



MARY DEMUTH

WRITE
YOUR BOOK
IN 2017

WRITE YOUR BOOK IN 2017

**A 17-STEP JOURNEY TOWARD
FULFILLING YOUR BOOK DREAM**

**By Mary E. DeMuth
2017**

Introduction

So you want to write a book. Perhaps the dream has been percolating in your heart and mind for many years. Maybe people in your life have been pestering you about when you'll finally get that story or book out. Does this dream keep you up at night? Are you frustrated that you haven't made the kind of progress you've wanted to?

2017 is your year, writer friend!

In this little power-packed ebook, I'll uncover my own process for writing a book—one that's helped me publish over 30 books in 11 years. It's practical. It's simple. But it also takes dedication on your part. You must want to do this.

Before you begin, I'd like you to find a pad of paper, a journal, or a dedicated space you can write your thoughts. On the first page, I want you to write this:

I WILL WRITE MY BOOK THIS YEAR!

Don't keep reading until you've done this. There's something powerful about writing down a goal. Now, find a post-it note and write the same words. Place that note where you can see it every day. This represents your commitment to yourself.

Writing a book is scary, yes. But it's not impossible, and when you get the hang of it, next thing you'll know you'll be writing book #2.

So, hang on to your keyboard—the adventure begins NOW.

Step One: Know Your WHY

Before you even begin, it's important you explore the reason behind writing this book. That motivation will inevitably help shape the book, and it will help you discern your audience. Don't circumnavigate this step—it's crucial.

Grab your notebook and a pen and answer these questions:

- Why do I want to write this book?
- Why is this book needed?
- Why am I the person to write it?

Perhaps you've walked into a library or a bookstore before and wondered, *Why in the world should I write a book? There are so many! Everything's already been written.* While that may be true, what is MORE true is that those bookstores and libraries don't contain YOUR book. There's only one you. Only you can share your message or story in your beautifully unique way. Only you have the experiences you have.

This is a broken world, and we need all sorts of perspectives—including yours. Don't let the fear of duplicating content hold you back from writing what's on your heart.

Another thing to remember on this path of knowing your why is this: sometimes you write a book for others, and sometimes you need to write a book for your own sake. Every single one of my books God has used to heal ME. To write a book is to embark on a new journey of healing—no matter what form the book takes. So don't simply assume that if you're up at night pestered by this book-writing dream, it means you have to publish it. God may be asking you to write it as a means of healing or an act of obedience.

Step Two: Count the Cost

Anything artistic requires hard work. Writing may be “easy,” but good writing requires loads of discipline, apprenticeship, humility and time. It’s important to count the cost before you embark on this crazy book-writing journey. Jesus shares a caution for word artists when he says, “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him” (Luke 14:28-29).

Your book will cost you. Time, mostly, but also mental wrestling, fear, and inspiration. Take heart, though. As you master writing (it’s a lifelong pursuit), you will begin to find an audience. Proverbs 22:29 remind us of the rewards of skilled work: “Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.” Wouldn’t it be amazing if your book opened doors for you for new relationships?

Katherine Neville encourages us to “write. Remember, people may keep you (or me) from being a published author but no one can stop you from being a writer. All you have to do is write. And keep writing.” On a more humorous note, Dennis Palumbo adds, “Every hour you spend writing is an hour not spent fretting about your writing.”

Don’t fret if you’re not as good as you want to be out of the gate. I wrote for over 10 years in obscurity, writing miles and miles of unpublished words before I placed my first magazine article. Zechariah 4:10 encourages us all to be faithful in small things. “Does anyone dare despise this day of small beginnings?” he asks.

Every writer has to start with small beginnings. The question is: will you be faithful in that unpublished place?

Step Three: Know the Basics

Whether you're going to self-publish or traditionally publish your book, it's still important to know the basics. Especially if you're looking for an agent and a publisher, how your submission looks (and how clean your writing is) will show whether you understand the publishing business or not. There's only one chance to make a first impression, so please know these three basic tenets of professional writing:

1. Format
 - a. Use 1-inch margins (MS Word will do this automatically).
 - b. There's only 1 space after a period.
 - c. Use the tab key to indent (not 5 spaces).
 - d. Use Times New Roman, size 12 font.
 - e. Double space your manuscript.

2. Grammar
 - a. Read a basic grammar book. Here's a good one:
<http://amzn.to/2gPCANy>
 - b. Know how to join independent clauses.
 - c. Know the proper use of semi-colons.
 - d. Become proficient at proofreading. (Here's a good book:
<http://amzn.to/2gPEkX5>)

3. Structure
 - a. Read your work out loud for flow.
 - b. Make sure you don't have too many paragraphs or not enough. It should look easy on the eyes when you look at a page.

Step Four: Know your Audience

You may think that the writing process is all about you getting words onto the page. While that's definitely part of it, don't forget the most crucial ingredient in writing your book—it's not you, but them.

Grab your journal again and answer the following questions:

- Who am I writing this book for?
- What do my potential readers love?
- What will wow them?
- How can this book be about them and not me?

While some think writing a book for everyone makes the most sense, the sure sign of a novice writer is to write broadly. Instead, writers find far more success in niches, where a specific tribe buys their books. For more, read *Tribes* by Seth Godin. <http://amzn.to/2gFMAFH>

Finding your audience isn't a simple one-step process. It can take some time. Typically your audience resembles you, so it's not entirely wrong to figure out what you like, then find others with your similar interests.

Be specific about your audience with demographics and psychographics. A demographic shows things like age, income, and gender. Psychographics represent an audience's preferences—what they consume, what shows they prefer, where they like to eat, etc. Here's an example of one of my audiences:

The book's **primary audience** is a woman in her forties, probably named Holly. She has walked with Jesus through many storms—the loss of a parent, the waywardness of a prodigal daughter, and the disappointment of job loss. She works hard, slipping ministry into the margins of her life. Sometimes, in quiet moments, she wonders if Jesus is really who He says He is. Does He see her? Does He understand her life? Does He care enough to answer twenty-three year prayer requests?

Step Five: Bring in Community

While a writer often writes in isolation, he/she doesn't thrive there. Writers need community. We need other writers who will encourage us through the difficult process of writing a book.

As you write your book, search for local writers groups in your area. If you cannot find one, check out the many online writers communities widely available. I would not be published today had it not been for two local writers groups. I needed the community. I absolutely needed other eyes on my work. And I needed to also give back as I ventured further in the craft.

One of the best things you can do as you write this book is to research writer's conferences and make a decision that the reward for finishing your book is a trip to a conference. Or consider coming to one of my mentoring intensives. <http://www.booklaunchmentor.com/mentoringintensive>

One of the best reminders of community in the life of a writer is the story of Harper Lee, known for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Although quite isolated later in life in the aftermath of fame, she could not have published that book on her own. So many people came alongside her to make it happen. For an amazing look into the collaborative process, read *Mockingbird* by Charles Shields. <http://amzn.to/2gPOcAd>

To end on a happy note, author Anne Lamott wrote, "An occupational hazard of writing is that you'll have bad days. You feel not only totally alone, but also that everyone else is at a party. But if you talk to other people who write, you remember that this feeling is part of the process, that it's inevitable."

Step Six: Test Drive Your Idea

You may be frustrated reading this little ebook, wondering when in the world are we going to start! Well, step six is for you. Chances are, if you downloaded this ebook, you already have a good idea of what your book is about. But before you jump right in, you may want to test it to see if there's actually an audience for it.

You can do this by writing a:

- Blog, magazine article, or column
- Facebook post
- Pitch email to several friends.

Pay attention to what parts of this idea people resonate. (And don't be afraid of someone stealing your idea. Even if someone stole it, they couldn't execute it the way you do). If you're writing fiction, you would test drive the themes of the book. With nonfiction, it's a little easier to write a short piece about the topic of your book.

Once you've gathered good intelligence on your idea, move to the next steps:

- Open up a file on your desktop and start putting articles, quotes, pictures there. (Or use Evernote to do this).
- Talk about the idea with trusted friends.
- Think selflessly. How will this idea benefit others, not just be about you venting or trying to prove your point?
- Brainstorm possible chapter titles.
- Read other books close to your subject.

You may think all this prep work is boring, and sometimes it is. But this research will become the backbone of your book. Don't skip this step!

Step Seven: Find a Metaphor or a Hook

Great books intrigue people. They're surprising and different. Whether you're writing a novel or a nonfiction how-to book, it will bless your book if you think deeply about what you want to say—and this comes through the vehicle of a metaphor or a hook.

In my memoir, *Thin Places* (<http://amzn.to/2hAqTJu>) I used the metaphor of Celtic thin places to frame my story. I wrote this: “The Celts define a *thin place* as a place where heaven and the physical world collide, one of those serendipitous territories where eternity and the mundane meet. Thin describes the membrane between the two worlds, like a piece of vellum where we see a holy glimpse of the eternal, not in digital clarity, but clear enough to discern what lies beyond.” The book became a testimony of all the times and places when God came near. I defined my own thin places throughout my life.

In my nonfiction book, *Everything* (<http://amzn.to/2hSTZm0>) I use the framework of head, heart, and hands to explain how to grow exponentially as a Christ follower.

In *The Wall Around Your Heart* (<http://amzn.to/2hSWWmF>) I walked the readers through The Lord's Prayer as a means to repair broken relationships.

In *Watching the Tree Limbs* (a novel, <http://amzn.to/2hSSHHR>) the central image is a giant tree where a girl looks longingly for rescue in its limbs.

While it's not necessary to find a metaphor or framework, it greatly empowers you as you set out to write your chapters.

Step Eight: Manage Your Time

You're ready to write. But when? Many people who work full time get up early to write every day, or they tuck it into their evening hours. No matter what time you choose, it's best to set an achievable word count goal. A typical page of double-spaced text is 300 words. At first, that may be your initial goal. As you get more proficient, work up to 1000 words a day. (When you improve, you can move that up to 5000 words a day).

Most nonfiction books are 50,000 words, so if you write 1000 words a day, in a little over a month and a half, you will have your book completed. For a novel, it'll be more like two and a half months, at 80,000 words.

The best way I've kept up my productivity is the Pomodoro Technique. (Download a free ebook here: <http://www.pomodorotechnique.com>). Here's how it works:

1. **Buy a timer.** (They recommend a tomato kitchen timer, hence the name Pomodoro which is Italian for tomato). I bought an ugly white timer for \$2.
2. **Write down your word count goal.** Decide how much of that you can do in twenty-five minutes. (This part is fun to me, kind of like work gambling!)
3. **Set the timer for 25 ticking minutes.**
4. **During that time, only concentrate on your word count.** If you get distracted, write down your random ideas on a separate piece of paper, but keep to the task.
5. **At the buzzer, GET UP. Walk around.** Do something else for five minutes. (Getting up actually doesn't stop the flow for me, and it forces me to move which, in turn, blesses my stiff shoulders.)
6. **After a five-minute break, set the timer again to tackle another word count goal** (or finish the last goal).

Step Nine: Create an Outline or Synopsis

If you're writing a nonfiction book, it's best to decide on what you'd like to say and in what order you'd like to say it. Typically a nonfiction book has an introduction, the body of the book making up the bulk of the book, and a conclusion. You can be as detailed or as rudimentary as you want in this stage, but remember this: the more time you spend on fleshing out your outline, the less time it'll take to write the book.

It's the same when writing a synopsis for fiction. The more time you spend figuring out the plot and characters, the less time you'll need to think through your plot as you write.

NOTE: You will also need to have these elements in place when you write your book proposal (see Step Sixteen).

For an advanced training on writing outlines (nonfiction), get my proposal tutorial here: (<http://amzn.to/2hSOOT9>). And for instructions on creating a compelling fiction synopsis, you can find that in my novel proposal tutorial here: (<http://amzn.to/2gFQz5f>)

SIDE NOTE (but very important): If you want to be traditionally published with an agent and a major royalty publisher AND you are writing nonfiction, you do NOT have to write the entire book. You will write the chapter outlines, a proposal, and three sample chapters (the first three).

Step Ten: Write Your Book

Now's the time to shine, friend! Sit in front of your computer, open a blank document, stare at that blinking cursor, and write like the wind! The best advice I've read about this is Anne Lamott's encouragement to write "crummy" first drafts. (She uses a more colorful word). You must dethrone the English teacher who yells at you as you write. Put her in a box, and pen your awful first draft. Don't despair. All my first drafts are terrible. It's part of the process.

Keep your word count goals in front of you. I use a chart to color my progress. Each box represents 300 words (or one page), and every time I tick off 300 words, I color a box. Once I color in the page, I'm done with my book!



As you write, remember that the most powerful writing is empathetic writing, where your readers tell you you've written exactly how they've felt. That's success. It's crawling into someone else's skin, experiencing their pain and struggle, then giving words to it. Strive for that.

Step Eleven: Get Feedback.

As you're writing your book, it's important to get intermittent feedback. At our writers group (Rockwall Christian Writers Group), we have authors bring in five pages of their WIP (work in progress). We have someone other than the person who wrote the piece read it out loud. This is probably the most helpful part of the critique.

After that, we offer edits and notes. Although we do look at grammar, what we're really looking for is whether the piece communicates clearly, and are there any points of confusion.

Other writers are invaluable for this kind of external help. You live in your head and easily add words into your text as you read, but someone who isn't you won't do that. And they won't know all that you know, so they can pick up when a sentence isn't making sense.

Often writers will take what we've taught them and rework their five pages, bringing them back a second and a third time. It's amazing to see the progress they make on each pass.

One novelist decided that he would take what he learned at writers group and apply it to his entire book. The result was a well-written, page-turning novel.

You may write your book alone, but you need editorial eyes and coaches as you grow as a writer.

Step Twelve: Take a Break

This is the easiest (or maybe the hardest) part of writing a book. But before I cover that, let's take a moment to celebrate!

YOU WROTE A BOOK! You wrote *Once Upon a Time, and The End*. You persevered through doubts, internal struggles, grammar grapplers, fears, and gaps when the words didn't come easily. You opened up a vein and let yourself bleed onto the page. You set word count goals and met them. You finished something you started.

C E L E B R A T E !

After you celebrate, do not look at your book for several weeks. You need to get some distance from it in order to have objectivity when you move into the editing phase. So, grab a cup of coffee or tea, smile at your accomplishment, and promptly close your book file.

I typically wait about 4-6 weeks before I look at my manuscript again.

Step Thirteen: Polish Your Book

After you've let your book rest and percolate, open it up again with fresh eyes. The first edit you'll do is called a substantive edit. This is the big picture edit where you'll look at themes, empty spots, story arc (in fiction), and flow. You'll notice repetitions and overall gaps.

Once you've identified those issues, spend a good 2 weeks adjusting.

After that, perform a good line edit. Again, here's a great proofreading book to help you: <http://amzn.to/2gPEkX5>. This is not the same as a substantive edit. This is the more nitty-gritty English teacher edit where you're looking at grammar, usage, and punctuation issues.

You can also bring in a critique partner at this point, or give parts of your book to your writers group.

Once you've done everything you can to make your manuscript sing, it's on to the next crucial step...

Step Fourteen: Hire an Editor

Now that you've written your book and looked over it substantively and line by line, it's time to hire an editor to finalize your book for either self-publication or traditional publishing.

Some traditionally published writers don't hire an editor at this stage. They have their proposal, query, and three chapters (for nonfiction) or their synopsis and entire manuscript (for fiction), and they simply give it to their agent to shop. Once a publisher picks up their book, an in-house editor (or sometimes someone they hire who does freelance editing) will take care of the editorial process for them.

But if you are a new writer and are looking for an agent, hire an editor. If you want to self-publish your book, hire an editor. Everyone needs an editor. I need an editor.

We do offer these services (nonfiction and fiction) at <http://www.BookLaunchMentor.com>. It's not easy finding an affordable but proficient editor. Your best option is to ask other writers for a personal recommendation. Here are the different stages of editing:

1. Substantive edit (overall picture)
2. Line edit (English teacher edit)
3. Galley edit (when the book is formatted and almost ready to print)

You will pay different fees for different edits, the substantive being the most expensive edit. They can range anywhere from \$350 to \$5000. Line edits are significantly less. You can typically do your own galley edit because by then the book's been through two edits.

Step Fifteen: Work on Your Platform

I would be remiss if I didn't address this 8-letter word. While your goal in 2017 is to get your book written and possibly published, unless you don't care a hoot about sales, you'll have to think about platform. Platform is simply all your connections and avenues to sell a book.

Most authors have a website, which is a very wise thing to have. Why? Because a website is space an author owns. The words there remain. You have ultimate control over the content, and you can easily build an audience from that place.

But in the other spaces like Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Google+, and Instagram, you don't have control over your content. They could change their logarithm at any point or take your content down. Social media experts rightly call these types of sites OUTPOSTS. They are simply other places on the web that point back to your hub—your website.

I would suggest you get YOURNAME.com. It's the most easily recognizable address. The other highly valuable thing to do is to begin to gather emails for a database. You can do this through a very simple and user-friendly program like MailChimp. You received the book you're reading through my Book Launch Mentor mailing list, and all that was orchestrated through MailChimp.

Keep in mind that the best way to sell a book is to write an amazing book. The next best way is to speak to audiences and sell your books in the back of the room. The third best way is curating a tribe through your mailing list. Concentrate on these three things before you branch out into other avenues.

Entire books and courses are created around this topic. At BookLaunchMentor.com, we have an exclusive 21-day course to help you launch your book with joy. Click here to be notified when the course opens. <http://eepurl.com/cbJsEH>

Step Sixteen: Write a Proposal and Query

If you want to be traditionally published, you'll want to write the kind of query letter (business letter to an agent) that woos and wows. You'll need a proposal, an outline or synopsis, and sample chapters.

Quick overview of a proposal's components:

1. **General overview of the book**
2. **About the book** (more detailed—target audience, felt needs, genre, word count, working title, USP, felt needs, reader benefits, special features, series potential, alternate titles)
3. **About the Market** (what's out there, potential readership demographics, current trends)
4. **About the Competition** (comparative analysis). Bulleted list of books that compare to yours. Include Title, Publisher, Date Published, and a synopsis of the book. Then write a sentence or two that shows how your book differs from the published book.
5. **About Promotion** (speaking, platform, web presence, media, blog tours, endorsements, influencer list, affinity groups, summary of publishing credits, press release list, willingness to participate in PR, periodical list for article submissions, special venues, social media, etc.)
6. **About the Author** (personal background, speaking, writing, professional memberships, awards, educational background)
7. **In summary.** (Summarize your proposal.)
8. **Chapter summaries** (nonfiction book), synopsis (fiction)
9. **Three sample chapters**

If this overwhelms you, I have a very simple solution! Get my nonfiction proposal tutorial here: (<http://amzn.to/2hSOOT9>) and my novel proposal tutorial here: (<http://amzn.to/2gFQz5f>)

Step Seventeen: Ship

You might be afraid now that you've finally accomplished your dream of writing a book in 2017. But now is not the time to shrink back. No, writer friend, now is the time to be brave. Writers ship. They take their words and publish them. They dare to believe that their sentences and paragraphs will help someone else. But books can't change the world unless folks can actually READ them.

No matter what form your book takes (ebook, print on demand [POD], offset printing, audio book, traditional book), it has great potential to bless others.

If you're self-publishing, your next step is to hire a formatter for your ebook or POD book. I personally recommend Kerry Nietz. He's really good and very affordable. Email him for prices. kerry_nietz@hotmail.com. You'll also want to hire a graphic designer for your cover art. Unless you're a graphic artist, do not do this yourself. If you'd like to save money, consider using <http://www.99designs.com>. They have done some amazing work for me. Another option is <http://www.fiverr.com>.

Once you have your files, you'll upload them to CreateSpace (Amazon), or KDP Select (Kindle). You can use an aggregate site to disburse all your books to various retailers (Barnes and Noble, Apple, CBD, etc). A service like <http://www.smashwords.com> does this.

If you're pursuing traditional publishing, you'll send your query and proposal to agents until an agent picks you up. This can take a long time. I highly recommend you attend a writer's conference instead. Meeting agents face to face makes the process quicker. Once an agent picks you up, he/she shops your book to several publishers. Hopefully one publisher will pick you up, offer you a contract, give you an advance, and have you hand in your book on a firm deadline. One year after that, you'll hold your book in your hands.

A Final Note

I'm so excited you've decided to embark on this book-writing journey. Would you do me a huge favor? If you ended up completing a book, would you let me know? You can email me at mary@marydemuth.com.

And if you know of a friend who would appreciate this informative guide, please send them here: http://eepurl.com/b_DGvn?

If you'd like intensive book mentoring, consider signing up for my next mentoring intensive. You can find all that information here: <http://www.booklaunchmentor.com/mentoringintensive>.

If you're worried about launching your amazing book, hop onto the waiting list for the book launch 21-day course here: <http://eepurl.com/cbJsEH>

Thank you for being brave enough to write a book. Remember, God may use this process to bring new facets of healing your way. I look forward to hearing your story, and I'm grateful to be a small part of your publishing dream.

Joyfully,

Mary DeMuth

