

How to write a book

Written by Julie Desmond

Tuesday, 03 September 2013 12:39

You wrote a book? People are amazed when they meet someone who has published a book. I was filled with admiration for my older brother when his first book showed up on our parents' coffee table. When I saw it in a bookstore, I thought, Wow! You. Wrote. A. Book. My brother was already smart, but writing a book was genius. Some studies indicate that publishing a book can increase a person's credibility two times more than earning an advanced degree. In my brother's field, law, credibility is critical to career success. Come to think of it, credibility is important in most fields. So everyone should publish books.

The challenge is in writing the book. What my brother learned during his book-making progress is that anyone can do it if they have the right tools. All a person needs is a pencil, paper, and a stapler.

Pick up a good, old fashioned pencil. The yellow kind with the tiny number two up there by the pink eraser. Sit down and put the eraser end in your mouth. Bite down on the pencil, somewhere just below the little metal rings, at about the number two. As you gently sink your teeth into the wood, think about what you would say if you didn't have that pencil between your teeth. Is it interesting? Is it smart? Is there a smattering of humor in there somewhere? If you removed the pencil from your mouth and said your thoughts out loud, would anyone care? Would anyone want to know more?

When your answer to those questions is yes, then you can put the pencil to its intended use. Start jotting notes on a piece of paper, in pictures, diagrams, an outline or word by word. When it's all down there on paper, wad up that first sheet and throw it across the room. Good writers fill wastebaskets. Great writers just toss everything on the floor.

Take a second sheet and start writing all over again. Keep writing and wadding and throwing until you have a meaningful outline for your book: a title, chapter names and summaries and a few notes about why you are qualified to write this thing. Every leader has a strategy; every coach has a game plan. You need one, too. When you are satisfied with your outline, post it where you can see it while you work.

Now grab the stapler and staple your backside to your chair in front of your computer because the only way your book is going to go from possible to published is through the hard work of editing, rewriting, more wadding and throwing and moving words around. A book should be enjoyable and easy to read, no matter what it's about. The best way to easy

reading is through hard writing. Don't quit now. Don't back off because you're a writer, not an editor. Dive into the craft of making your book. Keep going back; put in whatever time it takes.

Remember why you're writing a book: you know something the world needs to know, and you are the most qualified person to share that information. Someday, when your book is displayed proudly in your parents' living room or you see someone on the bus avidly reading the thing, you will know it was worth the hard work. All it took was a pencil, some paper and a stapler.

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