

*How To Become
An Established Author*

By Martha Jette



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Chapter 1



THE CREATIVE FORCE

The desire to write is a force to be reckoned with. You can't create it, if it isn't in you and you can't get rid of it, if you've got the bug to write. But turning our vivid thoughts and imagination into solid form can be both challenging and inspiring. Often, as writers, we learn a great deal about ourselves by the works that we create. The bottom line is this: if you do not have the passion to write or the desire to know yourself, don't waste your time. If you do, then this course is for you.

You will learn everything from how to get your personal creativity flowing, to announcing your book to the world and everything in between. Find out what other authors already know about such things as dealing with writer's block, preparing your manuscript, writing press releases, networking, radio interviews and much more!

First of all, don't set out believing that you will produce the biggest bestseller of all time. You have, after all, chosen a particular format, style and subject to write about. It is not the history of everything or the biggest breakthrough since sliced bread. That is not said to belittle anything you intend to write about, but rather to be realistic. You will have a specific, targeted audience depending on the genre of your book and you should decide on that at the start. Are you writing fiction or non-fiction? Is it a comedy, mystery, drama, sci-fi, romance, self-help, historical or a children's book? Once you know your audience, you must write for it with all of the creative force you can muster.

PREPARING AN ACTION PLAN

Before you even think of writing, you need to establish a plan for success. First of all, it is important to do what you love and love what you do. If you love writing, then the entire process of creating a book will not seem like work to you. Rather, it will be a labor of love. Then you must ask yourself: What do I want to achieve by writing my book? If your answer is fame and fortune, turn back now! If it is simply a desire you cannot suppress, then you're on the right track.



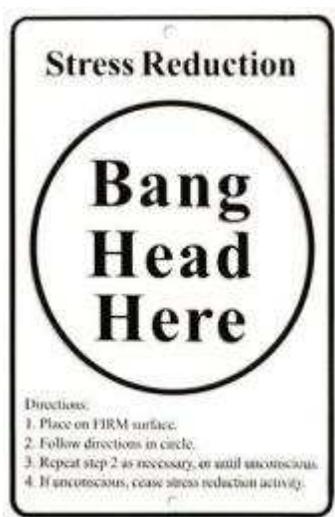
First of all, you need to write down your goals bearing in mind what you can realistically achieve. Next, you need to write out a schedule so you can practice good 'time management.' How many hours are you prepared to dedicate to your writing each day? How many days a week will you write? If you are writing non-fiction or an historical book, how many hours will you devote to research? Then decide how long you will take to write your book and set a date for completion. When will you begin searching for suitable publishers, write your query letters, copyright your work and do all the other things that we'll be talking about? Write these things on your calendar or in your date book.

This process is more important than it seems. First of all, writing to a deadline is motivating for most people. Once you tell family and friends that your book should be completed by say, September, you will want to ensure that it is. On that note, be wary of who you tell your plan to. You might not get the reaction or the support you were hoping for and that can be discouraging.



Overall, having a schedule helps you make the best use of your time. Remember to leave some contingency time to deal with unexpected events that could get in the way of your writing. Don't over-commit yourself. Also, ensure that your goal of writing a book does not conflict with other goals you might already have, such as spending more time with family, putting in more time at work, tending to health issues and so on.

In establishing your goals, you also need to consider 'stress management.' Writing requires a certain degree of privacy and a quiet atmosphere. How will you accomplish this? You might need to call upon your problem solving skills as well, to ensure that 'your space' is conducive to productive writing. It might help to keep a Stress Diary. By writing down all those short-term stresses you experience during the day, you will begin to get a bigger picture of what is causing it, which is the first step to finding a solution.



When writing down your goals, be realistic. If you don't, you will never manage to follow them. By considering all of the things I've talked about, you should be able to follow your action plan and monitor your progress as you go along.

You will be making decisions and taking steps toward becoming a successful author. Writing and publishing a book can be a frustrating process at times. It is vital that you maintain a good attitude and stay positive. On a final note, each morning when you get up and every night before you go to bed, review your goals. Doing so will reinforce them in your subconscious.

BEFORE YOU WRITE

Before you even start writing your book, it is wise to do some research. Do you know if the topic you have in mind is hot right now? Are there similar books on the market and are they selling well? A good way to find out is by reading newspapers, magazines, newsletter and e-zines that cater to writers. Join writer's groups and forums as well to talk to other people in the writing and publishing field. I will be giving you more information on these later, however for now, just be sure you have a potential seller with your book idea.

FICTION WRITING



Fiction writing is base on imagination and if you have a good one, your story will be good. It can also be plot-driven, or based on an idea or concept. The thing to remember as we go through each aspect of fiction writing is that although your story is fantasy, it must still make sense.

The next thing to consider is the physical setting of your story. It must be authentic enough to be believed and include everything from scenery, to atmosphere and perhaps even weather. These elements might have a profound affect on the actions or moods of your characters.

For instance, does your story take place in a run down factory, a dance hall or spaceship? All of these evoke extremely different images. Then you need to ask yourself, do I want my setting to be simply a background or something more powerful?

Choosing the right ‘point of view’ and ‘narrative voice’ for your story is also very important. Writing in the first person, gives the reader the impression that you are personally invested in your story. A third person ‘point of view’ is more detached.



Time is another element that must be established. First of all, what time of day is it? Although you don't need to specifically state that it's 2 p.m., your story must indicate through other details that it is mid-afternoon. Different time periods immediately create pictures in the minds of readers. For instance, there is a world of difference between Washington in 2006 and Boston in the 1800s.

Next, the characters in your story must be considered. Are they the primary focus, rather than the plot? Who is the main character and how will you write your book to show that this person is the most important? A good way to answer these questions is to write down character outlines. Describe not only how they look, but also their character traits (strengths and weaknesses), personality, views and moods.

Your main character will be the one who is most affected in the story and/or plays the biggest role. He or she will be the one with the most force of action, the biggest problem, the most painful hurt or seeking to accomplish the most tantamount goal. This is the character that you want your readers to know best, to perhaps identify with and to care about.

Then unless you are placing yourself in the story, decide which character will tell the tale. This is the ‘viewpoint character’ and the reader will experience the story through this character's eyes. It is also possible to have more than one ‘viewpoint character.’

Next, consider the plot or story line. How will you let the plot unfold in a natural way and follow it through to the end? Where and at what point will the climax occur? Will there be semi-climaxes as the story moves along and at what points? If you are writing a plot-based story, the intricacies of the plot will be what create the most interesting tale. This, of course, will take some planning. In this case, it helps to write out your game plan ahead of time.

Dialogue is a vital aspect of any written work, as it can really bring out the personalities of your characters. It can also serve to fill in necessary information, without just stating it, it can be used to establish the time and place, and also to develop conflicts between characters. Whatever its purpose, writing dialogue is something that can be difficult to create, if you haven't done it before. Don't try to recreate actual conversations, as they'll likely be very boring and annoying. For instance, most people repeat certain phrases and non-words like 'um,' 'aha' or 'you see.'

I'm sure you've heard the term "double speak" at some point. In dialogue, it means that what your characters say and what they really mean are two different things. What are your characters saying "between the lines" or "subtext?" This can happen when one or more of your characters don't really understand themselves or their own motivation. Showing a different side to a character through dialogue will tell the reader more about him or her than if you just outright said it. Knowing how to write this kind of dialogue can set you apart from other writers.

Also if your character has a slang or accent, don't overdo it. Dialogue should also flow, without a lot of 'he said,' 'she said.' Also try to intersperse your conversations with associated actions. Finally, always remember to begin a new sentence each time another person speaks and put their words in quotations.

Assuming that you know what genre or category your writing falls into, there are a few things to consider when writing your story. You need to be aware that there are certain conventions of structure, character and conversation that automatically come with specific genres.



For instance, writers of science fiction often use the term “faster-than-light travel” or “warp speed.” The sci-fi writer needs to know how and where such terms are used, if he or she intends to use them. In mystery writing, the plot generally begins with a discovery, such as a dead body and ends when the mystery is solved. A great way to become familiar with the conventions of your particular genre is to read similar stories by other writers.

NON-FICTION WRITING



Non-fiction writing is based on reality, but is not necessarily factual. This genre includes recreations of true stories, biographies and autobiographies found in such things as books, magazines, newspapers, advertisements and reference books. You might also want to write a how-to book. There are many of them out there on everything from how to loose weight, dance, find the right mate and build a birdhouse, how to improve your golf game, learn to dance, read sheet music or improve your Internet marketing skills, start a business and even how to write.



Non-fiction also includes medical, travel, space books and whole host of other texts. Obviously, the most important aspect of non-fiction writing is to write about what you know best. You must do your homework and become an authority on your subject matter.

You must also have an angle or purpose. Why are you writing it? In answering that question, you must answer the questions: who, what, why, when and how. For instance, if you are writing on how to balance your budget, your purpose is to help people gain control over their finances. You must decide whether you are aiming at the poor, middle class or wealthy. What do they need to know and why? When should they begin their financial planning and how?



For general non-fiction writing, you must decide on the right 'point of view' and 'narrative voice.' For instance, if you are writing about a personal and painful experience of your own, you might want to present it in the first person. However, if you are not ready to tell the world it was 'your' experience, you will need to write it in the third person. If you're writing an academic book, you might want to write in the third person in a 'professor's' voice. If it is a book about a conspiracy, you might want to adopt a 'suspicious' tone.

Next, choose your setting, which for non-fiction writing should be an actual place. If this is not possible, you will need to recreate the setting as closely as possible. Then establish the time element and your character outlines. Again, these must be factual or as close to it as possible. You must then decide on your characters and who is the primary character. What is the plot and how important is it? Will there be actual dialogue in your non-fiction book? If so, make sure that all words, expressions and accents are authentic in relation to the time element. What genre does your book fall into and are you being true to form for that genre?

Finally, although your non-fiction book should be based on facts, you can be just as creative as a fiction writer to keep your writing from being too dry and boring. Don't be afraid to spice it up a bit, but at the same time stick to the facts.

WRITING FOR CHILDREN

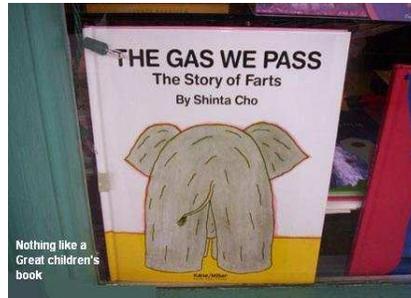


When writing for children, the most important thing to consider is the age group you are targeting. For children up to 7 years old, you can be as imaginative and fanciful as you like. First, decide on the ‘voice’ of your story or poem. You must choose a character (or two, or three) and simply let them speak just like a child would speak. If the character speaks with honesty, little readers will listen. Another trick of the trade is to imagine that you are telling the story to a child that you know. Imagine how they react as you relate the magical tale about to unfold. Of course, you should dig into your own childhood to remember how the world appeared to you.

Remember lying back on the grass and watching those furry creatures float across the sky? How about dreams of pirates and buried treasure beneath far away azure seas? Children’s books are written to delight children with tales of wonderment. There is no need to work hard at educating them about something here, as they will more easily learn to read, if they are caught up in the story. Maintain a rhythm and momentum throughout your tale and make your story like the best carnival ride a child has ever been on. Also, remember that small children have short attention spans, so you want to keep them rapt throughout.

When we are talking about children’s books, we are also talking pictures. Children react to pictures, before they ever learn the words. It is important to create pictures that reflect the words written on the page, that they are colorful, lively and age appropriate.

Children also love to laugh, so you can be as silly and creative as you please. In fact, take a look at this little book:



If you are not an artist yourself, you will need to find someone with whom you can collaborate. Later on, I will talk about networking and how it can be invaluable to you for finding the help that you need when you need it. If you're smart, which I am assuming you are, you can get the graphics for an entire children's book and cover for \$500 or less.

When I was preparing my children's book, "Talking To My Angel," I began collaborating with a female artist in Texas. Although I am in Canada, we had no problem getting the work done. It was simply a matter of e-mailing her each page, along with a note describing exactly what I wanted. I might have just gotten lucky, but this can be done, no matter the distance.

The end result was that I offered her a percentage of my royalties as well, though my publisher felt this was too generous. It is up to you to decide what type of arrangement you wish to have. Either way, it will be necessary to write up a short contract, which is signed by both of you for legal purposes.



It is also important to consider whether your market will be boys, girls or both. There are some things boys like that little girls have no interest in and vice versa.

For just little boys, you can feel free to write about sports, insects, dinosaurs and so on, while little girls seem to be happier reading about fairies, dancing and dolls. I in no way want to sound like I'm labeling either sex here, but there are subjects that appeal to both, such as school, family, friends and animals.

Though young children love color, you may have to use it sparingly if you want to get your first children's book published. Color is expensive and many publishers don't want to take on a costly project. Try something like drawings, with just hints of color here and there to liven it up. Also, make sure you use a big font, so the story is easy for little eyes to learn to read.



For children 8 and up, you can break your children's book into chapters. Be original, but for these youngsters, keep it real. Children are smarter than you think and will know if your story is too far out there. They can be the harshest critics. Create lively characters and an imaginative plot. Don't moralize, but rather get the message across in your story. Note that editors particularly like stories that touch on multicultural issues and/or have ethnic characters. Also, consider a story that is not seasonal, as you don't want your book to become outdated too quickly. As well, go for an idea that will have a wide appeal.

For children ages 12 and up, you should aim for stories that cover such topics as school, friends and family.

HISTORICAL WRITING



First and foremost, historical writing must be accurate. Otherwise, do not claim that your book is based on facts. This means that the historical writer must read and uncover every conceivable source of information to ensure accuracy.

This might include everything from history books and newspapers, to magazines, encyclopedias, maps, television shows, search engines, films, microfilms, videos and CDs.

If you are writing about an historical place, visit the site to get the feel of it. If you are able, also acquire knowledge from experts. If you need to send away for information, do that first, as it will likely take some time to get the response. You will need to keep files and or cards with pertinent information.

Just because you have decided to write about a historical person, place or event that does not mean you cannot use some of the tips and tricks used by fiction writers. Instead of just presenting the facts (which are, of course, very necessary), bring your story alive.

Finally, having written non-fiction myself, I found it most useful to keep separate files on the various aspects of my book. It proved to be a real time-saver, so you might want to consider doing this too.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES



Writing an autobiography is perhaps the most difficult of all writing styles. This is because people who write autobiographies usually have painful and compelling stories to tell. In the process of writing this kind of book, you might be dredging up memories and opening old doors to your past. You must be prepared for this emotional experience.

When writing an autobiography, it is also vital that you portray people and past events as accurately as possible. This can be difficult, if preconceived notions are clouding your mind. If possible, talk to those about whom you write and also discuss past events to be sure that you remember things accurately. Be aware that the other people you describe or talk about in your book won't take what you write lightly. Before including them in your book, get their permission if you can. . If you cannot do these things, you might be at risk of offending others and possibly being sued for defamation of character.

DRAMA



When writing dramatic stories you will have a primary character that the story will center around. Make sure you write so that the reader will come to know this person well. That means not only through physical description, but also how this person acts, things and feels. Don't just write paragraphs to describe the person. Incorporate this information in less obvious ways. For instance, it could be through conversation when another character talks about him or through something the main character does that shows how he thinks or feels about something. This may seem difficult at first, but it can be done with practice.

You truly want the reader to care about what happens to your primary character, so it is vital to endear him somehow. Then when something terrible happens, your readers will empathize with him as well.

COMEDY



Obviously, writing comedy is not for everyone. Either you're funny or your not. It seems to be a gift that some people come by naturally. If you're not sure if you're one of those special people, you should test your comedic skills on family and friends first. I have picked up books in the past that were supposed to be funny but really weren't, which can be quite the let down. Of course, if you are a professional comedian you shouldn't have much trouble translating your talent into words on paper. Even so, it might be a good idea to have a couple of people read what you've written to ensure that you will get the right reaction from your readers.

ROMANCE



Romance writing can fall under either fiction or non-fiction, but primarily fiction. Some romance writers say this style of writing is very free form as they can take the story any way they want.

For romance writing, you will have two main characters and again, you must let your reader know enough about them to care what happens both with and between the two. Set out a plot line first, so you at least have a general idea as to where your story is going and make it as sincere as possible.

HORROR/THRILLER/MURDER MYSTERY



I must confess that I am not very familiar with horror writing, but it seems quite obvious that the goal is to shock and frighten the reader. This will take much creativity on your part and a plot line that is weaving and in the end, unexpected. You want your reader to sit on the edge of his seat and feel the hairs stand up on the back of his neck.

For this type of writing, you will have to spend more time on your plot than with most other types of writing. You will have to decide when the plot will take a different twist and what the outcome will be. You will also have to develop your characters and in some cases, don't tell all so to speak. Unlike other forms of writing, keep at least one or some of the characters under a veil of mystery as the story unfolds.

SPY/ADVENTURE



Spy novels generally involve a lot of intrigue and adventure. There should be plenty of action to keep the reader engrossed from beginning to end.

Develop your main characters and plan your plot line before you begin. There should be twists and turns in a spy novel, but you can also throw in other elements, such as a love story. Also, if you want your spy novel to seem authentic, you need to bear in mind the world political situation for the time in which your story takes place.

RELIGIOUS



This type of writing is a genre on its own and should only be undertaken by those with a good knowledge of religious matters. Even so, religion and politics are both hotly debated topics and you can expect that there may be some negative feedback from those of alternate views. Make sure you know what you're talking about. That means doing your homework and referencing sources throughout to back up your views.

TRUE CRIME

I wanted to include this genre, as there are some specific guidelines you must follow when writing about a true crime. First of all, know the facts of the case and make sure that you can reference all of your sources. You will lay yourself wide open for a lawsuit if you don't. When writing true crime you **MUST** stick strictly to the facts and only the facts.

Sometimes, a good story comes along and you'd love to write about it but fear there could be serious repercussions. My book, "Playing With The Devil" is a very good example. If I had simply repeated everything as told to me by the primary character (the victim) I would have been dragged into court by now. Since I truly felt this story needed to be told, I decided to veil it under the guise of fiction "based on a true story." As well, I did not use anyone's real names – not the victims or the perpetrators are named outright.

Chapter 2

GETTING STARTED

Many aspiring writers have asked me how to get started. It's a good question and the answers vary. It depends on the type of book you want to write. For instance, if it is a self-help book, it is wise to break the subject matter into specific topics and tackle each one separately. For historically based novels, it is vital to do your homework to ensure that what you are portraying as factual is actually true. If you are being more creative, you must develop characters, plot lines, scenes and so on. No matter what type of book you want to write, you must have an overall theme, but getting those first words down on paper or typed into your word program is definitely the most difficult.



My advice: just do it! Write whenever you have a chance – at home, on the bus, wherever you happen to be. Take a notepad with you and jot down ideas as they come to you. If you find you want to change anything later, then by all means change it. The important thing is to get started. You will be reviewing your work many times, so the first draft does not have to be perfect. Just let loose your creative instincts and let the words flow.

Don't be your own worst critic at this point. At the same time, take responsibility for the words you write, because words have power. Be aware of how those words will affect the reader. If something does not feel right to you, don't write it. Use your inner guidance and intuition. As they say in journalism: "When in doubt, leave it out!" In some cases, a book can transform a person's thinking and even their life, so bear that in mind. Also remember that certain information is banned, such as anything that promotes hate or discrimination against a person or group.

MANUSCRIPT STYLE

As with everything else in life, there are rules associated with writing a manuscript.

- 1) Your work must be double-spaced.
- 2) Use a plain type like Times New Roman or Courier New.
- 3) The type size should be 12.
- 4) Use italics only to emphasize words or phrases.
- 5) Avoid all caps and bold face.
- 6) Set your margins to give you six inches across of text, with at least 1-½ inches at the top and bottom of an 8 ½ x 11 inches page.
- 7) Indents should be 5 or 6 spaces.
- 8) Do not put extra lines between paragraphs.
- 9) Don't justify your text. Simple make it align left.
- 10) Each page should include your name, book title and page number at the top.
- 11) Use a white background or white paper only.

If you need to, you might want to take advantage of new software that has recently come out called "New Novelist." This software helps you improve your characters, maintain structure, set out chapters, follow your plot line and even offers suggestions and ideas as you go along. New Novelist software costs \$54.99 U.S. and is available at: <http://www.newnovelist.com> It is interesting that the editor of this new software is Lucinda Hawksley, who is the great, great, great granddaughter of Charles Dickens. She is also a successful author herself, with 13 books published.

The manuscript style for children's books must also be double spaced and set out with the same margins. Put your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address on the top left-hand side of the page. Then scroll down about half way and center the title of your book. Then double-space and begin the body of your work. Each page should include your name, book title and page number at the top. Finally, just because it is a children's book don't add such flowery items as stickers or extraneous graphics to your manuscript.

If you are writing a children's book or e-book, you might want to take advantage of a new program called e-Books Writer LITE available for free at: <http://www.eBooksWriter.com> This program is for works up to 20 pages or 1 MB. The Pro Edition costs \$119.

Also, if your computer does not have the capacity to hold a full manuscript, you can go to <http://www.writely.com> where you will find a web-based Microsoft word processing program you can use for free. As well, no writer should be without a good dictionary and Thesaurus. You will find these both on line at: WordWeb: <http://www.wordweb.co.uk/free>

If at some point, you would like to convert your manuscript into a PDF file, you can do this free for the first couple of times at: <http://www.createpdf.adobe.com>. E-book writers will find this most helpful. An even better site I recently found that converts MS Word files into PDF for free, with no limit on the number of uses is at: <http://convert.neevia.com>.

WRITING TIPS



- 1) The first few lines of your book are very important. You must come up with sentences that will immediately capture attention and coax the reader to continue. When you see people flipping through books at bookstores, they read those first lines and you need to immediately make an impression that will prompt them to buy it.
- 2) The standard length of a sentence is generally 15 to 17 words. Try to keep most of your sentences shorter than that. Sentences that are too complex or include multiple phrases are just irritating, so make it easy on your readers by creating sentences that are easy to understand. Remember that a high percentage of people do not have anything beyond a Grade 10 education.
- 3) Watch your verbs. Instead of using is, was, had, went, etc., use more powerful verbs to liven up your sentences.

- 4) Watch for word and/or phrase repetition. In editing other writers' copy, I found that they often get hooked on certain words or phrases and repeat them far too often.
- 5) Don't use slang, unless it is within a conversation where it would be appropriate.
- 6) Write in color. In other words, don't just say something like: "Mary had beautiful, curly, blonde hair. As she stood at the counter washing the dishes, her son Michael walked in the room." Instead, write something like this: Mary brushed aside her curly, blonde locks. As she stooped by the sink to wash the dishes, she couldn't help but notice her son, Michael waltz into the room." Instead of saying, "John was very a very large man with a booming voice. When he spoke, everyone in the room listened." Instead try: John's looming figure and booming voice propelled every person in the room to immediately turn and listen."
- 7) Spare the adverbs. Get rid of those incessant words like 'very, suddenly, quickly,' etc. If you must use an adverb, make it an important one.
- 8) Don't use clichés or over-used phrases. These also get very annoying.
- 9) Don't use symbols.
- 10) Use dashes only for emphasis.
- 11) Express number 1 through 9 in words, and 10 and up as digits. Use digits for all dates and ages.
- 12) Appeal to your readers' senses. Aside from color, give them light, sight, sound, texture and emotions. It is not enough to just tell a story.
- 13) Though your readers might not be as well educated as you, it is important that you do not talk down to them. Knowing your target audience will help significantly.
- 14) Do not overuse commas. I see this a lot when I'm editing manuscripts.
- 15) Do not use a capitol letter after a colon or semi-colon.
- 16) Put all conversation in quotes. If it is a quote within a quote, use single quotation marks.
- 17) Remember to save your work as you go along. There is nothing worse than to spend hours writing your masterpiece just to have it disappear on you because of a hydro glitch.

COLLABORATING

If you are a first-time writer, you might consider collaborating with another writer or writers to get that first book published. Writing on your own day after day can be very lonesome work, whereas working with others can be most stimulating and offer different points of view and the old adage “two heads are better than one” can really reap benefits when writing a book.

There will also be more hands to take care of the task that must be completed. Naturally, there are some tips that should be noted when seeking to collaborate. Make sure you choose someone whose skills at least match your own. They need not be the exact same skills however. You might excel at character and story line development, while they do well at lively dialogue or historical research.

The drawbacks to collaborating might include such things as personality clashes or differing levels of commitment to getting things done. There might even be legal implications. For instance, what do you do if you begin the project, but the other party leaves you to complete the work? Will you still offer them half of the royalties? What if you get the manuscript to a publisher, but the other party refuses to sign on? Before you begin any collaborated effort, make sure you draw up a contract that takes these kinds of things into account. If you still feel uncomfortable about the situation, get it notarized by a lawyer.

PHOTOS

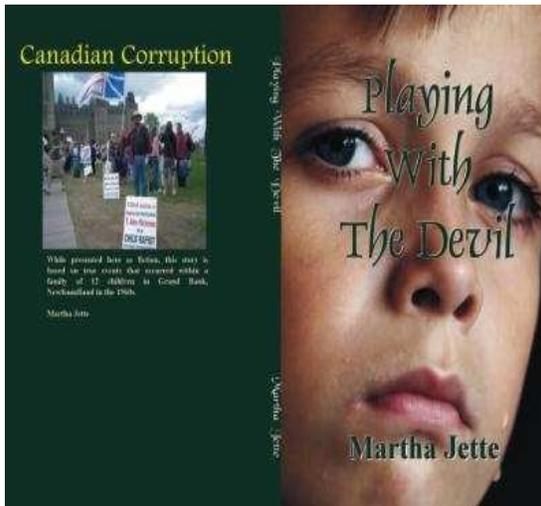
If you are using photos in your book, be sure that they are 600 dpi (dots per inch) so they will reproduce effectively. In my book, “Glimpses 2” It Could Happen To You! I had pictures throughout to go along with each story. Some stories had three to four photos and I learned the hard way. At the last minute, the printer advised my publisher that the photos were not turning out so well. I had to contact all the people I had interviewed (about 80 of them) to request photos that were 600 dpi. So do yourself a favor and get this done ahead of time.

Also, be aware that color photos are very expensive to reproduce. I would love to have had all of mine in color, but it just was not financially feasible for the publisher.

If you do not have suitable photos or graphics of your own, there are a whole host of sites on the net that offer them free of charge. You just have to watch that they are 600 dpi or higher. As well, you cannot just grab a photo off the Internet and use it for your book. You will likely be charged with copyright infringement. To avoid that, go to a site that specifically ensures that its photos are royalty free. A good site I found for getting photos that are not copyrighted is: <http://www.istockphoto.com>. On this site, you purchase credits that you can use to buy the photo(s) you want and the price is extremely reasonable.

BOOK COVERS

Your book cover will be the first thing that attracts attention on a bookshelf. If you leave this job to the publisher, you might not be very happy with what you wind up with. Therefore, you must really put some thought into what kind of cover you want. There are a couple of routes you can go to accomplish this. The first is to find a suitable photo at an on-line site, such as 88888888 where you can get high-resolution photographs at a very reasonable rate. You can then download it and just add your book title and byline. You will, however, still need to prepare the back cover. We'll get into that in a minute.



For this cover of my book *Playing With The Devil*, I wanted to immediately tell a potential reader that it was about a child – a very sad child. Notice the tears on his face and the big sad eyes. On the back cover, I wanted the potential purchaser to know that this crime occurred in Canada and that the justice system had failed. The picture depicts a man picketing at Parliament Hill in Ottawa and his sign lets the reader know that justice has not yet been accomplished.

Another option is to create the cover yourself if you have the talent or pay a graphic artist to do this for you. In either case, you will maintain artistic control over how your book will look. To complete this project, you should create a back cover as well, which should include your photo and a very short (one paragraph) write-up about you noting your credentials beside it. Below that, write one paragraph that will draw a potential reader into your book. For example, on the back of my book I wrote: “If you haven’t had a paranormal experience yet, look out! At some point, you probably will! Martha Jette presents 90 strange, but true paranormal stories from around the world – proof that strange things are happening to ordinary people – just like you – every day!” Then below that and to the right, leave space for your ISBN number.

For children’s books, your cover should be imaginative and colorful. What I did with my children’s book to save costs is I chose the best inside picture as my front cover.

REVIEWING & EDITING

Okay, let’s assume that you’ve gotten those first words written and in fact, have finished your first chapter. Rather than go back and review what you’ve done now, I have found it is better to just let it sit for a while. The best method is to write the entire manuscript first. That way, you can easily tell if the story line flows throughout the book and each chapter is where it should be.

Editing your manuscript is vital to your success with a publisher. If your work is untidy, doesn’t flow, has many spelling errors or is too confusing, it will get tossed very quickly.

Your first job will be to make use of that program called Spell Check. Go through the entire document and make all the necessary changes. Never fully rely on Spell Check though. If you misspelled a word and created a new word in the process, it might not pick it up as an error. If you need to change a specific word that is used more than once, your word program should have a function for that as well.

Editing also means you must ensure that your initial decisions about characters, plot, timing and so on are consistent and follow through as originally planned. You might find that some elements have to be reworked and parts of your manuscript need to be rewritten. You might also have to do some cutting in areas where you’ve rambled on too much about one thing.

Contact Martha Jette at:
marthajette@gmail.com.

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Just put Editing Service
Needed in the Subject
line.

Now, re-read your book if you've never seen it before. Be objective. Does it flow? Review the writing tips above to make sure that you haven't fallen into one of the problems listed. Does the plot follow nicely and culminate properly at the end of your story? Keep an eye out for spelling errors and poor sentence structures that the Spell Check missed. (It always does!) When you are finished, set your manuscript aside for at least one week. Then go through this very same process again.

If you are not willing or patient enough to do this, you could use editing software. You will find free editing software at The Free Site:

http://www.thefreesite.com/Free_Software/Free_text_editors. Another site with an XML Copy Editor for Windows 2000 can be found at <http://xml-cop-editor.sourceforge.net>. For more professional software, go to the Writers Super Center at: <http://www.writersupercenter.com/stylewriter> where you will pay \$150.



Of course, you can also hire a professional editor to do it for you. I have edited quite a number of books and my rates are very reasonable. I charge on a sliding scale that goes up to \$375 for up to 400 pages. For \$100 more, I also provide a critique of your book and for \$75, introduction pages about you and your book. However, I would suggest that you check around to get the best rate.

Chapter 3



There will be times that you lose your creative momentum and it seems like you couldn't come up with a novel idea if it was stuck out in front of you let alone the next word or sentence of your manuscript. Remember that this is only temporary - an 'incubation period' of sorts. Sometimes, the mind just needs time to process what has been written before it can move on. In fact, hitting a blind spot in your writing may be a sign that you need to put the book aside for a while and not try to force yourself. But how can you tell if and when this 'incubation period' has gone on for too long? Well, you will know, believe me! Rather than feeling like you must get some writing done, because deadlines are nearing, you will once again get that creative nudge. You will feel refreshed and anxious to get going on your creation.

But what if you just can't seem to pull out of your writer's block? Is it because you're really not committed at this time? Are you too wrapped up in other things, like watching television? You might just have to break some of your normal habits, if you want to be successful. There are also various ways to get those creative juices going again.

- 1) Think about why you are blocked. Has your story line gone off into left field? Maybe, you need to re-think this. Has one of your characters become much too important than another? Perhaps, you could change this. Is your work turning out dry and dull? Is it time to pull out that Thesaurus to liven it up? Maybe, your story line has gone awry and just doesn't make sense. This, of course, will take some chopping, editing and re-writing, which can be painful. You've already put so much time and effort into it that it's hard to just dispose of sections, but you must if you expect to move on. While you may have initially thought one idea was a very good one, it just might not be so.

The most you can do here is to learn from the experience. It in no way means that you are a poor writer or lacking in talent. Try to maintain a positive attitude about yourself and your book, no matter how difficult the writing might get at times.

- 2) There is also that nasty thing called 'life' that can get in the way of your time and creativity. If your life is already fast-paced, with little leisure time to spare, it is unlikely that you will be successful at writing a book. You need to ensure that your environment is conducive to your success. If there is someone in your life that causes you stress, this will greatly influence your ability to be creative. It might be necessary to keep that person at bay for a while, in order to achieve your dream of being an author. This does not mean eliminating them entirely (however, this might be a good idea!). Just ensure that you have a quiet, relaxing environment in which to write. Set up your 'space' in such a way that you will not be distracted from your work. In other words, don't try writing with the television or radio on. Parents of young children should wait till the little ones' bedtime, if they can't find an area of solace during the day. Any kind of noise or stress will just make writing a headache, instead of an inspiring and rewarding pursuit.
- 3) If you have writer's block you might just need to center yourself. Such things as meditating, going for a walk or bouncing ideas off a friend might help. If you are not mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically at ease, you're bound to have problems expressing yourself. It's best that you sort out any personal problems you might have first.
- 4) Meditating, as mentioned earlier, can provide some amazing benefits to body, mind and soul. In this instance, however, you can get into the meditative state and then roll out your characters and story line in your mind. Let your imagination flow and you will find that you can easily change anything you don't feel is right.
- 5) Your last resort might be to hire a professional creativity coach. A creativity coach will analyze your situation and work with you to find solutions that can put you back on the happy track of writing freely again. A coach can help you decide which of the approaches above — or many others they may have created themselves — might work in your situation. One such site that offers this service is: www.creativitycoachingassociation.com. Since I have never used this, however, I don't know what kind of cost would be involved. But before you make that kind of commitment, there is another possible solution.

Getting writer's block is no picnic, but there are some fun exercises you can do to get your imagination rolling again. The great 1900's French writer, Marcel Proust is most well known for his novel Remembrance of Things Past. He used a style of writing called 'stream of consciousness' to get motivated. Using this method, Proust would pick a simple topic and just let his feelings on it flow like river. In fact, he once wrote 30 pages to describe the simple act of rolling over in bed at night.

The theory behind Proust's 'stream of consciousness' writing was to just release your mind from any rules of writing or particular desire to be brilliant, so it can let new ideas stream forth. There is no inner critic to dampen your creative work. Thoughts and ideas are just unleashed and written out as they come into your consciousness.

Finally, some people believe fear is at the root of writer's block – fear of acceptance (or not) and believe it or not, even fear of success. Don't let fear stop you from accomplishing your goal, which is to get your manuscript written, rewritten, edited and off to a publisher.

As you have already learned, there are some fun exercises you can do to get your imagination rolling again. These are called creative writing prompts and the idea is to just go with it and let your imagination soar.

Creative Meditation Exercise



Here is a creative meditation exercise for you to try. Before you begin, make sure you have your pen and paper handy. I know this may seem airy-fairy to you at first, but if you follow my instructions, you will reap real benefits from this exercise.

Now, please get into a comfortable position and close your eyes. Hopefully, there are no noises to disturb you. If your radio or TV is on, shut it off. Now, just relax and take three deep breaths, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

In and out, in and out, in and out. (Pause) Imagine that you're breathing in the good energy and exhaling all your tensions.

First concentrate on your feet. Flex them and then relax. (Pause) Move your focus to your ankles. Flex them and relax. (Pause) Now move up to your calves. Flex and relax. Still moving up, focus on your knees. Pull them tight and then relax. (Pause) Now your upper legs – flex and relax. (Pause) Take a deep breath again, in through your nose and out through your mouth. Then move up to your thighs – flex and relax. (Pause) Moving up to your behind – flex and relax. (Pause) Now your tummy – flex and relax. (Pause) Up to your shoulders – flex and relax. (Pause) Now your neck – just let it relax. (Pause) Up to your face – scrunch it up and then relax. (Pause)

Okay, now take a breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Feel the tension just flowing from your body. One more time – in – out.

Now focus on your feet again. Imagine that they're going to sleep. (Pause) Move up to your ankles – imagine they are sleeping. (Pause) Up to your calves – they are going to sleep. (Pause) Now your knees – going to sleep. (Pause) Then to your upper legs – imagine they are falling asleep. (Pause) Up to your thighs – totally relaxed and going to sleep. (Pause) Moving up to your behind – falling to sleep. Now your tummy – totally relaxed. (Pause) Up to your shoulders – no more tension, just totally relaxed. (Pause) Now your neck – falling asleep. (Pause) Up to your face – imagine it is going to sleep. (Pause) Now the top and back of your head. Feel them going to sleep.

Take one more deep breath in through your mouth and out through your nose. By now, you should be totally relaxed. Just to be sure, focus on your feet for a minute. Can you feel them? If you can't, you are ready to move on.

All you have done here is put your body into a suspended state, so your mind and spirit can concentrate more clearly. There is nothing at all to worry about. When you come out of this, you will feel totally relaxed and refreshed. You will feel like you've had a cat nap and you'll wake up feeling happy and content.

Now you need to go just a little deeper. Count down from 10, as you become more and more relaxed. Now, imagine yourself on a beautiful beach. You are lying on a chaise lounge soaking up the warm sunshine. You can hear the water lapping on the shore. (Pause) Take a deep breath and just enjoy the moment.

Now you notice a door a few feet away from you. You instinctively know that on the other side of this door, you will see the first scene of your book. Now rise, move toward the door and open it.

Where have you found yourself? If you are inside a room, look around it. Make a mental note of everything you see. Is there furniture in the room? Is it old or new? What style? Is the room generally clean, messy or downright filthy? Make note of any objects or pictures that stand out. If there is one in particular that you think is especially important, pick it up and look at it. What is the air like in the room? Is it fresh, thick, smoky or heavy? What is the overall mood you get from that room? Are you comfortable, nervous, scared?

If you opened that door and found yourself outside, what do you see? Are there trees, flowers, grass, a sandy beach, a road or a basketball court? Whatever it is, take a good look around you. Take note of the weather. Is it sunny, raining or snowing? Is the sky clear or stormy? Look up and see.

Now do you hear any noises? Inside, it might be a TV, radio or fan? If so, turn to look at it. If outside, what do you hear - birds, cars, a train or animals? Can you hear voices? If you do, turn to look in the direction of the voices. Now, let's imagine that you hear two people talking. Do they sound happy, agitated or angry?

Now take a closer look at those two characters. What do they look like? Focus on one of them. Is he or she tall or short, slim or fat? What color hair? Is it short or long? Note the facial features. What color eyes, what type of nose and lips? Are there any wrinkles or other defining features? How is this character dressed - modern, old-fashioned, new age? What colors does he or she have on? Is the character wearing anything special - jewelry, badges, etc.?

About what age do you think he or she is? Now take note of this character's mood. Does it show on their face and how? Imagine this character walking now. How do they carry themselves? Do they step lightly, provocatively or heavy? What is the overall impression you get from this character? Are they friendly, cheerful, depressed, threatening?

Now take a close look at your second character and go through the above steps again.

Now come back slowly counting I to 10. Wake up feeling refreshed and energized. Now grab that paper and pen, and write down everything you saw in your mind's eye.

FINDING A PUBLISHER



Now that your manuscript is written and polished, and you have your cover ready, it is time to find a suitable publisher. For first-time writers, it is important that your manuscript be entirely finished. Publishers in the past have received far too many works in progress that were never completed and won't be willing to take a chance on you. New writers also have to prove that they can keep a story line going throughout their manuscript. However, if you submit subsequent books to your own publisher, just sending a few chapters and an outline or synopsis of the book would be sufficient.

Finding the right publisher will take some research on your part. First of all, you will want one, who accepts your genre of writing. There are a variety of sources, both on and off the net where you can search. You can visit such sites as the Association of American Book Publishers at: <http://www.publishers.org> and a list of various publishers at: <http://www.topicsites.com/publishers/book-publishers.htm>. If you want a Canadian publisher, try going to: <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Unofficial/Canadiana/CA-zines.html> Poets can find a list of publishers at: <http://www.pmpoetry.com/publishers.shtml>.

You will also find the World Wide Web Virtual Library of publishers at:
<http://www.comlab.ox.ac.uk/archive/publishers.html>.

You should also visit your local library and check out the most recent edition of *Writer's Digest*. This book lists the various publishing houses, along with agency profiles of American and Canadian publishers. You will also find the names of the editors and an assortment of essays on book publishing written by industry insiders. Please note, however, that the book does not list any publisher's reading or editing fees.

Another option is to find a publisher by word of mouth or by joining such on-line groups as Book Pitch at: <http://www.bookpitch.com>. This site is for authors, publishers and agents, so you get to know others in the writing industry.

PRINT ON DEMAND



If you have the funds, of course, you can opt to pay to see your first book in print by signing up with one of hundreds of on-line print-on-demand publishers. It used to be that self-publishing was an absolute book killer. However, it has now become fairly acceptable. I say fairly, because book distributors, booksellers, reviewers and even librarians might not accept your book as an authentic work. Also, if you want to acquire a grant for your next book, that first book would not be considered legitimate. This is unfortunate, but that's the way it is. The benefit, however, is that you will get that first book into print and will have it to prove to the rest of the world that you are an established author. When you pursue that next contract, having already written one successful book will look very good.

Be aware that self-publishing with a print-on-demand or vanity publisher can cost you from \$500 upwards of \$2,500, depending upon the one you choose. Even if you decide to go this route, you will need to do your homework. Choose a few that you think are within your budget and will accept the genre of your writing. Then ask questions – lots of questions. First of all, what are their fees and what do you get for that investment?

Do they provide a professional editing service? Do they do any pre- or post-production advertising? Do you get any free copies of your book upon publication? What is your royalty rate and so on?

Your other self-publishing option is to create your book through a site like Lulu's. (<http://www.lulus.com>). However, you will learn that there is a lot you will have to do for yourself to actually see your book make it into bookstores and/or become successful. This site does offer a free writing community though, with various forums of interest to writers.

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHERS



If you opt for a traditional publisher, be prepared to wait weeks and more likely months to receive replies. Most publishers today are inundated with requests. Then expect to get a lot of rejections. Remember, it is not that you're a bad writer. It is simply that publishers have a wide range of books to choose from. Don't lose hope. If possible, follow up your query letters with a phone call and if any of them are near to you, a personal visit.

Those hoping to publish a children's book should of course, seek out children's book publishers, though there are some exceptions.

Whatever you write, you will need to decide on a publisher and note again that I said "a publisher" because it is not acceptable to submit your manuscript to more than one. It is fine to query as many as you want, but the industry frowns on writers who put their manuscript in the hands of more than one publisher. Also, depending on the publisher you choose, you will either send in your manuscript by snail mail or over the Internet in a digital MS Word file.

Chapter 4

QUERY LETTERS



First and foremost, your query letter must look clean and professional. Your writing must be clear, straightforward, crisp and to the point. Remember that your query letter will be the first example of your writing that a potential publisher will read and first impressions have a major impact. Set it up as a business letter and write it as if it were one. Keep it short – no more than one to one and a half pages. Direct your query letter right to the person you want to read it. If necessary, call the publishing house to find out who that will be.

Writing a query letter should follow a well-established format. You must include your name, address, phone number and/or e-mail address and the URL of your web site. In the first paragraph, introduce yourself and your book, including the title, projected word length, type of book, completion date and potential audience. Then ask for their writer's guidelines and if they have specific rules regarding manuscript submission that you should follow.

The second paragraph should summarize your book in a few sentences. What is its focus? Does it have unusual characters or conflicts? What will a reader learn from it? How will a reader be affected? Answers to whatever questions fit with your manuscript should be included.

Paragraph three should be all about you – your writing experience, education, credentials, prior publishing history, professional memberships, specific expertise, other careers and so on.

Finally, thank the editor for taking the time to review your work and note that you hope for a prompt reply. When you're finished, make use of that Spell Check program to ensure that there are no spelling or grammatical errors.

As with anything else you write there are a few things to remember. When writing your query letter, don't brag about yourself or your book. Simply state the facts. Don't go into a lengthy synopsis of your book or reveal too much. Don't include an autobiography on yourself or your writing. Instead, focus on what sets your book apart from others.

Why do you love it and why should a publisher? Naturally, a publisher will be most interested in established writers, whose books make money and lots of it. Therefore, you must convince a potential publisher that your book has a wide market appeal.

It is perfectly acceptable to send out multiple query letters. However, it is not all right to send your manuscript to more than one publisher at a time. If you do, it is wise to inform each publisher that you are doing so. What you can do is offer them an exclusive look at your manuscript for 30 days, after which you will be free to make a decision or move on. On the other hand, if you send your manuscript to just one publisher, make sure you note that it is "exclusive." This might even give you a better chance at acceptance.

For children's books, it is acceptable to send your manuscript without pictures, graphics or drawings. In fact, most children's book publishers have connections to various artists and can get a suitable one for you. If you prefer to have this done beforehand, a good reference is the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators at <http://www.scbwi.org>. This site offers members a variety of services, including grants to writers, advice and conferences. At the library, you can pick up The Children's Writers & Illustrators Market, which is also available at Amazon.com. This book lists children's book publishers and their preferences.

LITERARY CRITIQUES

If you want your manuscript thoroughly reviewed by a professional, before you send it out to a publisher, you will need to hire someone to provide a literary critique.

This person will evaluate your writing, taking into consideration such things as the consistency, motivation and depth of your characters, plot creation, use of voice, flow of conversation, areas in your work that drag on, potential market for your book and your overall strengths and weaknesses. A good critique will show examples of how you can fix up your manuscript as well. This can be presented in either MS word or PDF form.

Some people who write literary critiques will do the rewrites for you, making the necessary embellishments, cuts and revisions, so getting a literary critique of your manuscript can be expensive depending on what you're looking for. I am aware of one person on the web who charges upwards of \$850 for a critique and another who charges \$2,500 for editing and rewriting. When I am hired on as editor of a book, I charge a flat rate per page and provide a critique for an extra \$100, which is very close to the going rate.

If you have opted for a simple critique of say two or three pages, expect to wait from four to six weeks for completion. For more in depth critiques, it can take from four to six months. While you might not think having a critique done is important, it can be most useful later on, as a good one can be sent along with your manuscript to publishers and agents.

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LITERARY AGENTS



I briefly mentioned last week that one of your options is to acquire the services of a literary agent. Some publishers only accept manuscripts through an established agent. But how do you do this? Well, the best way is by word of mouth. If you belong to a local writing group, which most cities have, ask around. There are also on-line groups with writers you can ask. You can also check out a few books at the library, including the *Writer's Guide to Book Editors, Publishers & Literary Agents*.

You can also search the net for an appropriate literary agent. Another option is to visit: <http://www.fwointl.com>, where you will find a list of available agents.

If you are new to publishing and you know absolutely nothing about the process, getting a literary agent might be a good idea. He will be the one who represents you and your book, so choose the right one carefully. Do your homework to find out if he is legitimate, competent and interested in your genre of writing. When you have found a couple of prospects, send out query letters in the same general style as you sent to the publisher.

That said there are a number of things to watch out for when seeking an agent. There are many scam artists who are more than willing to prey on new writers. Even some reputable agencies will try to rip you off, so here are some guidelines to follow:

- 1) If you are asked to pay “reading fees” don’t pay more than \$25. Some ask as much as \$150 just to read your manuscript.
- 2) You should not be paying “editing fees” at all. This needs to be done either by a qualified editor or as part of your contract.
- 3) If you are asked to pay “representation fees” up front – run the other way! The agent will try to convince you by saying he has to cover administration and marketing costs.
- 4) If worse comes to worse, demand that your manuscript be returned. The old adage: if it seems too good to be true, is especially important here.
- 5) Find out what other books the agent has represented. Were they successful?

Your literary agent is responsible for acquiring not only a suitable publisher, but also your advance. He will negotiate this for you and the only monies he or she should be given are between 10 and 20 per cent of that, which could range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars.

Here are a few resources that you might find helpful:

- 1) Literary Agents Directory: <http://www.ebookscrossroads.com/agents.html>
- 2) Association of Authors’ Representatives: <http://www.publishersweekly.com>
- 3) Information For Writers: <http://www.pw.org/info3.htm>
- 4) Directory of Literary Agencies: <http://www.writers.net/agents.html>

- 5) 1999 Guide To Literary Agents: 500 Agents Who Sell What You Write by Donna Dickerson.
- 6) Write to: Association of Author's Representatives, 10 Astor Place, 3rd Floor, New York, N.Y., 10003. Send \$7 and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. You will receive a list of AAR members and information about them.
- 7) Children's Literary Agency: <http://www.childrensliteraryagency.com>.

On a final note, here are the top 20 agencies to stay away from as listed on:

<http://www.sfw.org/beware/twentyworst.html>

- **The Abacus Group Literary Agency**
- **Allred and Allred Literary Agents**
- **Barbara Bauer Literary Agency**
- **Benedict Associates** (also d/b/a B.A. Literary Agency)
- **Sherwood Broome, Inc.** (also d/b/a Stillwater Literary Agency, LLC)
- **Capital Literary Agency** (formerly American Literary Agents of Washington, Inc.; also d/b/a Washington Agency and Washington Literary Agency)
- **Desert Rose Literary Agency**
- **Arthur Fleming Associates**
- **Finesse Literary Agency** (also d/b/a/ Elite Finesse Literary Agency)
- **Brock Gannon Literary Agency**
- **Harris Literary Agency**
- **Martin-McLean Literary Associates**
- **Mocknick Productions Literary Agency, Inc.**
- **B.K. Nelson, Inc.**
- **The Robins Agency** (Cris Robins)
- **Michele Rooney Literary Agency** (also d/b/a Creative Literary Agency, Simply Nonfiction, and Michele Glance Rooney Literary Agency)
- **Southeast Literary Agency**
- **Mark Sullivan Associates** (also d/b/a New York Editors and Manhattan Literary)
- **West Coast Literary Associates** (also d/b/a California Literary Services)
- **Writers' Literary Agency & Marketing Company** (a.k.a. WL Writers' Literary Agency), formerly The Literary Agency Group, which includes the following:
 - Christian Literary Agency
 - New York Literary Agency
 - Stylus Literary Agency (formerly ST Literary Agency, formerly Sydra-Techniques)
 - WL Children's Agency (a.k.a. Children's Literary Agency)

- WL Poet's Agency (a.k.a. Poet's Literary Agency)
- WL Screenplay Agency (a.k.a. The Screenplay Agency)
- Writers' Literary & Publishing Services Company (the editing arm of the above-mentioned agencies)

PROPOSALS

If an agent responds positively, you will need to send him or her a proposal to convince the agent that your book will sell. A proposal is a thorough outline of your unfinished manuscript or book idea, so the first two pages will be a summary of this. State what you intend to write about and the topics to be covered. Fiction writers need to present a general synopsis of the plot of their story.

You will then devote three pages to describing the market appeal of your proposed book. Include all demographics, including age, socio-economic factors, education and other characteristics of your potential market. List other books on similar topics that are best sellers to prove there is already a market for your book and a wide interest in it.

Then present a one-page description of yourself and any co-authors or researchers. Here you can boast as much as you want about yourself and your writing credentials. Then give a chapter summary with a chapter-by-chapter outline on the next page of what will be in your book. Finally, write about three sentences to tell the agent the approximate number of words you expect your book to include and a projected date for completion.

You should also consider acquiring an endorsement of your book to send along you're your proposal. Seek out someone who is either well known or has excellent credential in the field that your book covers and have them write up a short endorsement saying how talented you are as a writer and how great your book is.

If you don't feel competent to write a book proposal yourself, you can hire a professional writer to do it for you. Of course, this will cost you at least \$500, but might be well worth it. You will be getting someone else's objective view of your ideas. Either way, after your proposal is on its way you wait again, until the agent writes or calls you.

Give it about two weeks and if you get no response by then, write or call him to enquire about your proposal. If you don't hear anything for six weeks, contact him again and advise that you intend to move on and will be submitting your proposal to other agents.

When you finally acquire an agent, he or she will send you a short one or two-page contract. Be sure that the contract is for no longer than one year and that you won't be charged for such things as administrative or office expenses, if the book does not sell.

PUBLISHING CONTRACT



Once you have pretty much made up your mind on which publisher you want to go with, ask for a copy of their contract and scrutinize it very carefully. How long is the contract in force? I know of one on-line vanity publisher, who outwitted a friend of mine by inserting six months where the contract normally would have been one year. That means she got him to pay the full price for half the length of service.

Will you be provided with a proof, before the book goes to press? Do you retain the right to make changes without charge? Do you hold any subsidy rights, if the book should be presented in any other form, such as film? In what countries will they place your books? If you are getting some free advertising as well, when and where will this be done? Do they send out press releases when your book is released?

Watch out for a "general accounting" clause. If you see this, you could lose money on any subsequent books you write. For instance, let's say you get a \$6,000 advance for your first book, but it only has sales of \$3,000. You get another \$6,000 for your second book, but the publisher will take off \$3,000 from the debit on the first book.

Other things to look for include whether the publisher obtains the copyright and ISBN number or is it something you have to do? Also, watch for any clause allowing the publisher to license your book to a book club. Once the publisher has given the license, you might just find your royalties have decreased. Note that this does not mean you have to worry if the publisher gets your book listed on Amazon or Barnes & Noble. I don't fully understand the ins and outs of this, but from what I have learned, these on-line clubs don't appear to interfere with royalties.

As you can see, there are a number of reasons to really scrutinize the contract. If you really aren't sure of something, check it out with a lawyer or get a literary agent, who will be familiar with those kinds of things.

One thing I'd like to add here is that you cannot, by any stretch of the imagination believe what you are told that is not written in the contract. Some publishers will even make personal calls to tell you all the wonderful things they'll do for you, but that doesn't mean they ever will. Finally, it is a good idea to get in touch with the publisher to find out what they think is a suitable price for your book. This will also help you determine the amount of your royalty per book.

For more information on the terminology used in publishing contracts, a great source is found at the National Writers Union site at: <http://www.nwu.org/bite/gloss.htm>. Another site is: <http://www.right-writing.com/checklist.html>.

COPYRIGHT

©

Once you have your manuscript finished, you can apply to copyright your work. Actually, you could do it sooner, but you must be sure that the title you've chosen for your book is the one you will end up using. Why should you do this? Well, some publishers will tell you that getting your work copyrighted isn't necessary, that all you have to do is mail yourself a copy and that's enough proof. However, I prefer to make things truly legal. I want that certificate that says my book is "my book!"

Getting copyright is quick and simple, thanks to the Internet. If you are in the United States, just go to: <http://www.copyright.gov> and download the form. You will then fill it out and send it in to the address indicated along with a payment of \$30. In Canada, go to CIPO (the Canadian Intellectual Property Office) on line at: <http://www.strategis.gc.ca>. Click on the link for copyright and follow the same process.

BOOK DISTRIBUTORS



If you have self-published your book, you will need to find a book distributor to get your book into the various bookstores. This can be a hard sell, but if you know what they're looking for before taking on a particular book, it will certainly help. Here are a few tips:

- 1) They like interesting covers or book jackets that will catch peoples' eyes.
- 2) Your book must be reasonably priced.
- 3) You must provide a solid marketing plan.
- 4) Contact potential distributors at least six months before you actually need their services.
- 5) A book distributor should only cost you between 20 and 30 per cent of net sales.
- 6) Watch out for hidden costs for such things as administration, book storage fees, return reserves and catalogue charges.

You will need to send a query letter first that outlines your book and its market appeal. If you get a positive response, you can follow this up with a more in dept letter advising them of your needs, anticipated publication date, where you'd like your book distributed and so on.

BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews are vital to the success of your book and you can begin acquiring them even before the book is published. There are quite a few sites that offer book reviews, mostly for free.

However, you need to find reviewers who have a fairly high profile in order for the review to be effective. You can find a database of book reviewers at: <http://www.ebookcrossroads.com/book-reviewers.html>. There is also a Yahoo group called Reviewer's Choice at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/ReviewersChoice>. Another is Article Announce, which is at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/aageneral>. As well, various newspapers and magazines catering to writers offer book reviews. In this case, it is best to send a query letter first.

When you have a review or two, be sure to post them on your web site, so others can find out what kind of feedback your book is getting. Also, if you opt for a second edition of your book, you can always include a few short words from each reviewer on the back cover.

Chapter 5

THE BIGGEST JOB – PR

If you think your work is done after you get your manuscript accepted by a publisher, think again! Your real work has just begun and it can be the most daunting task of all. That work involves getting your name and your book known as widely as possible. In fact, you can begin working on some of these things well before your book goes to press.

PRESS RELEASES



Preparing a press release is not as hard as it might seem, but there are some hard and fast rules. You will need a release to send to both on and off-line newspapers, magazines, e-zines, newsletters, radio and television stations, press release sites and more. First, you must determine your target audience. If you have written a self-help book for instance, then you target those publications that might like to know about your book. If it were a children's book, you would target publications directed at parents and families. Once you determine this, you can then accumulate a list of on and off-line places where you plan to send your press release. Also, when sending a press release to a specific publication, be sure to address it to the right person. That may be the editor, submissions editor, section editor or book reviewer. If it ends up in the wrong hands, it might just go astray.

The most important part of your press release is your title or heading. This is what will capture or turn away potential media readers.

For instance, you could write:

Rhode Island Author Releases Book On Depression

However, a better title would be:

Learn How To Beat Depression In Six Easy Steps

This title suggests that there is really something to know that will be beneficial to readers and this is the sort of headline journalists look for, because they know how significant it might be to their readers.

Next, do not put a byline (i.e.) By Mary Smith. You will see the importance of this as we move on.

Writing the press release involves writing in the third person. This is very important. You want to make it sound like someone else wrote it about you, with quotes by you included. For instance, you don't write:

My name is Mary Smith and my book *Getting Out of Depression* has just been accepted by Bugle Publishing of New York. I am a new author from Rhode Island, with a degree in psychology.

Instead, you write something like this:

Bugle Publishing of New York has just accepted a new book by Rhode Island author and psychologist, Mary Smith.

"This book will help anyone learn how to beat depression for good," said Ms. Smith.

The words must appear as if a journalist has written a newsworthy article about you – a journalist who knows the importance of answering the questions: who, what, when, where and why. When you place yourself in the position of the journalist, you become invisible, thus better able to present the cold, hard facts.

The body of your press release must be short, factual and to the point. Extraneous words or sentences will lose the reader's interest quickly. Do not get too technical. Do not use words like 'unique,' or brag about yourself or your book. Leave that to your reviewers later on. You must put your personal involvement and ego aside. The usual rule of KISS (Keep It Simple Stupid) is very important here. Above all, do not use clichés or your press release will likely wind up in the "G" file or shredder. Do not include symbols, like trademarks and copyrights. It will just make the reader think about law and you don't want to pull them away from the subject at hand.

Also, remember to keep your press release short - about six paragraphs in all. You will find that when you submit it to some of the on-line press release sites, their forms will not accept long write-ups. Editors of any publication will simply chop off the end of any release that does not fit their format, so save time by keeping your release short and sweet in the first place. That being said, you must make sure that the most vital information in your release comes first. Be sure to include your contact information (i.e.) phone number, e-mail address and/or web site URL as well.

If you're sending your release to local media, instead of sending along an expensive glossy photo of your book, try just inserting the thumbnail into your letter when you prepare it on your computer. Also, I would not advise sending a copy of your book, unless you have made such an arrangement by telephone beforehand. Books tend to just disappear under a heap and if no interview or article results, you are going to feel cheated. However, in the event that the journalist does request a personal interview, be sure to give him some lead-time. They will need time to get together with you, conduct the interview and then go back to their office to write the story. The entire process will likely take a couple of weeks.

There are lots of sites on the web where you can send out your press release free of charge, including <http://www.Free-Press-Release.com>, <http://www.prweb.com> and <http://www.eworld.wire.com>.

SET UP A WEB SITE



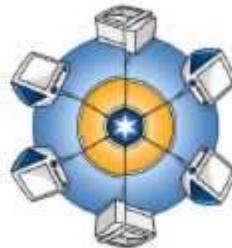
The first step of course, is to set up a web site to announce your upcoming book. There are, as you know, many free hosting systems on the web that you can use. Even if you know absolutely nothing about formatting a web page, most of these are pretty simple to understand.

Once you get used to writing HTML code, it becomes very easy. However, if you're really stuck, you can do a search for free HTML converters as there are a number of sites on the web where you can get one free, for example: <http://cybermatrix.com/txt2html.html>

Make sure to request from the publisher that a thumbnail print of your book cover be sent to you just as soon as it is available. When you get it, download it to your computer, so you can upload it later onto your site. You will use this, plus some information about the book on your web page that will arouse interest. You want to be creative with this information, as it is what will draw people to want to read your book when it is released.

Of course, when your book is released, you will need to update the site to reflect this fact. At this point, you will want to add any reviews you've received, because they certainly do have a positive impact on those who view your page when they are trying to make a decision as to whether to purchase your book. Make sure that you have an easy-to-find link directly to your publisher's site too, so that buying your book will be easy. People like 'easy.' Also, make sure to add your URL to your signature in your e-mail, so those you correspond with can check out your site.

NETWORKING



Do yourself a huge favor by beginning to network, before you even start to write. It takes time to make new contacts and friends on the net, and to establish honest, trustworthy relationships. I would also suggest that you use a site like Ryze Business Networking, which has both free and paid memberships. You only need to pay, if you want to set up your own forum. Please note that I am not endorsing just this site. There are several such sites on the web.

The reason I suggest this is that these kinds of sites have literally thousands of members. You will have a guest book right on your page and even if you don't actively visit other people's pages, you will find that a good number of them will drop by to say hello to you, thus viewing your page and what you have to offer.

Networking sites also have hundreds of groups you can join where you can discuss various subjects with other members. This might sound trivial and time wasting, but trust me. It is not. Networking is the most important thing you can do to promote yourself and your book.

It will also lay the groundwork by establishing relationships with others in your field, which can be invaluable when and if you decide to publish a second book. There are many authors, publishers, cover designers and graphic artists for you to get to know and you will learn the value of this over time.

Other on-line communities for writers include Powerful Intentions, as well as Authors Zone at: <http://www.authorzone.com>, Writers Net at: <http://SFF.net>, Linked In at: <http://www.linkedin.com> and Tribes at: <http://www.tribe.net>.

Direct Matches (<http://www.directmatches.com>) is another site, but there is a fee for membership. Another site you might consider joining is Bookwired (<http://www.bookwired.com>). This site is for authors and publishers, and offers forums, book reviews and more. Another excellent site is the Book Marketing Network at <http://bookmarket.ning.com>. You never know. You just might find your future publisher there!

If you have the funds, it is a good idea to set up your own on-line forum where you can discuss topics pertinent to your book's subject matter. For instance, my book included true stories of the paranormal, so the group I ran, Mystics and Merrymakers, offered information and discussions on paranormal topics. This is a great way to get yourself known on a site as an expert in your field.

WRITE ARTICLES



For any author, writing articles is a sure way to draw attention to your writing. There are many sites that collect articles for others to use on their web sites. There are also Yahoo and MSN groups that cater to writers and some newsletters and e-zines that accept submissions. As well, you can submit to a multitude of on-line and off-line magazines and newspapers. For a list of Canadian-based publications on line, try <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/Unofficial/Canadiana>.

While you should begin by getting your articles out there free, at some point, you will want to get paid for your hard work. One great site that pays when your article is requested is Article Distribution Services at <http://www.articledistributionservices.com>. People seeking articles for various purposes come to this site to find what they need. Yahoo also has a group specifically for articles called Article Announce, which can be found at: <http://www.articleannounce.com>.

There are a plethora of other sites where you can post articles and on most of them, other writers can drop by to give you feedback. These include: <http://www.gather.com>, <http://www.helium.com>, <http://www.scribed.com>, <http://www.triond.com>, <http://www.associatedcontent.com>, <http://www.articlesbase.com>, <http://www.izea.com/>, <http://www.en.articlesgratuits.com/>

When you are submitting your articles, remember to provide a short three to five line bio at the bottom, along with links to your site, your publisher's site, etc. Be sure to check the requirements for each submission, to ensure that your article is not rejected.

BLOGS

When I first heard about blogs, I had no idea what they were or what purpose they served. However, I have since learned that people actually do read them and they are a terrific means of showing off your writing skills. The most popular site is <http://www.blogspot.com>, where setting up a blog is very simple.

The trick to blogging is that you need to add to your blog every once in awhile, to keep readers interested. There is also a Canadian site at: <http://www.blogscanada.ca>.

I currently run a blog at <http://mjbookreviews.blogspot.com> where I post reviews of books by members of the Book Marketing Network. Also, at the BMN site and others, I post reviews of other people's books.

BOOK EXPOS

As a published author, you will want to get your books into book expos, where they will be seen by possibly thousands of people. Book expos are held annually in a variety of cities around the world. However, you don't necessarily have to be in attendance to have a presence there. Some sites offer this service for a price. Now, here are some links for you:

For book expos in Canada, go to: <http://reedexpo.ca/bookexpo>.

For the United States, go to: <http://bookexpoamerica.com/app/homepage.cfm?>

It should be noted that taking part in these book expos can be costly. In some cases, you will be able to send your books to the event without actually being there yourself. However, it is difficult to determine just who picks up your book and/or what they think of it. A better idea is to attend a bookselling event in your own community, if there is one. That way, you can be there in person to represent your books.

E-MAIL CAMPAIGNS



Naturally, as a new author you will want to let everyone you know the big news and hopefully, drum up some sales as well. For this, an e-mail campaign is the answer. I use IncrediMail for this purpose, because it allows you to insert pictures and graphics right into your e-mail. I inserted the thumbnail of my book with a big headline saying, "Announcing" and then my book title with all the details after that.

Of course, I included a direct link to my publisher's site and my home site to make it easy for them to check it out and perhaps, buy a copy. IncrediMail is a mail service that you download and use from your desktop.

Also, if your e-mail program supports it, send them under BBC, so that each person appears to get their copy separately and there are no complaints about strangers having access to their e-mail addresses.

NEWSLETTERS & E-ZINES

Aside from sending your press release to these publications, it is a good idea to start your own newsletter or e-zine. Having your own regular newsletter or e-zine will further establish you as an expert in your field. For non-fiction writers, this should be easy but even if you have written a book about medieval romance, you can create a newsletter that covers similar topics.

I know of quite a few people who pay a significant amount of money to send off their weekly or monthly newsletters. Quite frankly, I don't see the point. I simply joined Author's Den (<http://www.aurthorsden.com>) and can send my newsletters free. The set-up is very simple, so you shouldn't have any problems with it.

You also get a page of your own there that is displayed publicly. On this site you only need to pay, if you want your book listed in their bookstore. Again, please note that I am not endorsing this site. I am sure others like it on the worldwide web are just as good.

I also know people who attempt to send off daily newsletters. Please don't do this to yourself! It's just too much work, with no pay-off. Plus, I don't know anyone who wants to read one person's newsletter every day. You could opt for weekly or even monthly, depending on your personal schedule. I find sending mine out monthly gives me more time to gather the information I need to present a descent newsletter.

Once you have a newsletter or e-zine, you need readers. Start with people that you know and then you should go to sites on the net that list them, as this is where readers go to find publications that interest them. There are a number of newsletter directories on the Internet, such as <http://www.newsletteraccess.com> that you can find by doing a search. One that I particularly like is Netterweb.com. Add your newsletter to their list and also look for other similar newsletters. The reason is that you might be able to swap advertising with some of the ones who cater to similar readerships.

Also, be sure to place a link to your newsletter on your web site, in e-mails and if acceptable, as part of your signature on forums.

BOOKSTORES



I have found that sending press releases to off-line bookstores is a total waste of time. You will need to actually visit a bookstore to talk with the owner about having your book on their shelves. For the chain bookstores, it will be necessary for your publisher to make arrangements for you, as they don't cater to individual authors.

However, you can always try tipping your publisher off to any stores that you think might be interested in your book. Also, look for any avenues where you could sell your book in bulk, such as corporations, clubs, associations and service organizations.

If you have self-published, you will likely have to contact Barnes & Noble or Amazon.com yourself. Otherwise, your publisher will do this for you. Either way, make sure to check them out to make sure that all information about your book is accurate. If you need to make changes or corrections, you can do so by using the Suggestion Box that can be found at the bottom of each page. To change a title, author, languages, binding, number of pages, publication date and format or edition number, use the on-line catalogue update form. Changes will likely appear within five to seven working days.

As a side note, if you have self-published you will also want to list your book in Books In Print at: <http://www.booksinprint.com> and the industry's highly acclaimed Bowker's List at: <http://www.bowkerlink.com>. If you don't have a computer to access, you can also find these books in the library, with addresses of where to write to be included.

RADIO & TELEVISION



If you want to tout yourself and your book on radio or television, you will need to do your homework. There are literally thousands of opportunities out there, but you need to find them. The first step is a Google search. Check out various web sites to determine which radio and television shows might accept your genre of writing. You will find a searchable directory of on-line radio stations at: <http://www.radio-locator.com>. A searchable directory for television shows can be found at: <http://www.TV.com>. For both TV and radio, go to: <http://www.TVRadioworld.com>. A list of regular U.S. radio stations can be found at: <http://www.gebbieinc.com>.

In my own case, of course, I chose all those stations that presented shows on the paranormal. This is another good reason for clearly defining your audience. The clearer this is, the easier this task will be for you.

There are other options as well, such as hiring someone like Mr. Pitch get you those sought after interviews, subscribing to such on-line publications as Bill Stoller's Publicity Insider, (<http://www.publicityinsider.com>) which gives you access to contact information for the top shows. Mr. Stoller gives subscribers some terrific information on radio and television contacts. However, it will cost you \$97 per year for his wealth of information.

You might also consider purchasing the Harrison's Guide, which has details about more than 5,000 radio and television stations. There are also sites like <http://www.appearontoptvshows.com> that charge between \$300 and \$400. The cheapest option, of course, is to go to your local library to check out such books as Bacon's Media Directory, Literary Marketplace and the Oxbridge Periodical Directory.

Dealing with live media is much different than print. Often, they look for that truly sensational headline, as they receive so many requests for interviews. Since that is the case, feel free to jazz up your news release for them. You should also attach a sample of your work – perhaps a pertinent paragraph or chapter, as well as any endorsements or reviews you might have that will pique their interest. If you are accepted for an interview, they will request that you send along a bio as well as questions that you think their audience might like to have answered. Some request up to a dozen questions so make sure you have a list ready. Once you have acquired a few interviews, make sure you list the shows you have already been on at your web site with links to their archives if possible.

Preparing for a radio interview is vitally important – not how you look, of course, because you can do this in your pajamas! But you must know your subject inside and out. You, of course, want to come off as professional, so you don't want any of those painful airtime pauses. Print out the questions and your answers before the show and have them in front of you. You might also want to print out excerpts from your book that you think might be of interest to the listening audience. Some shows also have call-in lines for people to talk to you or ask questions. Be prepared for this, again, by knowing your subject.

Television is a different medium altogether. Make sure that you arrive well ahead of the appointed show time, as you will be taken into make-up and perhaps, wardrobe as well. Don't bother with makeup, as they'll just redo it. Don't use hairspray, because they'll likely redo that as well. Your best bet is to dress clean and conservative. Anything too provocative will take away from your overall professional appearance.

You really need to have a firm knowledge of your subject matter for television, as you won't have any notes in front of you to follow. In some cases, you might also not know the questions you will be asked. For shows like Oprah, if you should get so lucky, you will know the questions beforehand, so this will help you.

FREE SEMINARS

If you have written on a topic that lends itself to presenting a public seminar, you might consider doing one for free at a local venue, such as a library. In so doing, you are letting others know that you are a professional in your field and you'll likely sell some copies of your books while you're at it. And you never know. If you get a good response, you might find yourself setting up paid seminars!

A couple of place on the net that you might try are www.teleclassinternational.com or www.teleclass.com.

Chapter 6

WHEN TO HIRE A PR EXPERT

If you follow most of the above avenues plus all of the advertising tips I will give you, you will likely not need a professional public relations expert. However, if you decide to go that route, choose one carefully. Not all public relation firms deliver on their promises. Before you decide on a specific firm, make sure you know exactly what you're getting for your money and get it all in writing. You should also use your 'network' to get advice on who would be the best candidate for this job. You want someone who is interested in and understands your subject matter. If they can't explain it, they can't do a good job of telling others about it.

Also make sure you check out their credentials and history of successes. A good PR expert will cost you at least \$3,500. Also, it might be wise to choose a firm in your own town or city. This way, you can sit down with a person face-to-face to review your needs. You will also be more easily able to check in with them from time to time.

There are quite a number of public relations firms advertised on the Internet, but be wary and get everything in writing. One such site is Annie Jennings at <http://www.anniejenningspr.com>. She charges after she acquires a radio or television spot for you, however, the fees might be high. I have not been able to find out exactly what they are. Another option is to join an on-line site like <http://www.Prleads.com> where interested reporters and other parties will come to you, instead of you trying to get to them.

ADVERTISING – ANOTHER BIG JOB

There are basically two types of advertising. One is done to raise awareness about a company, product or service. The other is done to move people to action, such as purchasing a product or service. Of course, your objective is the latter, as you want to sell your book. It is all good and well to have a web site and a published book, but if you don't advertise, no one will know you have a presence on the Internet. Therefore, it is necessary to actively promote yourself and your book just like any other business.

SEARCH ENGINES



Once you have a web site, you will need to get it noticed by the major and lesser search engines. It is vital that you attract the attention of search engines, so your site will be found easily on the net. The first step is to go back to your site to include Meta tags, which are descriptions and keywords in a specific format to attract the search engine crawlers. Some multiple submission search engine sites also help you with this coding.

Keywords are very important. Read through your web site and write down any words that are pertinent to your subject matter. This list can be as long as you like, in fact the more the better. Don't worry, because nothing written between the <HEAD> and </HEAD> will show up on your actual web page. They are only inserted for the search engine crawler to pick up.

Here is an example of what I put at the very top when setting up one of my web pages. It goes right at the top so the search engine crawlers can easily find it. You can see that I've included everything related to my books, as well as references to some of the advertising on my site.

```
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Glimpses of the Paranormal</TITLE>
<Meta name="description" content="Everything you ever wanted to know about the
paranormal.">
<META name="keywords" content="books, author, writing, Martha, Jette, Glimpses,
angels, channeled, children, ghosts, hauntings, premonitions, witches, UFOs, ESP,
psychics, aliens, strange tales, true stories, weird stories, paranormal, phenomenon,
money, power, the mind, Inner Expansion, Law of Attraction, ebooks, spiritually,
happiness, laws of life, get rich, big money, success, wealth, affiliate">
</HEAD>
```

There are a number of sites where you can submit to multiple search engines for free or at minimal cost. One free site is Submit Express (<http://www.submitexpress.com>) where you have the option of submitting free or covering more search engines for a price. Others are Easy Submit at: <http://www.ineedhits.com/submissions/easy-submit.aspx> and Submit Plus at: <http://www.submitplus.com/freeprograms.php>. This site also allows you to test your Meta tag, description and keywords to see how effective they are. You can also optimize your Meta tag to improve your chances for a better ranking with the search engines.

Some of these sites also require that you place a link on your web site in return for their free services.

A site with links to various search engines is <http://searchenginewatch.com/links>. For a list of major search engines, go to: <http://www.selfpromotion.com/list-of-search-engines.t>

For direct Yahoo site submission, go to: <http://search.yahoo.com/info/submit.html>. For MSN, go to: <http://beta.search.msn.co.uk/docs/submit.aspx> and for Google go to: <http://www.google.com/addurl/?hl=en&continue=/addurl>.

Google now has a special listing for authors and publishers only, where you can list your book or books for free. You will find this at: http://books.google.ca/intl/en/googlebooks/publisher.html?sourceid=gp&subid=CA-HA-general_publisher-SYN&utm_campaign=general_publisher-ca&utm_term=book%20publishers.

Google also has a new service called Google Base, where you can post anything from want ads, to blogs. This one is at <http://base.google.com>

On the regular search engines, you can also submit the URLs to your blogs, newsletters, forums and any other on-line presence. The only stipulation is that very similar sites will be rejected.



One thing you might consider to get your site more exposure is a web ring. These rings connect web sites that cover similar topics. You will place a link on your site, as other members do, that will allow visitors to hop from one site to another. For a good list of web rings for writers, try http://www.redinkworks.com/writers_web-rings.htm or [http://www.supercrawler.com/Arts/Writers Resources/Web Rings](http://www.supercrawler.com/Arts/Writers_Resources/Web_Rings).

Some specific sites include: <http://www.sfga.org> for science fiction writers and The Ring of Words at: <http://www.poetrytodayonline.com/words> for poets. A ring for children's book writers can be found at: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Shores/2084> and one specifically for Female Authors On The Web is at: <http://g.webring.com/hub?ring=faw>.



Linking your web site to others is possible where you find such a service on another person's site where you can submit your own. You can also add links to your web site. This way, traffic can travel between the two quite easily. This has become quite popular, however, there are specific rules you must follow.

First of all, make sure you have permission from a web site owner, before placing their link on your site. Also, do not place specific articles or links to them on your site without permission. Don't use logos, pictures or other images without permission. If you do any of these things, you could find yourself with a lawsuit.

The best way to find links is through your own connections to people you have come to know on the web through forums, word of mouth and other sources.

There is also a way to create links to suitable web sites automatically. By using software called Arelis, you will be able to link to find up to 50 link partners at a time. This software allows you to send a customizable e-mail to each one to request a linking relationship. It will also keep track of responses, including which sites linked back to you. To learn more about Arelis, go to: <http://www.axandra-link-popularity-tool.com/index.htm>. The cost is \$99.95.

FREE FOR ALL LINKS

There is a lot of confusion on the web as to whether free for all links known as FFAs are really effective. However, if you'd like to be included in this form of linking, the best place to go is: <http://hightraffic.net/links/automate/links.shtm>. Here you can submit your site URL to over 9,000 pages in the MultiLinks.Net network for free. Be aware that you will get a flood of e-mails when you do this. There will not only be requests to confirm your link submission, but also plenty of SPAM. It is a good idea to set up a separate e-mail address just for these beforehand, so your regular inbox is not crammed with stuff you don't want.



Another way to let the world know about you and your book is through classified ads. There are just too many free classified sites to mention, so to save time, it is easier and more effective to submit your ad to a site where your ad will be sent out free to multiple classified sites. Here are a few examples:

- 1) <http://www.classifiedclub.com>
- 2) <http://www.inetgiant.com>
- 3) <http://www.myzipaddress.com/w/classified-ad-submitter.html>
- 4) <http://www.freepgs.com/ledbetter/submitware>

A full list of classified sites can be found at [http://dmoz.org/Shopping/Classifieds/Free Classifieds](http://dmoz.org/Shopping/Classifieds/Free_Classifieds).

BANNER ADS



Banner ads are quite popular, as they tend to take up less space and can be quite eye-catching. The theory behind banner ads is that an attractive ad will get much more attention than a written ad. There are a few sites where you can create your own banner ad for free. One is AdDesigner at: <http://www.addesigner.com>. Another is Free Banner Exchange & Ad Network at: <http://bannermania.com>.

Chapter 7

MOVING AHEAD

Now that you've become a published author and have done everything you can to keep the tills ringing with sales of your book, it is time to look to the future.



Once you have one traditionally published book under your belt, you might want to consider applying for a grant from the government, an association, corporation or private party to cover your projected expenses for writing a subsequent book. In 2004 in the United States alone, government and private foundations had to, by law, distribute more than \$360 billion to writers, artists, businesses, college students and others, so there is plenty of money to be had, if you know what you're doing.

Be aware that not all on-line sites offering to give you lists of grant sources or find you a grantor are legitimate. Many of them offer outdated data bases and directories. If you are unsure, check out the site or company with The Better Business Bureau, which now has a presence on line at: <http://www.betterbusinessreviews.org/grants.com/mygov-ov1>.

Here are some links that you should find helpful:

- 1) The Canada Council For The Arts at: <http://www.canadacouncil.ca/grants>
- 2) Association of Canadian Publishers: <http://www.publishers.ca/publishing-writing-grants.htm>
- 3) Ontario Council for the Arts (<http://www.arts.on.ca/grants/writing>) has a Writers' Reserve for professional writers. For more information, write to Lorraine Filyer in the Literature Office at: lfilyer@arts.on.ca. She also handles grants for works in progress, travel grants and creative writing grants.

- 4) Canadian organizations: http://authorial.com/pages/fl_grants.html
- 5) The Canadian Writers' Foundation: <http://www.canauthors.org>

In the United States:

- 6) The Writers' Directory: <http://www.usarts.grants.com>
- 7) Uncle Sams Money: <http://www.UncleSamsMoney.com>
- 8) Grant-Sources: <http://www.Grant-Sources.com>
- 9) Grants for the Serious Writer at: <http://www.worldwidefreelance.com/grants.htm>
- 10) The Writer's Fund: <http://www.writersfund.org>
- 11) GuideStar – a database of more than 40,000 non-profit organizations and charities at: <http://www.guidestar.org>
- 12) The Foundation Center: <http://www.fdncenter.org>
- 13) Granting organizations: http://www.pw.org/links.pages/Grants_and_Awards
- 14) The National Endowment for the Arts: <http://arts.endow.gov/guide>

In the library, refer to such books as the Catalogue of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)(for U.S. only)

APPLYING FOR A GRANT

Once you have found a shortlist of possible grantors, you will need to send out query letters. They should include the following:

- 1) A mission statement, which in the case of a writer is to publish your book and widen your profile as an author.
- 2) A description of your proposed book.
- 3) A summary of you goals and objectives.
- 4) List any collaborators, illustrators, etc.
- 5) Give a time frame for completion.
- 6) Give a brief description of how the funds would be used.
- 7) List any other funding that you have received from that particular grantor.

Once you have some positive responses, you will need to send along a grant proposal. Preparing a grant proposal can be a daunting experience, if you've never done it before.

Remember that the primary goal of your proposal is to sell a potential grantor on the idea of helping you attain your goals.

When you write your proposal, be concise and clear about what you need, including the cost of any research or collaborators and what the funding will be used for. Make sure you read the potential grantor's guidelines and instructions very carefully. Give the grantor a reason to believe that you will successfully carry out the work.

Be sure to proofread your proposal. There is nothing worse than applying for a writing grant with a proposal that looks like you are a sloppy or incompetent writer. Finally, if you are rejected, you may ask for a grant reviewer's opinion and suggestions. This will help you the next time you apply.

Components of a Funding Proposal

- 1) A three to four sentence summary of the book for which you seek funding.
- 2) An introduction telling a little about you and your qualifications.
- 3) A Statement of Need based on facts to show why you need the funding.
- 4) State your objective. How will the funds assist you?
- 5) State your method of accomplishing your objective.
- 6) An evaluation on how you will measure your success.
- 7) Future funding: how will this funding help you to continue successfully with your writing career?
- 8) Budget: clearly define the costs that will be borne by the grant.

If you still feel unsure of yourself when it comes to preparing a grant proposal, you can take a grant-writing course for about \$300 at: <http://www.grantwriters.com> or purchase a book like The Grant Winner Guide for \$35 at: <http://www.grantwinner.net/?hop=invest2>.

KEEP INFORMED

The biggest favor you can do yourself as a first-time author is to stay informed about what's happening in the writing world. If you know what's hot, you just might come up with a second book that flies off the shelf. There are many on and off-line writer's magazines to choose from.

On-line, I get a number of regular newsletters, including Write Site (<http://www.writesite.com>), which is just packed with helpful and interesting information for writers. Quill & Quire is another excellent site that sends out a monthly e-magazine. (<http://www.quill&quire.com>)

Another excellent newsletter is Publishing Poynters by Dan Poynter, which can be found at: <http://ParaPub.com>. Mr. Poynter offers information and insights on writers and writing, as well as classes and marketing news. On his site, you will find many downloadable e-books with a wealth of information on just about anything a writer needs. As well, you can list your published books on his site.

You should also consider joining some professional writing associations. The National Writers Association can be found at: <http://www.gcwriters.org>. The Canadian Authors Association is at: <http://www.canauthors.org/national.html>. For a comprehensive list of writer's associations, go to: <http://www.eBookCrossroads.com>, where you will find associations for just about any genre of writer. Other groups you might consider joining include the Writer's Guild of America at: <http://www.wga.org> or the Writer's Guild of Canada at: <http://www.writersguildofcanada.com>.

There is also The Writer's Union of Canada at: <http://www.writersunion.ca>. In the United States, go to the National Writers' Union at: <http://www.nwu.org>.

Finally, you should be aware that if your book is catalogued in a public library, you are entitled to public lending rights. In Canada, go to: <http://www.plr-dpp.ca/PLR/default-e.asp>. For more information on public lending rights in Canada, go to the Public Lending Rights Commission at: <http://www.plr-dpp.ca/PLR/what-e.asp>.

In Australia go to: http://www.dcita.gov.au/arts/arts/lending_schemes/plr. For the United States go to: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/B00070R5GK?v=glance>. For more information on public lending rights in general go to: <http://www.answers.com/topic/public-library>.

Chapter 8

WRITING EXERCISES

What follows are some writing exercises that will help you become more creative and also get rid of that terrible writer's block that all of us suffer from time to time.

A) Please choose one of the following and write for 10 minutes.

- 1) Write about a habit you have that is difficult to break.
- 2) Begin a story with, "There was once a chance I didn't take."
- 3) Use these words in your story: "setback, money, finances, health, friends, success."
- 4) Use these words in your story: "funny, falling, fabulous, famous, fruit."
- 5) Use the story line that you wake up and look in the mirror, but the face looking back isn't yours.

B) Choose a picture from your on or off-line photo albums. It could be of a person, place or thing, but whatever you decide sit down and write a story based on that photo. Write, write, write – at least 250 words.

C) For this writing exercise, choose one of the follow prompts and write for 10 minutes.

- 1) Use the first line of a nursery rhyme to start your story.
- 2) Use the following to start your story: His face grimaced and his body trembled as he clutched the railing.
- 3) Use the words "silence is golden" to create your story.
- 4) Describe a place you remember from your childhood.
- 5) Begin with the line: "It was wrapped in bright red paper, with a shiny, white bow."
- 6) Write about the color of your heart.

D) Choose one of the following writing styles:

- 1) Narration: write about a happy event when you did something enjoyable as a child.
- 2) Persuasion: write about persuading someone to buy something you have that is valuable. You really need the money for something important.
- 3) Explanation: write about why you got to work late.
- 4) Description with a twist: write about how it feels to have a tarantula crawling up your arm.
- 5) Imagination: write about what it's like to drink a potion that enables you to change your shape into anything you wish for 24 hours.

E) Please choose one of the following and write for 10 minutes:

- 6) Write about your hero or the nicest person you've ever known.
- 7) Begin a story with, "It was one summer I will never forget."
- 8) Use these words in your story: "pineapple, pillow, funny, celebration, hockey."
- 9) Write about the best movie you ever saw.
- 10) Use a story line based on a murder.

“Glimpses” True
Stories of the
Paranormal is
available only
through the author
by writing to:
[marthajette@gmail
.com](mailto:marthajette@gmail.com).

Page 67

THIS PUBL

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Cost: \$7.

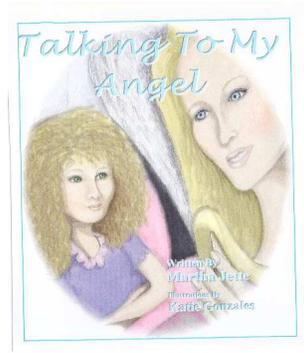


For more information on this author, please visit any of the following sites:

<http://www.freewebs.com/paranormalbooks>

Glimpses of the Paranormal

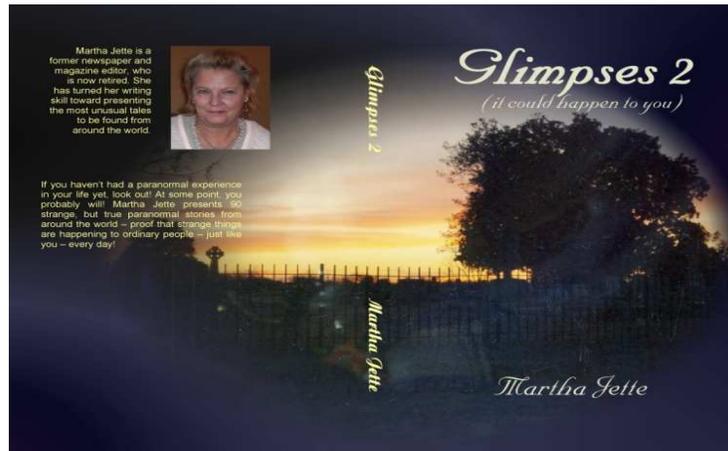




"Talk To My Angel" is a lovely children's book for little ones who have experienced angel visitations and/or invisible friends is available at: <http://www.sagabooks.net>

If you order today, you will get a free Angel Pin!

Glimpses 2 (it could happen to you!)



"The supernatural is the natural not yet understood."
-Elbert Hubbard-

Reviews

UFO Digest Review

<http://www.ufodigest.com/glimpses2.html>

Alternative-Read.com Review

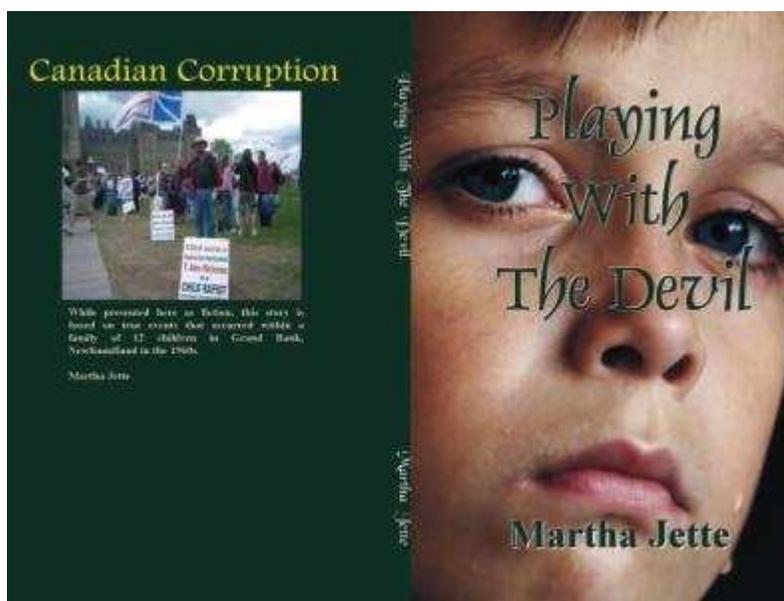
<http://tjbook-list.blogspot.com/2005/10/104-alternative-view-glimpses-2-it.html>

Amazon.com:

<http://www.amazon.ca/Glimpses-2-Martha-Jette/dp/1894936388>

Playing With The Devil

<http://www.angelfire.com/planet/pwtd>



“**Playing With The Devil**” is a novel based on a true story of the horrid abuses suffered by 12 children in one Canadian family is also available at various sites. *Note: Newfoundland electoral candidate Paul Perrier (Perrier Entertainment Canada) is willing to donate an organ to a child in support of Byron Prior’s case as well as that of all children who have been or are being abused.

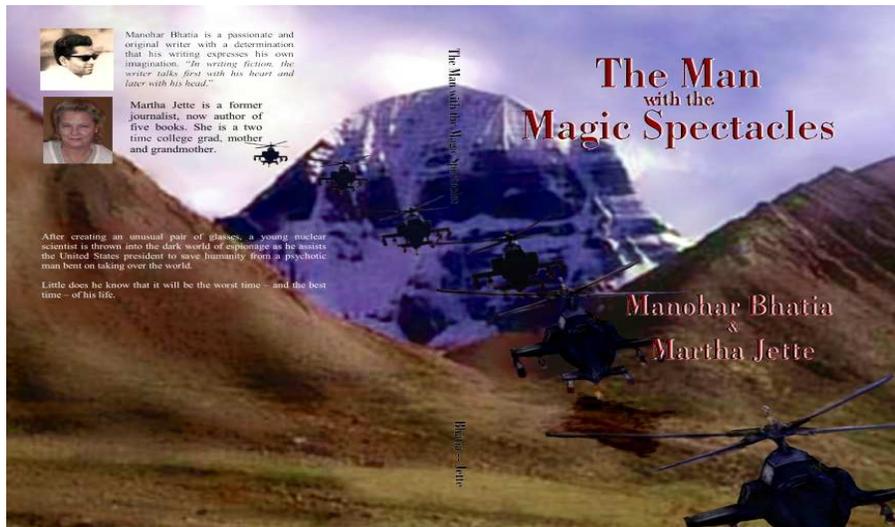
A new YouTube video that has now been posted with regard to this issue:

www.youtube.com/cdnjusticedelayed

Purchase Playing With The Devil

Target.com http://www.target.com/gp/detail.html/602-8673576-0276660?asin=1894936515&afid=yahoospplp_bmvd&Inm=1894936515|Books : Playing With The Devil&ref=tgt_adv_XSNG1060

<http://www.magicspectacles.bravehost.com>



“The Man With The Magic Spectacles” is co-written by Martha Jette and Manohar Bahtia.

This fictional book tells the tale of James Ivory, a young nuclear scientist who is thrown into the dangerous world of international espionage when he invents a special pair of glasses. At the request of the United States president, James sets out to find and stop the notorious John Carlos, a madman with massive nuclear capabilities, who is intent on taking over the world.

Little does he know that this new adventure will turn out to be the worst – and the best – time of his life.

You can get a copy now for just \$14.50 through either <http://www.sagabooks.net> or <http://www.amazon.com>.

Or use this direct link to Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_ss_b/103-1879982-9655038?initialSearch=1&url=search-alias%3Dstripbooks&field-keywords=Martha+Jette&x=11&y=13

Martha Jette’s books are also available through Saga Books of Calgary, AB.

<http://www.sagabook.net>

<http://www.amazon.com>

<http://www.barnes&noble.com>

And a variety of other on-line stores

You Can Get PAID While Your List Builds Itself On Autopilot!
Viral Shock [ViralShock.com](http://www.viralshock.com)

<http://www.viralshock.com/members/teeka1234>

STORIES NEEDED

If you have had a paranormal experience or know someone who has please contact me, as I would love to hear about it and perhaps feature the story in an upcoming issue. Please write to: marthajette@gmail.com. Aside from ghosts and hauntings, I also accept stories on related subjects such as witches, UFOs and crypto zoology, ESP, angels, past lives and reincarnation. Please put "Story for Newsletter" in the subject line.

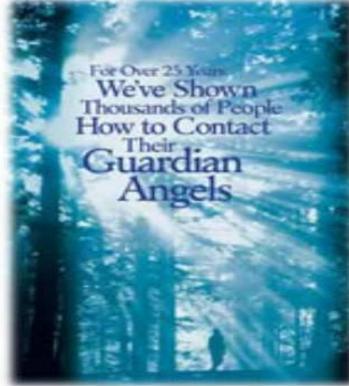
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<http://www.taketheinternetback.com/index.php?refId=10319>

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How To Contact Your Angels... in 60 Seconds or Less!

<http://www.innerexpansion.com/shop/shopaff.asp?affid=80>

This on-line program from *Inner Expansion Virtual University* shows you how to have a **two-way communication** with your own personal team of spiritual helpers. You will receive an individual chart called **My Personal Life Plan** that gives you a blueprint of everything you brought with you to be spiritually and materially successful in your life.

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