, no matter what their age, or their background, always fight me on...

They don't believe you can actually write a book in 14 days. They don't believe it's true. They don't believe it applies to them and they don't believe it will result in unbelievable productivity.

I'll prove it to you in a very few minutes, but I want you to know that if you don't believe what I'm saying... well, you're just normal. And if you continue to disbelieve, then you'll remain normal. By that I mean you'll remain an unpublished author. But if you will just suspend disbelief for a few minutes. If you'll read this chapter, and the next few, and simply take my information on faith... until you can actually put it into practice and see the results for yourself... then you'll harvest a wealth of benefits that will help you in your writing from this day forward.

The concept I want to introduce you to is the very basis, the foundation, of speedwriting. And it came to me as I was reading an article by one of my seminar attendees Robert W. Bly. He was going over an interview with one of the most prolific writers of our time, Isaac Asimov. Asimov was asked why, what was the reason, he was so incredibly prolific.

In a glib, off the cuff, response that seemed to go over the heads of all who read the piece, Asimov replied that he believed he was prolific because he had a simple and straightforward style.

So powerful was this comment that I wrote it down and thought about it constantly for several days. Finally, like an epiphany, I realized the truth only partially revealed by Asimov's comments.

He was not prolific because he had a simple and straightforward style, nor did he have a straightforward style because he was prolific-as I later believed. The truth was that speedwriting and a simple and straightforward style were inextricably linked. One was both the cause and the effect of the other.

Asimov was prolific because he had a simple and straightforward style, but he could have a simple and straightforward style only because he was prolific! Each depended on the other.

Said another way; here is the truth about speedwriting. The faster you write the more simple and straightforward will be your style. It has to be. Style becomes convoluted, unintelligible, and muddled, only when we start spending time thinking about what we want to write, how we want to say it and what we want the reader to feel when he or she reads our words.

If we write very very quickly, we will always write exactly the way we talk. I want to say that again, because it is so very important. If we write very, very quickly, we will always write exactly the way we talk. When we talk to someone, we rarely, if ever, use extraneous words. The idea of what we're saying almost always comes through and is understood by the listener.

The faster we write, the better we write. If we become prolific writers, our writing will also be very, very good. If your writing isn't all you want it to be right now, you should be writing faster and faster. Once you reach the point of writing at the same pace as you talk (now possible with computer technology) you're writing incredibly well, and you are also prolific!

The faster you write, the better you write, because your writing will read as if you're talking directly to the reader, and that's the most powerful writing style of all.

Most people are incredibly reluctant to embrace this concept. The idea that the faster you write, the better you write, is totally foreign to their way of thinking. It's foreign to the way they've been taught, foreign to the articles they've read in writing magazines.

Good writing is the product of countless hours of writing and re-writing... so the theory goes. Well, if that's what you want to believe, then go ahead. I can't stop you. But I can tell you it's simply not the case. Good writing is the product of writing the way you talk. And writing the way you talk is the product of writing quickly. When it comes to writing, quality and quantity go hand in hand. If you want to increase the former, you must increase the latter.

This idea is true in many areas of life. Think of someone you know who does something very, very well. I'm willing to bet money they also do that task very quickly. The better you do something, the faster you do it. And the faster you do it, the better you do it.

There are many who will say good writers are fast because they 'know how it's done.' If you know how something is done, you don't have to think about how to do it. All your time is devoted to creating, rather than the 'process.'

You can't make a pie quickly until you have the recipe. Once you've learned that, then, yes, you can do it quickly, and you'll do it well.

Surprise, you already know how to write well. There's no skill involved. You've simply got to write the way you talk. You already know how to talk. If it makes you feel any better, you've already spent years learning how to talk, and how to communicate with another person. You learned all that when you were quite young. You've spent years perfecting it.

The work is done. It's the speed you've been lacking. You already have the required skill.

Now let's get into the details of really producing fast copy for your book.

How a '?' can actually double your writing speed and turn you into a writer who's on 'automatic pilot'

If I ask you to talk about something, anything, no matter how much you liked the topic, you'd be pretty hard pressed to make it happen. You'd have to stop for a few seconds and think about what you wanted to say, what you wanted to leave out, and what you wanted to say first, second, and so on.

That's if you can think of anything to say at all. If I asked you to write about the chair you're now sitting in, well, if you were really good, you might be able to go for a few sentences, and then you'd be completely lost about what to say next.

That's normal. Unfortunately, that's exactly the way most of us write. And we meet with immense frustration as a result.

But there's a solution. It's a solution so powerful, most people are amazed at both the simplicity and the results.

When you create your book outline (and I'll be showing you exactly how to do that in the next chapter), and later on your blueprint, you'll be writing in response to questions, because it is infinitely easier to write in response to questions than in response to statements.

You would be all tuckered out after just about three sentences if I asked you to write about the chair in which you now sit.

Instead, here's the question: why does the chair you're sitting in have a great design for the work you're now doing?

Now you can write, and you can write for at least two-thirds of a page. We can always write in response to a specific question. We're never able to write well in response to a statement, or a point that we see in our outline.

This point was driven home to me when I was talking before a group of teachers. They're biggest concern was creating remarks for their students' report cards. Each had to be different, yet all were starting to look the same. If you sit down to write remarks on 30 report cards, similarities will be glaring.

I suggested they do this, instead. Prepare three to five questions they would answer for each student. Same questions for each student. For example, How is Johnny doing academically, How is Johnny doing socially and How is Johnny doing physically?

When the teachers would get to Johnny's report card, all they had to do was close their eyes and envision the student, then read the first question. As soon as they did, a fresh comment came immediately to mind.

The teachers were amazed how much more power their comments had when they were written in response to a question, rather than a statement.

From now on, you should never write anything, unless it is in response to a question. This single rule will supercharge your writing ability.

The three words that will unleash your writing ability like never before

You're about to discover a concept so powerful, it will revolutionize the way you write. Say goodbye to the old and say hello to the new. This is the single most powerful writing concept you may ever learn. I'll start out slow and in the next page or so, you'll discover the very crux of speedwriting.

The human mind needs only three words to create a complete story. The three words vary, but there are always similarities. The three words are meaningful words; they're words that have more meaning than simply their definition. They have a connotation as well as a definition.

To most people, these words would simply be nouns or verbs. But to the prolific writer, they are the very engine of speedwriting.

If you are given three meaningful words, words with a connotation beyond their simple definition, your mind can create a story instantly.

I'll give you some examples. Try to blank your mind as much as possible. I'm going to give you three special words. And when I do, they will create an image, a scene, a story in your mind. If I gave you the three words, "coffee, painting, river," your mind would instantly give you a story of some sort. You would see an image in your mind. You'd see someone sipping coffee while they painted by the river, or perhaps someone spilling coffee on a painting by the river, or someone dropping a painting into a river of coffee, or a polluted river of paint running through a coffee plantation. The list is, literally, endless.

If I gave 200 people those three words, they'd all see different stories taking place in their own mind. And the more they wrote about the story, the more diverse the stories would become.

But the important thing is that would see a story of some kind.

Not one of them would draw a blank. Not one of them would be given the three words and then complain the words brought no image, no story idea, to their brain.

And it will happen again and again, over and over, as long as you give your brain three different words to work with and these words are dynamic words. So forget about using words like 'it' or 'a' or 'the' or 'I'

Three dynamic words will instantly bring a picture into focus in your mind.

To show you just how powerful this strategy is, a teacher friend of mine complained she was running out of story ideas for her students. She wanted them to write stories, but they all sounded the same, and she couldn't come up with a new story idea for each of them.

"No problem," I said. "Tell each of them to take out their dictionary. They must open the pages randomly and when they get to the first page, they must write down the first noun or verb they see. Then open the dictionary to another page and, again, write down the first noun or verb. Finally, open the book to a third page and repeat the process.

They'll have three dynamic words. In the student's mind, each will have a different story idea. In their minds, each story will be unique. If they follow the instructions of the upcoming writing-machine exercise, they'll be producing stories at a phenomenal rate."

The simple 5-minute exercise that will open all your creative doors

Here is the writing machine. What you're about to discover in the next few paragraphs will, literally, change your writing career. If you use it well, you'll never have writer's block, or suffer from procrastination again.

The writing machine has been designed and created so that even the most challenging writing task becomes mere child's play.

Ready? Here goes!

This is going to be a writing exercise. It will last for only five minutes, and after the five minutes, I expect your life to be completely changed. I ask only two things. You must take this exercise as seriously as you possible can. And you must obey all the rules. If you do not, you'll suffer the same indignity as a young man who attended my seminar in Dallas.

I told everyone we were about to have a five-minute writing exercise. This young man determined for himself that it was time for him to have a 'smoke break' got up and left the room. He came back about six minutes later and couldn't understand why everyone was so excited about their writing ability and their writing future.

This is a problem I run into a lot. As soon as I use the word 'exercise' students and readers see this as the ideal spot to take a break, or to keep on reading without actually doing the exercise. You're not going to absorb this information through osmosis. There is nothing special about the paper you are holding. The information will not be absorbed through your skin. You must do the actual exercise.

Most of my students pay a large amount of money for this manual. The majority of what you have paid is locked in this one exercise. To skip it means you're just throwing your money away. **DON'T DO IT!!!** Participate in this exercise right now!

I should also tell you that no mater how many times I offer my seminar, I always have difficulty with those who are either very intelligent, or who think they are very intelligent.

The problem, of course, is that those who are intelligent (or under the misguided impression that they are) will always take any exercise in any seminar as a chance to express how intelligent they are by **NOT** doing the exercise, or by purposely screwing up to show how humorous they are.

I will tell you again, that if you treat this exercise in a cavalier fashion, you will get results worthy of a horse's ass. Treat it seriously, however, and you will be simply astounded.

So, if you're incredibly bright, bear with me for a moment. I, too, have a very high I.Q. But I know that this exercise is fundamental for your progress through the writing machine concept.

**Now it's time to
prove it to yourself: Ready, set...**

Now, because you're reading this and not actually experiencing it, I have to trust you'll actually do this exercise. I hope you do. If you do, you'll be simply amazed at the results. If you decide to simply keep reading, well, that's okay too. But you won't be nearly as impressed with your own ability.

The basis of writing your book in 14 days or less!

Ready?

Great! Get yourself some lined paper and a pen. If you're at a typewriter, or a computer screen, so much the better. You can work there. You're going to do some writing. Don't worry. It won't hurt. You're going to write for only five minutes. No one has ever been hospitalized as a result of this exercise.

Get a timer or use your watch. If you can set it for a five-minute countdown, great. If not, just take it off your wrist and put in front of you and to one side where you can see. Remember, five minutes ONLY!

The exercise is about to begin. But there are some rules that have to be explained to you. The first rule is that you must obey all the rules. If you don't you'll just screw things up and you won't get the results you are looking for.

The next rule is that you must write as fast as you possibly can for five minutes and five minutes only. The faster you write, the better your writing will be. I know that sounds somewhat outrageous, but after doing this exercise with hundreds and hundreds of people-I know it to be the case. The faster you write, the better your writing will be. At the end of five minutes you MUST STOP!!

Next rule, you must not think. Difficult for an intelligent person, but I'll explain. Whatever comes into your head, that's what goes down on the paper. Don't edit the thought process at all. You're trying to write a story. That's the only criteria. You are writing a story.

Whatever comes into your head, that's what goes down on paper. You're not trying to put down a bunch of disjointed thoughts. You're trying to write a story. But don't let your mind get in the way. Whatever comes into your head should go directly to your pen or keyboard. Remember, the faster you write, the better it will be.

Start With Three Little Words...

In a moment, I'm going to give you three words. Here's the next rule. You must start your writing with one of the three words. So if I gave you 'smear,' 'reputation,' and 'rumor,' you'd have to start writing with one of those three words. You couldn't start with any other word like It..., A..., The..., Once upon a time..., It was a dark and stormy night... nothing like that. You MUST start writing with one of the three words. This is essential. Start with 'the' or any other word and I will find out where you live and hit you with a large stick!

Now, if you want to add an 's' to the word, fine. Want to add an 'ly'? Great! An 'ing'? No problem. Add any suffix you want to, just make sure you start your complete sentence with one of the three words.

Final rule, the other two words must appear in the first paragraph. Remember, the faster you write, the better it will be. All set? Great! Here are the three words. As soon as you see the three words, you must choose one to start with and begin writing immediately-don't sit there and ponder. **It won't help and you'll screw things up!** Got your timer ready and set for five minutes? I'll wait... As soon as you recognize the three words, start writing instantly.

Blue, ship, darkness, rumor, hinges, chairs, Granny, grass, sadly. **Now, pick every third word to get your three words...** GO! Write as fast as you can for five minutes and don't stop until the five minutes are up!

Read on only after you're finished the exercise!

Now, if you did the exercise, you're probably pretty impressed. Most people write more than 2/3 of a page in those five minutes. If you didn't, you can go back and try the

exercise again later with three different words and you'll quickly see that 2/3 of a page isn't nearly that difficult.

Now the surprising news. If you want to write your book in 14 days or less-fiction or non-fiction-and you wrote 2/3 of a page in those five minutes, you'll have to SLOW DOWN!!! Yep, at that rate of speed, you can create a non-fiction book in 25 hours of writing and a 400-page fiction (the largest size manuscript any publisher will allow you to produce) will take you just 50 hours of writing.

Now for the really surprising part. Read what you've written. Go ahead, I dare you. It's good isn't it? In fact, it's better than good. It may well be some of the best stuff you've ever written!

Every time I show this exercise, I ask a volunteer to read what they've produced. I pick someone at random. The results are always astonishing. They relentlessly produce writing so good, it could be published as it is without any editing required.

In fact, it's usually so good I can't get anyone else to read what they've written. They're convinced it won't be nearly as good. And yet, everyone in the audience has produced writing of equally high calibre!

Techniques that shocked this expert!

This one technique is so valuable, it even shocked a very knowledgeable individual who was sitting in my audience just a few months ago.

While presenting to a room full of lawyers (about 100) I noticed that there was an individual seated right in the middle of the audience. And he wasn't a lawyer at all. I recognized him from his picture that appears on the back of 45+ books he has written. It was Bob Bly, one of the most prolific non-fiction writers in the U.S.

I really can't think of any living author who is more prolific in the non-fiction publishing arena. And I can't think of any living writer who knows more about being prolific than Bob. Yet, afterwards, I got the chance to read his comments on the seminar evaluation sheet: in fact, he came right up to me and read them!

“Steve Manning is undoubtedly the world's expert on writing quality and writing productivity. I've written 45 books up to this point, and I only wish I had known about his strategies when I started. I'd have even more books to my credit. It's a pity that every professional who wants to write a book can't get hold of this outstanding information!”

Why this technique works every single time

Most people are absolutely amazed when they go through this exercise the first time. And the wonder doesn't leave them even after they've done it hundreds of times. Something almost magical happens. But I want to take a more temporal look at the process and show you the benefits of this kind of exercise.

To begin with, it is the basis, the very foundation, of the speedwriting machine. But you'll see how it is used most effectively in a few moments.

First, realize that you were writing for five minutes, solid. No hesitation, and no writer's block. Interestingly, you may have suffered from writer's block before, but you didn't during that exercise. (If you did, you were thinking about what you were doing... and that's not allowed!)

Next, your writing was “In The Moment.” There was no warm up to saying what you wanted to say. There weren’t two pages of nothing before you said something significant. You started the story right away and it was interesting right away.

That happened because you started your writing with a power word. You didn’t start with a dull and boring word.

Anytime a writer calls me and complains that they’ve not said anything worthwhile, in the many pages they’ve written, I’ll always ask them what word they started writing with.

Invariably they’ll wonder what I’m talking about, first, and then after I explain and repeat the question, “What word did you start writing with?” they’ll almost always answer, “The”.

And there, of course, is where the problem lies. If you start with a word like ‘the’ you’ve pretty much shot the first couple of pages. If you start with the word ‘the’ you’ll never say anything exciting immediately. You’ll ramble on for several paragraphs, or several dozen, and get nowhere.

Allow me to let you in on a secret. You are not James Mitchener. You do not have 200 pages to fill before you eventually get to the story. If you’re going to be a published author, you’ve got to intrigue the agent, the editor, the publisher, right from the very first line.

If you start with a word like granny, or tombs, or vacation, you will be in the situation right away. There will be no warm up to the story. You’re grabbing the reader by the lapels and throwing them into the situation. And that’s exactly what you want to do. You don’t want to give the reader any warm up.

If you don’t quite know what I mean, go out tonight and rent the movie, “Raiders of the Lost Ark” That movie starts with a bang and keeps on roaring upwards, like a rocket. That’s excitement and that’s the stuff your book should have if it’s going to see the light of a bookstore day.

There are more than a few benefits to this exercise. There are some decided advantages to doing this exercise. And if you haven’t done it yet, you should stop reading this right now, go back and do the exercise. Pick the first, third and fifth word...

The advantages you’ve probably noticed are several. And each is important. I’ll list them right now:

First, you were given clear instructions about writing the piece you’ve just completed: write as fast as you can, write for five minutes, don’t think, the faster you write the better it will be, you’re writing a story, not a bunch of disjointed thoughts, start with one of the three words, the other two must be in the first paragraph.

When you have these clear directions, you will NEVER suffer from writer’s block. Now, if you did suffer from writer’s block, there’s a simple reason... you were thinking! It’s amazing to see a room full of 100 or 150 people, all busily writing at a frantic pace. People who, just moments before, had complained that they frequently suffer from writer’s block. If you simply free your brain to write, there is nothing that can block it.

Next, you were given a clear deadline. Five minutes. No more, no less. You write as fast as you can for five minutes and when the buzzer, beeper, or bell goes off, you stop.

Here’s something you’re probably not aware of. In our society, the closer we get to a deadline, the more productive we become. If you don’t believe me, invite someone over

for dinner tonight. As the deadline for their arrival draws near, see how quickly the house gets picked up and cleaned. This strategy works so well, I've even begun using it in my day to day life. Any time the house looks a mess, I insist that my wife invite her mother over for dinner that evening. The house then gets cleaned in about two hours. For the chauvinists out there, I'm the one who cleans it, top to bottom, trophies to toilets.

The next thing you should realize is actually one of the most important secrets of this manual. Writing is fun. It's not nearly as difficult as you might have thought. It's not labourious, it's not even tedious. It's fun.

But that's a secret, and you must promise both yourself and me that you'll keep it a secret. Any time someone asks you if writing is difficult, you must tell that that it is tremendously difficult. As I often say to anyone who asks "think of the most difficult task you've ever encountered or attempted... writing is far more difficult than that."

It's not, of course, but if everyone know how easy it was, then everyone would be doing it.

If someone asks you how much time you spent on the book you've just published, tell that you spent years and years writing it. When your next book comes out just 14 days later, tell them you were working on that book the same time... years and years of effort!

Maintain the myth. It will work better for you.

Why writer's block has just become a thing of the past

Every time I try these exercises in my seminar, everyone who tries them is amazed not only by the quality of their writing, but, in retrospect, that they had absolutely no problem writing for five minutes about a topic they were given only seconds before.

It isn't until I point it out to them that they noticed no one suffered from writer's block. No started writing and then drew a blank.

As soon as I tell people they're major objective is simply to write as fast as they can, they no longer feel encumbered by the quality of their writing. They just write. The quality takes care of itself.

Once again, I want to make sure you're aware of why you become a very powerful writer when you write quickly. Realize that you already know how to speak well, and writing well is simply the process of taking your words, and putting them down on paper. If you know how to talk, you know how to write. Often it's just a matter of getting out of your own way.

You've got to write the way you talk if you're to be understandable to the reader. As I've said so many times, how often have you read a book and found it to be either a great story, or a great presentation of the idea. When that happens, you say it was as if the author was talking to you directly. Like they were in the same room and speaking to you over a cup of coffee.

How do you write that way? By writing quickly.

The faster you write, the more likely you are to write the way you talk. You don't have the time for those convoluted concepts and \$100 words that few people really understand.

If you write quickly, you will write the way you talk. If you write the way you talk you will be far more understandable.

It's a delightful circle. The faster you write, the better you write.

The ultimate speed (according to today's technology) is to dictate your book. You'll be writing at a rate of 14 to 200 words a minute. But for now, let's assume you've got to do the mechanical work of getting the words down on paper!

A final warning about this strategy & why you must keep this strategy a secret

The concept you've just discovered really is the foundation of speedwriting. There isn't a book, or a long-form piece of writing that can be produced that cannot benefit from this strategy.

You'll now be able to produce virtually any document in just a fraction of the time it has taken you until now.

But, please, I ask of you to understand an element of human psychology. In our society there is a belief that there is a correlation between the length of time it takes to produce something, and the inherent worth of that thing. The book that is written in 14 days has a perceived value that is less than the book that has been toiled over for five years. It's not true, but that's the perception.

So please keep this strategy a secret. Not for my benefit, but your own. If you write a book in just days and then tell people how little time you spent on it's writing, you won't receive the accolades you're expecting. You'll receive derision and contempt. The perception will be that any book written so quickly can't be any good. That's not true, but that's the way people think.

So if people ask you how long it took you to write the book, please tell them that it took years and years and years. And when your second book comes out just 14 days later, tell them that you were working on that book at the same time! Years and years and years!

How many words are on a page?

Remember those people in high school who were constantly asking the teacher how many words were needed in the essay? They're still around. Unfortunately, they've grown up but the question remains. I get it at every seminar I present.

Here's the answer. There are approximately 320 words on a page. And for their next question, the answer is 'a page is a page is a page.' If you hand write in single spaced on lined paper, you still get 320 words on the page. Double space it on a computer, 320 words. And if you counted the words on the page of a published book, yep, you guessed it, about 320 words. A page is a page is a page.

The only exception is the page you're now reading. It has about double that number. There's a reason for that, or course. I wanted to get as much information on a page as I could so I could give you exceedingly high value, but keep my production costs down.

Next question...

How many pages are in a chapter?

There has never been a definition given for the perfect chapter-size, but it only takes a little reasoning to figure out what it should be. After more than a decade of writing and experimenting and researching in writing, I have come to the conclusion that TEN PAGES is the perfect user-friendly size for a chapter. We'll explain why:

For one thing, as any newspaper or magazine writer can tell you, a lot can be said in 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages. A WHOLE lot as a matter of fact. Not only that, but forcing yourself to keep each chapter down to 10 pages also forces you to get to the point

sooner, instead of allowing yourself the "liberty" of rambling at the expense of your audience.

Readers on the run

There are some excellent marketable reasons for designing 10-page chapters as well that you can easily see if you put yourself in the shoes of the typical reader for a moment while contemplating this insight:

The average reader these days has to work 40 or more hours each week for a living, and therefore most of the reading they have the opportunity to pursue is "on the run." They get to read on coffee breaks and lunch breaks, or in those moments between turning the oven on and having to baste what's inside it. Most readers these days have to avail themselves of 15 minutes of reading at a time.

Imagine yourself as a reader who has only 15 minutes to read, then imagine picking up a book only to discover that the next chapter is 47 pages long! What do you think that reader is going to do?

Since nobody likes to put a book down in the middle of a chapter, the chances that a reader will even start to read such a chapter on a limited schedule are slim to none. A 10-page chapter, on the other hand, is just right for most modern schedules, and consider this profitable thought: If a reader can read an entire chapter of your book at each sitting, they'll get through your book a lot faster... and will therefore need to buy your next book a lot sooner. Without a doubt, the 10-page chapter is the most perfect user-friendly size chapter of all.

You should also be aware of this little tidbit when it comes to best-selling writing: The faster any reader reads a book, the more impressed they are with it. They can't believe it when they finish in less than two weeks. They may have never done that before and they become so excited, they start telling their friends. Fortunes are made in the publishing industry on "word of mouth" advertising.

THREE TIMES AS LONG

Just in case you're thinking, "Wow, if a reader will read my book quickly if every chapter is 10 pages in length, imagine how much faster they'd read it if each chapter averaged out to be only 3 pages!"

The truth is that it would take a reader three times longer to read a book composed of 3-page chapters. The reason is because most readers feel a sense of satisfaction over every chapter they complete. If they're used to reading only one chapter at a time, they'll place the book down when that chapter is over... regardless of how few pages they read. After all, who needs to read more than one chapter per sitting!

The moral of this story is to design all your chapters to be approximately 10 pages in length.

"How can I design a chapter to be 10 pages?"

The simple secret to that technique will be revealed in Process #4. In the mean time, I want to enlighten you on how to determine HOW MANY 10-PAGE CHAPTERS YOU SHOULD WRITE. The most successful writers do not play a guessing game when it comes to the length of their book. They plan it out to be the length they know makes it most marketable. Unfortunately, most authors write their book not having any idea how

long the first draft will be when they're done, and then spend months of tedious agony trying to edit it down to the right size afterwards.

Until the publishing of this book, few writers (other than Jack London) have ever known that you can write your book to **BE THE RIGHT SIZE THE FIRST TIME**.

Here's one of the greatest writing secrets you're ever going to hear: If you possess the secret that allows you to crank out chapter after chapter that average out to be 10 pages, **IF YOU KNOW HOW MANY CHAPTERS YOU ARE GOING TO WRITE... YOU KNOW THE EXACT PAGE-COUNT THAT YOUR FINISHED MANUSCRIPT WILL BE!**

HOW MANY CHAPTERS DO YOU NEED?

"How do I know how many chapters I ought to write?"

The answer to that question is what this informative process is mainly about. The answer entirely depends upon what sort of book you are writing. Many writers are unaware that most genres have an average page count that their readers are most used to. Therefore, if you write a story in that genre that is the right number of pages, you stand a much better chance of being received well by the readers.

You also need to be aware of this: Publishers print certain categories of books "around an average amount of pages" because they know that number sells best. If the average sized Science Fiction novel was 300 pages in length, what do you supposed your chances are of selling your first sci-fi manuscript that is 600 pages in length? As you would have guessed, your odds would not be very good. For that reason, it would behoove you to be aware of the optimum length of each genre.

What are those magical averages that make your manuscript most marketable?"

The following tabulation below shows you at a glance how many average pages are found in the most popular (and best selling genres:

	AV. Pages	Chapters
GREAT NOVEL	= 400 Pgs	= 40 Chptrs
ROMANCE	= 350 "	= 35 "
FANTASY	= 350 "	= 35 "
HORROR	= 350 "	= 35 "
SCIENCE FICTION	= 300 "	= 30 "
DETECTIVE/MYSTERY	= 280 "	= 28 "
ACTION/ ADVENTURE	= 280 "	= 28 "
PULP ROMANCE	= 240 "	= 24 "
WESTERN	= 200 "	= 20 "
HOW-TO BOOK	= 200 "	= 20 "
TEEN NOVEL	= 200 "	= 20 "
AGE 9-12 AUDIENCE	= 150 "	= 15 "
HOLLYWOOD SCRIPT	= 120 "	= 12 "
CHILDREN'S BOOK	= 100 "	= 10 "

NOTE: Although I have listed "Pulp Romance Novels" (paperback romance novels) to average at 240 pages in length, Harlequin Romance novels require a nearly exact page count of 220.

"Why is there no average page size listed for autobiographies or biographies?"

In reviewing autobiographies and biographies, the number of pages varied so radically that there was no true thing as an average. Why? Because there's no such thing as an "average" life. The more interesting things a person does, the longer their autobiography or biography will be.

Chapter 7

The five steps to blueprinting your book, start to finish, in a matter of hours

The key to knowing what will be on every page of your book... before you even begin!!

I get into this conversation a lot with many of my friends and students. But the truth has born itself out for me countless times. You must know what's going to be on every page of your book before you write even the first word!

True, there are many authors who will tell you they just sat down and wrote their book. The material just came out of their brains and onto the paper or the computer screen. I'm not going to argue with them, but I don't think they're telling the whole truth.

There are those authors who will tell you the book just wrote itself. If that were really the case, then what these folks should do is simply put a ream of paper on the kitchen table, with a couple of pens, and then go on vacation for a couple of weeks. When they return, not only will the elves have made new shoes for them and the members of their family, but the manuscript will also have been written.

There are others who will say that the characters wrote the book. They took over the whole process of writing. Frankly, I think these people have bigger problems than I can help them with.

The fact is, you're going to have to write every single word that is your book. You're going to have to make it happen. And if you don't then no one else will.

I should amend that last statement and say that 'in most cases' no one else will. The recent surge in popularity for 'chicken soup' books and books of that genre, proves you can get other people to write your book for you, while you dance all the way to the bank.

Nevertheless, in most cases, you will be the person who writes your book.

Before you start, you've got to have one interesting thing to say for every chapter!

It's not mandatory... but it helps. I want you to write a book that is simply crackerjack full of quality, content and effort. I want people to hold your book up high as an example of true writing genius and content capacity.

So, you owe it to yourself, and to your readers, to put something significant into every chapter.

Many of my students will tell me that they can think of only three or four things to put in their entire book. Only three or four significant ideas... That's not a book, that's a magazine article.

Others will tell me they simply can't think of ANYTHING to put in their book. They can't come up with anything significant that would interest the readers. That's a newspaper article! And you should know the difference between the different types of writing before you start.

Nevertheless, let us push onwards...

Knowing the order of the chapters

I'm assuming right now that if you have an idea for a work of fiction, you also have a good idea of how the chapters will flow. You know what the story will be, so you know what will be the main theme of each chapter. If you have no idea of what the story will look like, don't worry, I'll take care of that for you in a coming chapter.

Similarly, if you're writing a non-fiction book, you also know the kind of information you want to present, and in what order. That means you already know how you want to present the information in chapter form.

And, because I'm an equal opportunity writer, if you have an idea for a non-fiction book but you don't know what to write, that will be covered in an upcoming chapter as well. My objective is to leave no stone unturned, no problem unsolved, to ensure you succeed!

Why we have to start with an outline, and why an outline will not help you!

Remember Miss Mavis, your grade 8 English teacher? Seems we all had her for English. Lovely lady. She's retired now. Seems the chalk dust got to her. When you were in her class, she told you that before you write anything substantial, you really should write an outline, so you know exactly where you're going and how to get there.

Sounded logical to you at the time. So you did it. Did the technique help you in high school? Not really. Did it help you in business? Again, not really. And if you've tried to write a book by starting with an outline before you began writing, did you get very far?

Not really!

In fact, about the only thing you can say after you've produced an outline for a book is that, well, you've produced an outline for your book!

So what do you do now? Well, you could write another outline, but that sort of defeats the purpose, doesn't it.

That's why I'm convinced that in order to write your book, you've got to blueprint the entire book, from start to finish.

You must know what happens on every page of your book, before you even begin to think about writing it. On each page, without doubt, you know what will take place, what plot developments will unfold, what piece of information will be divulged, what message will be conveyed.

At this point in my seminar, someone usually jumps up and accuses me of limiting their creative ability. Nothing could be further from the truth. My objective is not to limit your creativity-my objective is to eliminate the obstacles you find in your writing every day!

Okay, so let's get started with the blueprinting process for your book.

First, the bad news-the blueprinting process starts with, an outline. I'm sorry, I know I said some fairly derogatory things about the outline a few paragraphs ago, but the outline is the place from which we must start and, if it's any consolation, we'll be done

with it fairly quickly. And it will be instrumental to the overall success of our book writing.

The purpose of an outline

The most important reason for an outline is to ensure that you follow the guidelines a publisher requires.

And almost as important is to ensure that you include all the information you want to include in your book.

You don't want to be writing your book only to realize when you're almost finished that you've left out an important element. Nor do you want to be nearly half way through and half to determine if you've covered an important point.

An outline will tell you exactly what you're going to cover and in which chapter.

Perhaps most important of all, the outline will save you literally months, if not longer, on the writing of your book.

The time you spend on your outline will be paid back to you in spades. No more wondering what you want to write about, no more pondering if the plot should take a twist now. It's all laid out before you in black and white.

The precise size of your book, and why you'll pay dearly if you violate this rule

In the last chapter, I told you exactly how many chapters would be in your book. After we've discovered this blueprinting method, I'll tell you exactly which chapters should be put in your book and which chapters are irrelevant.

At this point I'm assuming you already have a great idea for a book, fiction or non fiction, and you know what information or plot twists will be in each chapter.

If you don't have that information, as I said, don't worry, just stay tuned.

I've told you how many chapters are in a particular kind of book. No, you don't have to stick to those numbers if you don't want to but I strongly suggest that you do.

I've had students tell me everything from "My book MUST be twice as long as you suggest," to "My book is different because it doesn't HAVE any chapters."

Okay, okay, your book is completely different from every book that's ever been written and you think that's what makes it unique and different from everything that's ever been published.

Newsflash. What makes your book new and different has nothing to do with the format or the size of the chapters or the length of the book. What makes your book new and different is the content of the book. The publisher has no interest in publishing something that's never appeared before. The publisher, if each had his or her own way, would just as soon publish all of last year's successful books all over again.

So please, please, please. For the sake of your own sanity, write your first book with the guidelines I've given you in mind. The second or third book you write can give rise to your innovative ideas and creative abilities. But for now, my major concern is getting your published and that means you have to do everything possible to make it happen.

The battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift... but that's the way to bet!

The Chapter Outline

The following information I give you will be the information you need to create your own chapter outline. Please realize that you'll have to repeat this process for each chapter you intend to write.

The entire blueprinting process should be completed before you write the first word of your book. I know you're anxious to get started, but believe me when I say that your success will have a lot better chance of occurring if you create the entire book blueprint first.

Remember, this is the information for creating one chapter outline. You'll have to do it for all the chapters you want to create.

Step 1

List the numbers, consecutively, from 1 to 18 down the side of your page. If you're working with a computer, do exactly the same.

On each of those 18 lines list the thing (that's the technical term) that you want to convey to the reader of your book. The thing could be an idea, a concept, a plot development, a piece of dialogue. But just put down a single word that will symbolize the one thing you want to convey to the reader.

Do this for all 18 lines. That means that for this particular chapter (and for any particular chapter) you'll have 18 things you want to talk about or tell the reader.

I can think of more than 18

Many of my students will tell me that they can think of far more than 18 things they want to say to the reader about that single chapter.

That's nice. I don't really care. All I want you to do is put down 18.

When someone tells me that they can think of 36 things they want to put in that chapter, I'll tell them that what they really have is two chapters! If you have more than 18 things you want to put into this chapter, then you'll have to take the excess and put it into another chapter. Remember, just 18 items.

But I can't think of 18

That's the lament I'm more likely to hear from my students. "I can't think of 18. I can think of only six or 12 or eight... but not 18."

Okay, here's how you do it. It's really so easy, it's almost laughable.

First of all, I want to introduce you to a concept called the journalist's 6 Ws. Here they are:

Who, What, When, Where, Why and How.

For those readers who don't believe that How begins with a **W** write it down on a piece of paper, hold it up to a mirror and you'll find it starts with a **W** every time.

Let's suppose that you have 12 things you want to talk about in a particular chapter. You're short six. That's how many you need to make up the 18 required for this chapter.

So ask yourself one who question, one what question, one where question, one when question one why question and one how question (or several of one or more of those variations

If you've got only six items of the required 18, then ask yourself two who questions, two what questions, etc. Or several of any of the variations. Four what's, six who's, and so on until you've got the required 18.

An Example

If you know exactly what we're talking about, then you can skip down to the next section. But usually at this point there's a request from an audience member to give an example.

So let's do just that.

You're writing a book called Jack and the Bean stock. I'm not being childish; I just want to use an example that will be familiar to the largest number of people

Most people know the story of Jack and the Beanstalk.

In this chapter, we'll call it chapter six for the sake of convenience, Jack meets the chicken (hen, duck, goose, whatever) that lays golden eggs for the giant.

You've already thought of 12 things you want to mention in this chapter-clever person that you are-but you need another six.

Simple, use the journalist's six W's.

Who is responsible for the chicken being where it is now?

What is it about the chicken that makes it so special?

When does the chicken lay gold eggs?

Where does the chicken lay these eggs?

Why does the chicken lay these eggs?

How can Jack help the chicken free itself of this slavery?

You see, it's easy. Given a few minutes and the inclination, I could easily come up with 50 or more items that could be included in this chapter.

But you need only 18.

Subtract three!

Got 18 for the chapter? Great! Now go back and take a look at the 18 you have. Find the three that you think are least interesting. The three that really don't add anything to the chapter. The three that you think your reader really could do without.

They'll be easy to spot. They're usually the ones you felt forced to include because I said you had to come up with 18 items.

Once you've isolated those three, simply remove them from the 18 of the chapter.

Sounds like heresy, doesn't it. You've worked so hard to get those 18 and now I'm telling you to get rid of three. Don't worry, your writing will be much tighter because of it.

Eighteen take away three is, well, it's not calculus, but I think you've got the answer already, don't you. That's right, it's 15! You've got 15 items you're going to write about in this chapter. A little later in the book, I'll explain to you why you need only 15. For now, take my word for it.

The most important ingredient!

Now, this next step is probably the most important step in the whole process. If you have any trouble writing your book, it's probably because you've failed to take this step seriously. Every time a student of mine has trouble with the actual writing of their book, or trouble with how the finished manuscript reads, it can almost always be traced back to this one element.

Here's the instruction.

Take the 15 elements of this chapter and put them in the best order for you and the reader. Put them in the order in which you want to present them to the reader.

First this, then this, then that, then that.

It could be smallest to biggest, regional to international, chronologically (particularly for fiction), or any other way you want. But if you were the reader, this would be the order that would benefit you the most.

Sounds remarkably simple doesn't it. It is. The only trouble is that most writers assume that they've already got the 15 in the right order. That may be the case, but it's worth taking a second look... even a third.

**Here are two examples
of exactly what I mean**

Thought I'd just leave you stranded with a theoretical explanation of the process didn't you. Not a chance.

Not only am I going to show you exactly what I mean, I'm going to show you how it's done with both fiction and non fiction.

First, the fiction book. Back to Jack and the Beanstalk and the hen that lays the golden eggs. That's chapter six, by the way.

I'll do the chapter outline for this chapter and go through each process.

First, I've got to get 18 items to tell the reader about.

Description of the room

Why the hen lays golden eggs

The hen's appearance

Jack sees a gold egg on the nest

Giant has kidnapped the hen

The hen's feelings

Important information from the hen

Harsh living conditions for the hen

The hen dreams of freedom

Jack could use the gold from these eggs

Jack is as selfish as the giant

Jack gets to the hen's room

The giant is heard

The giant's schedule

Then hen wants to accompany jack

Jack narrowly escapes under a door

The giant's wife is kind to the hen

Jack thinks about how he mistreated his own animals

Okay, let's not waste any time. Let's get rid of three and be left with just 15. Please realize that the three you decide to eliminate will probably be different from my choice. That's okay. That's the nature of writing. There are no wrong or right answers.

Description of the room

Why the hen lays golden eggs

The hen's appearance

Jack sees a gold egg on the nest

Giant has kidnapped the hen

The hen's feelings

Important information from the hen
Harsh living conditions for the hen
The hen dreams of freedom
Jack could use the gold from these eggs
Jack gets to the hen's room
The giant's schedule
Then hen wants to accompany jack
Jack narrowly escapes under a door
The giant's wife is kind to the hen

As I said, the 15 will probably not be the 15 that you would choose.
Now let's put them in the right order for the book:

Jack gets to the hen's room
Description of the room
The hen's appearance
Jack sees a gold egg on the nest
Why the hen lays golden eggs
Giant has kidnapped the hen
The hen's feelings
The giant's wife is kind to the hen
Important information from the hen
Jack could use the gold from these eggs
Harsh living conditions for the hen
The hen dreams of freedom
The giant's schedule
Then hen wants to accompany jack
Jack narrowly escapes under a door

It to me just a few minutes to create the outline for that chapter. It should take you about the same time. You can see that there isn't a lot of mental gymnastics that goes into the process.

"But," I can practically hear someone shouting. "That might be well and good for fiction, but non-fiction is an entirely different thing! Can you give me an example for non-fiction?"

Of course. And it's just as easy. To be frank, every time I hear someone say that they can see how it can be done for fiction but not for non-fiction, I try to get that person to sit beside a mirror image. Someone who sees how it can be done for non-fiction but not for fiction.

Believe me, it works no matter what kind of book you want to write. Here's the non-fiction example.

This non-fiction is all about time management. Unique, don't you think? This chapter (chapter six, by the way) is all about time management and meetings. Ready? Here goes.

Agenda

Necessary participants only

Precise start time

Participant expectations

Dealing with non-participants
Staying on track
Avoiding the tangent
Minute taking
Follow-up meetings
Concrete follow up results
Tapes for non-participants
Creating entrances and exits
Establishing the rules
Best time for meeting scheduling
How to avoid meetings
Why meetings take so much time
Why meetings are so counterproductive
The mini-meeting alternative

And, just as we did for the fiction book, the next step is to find the three items that are least important. Again, your choice will be different from mine.

Agenda
Necessary participants only
Precise start time
Participant expectations
Staying on track
Minute taking
Concrete follow up results
Tapes for non-participants
Creating entrances and exits
Establishing the rules
Best time for meeting scheduling
How to avoid meetings
Why meetings take so much time
Why meetings are so counterproductive
The mini-meeting alternative

I'm actually pretty impressed with my selection. But now let's get even more serious and put the 15 in the best order.

Why meetings take so much time
Why meetings are so counterproductive
Agenda
Minute taking
Necessary participants only
Tapes for non-participants
Creating entrances and exits
Precise start time
Establishing the rules
Participant expectations
Staying on track

Concrete follow up results
Best time for meeting scheduling
How to avoid meetings
The mini-meeting alternative

Now for the book!

You've created an outstanding chapter outline. Well done! Now the task ahead of you is pretty clear. Create a similarly effective chapter outline for each and every chapter in your book.

When you've done that, you'll have a complete book outline. And a sense of real accomplishment. Unlike other times when you've produced a book outline, you're well on your way to producing your book faster than you ever thought possible.

How long should the creation of a book blue print take you? Frankly, it doesn't really matter. The faster you do it, the better. But even if it takes you longer than you expected, you're still far ahead of the game. While those other authors are still wondering what they're going to write about, you're well on your way!

Now we're going to move to the next step. We're going to take you from book outline, to book blueprint!

Here we go!

Chapter 8

Creating Your Book Blueprint

This is it. This is the chapter you've been waiting for.

This

is the oh-so-simple concept that has launched the writing

careers of thousands... and now you, too! Okay, let's review very quickly. Right now you have an outline for your book. You've got the number of chapters that has been prescribed by publishers and with my recommendations.

Each chapter has 15 items or topics that you want to convey to the reader. (You started with 18, you chose the three that were least important and you removed them from your outline. That left you with 15.)

After that you put the 15 items into the best order for both you and the reader. This is entirely up to you. It really depends on how you want to structure the book, and if the book is fiction or non-fiction.

If you're still struggling with what should go into your book, I'll be covering that in the next chapter.

And you've done this work for every chapter in your book. So far you've done several hours of work and you haven't written your first word.

Once again, the work you do at this stage will dramatically reduce the work you have to do when it comes time to actually write the book.

All set? Then let's get started with the creation of your book blue print.

First step of your blue print creation

I'm going to give you the instructions for completing a blue print for a single chapter. You're going to have to do it for all the chapters in your book.

Go to your first chapter and take a look at what you've written. Fifteen items of information you want to convey to the reader.

Go to each of the 15 and ask yourself why that item is significant. And then write a significant sentence about that single element.

It doesn't have to be profound; it doesn't even have to be dynamic or even insightful. Just a significant sentence. You've already said that the item was significant. Now write a sentence that explains that.

Again, I'll use the examples for both fiction and non-fiction. We'll start with the non-fiction offering first. Time management, first

Please understand that I'm well aware that my examples are very basic. But they're that way for a purpose. I want to ensure that you understand the concept. Once the concept is in your mind, then you can use it for virtually any book you want to produce.

Here's our time-management book with the chapter outline on meetings.

Why meetings take so much time

Why meetings are so counterproductive

Agenda

Minute taking

Necessary participants only

Tapes for non-participants

Creating entrances and exits

Precise start time

Establishing the rules

Participant expectations

Staying on track

Concrete follow up results

Best time for meeting scheduling

How to avoid meetings

The mini-meeting alternative

Let's make a significant sentence for each of the elements.

Meetings take too much time from your workday.

Meetings are not productive, they're counterproductive

A meeting agenda is essential

The value of specialized minutes

Don't have any unnecessary participants

Create tapes for non-participants

Create entrances and exits of several people

Start on time

Establish the rules of the meeting

Participants should have expectations

Staying on track is vital

You must demand concrete follow up results

Using the best time for meeting scheduling
Avoid meetings whenever possible
Using the mini-meeting alternative

That's the next step for the creation of your blue print. Simply change the important element to a significant statement.

In your own example, make sure you leave three lines after the significant statement is written.

Next step? That's easy. I want you to change each of the 15 significant statements in each of your chapters into a significant question.

Not hard to do. You simply erase the period at the end of the statement and insert a question mark. At the beginning of the statement, place an interrogative such as can, who, when, should, how to, etc.

There's a very important reason for doing this. It simply has to do with the way our brain thinks.

I've discovered that it's far easier to respond to a question than it is to respond to a statement. If I said to you, please write about that chair in which you're sitting, you'd look at me with a blank stare on your face and wonder what I was talking about. You'd certainly have no idea of what I wanted or what was expected of you.

But if, instead, I asked you, "Why is that kind of chair being used in this environment?" That you can respond to. You can answer the question easily.

It's far easier to respond to a question than it is to respond to a statement.

After you have written the question you should leave three lines for your next task. But before we go there, let's take a look at our time management example.

I'm going to take the chapter outline, and I'm going for the next step in the blueprinting process. Turning each statement into a question.

Why do business meetings take so much time out of our workday?

Why are most of the meetings we have, completely counterproductive?

Why is a meeting agent essential and what should be on the agenda?

Who takes the meeting minutes and why are they vital for your meeting success?

How to get the fewest number of participants for your meeting

When is it best to simply hand a non-participant a tape of the meeting?

Should you have people coming and going as the meeting progresses?

Just how important is a precise start time?

What are the meeting rules that are most effective and how do you establishing the rules

How do you get all participants to come to the meeting with actual expectations?

What are the three tips for staying on track?

Should concrete follow up results be expected from every meeting?

What is the best time for meeting scheduling

How can you avoid meetings?

What is the mini-meeting alternative?

So far, this whole process should strike you as being about as difficult as lying on your back in the sun.

I should also tell you that way back when you were creating your chapter outline, if you used the journalist's six W's to come up with the items you wanted to discuss in your chapter, you may already be at this point.

You may already have the items in question form.

But I'm not going to dwell on that because I see no point in making the process even faster than it already is!

And the next step...

Remember, I asked you to leave three blank lines after each question. (Okay, if you're using a computer the 'enter' key or the 'return' key will take care of that for you.) Now we're going to find out why.

Read each of the questions in your chapter. After you read a question, close your eyes and picture the answer to that question. You'll easily see it in your mind's eye.

Now, open your eyes and write down the three words that best describe the answer to that question. Notice that I did not say that you should write down the best three-word answer to the question. I don't want you to do that. I want you to write the three words that best describe the answer to that question.

It could be a sight, or a smell, a texture, flavor, color, emotion, a piece of furniture or a living thing. It could be a plant or animal or something you'd find in your pocket, or use every day, a weather pattern or your worst fear.

The three words could be anything, really. But I will guarantee to you that none of the words will be 'it' or 'a' or 'the'. The words you'll be choosing will be 'power' words, as we discussed several chapters ago when we did our writing exercise.

Remember, for each question, there must be three words that best describe the answer to that question.

Realize also that your answers to a question will likely be very different from the answers given by someone else.

Let's go back to our time-management book with the chapter on meetings. You'll get a clearer idea of exactly what I mean.

Why do business meetings take so much time out of our workday?

- a. Boring
- b. Unfocused
- c. Unnecessary

Why are most of the meetings we have, completely counterproductive?

results
initiative
people

Why is a meeting agent essential and what should be on the agenda?

time
schedule
planning

Who takes the meeting minutes and why are they vital for your meeting success?

- responsibility
- actions
- ownership

How to get the fewest number of participants for your meeting

- goal
- result
- support

When is it best to simply hand a non-participant a tape of the meeting?

- time
- essential
- contribution

Should you have people coming and going as the meeting progresses?

- productivity
- contribution
- scheduling

Just how important is a precise start time?

- precedent
- business
- action

What are the meeting rules that are most effective and how do you establishing the

- rules
- tangents
- focus
- time

How do you get all participants to come to the meeting with actual expectations?

- agenda
- problems
- solutions

What are the three tips for staying on track?

- relevance
- results
- productivity

Should concrete follow up results be expected from every meeting?

- reviews
- challenges
- support

What is the best time for meeting scheduling

morning
afternoon
ideal

How can you avoid meetings?

agenda
objective
tape

What is the mini-meeting alternative?

chairs
location
follow-up

I know, I know. You would have picked different words. If you show your blueprint to your friend, they would come up with different power words, too.

It's one of those little things that makes my book unique and your book different from every other book that's out there.

Ready, Set...

Create power words for every question in your chapter and you'll have a chapter blueprint. Do it for every chapter of our book, and you'll have a book blueprint.

Now all you've got to do is write the book!

No, I didn't leave out the last step. You've already done it. But I'll go through the details if you'd like.

Pick any chapter you'd like to start with. Pick any one of the 15 questions in that chapter. Get yourself a timer of some sort. I use a time that came with my wristwatch because it's always with me and I never have to remember to carry it with me.

All the time has to do is count down from the five-minute market and give you some sort of alarm or beep when the five minutes are up.

Any timer will do, with one exception. Don't use one of those kitchen timers that clicks relentlessly during the five minutes. It's very disturbing and will ruin your concentration while you're writing.

Got the question you want to start with? Great! Set your timer for five minutes. Read the question. Can you see the answer in your mind's eye? Good. See those three words? Excellent.

Start the timer. Start writing. You must begin your writing with one of the three words. The other two must appear in the first paragraph. Write as fast as you possibly can. Do not think. Do not edit yourself. Whatever comes into your mind should go directly to the paper or the keyboard. The faster you write, the better your writing will be...

Does all this sound the tiniest bit familiar? It should! It's the same as the writing exercise you did a few chapters back!

When the timer goes off, you **MUST** stop your writing for that question and, if you want to, you can go on to the next question... or any other question in the book!

Do this just a couple of times and-although I hate to personify the human brain-your mind will be saying to you, “you’re serious about this five-minute thing, aren’t you.”

Yes, you’re very serious. Your brain must give you it’s best right up front and right away because after five minutes, you’re moving on!

Fluff Factor

I’ve discovered in my classes that your mind will usually give you its best stuff initially and after about five minutes it starts to peter out. Giving you little more than fluff and padding.

You want to avoid the fluff factor in your writing at all costs. It will only be removed by a competent editor later on, and the resulting manuscript will look dismally small afterwards. Remember, five minutes and then you’re moving on.

Here’s the reason for 15 questions

Before we go any further, let me tell you why each chapter ended up with 15 questions to be answered.

If you remember the writing exercise, you’ll recall that if you write as quickly as you can for five minutes, you’ll likely produce about two-thirds of a page. Perhaps a bit more, perhaps a bit less. Two thirds on average.

Two-thirds of a page times 15 is, you guessed it, 10 pages of writing. And that’s precisely the length of your chapter. That’s also the length your publisher most prefers.

And because you write for only five minutes on each question, (10 questions), you’ll be producing a 10-page chapter in just 75 minutes worth of writing.

But I have more to say!

Often, the biggest problem you’ll face is actually stopping yourself after just five minutes of intense writing. You may find, on occasion, that you have so much more to say. You’ve got more information, or an additional description of a place, or more plot exposition. Can’t you take just an extra minute or two and complete the task?

Frankly, I’m not there to watch you. You can do whatever you wish. But if I were there, standing beside your desk as you produce your book, I’d be rapping your knuckles! Five minutes means five minutes.

If you’ve got more to say, you didn’t produce your blueprint correctly. Rather than spending any more time writing, you might want to spend a few minutes and revise your blue print!

Do I hafta...

Usually about this time, someone asks me if it’s really necessary to produce the entire book blueprint before we start writing the book. I mean, couldn’t we start writing after we’ve produced just a chapter blueprint?

The answer is a resounding, NO!! You really should have a blueprint for your entire book before you begin writing. You must know what’s going to happen on every page before you write the first word of the book.

This will prevent you from duplicating information later on. It’s far easier to see an overview of the entire book when it’s in blueprint form, rather than in your mind, or flipping back pages to see if you’ve already said that in a previous writing session.

I should also tell you that once the blueprint has been created, it almost begs to be written. It cries out for completion. It's easy to stop writing your book when you've got just two chapters done and you really don't know what's going to be in the remaining chapters. But when the blueprint is ready, it's right there before you, the entire book.

Virtually no thought processes are involved. You're just setting your timer, and write as quickly as you can.

Blueprint advantages

There are several obvious advantages to using the blueprint method to writing your book. The first and most satisfying is that this technique allows you to write your book faster than you can imagine. Faster than any other method that's out there.

There simply is no faster way of writing your book on the planet.

Next, the blueprinting method takes all the anxiety out of the writing process. No pressure, no wondering about what you're going to write about, no writer's block, no hesitation, and no writing problems of any kind. Just pure productivity.

By using the blueprinting method, writing becomes about as difficult as sitting down and copying a page of text for five minutes.

You can write anywhere and any time. No need for an office, no need to be in your den. If you've got your blueprint, and a pen, you can start writing anywhere. While you're waiting for your spouse, the first five minutes of a day. Coffee break, cafeteria, just before you go to bed at night.

And you can write at any time. Most of my students like to use the first five minutes of the day because they've convinced nothing substantial happens in those five minutes anyway. Or it could be the five minutes you'd otherwise be spent waiting.

All you need is five minutes and you'll move your book ahead two-thirds of a page.

Just to clear up what could be a misunderstanding, you write in five-minute blocks. But you're NOT restricted to writing for just five minutes. You can write for as long as you want. Just make sure that your writing session is divided into five-minute sessions.

Personally, I write 50 minutes at a time. That's 10 five-minute segments done one right after the other. After 10 sessions, I take a 10-minute break before I start again.

This allows me to write at the rate of 3,000 words per hour. A rate that most people simply don't believe is possible. But, as you now know it is.

I also want to make sure you know that the 3,000 words usually needs very little editing. Not because I'm an unusually powerful writer, but because I write quickly. If you write quickly, you'll write the way you talk and your ideas will be both concise and understandable. If you achieve that, most editing becomes superfluous.

Start anywhere!

Here's one of the most amazing elements of the blueprinting process. You don't have to start at the beginning of the book. You can start anywhere you want to. You can start at the beginning of chapter six if you feel like it. Or how about the beginning of chapter nine? Pick the chapter that excites you the most and start there.

Heck, you don't even have to start at the beginning of the chapter. You could start right in the middle and work sideways. Or you could hop around from one chapter to the next. Write a little bit of chapter seven, then write a little in chapter 22. You'll always

know exactly what you want to write because your blueprint is with you every step of the way.

No more thinking about what you want to write

“Oh, my,” says the writer, holding his head in his hands. “What shall write about today? What information should I convey? Where will the story lead us now?” Sorry, but the blueprint does away with all this indecision. You know exactly what you’re going to write about. The blueprint will tell you every step of the way!

This isn’t something that robs you of creativity. It’s something that robs you of the tedium of writing. You simply sit down, you know what you’re going to say, and you write it. Nothing could be simpler.

No do you have to read what you wrote yesterday to discover what you’re going to say today-you know, to refresh your memory. Your blueprint is your memory.

Let me tell you that you can’t win when you read what you’ve read yesterday. If you read it and it was very bad, you’ll give up saying, “You see, I’m not a good writer. I’ll stop now and become a truck driver.”

If you read what you wrote yesterday and it is very good, you’ll give up saying, “You see, I could never write that well again. I’ll stop now and become a truck driver.”

You can’t win.

Reading what you wrote yesterday isn’t necessary when you have your blueprint by your side

Take a break for months

I don’t recommend it and I really don’t know why you would-writing is so much fun-but you may decide to put your writing aside for a longer period of time. Maybe you have to focus on another project, or you become ill, or, well, there are all kinds of reasons for a lengthy delay in getting back to your writing.

(I’m hopeful that procrastination won’t be one of the reasons because you have your blueprint.)

In any case, there’s something magical that happens when you use a blueprint for your writing and you take an extended break.

When you come back to your writing, you’ll be able to pick up exactly where you left off, almost as if you’d never left the writing project.

Here’s why.

When you write the question and write down the three power words that best describe the answer to the question, you mind visualizes a scene. You ‘see’ the answer and you’re able to write effectively.

Come back after a few months, read the question, look at the power words and that very scene will jump right back into your mind’s eye. You’ll know exactly what you want to say and how you want to say it. It’s almost scary when this happens. It’s almost as if the passage of time did not exist. You’re instantly right back into the writing mode and you didn’t have to re-read a single paragraph of your book to get ‘back into the swing’ of writing. Just set your timer and go!

Three words of advice for perfectionists

GET OVER IT! Perfectionism may be important to your workday, it may be necessary for your profession, and it may even be a hobby for you. But when it comes to writing, the last thing you want to be is a perfectionist.

Have you ever encountered those writers who re-write the same page, over and over? Spending months and never getting past the first chapter. They want their writing to be 'perfect.'

Newsflash. It never will be perfect, so write as well as you can and keep moving. Write quickly and you'll write well. Don't even think about rewriting until the book is complete. You can't perfect something unless it already exists. Your number-one priority should be to get the book written. Perfectionism will not help you with that.

Now you're going to hear some real writing heresy on my part. Writing the book is far more important than outstanding content. The published book with reasonable content is far superior to the unwritten book with superior content.

The power of Transitions

When your book is written, read it over. If it's a non-fiction book, it should read very well. That's because a non-fiction book is simply the presentation of information, presentation of information, presentation of information.

If your book is fiction, however, there may be a problem. You may find that the book reads a bit choppy.

If it's really choppy, I suggest you had a problem with putting the 15 items into the most appropriate order for the reader. (Remember I told you how important that was?)

The ideas should have flowed smoothly. If it reads like the author has written two thirds of a page, then two thirds of a page, then another two-thirds of a page, we have a transition problem.

We must bring the reader from one idea to the next idea very smoothly. In the mind of the reader, there should be no conscious thought that there was a break in the writing process, let alone the writer's thinking process.

But if that does happen, you'll have to create a transition.

This is a tool that has been used effectively by every great writer of our time, and all times before.

Here's how it's done

In your chapter you have 15 items you want to convey to the reader. Let's suppose we need a transition between the sixth and seventh item.

In the sixth item we talk about cars. In the seventh item we talk all about a castle. Well, it might not make any sense to you, but if this was your book and you'd worked hard on the blueprint, this would make perfect sense to you.

Okay, you read all about a car and then you read about a castle.

Too big a transition. We have to bring your reader from a car to the castle smoothly.

In your book, what is the one word that connects car with castle? I don't mean literally. The connecting word will depend on your story, of course. So it could be anything.

Let's pick the word 'dress.' Again, if this was your book and this was your choice of transition word it would make complete sense to you. Naturally the connection between the car and the castle is 'dress.'

Set your timer for one minute, no more. When the timer starts, you must write a one or two sentence paragraph that uses the word ‘dress’ (no, you don’t have to start with that word) the brings the reader from on topic-the car-to the next topic-the castle.

“She felt clumsy as she shifted herself and her dress out of the car and wondered if this was anything close to the right attire for Kreighoff’s castle. A castle that now loomed large before her.”

Okay, it ain’t great, but it was spur of the moment. Notice how I’ve shifted the reader’s attention from the car to the castle via the dress.

If you do it correctly, your reader will be unconsciously thinking, ‘of course! This is a natural and inevitable transition.’ Now your reader feels quite comfortable with the two pieces of writing about the car and the castle.

You won’t have to write a transition between every section of your writing. As you get better (faster) you’ll notice that the transitions appear naturally.

Sometimes as I’m writing, I’ll glance over to see what’s coming next in the blueprint and I’ll purposely end one section of writing with a transition to the next. It becomes quite easy after a while.

Remember, most of the time you won’t need a transition. You’ll be writing 15 sections for every chapter so at the very most you’ll have to write only 14 bridges, or transition paragraphs. But if you’re writing that many transitions, you really should be doing more work on your blueprint to ensure the 15 parts are in the right order.

Creating the irresistible lead

You want the start of your book to be so powerful, so dynamic that it picks the agent off the floor by the lapels and throws them into the story with such enthusiasm that they simply cannot take their eyes from the manuscript.

If you don’t quite know what I mean by that, then go out and rent the movie “Raiders of the Lost Ark.” This movie starts on a high point and soars straight up from there.

You want your book (fiction or non-fiction) to do exactly the same.

I can’t stress how important this element is. You have just a few seconds to make a great impression on an agent with your writing. The agent is not going to wait 100 pages, 10 pages or even 10 seconds to be intrigued by what you’ve produced. She wants it immediately! And that’s why your lead is so very important!

An agent gets anywhere from 25 to 250 proposals every day. The only way to separate yours from the garbage is the lead.

It has to be pure magic!

Start by realizing that in your book there will be several exciting moments-and this is true for both fiction and non-fiction. Pick the spot that is most exciting and start your book there. There’s no reward for tucking this element deep into the book, never to be seen until after 125 pages have gone by.

The most exciting point is where you should be starting your book.

If your book is fiction and the most exciting point is well into the story, then where it begins should be the chapter you send to the agent. And that chapter should start with this very exciting point. But that’s second best. Best is starting the book at this point or a point very similar to it.

If we’re talking about fiction, I strongly suggest you start by describing all the benefits the reader is going to get after they’ve mastered the content of your book. Take a

magic wand and set before the reader a scene where they are complete masters and are harvesting all the rewards.

Once you've chosen the scene you want to describe, I want you to close your eyes and imagine the scene. Close your eyes and visualize the entire process. See the scene that your reader will see. See the scene you WANT your reader to see.

What are the three words that best describe the scene? Note that I did not say what is the best three-word description of the scene. I said what three words best describe the scene.

Jot those words down.

Set your timer for five minutes.

Start your writing with one of the three words, the other two must appear in the first paragraph. Write as fast as you possibly can. Do not think. Do not edit yourself. The faster you write, the better your writing will be.

When you finish this process, you'll have a lead that will be magical. It will leave the reader hungry for more.

As I've mentioned previously, every time I do this exercise with my writing students, both they and I are amazed by the results!

You will be, too.

Ending your book with pure poetry

Frankly, you can end the book anyway you want to. Your book is not going to be rejected or accepted based on how you end it.

If you end it elegantly, people will say you're a marvelous writer. If you end your book inelegantly, or abruptly, people will say that's just your writing style.

If you really screw it up, the editor will help you fix it by making some suggestions.

Still, if only for your own peace of mind, it's nice if you can end your book as beautifully and as powerfully as you began it.

Here's the trick. Every book is about something. And you can usually sum up that something in a single word.

No, I can't give you that word. Every book is different. Every summarizing word is different. But if I asked you to summarize your book in a single word, chances are good that you could do it.

Now, I'm going to use a typewriter metaphor because you'll be able to understand what I'm talking about if I do.

Those of you who don't know what a typewriter is, well, you'll just have to muddle through.

If you've got your summary word, imagine inserting a piece of paper into a typewriter and rolling it down to the very last line. At the right hand side of that line (so you're writing the last word on that blank page) type the single word that summarizes your entire book.

It could be 'love,' or 'beauty' or 'success,' or whatever is appropriate for your book.

Go back to the top of the page.

Set your timer for five minutes and write to that last word. Write so the final word you write will be the last word on that page.

You'll end up with a poetic ending you never thought you were capable of.

An example

Have you ever seen the movie Casablanca? Just about everyone has. I use this example because of the popularity of this movie.

If I asked you what was the final word in that movie, would you be able to remember it? Most people can after just a few moments. The word is 'friendship.'

"Louis, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

The whole movie is about friendships. Friendships that are genuine friendships. Friendships that are friendships of convenience. Friendships that are business relationships. Friendships that are love affairs. And so on.

By ending on that word, the movie ends in a way that is incredibly appropriate for that story. It ends on friendship.

Try this yourself. Your ending will be pure poetry.

Get ready, I'm about to show you how to write a best-selling fiction or non-fiction book...

Chapter 9

How to Write A Best-selling Fiction or Non-fiction Book

(or, how to buy a best-selling plot for 25 cents!)

I have a lot of conversations with literary agents. They call me all the time asking the cliché question, "Read any good books lately?"

They're not joking. They know I spend a lot of time talking to my students and reading their manuscripts. (I hope to read yours very shortly, by the way.) They know I'm a great source of new material for their publishing mill. I'm quick to recommend any student's work that I can.

During our conversations, I'm likely to ask these agent friends of mine a question that just about everyone would like to have the answer to.

When I've got them on the telephone, I'll ask them just why so many would-be writers can't get an agent.

I hear this all the time. I can't get an agent, I can't get an agent, I can't get an agent. "My gosh," I'll ask them, "Is their writing that bad? Can they really not put a few words together to create a sentence?"

And almost universally, the response is identical. Writers are not rejected because their writing is bad. In some cases it's very good. In many cases it's at least adequate. And even in those rare instances where the writing is below par an editor could easily take on the task of making the writing better than it is.

Rejections, in the majority of cases, have nothing to do with how well the writer writes. When it comes to fiction, the agents are painfully blunt—at least with me.

"The plots are terrible. The story simply sucks."

And when it comes to non-fiction, which is simply the presentation of information repeated over and over again for 20 chapters, the problem is equally frustrating.

Again, it has nothing to do with the writer's writing ability.

“But,” say the agents, “the book that writer wants to write has already been written and there’s nothing new or innovative that the writer can offer to the publisher. If the publisher already has a book on time management, he doesn’t want a second one that will compete with the book he’s already got thousands of dollars devoted to.”

So if you want to write a best-selling fiction, you’ve got to come up with a best selling plot. If you’re going to create a best-selling non-fiction, you’ve got to come up with something that isn’t already on the market!

Let’s deal with fiction, first.

Creating Your Fiction Best Seller

If you’ve already got a great fiction swimming around in your head, or if you’re already several chapters into the fiction story you’ve always wanted to write, I can appreciate that. I know what it must mean to you. I know how many hours, weeks, perhaps even years you’ve devoted to this project.

Unfortunately, I’ve got to tell you the truth. The chances of your book becoming a bestseller are pretty slim (and even that’s an overstatement) unless you’re willing to follow some guidelines.

The most useful guideline is that you should consider shelving that book until you’ve created and published one or two books in that genre.

I say that only because it’s unlikely that the plot you’ve constructed will be a plot that will amaze a traditional publisher.

If you’re starting from scratch, so much the better.

First of all, in order to write a best-selling fiction, you need to have a certifiable best-selling plot. Most people don’t have one lying around their office, nor do they have one swimming around in their head. They might ‘think’ they do, but there’s no guarantee that the plot they’re considering is a best seller.

Don’t take chances

Get yourself down to the local plot shop, and buy a best-selling plot!

No, I haven’t taken leave of my senses. The local plot shop is also known as the ‘used-book store.’

You’re looking for a particular kind of book. There are two criteria and the book you buy must have both of them. If it’s short on one, then the book you’re looking at just isn’t the right one.

First of all, genre, or what the book is about, doesn’t matter at all. Just make sure it’s fiction.

Now to the first criteria. The book must be three to nine years of age. At least three years so the plot is old enough to be out of current memory. But no more than nine years because you want it to still be relatively current.

The next criteria, the book must have the banner on the front cover that says “National Best Seller.”

Not, “By the best-selling author of…” some other book. You want this book that you buy to be a national best seller.

What does that banner tell you about the plot in that book?

It tells you that the plot is a best-selling plot. It’s not a best-selling plot because the author thought it was, or the agent thought it was or the publisher thought it was.

It's a best-selling plot because the book went out into the market and the 'market' thought it was a best-selling plot.

This isn't whimsy. This is incontrovertible truth that what you're holding is a best-selling plot.

Now, here is something you should know about the publishing world. Major publishers, the folks who bring you the blockbuster best sellers are a pretty conservative bunch. If they had their 'druthers,' they'd just as soon publish the books they published last year-minus the losers, of course.

If they could get away with it, they'd love to simply give the buying public the same book with a different cover.

And you know what, they'd have another best seller on their hands.

In the publishing industry (hey, let's be frank, in the whole world) there's no money in being unique, special, innovative or creative. The kinds of books that will sell this year are the same books that sold last year... and the year before that.

If you've got a book in your hand that says 'national bestseller' on the front cover, you're holding more than just a book. You're holding your key to publishing success. And all the riches that go along with it.

Buy that best seller. If you can't afford it, take a look at the many garage sales that spring up every week near your home. You can pick up these best sellers for about 25 cents.

If that's still too costly, get yourself to the local library and knock yourself out. All their books are at least three years old.

However you get hold of the book, take it home and read it.

You already know how to create a blueprint for a book; so do something I call reverse engineering. Rather than creating a book from a blueprint, create the blueprint from the best-selling book!

What you'll have, after only a few hours work, is a best-selling plot and a best-selling blueprint for a best-selling book

What comes next is pretty obvious. Simply re-write the best-selling book

Now, before you mail this manual back to me accusing me of plagiarism or copyright infringement, I'm not saying that you should literally write the same book. I'm saying that you should use this blue print and write your own book.

But change everything you can possibly change. Change the names, change the places, change the time.

If it's a western, make it a romance. If it's a romance, make it a murder. If it's a science fiction make it a modern-day adventure. Change everything you possibly can change. If it takes place under the sea, make it take place in space. If all the weapons are bows and arrows, make them use phasers. If all the characters are men, make all your character women.

Everything you can possibly change, change. But keep the story, the plot and the blueprint!

Does this sort of thing happen in the real publishing world? Only every day. Ever read a harlequin romance. Ever read two Harlequin romances. Notice any similarities in plot?

Harold Robbins, one of the most successful writers of the 20th century, a man who got million dollar advances, was repeatedly accused of writing the same book over and over again.

Accused, no doubt, but poor critics and writers who kept wondering how he did it.

Do you remember a television program called The Honeymooners? Animate that television show and you have the Flintstones.

Remember the television program my Favorite Martian? Make the Martian hilarious and you've got Mork and Mindy. Make Mork a puppet and you've got Alf. Put them all together and you've got Third rock From the Sun.

Not too long ago I was watching a movie called "Independence Day" with Will Smith. I'm watching this moving with my wife. And we're both enjoying it. I can see why it was so successful.

But I'm also an old-movie buff. I'm half way through this movie when I begin to conclude that this is exactly the same plot as the movie, "War of the Worlds," based on H.G. Wells story by the same name.

In Wells' story, the Martians invade the world. In the newer movie, we have to update things to be politically correct (we don't want to offend the Martians) so we call them 'aliens.'

In Wells' story, humanity tries atom bombs. They don't work. We try hydrogen bombs. They don't work. Finally the Martians die because they cannot defend against a common earth bacteria.

In "Independence Day," we try atom bombs. They don't work. We try hydrogen bombs. They don't work. My gosh, I'm thinking, is it going to be a blatant rip off. Are the aliens going to die because they cannot defend against a computer virus!

All this is simply prologue to make you understand that it is folly to go out and try to create something new and innovative... particularly when a successful plot is so close at hand.

"I never intentionally set out to compose anything original."

--Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Let's be honest. Unless you've already written several best sellers, you really have no idea what is needed in a plot to make it sell big. You may 'think' you know, but you really don't

Don't try to recreate the wheel. Just use the plot that the market has already said is a winner.

Outstanding methods for creating your own plot

I could give you all sorts of ways for creating your own plot. And if you wander into your local bookstore, you'll see them lining the shelves. How to create this sort of plot. How to create that sort of plot. A romance, a thriller, a murder mystery, a western. Go ahead. Buy them. Use their suggestions. At the end of the process, you will not have a plot at all. You won't be any closer to a best-selling plot than you are right now.

Don't hurt yourself with this sort of stuff. Go out and get a best-selling plot and simply use it. It's that simple!

Creating your non-fiction bestseller!

Most of my students will say they can certainly see that not recreating the wheel is the most effective method of writing a fiction. But where does that leave them if they

want to write non-fiction. I still haven't told them which chapters they should have in their book!

Okay, I'll do that right now!

In most cases, the non-fiction book you want to write has already been written. At the very least there are several other books that, to a greater or lesser degree, cover the same topic you want to write about. Then you've got an even bigger headache. Computer technology notwithstanding, there's nothing new under the sun.

Your task is to create a book that is as good as any book out there, but has new and innovative information packaged and presented in a way that makes it very exciting for the book buyer.

At first you might think this is difficult. Actually, nothing could be further from the truth. It's dead easy. In fact, give me a book topic that has been 'done to death' and I'll be able to create a new tact on that subject in about 30 seconds. I'll show you how in a few moments.

Collect similar non-fiction books

Your first job is to collect various books that have covered the same topics that you want to cover. Don't go back too far. Ten years at most. That should give you a great number of books to look at.

If you have a topic that you **KNOW** has never been covered before, then you should look at similar books.

One of my students was writing a book about how to effectively domesticate barn owls. Okay, I'm willing to agree that there aren't too many books on that subject at all. So I suggested that he round up similar books. Books that talk about the care and feeding of wild animals.

You can find these books in used bookstores, libraries, specialized clubs, the Internet. Keep looking and try to find similar books. You'll need them. You want to use the information in these books to create the blueprint for your own book.

Find the chapters that are necessary

Read these books over and you'll notice that there is something intriguing about the chapters. All the books have several chapters that cover some of the topic.

If you're reading books about time management, you'll always see a chapter about time management in the office, or time management in meetings, or the idea of delegating responsibilities and so on.

Well, guess which chapters you should definitely have in your book? That's right, those same chapters.

If every other book on your topic has chapters on X, Y and Z, you can bet your bottom dollar that the publisher will expect at least these chapters to be in your book as well.

It does no good to argue. You can explain, until you're blue in the face, that your strategies are different and that your strategies do away with all this X, Y, Z stuff. That doesn't matter.

You can certainly explain your new concepts, but you have to be able to explain them in terms of X, Y, and Z.

This should give you chapters for at least half of your book, and perhaps much more.

Don't forget chapters explaining the challenges and the obstacles the reader will face when they take on this subject. I know one author who constantly starts his books with an entire chapter just devoted to the problems the reader either has been facing, or will be facing as a result of the information.

Remember also that when a reader buys a non-fiction book, they're looking for a solution to a problem. They have a specific benefit in mind and they want to obtain that solution.

Non-fiction is more than just the presentation of information. It is the presentation of the benefit that you can get from understanding and implementing this information.

Books that simply present information are little more than boring textbooks. If you're going to present information to people, find out what they want and, just as important, why they want it.

Then provide them with that solution.

Wouldn't it be nice if history texts did more than simply present history? After all, that's not why people are reading a history text. They want to pass an exam, or they want to get the information for some other reason.

I think academic texts should do more than just present the information. They should also present the most effective studying techniques that will allow the student to pass that exam.

If you want to know how to domesticate an owl, there has to be a reason. For fun and profit? As a stress reliever? So you can open a zoo? Why?

If you can give that to the reader, you'll be far ahead of the game.

I'm convinced that you could take any successful 'how to' book and give it a focus and you'd be on your way to another best seller: "How To win Friends and Influence People-a guide for consultants" "Think and Grow Rich-a manual for mothers." You get the idea.

Step-by-Step solutions

People aren't buying how-to because they've got nothing better to do with their money. They're buying how to because they want answers to their questions. They want solutions to their problems.

That's what should be in your book. Step by step solutions that can be photocopied, laid out on the kitchen table and followed like a road map.

The only question should be whether the person reading the material is going to follow the road map, not whether the road map exists or whether it's any good!

First you do this, then you do this, and then you do the next thing.

If you wanted to write a book in 14 days, or any time span for that matter, the material in this book will allow you to do so. The material in this manual will give you all the answers to every question I can possibly think of, all the questions that have been asked of me. And all the questions that should have been asked but weren't. I'm trying to leave nothing to chance.

Create your own technology chapters

For a few moments, you may want to skip back to chapter five, where I told you how to develop your own technology.

This is an essential attribute for your own non-fiction book. You must have your own technology to really differentiate your book from every other book that is out there. You must be able to say to an agent or a publisher that your book is different because you are the founder of the |TECH technology for weight reduction, or the IRONS technology for reducing stress.

Not only does this make your book different, but it produces a ready-made hook for all media. If you're produced another book on time management, no one cares. But if you're the founder of FOUND time management, everyone wants to know what that is.

If you've made a dramatic breakthrough in your field of expertise, great. But if you haven't then repackaging what is already known is just as effective.

Simplify the complex

Are there complex ideas in your field of expertise? Are there ideas that have great merit but are understood only by the experts? Then that's another series of chapters you can put in your book.

Becoming the authority on a subject means you're able to take concepts that are complex and write them in a language (like you were explaining it to a 10-year-old) your reader can understand.

There may already be solutions to the problems your readers have. But the solutions are shrouded in statistics and impenetrable interpretations. Simplify all that for the reader and you've got some great reading. You've also differentiated your book.

Create a response device

Robert Allen, famed best-selling author of the book "No Money Down Real Estate" made hundreds of thousands of dollars for this book and for the sequel, "No Money down Real Estate for the 90's"

His third book, however, was an economic flop-at least for the publisher. The third book, entitled "The Challenge" had just as much vital information in it but-according to Allen-was poorly titled.

And sales reflected the poor title (or whatever other reason there was for the book's poor performance).

Ironically, Allen made more money on this book than he did on the first two books combined. It happened because in the book he invited readers to contact him for a free premium. A special report or an audiotape was given away if you contacted the author's office.

I'll tell you now that it takes some fairly aggressive negotiating to get this sort of item placed in your publishing contract... allowing you to have this. But it's worth it if you have any sort of back end for the reader. (The back end is the place where all of your other products and services are sold. Allen had several information and seminar products that each sold for several hundred dollars. Anyone who contacted his office was offered these products. Products that have a much higher profit margin than most people could imagine.)

Of course, if you're going to self-publish your book, there's really no problem. You can place in the book whatever you want.

You can place your own catalogue in your book if you want (and you should). If your book is traditionally published, the best you'll be able to manage is an offer to send the reader your catalogue if they call you.

Or you could offer a free Special Report, which is just 3-5 pages of information that costs less than a dime but offers them still another product.

Special reports happen to be my favorite premium because they have a low actual cost and a very high perceived value. I can offer a \$20 Special Report that has at least \$20 worth of information in it, but it costs me just pennies to produce. And I now have the reader's name and mailing address for other offers they may be interested in.

And now, with the introduction and widespread use of e-mail, all of my production costs and distribution costs have been eliminated as well!

Salt the Table of Contents

"You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." Ever hear that one? So have I. Interestingly, a friend of mine was telling me that it's not true. You most certainly can lead a horse to water and have him drink. In fact, if you do it correctly, you won't even have to lead the horse to water. The horse will drag you to it no matter how much resistance you offer!

How? By salting the oats.

Apparently if you put sufficient salt in the oats a horse eats, it will want a drink of water very quickly.

It will want to satisfy this need.

The same is true in other situations. That's why I recommend you salt your book heavily with expectations.

In the next few paragraphs I'm going to tell you exactly how to get a reader riveted to your every word, want to finish the chapter being read and NEED to go on to the next one, find your concepts irresistible and recommend your book to at least 10 of their friends!

Ready? Thought you would be. That's what I call salt. Presenting the reader with expectations so they simply can't put the book down.

Of course, you're going to fulfill all those expectations, but by presenting them to the reader beforehand, you make the anticipation very large-and very useful as well.

I'm always disappointed when a publisher calls the chapters in a book by such mundane names as VI, or IX, or the very popular IXX.

Instead, why not:

"Chapter 5, In which you find out how you can look 15 pounds lighter in just 60 minutes, the three dresses you should definitely NOT wear, the restaurant food that will take HOURS to burn off and the very best strategy for non-stop weight loss motivation."

Now, if you're interested in losing weight at all, it would be hard not to read that chapter. It has the promise of so many good things in it.

If the reader were looking at the book in the bookstore, if the reader was trying to decide if they should pick up your book, or someone else's, what do you think they'd do? Naturally, they'd go for the one that held the greater promise of success... despite the fact that both books would probably contain the same information.

Don't forget to salt the beginning and end of your chapters as well.

You salt the beginning of the chapter so the reader will know just how much valuable information lies ahead for the. You salt the end of the chapter with all the wonderful things that will be disclosed in the following chapter (so they'll want to continue reading rather than putting the book down.

Getting testimonials

Your book is wonderful. I know that and you know that. But, sadly, the reader doesn't know that. Your reader needs some convincing. And the very best way to get that sort of endorsement is through a referral.

A referral is an endorsement that comes from a friend or a respected authority the person knows.

Enter testimonials.

You can't get the person's friend to refer your book-the logistics are just too difficult. But you can get a respected authority to do it.

It's called a testimonial. You see them on books all the time. The more respected the source of the testimonial, the more powerful the testimonial is.

So how do you get them?

Do you just send the whole manuscript to someone you've never met and hope that they'll say nice things about you?

Hardly. To start with, you don't send the whole book. If you did, then you'd probably get a polite reply (if you got a reply at all) saying that the person's schedule does not allow them... and so on.

First, think of who your reader is. Now think of 20 or 30 names of people your reader may find authoritative. The names are usually of celebrities-to a greater or a lesser degree.

Send the celebrity (talk to your local librarian about getting an appropriate address) just a single chapter. That's all. Not a bunch of chapters. (People have better things to do than to read your unknown work.)

Tell them you value their input. You value their expertise on this particular area. You value their comments. If they could just quickly read the 10 pages you've sent and, if they have any comments, could they put them on the enclosed sheet, place the sheet in the stamped envelope (that you provided) and send them to you.

If they give you a testimonial, that's great. But that wasn't the objective. You just wanted to ensure that they looked at part of your book.

About 10 or so days later, write the celebrity another letter and clearly ask for their testimonial for the book they've read. Remind them of what the book is about. Remind them of the direction of the book and everything they'd need to give you a glowing testimonial. And tell them the names of the celebrities who have already given you a testimonial as well as the list of celebrities who are expected to give you a testimonial.

Now, if all you've got so far is the testimonial of a friend, make sure you present your friend as a learned celebrity who is giving you a testimonial. And make sure you include the testimonial that I'm going to give you. (Just call me!)

Then be very bold and write out the testimonial that you would like to receive from that celebrity and suggest it. Don't go overboard, just make it a nice testimonial.

You'd be amazed how many celebrities will simply sign the testimonial and send it back to you.

Make sure you include a copy of the testimonial in your letter so they can have one for their files.

Now, get ready for this next chapter. You're about to discover researching techniques that are so powerful, so dynamic that it could very well revolutionize the way all authors research their books from now on.

I'm going to tell you how to minimize your research time so dramatically that you'll never again do even one moment more research than is absolutely necessary. I'll show you how to get the vital information from 20 books in less than 30 minutes. How to get cutting edge information with a single telephone call. How to ensure you use every single piece of research you find... and much more!

See how effective salt can be!

Chapter 10

The fastest method of researching on the planet

(it has nothing to do with the internet!)

You're about to discover the fastest method of researching on the planet. You're about to discover where to do your research, when to do your research and even how to do your own research so you become the number one authority in your field. We'll discuss techniques for actually getting you the answer to any question in just minutes. Even how to get information no one else has! But perhaps more important than even these unbelievable insights, you'll discover the single most important question you should always be asking, ANYTIME you do research for your book.

I know you're the expert in your field. I know you're the expert on your topic. There is simply no one who knows more about the subject than you do. You are the world's most authoritative expert on your subject...

Well, that may be true, and it may be less than true. You can produce a very effective book if you know a lot about a subject. In fact, if you know more than most of your prospective clients and it's a topic your clients want to explore, you've got the makings of an outstanding book.

But you don't know everything there is to know about your subject. There may be a few questions, just a few, you don't have the answers for.

That's the purpose behind this chapter. Regardless of your level of expertise, there may be a few areas that you either don't know, or aren't as expert as you know your prospect needs you to be.

I'm going to give you all the information you need to do the kind of research you absolutely must have to produce a fantastic book.

Please remember that in the first chapter I told you that the techniques involved in writing your book in just 14 days, or less, DO NOT include the time you spend researching and editing your book. But before you get depressed, realize I want you to get your research done, what little of it you need to do, in the shortest time possible.

And it won't be a boring task, either. I'm not interested in spending hours in the library researching a topic, only to discover after almost a day of turning pages and

pulling books, that I've got precious little more information, usable information, than I had when I started.

It will be fast, painless, even fun. I'll give you some strategies that may seem revolutionary to some and work every time for everyone.

A word about the internet...

Please don't misunderstand me here. I'm not a ludite, nor am I a person who has anything against the internet, or the World Wide Web. In the years to come, the net and the web will be crucial when it comes to rapid research.

But that day is not today. And it won't be in the very near future. While there is a wealth of information to be had on the internet, there is also a wealth of confusion, dead ends and informational meanderings.

It's tough to research anything on the net and not get sidetracked a hundred times along the way.

The information is certainly there, it's just not easy to get to.

When the net and the web can present you with a tool that will allow you to easily find the specific information you're looking for, the net will become an awesome tool for research. Right now, however, there are other tools that are far faster and far more effective.

Here's your biggest problem when it comes to research...

I teach writing at all levels and inevitably the topic of research will always come up somewhere in the teaching. The student will always raise his or her hand and I can almost hear the question before it's asked.

"I have this problem when I do research..."

And so does the vast majority of consultants and professionals who begin writing their book. The biggest problem they have is they find their research to be excessive, and they can't stop.

They research and research and research. Always finding the information fascinating. Always finding it impossible to stop and get on with the writing of the book.

I have three words of advice for these folks... GET OVER IT! You don't have to research yourself into the ground to develop a well-researched book.

You should research only those questions that need to be answered. Questions you can't answer yourself. You should research those questions only in a way that will give you the information you need in the shortest period of time possible.

The single most important time to do research that guarantees you'll never do one minute of research more than you have to

Here's a revolutionary technique I share with every writer. It's a technique that's deceptive in its simplicity, but profound in its repercussions. In every class there are always several professionals who sit with mouths agape at the undeniable logic of this strategy. It's a technique I developed as a journalist when six articles had to be written by the end of the day. And it's a technique that has yet to fail me when I need to do research in the shortest time possible.

Put in its most basic form, it is knowing the precise time, the most powerful time, to do research when you're writing your book.

I encourage every consultant or professional to write his or her book first and THEN do the research!

That may sound ridiculous at first, but think of what this really means.

You know a lot about your book topic. You know, based on what you've read in previous chapters, how to write it quickly.

Why not simply write your book leaving blank any areas where real research is needed. After your book is written, go back to those areas and ask yourself specifically what needs to be discovered. Now you can go to your research source with specific questions about specific subjects. You'll never again find yourself researching in an ad hoc manner. Nor will you ever find yourself doing excessive research.

You must learn the secrets of limiting your research so you don't spend forever on the task.

When you were in school, you researched and researched when it came time to write a paper. Ironically, most of what you discovered never made its way into your paper. Why? Because it wasn't needed.

However, had you simply written down the questions you wanted to answer first--rather than the broad topic with the objective of including everything under the sun--your research would have been carved down to just a few hours!

How much research is really needed to write the book you want to write?

Here's something you probably haven't realized. Take a look at any book you happen to have. Or any book in any library. In no book will you find a chapter entitled, "**Stuff I learned, but didn't use in the book.**"

In short, you get no credit, no credit at all, for research that you do but do not use. No extra points, no extra money, no extra recognition. In fact, the readers will never know (and probably don't care) about the efforts you went to, to discover information that wasn't presented in the book.

So it just makes sense that you should research only those items that will definitely appear in the book, and refuse to research those items that are not 'essential.' Essential being defined simply as whether or not it will appear in the book.

I will also tell you that you will get neither credit nor adulation for the amount of time you've spent researching.

Arthur Hailey, for his best-seller 'Wheels' spent an entire week on a car assembly line. The information he gleaned from this personal odyssey of 168 hours was condensed and placed into a single paragraph in the book.

While many who know this, express awe at Hailey's determination, I'm rather saddened by the unbelievable waste of time.

Hailey could have determined what he wanted, called a line worker and had his paragraph perfect in about five minutes.

There is a profound misconception about researching your book. You don't need to spend a huge amount of time on it. Most of the information you'll be using will come directly from your own mind, your own experiences, your own abilities and knowledge. If that's not the case, you really should consider picking another topic.

Inevitably I'll be asked by someone attending my seminar to explain the strategy if one is writing a history text, or a chemistry text, or a detailed gothic romance. How can you write one of those kinds of books unless you've already done considerable research?

My reply is about as obvious as you can get.

If you're writing one of these books, most of the information should be swimming around in your head right now. If it isn't you have a real problem.

If you want to write a history book and you have little or know understanding or awareness of this time era, why are you writing a history book?

If you want to write a chemistry text and you have no understanding of chemistry, why are you writing a chemistry book?

It's the same for fiction. If you want to write a gothic romance and you've never read a gothic romance, you've got a real problem.

If you've already read dozens of gothic romances, you already know how they eat, what they wear, who lives where and the implications of their lifestyles.

The whole purpose of writing your book is to display your own unique perspective to a prospective client or reader. Let them see what YOU can do. Your objective is NOT to produce a warehouse of old material that doesn't give your prospective client any reason to think you're special.

When you've got that kind of experiential support behind you, your research is limited to perhaps finding where a few forms can be obtained, or the correct phone numbers or something similar. You don't have to research much to produce a very marketable book.

Many of my students produce a book as if it was a university thesis, where their own information counts for nothing and everything they write must be triple verified by some other source. Not necessary.

You should also reason that in many cases you don't need exact information. Just approximate information.

That doesn't mean you fudge anything, but the reader needs to know specifics about some things, and generalities about others.

For example, if your book had to do with a recipe for baking a perfect apple pie, then, yes, you'd need specifics when it comes to measuring ingredients and directions.

But you can speak in generalities about origins, or designs, or anecdotes.

Keep in mind your reader's needs. They need to be treated as if they know nothing about the topic. But don't treat them as if they insist on knowing everything about the topic, no matter how inane or irrelevant.

It's your personal experience that will contribute the most when it comes to researching your topic. Your personal experience includes what you know, what you think you know and even what you're pretty sure of, but can't verify without hours of unwanted and unneeded research.

How much of your own background becomes instrumental in the success of research?

Your own background is absolutely essential to the research for your book. I'm always telling my clients the first book they write should be based mostly on their own experience and the background they bring to the subject itself.

First, make a list of all the things you know about the subject. These are items you feel confident about. Concepts you've got solidly in your own background. You'll find it's extensive.

It's really not until you itemize your own background that you start fully appreciating what you bring from your own experience.

Next, start listing what you probably know. You may feel a bit uncertain about topic areas until you start actually exploring what you know. You'll start realizing that while you weren't sure initially, suddenly there's a lot more about the subject within your grasp.

Next, make a list of the things you need to know, but you definitely don't, regarding the subject you're writing about.

This will be a decidedly small list. You may find only a few topics about which you draw a complete blank.

These areas usually encompass what I call 'unknown information'. Topics just peripherally involved in what you're writing about, but you've got to understand them in order to give your reader a complete overview.

The one, small area in your library that will give you more information than you ever thought possible

There are areas for which you'll have to do basic research. You'll have to discover basic information about these topics before you go on.

Here's how you do it. Go to the single most important area in your library. That place that has all the information you could possibly need. The place that offers you the information in seconds, instead of days.

Instead of walking into your library and turning right, leading into the adult's section, turn left and enter the children's non-fiction section. Here is where you'll do all your initial research.

Everyone believes the only things you'll find in the children's non-fiction section are books about talking turtles. Not so.

You'll discover a wealth of non-fiction books written on every subject you can imagine. From nuclear science to weather to biology and everything in between.

But the real power of these books is that experts in the field write them. Why? Because only an expert in the field could take a relatively complex idea, like electromagnetism, and make it simplistic enough for a 10 year old to understand.

Even better, these books are short. There are only 20 or 30 pages in each one. What you hold in your hands is the essence of a subject. The essential information can easily be read and understood in a matter of minutes.

And if you're concerned about bibliographies in your writing, fear not. These books all have 'grown up' titles, like 'Understanding Weather,' or 'Einstein's Theory' and so on.

I can't tell you how often people have called me with the news that this strategy actually works for them. Just yesterday a student called me saying my comments were right on, "with the exception that I had to turn right instead of left to get to the children's section."

Try it. You'll be amazed how you can zip through 20 or so books and get a wealth of information in less than an hour.

Compare that to the alternative. Going into the adult non-fiction section and pulling out huge tomes that take days, perhaps weeks to read, finally giving you anything but a clear understanding of what you want to say.

Again, make sure when you do your research, you have specific questions in mind. Don't just research for the sake of accumulating information. That leads to endless researching and the problem of not knowing when to stop.

If you've got a specific question, you'll know when you've got the information you need.

That's why I suggest people 'write their book first' and then do the research. You'll have specific questions in mind.

Whatever you do, stay away from those tomes as a source of information. In fact, I strongly suggest you stay away from any adult book if you're looking for information your readers would find interesting.

The reason is an obvious one. Books, particularly learned ones, those so thick you can actually hurt yourself getting them from the library shelf if one happened to fall on your foot, are out of date long before they're ever published.

New strategies, new theories, new processes are being developed even as they're going to press. So, while these books may have suited your purposes when you were in school, they're not much good now.

But even more to the point is the time it takes to wade through them so you can get a simple piece of information. Page after page, laying down first principles that must be understood before you can fully appreciate subsequent pieces of information, and that's just one book.

I want you to get the information you need, whatever it happens to be, fast. Here's how it's done.

The five-step process for getting the answer to ANY question in just minutes

If you know a lot about a particular subject, chances are good you'll also know all the other experts in that field. You may even be on a first name basis with them.

If you need information for your book, the easiest way to get it is to ask another expert in the field who has that information.

It's easy to do.

First, find the expert. Find the author's name in those large books (or better yet, the children's books). The children's book authors are usually the better bet because they will almost certainly be the acknowledged experts in the field.

Second, call them, via the publisher. Or write them a letter via the publisher. Explain to the first line of defense (usually the secretary or the publisher's editor), that you're writing a book on the area of the author's expertise (or a variation on that theme) and you wanted to ask him or her a few questions about the subject.

Third, when you get to the author, say exactly the same thing. I always introduce myself and then say I'm writing a book on this topic and I was wondering if I could ask them a few quick questions on the specific subject of....

Fourth, as soon as they say yes, and they always will say yes, I explain I'm not an expert in their field (even if I am) and if the questions I ask seem somewhat naive, I hope they'll understand.

Why do they always agree to talk to me about their subject of expertise? Because they ARE experts. They know all the details about their specialty. And they have also found their spouse, their friends, their relatives, long ago lost interest in the subject they hold so dear to their heart.

Nobody they know wants to talk to them any more about their field of expertise. Think of it yourself. Do you have an area where you excel? How many people do you know who would like nothing better than to sit down with you and discuss it? Not many.

Now they have this person, a stranger perhaps, who recognizes them for their expertise and wants to talk to them and ask them questions.

Why do I say I know virtually nothing about the subject? Because if I profess to know a lot about a subject, the expert I'm talking with will always assume I know more than I do. Half way through the conversation I'll have to stop him and ask him to explain something he thought I already knew. I end up looking like a fool.

If, however, you tell someone you know nothing about their area of expertise but are fascinated, what do they immediately want to do? They want to give you all the information they possibly can.

Fifth, ask them if there's a good time for you to call them. Tell them it should take only about 12 minutes, tops (even if you think it might take longer), and prepare your questions ahead of time so you'll get the specific information you're looking for.

I always suggest that you talk to people before you ever start research in books. Cutting edge information, stuff that has yet to be published, material that is too current to be in print, even thoughts or suspicions too new for publication, will always be in people's heads. Floating around. Just waiting for someone like you to coax into the limelight.

Talk to people, experts. Those are the folks who have the real information.

Your second most important research telephone call

Next stop in the information hunt, go to your library and ask for the directory of newsletters in North America. In this directory, you'll find about 60,000 titles of newsletters that cover every area and every topic you can think of.

Find the newsletters that pertain directly, or indirectly, to your subject. Call the editors, and ask them if you can see a few back issues, please. You're considering subscribing to the newsletter.

If you don't already subscribe, perhaps you should.

While you're talking to the editor, tell him or her you're writing a book on a specific topic. You'd like to know if any experts in that field come to mind. While you know more about that subject than anyone else does, there may be a few--only a few, of course--who know ALMOST as much as you do about the topic.

The editor will know their names and how to get in touch with them.

While you have the editor on the line, ask him if his newsletter offers any specialized books or tape albums. You may not have that information and it would be very effective if you did.

Your objective is to cover all the bases; to ensure you've got all the information you need for your booklet.

But, let me offer you one caveat. The more nebulous your request for information, the less likely you are to meet with success.

Make sure you have specific questions, specific queries about specific subjects. If you call the newsletter editor and say only that you want to learn more about 'relationships' the editor won't know where to start helping you. You'll probably end up being directed to the local bookstore for some pretty general books.

When you talk to these experts, again, make sure you have specific questions in mind and it's a great idea to record the conversation on tape. That can be done easily enough. Again, go to a Radio Shack or similar store and tell them what you want to do. They'll be able to show you the necessary equipment.

How to become the world's foremost authority on your topic!

Now I want to show you how you can easily become the world's foremost authority on a subject, even if you're starting from ground zero, or a limited amount of your own information.

Again, decide what you want to be an expert in. What field, what area. Try to be as precise as you possibly can be.

Next, make a list of all the things you absolutely, for sure, know about this subject area. No matter how limited, no matter how arcane. This is information you absolutely know.

Next, make a list of all the pieces of information, just short form you understand, of all the items, areas or pieces of information you 'think' you know. Just pondering these areas can make the information crystallize before you and you suddenly realize you know much more than you had given yourself credit for.

Now, make a list of all the areas, subjects or certain facts you definitely don't know. This is information you are sure you should have at your fingertips before you can call yourself the world expert.

Make a list, yet another list, of the ten leading experts in the field. The ten minds, or authorities who are the acknowledged leaders.

All have written books on their subjects. Get the latest ones that pertain to your area of expertise and read them. Skim over all you already know and make notes only of those items you don't know.

Once you've studied this information, digested it and have it at your fingertips, you're the 11th leading authority in the field.

Now it's time to become #1. Take a look at what has already been uncovered and simplify it.

It is in the simplification that true genius arises. If you can take complex ideas and make them simple, you understand both what has gone before and you have an insight into what will arise in the future.

No, you don't have to have a huge mind or an intellect as big as all outdoors to do this effectively. It just requires some reflection and some thought. Take a look at all the great experts in their field and you'll find very few were real geniuses. They simply took a complex thought and made it simple, by applying a little thinking. Rarely do we find the great leaps of genius that belong to an Einstein or a Newton.

The simplification of this information will be your basis for producing revolutionary technology, unique technology as I outlined in chapter five. You have simplified it, made it understandable, and by using those techniques, you rip it away from every other expert in the field and become the ONLY expert who has this technology available.

Finally, get ready to give this information and insight away as readily as possible. If you're the leading authority on a subject and you're the only one who knows it, you've accomplished nothing. But if you share the information, make it available, you've really accomplished great things.

How to get information no one else has!

You're unique, and the services you provide--even if many other professionals are offering them--are unique as well. No one brings to the table the set of strategies, and information, experience and perspective that you do.

So you've got to make it apparent to your prospective clients, via your book, that you've got an innovative perspective, a unique outlook, an unparalleled expectation. You're not just different, you're 'better' than anything or anyone that they've been considering up to this point.

And you can do that by developing your own research, your own information.

No, this isn't going to cost you a lot of money. It's not going to mean countless months of surveys or reproducible experiments.

You simply must present the results of your own research, your own insight, when you're gathering information about your subject.

You already know a great deal about your subject. And you've gained great levels of expertise just by being in the business for whatever length of time you've been there.

But now you must ask yourself one question that virtually no other expert will ask: WHY?

Presenting the information is valuable, but being able to answer the question, WHY, will separate you from the herd.

This is true, and that is true, but why is that the case. Give your reader your own perspective on the reasoning, and you're introducing your own research, or your own findings.

I'll give you an example.

In my work with direct-mail copy, there is an edict that every copywriter knows, and understands: Long copy outsells short copy. If you want to sell anything via direct mail, you better get ready to produce as much sales copy as you possibly can.

This is an unarguable fact.

Equally unarguable is the fact that no one outside of direct mail understands this, or believes it.

When I present this information to my client, either in person, or in my own book, I say: "My research, based on 27 clients in the last 6 months alone (and this is research that no one else has produced), has shown conclusively that long copy outsells short copy, almost 4 to 1."

Whatever work you've done in your area of expertise, must be seen as research for future clients. Research that only you could have done--because only you were in that unique position to conduct it.

The one question you MUST ask to get the most innovative answers possible

Any time you're doing research, interviewing experts, developing your own strategies or verifying your findings, you've got to keep one question in mind if you want to maximize the value of your information:

How does this affect my client?

If you can't answer this question, then all you're doing is presenting information and you're little more than a distributor of knowledge. You have to be able to tell your client why all this stuff actually means to him or her. Why using it will save them money, increase their staff's productivity, give them a longer life.

It's not always easy to be researching something and constantly ask yourself 'So What!' But that's what you've got to do.

Please note that if you DO this, you'll be tapping directly into the heart of what motivates your prospective reader to call you wanting additional services, additional products, your time, or your expertise.

You will have shown him 'what's in it for me?' and you will have translated it directly into terms he can understand.

But that's just the beginning, because in the next chapter, you discover...

Chapter 11

Perfecting what you've written

how to go from good to great and making your editing a SNAP!

Editing allows you to go from good writing to great writing. That's all you have to do. And it's not particularly difficult, either. I'll give you several strategies that will improve any writing quickly and easily. And I'll give you an overall strategy, that I call SNAP editing, that will give you an almost magical command of the editing process.

I should also tell you that the techniques you're about to be given were raved about by professional editors when I presented the strategy to a group of them not long ago.

Just the idea that you can write a book of any substance in 14 days or less makes any editor pale. But after they saw these strategies in action, they were very impressed. The past president of this association was so enamoured, she wanted to help me speak to groups of writers and convey these messages to them.

The three things that powerful editing will give you.

You want to convey excitement, precision, reading ease with your writing. And those are the mandates for editing. That's what editing is.

Powerful editing will give you the one element that will create each of these three benefits. And that one element is the elimination of unnecessary words.

That really is what editing is all about. The elimination of unnecessary words.

Excitement dies in any writing when there are more words than absolutely necessary. Hone it down to the minimum and you're left with very exciting writing.

You'll also find that with a minimum of words, your writing also becomes more precise. You and I both know of writing that has run-on sentences and qualifiers that 'sort of' give information. 'Nearly' match expectations and 'almost' give us the value we were looking for.

Editing gives us precisely that.

And whether you want to admit it or not every writer must try to get his or her message across to the reader. If you can't do that, you've failed miserably. Have you ever read a book that was impenetrable? Just about everyone has. Most people simply assume they weren't intelligent enough to understand the concepts the writer was giving.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The writer must make those ideas, those concepts, easily understood.

If you've ever found a book to be boring, it's not your fault. It's the fault of the author, the editor, or both!

Why should I be the one to edit?

When I get this question the person usually means they thought their job was to simply write the book. The editing process would be done by someone else, probably the agent or the publisher's editor.

Newsflash. The agent doesn't edit anything. They simply sell your manuscript to the publisher. Kind agents will often make some general suggestions if they have the time, but they will rarely have the time.

And if it doesn't look good before it gets to the agent, then it's not going to even get to the editor.

Now, if you're not an effective editor, don't worry. I'll give you all the tools you need to make your manuscript better than you ever thought it would be. But it must be as good as you can make it before the agent sees it.

Why you may not need to edit at all!

Speed your greatest ally when you write. The faster you write, the better your writing becomes. I've said this time and time again, and I'll probably be saying it with my dying breath. The faster you write, the better your writing becomes.

If you take that to heart, if you really understand that concept and all the ramifications, then you'll discover that your writing will need very little editing at all.

Why?

Because the most effective form of writing is the appearance of the author talking directly to the reader. We want the reader to feel so comfortable with our book that he or she honestly starts to believe that we're talking directly to them and them alone.

You get that by writing the way you talk. And you write the way you talk ONLY by writing quickly.

When you write quickly, you don't have time for all the convoluted sentences and the large words that many of your readers will not understand.

So it should come as no surprise to you to discover that whenever any of my students sticks closely to the idea of writing quickly, the amount of editing is virtually zero. The writing stands on its own. There's no need for re-writes. The first draft is good enough to be undergo the scrutiny of agent and editor alike.

When I tell people how to editor their material, I feel as if I've done them a disservice. If they have been listening to me and if I have given the required information to them correctly, they shouldn't need to do any editing at all!

The most important question to have in mind when you edit

When we write we all tend to get a little carried away with ourselves and our message. We tend to think that what we're saying is the most important thing and we tend to presume that our audience knows exactly what we're talking about.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

When we edit we must constantly be thinking of how to make the message clearer for our reader. Do they understand and if they don't how can we make the message still clearer so they will understand.

To do otherwise cheats our readers and to cheat ourselves.

Cheating the reader is pretty obvious. They wanted a good story and they're not getting it. Or they want some clear information, and they're not getting it. You must constantly be thinking of the reader, editing as if you actually were the reader.

On a large scale, start thinking about what's in it for the reader. If we're talking about fiction, this story had better be constantly interesting so it will hold the interest of the reader.

As you edit, are you wondering if the story is real exciting.

When Ken Follett writes, he writes with only one thought in mind, is the reader being entertained, excited, intrigued by every single sentence. That's what every author should be doing. When they edit, how can I make this story even more exciting.

If we're talking about non-fiction, are you presenting all the information your reader needs to get the benefits you've promised. Don't leave out an ingredient. Make sure you cover all the bases to ensure a complete success when your reader tries it for himself, or herself.

Can you really perfect your book

The short answer to that is, 'no' you can't perfect the book. You can make it better, but you can't make it perfect.

Every time I discuss editing with an author, or an editor, they're quick to point out that the book they've just been working on (or worse yet, the book that has just been published) isn't perfect, but it's as close to perfection as they can get it, given their limitations of time and resources.

Your book will never be perfect and that means that if you're a perfectionist, you run a very real risk of never getting your book out the door.

As I've said to so many perfectionists, GET OVER IT. Your perfectionism will not help you in the world of writing. Can your writing be made better, absolutely. But you've got to realize this will always be the case. You'll never send out anything in a perfect state. Again, you have to realize that you have limitations of time and resources.

Again, this is where you'll find the writers who are writing the same three pages over and over again... for months! They go to their graves having never finished a book, and wishing they could get just one more draft of those three pages that have been rewritten 100 times before.

The secret of “Good enough”

Now I’m going to tell you something that will sound like heresy. It did to me the first time I heard it several years ago. But as I soldiered on in my writing career it began to make more and more sense.

Ironically, this advice came from a professional editor. A person who most people would think is an absolute perfectionist when it comes to all things written

Her amazing rule was, “Good enough is good enough.”

I’ll explain.

Everyone wants their work to be as good as possible. No one would intentionally send out work that had questionable quality.

Unfortunately, when it comes to writing, there is no quality that equals zero defects. There will always be ways to change, improve and alter the writing that has been done.

Will the changes be for the better? Sometimes. And sometimes not.

What you must realize is that eventually you will reach a point of diminishing returns. You will reach a point where you’re changing things just for the sake of change.

You have to say to yourself that “good enough is good enough.” It’s not the best it could have been, but it sure isn’t as bad as it might have been.

That’s when you let it leave the nest and seek out a buyer in the big broad world.

If you’re concerned that your writing will never be good enough for an agent to view, again, realize that the writing quality you have right now is probably far superior to the writing ability of 80%+ of the entire population. It’s time to stop trying to get better, and start trying to get published.

When should you edit your book

Finish your book, finish your entire book, before you start to edit a single page. You cannot perfect something unless it already exists. You cannot make something better until you’re holding something in your hand.

The objective of writing a book is not the editing process (despite what many people think). The greatest amount of time should be spent on the writing process. Not the editing of the book. That’s practically an afterthought.

I should also tell you that because you’re writing as quickly as you’re can, you’re more likely to be writing the way you talk, so there’s very little need, in fact no need at all, for the second draft. How many times have you been talking to your friend, and mid way through the conversation said, wait a minute, let’s start again at the beginning of the conversation because I think I can present my ideas better.

It never happens.

Don’t think that the writing process begins after you’ve written a page, or a paragraph, or a chapter, or even several chapters.

Write the book first, then make it better.

Too many writers use the editing process as some sort of crutch or shield that prevents them from ever sending their work out to the world.

“Oh, it’s not ready yet,” says the writer.

Newsflash. If it’s not very close to ready the first time you write it, it’s never going to be ready. Because it’s not likely ever to get dramatically better just because you’ve had second thoughts about a sentence or two.

How long should you spend on editing

If I said the less time the better, you still wouldn't be satisfied. Everyone wants an actual number. So here it is.

As far as actual re-writing time is concerned, I would strongly recommend that you spend no more than 20 minutes or so on every chapter. You should be able to edit your non-fiction book in an afternoon. Your huge fiction in less than a day.

It can be done easily if you follow the computer rules for editing I've laid out in one of the sections that follows.

In fact, restrict yourself to this time limit. If the watch goes beyond 20 minutes, it's time to move on to the next chapter.

Should I get outside help

You're making this far too complex and you don't have nearly the faith in your own ability that you should have.

YOU have the ability to edit your own work. It doesn't take a lot of effort.

Professional editors are in business because the people they work for either don't have the time or the inclination to edit their own work... or they sincerely think they're literary morons and they are incapable of editing a page.

That's not the case with you. You already know how to write and you care about the writing you've done. That means you're well qualified to edit your own manuscript.

If you would feel more comfortable getting someone else to edit your book, then by all means please do. But you will not be satisfied with the result. They will make changes and offer suggestions that run counter to what you want to have happen.

Many professional editors have stopped taking on private clients because it causes them too much grief for too little money.

Too little money for them, that is. You may be surprised at the small amount of service you get for several thousands of dollars.

It's better to do it; yourself.

The absolute answer to page numbering problems

Computer editing strategies that work every time

There's a huge amount of editing that can be done long before your manuscript ever gets to a professional editor. And most of it is all done with a few computer key strokes.

I'll give you the instructions and you simply use your computer's find and replace command to make your writing much better.

Replace every possible 'the' with 'your'

Find every 'that' and see if it can be removed

Virtually every sentence containing 'is,' 'are' or 'am,' can be easily rewritten to remove these lame versions of 'to be'

If a word ends in 'ly' it's almost always an adverb. Get rid of them and use a stronger verb.

Adjectives describe or modify nouns. Get rid of them and make your nouns more accurate or stronger.

Replace 'have to' with 'must.'

Search for weasel words, ‘almost, nearly, usually, virtually, about, etc. Get rid of them and be more accurate.

Please understand that the robotic editing that the computer does at this stage, the simple replacement of words, or the elimination of words that are poor choices, is very important to the rest of the editing process.

You may discover that this editing by computer process is all you need to tighten up your work to a very acceptable level. Take it seriously. It’s important. It’s so important that I will not edit a student’s manuscript if they haven’t first gone through the process of basic computer editing.

Easy page numbering

When you’re writing your book, it’s painfully obvious that you’ve got to number your pages. But you’ve got to consider that the number system you use could really screw things up as you go through the editing process.

On your computer, I’m assuming you’re keeping every chapter in a different file, and all the chapter files in a separate folder. That’s usually the best way to work it.

Unfortunately, when you do this, your page number strategy becomes cumbersome. The basis of the blueprinting system is that you can work on any chapter you want. But if you don’t know how many pages are in the other chapters (yes, I know, you’re shooting for 10, but there are always variations) how can you number the pages in your chapter.

Add some text to chapter 10 and that could throw off all the other page numbers after that... or it might not. Or it might throw off the next chapter, but that’s all.

The solution I recommend is to number each chapter sequentially, and then number all the pages in that chapter separately.

Take a look at the bottom of this page and you’ll see exactly what I mean.

This kind of number has two benefits. First, you can add as much as you want to a chapter and you’re never going to affect the numbering of the pages in other chapters.

Second, it’s very easy for a reader, (agent or editor or yourself), to know exactly what chapter is being read. You don’t have to go back several pages to see the chapter heading, or thumb ahead a few pages to see what chapter is next.

I’m particularly fond of using this number system with my manuals because when I make changes (which I’m constantly doing) I need to replace only the chapter that contains those pages with the changes.

Introduction to NEAT editing

Neat is, as you might expect, an acronym. The word neat is a mnemonic device designed to help you remember what to do when it comes time to edit your manuscript. It can tell you whether it’s worth your time to edit and it will tell you exactly what to do with your writing if editing is required.

It’s a four-step process that starts right after you’ve taken care of all those robotic editing processes you were told about earlier in this chapter.

Numbering (N)

Your first step is to number all the paragraphs of your book. Start with the last paragraph on the last page of the last chapter. That’s paragraph #1. The penultimate or second to last paragraph in that chapter is paragraph #2 and so on until you reach the very

first paragraph of the book. The number of that paragraph will be, well, quite large. It will be the largest numbered paragraph you have!

Why are you numbering all the paragraphs sequentially backwards, starting at the end of the book and working forward? Because that's how you're going to edit your book. Backwards.

You're doing this because I want you to evaluate all the paragraphs on their own, independent of the paragraphs that lead up to that paragraph. The best way of doing that is to edit paragraphs in reverse order.

Got them all numbered? Great! Now...

Evaluate (E)

Read each paragraph and give it a score out of 10. A score of 1 means this is the worst piece of garbage you've ever seen in your life! A score of 10 means Norman Mailer should be so lucky to produce such an elegant paragraph.

Don't be hard on yourself. Try to be fair but not harsh. Compare your writing to the writing you've seen in other books in the same genre. That should help you immensely.

Once you've scored all the paragraphs, add up all the scores and divide it by the number of the first paragraph of your first chapter. (Your largest number.)

You should get a score out of 10. If you get 11.5 or 12.6, or anything above 10, you've done it wrong and you'll have to do it again. This is important. Take your time.

Now to your score.

If you've got a total score of 7 or more, your book is just fine the way it is. Could it be improved? Of course it could. Is it worth the effort? Frankly, no. The book is just fine and it's ready for the agent.

If your book had a total score of less than 7 then you've got some work to do.

Go back to the book paragraphs. Any paragraph that has a score of 7 or more, leave alone. Again, can they be improved? Of course. Is it worth the effort? No. Just leave them alone. They're fine!

Axe (A)

Any paragraph that scored three or less gets the axe. It gets cut and removed from the book. Can these paragraphs be improved? Of course. Is it worth the effort? No. Just axe them from the book. That's the fastest way of editing these paragraphs.

Tighten (T)

So what do we do with all those paragraphs that fall somewhere in between? We tighten them, improve them, rewrite them so that any paragraph that scored between 3 and 7 is tightened to an eight or a nine.

How? Not difficult.

Here's a paragraph that we'll be working with:

In the straw markets of the country of Jamaica there's a wonderful smell of nutmeg. You can buy fruit, trinkets and shells. And the people smile, ready to serve your every whim. It's an enchanting setting for any visitor.

Okay, this is not an outstanding paragraph. It's not garbage but it's not great. It needs to be improved. We have 39 words and not all of them are essential.

The first step in making any paragraph better is to isolate the essential words. In this paragraph we have.

straw markets country Jamaica wonderful smell nutmeg. You buy fruit, trinkets shells people smile serve your every whim enchanting setting visitor.

The next step is to get rid of the obvious redundancies. Most people understand that Jamaica is a country. So the word **country** can be eliminated, too. Leaving us with:

straw markets Jamaica wonderful smell nutmeg. You buy fruit, trinkets shells people smile serve your every whim enchanting setting visitor.

Just 20 words. Now all we've got to do is re-write the paragraph using the essential words.

The fragrance of nutmeg fills Jamaica's straw markets as smiling vendors offer you enchanting fruit, trinkets and shells.

Just 18 words. Less than half of what we started with. Much more powerful, much more direct. And much better written.

Now you can see why that basic robotic editing with your computer is so important. By going through that simple process first, you can dramatically increase the scores of all your paragraphs, often to the point where no additional editing is really needed. Certainly to the point where far fewer paragraphs need to be edited.

And after NEAT editing...

Your work still isn't done. You've got to take a look at the text you have left. Chances are it will be considerably shorter than it was just a few minutes ago.

As you read the text, you may find that there's a problem with the flow of the material. The reader may have to make leaps that are far too large. That's where your experience with transitions comes in. If the flow has been broken because of the editing, then you've got to use transitions to help the reader find his way.

How to write with a partner

If you want to write with a partner I want you to be able to do it without ruining a perfectly good friendship, or marriage.

Writing partners always start out with the very best of intentions, but they always end up as the worst of friends... or worse.

Here's what usually happens. You and your friend decide to write a book. You write one chapter and you give it to your colleague with an invitation to criticize and offer suggestions for improvement. Your friend thinks you're serious and so that's exactly what your friend does.

Your friend gives it back to you, with a smile and naïve belief that things are fine.

You do a slow burn as you review the inane comments and capricious suggestions made by your friend.

Now, your friend has finished his or her chapter and hands it to you to make any suggestions.

You nod, and smile your own smile.

Your friend gets his chapter back with more than a little editing, more than a few comments, and more than a couple of suggestions.

Now you're both mad and chapter three will never be produced.

Too bad. It would have been a good book.

Here's a better way of approaching it. You both work on the blue print. That's not difficult because no writing is involved. It's just a matter of putting down your thoughts.

Once the blueprint is finished, each of you select the chapters you each want to write. I'll work on chapters 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16. And you want to work on the others.

Using the blueprint, each of us knows what will be in the chapter that is being written. Each of us will be producing our favorite chapters.

Now the most important element. Neither of us gets to criticize the work of the other. You read it, you like it. No suggestions, no alterations, no changes or editing.

If you want, and here's the only suggestion you'll get from me, you might want to hire a third person-a professional editor if at all possible-to ensure that the book has a common 'voice.'

A book, regardless of how many participants, should always sound like it came from a single author, so the reader doesn't have to adapt to different writing styles.

Take a look at Chicken Soup for the Soul. Each story was written by a different person. Yet the overall book has a single 'voice.'

Chapter 12

Creating Mood with a Single Word

Change from a creepy cemetery to a brilliant picnic with a single word

Creating mood in your writing is vital. You want your readers to feel what you feel; you want them to experience the situation with the right mind set. That all has to do with mood.

Authors spend a lot of time creating just the right mood for their stories (both fiction and non-fiction) and never realize that they could do the same thing simply with a single word.

Let me give you an example. We're in a field. The grass is green. I can describe the grass as being either mint green, forest green or mucous green.

The sky is either emerald blue, robin's egg blue or cave blue.

And the sun shines either a butter yellow, frosty yellow or funeral yellow.

Now for something surprising. Green is green, blue is blue, and yellow is yellow. They're all the same colour. But notice what happens when I describe the colour with a noun adjective. The colour takes on the mood of that word. Cardinal red (the cardinal you'd find in a church) and brothel red are both the same red. But the connotations are decidedly different... especially if you find brothel red in a church. You just know something is up.

That's what mood is all about. Making the reader feel a particular way. And the fastest, easiest, least complicated way of doing that is with colour. Particular kinds of colour.

"The road that took the student to the college passed little farm houses, surrounded by wooden fences and seemingly populated by cows."

No mood at all, right? In fact, I'd say that last paragraph was mood neutral. Now read what happens when I add some colour.

"The ashen gray road that took the student to the college passed little gray farm houses, surrounded by gray wooden fences and seemingly populated by gray cows."

Let's change the mood again.

"The shiny black road that took the bright student to the college passed clean little farm houses, surrounded by pristine wooden fences and seemingly populated by well-scrubbed cows."

And finally,

"The silver road that took the student to the college passed little orange farm houses, surrounded by blue wooden fences and seemingly populated by enameled cows."

Different colours, different textures, and different moods.

You can spend just a sentence or two describing a desk in the middle of the meeting and you can set the mood for the entire scene.

POWER OF SUGGESTION

"How will the following method produce feelings and emotions in readers?"

Doctors and other professionals who deal in the subconscious realm of the human mind are well aware of the "power of suggestion". The soon-coming formula for describing and instilling real feelings utilizes the power of suggestion by describing enough of the symptoms associated with any strong feeling so that the reader actually begins to exhibit those symptoms themselves.

Any time a powerful emotion is felt, whether it is a good or a bad feeling, that emotion produces predictable physical symptoms that are immediately registered in various portions of the human anatomy. Some of these symptoms occur in organs and are known only to the person experiencing the motion, while other symptoms manifest themselves visibly and can be observed on the "outside."

Therefore, the highly effective formula I now present to you is composed of recording both the "internal" and "External" symptoms associated with any strong emotion.

Step 1: to instill real feeling into a story, the first step is to identify the emotion you want to produce. As soon as you do, describe it in a single word. Ask yourself, "What one single word most closely captures the motion that my character felt?"

Now, write that word down on paper and don't worry if that one word isn't perfect because it will be built upon in the next step.

Step 2: Once you've got that word down, simply take a piece of scratch paper and write down three single words that describe that feeling. For instance, let's say you wanted to describe the motion of PARANOIA. You might use these three words:

- a. Suspicion
- b. Fear
- c. Anger

The reasons you need to come up with those words is because it causes you to more fully understand the emotion, and you must fully understand it in order to effectively write about it.

Step 3: Once you have those three words written down on paper, choose your single favourite word of the bunch by placing a check mark next to it.

Step 4: Now that you've explored and identified the feeling with three words, and have chosen the best "starting word" of the bunch (just as you did in the Fabulous Five-Minute Lead), simply attempt to describe whatever emotion it is your character is feeling, beginning your description with the check marked word and including the two accompanying words in the first paragraph. Go ahead and write your basic feeling passage, giving yourself only 5 minutes. Don't attempt to make it too fancy. There will be time for spicing it up afterwards in the remaining steps.

Note: Quite often, for the first couple of paragraphs, I avoid using the one single word that best describes the actual emotion. The reason I do this is that the character is feeling and then figures out for himself, "Hey, that guy is really paranoid!" when you say it outright, it loses some impact. When they make a conclusion, it gains major impact.

INTERNAL SYMPTOMS

After writing your basic feeling passage, you're now ready to begin adding to it in a way that transforms your description from mere words to the very manifestation of that feeling itself!

Feelings, as I all well know, produce reactions in a human being, physical symptoms that can be felt by the person experiencing them. Since there are symptoms that I all can relate to, we're going to add the most important symptoms into the passage you just completed in order to make your feeling description extremely real to your readers. To do this, we're going to pretend I am a doctor and describe what reactions are taking place in various parts of your character's body. At first we'll describe only those "private" symptoms that only the character knows about.

MOUTH, TONGUE, THROAT, AND EARS

Step 5: The ancient Romans once knew the importance of the mouth as it related to feelings. During trials they would often place a piece of cotton into the mouth of a witness and then ask them a question. If the cotton was completely dry afterwards, they assumed the witness was lying, and if the cotton was moist, they assumed their testimony was true. No doubt a lot of very nervous honest people died this way. However, the Romans were on the right track.

In this step and the two steps to follow it, we're going to be adding three internal symptoms into the basic feeling passage, starting at the top of the body and working my way down. In the first enhancement, we'll start with the mouth, tongue, throat or ears.

Describe the sensations that were taking place in your character's mouth, tongue, throat, or ears during the particular emotion you have already begun to describe. There's no need to have to include all four parts of the body, just pick the best of the bunch for your own situation.

In other words, tell your audience if their mouth was dry, were they salivating uncontrollably, was their tongue swollen, did their throat tighten up, were their ears tingling or whatever?

When Inserting any of these additions, simply write each one on the page just a below your "basic feeling description," and draw an arrow that points to where that addition should be inserted later into this passage. Do it now, giving yourself 3 minutes to make the addition.

CARDIO-PULMONARY

Step 6: Now I work my way down into the cardio-pulmonary system. Tell the reader what was happening to your character's heart, circulatory system, or lungs at the time. Was their heart racing, did it skip a beat, did it sop for a moment, was it pumping ice water through their veins, was their blood boiling, did it f eel like their heart was up in their throat, were they starting to hyperventilate, or what?

Give yourself another 3 minutes to insert this cardio-pulmonary description below the passage already completed, then designate with arrows where it is to be later inserted into the basic feeling passage.

GASTROINTESTINAL

Step 7: moving down the body even further, I come to the stomach and intestines. The stomach, above all other organs, is the most sensitive barometer of a character's feelings. Therefore describe what was taking place inside your character's stomach or intestines.

Was it feeling warm and cozy, or was it tied in a knot, or filled with a flock of butterflies? Did they feel queasy, did it feel tight, did it feel like a trapdoor opened up inside creating a bottomless pit, was there a sea of acid churning, or did they feel a cold chunk of ice in the depths of that organ? Whatever they felt, give yourself 3 minutes to describe it.

EXTERNAL SYMPTOMS

That's it for the first half of this formula! You've completely described all the inner symptoms, since you've now accomplished the internal feelings associated with your basic feeling passage, it's now time to briefly describe how that feeling was exhibiting itself on the outside of your character's body. To do that, we're going to start with the eyes.

WINDOWS OF THE SOUL

Step 8: so much can be seen in a person's eyes. Therefore, briefly describe the effect that this emotion was producing in your character's eyes. Were they wide-eyed with fright or wonder? Were their eyes reduced to angry, narrow slits? Were their eyelids clinched tightly shut in fear? Were they blinking in unbelief? Were their orbs starting to mist over or were tears already beginning to stream down from them?

In what way were their eyes betraying their emotion? As usual, give yourself another 3 minutes to describe them.

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS, SKIN COLOUR, OR TONE OF VOICE

Step 9: Along with eyes, facial expressions say a lot about what a person is feeling inside. Other dead-giveaways of emotion are skin colour and tone of voice. Choose from the best one of these three choices to describe your second external symptom. There is no need to do all three.

In other words, were their nostrils flared in rage? Was their mouth shut with their lips forming a tight line? Was their lower lip protruding into a pout? Were they nervously biting their lower lip? Were any muscles on their face twitching? Was their mouth silently open in fright? Were there beads of sweat forming on their brow, or was their face red and flushed, or white and drained?

Did their voice crack with fear or excitement? Was their voice hushed or at a barely audible whisper? Were they stuttering and stammering? Did they gasp aloud or were their teeth chattering noisily?

Give yourself another 3 minutes to describe one of these external symptoms.

BODY LANGUAGE

Step 10: A character's stance, the position of their arms and legs, and what they were doing with their hands tells a lot about what is going on inside the person. In your final external symptom, describe the body language of your character. For instance, if you ever saw a person standing with their arms and legs crossed while saying, "Trust me..." you'd best beware!

Were their arms and legs crossed in a self-protective stance? Were they clenching and unclenching their fists? Were they scratching thoughtfully at the base of their palm or scratching of the back of their neck, were they waving their arms about or impatiently tapping their fingers or feet, or were their arms and legs visibly shaking? Give the reader 3 minute's worth of body language right now.

By the time you've completed all ten of these steps, all you've got to do is to place these additions into the most appropriate place in your basic feeling passage, and the result will be a "living" description of feeling that the reader will experience with you.

Basically, what this formula does is to reinforce that feeling to the point where the reader begins exhibiting the internal and external symptoms, too, solely through the

power of "suggestion." The moment they begin having those symptoms, they begin feeling that emotion.

WHERE TO INSTILL FEELING

"How often should an author construct a feeling description in their story?"

At any point in the story where a character is experiencing an extremely strong positive or negative emotion, you want to cause your readers to experience it, too. It is that wild roller coaster ride of emotions - making a reader feel sad, then happy, then angry, then fearful, then triumphant - that causes a book or a screenplay to be remembered for a lifetime. Hang on, and enjoy the ride. As a writer, you'll feel it, too.

WORLD'S FASTEST MOOD MAKER

"Are there any other ways or formulas for instilling real feelings into a book?"

Absolutely, In the proper use of colour shades can be found the secret and the power to activate any mood in a story you desire. Few writers have figured out that the most effective place to establish (or change) a mood in your book is during any descriptive passage. And all it takes to put mood into that passage is to weave in carefully selected colour "shades" that evoke appropriate images and memories in the minds of your readers, images which conspire to achieve that desired mood.

For instance, let's say you wanted your audience to feel like a kid again. All you would have to do is to fill your scene with a handful of descriptions in which you described different colour of objects in terms that would bring back a rush of childhood memories for your audience. Such colours could be any of the following examples: Radio Flyer wagon red, Frisbee yellow, cotton candy pink, Hoola-Hoop orange, Cracker Jack brown, G.I. Joe green, snow cone white, and Mickey Mouse black, to name just a few.

If you wanted to create a nostalgic mood in your book, you could fill any description with nostalgic shades such as Model-T black, outhouse brown, Tic-Tac gray, dust-bowl red, wringer white, etc.

IN COLOUR IS THE POWER TO CREATE ANY MOOD YOU DESIRE

Let me repeat this incredible insight: To take your readers on the widest range of emotions possible throughout your story requires a mastery of colour. When you learn to use shades correctly, you will have the power to evoke any sort of mood you want into a description simply through the use of REAL colours. After all, I all know some shades are instantly perceived as happy, some shades are sad, some shades are mysterious and some are luxurious, while others are sickly and revolting.

Colour can even be used as a prelude to subtly warn the reader of some soon-coming action, creating a foreshadowing of something good or bad about to occur.

For a working example of the ability of colour shades to create a story mood, check out the flowing two descriptions. Both describe the exact same place, using the exact

same words. The only item that has changed in the second passage is the shade of colours. When reading these descriptions, ask yourself which place would you like to visit and which place you would want to avoid:

COLOUR SHADE EXAMPLE

Towering above the peacock blue and turquoise shallows of the island lagoon, a tree house made of study vesi wood perches precariously atop a mammoth pacific almond tree. Growing through the floor of this rough-hewn structure are gnarled limbs covered with a profusion of pale, lime-coloured ferns. Entwined among the ferns are peridot vines that create an otherworldly scene where draperies of wild orchids drip with chartreuse petals. The flowers spiral upwards, disappearing into the canopy three stories above where sparse ruby red leaves terminate on stubby fingers, blanketing the treehouse in cool licorice shadows.

SAME PLACE, DIFFERENT DAY

Now see if you would like to visit this next place described in different colour shades:

Towering above the cyanide blue and varicose shallows of the island lagoon, a treehouse made of study vesi wood perches precariously atop a mammoth pacific almond tree. Growing through the floor of this rough-hewn structure are gnarled limbs covered with a profusion of pale, mildew-coloured ferns. Entwined among the ferns are greenish, bile vines that create an otherworldly scene where draperies of wild orchids drip with mucous-coloured petals. The flowers spiral upwards, disappearing into the canopy three stories above where sparse leech red leaves terminate on stubby fingers, blanketing the treehouse in cool graveyard shadows.

Note, too, which of these descriptions are most interesting to read. In the first description I used colour shades only to paint a scene. In the second description, I used colour shades to paint a mood. When one uses colour shades to effectively paint a mood, no matter what type of mood is created, the result is always a very lively description.

COLOURS & METAPHYSICAL WRITING

In the technique described above, the various colour shades you used acted on the conscious imagination of your reader to create a desired mood. It's possible with a basic knowledge of "colourology" to take "moods" a step further. You can easily create any desired mood you wish in the subconscious mind of your reader in a way that it would manifest itself through physical feelings in the body.

Metaphysical practitioners who delve into the swirling world of colours know for a fact that specific colours create certain predictable moods in humans. All it takes to manipulate a "patient" is to surround them with the appropriate colour to pique the desired mood. There is great power in colour to control the actions of others.

Already there is "light & colour" therapy (a practice which dates back to the ancient Egyptians) being used by modern medical doctors. In these therapies, they project a particular colour of light onto the patient to produce positive and startling effects. Every

shade of colour is produced by being slightly different wavelength in the electromagnetic spectrum of light. Since every different colour is oscillating at a different frequency, the physical vibrations they emanate produce different (entirely predictable) feelings throughout mankind.

What metaphysical experts have discovered is that the patient need not be exposed to the right colour to feel its desired effect. They need merely to maintain that colour and it will produce the same sensations within them.

Therefore, any author who knows what colours produce what emotions has the power to manipulate their audience to inspire any desired effect. This ability is especially important to writers of How-To and other non-fiction books who must touch the right nerves in their audience to provoke them to do something.

In order for a How-To book to work well enough to be a big seller, an audience must be made to feel extremely optimistic about the possibilities presented by the author, they must have their self-worth and self-ability bolstered high enough to be willing to attempt whatever it is the author suggests, they must be made to feel confident in the advice of the author, they must be made to feel highly enthusiastic about the subject, they must be made to feel they deserve this great advice and be made to want to reward themselves with it, and they must be made to feel much smarter than those attempting to perform a task in the old-fashioned way. (It doesn't hurt a fictional book to instill these same feelings.) To write a successful How-To book absolutely requires the ability to sway the emotions of others in the right direction. Yes, these rules apply to everybody.

In order to manipulate a desired feeling among your readers, first, all you've got to do is know the "psychological basics" of colour. Secondly, you need only ask yourself what type of feeling you want to evoke. Third, all you have to do is simply fill your scene with varying shades of that one single colour. Period.

The mind is such a powerful force that just imagining these colours produces the same effect as being bathed in the actual rays. The following is a brief compilation of the powers of various colours to affect emotions. Use this information wisely for a good purpose. Such knowledge is a huge responsibility.

RED: Red bolsters courage and heightens the sensations of anticipation, enthusiasm, excitement, and expectation. It causes one's blood pressure to rise, speeds up the heart and pulse rate, and even one's rate of respiration. Red is the most energizing colour of all. It stimulates extra needed energy after a slump and gives one the strength and courage to begin a new project on faith.

PINK: Pink has the power to soothe mental tensions. It promotes feelings of responsibility and encourages one to listen to their heart. Pink is also a loving colour. It has the ability to foster an acceptance of new ideas. When one is feeling loving, they can more readily accept other religions, other ideologies, other philosophies, other cultures, and other ideas you present in your book.

MAROON: Maroon creates more positive feelings towards oneself. Furthermore, it makes one want to reward themselves. It also brings on feelings of being carefree. As such, this colour stimulates both feelings of fun and sensual desire.

Orange: Orange creates an impatience and restlessness (that can be applied positively to motivate). For those feeling down-in-the-mouth, it piques one's appetite. Orange has great usefulness as a "clarifying colour" in that it helps one not to feel as confused. It helps one to digest, to transform, and to understand new ideas, and to experience new feelings. It is a colour that helps one shed restricting hang-ups. Orange is the colour that psychologically enables one to overcome the repressive limitations others have imposed upon them. Orange is an inspirational colour that gives a person a heightened feeling of initiative. It causes one to want to get up and start doing something NOW. It aids in organizing thoughts that can be very helpful when a lot of new information is involved.

PEACH: Peach is really a cross between orange and yellow with properties that is a hybrid of both. Peach doesn't charge one up so much as it acts as an energy shield preventing an undue loss of energy. (You don't want your readers getting too sleepy as they read your book.) Peach increases feelings of philanthropy, inspiring others to want to do more for their world. It evokes feelings of charity and concern. Furthermore, peach promotes patience, which makes it a valuable asset when describing tedious details.

YELLOW: Yellow aids in communication by helping one get their point across more effectively. It is so bright and cheerful it is an effective anti-depressant. Along these same lines, yellow stimulates one's desires. The more one desires to obtain knowledge, the greater the chance they'll keep reading your book to receive it. Yellow motivates one to start talking or writing which makes it a great tool for word of mouth advertisement for your book. It is a colour that helps your audience to more effectively "read between the lines."

Yellow is the happiest of all colours, the most joyful member of the spectrum. It is the colour of spring and the glory of fall. It cheers readers up from gloom and lightens their heart. It is so powerful a colour it causes one to feel like celebrating. Furthermore, yellow is a colour of self-acceptance as well as a hue that entices one to give credit where credit is due. As such, it is a great colour to help one to break the inhibiting bonds of self-doubt, which prevent them from attempting a new method. Last, but not least, yellow promotes optimism, renewal, rebirth, and wisdom. Yellow is a great colour for new beginnings. It is the colour of the dawning of a new day that gives me that "clean slate" sort of feel. It promotes loftier thoughts and ideals, and encourages tolerance.

GREEN: Green calms the nerves, balances one's feelings and gives a sense of equilibrium to the emotions. Green reduces eyestrain. This colour gives one a clearer insight, brings about greater understanding and induces feelings of tranquility and benevolence. Green is also known for increasing one's objectivity and for putting one into a more practical frame of mind.

JADE OR EMERALD GREEN: The darker shades of deep, rich green have the most pronounced calming effect and are excellent for soothing stressed nerves to the point of helping one to feel carefree. Jade green promotes greater self-awareness and assists readers in making internal discoveries about themselves. The deeper and muskier colours of green stimulate feelings of idealism and romance. It is also a colour of healing.

PERIDOT: Peridot has a strong calming effect that is beneficial for returning a reader to normal after a nerve-wracking episode. It is an adventurous colour that causes one to yearn for change and seek new opportunities. This magical hue helps to remind one of unfulfilled desires and dreams. This is an important aspect in accomplishment, since most reader's dreams aren't broken, they're merely forgotten. Peridot is a good colour to use when exposing others to new interest in life. This beautiful hue puts one into an innovative frame of mind and makes them more prepared to meet challenges.

TEAL: Teal promotes feelings of independence and inspires optimism.

SKY BLUE: This transcendent shade of blue fosters waves of tranquility. It inspires a feeling of trust, enabling an audience to listen better to the author. Sky blue is the colour of creativity. It stimulates the creative spirit and increases perception. It is the color of intellectuals. Sky blue possesses the power to boost the imagination. It enhances one's logic and analytical ability making it a good choice of colour for "human computers."

ROYAL BLUE: Royal blue has a "tranquilizing effect upon body activity while at the same time it stimulates the mind. It is the colour for contemplation, wisdom, and discernment. Royal blue creates the desire for the audience to "know oneself." Such a desire can lead to phenomenal inner discoveries. It plays the unique role of putting one in a frame of mind that fosters the appreciation of arts and fine things.

MAUVE: A soothing colour that lessens stress caused from worry and confusion. Mauve allows a person to gain access to their own personal intuition, making it useful for readers desiring to solve a mystery. Mauve enhances and inspires one's intuitive awareness. It helps to give one great insight into the workings of things.

PURPLE: The violet shades have long been associated with the process of "spiritual reawakening." This is the colour of reverence and for inspiring creativity. Its colour evokes a desire to reach upwards to a higher guidance. Purple is a tonic to the brain and nerves, strengthening them without exciting them. This heavenly colour fosters feelings of "nobility" and self-confidence in what one is attempting. It gives one a faith that their goal is a "calling." Purple is a very intuitive colour giving one access to deeper insight. Purple makes one feel more psychically sensitive but it discourages over indulgence.

BROWN: Brown promotes stability by counteracting one's inconsistencies of feelings. In this regard, it is useful in helping one to make a difficult decision.

Conversely, brown decreases mental activity, which can have beneficial use in "bringing your readers down" after some emotional turmoil.

BLACK: Black strengthens one's convictions. It creates a stronger sense of belief. Black promotes a heightened sense of self-control, allowing one to take greater charge of their situation. Its other time-honored value is that it helps one face the fear of the unknown.

WHITE: White inspires a search for truth. It causes one to seek perfection, inspiring one to improve. White brings about feelings of independence. It is a relaxing colour for "untensing" the muscles. White inspires a feeling of purity, which puts one on a higher spiritual plane. It is a colour that is good for combating negative thoughts, thereby promoting optimism. Last but not least, white creates an aura of open-mindedness, making it a great colour for unusual topics and discoveries.

GRAY: Gray alleviates stress, promotes relaxation, and generally places one in a more passive state of mind.

SILVER: Silver enhances one's self-esteem and self-worth. Use the colour of silver to overcome self-pity and to gain faith and hope to carry on. Silver is an inspiring colour that promotes the quality of honour.

GOLD: gold promotes material security. It motivates one towards high ideals. The colour of gold encourages one to "up the ante" and shoot for higher rewards. Last, but not least it increases one's appetite for material things, which is a great motivator for achievement.

Chapter 13

Writing your own life story

TWELVE ELEMENTAL TRUTHS OF NON-FICTION WRITING

This special chapter contains important insight into the art of successfully writing the story of your life like a best-selling novel. To accomplish this end, the major part of this chapter has been devoted to opening your eyes to the "Twelve Elemental Truths of Non-fiction Writing." These mind-expanding tidbits of advice reveal both the strengths and the foibles of autobiographical writing:

1. Interesting people create interesting stories and doing interesting things creates interesting people.

In case you doubt the wisdom of that truth, check to see whom the most beloved and best remembered writers have been in the past two centuries. If you do, names like Jack London, Mark Twain, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, and Robert Louis Stevenson

come to mind. These are all writers who lived as interesting a life as they wrote about. I know many fiction writers would disagree, but even imagination is limited by experience. Like it or not, it's a fact.

Don't let your lack of experience discourage you from writing. I say this to encourage you to let your love of writing inspire you to live more, always keeping this thought in mind: The more different things you do, the more you can write about.

2. Fact is stranger than fiction, but creative lying is more interesting than one or the other... and quite often greater truth is found in the lie.

The biggest mistake most non-fiction writers make is in thinking they have to tell the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help them, God. The real truth of the matter is that sometimes a lie can tell a greater truth than the "truth" can.

A great example of this concept is a story I wrote about a true-life South Seas experience of living the life of Robinson Crusoe on a small desert isle in Fiji. Across a two-mile channel lay another island called Leleuvia; whose palms were taller and greener, and whose white sand beaches were wider and whiter. The lagoon is always bluer on the other side of the tide.

Every day this uninhabited island called to the author to come over, but the problem was that the author had no boat, and the channel was murky with strong currents and famed for the abundance and voracity of its bronze-whaler sharks. One day, however, a hurricane raged and when the storm ceased, the author discovered the waves had deposited a native outrigger canoe on his shore. (No word was ever heard from the previous owners.)

The very next day the author got into the canoe, and with a makeshift paddle began the two-mile journey on the still heaving waters. It was during this incident that the author discovered a simple but very important lesson in life he never forgot, "Always check out your boat for holes before leaving shore."

Suffice it to say the boat sank in the worst possible place and the harrowing experience of dealing with the shadows that played in the deep, and of trying to swim with a water-logged craft to a strange and dangerous shore was one of the worst moments of his life.

The story I just related is a condensation of the one that was written, and it's a story that is completely true except for one minor detail... the native outrigger was, in fact, a fiberglass kayak.

In this case, had the author told that one little "truth" in the story, the story would have lost the true essence of what it was about, namely living a very primitive back-to-nature lifestyle as a modern-day beachcomber. By telling the whole truth, the real truth of the experience would have been sacrificed.

A quicker example of a time to lie is when dealing with "dates." When it comes to non-historical autobiographical writing, it's always damaging to speak of a time and say, "it happened around..." Admitting that you're not sure of the date can cause a writer to lose credibility in all the other facts of their experience. I've discovered that if you want people to believe the big truths in your story, you're going to have to convince them of the fabricated "truth" of the minor details as well.

When you admit that your recollection is foggy, what you've done is to cause the reader to doubt the soundness of your memory. When we're telling a story about my own life experiences, I would never dream of saying, "It was summer in the late sixties." We'll tell the reader without the slightest bit of hesitation, "It was 10:15 a.m., on August 4th, in 1968." Guess which type of non-fiction writer audiences believe the most?!

4. Don't be too close to your subject when you attempt to write about it. It's better to get emotional over your subject during your writing than it is to be too emotional before it.

Most potentially good writers, who have been deeply discouraged from writing, got that way because they tried to write about a subject they were too close to at the time. It's a natural assumption to think that if you were head-over-heels in love right now, this moment would be the best time to capture that feeling on paper. More than likely you've had an incident in life, happy or sad, where you tried to capture that feeling on paper while the feeling was hot... only to walk away feeling very disappointed in your writing ability.

This is natural. What happened was that your emotions were so strong that mere words couldn't compete with the feeling. Therefore, you were bound to be disappointed. I have found that the best descriptions of the worst and best moments of one's life can only be written about properly after sufficient time has passed... no matter how good a writer you are.

Therefore my advice is this: If the experience you want to describe is one that was a very negative experience in your life, it's best to wait TWO full years before attempting to create literature about it. If the experience was a profoundly positive episode in your life, you only have to wait ONE full year to capture it properly on paper... because the stronger emotions of a negative experience last twice as long as a good one.

5. Publishable life stories should have a positive message or at least end in a positive way.

It's been found that the human brain is capable of performing over 55,000 thoughts in a day... 79% of which are negative. If you want to have a rare story among humans, the type of story that is guaranteed to stand out from the crowd, then try writing of your positive experiences. Take it from writers who have made a living on non-fiction for over a decade: sour grapes don't make good wine and sour grapes don't make a good story. At

the most, put your sour grapes on paper ONLY as a pressure valve in an attempt to purge yourself of the negative feelings attached to that experience. Afterwards, take that paper and leave it in your safe deposit box, or better yet, burn it. But for heaven's sake don't try to publish it. There's too many of those stories already.

We're not saying that you shouldn't write about a tragedy that occurred in your life. Quite the contrary! Tragedies are fascinating to read. But only write an entire story about a tragedy if somehow it had a happy ending. Sometimes it takes a great tragedy to make me find love or to see the wonder of life. In writing, like Shakespeare once said, "All's well that ends well."

6. The best life stories are written in FIRST PERSON and PRESENT TENSE in order to capture all the excitement of the moment and all of your feelings.

The greatest memory enhancement trick of all times is to write the story of your past in present tense... as if you were reporting incidents taking place around you right NOW. You'll find that when you pretend like you're re-experiencing the past, you'll more than triple your memory comprehension, and details will come back to you that you thought you had lost forever. It's the greatest way in the world of traveling in your own "Time Machine," and getting to live that moment all over again.

Writing in present tense is also a wonderful way of giving life to the characters you write about who have since passed away. When you write of them in the present they are alive, happy, and ornery again, and will remain alive as long as your written word survives.

The great benefit for the reader - of writing about your past in the present tense - is that the reader no longer feels like they're just reading history. Instead, you've made the incident and era come alive to them by making them feel like they are there and experiencing it with you at that moment. That's a very great gift to give your readers, indeed.

Here's another tip along these same lines: don't be afraid to say "I" in your story. If you attempt to cut yourself out, you'll also inadvertently cut out a lot of the emotions you have attached to that experience. I've found that even when we're writing stories for magazines that want only third-person reporting, I always writing my rough drafts in first-person, then edit all the "I's" out afterwards. That way I can gracefully step out, yet all my enthusiasm remains. Enthusiasm is the most magical ingredient for bringing life to a story and causing it to sell.

7. An autobiography is most interesting to read if it has several characters in it. Even if all those characters are you.

No autobiographical monologue about your self should contain only one character. To understand what I mean by that strange remark ask yourself this question, "Are you exactly the same person you were thirty years ago?"

Of course you aren't. You're probably not even exactly the same person you were ten years ago, five years ago, or even one year ago. People change. They transform with knowledge and experience. When they quit transforming, they're buried.

A major downfall of most autobiographies is that the author describes himself or herself as the person they are NOW throughout every stage of their life. At the very least, describe a different you for each five-year increment of your life. That way your story will capture the real evolution of your personality and will be far more interesting to read because it contains so many different fascinating characters... all in the same person. (For more information on how to do that refer back to "Frankenstein's Laboratory.")

8. A sure sign of amateurish non-fiction story is when it is written in the exact chronological order in which it actually occurred.

This is one of the first indications editors look for to see if the story was written by an uncreative writer or not. I've always found that non-fiction writers have to be more creative than fictional writers in order to compete. Not only do they have to write more creatively, they have to organize their story more creatively, too.

The easiest way to be creative in the organization of your story is to divide the body of your story (everything but the beginning and the end) into three major portions. Then look at those portions and judge them to see which third of your story is the very most interesting, which third is the second most interesting, and which third is the 3rd-most interesting (although, I'm hopeful it's still quite interesting).

Once you've done this, all you've got to do is give creativity to the organization of your story is to order those three major pieces in the following fashion: 1-3-2.

The most interesting third in non-fiction writing should be told first, because their audience is the least forgiving. When readers read a work of fiction, they're relatively patient. If the story starts weak, they assume it will get better as it goes along. After all, how could it have gotten published otherwise?!

When readers read a work of non-fiction, on the other hand, especially if its' autobiographical, they are expecting it to be boring in the first place and if it starts off weak, they assume it can only get worse. Therefore, always start your life experience stories on your best foot.

Place the least interesting third of your story in the middle and save the second-most interesting third until the end. The reason to do this is that if the first third of your story is great, the reader is now hooked and will coast through the weaker (although good) middle portion of your story. Now, suddenly when they get to the end of that middle portion, the story gets better and better until it ends with a bang by answering the Ultimate Reader Question at the end.

This way, all the reader knows is that your story started off great, was pretty good all through the middle, and then got even better as it raced towards the end. They'll just know it started and ended great... and they'll anxiously look forward to reading your next autobiographical work of art.

Of course, to rearrange your true-life story in the 1-3-2 order is going to take some creative thought to pull it off right. But know that being forced to do it also forces you to take total control of the direction of your story, instead of letting the story direction take control of you. Know, too, that no reader expects a story to progress continually forward through time. It's OK to sometimes take a look back, and other times to jump forward in time. It all adds to the fascination of the story.

9. The mistakes you are most reluctant to tell others about are generally the things they want to read most... and such writing usually makes the type of stories that readers benefit the most from. Human beings naturally learn more from mistakes than they do from successes. That's because if they are successful at some endeavor, they savour that success. But if they fail at some endeavour, they go out of their way to analyze it to prevent it from happening again. Therefore, if you fail to tell others about your mistakes, you deny them the wisdom of your experience.

Writing should be an act of giving. Give the reader all you can... short of perjuring yourself. And keep this thought in mind: Admitting your mistakes adds a great deal of credibility to any story, for no reader is going to assume that someone would lie by telling them of a mistake they didn't really commit. Throw in a few of your mistakes, and they'll be more inclined to believe your successes. (Also, it'll make hearing of your triumphs easier for them to swallow.)

10. When writing an autobiographical story, the greatest way in the world to appear strong to your audience is to admit your greatest weakness. And the quickest and surest way to gain respect and admiration is to honestly admit your faults.

The non-fiction writers that readers admire most are the ones the reader can say this about, "That sure took a lot of guts to admit that mistake." And "I'm glad I now know I'm not the only one who has made such a blunder."

Keep this in mind, too: The reader can't relate with a superman or a superwoman. They can only relate with human beings... and real human beings by their very nature make mistakes. Admit your mistakes and you'll have an audience that can identify with you, and sympathize, and empathize, and laugh with you as well.

11. Good life stories have a message for the reader. The author has learned from their experience and passes those lessons on. However, only the reader can determine if those lessons also apply to themselves.

In the process on writing Conclusions, I mentioned that Socrates once said, "Without reflection there has been no experience." If you experienced anything deeply enough, you

should have learned something from it. After all, the greatest lessons in the world are learned in the "School of hard Knocks." For this reason, the wisdom to be found in an autobiographical work always exceeds the wisdom to be found in a fictional one.

Here's a secret you ought to know: Quite often the lessons I SHOULD have learned a long time ago are only discovered when I start writing about them now. The process of writing an autobiography is the greatest act of self discovery the world has ever known.

12. The more years since your experience took place, the better your story. The problem with writing a true-life experience that is too "fresh" is the writer generally writes too much about it. Contrary to popular opinion, as years pass by it is not the negative things in an experience that are forgotten first, nor the really good things. The things most quickly forgotten are boring little details that have no place in an interesting story. I call this process "the Magic of MIND EDITING". The loss of such boring details greatly improves a life story, and really important details will come back to you, one by one, as you write them.

Truly, when done right, of all genres in the world, a well-written autobiography makes the best reading.

TWO WORDS OF ADVICE

The two words that most commonly accompany nostalgic writings are, "I Remember." The problem associated with "I Remember" is different depending upon whether you've got a younger or older audience. When a younger audience hears the term "I remember", they immediately panic wondering, "Oh my gosh, how long is this going to take!" They still remember the last time they were cornered by a geriatric who said the same thing.

When it comes to an older audience they are more forgiving, but the term "I Remember" immediately causes them to question, "How well do you remember?" And immediately the writer loses a measure of credibility.

The proper attitude towards nostalgia should not be "I Remember." Instead it should be, "I'm there right now... come join me today for a walk in the past."

The Nostalgic Story is a warm and pleasant reminder of the way things once were... but don't bury your nostalgia by lamenting its passing. Bring it to life in the here-and-now for your reader. That's the only way an audience can experience an era denied to them by the foibles of time. The past should never be just remembered. It should be relived.

Chapter 14

Frankenstein's magical laboratory of character creation

CHARACTER BUILDING

In a few moments, I'm going to show you the second fastest way to create a character for your book. It's a lot of fun and whenever I give this lecture to students they have a ball creating characters. But first, I want to delve into the reasoning behind character creation.

Just like almost everything else in this success system, the reason for creating a character is to help the writing proceed faster. The more you know about a character, the easier it will be to know exactly how he or she will react or act in any given situation.

Now, to be sure, I want you to realize that when you write a book, it is you who are doing the writing. I really don't hold to the idea that the characters write the book, or the book just writes itself. It is you who will kind every step the characters take in your story. So, it could easily be argued that it's not necessary to have any idea what the characters are about because the author is going to make them do whatever he or she wants them to do.

Well, that's true. But; you're missing an important part in the concept of character creation. For the story to be a good story, the characters must act as if they were real people. The actions of the characters must be congruent or consistent with what they have already done in the story, or what they've already done in their lives. If a person is a psychopath or a sociopath, and mid way through the story you have him being tender and kind to a person for purely altruistic reasons, well, it's just not going to read right with the audience. The actions are not consistent with the character. The young lady who wouldn't hurt a fly all her life can't go on a Ramboesque killing rampage-even if she has been mightily provoked.

The characters must be consistent with their actions.

The only way for you to know exactly what their actions will be in any given situation is to know them as well as you possibly can.

If I set up a hypothetical situation for you and asked you how you would react, you'd tell me. And I'll bet that your statement would be very consistent with how you've reacted in similar situations. No one who knows you would be surprised at your answer. In fact, they could probably predict it for you!

That's the way it's got to be with your characters. They've got to act in a way that is consistent with who they are. Now, the readers may get a few surprises along the way, because they don't know the characters as well as you must. But the surprises should dwindle to zero as the reader gets closer to the end of the book.

By the time the last chapter rolls around, the reader should know the character almost as well as you do. The plot may twist and turn, flip flow and go into unpredictable directions, but the characters must remain creatures of habit.

For the longest time, I wondered why all those writing books told me that I had to write a backgrounder on each of my characters. I had to know where they were born, what they did growing up, how their mind was molded (or bent) into its present-day configuration.

I used to think to myself, Why? I'm never going to use any of this stuff in the story. Why put in the time to produce something I'm never going to use?

Besides, no one ever told me the step-by-step process for creating this backgrounder and it seemed like far too much work to me. Then it suddenly hit me. I was doing it because I wanted to know exactly how a character would react in any situation. It would

make the blueprinting, the writing, the creative aspect, much simpler and everything would go together much faster.

I'll give you an example of what I mean. Let's suppose that the character in your story is your real-life friend. You change his or her name for reasons of privacy.

In your day to day life, when something happens to your friend, are you likely to be able to correctly predict what they'll do? How they'll react? What they'll say? Their facial expressions? The very words they'll use?

Chances are, all this would be very easy for you. You'd know exactly what they'd say and what they'd do.

This is the fastest method on the planet for creating a character... simply use a personality you're already familiar with.

The simplest, of course, is to use you. Just about every author is asked if the character in the book is autobiographical. Frankly, I think that any author who says the character is not autobiographical would probably lie about other things. Every author writes himself or herself into the book. Now, it might now be the main character. It may be a supporting character, but in any case, it's the author.

So don't try to deny yourself. If you've got a character in a book that you'd like to be, don't fight the feeling. Become that character. Then, if you're wondering how that character would react in a situation, you have only to look in the mirror to get the correct answer.

Or, you can use a close friend or acquaintance. You don't know them as well as yourself, but you know them fairly well. You know how they'd react and what they'd do. Change the name and make that person the character in your book.

By now I hope you're getting the idea that it's much easier to write a character if you know what they're going to do or say.

Now, after you've exhausted the friends you have, go for characters you're already familiar with. They could be characters in another book, or movie actors (more specifically, movie actors portraying a specific role.) I want Rick from Casablanca playing this character, or I want Jack Benny to play this character, or I want Roseanne to play this character.

The objective is to give you an excellent idea of what this character is all about in the least amount of time. Don't worry, we'll get to original characters in a few moments.

Finally, I hope that you'll give serious consideration to the idea of re-writing books that have already been produced. Re-engineering the plot and changing as much as possible to produce a new story is simply the fastest method on the planet for producing a great book. If you do that, you'll have many, if not all, of the characters already outlined and ready to go. There's no reason spacecraft commander can't have the same personality as the prairie farmer. There's no reason the female British teacher can't have the same personality as the male American doctor.

If you're going to use this strategy, then you must realize that the characters have already been created for you. They've been worked on, shaped and molded to give the most impact to the original story. Why fool with a good thing. Use these characters in your new story.

YOUR NON-FICTION CHARACTERS

There has been a recent wave of non-fiction books using characters to help the reader get the message the book is conveying.

Usually, these books take the form of homilies or parables. Let's all sit around the campfire while I tell you the story of Joe, who wanted to install new kitchen cabinets in his house. This is a story of the problems facing Joe, and the solutions he found as he went through the steps of installing those kitchen cabinets. And, unless you're particularly thick, you'll realize that Joe is really just like you and you better take his discoveries to heart if you want to do the job right and avoid all the disasters that befell poor Joe.

The parable works for just about any non-fiction and you can use it to best advantage if you use a character with whom you're very familiar-like maybe yourself, or yourself cleverly disguised as a fictitious character.

DO-IT-YOURSELF CHARACTER CREATION

Whenever I give my lectures in schools, particularly to the younger grades, we all have a lot of fun creating our own characters. It's fun for the kids because we build our characters step by step. This is a concept that kids understand. They know that they're not talented enough to build a whole character all at once. They'd rather take it a step at a time and be surprised (sometimes amazed) at the result.

And so it is with adults. If I say simply, "tell me about this character you want to have in your book," well, you'd probably be a bit flustered. I mean, where will you begin? How about, where the person was born, or where they went to school, or what they like to eat, or their favourite hobby.

Well, all of that is nice, but it has very little to do with what the character has to do in the story. You don't need to know everything about this individual, you just need to know enough so you'll know how he or she will react in any given situation. Or, more specifically, how he or she will react in the situations within your story.

By the way, as long as we're on the topic of 'he and she' there's something you should be aware of. I strongly recommend that, unless the gender of the character is essential to the story (for example, you're writing a romance novel) the gender of the character should be one of the last elements of character creation.

Frequently, I'll be sitting with a potential author, discussing their character creation, and after just about everything is ready, I tell the author that the character should be female. Not male, as I'm sure he or she has surmised. It puts a whole new spin on the character and what they can do in the story.

THE NICKNAME

Start by giving your character a nickname. Now, this is probably the only thing that will remain private between you and the character. It may come out in the story later on or right at the beginning, but it may also remain just between you and the character.

Everyone has had a nickname. Some we were aware of, others were uttered only behind our back. Some were pegged on us so long ago that we've almost forgotten them.

But the one thing about nicknames that you can depend on is that each one has a kernel of truth or irony about it. Each nickname is indicative (sometimes painfully so) of that individual. Sometimes we fight long and hard to get rid of the nickname but it has

such an affinity for our personality that even if we left it behind, even if we moved to a new town, and gathered a new set of friends, that nickname would seem to spontaneously erupt.

It can tell you more about the person than a lengthy biography. It can tell you about the person's past, his personal flaws, his failures, his successes or her ambitions.

In fact, the nickname can dramatically change how you perceive the character. I'll give you an example. Let's go back to that character I mentioned a little while ago. A character most people know. Humphrey Bogart's character Rick in Casablanca.

We all know Rick. We all know he was smooth, worldly, courageous, running from something and running towards something else (I do tend to get melodramatic). Now, let's suppose that the folks in Casablanca had a nickname for Rick. Let's suppose that everyone called him 'Diamonds.' Puts a whole new twist on his personality, doesn't it.

But let's have some fun. Let's change the nickname to 'Cheets.' Now he's an entirely different character, isn't he. Then again, how would the Nazis feel about Rick if his nickname was 'Gunner?'

The gangster 'Bugs' Moran had that nickname not because he resembled a long-eared, carrot-eating rodent. But because most people who knew him thought he was crazy. As crazy as a bed bug. Bugs. That's why no one called him 'Bugs' to his face!

Speaking of faces, across town in Chicago at the same time was Al 'Scarface' Capone.

Now, you just know that someone known as 'Scarface' isn't going to be the most likeable character in the world-at least, not deep down!

So give your character a nickname. It can be anything you want it to be. So many people tell me they can think of only a few nicknames. The truth is that there is literally no end to the number of nicknames you can come up with. If you can think of a noun (and add an 's' to it or put 'the' before it) or an adjective, you can think of a nickname.

I'm just going to look around my office right now and I bet I can come up with a dozen:

Walls, The Carpetman, Woodsy, Books, Hands, Flowers, Digit, Clocks, Bear, Dogs, Coins, or Needle

HOW TO BRING CHARACTERS TO LIFE

To create a walking, talking, living breathing, feeling character all it takes is a minimum of **THREE PERSONALITY WORDS**. If you put the right three personality words side-by-side, you will have a description so vivid, it will cause the reader to see a real human being. With as little as three words, that reader will even be able to tell you what they look like, how they dress, what sort of occupation they're employed in, and how they developed those personality traits in the first place. Below are three examples of human beings that are hauntingly real, even though they're made from three words. Read each of those three groups, one at a time, and see if you can't see and feel those people:

EXAMPLE PERSONALITIES:

- (1) Friendly, Insincere, Calculating
- (2) Paranoid, Loving, Dangerous

(3) Quiet, Self-Sacrificing, Domineering

"Can I use just one or two personality traits?"

Walt Disney created a whole cast of lovable characters with only one personality word to describe them: "Grumpy, Sneazy, Doc, Bashful, Dopey, Sleepy and Happy"

Popular writers such as Sidney Sheldon have created characters with as little as two words. Once when describing a group of "behind-the-scenes" world leaders, he painted a picture of each individual with only two words:

The Frenchman, "Argumentative, Stubborn." The Chinese, "Clever, patient," etc. The problem with using fewer than three personality traits, however is that one single trait has a tendency to create merely a cartoon character, and two personality traits might form only a "stereo-type."

With three personality traits one immediately creates a real-life human being with a complex personality that is understandable and recognizable. Giving any character three personality traits is all it takes to bring a new life into this world.

Now, the problem that remains is how to pick the right three personality traits to make a real person. You'll learn how in the steps below and you'll also learn what five categories of human beings exist. After coming up with three convincing traits for each of these five categories, we'll then tell you how to "flesh-out" your characters in case you'd like to expand upon those personalities.

PERSONALITY TYPES

Although human personalities come in as many different varieties as there are people, they can all be boiled down to one of five categories of personality types:

- (1) VERY GOOD
- (2) GOOD
- (3) NORMAL
- (4) BAD
- (5) VERY BAD

THREE MOST INTERESTING PERSONALITY TYPES

This may sound like an over-simplification at first, but we're going to demonstrate that it is not because you can create an infinite variety of people from those five headings. However, only three out of those five categories of people make really interesting characters to read about.

"Which one should I choose?" you might be asking yourself.

The following information can help you quickly narrow the choice down to the best three. As I said, although there are five types of people to choose from, only THREE of those groups of people are truly interesting... and they are not the three that most people would guess.

The three most interesting characters to read about would be the GOOD character, the NORMAL character, and the BAD character. The "very good" and the "very bad" characters aren't really all that interesting, for reasons we'll now explain:

As anybody knows, a really good character who never does any wrong is not a very interesting person to be around. Most people are considered very good, when in fact they are just very BORING. Besides, if they really are truly good people (virtually perfect specimens of mankind), very few of your readers will be able to relate to them. Perfection in human beings is both irritating and monotonous. The Chinese have a saying about such a perfect character, "There are only two perfect human beings. The one has already died, and the second hasn't been born yet."

When it comes to the totally evil character, few of your readers (hopefully) will be able to relate to them. A character that no one can relate to is a character that inspires little to no imagination on the part of your audience. Besides, the main reason very bad characters are not all that interesting is because there are never any deep feelings attached to them. Let me explain...

When a character is totally bad, the reader knows they'll eventually "get it" in the end, and when that finally happens the audience sheds no tears because there was no emotional attachment to the character. Furthermore, it was so expected that you'd bump them off that the audience could hardly care less when it happens. If you don't kill off that S.O.B. (super Obnoxious Bad guy), on the other hand, your readers will be very irritated with you for letting such a despicable person survive. Creating really bad characters is virtually a no-win situation for authors.

Let me repeat: The major problem with a totally good and totally bad character is that the reader cannot relate with either one.

When you see what kinds of personality traits these five categories of characters are composed of you'll have a much better understanding of why the Good, Normal, and Bad characters make the most interesting characters of all.

PERSONALITY FORMULA

Listed below is the formula for creating all five personality types. As you can see, every single personality group is composed of only three ingredients: A POSITIVE personality trait, a NEUTRAL personality trait, and/or a NEGATIVE personality trait. Put these traits together according to the formula shown, and you can purposely create any one of these five types of characters in a matter of seconds:

VERY GOOD = 2 Positives + 1 Neutral Trait

GOOD = 2 Positives + 1 Negative Trait

NORMAL = 1 Positive + 1 Neutral + 1 Negative Trait

BAD = 2 Negatives + 1 Positive Trait

VERY BAD = 2 Negatives + 1 Neutral Trait

THE MYSTERIOUS NEUTRAL TRAIT

"It's not difficult to figure out what a positive and a negative personality trait could be, but what is a neutral trait?"

Neutral traits are the toughest - at first - for most writers to visualize. A neutral trait is sometimes positive and sometimes negative, depending upon the circumstances, and depending upon the other two personality traits that accompany it.

Neutral traits are often those that are beneficial to the world, but are of dubious value to the person possessing them. A personality trait such as "Self-Sacrificing" would be considered a neutral trait for such reasons.

If you are having difficulty comprehending what constitutes a neutral trait, know that it is any sort of personality trait that would cause some people to argue that it was a good trait to possess and other people to argue that it was a bad trait to possess. Neutral traits are often controversial.

Another good example of a neutral trait would be the trait of "impatience." Although most people would naturally assume at first that impatience is negative, every highly motivated person knows that one of the greatest factors of success is a healthy amount of impatience. Successful people don't wait around for opportunity and when they see the hand of opportunity knocking, they run over there and set their door down in front of it!

However, if that person is too impatient, they will never stay in one place long enough for the hand of opportunity to knock. This duality of "impatience" makes it a neutral personality trait.

If a trait is neither good nor bad, but is "just the way that person is" then what they have is a neutral trait.

EXPLANATION OF THE "FORMULA"

"Why give a good character a bad trait, and a bad character a good trait?"

You can't have a real human being without them having a weakness or flaw. In the case of a good character, the bad trait is obviously their flaw and sometimes this is the most interesting part of them. More than likely, it is that bad trait that will lead them into the exciting problems they encounter throughout your story.

Furthermore, give a bad character a single good trait and the reader has a chance to become emotionally attached... because of that single trace of goodness in them. Readers want to see a silver lining behind every dark cloud, they want to think that every character has some redeeming quality, and if they do, they hope and pray that that redeeming quality will overcome the darker side of the character.

"Why is a good trait in a bad character considered to be their flaw?"

When you give a bad character a positive trait, you give them a variety of problems that you can weave into your plot. A good trait in a bad character is a flaw that becomes their weakness... and quite often it is that flaw which becomes that bad character's undoing. When that happens, it seems more like a tragedy to the reader, and pulls a lot harder on heart strings.

REVERSE PSYCHOLOGY

"Why is it smart to put a negative trait in a good character?"

Oddly enough, the majority of your readers will identify most strongly with the negative trait of your good character. In fact, that identification actually makes that negative trait seem almost humorous to your readers.

Again, oddly enough, while your audiences will relate most to the negative trait of a good character, as strange as it may seem I have discovered that your same audience will relate most strongly with the good trait of your bad character. No one ever claimed humans are logical!

"Why would a normal character be more interesting than a very bad or a very good character?"

If you look at Frankenstein's formula above, you will see that a "normal" character is composed of one positive trait, plus one neutral trait, plus one negative trait. The reason

such a character is interesting is that he or she is the most UNPREDICTABLE type of character in the world. Normal characters are your neighbours...

Rod Serling filmed an entire Twilight Zone episode portraying normal characters. In that program, he showed an entire neighbourhood where only one family had built a bomb shelter. When the radio announced that Russian missiles were heading towards their city, the family with the only bomb shelter saw how their normal neighbours reacted.

Because normal characters contain an equal dose of good and bad, they could realistically do anything or react in any unforeseen way, just like the real normal people you live next-door to. Normal people have truly the most unpredictable creatures in the universe! The other magical thing about a normal character's personality is that every one of my readers can relate to at least a part of them. This makes them very interesting characters, indeed.

DR. FRANKENSTEIN'S LABORATORY

Below is a step-by-step method for designing your own living, complex personality human being based on Frankenstein's formula:

Step 1: for step number one, simply decide which of the three best personalities groups your soon-to-be-born character will possess. This should take you no more than a minute to do.

Step 2: Once you decide what sort of general personality to give to your character, you need to come up with the right personality traits. For instance, if you chose a bad character, you need to give them two negative traits and one positive trait. If you chose a good character, you need two positives and one negative trait. If you chose a normal character, you need one positive, one neutral, and one negative trait.

Know that when it comes to human beings, there are no self-self-contradicting traits. Humans are creatures of two natures, and all of us have traits that continually war with others. If your random character has two traits that seem to be contradictory, more than likely you have got a most realistic human being.

"How can a character be industrious and lazy at the same time?"

Actually, such a character is usually a very creative person and such personality traits identify one of the authors of this book. Truly, the inspiration for creating the Total Writing Concept method of writing could be said to have been "Genius borne of laziness."

A person who is industrious and lazy makes one of the best beachcombers in the world. It takes a very industrious person to be able to live off the land, but it is the lazy streak that puts them off wanting to live in the normal 9-to-5 routine. Yes, human beings of conflicting natures are very human indeed.

That's it! At this point you've created a living character. That's all it takes. Try randomly creating one on your own and see how well you can imagine the existence of that human being.

HIERARCHY OF CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

As you already saw, it is entirely possible to develop an extremely believable character in as little as three words. However, if you would like to "flesh-out" your

character by adding a little more meat to their bones, I offer the following five-part HIERARCHY to guide you. Depending upon the amount of word space you are free to devote to the description of any one character, my advice is to add each of these character ingredients one-at-a-time, only putting in those that you have room for. These fine points of characterization are listed in an order of descending importance so add them in the order offered.

Keep in mind that "Stage One" is the only absolutely essential stage of character construction for those pressed for time and word space. "Stage Two" is the second-most important aspect to give the reader's imagination something to chew over and I highly recommend that you utilize it.

Every other stage after number two is merely an enhancement that is nice to instill if you can, but is not absolutely necessary. When you think that character description is getting too long, simply omit the remaining stages... or subtly include them in a piece-at-a-time later into your story. They can always be part of the 18 blueprint ingredients of any chapter.

STAGE ONE: CHOOSE THREE PERSONALITY TRAITS

This is the stage you've already performed.

STAGE TWO: HABITS AND PET PHRASES

What sort of habits does your character possess? Are they continually combing their hair like the legendary "Cookie?"

Human beings are creatures of habit, not only predictable in what they will do but also predictable in what they will say. Does your character have a habit of saying something in particular, a phrase they're fond of repeating in specific situations? If so, mention it here.

You'll be surprised how many times your creative mind will come up with a reason to insert these pet phrases they like to say, which can create some very humorous passages. When a pet phrase is repeated more than once, it also makes the reader feel like they really know this character (and the better they feel like they know a character, the more attached they are to them). Below are some examples of a few pet phrases:

"Go ahead... make my day."

"It's going to be on of those days."

"I can't believe I ate the whole thing."

"I've got a headache you wouldn't believe."

Now go ahead and come up with a Pet Phrase for your own character. I guarantee that if you do, you'll have a character more believable to your readers than their next-door neighbor.

STAGE THREE: HANDS AND EYES

Fortunetellers are experts at reading the personality of a person imply from seeing and touching their hand. The softness and/or callousness of a hand tell a lot about the owner. The condition of the fingernails tells just as much. Describe your character's hands to describe their personality, not to describe their hands.

Too many writers make the mistake of simply describing a human being, instead of describing the personality that that physical trait implies. In the next part of this fifth stage of fleshing-out your character, when describing your character's eyes, don't just describe what colour their eyes are... describe what a person sees when they look into those eyes. There's a big difference.

STAGE FOUR: CLOTHES

What sort of clothes is this person wearing? To do this character-building stage effectively, you don't have to tell everything that a character is wearing. What a person puts on their feet and their head can tell volumes about that character's personality.

STAGE FIVE: UNUSUAL PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Human beings would look very much alike to space aliens. They're mostly within a foot in height of each other. Nearly all of them have two eyes, two ears, one nose, one mouth, two arms and two legs, generally in approximately the same places. In fact, different species of mushrooms have far greater differences from one another than the average humans do.

Therefore, when you describe a person, you don't describe the normal part of them. Look for some unusual physical characteristic that makes them a little different from all other human beings around them. When it came to looks the most memorable character to picture in Chaucer's Canterbury tales was the miler who had a tuft of red hairs sticking off a mole. That's the sort of physical characteristic you want to highlight. The physical description of anything else about them is mostly frivolous and a waste of precious word space.

By the time you've performed all these steps, there should be nobody who can't picture your character perfectly. Since that is the case, enjoy the "monster" you have created. It's exciting to bring a new life into this world and it's important for a developing writer to feel the thrill of creation. A prolific writer is a parent of a very large family, and their words are their children.

SUCCESSFUL AUTOBIOGRAPHY CHARACTER

"What does all this character building have to do with a person who plans on writing an autobiography?"

An interesting question I enjoy asking in my writing seminar is this, "How many people here are the exact same person you were 10 years ago?" Not surprisingly, nobody raises his or her hand. When I ask, "How many people here are the exact same person you were two years ago?" still nobody raises his or her hand. It's even quite rare to get an affirmative response to the question, "How many people here are the exact same person you were last year?"

The single biggest failing of most autobiographies is that the author covers several decades of their life, yet describe themselves by only the personality they own today. What a narrow view of life! All of us have been so many different colourful characters; it's a shame to write one monotonous picture. If you want to produce a great autobiography, simply describe every episode of your life from the point of view of the

personality of the person who actually lived it. This will take some soul searching but it's sure worth the effort.

Pinpointing your former personalities gives you a lot more to write about. If you can remember what you were like when something important occurred in your past, the memory of who you were transports you back to the moment of that experience, allowing you to tap into TOTAL RECALL of all your motives, your thoughts, and your feelings as if they just happened today.

Remembering who you were reminds you how you got that way in the first place, when which will spark many memories for your story, memories you wouldn't have recalled otherwise.

MATERIALS TO BUILD YOUR OWN HUMAN

You can't build a proper human being without having the right ingredients. We've already discussed "Neutral Personality Traits, and Negative Personality Traits In case you're a little uncertain as to what constitutes a positive or negative trait, I offer you the following definitions:

Positive traits are those that almost always benefit the owner of the trait and those around them. A positive trait is the sort of trait that attracts you to your favourite family members and friends. The entire world generally benefits from positive traits when they are used in a positive manner.

Negative traits are those that are generally accepted as not desirable to possess or disagreeable to be around. Know, however, that a negative trait doesn't necessarily mean that it's "evil" or "bad". It's true that quite often it is, but more than likely it is simply a trait that has the potential to sooner-or-later cause the bearer of that trait some grief.

Chapter 15

Creating the perfect proposal

Now that it's written, what do you do with it?

The manuscript has been written, or a good part of it has been. So now what do you do with it? Well, you've got to sell it to both the agent and the publisher. The hardest part of that is selling to the agent and I've devoted an entire appendix to that prospect. You've got to send the agent, or the publisher a proposal and will make them buy into, (or buy) the book.

But before I give you all the details you need, I want to go over some groundwork.

You should start thinking about selling your book before you write even the first word. In fact, aside from a couple of sample chapters that you've got to include with a proposal, one of the first things your should create is the book proposal.

For the agent, the most important selling tool you can have is the agent acquisition letter and the synopsis of the book. The sample chapters are nice to have, but they're not necessary initially.

The agent acquisition letter will sell the agent on your book. The synopsis will show the agent that the complete book has been thought out, and the sample chapters will show the agent that, yes, you really can write the book.

The rest of the proposal is nothing more than a tool the agent will use to sell the book to the publisher.

This is true for both fiction and non-fiction.

You've got to sell the agent on the book first, before the publisher is sold the book. And you do that with a great agent acquisition letter and a great synopsis.

The agent will be sold your book based on precious little information. So little, in fact, that you'll really wonder how they could make a coherent decision. But they do.

Initially, I strongly recommend that you send the agent no more than an agent acquisition letter and a synopsis of the book. If you can't hook them with that, whatever else you book in your book proposal will be unread and unused.

Sell the book first, then write it.

Sounds backward, doesn't it. I mean, that's not the usual way it works in this world. First you build it and then someone buys it.

Not so with books.

And that's really a plus for you. Why would you want to spend all that time, (14 days or so) writing your book if no one wants to buy it?

The appendix will deal with the agent acquisition letter. Here I want to give you an idea of the synopsis.

For the synopsis, fiction or non-fiction, you're going to write a single paragraph that summarizes each chapter. That's all, just a single paragraph. Each paragraph will be followed by 4-6 bullet points of what goes on, or the action that takes place.

There's a reason for this. You want the synopsis to be detailed enough to give the reader a good idea of what's going to happen in the story (or then non-fiction) and you want them to be excited about the details. But you don't want to give the editor so much information that they can find fault with it.

At every stage in your proposal or in the publishing process, you want to give the reader (agent or editor) enough information to make a positive decision, but not enough to say "no, that's not what we're looking for."

Here's an example of what I mean with our mythical story about Jack and his beanstalk:

Chapter 1

Jack, a lazy lay about, is sent on a simple errand by his mother. A task he's about to screw up. Asked to sell the family cow for money, he comes home with only a handful of beans and a promise. In a castle set in the sky another person finds herself imprisoned by her own foolishness. She is the hostage of a giant. And an odd little man is practicing rock climbing

- A air of magic and the promise of untold riches
- Our hero battles against his own insecurities and a dismal future
- The surreal setting of a castle and the terror that waits for jack
- Curiosity at what role a small man in green will play
-

Chapter 2

Jack's mother is disgusted with him. She humiliates him and harasses him even into his dreams. His night is tortured with one nightmare stacked upon another. Suddenly he begins to dream of a beautiful woman. Almost by magic, the young girl also falls asleep, and is in the same dream. In a small puddle of water on a ledge, the small man in green sees an unknown vision and scampers down the side of the cliff, almost hurting himself in the process

- Jack possesses abilities that are far beyond those of a normal lad
- A young woman sees freedom and what it really means
- There's something frightening in the small pouch carried by the man in green.

And so on.

]

Okay, it's true I'm making all that stuff up. But, hey, I said it was a story, remember.

Your chapter synopsis should be so exciting, so intriguing that whoever reads it will be forced to continue... or want to continue. They'll want to know what will come next in the story.

The same is also true for a non-fiction.

Remember that you want to give the agent just enough to use to sell the editor. But not enough for the editor to find fault with the book proposal.

For the fiction book, you'll also need a 2-5 page written synopsis of what the story's all about. Think of this as a short story.

Formal proposal

The formal proposal is what the agent will be looking for after they've seen you're query letter and your query letter and your synopsis.

Here's how it's laid out.

Title page

Nothing difficult here. It's very short and very straightforward.

Book Proposal

Jack and the Beanstalk

By

Steve Manning

2065 Blue Ridge Cres.

Your Town, Your State

1-905-989-4891

email: stevemanning@usa.com

Agent: (the proposed agent's name)

That's it!

Overview

One or two pages telling the reader exactly what the story is all about. You can use a synopsis if you'd like.

Format

Tell how the book will be presented. (Don't get too specific. They don't need to know your preferences about artists, type styles, kind of paper, binding preferences, and so on.

Just the number of pages, the number of chapters, the number of words, if illustrations are going to be used, or if you need to use photographs, diagrams, charts. That's all!

Market

Who's going to buy this book and why. Don't fall into the trap of saying that 'everyone' will want to buy your book. That means that 'no one' will want to buy your book.

What kind of people are they? Give the publisher the demographics. Be specific. And give the publisher the many reasons that all of these people will be running to buy your book once they know it's available.

Promotion

What are you doing to do to make the book a success? Remember what I've said so many times before. There is no such thing as a best-selling book. Only a best-selling author!

It's the author that makes the book a success. So tell the publisher what your promotion plans are. Don't even think that the publisher will take care of this angle and your job is simply to produce the outstanding book. That's not going to win you the contract. You want to make sure the publisher knows you will personally be trying to get on at least one radio show somewhere in North America every day. That you are willing to do book signings and appear on television shows.

Many first-time authors commit to using their advance for hiring their own PR Company to help promote the book.

Competition

This one is important so don't skimp here. Tell the publisher what books your book will be competing with. What books are already out there doing what your book will be doing? Name them, along with title, publisher and ISBN.

Then tell the publisher why each of those books suck and why yours is much better than anything out there currently.

Don't worry about or even mention books that are more than 10 years old. They're not considered your competition.

Author's Biography

Not your life story, just the bits about you that make you an authority on the subject you're writing about. Frankly, anything that will increase your credibility or, failing that, your appeal to media.

Sample chapters

Just two sample chapters. They can be any two. They don't have to be chapter 1 and chapter 2. They can be chapter 2 and chapter 12 if you'd like. The purpose of these chapters is just to prove that you can write well enough to make the book happen.

Chapter 16

Getting Publicity

Naturally, I want you to get on as many radio shows as possible. They're great for getting your book sold through book stores, and getting people to call you directly to buy your book.

But you also want general publicity as well. You want to be called all the time to ensure there's a never-ending stream of exposure for both you and your book.

Imagine what would happen if your face or message was in at least one major media every day! Add that to your radio shows and you're a media phenomenon.

This is entirely possible. The media will make you as famous and as rich as you want to become... if you approach it correctly.

That's not just a trite phrase or hyperbole. It's true. You can, literally, take it to the bank.

Now, before we get too far into the world of publicity, there will always be several people, notably people who are involved directly, or indirectly with advertising, who will say you can't exist solely on publicity.

The reason is logical and straightforward. Publicity is free, so the cost is fantastic. But publicity can also be fickle. Your chances of getting exposure are dependent--or so people would have you believe--on the whims of the media. If they think what you've got to say is important or significant enough to put you on air, then they will. But whether they do or not... well, that's up to them.

This is a lie.

The facts are true. But the extrapolated results are not accurate at all.

In fact, you can FORCE the media to put you on air. Not by any legal means, but simply by creating press releases media MUST use.

Now, this is a generality, of course. Not every media representative, not every journalist, will give you the publicity you want... but so many will, that those who don't will seem largely irrelevant.

In this chapter, I'll be showing you exactly how to get all the publicity you could ever want... and perhaps even more!

I'll be telling you about how the media thinks and how they react when they see press releases come across their desk.

This is not second-hand information. I've been a journalist for magazines for more than two decades. There are techniques that work, and there are techniques that don't work.

Every time I hear someone speak about the way to get publicity (with only two exceptions) I hear complete nonsense. Sadly, everyone copies down and follows that junk as gospel. I'll get to those idiot ideas in a few pages. All I'm asking you to realize right now is that publicity can easily be your ticket to both fame and fortune. If you do it right. And I'm going to tell you how to do it right!

What is publicity?

First, let's talk about what publicity actually is. You've got something to say, some news, an interesting view point, and interesting product (like your book) and the media, in all forms, wants to get that message out to their listeners, viewers, and readers.

No, it has nothing to do with altruism. The media doesn't really care about whether you succeed or not. They don't care about you at all. They care about themselves. They care about ratings. They care about getting the most people tuning into their station, or picking up their publication that they possibly can.

They do that by publicizing items that 'probably' would interest to their audiences.

You, of course, provide that stuff. It's a symbiotic relationship. You create the audience the media needs, for free, and they give you the publicity you need, for free!

Next, it's easy, IF you know what you're doing. I will tell you that if you have no idea what you're doing, or if you're read a bunch of books on the topic, it's one of the hardest tasks in the world, fraught with problems and ending in disaster at worst, or mediocrity at best.

Every time, I'm on a committee where someone has been asked to get 'publicity' for an event, I can also predict the results that will occur--nothing!

The people who are out to do this job (and that's you) will do everything they 'think' they've got to do, and will even follow up and follow through. But they won't get the results they thought they could get.

It leaves everybody with the feeling that there must be some sort of 'secret' attached to publicity only the big PR companies know about.

News flash! Even the big PR agencies don't know how to get publicity relentlessly. Read on!

Can it work through sheer tenacity?

Now, if you don't know what you're doing, and if you have nothing but sheer tenacity, you CAN make publicity work. But in all my years of journalism and media work, I've discovered only ONE individual who exploited the media as effectively as anyone could simply through sheer tenacity.

She went the traditional route, the route followed by most, but she added an ingredient few of us have... tenacity, persistence. A tenacity I've never encountered before or since.

She was like a terrier in her pursuit of publicity. She would eventually get it with sheer determination and exhaustion on the part of media. She bugged them so much, they gave her exposure just to get them off of her back!

Unfortunately, NO ONE I know of, recently, has that kind of dogged determination. If you do, so much the better. But you're not likely to.

That's not a disparaging remark against you. If you lack the tenacity to succeed with publicity using conventional techniques, you're just like everyone else. You shouldn't feel as if you're not up to the job.

With most authors, you'd think the light would come on at some point. If you're trying really hard to do something, or to accomplish some goal (in this case media awareness) and you're not having any success, chances are very good you're going about it the wrong way.

Yet, they'll keep on doing what they've already been doing hoping to get a different result from the same efforts. Kind of sad, when you think about it.

But there's an easier way. It's like everything else in this world. You can do it with sheer determination and brawn... or you can discover exactly how to do it, what tools to use, what techniques work, and pull so much publicity you'll frankly be overwhelmed... all at the push of a button!

Few know where that button is, and those who do know, aren't telling anyone. Well, I'm going to tell you. And when you discover the tools, the techniques and the tactics, use them and get ready to handle all the publicity you could ever want.

Why do most people get it wrong?

Publicity remains an unbelievable puzzle to most people. Eventually they conclude the rationale used to get your story in the media is beyond them and must be decided by the turn of a wheel of fortune.

Those who study the topic will run to the library or to the bookstore and see what the 'experts' have to say.

After pouring over these books, they'll find the 'right' way to get publicity is to write a press release (or a media release--same thing except electronic media would rather receive a 'media release'--snobs that they are) that explains who you are and what you're doing, using the traditional who, what, where, when, why and how that journalists are so very familiar with.

Then, after a few days have gone by, you follow up the press release to see if you can be of any more help or provide information.

The fact that any of those kinds of press releases are ever used is testimony not to the efficacy of the technique, but rather indicative of the desperation media face every day. Those media releases are used only when the media can't think of anything else to run in their publications, or on their shows.

Needless to say, I'm always inundated with authors who complain they can't get any media exposure... despite the fact they've purchased and read several books on the topic, followed the techniques relentlessly and also have a high level of tenacity.

That's what causes most people to dismiss publicity as a viable route to success. Most people think your exposure is dependent on the whim of the media and you can't predict your success.

That's not true. You can make publicity very predictable. You can predict that you will succeed. What you can't predict is something I call the **media multiplier factor**. You'll always be successful; you'll just never know how successful you're going to become.

One of the most important aspects of publicity you should realize is that media folks, despite the mystique, despite the oft time cited celebrity, despite the awe in which we hold them, are folks just like you and me. They have the same emotions, respond to the same appeals, react in much the same way you and I do.

There is a myth that says media people are very 'sophisticated.' They aren't 'sucked in' by the sensational. That most are dedicated to journalistic integrity and high ethical standards.

This, TOO, is a lie. The sooner you understand that and begin to exploit it, the faster you'll capitalize on publicity.

Media people are just like you and me. If you respond to something, they'll likely respond to the same thing. If the majority of the population finds something interesting, the majority of the media will find that same thing interesting.

The difference between media people and the author is the media person has a keen sense of what interests the majority of people.

Authors, deluded fools that we are, have no idea what interests the majority of people. AND we have the temerity to assume the majority of people would be interested in US.

They're not, they never have been, and they never will be. Unless we give them a reason.

What can it mean to you?

When you give media a reason to be interested in you, you open the floodgates to publicity. I'm not going to lie to you and tell you it won't cost you anything. But I will tell you the cost will be minimal. Especially when you compare it to what you'd have to actually pay for the publicity you get.

Any media exposure you get will cost you about 20 cents. That's all. And that 20 cents could get you two full pages in a major business magazine, or a full page in a trade publication, or a half-hour radio show, or three days of hourly coverage on CNN or simply a column and a picture in your local weekly.

It ranges all over the place. The only constant is the exposure you get will ALWAYS be more valuable than your expenditure.

Your cost for any one or all of these? About 20 cents or so to fax a press release.

So, costs become minimal, or non-existent.

Second, we get into the '**media multiplier factor**' or **MMF**. If you get publicity in one medium, or one medium element, such as a magazine, you'll rapidly be sought out to appear or be discussed in other media and other elements of the media, such as other magazines as well as radio, television, and newspapers.

The MMF means you can start out with something small, and end up with national coverage. Coverage that becomes so relentless you've actually got to leave your telephone off the hook because you're not prepared for the deluge of publicity demands.

The MMF comes about because of the peculiar way media people think. If you are qualified to be on a radio show, then you are equally qualified to appear in a newspaper article, or on a television programmed.

By qualified all I mean is that you're not an idiot--or if you are, at least you're an entertaining idiot. And you've got something interesting to say. (Interesting means a media listener, viewer or reader would want to hear it.) If you're a good interview on radio, every producer who sees you (and they scan the radio waves to find folks like you) will want you for their program. And every magazine editor who sees you on television will want to do an article on you.

The reason is you've been qualified by another element of the media. Once you're qualified, you're certified publicity worthy.

The MMF is something you can't control--at least, not by yourself. And if you try, you won't get nearly the kind of results you really could. Nevertheless, it exists, and when you start acquiring publicity, just realize that you've been warned. Folks you've never

heard of, and who were never sent your media release, will hear about you, and will want to make you and your book famous... oh well, if they must, they must!

All that publicity is an engine that drives people to bookstores to purchase your books. It can also be used as an engine to drive people to buy your book from you, but it's simply easier to be driving people into bookstores.

How is it different from radio shows?

With this kind of publicity, we're not after the half-hour radio talk shows. Although, if they come alone, so much the better. Instead, we're simply trying to increase your profile, and increase the profile of your book. We're trying to drive people into bookstores and get them to buy your book, or, if we're selling the book directly, we want them to call and ask for additional information.

If you do a 45-second bit on radio or television, or if you've got a small article in the local paper, that may not be enough to get them to call you. It's not nearly as good as the half-hour radio show you've done and from which you benefit greatly.

Still, it's a formidable weapon.

I should also tell you this kind of publicity is obtained almost exclusively by capitalizing on another event. Something happens in the news and then you piggy back on top of it and ride the same publicity wave that it has created.

If there's an election going on in your neck of the woods, and if you can tie your book into an election scenario of some sort (and just about everyone can) then you've got an idea for piggy backing your book onto the events in the news that day.

Once again, there is less emphasis on direct sales, and more emphasis on driving people into a bookstore or to some other sales position, so they can look at your book, or read your additional sales material, and then make a decision.

Holidays and seasons

You can tie your book or piggyback with anything happening in the media. Generally, or specifically, in the last few days or even in the last few minutes.

If the media is interested in something, chances are very good they're interested in something else closely associated with it.

The market, their audiences, have already proven they're interested in something, but media people don't want to do the same story over and over again. They're looking for something related, but different.

Let's suppose you've got a cookbook about to come out and the rage in the media is the sinking of the Titanic, the movie of the same name.

You've got to relate your cookbook to the Titanic. Do you have any recipes used on the ship? How about a titanic dinner party. (That one was actually used! And got tremendous media coverage). Whatever the situation, if it's in vogue right now, the media will want more of it.

What's everyone talking about right now? How can I tie my book into that concept? And you've created an instant media magnet.

Why? Because media don't want to present something boring to their audiences. And more of the same, well, that's just plain boring. If you've got something new, something different, but something that piggy backs with the current mania, or craze, then you've got a story the media wants.

You'll often be able to do exactly that with holidays and seasons. Think of all the holidays there are. At least one a month, sometimes more! Then there's four climatic seasons, along with all the other kinds of seasons you can think of. Fashion season, hunting season, back-to-school season, planting season, harvest season, mattress-buying season, spring-cleaning season, and that doesn't begin to tap into all of the National (you fill in the blank here) Days popping up everywhere.

There is literally no end to the number of seasonal or occasional events scheduled right now that you could take advantage of. There is literally no reason why you can't be sending out a powerful media release, virtually every day. And harvesting a wealth of publicity because of it.

Listen to the news

Listen to the news. Within the next 30 minutes, you'll be given your ticket to fame and fortune. Sometime in the next 30 minutes there will be a radio newscast, and on that newscast will be listed a story pertinent to your book.

You've written a book on the topic of time management. At 7:00 a.m., you hear about a news report just out of a California university saying stress is robbing the economy of \$51 billion dollars.

That story, by the way, is something I've just heard on the radio, so, aside from the book on time management, this is happening in real time, as you read it.

You know time management is the key to reducing stress in the work force, and in the home. If you can get control of your time, if you can manage your time more effectively. Then you're going to reduce the level of stress and add billions to the overall economy.

It's 7:02. You start to work on your media release. And you start with the headline absolutely essential to your success. (I used to say a headline was 95% of the success of our media release. That's no longer true. Now I believe the headline is actually 100% of your success. If you've got a fantastic headline and a lousy media release, you'll still succeed. If you've got a lousy headline and a fantastic release, you may as well not bother. Nothing will happen.)

"Philadelphia man creates a single-sheet form that will save the U.S. economy \$51 billion annually!"

Now, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking there's no way a person could do that. You're thinking it's impossible. You're thinking if something like that was possible, someone would have already invented it.

But if you were holding the media release in your hand, after you read that headline, what are you forced to do? What are you compelled to do. What **MUST** you do if you are at all human?

The answer is you are absolutely compelled to continue reading. You are absolutely compelled to discover what this form is, and how, with just a single sheet, a man can save the economy \$51-billion.

That's what you want to do with the media. You want to present them with a title, or a headline, so compelling, so intriguing, they absolutely **MUST** continue reading.

Compare the headline you've just read with the headline I almost always see at the top of a media release:

"Canadian Paint company tops \$350-million in annual sales", or "Toronto retailer expands with three new stores", or "Miami printer acquires new four-color press."

Sort of brings a tear to your eye, doesn't it? And not a tear of admiration, either. None of those headlines would force anyone to read further!

The title

The success of your media release, the success of your publicity effort, will depend wholly on the power of your headline. If you write a headline that puts people to sleep, your telephone will be silent. If you write a headline that makes people take action, you'll have a telephone ringing all the time!

Yes, I know it sounds preposterous, but all your success is dependent on the headline. So you should spend some time looking at powerful headlines and imitating those structures.

There are two places to find headlines that will get your telephone writing. Neither of them is the local newspaper. The local newspaper has yet to get the science of headline writing down to the art it is.

Instead, go directly to the tabloids you'll find in your local shopping market.

Yes, I know. No one ever buys these things. So how they've attained a circulation of more than 2-million, I don't know. But they do! And they've got that circulation for a reason.

It's because the headlines are irresistible.

Try not to focus on the tabloids that concentrate on celebrities. They're interesting, but they're popularity is celebrity driven, not headline driven. The SUN is a great tabloid for headline-driven circulation. Not too many celebrities at all.

That means people are reacting to the stories based on the headlines, rather than the person the story is profiling!

Look at the headlines, they're amazing! How can you resist, "How YOU can live like a sultan on a shoestring budget," or "The 'Eat all the chocolate you want' Diet" Those are headlines that FORCE you to read on if you're at all interested in the information.

Forget about the old-style headlines. Forget about the 'who, what, when' crap. You want headlines that grab the journalists or producers right by the lapels and force them to read on! You're not going to give them any choice. They've GOT to find out what your press release says, because the headline is so intriguing.

The second place you can find these types of headlines is on the cover of Cosmopolitan magazine. These headlines, or article titles, are designed and written so the reader, or the potential buyer of the magazine, is literally forced to get the magazine so they can have the benefits of the article. They're astoundingly powerful. Get hold of a few back issues at your library and write down the headlines or article titles. That's powerful stuff.

Now, let me tell you a secret. Journalists and reporters will always tell you they're not interested in the sensational. If they saw a headline like the one I used about the time-management book, they'd dismiss it out of hand!

They lie!

They're only human. They're pushed by the same buttons we all are. They will read the entire press release for the same reason there's a circulation of 2.2-million on the national Enquirer. We can't resist it. Our insatiable curiosity drives us to find out more! Especially if the headline is unlikely, improbably or flat-out impossible according to all the logic we can muster.

That's also why we're flat-out mesmerized when master magician David Copperfield takes to the stage. Logic takes a holiday, and we become fascinated by the impossible!

I'm going to give you some examples of headlines for press releases that flat-out work. Each one promotes a book. And each one can get scads of publicity for you. If you want to use it for your own book, feel free!

Barber turns a nickel a day into a \$million!

Top model states biggest mistake women make when they go on a date!

New Jersey Man sells Brooklyn bridge for \$14.95

Toronto man gets others to fund his publishing empire

Journalist proves he can make anyone famous in six days!

Outrageous? Impossible? Unlikely? Absolutely!

Effective? Relentlessly!

Now, if you have any trouble coming up with a title for your media release, write down 10 or 15 and fax them to me at 905-686-3080. If I can get to them quickly, I'll give you my pick, or suggest a few more that will help you!

Creating your press release

Okay, you understand why the headline of your press release is so powerful and why you should spend an extraordinary amount of time on it. But the headline isn't the only part of your press release. There are some nagging essential details.

Your press release is always sent on plain white paper. No logo, no letterhead required.

In the top left corner, you must put your choice of the following words: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, or FOR RELEASE ANYTIME ON OR BEFORE (DATE), or FOR RELEASE ANYTIME ON OR AFTER (DATE).

The first description simply tells the media contact they can use the press release anytime. Now, next week, next month, next year. The material isn't time sensitive.

The other two choices tell the media person they've got to check the date before they can use the material.

Let's suppose you've got a Christmas angle for your media release. For release anytime on or before December 25, covers it very well.

The media will be more than happy to accommodate your date request. They have nothing to gain by doing otherwise. Don't send your release too far in advance of a release date (except for magazines, which have four month lead times) because the release will get lost.

In the upper right hand corner, you'll write FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT followed by your name and your direct telephone number. Don't use the name of an organization. Or the name of an institute. And the number you use should be your direct line, or the line of your company, plus the appropriate extension.

Anything less than that, and the media contact will dismiss the release as being too hard to follow up with.

On the topic of follow up, every book I've ever read on the topic of publicity will always tell you to follow up with the media person.

This is a lie! If your story (your headline) was so boring that no one called you about it, no amount of telephone calling will revive it!

If your headline was superb, the media person will need no prodding to call you and make the story happen.

Don't waste your time following up a press release. If no one calls you, it's because your headline was garbage. And no, I don't care that everyone in the office thought it was brilliant. The media thought it wasn't worth the paper it was printed on. Write a different one, and do it again.

After the all -important headline, comes the two-line explanation of what your story is all about. Any story, no matter how intense, how complicated, how dramatic, how important, and is boiled down into no more than two sentences of fact. Everything else is just detail.

Let's go back to those headlines I gave you a few pages back. Here are the two sentences that follow each of those headlines.

"Miami hair cutter John Smith takes his customer's tips and is getting rich in the stock market."

"Fashion model Joan Janeway has discover what drives dates wild. And what causes them to run away."

"Al Newman has bought the bridge boardwalk and is selling it in pieces. And he can't keep up with the demand!"

"Writer Steve Manning shows writers how they can get their friends to pay for the printing of their book. And do it willingly!"

Publicist Ben Tallisman used a pen, paper and a stamp and he got a local tramp onto national television!"

Beyond the two lines, are what I call SALT. They intensify the thirst for the journalist to talk to me to find out what I'm doing and how I've done it. They're almost always preceded by 'bullets,' or dots.

* The three words you should never say to your banker and why saying them could ruin your credit rating.

* Why you've got to insist on a specific teller to take care of you every time you go into your bank... and why you'll get lousy service if you don't.

* How you can open a business bank account and get credit-card merchant status in just 30 minutes.

And so on. Have about ten of these, and then the journalist will be champing at the bit to interview you--either to find out what fantastic information you have, or to discredit you before as many people as possible. Either way, if you know your stuff (and you should) you're a winner.

At the bottom of this first page, ensure you type in any and all media testimonials you may have that will add credibility to you and your cause.

"Outstanding interview, Steve. Give us a call in 60 days and we'll do it again." Terese Elviss, CKOV radio.

Creating your bio

The second page of your three-page press release is your biography. You want the media to know who you are and that you'll do a good interview. All the information on this single page should relate to two things. You, and the story. It is not the place to write down everything that has ever happened in your life. Nor is it a resume. You're not applying for a job.

Before you write down anything, ask yourself what this has to do with the story and if the media person would be at all interested in the topic.

The fact that I've written 1600+ magazine articles would be infinitely more important to my media contact if I had my Ph.D. from a wonderful university.

You've got to include the reason why you'd be an interesting guest on their show, or to interview.

What is the QUESTION SHEET?

Finally, you'll be including a Question sheet. This sheet has about 20 questions you think that media person would be interested in asking if they interview you.

Media people are just like you or I. They don't want to look stupid before hundreds of thousands of people. If you include a question sheet, they can actually know nothing about their topic, dash in from their car, coffee in hand, pick up the sheet, ask the first question and appear totally prepared for the interview. They like that.

And you'll like it too, because the questions are ones you can hit out of the ballpark. Make sure several of the questions appear very challenging. You want the media person to look good.

Don't worry, you've had days to prepare great and enthusiastic answers to those questions. Spontaneity is so important we should practice for it weeks in advance!

If you're a purest at heart, you're probably thinking, right now, that no self-respecting journalist would use your question sheet.

Let me make it easy for you. They ALL will use your question sheet. Even those who don't use it will be asking you the exact questions on the sheet, because those are the questions most people want answered.

You've prepared yourself well for those questions, so I can tell you these snap interviews will be a breeze.

By the way, if someone from the medium calls you to 'audition' you (like they do with the full-length radio shows) don't hold anything back. If your sheet said, "The two foods you should never eat on an airplane," don't be coy and say you divulge that information on page 142 of your book!

That's not what the media person wants to hear. You've' teased them enough. Now is the time to give them all the possible information they want, need, or could ever hope to have about your book on new-wave asparagus.

Costs

These releases are not to be mailed. They are to be faxed. Remember the time line. At 7:00 a.m. you hear the newscast. By 7:03 you're writing your press release. You should have finished it by 7:20 You're faxing it at 7:21. By 7:25, they're calling you and asking you if you can be interviewed NOW!

That means your costs are minimal. Other than the fax machine, or the computer software you probably already have, the cost will be only your long-distance calls. And even then they'll be minimal or non-existent if you fax locally.

If you fax nationwide, I suggest you do it during off hours so your long-distance charges are minimal.

Don't follow up with a telephone call. Remember, if your press release is good, they'll be calling you. If they don't call, your telephone call won't change anything.

Chapter 17

Your Life Story

This is the one book that everyone should write, but virtually no one does!

I have as many ancestors as anyone I know. As many ancestors as you. That stands to reason. Thousands of relatives who have gone before. Millions of them, in fact. Yet in all those millions, as far as I know, not one of them has left me so much as a scrap of paper telling me what they were all about, what insights they could pass along to me, what wisdom they had gathered from their years on this planet.

And I've found it's the same with virtually everyone I meet. Usually, I'll ask my audiences a very penetrating question when I discuss the topic of a life story. It's so simple, it's obvious. But the results are so revealing, it's actually sad!

I ask my students if any of them can tell me the first name of any of their eight great grand parents. That's all, just their first names. Not their life story, or even some insight into their upbringing or accomplishments. Just the first name. My students usually look around at each other in amazement. It isn't even that they can't remember. It's that they've never been told. It's information that is gone forever. Yet your great grandparents lived, loved and laboured on this earth fewer than 100 years ago.

Now let me ask you an even more important question; 100 years from now, who's going to remember your name?

You see, 100 years from now, you're not going to be remembered for the way you combed your hair, or how well you made roast beef or the fact that you made budget at work. You'll be remembered only for the words you put down on paper today.

Wouldn't it be nice if you could pull a book off the shelf that told you how your great grandparents thought, felt and dealt with the challenges of their life? That's simply not possible. But what is possible is that you can write your life story. Starting today!

You already know the writing machine strategy. Now I'm going to show you how to make it work so you can write your life story in just a matter of hours!

Have you got some free time? Some time when you're not doing much of anything? When you've got that time, I want you to write down some questions. Basic questions. Questions about things that happened in your life. Make sure the questions are very specific. Not general.

Questions like, Describe what happened on your first date? Why is that your favourite flavoured ice cream? When you were very small, and you looked out your bedroom window, what did you see?

Create between 200 and 300 questions. Remember, make them specific.

When you've done that, go to each question, read it and close your eyes. Visualize the answer to that question. And then write down the three words that best describe the answer to that question. Not the best three-word answer, but the three distinct words that best describe the answer.

Do that for all the questions.

Get out your timer. Set it for five minutes. Pick a question you want to answer. Start with one of the three words, the other two must appear in the first paragraph, and write your answer as quickly as you can for five minutes.

If you've got 300 questions, your life story will take about 25 hours to write.

To help you get started, I've taken the liberty of writing about 110 questions, to get you started. Use them if you'd like. And create your own as well!

What was your favourite bed-time story?

Were you every really frightened as a small child? What happened?

When you were a small child and you looked out your bedroom window, what did you see?

Who taught you how to whistle?

What was your most embarrassing moment as an adult?

Describe the worst romantic date you've ever had

How did you meet the love over your life?

How has your favourite colour affected your life?

Tell me about a pet you owned, that wasn't your favourite

What was the best thing about your favourite pet?

What happened the first time you went camping?

Tell me about a party you went to.

What was the best Christmas gift you've ever given?

Why is that your favourite movie?

Tell me about your best friend of today.

What was special about your best childhood friend.

What has been your greatest accomplishment?

What do you think is the most important element when teaching someone.

Why was your favourite teacher so good.

Did you ever do poorly in any area of academics?

What was your favourite game when you were a child?

Did you ever think of starting a business?

What has been your biggest disappointment

How has your religious belief helped you?

Tell me about the saddest day you can remember

What's been the most exotic place you've visited

What do you think about technology?

What kind of furniture do you like?

Do you think luck exists?

What kind of music do you like?

Have you ever wanted to play an instrument?

What do you like to cook?

How do you get along with an irritable person?

Give me an example of you being charitable

When you were a teenager, you fell in love. What was that person like.

Describe them most important medical problem you've had.

For what single event in your life to you have the most regret?

Who taught you how to drive?

There's one place you would really like to go, why?

Were you born in the right time, or should you have been born a long time ago?

How would you define 'hero' or 'heroine'?

Why is that your favourite fairy tale.

You got beaten up once. What happened?
Why was that your favourite job?
To whom have you given the most of yourself?
Do you have more creative ability that you show?
Do you worry that today's the day that people will discover you for who you are?
Your life hasn't been all that you've wanted it to be. Why?
What is your doctor like?
What happened when you tried to ride the horse.
Who taught you how to read?
What's been the biggest mistake you've ever made.
What was the most meaningful gift you've ever received.
What was the most unkind thing an adult has ever said to you?
If you could have one super power, what would it be?
They say you can change your life just by missing a bus. Do you think that's right?
Who has given you the most unusual gift?
What skill that you developed has been most important to your life.
Think of the last person you knew who died. What did that person teach you about life?
Sometimes you get depressed. What's the usual cause of your depression.
What causes you to be so shy?
If you could have one personality attribute that you don't have now, what would it be.
No one is honest all the time. What has been your biggest lie?
What do you think people will say about you when you die?
What do you think about when you watch fireworks?
How important has swimming been in your life?
When you look at a picture of the earth, from space, what do you think.
Not everyone shares your feelings about business. Why do you think that is?
When you were very young, something interesting happened to you in place of worship. Tell about it.
How do people treat you when you talk about your hobby?
Do you spend a lot of money on your hobby?
What's your favourite kind of food?
What's the worst personal attribute a person can have?
When were you last in a physical fight or contest?
Describe your bicycle.
Your boss doesn't give you credit for your talent. Why?
You'd like to meet more people but something holds you back. What is it?
It's not easy doing what you do. What's your biggest challenge?
What has been the most unusual bed in which you've slept?
Have you ever played an April Fools joke?
Can you give me an example of how superstitious you are?
Describe your route to school when you were a child.
What was your favourite after-school job?
What was your most special birthday?
Can you think of a birthday party that was a complete disaster?
Are you an organized person?

What kind of music do you like?
How do you feel about home ownership?
Describe the first place you lived after leaving your parents' home.
If you were trapped on a deserted island with three books, which books would they be.
What's the biggest challenge about getting old?
You have an unfulfilled dream. Tell me about it.
Why is that your favourite sport?
Why do you dress the way you do?
Some people find fault with your level of ambition. Are they right?
Think back to your first ride in a car. Where was it and what did you see?
What is the most fun form of transportation you've ever encountered?
What were the circumstances surrounding your longest walk?
What has been your most important contribution to the community?
Why do you think it's important to write your life story?
What person has influenced you the most?
Do you believe in God?
What does a boss look for in an employee?
Have you ever been self employed?
What things make you laugh?
When you were growing up, what was a sure sign of Spring?
Do you have a favourite plant?
What was the most spectacular piece of scenery you've ever seen personally?
Give an example showing why time is important to you.
Have you ever been athletic?
Were you ever politically active?
Describe the first time you tried to make something 'worthwhile.'
Currently, what is your favourite game?
What is the most immoral thing you've ever done?
If you could script your last words, what would they be?
Describe your personality at the age of 20.
What was the moment of your greatest happiness?

Appendix

ATTRACTING AN AGENT TO YOUR FINISHED WORK

EXPLANATION OF THE FOLLOWING PAGES

The primary intention of this book is to teach one how to write in the easiest and most effective way possible, and in the shortest amount of time. It has never been the purpose of the authors to teach others how to get published. My desire is to help others to create a marketable book, which should have every chance of being accepted for publication. A book written according to the creative guidelines of the Total Writing Concept is a book that makes well above average reading.

However, the lure of being published is such a great motivational factor that I did not want to miss out on any opportunity to encourage others to write.

Therefore, I have included this brief summary of what it takes to get an agent to represent your finished work.

The following pages show a working example of a successful letter of ours that proved to attract quite a number of agents. On the first page is the actual synopsis of highlights that should greatly increase your chances of cinching the deal. If you prepare a short letter and synopsis with as much purpose and planning as I did ours, you can be sure of getting more positive responses than you need.

ON MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS

Many neophyte writers feel reluctant to send a letter to more than one agent at a time because they have read those three insidious words somewhere, "No Multiple Submissions." If you plan on making a living in this industry, you've got to ask yourself this question every time you see a rule, "Who was that rule written for?" If you come to the honest conclusion that a rule was written solely for the benefit of an agent or publisher-at your expense-you have every right in the world to "void" that rule. We're going to show you right now why you should ignore the long-standing rule on "No Multiple Submissions."

PERCENTAGE OF ACCEPTANCE

Out of 26 copies of this very same letter I sent out, I received 14 back with a stamp from the post office that informed me the agency had moved and their forwarding address had expired (if they bothered to have left one). One letter was sent back saying the agent was deceased, two bluntly told me they had gone out of business, four were outright rejections (personally wishing me success with the project), and six were eager requests by agents to represent us.

Imagine if you sent out only one query at a time and had to wait four weeks just to find out that agent were deceased. It could take you a year just to find an agent in business. For your own sake, always send out multiple submissions. Besides, you don't want to take just any agent. You are the boss. You ought to get to chose who you hire. If you're only approaching one at a time, you'll never have the luxury of choosing the right agent for you.

Following this sample letter and book synopsis is an explanation pointing out the most important ingredients that made this agent letter work so successfully. They are ingredients that any astute writer can emulate.

July 15, 1996
Jeremiah Smith
123 Broadway Avenue
New York, NY 10010

Dear Mr. Smith:

Earn A College Degree in four Months... or Less is more than a dream. It is a book I have just finished that is guaranteed to spread across this country like wildfire.

In case you're concerned the title sounds "too good to be true," know that I've actually been conservative in my claim. In reality, it's possible to earn a fully-accredited Bachelor's degree from scratch in less than TWO months!

I know. I received my own regionally-accredited degree this way and have fully investigated all the best educational short cuts for three years.

Being former editors, I am well aware of the necessity of brevity, therefore this letter is purposely short. Included with it is a synopsis which "highlights" just a few of the best-kept educational secrets revealed in this book:

The reason I use the term "popular" is because I am very active on the lecture circuit. At just one well-attended lecture alone just mentioning the book title caused more than a fifty percent buy-rate... and this was for a product that was "sight unseen." It hadn't even been finished yet! Not only that, but this is the **ONLY** book I've ever written where people continually ask if they can have extra brochures for their friends!

The economy is ripe for this book... and will be for many years to come. The job scene has never been more competitive than it is now. People need to earn a college degree in order to compete. This book allows them to do so in a hurry.

I found your name listed as an agent with experience in "How-To" books. If you'd like to represent my finished (and polished) book, please notify me as soon as possible. We're looking for a qualified agent to work with right now... for this book and several others that are soon to follow.

All the best,

EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE IN FOUR MONTHS... OR LESS!

SYNOPSIS OF HIGHLIGHTS

- * **Earn a Bachelor's degree in four months without taking a single course.**
- * **Where to get a four-year degree for less than \$1,000**
- * **Accredited universities that award a degree based on life experience.**
- * **How to qualify with no math course or exam.**

- * **Earn 120 units of credit including 60 upper-division for only \$196!**
- * **Special tips for bankers, insurance personnel, and federal employees.**
- * **How to earn an instant "major" by taking one 3-hour test.**
- * **The university that gives you unlimited life experience credits for \$30.**
- * **Legitimate schools where you design your own degree.**
- * **Receive credit for every old course no matter how long ago.**
- * **Where to buy all your homework and term papers.**
- * **Where you can get your educational needs assessed for as little as \$15.**
- * **What corporation and government training programs are worth credit.**
- * **How to find out how many credits your military experience is worth.**
- * **Five tests a person can take to be awarded a legitimate Bachelor's degree.**
- * **Receive 18 semester credits for being fluent in another language.**
- * **Receive a full year's worth of credit for taking one 3-hour test.**
- * **Why attending four years of school is one of life's biggest rip-offs.**
- * **How to earn three years of your degree at a community college.**
- * **How to earn a degree by challenging final exams.**
- * **Receive \$72,000 in financial aid whether you have a low income or not.**
- * **Where to find consultants to give you FREE educational advice.**
- * **And much, much more...**

DISSECTION OF AGENT LETTER

Before telling you which statements were responsible for the success of this letter, the first thing you need to be aware of is the size of the agent letter. Take note that it is only ONE page. Agents are busy creatures, and the longer a proposal is, the longer it will take them to get around to reading it. If you want your book idea to get looked at fast, never make your letter more than one page in length.

Earn A COLLEGE DEGREE IN FOUR MONTHS...OR LESS is more than a dream. It is a book that I have just finished that is guaranteed to spread across this country like wildfire.

Our opening statement immediately told the agent what the book was about, and did so in a way that would cause him or her to raise an eyebrow or two in amazement.

In case you're concerned the title sounds "too good to be true," know that I've actually been conservative in my claim. In reality, it's possible to earn a fully-accredited Bachelor's degree from scratch in less than TWO months!

Because the subject of my book was a bit "off the wall," I immediately needed to inject some legitimacy into the subject. Again, I did so in a way that actually boosted the agent's curiosity.

I know. I received my own regionally-accredited degree this way and have fully investigated all the best educational short cuts for three years.

It's important to let an agent know the depth of your experience with your topic. The more you sound like an expert, the greater your chances of acceptance will be. In this case, I let them know I had extensive personal experience in the subject, and had researched it well.

Being former editors, I am well aware of the necessity of brevity, therefore this letter is purposely short. Included with it is a synopsis which "highlights" just a few of the best-kept educational secrets revealed in this book:

It's one thing to be an expert, but quite another to be able to write about it. After grabbing the agent's attention and letting them know why I was the right person to write such a book, I immediately found a way of casually mentioning my professional expertise in the writing field.

The reason I use the term "popular" is because I am very active on the lecture circuit. At just one well-attended lecture alone just mentioning the book title caused more than a fifty percent buy-rate... and this was for a product that was "sight unseen." It hadn't even been finished yet! Not only that, but this is the ONLY book I've ever written where people continually ask if they can have extra brochures for their friends!

In the last passage I threw in a tidbit of the marketability of the book, so the agent could get excited about its sales potential. After all, the number one reason they're in this business is to make money. (The number two reason they're agents is because they can't write.)

The economy is ripe for this book... and will be for many years to come. The job scene has never been more competitive than it is now. People need to earn a college degree in order to compete. This book allows them to do so in a hurry.

It's important to hint of your book's marketability, but it's also important to sound like you're not in it just for the money. You want to convince the agent that the world needs your book, and will recognize their need for it.

I found your name listed as an agent with experience in "How-To" books. If you'd like to represent my finished (and polished) book, please notify me as soon as possible. We're looking for a qualified agent to work with right now... for this book and several others that are soon to follow.

In many ways, this last statement was the most carefully thought-out passage of all. If any one passage created the majority of success, this was it. For one thing, it starts off letting the agent know I didn't just pick their name out of a hat. I let them know I shopped around and that I chose them specifically because their expertise was in the same field as ours. This lets them know I am a serious professional because not just any agent will do.

Notice, too, the words "finished" and "polished" book. I went out of my way to show them I am a not would-be author. I am a writer with the product in hand. The vast majority of letters agents receive are from unpublished writers who haven't even completed their first book. Agents know that only a small majority of writers who start a first book actually get round to finishing it. my advice is that if you haven't been published yet, don't waste your time seeking an agent until you have the first finished product in hand. Otherwise, there's very little chance they'll take you seriously.

Note, too, that I didn't just tell them it was finished. I know only too well that the majority of manuscripts they receive are pretty sloppy affairs that have never been properly edited. That's why I went out of my way to point out that the manuscript had been "polished."

A time limit was also placed on my last passage when I said we're looking for an agent right "now," plus I politely insinuated they must have proper qualifications. The very word that I used, "looking," let them know as subtly as possible that if they were at all interested, they'd better jump on the bandwagon right away... because there are other agents being contacted as well. That statement resulted in the accomplishment of receiving my first "yes," in only six days after my mass mailing. The second "yes," came clear across the United States a week later.

PROVING YOUR PROFITABILITY

Last, but not least, was the ending remark concerning **"this book and several others that are soon to follow."** What a lot of new writers don't realize is that 60% of all published books don't make a dime for the publisher. This means they don't make much money for the agent either. If you gave the impression this was the only book you were

going to write, the agent would know that, at best, he had only a 40% chance of making even a little money off it.

At that rate, if you told the agent you were going to do one other book, they would still have less than 100% chance of making much money off your two published books. In my case, however, the agent knew of the one book already mentioned, and I talked about future "books," not a future "book." In essence, I told them there would be at least three books, which according to the odds would give them at least a 120% chance of making money off us. For a smart agent, those odds are too good to pass by.

Best of luck on your publishing prowess. Don't forget to invite me to your book signing parties!

Bonus! Bonus! Bonus! Bonus!

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