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How to be
a
Prolific Writer

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Writing Commandments

We are living in a noisy world and it can be extremely hard to be relevant. There is a lot of academic noise, political noise, economic noise, relationship noise and last but not the least, literary noise. Everybody wants to become a writer and technological advancement has made this dream a reality but ask yourself, why do you want to become a writer? What genres do you want to write about? How well do you understand that genre? Have you read enough in that field and came up with a list of what is missing? Are you the one to bridge the gap of what is missing?

Before we get into writing, let us first crunch some numbers because statistics never lie until we doctor them.

- Google estimates about 130 million books published in the history of mankind. In the list of all successful authors we know today, they nearly all met rejections on their process of writing and publishing. C.S. Lewis got 800 rejections, John Grisham's first novel, *A Time to Kill*, was rejected 12 times, and he unsuccessfully tried to sell copies from the trunk of his car. He earned \$26 million.
- Judy Blume, who has sold 80 million books, got nothing but rejections for two straight years.
- Steve Berry, 10 million books, collected 85 rejections over 12 years before breaking through.
- Rex Pickett's *Sideways* was rejected 16 times and received an advance of \$5,000 before being picked up for a film.
- J.K. Rowling, the first author billionaire, had *Harry Potter* rejected by a dozen British publishing houses

What am I trying to say, to be a writer, you must be crazy enough to believe that your work is all that the world is waiting for to make it better. Then you have to push your book to be in the front shelf with front page up to the 130 million copies out there. Never give up! Are you ready to write now? If this did not discourage you then you could be one of those people whose ideas might revolutionize the world.

When writing, write about something you are passionate about. In this guide book, I am going to give you a step-by-step process on how to write more than one books in a year. These are the same tips that I have learned the hard way and applied on my last four books. I have simplified them for

you and made them available free of charge to help you nurture your hidden talent that can be a useful resource to solve the global challenges.

Do you have the ideas that can change the world? Do you have a story to tell? Do you have something you wished humanity would change or do differently? Or what does change mean to you? It does not matter whether you write fiction or non-fiction, these tips apply to all genres. Still asking yourself what to write about? Think about it, how about telling the world your story? We all have different stories coming from different backgrounds and every story has the inspiring side of it. That is what the world is waiting for. Don't let your story go unsung; inspire the world with it by following these commandments:

Build a Platform

What is your platform? Or what do you stand on to elevate you above 130 million copies out there? How do you reach out to your readers? who are your target readers? Where do you find them? It is possible to build your platform as you write so by the time your book is published, you will already have a stage set.

A platform is a media that gives you access to your potential readers. Social media has made it very easy for us to build a stage where we can present our artwork. My personal platforms include; my leadership and entrepreneurship website, twitter and personal mailing list. Your followers should clearly know what you do and what they want to get from you.

Design Your Style

After building your platform, the next thing you want to do is to design a style. How do you want to convey your message to people? Do you want to blog your ideas or write articles to your audience? Do you want to put it all in a single document called a book? Designing your style also makes it easy to connect with your followers. They know what to expect from you, nothing but the best. If you choose to write short stories, be frequent and keep your followers entertained but better off if they are engaged. Ask them questions, and listen to what they say in response. Then tailor your message according to the market demands but still remember to stay true to your story. Tell it from the heart.

Write and Write More

This can be the most difficult part and that is why it is important to build your platform and style. Once people know what you are passionate about they will even go to an extent of suggesting topics to you. Write with a hope that at least one person will find your work helpful.

Find your Rhythm

What time are you most productive? Do you consider writing as a hobby or a job? What time are you most creative? Where are you most creative and by this I mean, what type of environment do you have to be in when writing? Where do you find peace of mind? Once you collect your thoughts, you will find a rhythm.

Writing is my hobby so I only do it during my free times. It does not even require me to use expensive tools or software since all my four books were written on my BlackBerry cellphone. I choose to write on speed of life and the fast pace of success and leadership therefore I have to sit in a busy place to get my thoughts going. What works for you?

Create Time

We all have 24 hours a day which is not enough to fulfil all our dreams. However if you do the math, you will realize that you waste at least 2 hours a day doing nothing.

I started writing when I was a student. It took me one hour to-and-fro to school in a public transit. I used to spend these hours catching up with my back end sleep or listening to music or even sit and do nothing. Then I started writing on things that mattered to me, what I loved, what I least liked and what I wanted to change. The more I did it the more I liked it and the more people started to visit my website and interact with my social media posts.

Instead of now wasting two hours doing nothing on public transit, I was writing on success and transforming lives of my subscribers and online community. Do you have hours that you sit doing nothing? It can be to or from work, school, visiting friends, or when cooking. If you master this skill of being disciplined with your time, you will create some of the most useful articles and stories to share with the world.

The Writing Process

As I said earlier, when writing, write on things you know, the areas you understand better and use your writing to educate the world.

Phase One

Try and do a chapter a day, write, write and write. Now this is why I also talked on time management. I try to write at least a chapter a day when I commute. This might not work for you because some of us can only focus in quiet places. Design what works for you and be disciplined at doing it.

Phase 2

Personally I like to do phase one and two together. It makes me psychologically think that I am almost done writing my book. Phase two is the first editing of your rough draft. While editing, prune out unnecessary words, sentences that do not make sense to you, chapters that fill your work but are less informative. Check for spelling and basic grammatical errors. Read the chapter out loud to yourself.

You will be surprised at some of the mistakes you make while writing. Never let these mistakes discourage you. Just write.

Phase 3

Once you have finished writing your book, and a good book should be about 35,000 words and more, sit in a quiet place and read it aloud. Some of your original ideas will be embarrassing, some so exciting and some will make you realize things you did not know about yourself. When reading out loud, try and have someone in the room and pay attention to parts of the book that makes them want to take a nap. Mark that page with a pen and revisit it when you are done. Ask them what they enjoyed and what they did not. You can also ask for their honest opinions on the book or a chapter. Of course these are your family and friends and will always be positive with you and give you encouraging words. Use that as a motivation.

Get ready because sometimes people can be too honest with you and if they tell you something that appears mean, do not take it personal. Maybe you are reading non-fiction to fiction lover. Just take note of what they say and keep on keeping on. There is no space to quit.

Phase 4

After correcting all the changes you found out when reading your book or chapter out loud, print a hard copy of the book in a regular printing machine and read through it. You will realize by this point that writing never ends. You will catch more errors when reading your book on a paper, than when you view it on computer screens or on your cell phone as I always do. Make these corrections and let your book feel like it is ready to be sent to a publisher or to a publishing agent.

Phase 4

This is one of the most difficult phase and that is why you needed a platform. Inform your followers or social media community about your book and ask if there will be anybody willing to proof read it for you. Most of my editors and proof readers are sourced online and are my followers either on my blog or on twitter. I have to give them full credits for the tremendous work they do.

If you are lucky enough to outsource a virtual proof reader, let them know what you want them to do. You do not need anybody who is just going to read and tell you it is okay or not. Look for a critic.

Make sure you mention to them that they should interact with the book. Let them highlight, the parts of the book that they find thrilling as well as those that are boring. Which parts are not clearly communicated and if possible, how would they say it? Which chapters would they strike out and which ones need tweaking?

The more followers you have the likely chances you might get more than just one critic.

Make sure you do not take the comments personal and give the critiques a second thought. Change them or look for a better way to communicate your ideas. If you are a sci-fi writer, I would expect you to have sci-fi followers, if you are a business writer, I would expect you to have entrepreneurs as your online community.

If you have more than one critique, counter run their comments and check what ideas they both share in common? If a point is crossed out in by different reviewers in a book then you probably should consider changing it. This is not to say that your critiques are right all the time, they could also misinterpret you so make sure you communicate clearly and explicitly.

Writing Format

We have covered general information on writing and how to promote your works. But now let us get into advance writing formats. How do you write a book worth reading? Of course you must have the information ready and most importantly you must know how to arrange your words, themes, arguments and thesis. In this chapter I am going to show you how to put all the four ideas together to build a strong book that is clear and easy to read.

Have a minimum of three key points and maximum of five points for every chapter. Write them down in bullet points then build them into paragraphs. Once you have your five paragraphs ready then design your first paragraph or an introduction of the chapter or as scholars and academics prefer to call it, "thesis." You can develop a thesis of every chapter by asking yourself "what is the overarching topic of discussion in this chapter?" What is that you want to talk about? If possible, let this be the last sentence in your first chapter.

A good example is my first paragraph on this chapter. My thesis reads "In this chapter I am going to show you how to put all the four ideas together to build a strong book that is clear and easy to read" That is my end goal with this chapter. Do this in all the chapters you write. This will keep your readers engaged because you are giving them high expectations on what is next at the same time you are not giving them everything to appoint where your story leads nowhere.

On your second paragraph, define ambiguous words that you might have used in the first paragraph or in the entire chapter. This is for clarity for when your readers meet these words.

Do not write long paragraphs. Keep a range of four to five and a maximum of six lines in a paragraph. This makes your book easy to read and engaging. Human mind can lose track by just seeing a huge block of chapter with random words. So keep your words short and precise.

List your points from the strongest to the least strong. So make sure that the first paragraphs you used when writing your thesis are arranged in order of importance. When you are done, work on your summary.

A summary is like a bullet point showing your readers that you did exactly what you said you were going to do. In this chapter, I told you that I was going to show you how to write a clear and easy to read book by showing you the format and arrangements of thesis, words themes and arguments. Make sure you tell it again and that is when clarity and precision is achieved.

Always read your work several times to catch any mistakes that you might have made.

Polishing Your Work

Editing can be an odious task. A lot of writers, me included, always rush their editing process leading to errors I prefer to call, "writers unforgivable sins". It does not matter the number of times you read your own book, you can never see errors and that is why it is advisable that you pass your book around to as many proof readers as possible.

The problem originates in the brain. When proof reading your own work, you are not reading the story but you are retelling yourself your own story. This is what makes it hard to catch errors because the whole story is in your mind.

This is common in nearly all arts. Back in the days when I used to produce music, I would make instrumentals, record vocals, do first round of mixing and then take a break for a minimum of one week to forget everything I have been working on. I would then revisit the music with clean ears as if I am listening to it for the first time. I would then make the necessary changes before I proceed to mastering the project. Let other people review your work before you publish it or send it to a publishing agent or even self-publishing it.

Think Professionally

Congratulations, you have written your book and ready to get it published. Wait a minute, did you send it to a professional editor? A professionally edited book sounds different from what I call a casually edited book. By sending your book to a Professional editor, you add and create extra value to your readers so that in the future if you decide to publish it, your readers will be getting higher quality per dollar or time they spend reading your work.

How to Get an Editor

Ask your friends if they know any Professional editor who can do an outstanding job. Ask them to introduce you. If you are in a position to pay for Professional editing, I would encourage you to do so. Professional editors got a magic touch and any book they lay their hands on can turn into gold if it is well written.

You can also tap into outsourcing through your social media platforms. People know people who are masters in different categories. This is why it is important to be proactive in social media. Ask your followers for help. People generally understand and would love to help you reach your goals if you are committed enough Choose wisely.

I only have one reliable Professional editor I work with and have given my books a golden touch. There are a lot more like her out there so take your time before you find one and be equally considerate and reward them accordingly. You can also use virtual assistance on sites such as Fivver.com for a minimum of \$5 dollars. That is literally less than the price of a McDonald sandwich.

A well edited manuscript should be discouraging to continue with and that is how you know an editor has done an excellent work. Paragraphs cancelled, new words added, chapters taken out and the format changed. If you agree with the changes that has been made by a professional editor then you are on your way to making an enjoyable book to read.

BUILD ENTHUSIASM

As you work on launching your book, make sure you keep your audience engaged and enthused. They want to know the progress of your book. Make it big, make it sound like it is the only book that can

transform lives in less than a day. There is power in talking big but make sure that your book is worth the talk.

Make a choice between going with a traditional publisher or self-publishing. It can be beneficial to get a traditional publisher therefore submit your manuscript to as many publishers as you can contact. You can get your manuscript turned down for various reasons but that should not discourage you. You are the writer therefore you understand your book better than anybody else. If you feel that you have done your best and that the market is ready for your book, feel free to self-publish. It simply means that you will be doing more in terms of promotion, sales, marketing and getting your book out there.

Tell your friends, find writers groups in your city, attend conferences, network with people, sell to your followers. Something else, I have found is to give free copies. Since this is your first book, building readership is important and you can increase your readership by giving free copies of your book.

Before you finish editing your first book, you should start writing your second book. Just do a number of first drafts because not every chapter you write will make it to the final draft. If you do a chapter a day, you can write a whole book in one month and use the following two months on editing and polishing your work. In a year you can easily write three books. This strategy is helpful when you are thinking of writing a series of books.

Make it Work

There is a big difference between knowing how to do things and actually doing things. Now you already know, try and implement. Books never write themselves. If you have wisdom to share, do it now or else it will be a wisdom that nobody else can benefit from. Wisdom only adds value when shared therefore I will encourage you to write those three books this year, starting now.

