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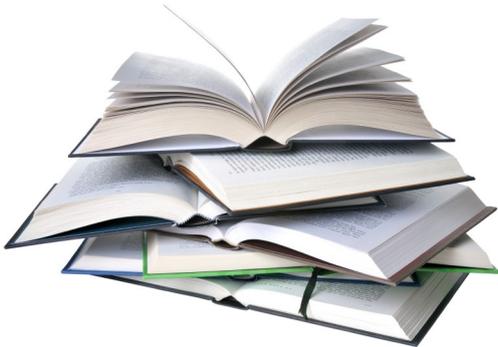
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About Joanna Penn and The Creative Penn

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Write a Book : 10 Reasons Why You Should Write Yours Now



Studies have shown that **82% of people want to write a book**, but few of these actually ever achieve that goal.

Here are 10 reasons you should overcome your blocks and actually write your book now.

1. **Fulfil a life goal.** If 82% of people want to write a book, how many of these consider it a life goal worth achieving? In these days of digital printing, print-on-demand and small print runs, you can achieve your goal of writing a book even with a small budget. So state your goal, and get writing!
2. **Status and confidence.** Authors are generally respected. People look at you differently when you say you are an author. This will also give you confidence. If you can write a book, and achieve your goal, then you have will have become a more interesting and accomplished person in the process.
3. **You don't have to do it alone.** If you want to write but you are unsure how to, there are plenty of blogs, courses and tips online to help you. If you have the raw material, you can find a freelancer to help you write or edit it. If you need a community of people to discuss your ideas with, there are groups online and locally you can join. Writers are everywhere. Start to share your ideas and you will find the support you need.
4. **Be immortal and leave a legacy.** A print book will contain your words after you are gone. The internet will become ever more cluttered, but print books are difficult to throw away so they carry on giving for a long time. With new technologies, you can even write your own family history and print a few copies for your family. It doesn't have to be a blockbuster novel.
5. **Learn about yourself and open the door to new opportunities.** Writing a book can reveal many things, and you can discover a new self in the process of writing. It can open your eyes to new ways you can improve your life and other people's. You may end up speaking about your book, appearing on TV and loving something you didn't even know about before. Take a chance!



6. **Say something important.** Maybe you are passionate about a cause, maybe you have a story that needs to be told. Your voice is important and your words can be heard if you get them out there. Write your story and inspire others. You don't know how your words can help other people in their own lives. As [Seth Godin](#) says, "The book you write will change your life".
7. **Start a new career.** If you have always wanted to be an author, then writing a book is the way to start this career. Many people talk about being "an author", but you do actually have to write something to become one! It may take a few years, but you can have a career as an author, or a freelance writer. You can also become a speaker about your book topic, or use your book as the basis to a consulting or training business.



[Image: Flickr Creative Commons Reini68](#)

8. **Grow your business.** If you market your books to a wider audience, it can be a means to attract new people to your business. They may read your book and then want your professional services to help them in their business. The book then functions as a giant business card.

9. **Demonstrate your expertise.** You may have spent long years gathering your expertise in a subject. You have notes and seminars, training programs and articles. You may even be a speaker on your subject. Having a book further elevates you in people's eyes so you are perceived as the expert.

10. **Use as a product to sell.** You can create another stream of income by writing a book and selling it, either on the internet or in bookstores. You can create spin off products relating to the book that your market may be interested in. This can also be used by fiction authors. For example, if you are an author of historical romance, you could also write a book/ebook on "How to write historical romance" that you can sell to other authors who want to write in that genre. People pay for information so what do you know that others want?

So pick up that pen, or sit down at the computer and get writing!

How to Find the Time to Write Your Book

Many people say they are waiting for the right time to write their book.

“If I take a year off I could write it” or “When the kids have left home and I have more time”



But by focusing on the time involved, you are creating a block in your mind. **Life happens, but you can still fulfil your dream of writing a book.**

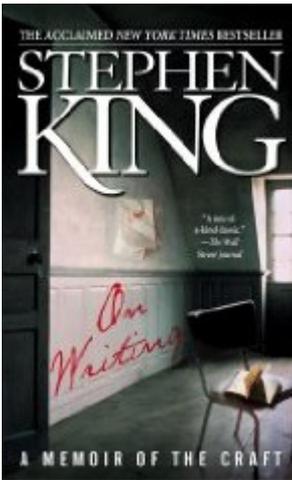
There is a myth of creativity, that you need some perfect space and perfect time to create, that you can't do it where you are. But what you write is real life, so you have to be in real life to create it in words.

That perfect time may never come, so just start where you are, one tiny bit at a time.

Only you know the detail of your life, so only you can make the decision on when to write. But you need to make a decision about when and where you will write. Here are some ideas.

- **Get up an hour earlier** and write before the household gets up
- **On the commute** (train/bus)
- On the commute while driving. Buy a **small voice recorder and speak ideas** into the machine.
- For 2 hours every evening, **instead of watching TV**
- **Saturday mornings** when the kids are doing sport
- **At weekends** when I am not doing household chores. I will get a cleaner to do the household cleaning and use that time to write.
- **Take a lunch hour at work** several times a week, find a room and write then.
- Organise working 4 days a week and **use the 5th for writing**

Find some way of earning money that is not selling your books until you make it, otherwise your writing becomes stressful and there is pressure to write the next piece that will make a few dollars, as opposed to focusing on your book every morning and night in between working.



In Stephen King's [On Writing](#) he talks of when he was working in a commercial laundry and his wife Tabby was working second shift at Dunkin Donuts while they tried to raise two kids. He wrote short stories when he could and sometimes got a cheque in the mail. But he persisted – and you can too.

(By the way, On Writing is an excellent book for learning more about how a successful writer does it!)

“Write at the edges of the day.”

Toni Morrison, author of “Beloved”

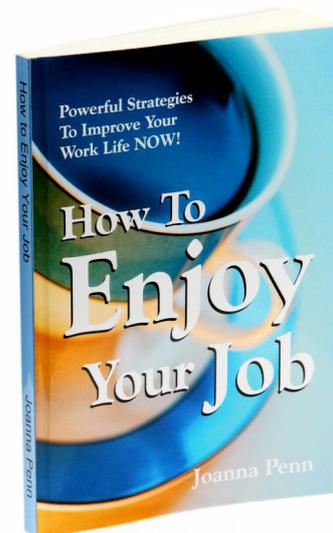
My personal story:

I once decided that I needed time to finally write the book that was on my heart. I was a miserable IT consultant, surrounded by other miserable people and wanted to change my life and help them too. I had some money from the sale of my house, so I took 3 months off and tried to write every day.

I had my desk all set up, even some ideas ready to go but it didn't work. After 3 months, I didn't have anything to show for my time off, and I went back to work disheartened at my inability to write. It was 4 years until I decided to try again because that book was still burning on my heart and I was still unhappy at work.

I finally wrote “[How to Enjoy Your Job](#)” in 9 months of evenings, weekends and days off. I also made a switch to 4 days per week and spent the other day researching and writing. Working as well enabled me to write without guilt, as well as providing me with inspiration for my material. It grounded me in real life, and also helped keep my focus on what I wanted to change with the book.

So you can find the time – you just need to re-prioritise!



Related articles:

- [What will you give up to write your book?](#)
- [Record your book:](#) 3 ways to speak your book instead of writing it

What I Wish I Had Known Before Writing My First Book



1. **Writing is a journey, but a book is a goal.** You can make it. You can hold your book in your hands. It is achievable. But it is not just about just writing, you actually have to set a target and then make it happen. Make your goal SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Based. So don't say "I will write my Lord of the Rings style trilogy epic in 6 weeks". That's not going to happen.

But you can say "I will write 1000 words per day on my <genre> novel and I will finish the first draft in 3 months". When you write that first book, you struggle because it seems endless...but you can make it!

2. **You need to know about publishing options before you finish your book.** I knew nothing about publishing while I was writing my book. I thought once I wrote it, I could just find a publisher. Imagine my surprise when I found out how long things take, and how small the industry is here in Australia compared to the US and UK! I also found out that I should have sent a query letter and a proposal as opposed to a completed book (for non-fiction at least). If you know your options, then you can set things in motion before you finish the manuscript. It will also keep momentum going on your road to publication by whatever means you want.

3. **Publishers want a "platform" and a marketing plan as part of your query/ submission.** If you are not an established author, this is even more important. I have lots about this on the blog – but I will particularly point you back to [How Gary Vaynerchuk](#) got a 10 book deal with Harper Collins.

4. **There are other methods to publication other than the traditional route.** Don't be discouraged and don't give up! Free your creativity! Use your energy to get your words out there! [Self-publish](#), publish an ebook, write a blog, write articles, do a podcast, use print-on-demand. There are so many options and adventures to be had with your creativity.

5. **Promotion can be done yourself, with time and no money.** Suck up all the knowledge you can and do it yourself. Don't have your finished book sitting sad at home – get it out there! You can even make it [onto Oprah with a self-published book](#) now. My story is not quite so 'big', but [I made it on Australian National TV](#) with my self-published book "How to Enjoy Your Job". I didn't have the budget for a publicist so I spent 9 months learning about marketing. A great investment! (I also share everything in the Author 2.0 course – [click here to learn more](#))

6. **Writing and publishing books is addictive!** You might think you will only write this one, but soon you have loads more ideas for more books! I have now written 3 non-fiction books, with my first novel currently underway.

Piracy vs. Obscurity. Which Is Worse For Authors?



I am an evangelist for digital publishing and getting your work out there on the internet. But I keep getting the same question over and over again when I talk to people about it.

“What if my work gets pirated?” [Kirk Biglione and I talked about this in the last podcast](#) as well, so here are some important points to remember:

Image: [Flickr CC Nick Humphries](#)

- **Yes, piracy happens.** People may steal your work and try to sell it, especially if you are not releasing your books in a format people want. iTunes and the music industry did not collapse when music went digital but those who didn't make their work available were pirated anyway. JK Rowling didn't release Harry Potter in ebook format so it was scanned and put online very quickly. If she had released an ebook version, there would have been less to pirate!
- **Most people prefer to buy ebooks rather than take stolen copies.** Your reading public are book lovers and voracious readers. Most people are law-abiding citizens. Some people will abuse the privilege but most are honest and want to compensate you. Trust your public.
- **Obscurity is a greater threat to authors than piracy.** This quote is from [Tim O'Reilly, from O'Reilly Media](#) and is absolutely true. It is better to be pirated and out there in the public getting some eyeballs than it is to have your unpirated, unseen manuscript sitting in a drawer where no one can find it or you.
- **Some authors are allowing piracy deliberately in order to promote book sales.** Paulo Coelho, author of many books including the worldwide hit “The Alchemist”, [leaked his ebooks in Russia on piracy networks](#) deliberately. His sales went from 1000 to over 1 million per year. [He says](#) “Don't be fooled by the publishers who say that piracy costs authors money”.
- **Piracy could be seen as marketing.** Many authors now give ebooks away for free and it is a recommended strategy to gain more readers for a print copy, or at least for a second book. In [this podcast, Kirk Biglione and Brian O'Leary](#) discuss the findings of a piracy investigation showing a correlation: “Sales grew after free content was distributed, whether it was pirated or deliberate”

However, if you find your work has been pirated, address it immediately. You can monitor your web presence through [Google Alerts](#) which will send you an email daily of any mentions of you on the web. Set up your name, your book names, your company name and anything else you want to monitor, and act decisively.

Related article: [Creative Commons: What is it and how can it benefit you?](#)

What Is NaNoWriMo And Why Is It So Good For Writers?



[National Novel Writing Month](#) is held every November. The aim for everyone participating is to **write a 50,000 word novel within the month** and even if you don't make that, it is a time of mutual support for writers. If you join the website, you can track your word count and be part of a global movement. There are groups that form to keep each other motivated, and many people complete their novels or at least get a good way through them.

There is [NaNo Q&A](#) as well as a [radio station](#), plus competitions between countries on word count. There is even a post-NaNo page "[I wrote my novel, now what?](#)"(that will be publishing then!)

It is such a great idea because **it gives you a short period in which to really focus on your Work In Progress**. Don't think it just has to be a novel either, you can write whatever your book project is. You can also connect with other authors who are writing in this time. Tweet with #NaNoWriMo or join the [Facebook page](#).

My commitment... what's yours? I have been pining for time to write my novel for months now. Ideas have been floating around but every weekend I get caught up with blog writing, tweeting, planning seminars and talks – and then there's the day job... you know what I'm talking about! So **I am going to scale back other activities in November** and concentrate on writing my novel. If I can get 50,000 words done on it, I'll be stoked. So I am committing to be a part of it.



Over my NaNoWriMo experience, I did regular videos with Lessons Learned about writing my first novel. Here are the links to the posts containing text and video.

- [Day 1 update and lessons learned](#)—Off to a great start
- [Day 5 Update](#)—My writing sucks!
- [Day 11](#)—losing track of my characters
- [Day 18](#)—I moved house and am behind, but it's a thriller
- [Day 26](#)—Made the mistake of editing whilst writing
- [NaNo Roundup post](#)—20,033 words and feeling like a winner!

See you for NaNoWriMo next year?

<http://www.TheCreativePenn.com>

How to Publish Your Book on Amazon.com for Free

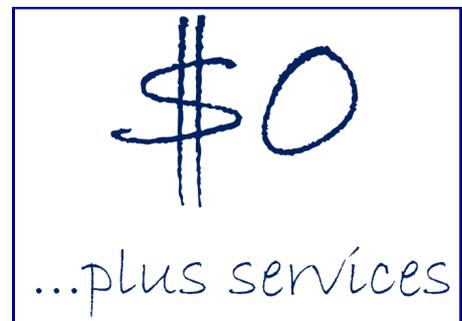


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If you are a published author with a contract, then your publisher will need to arrange distribution on Amazon. But if you are a self-published author and you own the rights to the material, it is within your control and easier than you think. If I can do it, so can you!

The key is to use a service that you can load your book onto easily and that has distribution with Amazon.com and other online bookstores. These services use **print-on-demand** technology, which means the book is printed when ordered and shipped straight to the customer.

The important thing is that **you can do it for free, but you can also pay extra for services**. These services may include cover design or marketing packages. These are assisted publishing services, which can range all the way to “vanity publishing” sites which will do all the work for you but will cost you \$thousands.



The process works as follows for all the major self-publishing sites:

1. **Upload manuscript.** Take your final edited manuscript in Word/PDF format and load it onto the website of the service you choose. You also load the front and back cover as pictures. Some sites have specific software so you can format the book, for example, picture based books.
2. **Create associated information page.** You write your blurb text, anything you want added to the website page for your book and decide your price. The publishing site will add their commission (because you pay nothing up front) and the total price is calculated.
3. **Order and Review.** You will then need to order one of your own books to sign off that you are happy with the final product. Make any changes and then authorize distribution. You can order copies of your own book for the printing price and only order one at a time if you like. This saves a huge amount of money for upfront printing.
4. **Distribution.** Once approved, the files are distributed to the electronic bookstores including Amazon.com. You will see them within a few days/weeks depending on the service.

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5. **Build your Amazon site.** You will need to make adjustments to your Amazon site. Upload images and get testimonials as well as completing your Author Profile. You can then promote the book and drive people it online. You may also want to register for the Amazon Affiliates program which pays you a % of sales you recommend.

6. **People buy the book from the site.** When the book is ordered, the request goes to the publishing service who print it and ship it to Amazon who ship it to the customer. It does take a few extra days but it means you don't have to print in advance or store books which saves you money.

7. **Income.** You get paid your sales income monthly from the service you publish with. If you are not in the US, you can use Paypal.com for payments. This is essentially a form of passive income after the book is on sale, because the money comes in monthly for no additional work.

These companies are all recommended for self-publishing for little cost. All use Print-on-Demand technology.



Use [Lightning Source](#) if you want to publish multiple books as a pure self-publisher and you don't require additional services. Great for a small press.



Amazon's own self-publishing platform, [CreateSpace](#) offers basic packages plus full services for editing, cover design, distribution and promotion. Can also be used for music and movie distribution.



Similar to CreateSpace with same functionality. Nice cover design wizard for ease of use. I have used [Lulu.com](#) for my books so far and have found them easy to use .



[Blurb](#) is particularly good for photobooks and you can load a fully formatted PDF—great for artists and photographers.

Self-Publishing Banishes the Fear of Writing



Freedom Soaring

Image Credit: [Flickr Creative Commons ArchanaR Freedom](#)

Warning: Personal, sentimental post!

In the last few weeks, I have been considering writing fiction. Shock horror! **For a non-fiction author, this feels like an almighty shift within me.** I wanted to share this change with you, because I think many writers feel the same way.

I didn't write a book for many years because I was afraid. **Fear of rejection. Fear of failure.** The usual reasons. I didn't think I wrote well enough. Why would anyone want to read what I wrote anyway.... You know what I mean!

I wrote my first book because it became **a burning need to change my own life.** [I self-published](#) to get the message out there regardless of what any establishment thought. I wrote the next 2 books and started [TheCreativePenn](#) blog because I wanted to share how amazing the world is for authors now, and communicate how other people can achieve their book-dreams also.

It has been 14 months since I self-published my first book, and I am about to get the 2nd and 3rd onto Amazon.com. Wow! I couldn't write for over 20 years because I was afraid of failing. Now I am writing every day, and desperate to find more time to write other things! OK, so I am not a best-selling author (yet!). But my books help people, I am useful and that is my own success. I get emails from people who like what I write, comments on the blog and positive tweets. This is much more feedback that I ever got from my own silent diaries, full of unrequited writing.

Self-publishing has liberated me from fear because it enables me to reach people on my own terms. I know that on the internet people will find me who want to read what I write. I am also inspired by the podcasters I am meeting online and listening to: [JC Hutchins](#), [Seth Harwood](#), [Pip Ballantine](#) and [Tee Morris](#). I am loving their stories and their success with reaching out across the world. They challenge me to write and to express as well.

I truly believe that the experience of self-publishing has banished my fear of writing. It has not made me a millionaire in money, but I am all the richer for the experience. By releasing the fear and enabling my first book, it paved the way for the next 2, and who knows how many more. I am 34 right now. Prolific writers get through at least 1 per year, so that makes a good 60 more before I pop off!

To those readers thinking about writing a book – do it now. Self-publish it and get over your fear. Your next book will be the better for you getting the first out of the way.

What is Print-on-Demand and Why is it so Important?



Print-on-demand publishing is becoming more common especially in the self-publishing world, for small presses and academic textbooks.

Books are printed individually when there is an order placed for them instead of in bulk upfront. A print-on-demand publisher will have digital files of your manuscript and cover, and they will just print the book out when it is ordered and ship it to the customer.

The benefits of this are:

- There are **no upfront printing costs** for books. They are just printed when ordered. This means a lower cost of entry and you get paid after the books are sold.
- **No stock is held** so there are no holding/storage costs, and for self-publishers, no depressing pile of books in the corner of your living room
- Your book can be **ready for sale immediately anywhere in the world** on completion and upload of the manuscript. You don't have to ship and store books at various locations. You can also publish internationally e.g. have a POD site in India and US to serve different markets.
- There is the **ability to change the text** and publish changes more quickly. This is particularly useful for textbooks that are updated regularly.
- It is more **environmentally friendly** as there are only print and shipping costs for actual sales. No huge print runs so no pulping of leftover books.

The negatives for print-on-demand are:

There are **lower profits per book as printing costs are higher** than bulk printing, but the benefits of not spending the money up front often outweigh this. **You will also need a small print run** if you want to have your book in physical bookstores as they can't take POD. For speaking and back of the room sales, you can order a small print run from the POD printer, but it may be too pricey for full distribution needs.

Related articles:

- [Print on demand will save you money](#)
- [Print on demand changed my life! \(Video\)](#)

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When Is The Tipping Point For An Author To Go Digital?



[Image: Flickr CC Kosabe](#)

An article recently examined whether [The Tipping Point has come for the publishing industry](#).

It suggests that 2009 is the year that the ebook finally changes the publishing industry to a digital model, helped along by the global financial crisis cutting costs and jobs. When the #1 bookseller Amazon.com acquired the #1 iPhone e-reading application Stanza, it brought ebook readership to the forefront of [news and blog talk](#).

There are many within the book/publishing/writing industry who have already embraced the changes and opportunities digital publishing brings. But there are many more who still talk about “the smell of a new book”, who chase the end of the rainbow for the traditional publishing deal and reject self-publishing as beneath them.

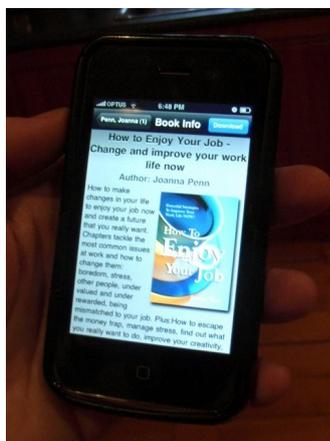
So when does the tipping point come for an individual author to go digital?

For me, it was in April 2008. I had written my first book and (briefly) tried to get a publishing deal. It was all too slow and being a first time author, [I decided to self-publish anyway](#). Within a few months I had learnt all about the other options available to me including the digital options that are free or cheap and that allow me to have a printed book or a digital product online.

- **With Lulu.com** (and many of the other self-pub services) I could load a Word document for free and see my book on Amazon.com within a few weeks. I also now sell my books in India with a similar service, [Pothei.com](#).
- **With print-on-demand**, I can sell my books in the US and other countries while holding NO stock. I don't have to pay thousands for up-front printing. I just load my files and when someone orders, they print it and ship to the customer. No stock, no up-front costs. This still produces a printed book so it is brilliant for the author starting with little budget.
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- With **free blog and audio software** like [Wordpress](#) and [Audacity](#), as well as social networking, I can reach more of the book buying public with articles and audios. I can meet people in multi-media!

Have you embraced the digital opportunities for authors yet?

How to Publish an Ebook for Multiple Platforms Using Smashwords.com



Ebooks have taken off in 2009. With more ebook readers being launched weekly, mobile phones with ebook apps and the publishing world in a spin, you need to jump on the wave!

If you have the digital rights to your book, or if you have something you would like to self-publish, you can publish it as an ebook in a few hours and have it for sale today! It might not make you a millionaire, but you will be available on another platform, accessible globally, and all for free!

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To start the [Smashwords](#) publishing process, register for an account, and just follow the instructions.

Related article: [Update on the International Amazon Kindle and what it means for authors](#)

What is an “Author Platform” and Why Do You Need One Now?



The phrase “author platform” has started to become more of a catchphrase in the publishing and book world, so I thought I would explain it if anyone is confused.

The **author platform** is how you are currently reaching an audience of book-buying people, or how you plan to do so. It is your influence, your ability to sell to your market. It is your multi-faceted book marketing machine!

Here are some examples:

- **Are you already famous?** Maybe just in your niche but are you already a household name because of something? If yes, you have a platform and will likely get a book deal. Think Paris Hilton or George W. Bush – they don’t need to know how to write to get published! I suspect this category does not include anyone reading this blog!
- Do you already have a **speaking platform**? Can you get audiences of several thousand to pay to come and see you?
- Do you already have an **existing business** with clients and customers who will buy your book?
- Do you have a **popular blog or website** that reaches thousands of people? Think [Gary Vaynerchuk](#) and Christian Lander’s “Stuff White People Like”.
- **How big is your email list** of people who subscribe to your newsletters or ezines?
- Do you have a **huge podcasting audience** who are raving fans and want to buy your books? Think Scott Sigler and JC Hutchins.
- Can you develop a **massive following using web 2.0 technologies**? Think Tim Ferriss who used the leverage of bloggers to promote “The Four Hour Work Week” into a huge hit.
- Do you have hundreds of thousands of **followers on Twitter, Facebook or mySpace**? Can you convert those into book buying fans?
- Have you already had a **self-publishing hit book** that you have successfully marketed yourself? Think Lisa Genova’s ‘Still Alice’ and Christopher Paolini ‘Eragon’.

If you don't have any of these right now, never fear. Most of these people took time to build their platforms. We all start somewhere!



Why do you need an author platform?

If you want to get a publishing deal, **you need a platform to prove your books will sell**. Many agents/publishers will not even consider you if you don't have a platform already. If you don't believe me, check out [this post](#) by literary agent Rachelle Gardner who says “*you really need to show that you are willing and able to put the time and effort into marketing yourself and building a readership online*”.

If you are a self-published author, you need a platform to sell your books.

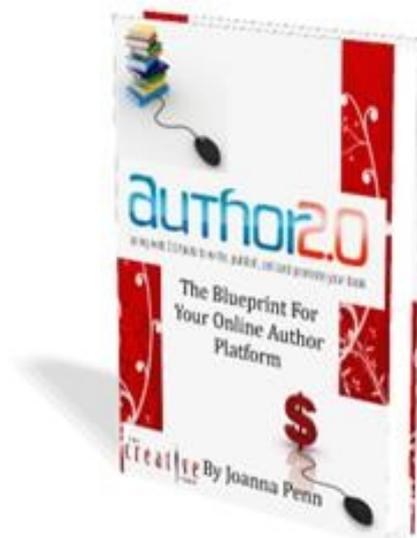
If you haven't written a book yet, you need to start building your platform so you have one when your book is ready.

Book-selling is a business for publisher and author alike. We all need to eat! Some of us would like to eat really excellent food at superb seafood restaurants, and not just mince and beans. **So selling books is important to us all**. There are thousands of books published every month. There are millions of blogs online. What makes you stand ahead of the pack? Why will people buy your book?

How can you build your author platform?

So many ways! They all take some time and effort. There is no magic bullet. You will get there, but only if you get started!

Start with the free [Author 2.0 Blueprint](#) which will give you lots of ideas!



<http://www.TheCreativePenn.com>

How to Discover and Build Your Author Brand



If you think branding is a business marketing term and doesn't apply to authors, it's time to change your mind!

The internet is made up of many tiny niches and websites, blogs and **books relate to those markets**. People find those sites by searching for specific words and phrases based on what they are interested in. Your author website, or your book, can be found in this way too.

Branding is important because it enables people to find you, and when they find you, they might just buy your book. So who are you online? Which niche do you fit into? How do people find you?

Creating an [author platform](#) is vital for a new author's success, and creating a brand is the basis for the platform. But you need to know what you are creating before you start!

To decide on your brand, answer the following questions:

- How do you want to be known? What **words** do you want people to associate with you?
- What are your **goals** for the next 3 years? What words are associated with that?
- Will your books be in a particular **genre**?
- Who do you admire and want to emulate in writing and also as a brand? Find their websites and keep screen-prints of what you like and don't like. Use them as a **model** (but obviously no plagiarism!). If you have a website already, enter it into [Google Keyword tool](#). Are you happy with the **keywords** associated with your site? Do you need to change your focus?
- What **images** do you want associated with you and your brand?

You also need to know **what you want for your future**, because if you can't see the brand extending over multiple books you have hard work ahead! I made this mistake after my first book "[How To Enjoy Your Job](#)" when I branded myself with "career change" and a business image. I quickly realised that I didn't want to speak or write on this topic anymore and started [The Creative Penn](#), a new brand, from scratch. I brainstormed ideas and settled on using my own name and the image of a pen with creativity. You can still keep more than 1 niche/brand, but be aware of the effort involved!

Having a brand doesn't mean you need an expensive logo or unique design (although you can do these things). It means you have an image and words associated with you in people's minds. You resonate with something to your fans and customers. People will form these opinions themselves, but you can control this if you build a brand.

Building Your Brand

Once you have decided what you want your brand to be, then you need to ensure you stay on message, and make sure people don't get confused when they arrive at your site. For example, if you write a horror book, people will not expect pink teddy bears and smiley faces on your site. If you write romance, have a site that reflects that.



Image: Flickr CC Karola

* **Blog and network on topic and within your brand niche.** For example, on The Creative Penn.com I will not talk about my day job, I won't give you cooking or family advice. I also won't review a sci-fi book. I will stay within the bounds of The Creative Penn brand because that is what you expect (and want) from this blog. I will also only tweet the same topics as it fits with my brand.



The internet is segmented into niches.

Image: Flickr CC LePiafGeo

* **Be consistent.** Try using the same photo across multiple social networks so people recognise you. Put your picture on your key material because you want people to connect with you personally, not just your book. Try not to jump around too much with your brand ideas. Think about it, then focus your energy on developing that brand consistently. The internet compounds your efforts, so the longer you are in the game, the more effective you will be.

* **Find others in your brand niche.** Connect with likeminded people and follow similar blogs. Get to know who makes an impact in your area and read what they are doing. Connect with them on Twitter if you can. Perhaps interview them for a podcast? Google them and see where they have been posting or appearing. Do they have video or audio? Which social networks do they use? Where do they sell books? From there you will also find people you can network with and who may start following your blog.



I speak on this topic and my slidepacks are loaded onto Scribd.com.

[Click here for the Digital Marketing and Branding presentation.](#)

<http://www.TheCreativePenn.com>

Award Winning Book Marketing Plan



Having your own book is fantastic – but books don't sell themselves. You need to be marketing and promoting your book whether you are a self-published author, or if you have a contract.

Marketing is your money tree – you need to put effort in for it to grow!

I have been an avid student of marketing and sales for the last year, reading countless books and listening to audio programs to ensure I knew what I was doing. I have incorporated much of what I have learned into this blog. At the beginning of 2009, I won an [Award for the Best Marketing Plan for self-published books](#) which included an overview of all the different types of things you can do to market your book. As this site is all about author education, I am sharing it with you – just right click to download from the link below.

[Click here for the Award Winning Marketing Plan](#)

It includes ideas in the categories of PR, press releases, TV, speaking, networking, book launches, internet promotion, articles, advertising, joint ventures, corporate sales. It doesn't include Twitter as it was done before I joined up—now I would consider Twitter to be a very important part of a marketing plan.

For more on book marketing plans, check out the free audio with Dana Lynn Smith, the [Book Marketing Maven](#).

[Click here for download of .mp3 file or listen online.](#)

Includes:

- What you should include in a book marketing plan
- Advice for authors who are unsure about marketing
- Top tips for doing a marketing plan for publishers
- How to combine social networking with selling

And much more!



Related articles:

- [Branding and marketing in the digital economy](#)
- [Book promotion: 5 top tips from being on TV](#)
- [Press releases: Top tips and a success story](#)

Blogs: 10 Reasons Authors Should Have One



Blogging is a few years old now, but mainly in tech and online marketing industries. It is now taking off in publishing and writing, as authors come to understand the power of blogging.

If you don't have a blog yet, here's why you need to get blogging now!

[Image: Flickr CC Tarop](#)

1. **People can find you and your books on the internet.** Google loves blogs and regular content updates. Blog software allows you to update your blog whenever you like, creating extra pages for your website. These are indexed and over time you can build up a great internet presence so people can find you when searching.

2. **Connect with like-minded people.** Being a blogger opens up a new world of networking with like-minded bloggers. You can connect with other authors who blog, or literary agents, publishers and communities all over the world. There is definitely a mutual respect and trust amongst the blogging community.

3. **Two way interaction and feedback with readers.** You can allow comments on your blog so people can connect with you directly by leaving a message. You can also comment on other blogs. This allows an interaction that cannot be achieved by a static website or email alone. As you develop as a writer, this interaction increases and as your books are published, you will hear from fans too.

4. **Marketing you as an author.** You can add all sorts of information about yourself at your blog, including photos, videos and examples of your work. You can list your publishing credits, your ebooks, articles, media appearances and anything else you want to use to market yourself as an author.

5. **Book promotion.** Have a special page for your book where you can add photos, [your book trailer](#), downloads of chapters and any other information on your book. You can do special blog posts, for example, an interview with you talking about your book, or a giveaway.

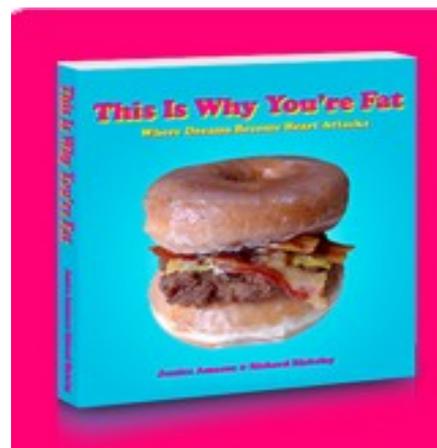


<http://www.TheCreativePenn.com>

6. **Online sales channel.** You can use your blog as a place to sell your books and services. If you integrate with a [shopping cart](#) or use a service like [Smashwords](#) or [Clickbank](#), you can add links for these Buy Now pages.

7. **Writing practice.** Blogging is a very dynamic way of writing. Sometimes you will get an idea and want to blog on it immediately. You will do some research, try to write something catchy or useful, and then post it all very quickly. Sometimes you might spend a lot longer on one piece, but generally you write between 500-800 words and get it out there. If you get “bloggers block”, then chances are you are not interested enough in the material to sustain a blog on it, so move on!

8. **Blog your book.** You can use your book as the key material for your blog. Take excerpts and use them as posts, and then spin off from those posts into new things. This will get you traffic related to your topic/book subject so make sure you have a sales page that allows people to buy your book. On the flipside, there are blogs that have been turned into books when they have achieved sales success. Examples include: “[Stuff White People Like](#)” and “[This is why you're fat](#)”.



9. **Build an audience.** People can subscribe to your blog through an RSS feed which means you can build a following who read your work. You can build relationships with these people and get direct feedback through comments and seeing how people respond to your posts. If you build a loyal following, they are also more likely to buy your books as they come out.

10. **Build your platform.** Publishers these days want a “platform” meaning that you have a following, people who will buy your books. If you are self-published, this is even more important as you will need to sell it yourself. Blogging enables you to build this platform in terms of a body of work, an online presence, knowledge of the industry and marketing as well as hopefully some people who are interested in what you have to say.



Related articles:

- [How to set up your own blog](#)
- [Top 10 tips for effective blogging for authors](#)
- Audio: [Blogging Basics for Authors](#) with Joel Williams, BlogTechGuy
- [Blogging: Learn from an expert](#)

Twitter: What Is It And Why Should Authors Use It?

You have probably heard of Twitter by now. [Time Magazine said in June 2009](#) that it will change the way we live , and certainly it is changing the way people communicate and do business.



If you don't know, [Twitter](#) is a social networking tool based on regular updates of 140 characters only. This means you have to be succinct and creative in what you put out there if you want to catch people's attention.

You **set up a basic profile**, then “follow” people and can see what they post. People follow you and can see what you post. You can find people you might be interested in following at [Twellow](#) (Yellow Pages for Twitter) or [WeFollow](#) . You can also search for a topic on [search.twitter.com](#).

Most people use a Twitter client to manage their tweets instead of the homepage. I use [Tweetdeck](#) on my PC and [Tweetie](#) on my iPhone, but there are lots to choose from. Tweetdeck also has a useful URL shortening tool, so you can paste in a really long link and it shortens it for you. (You can also change the colours if you don't like them). You can also schedule your tweets with [TweetLater](#) which means you can cover multiple time zones.

People post some very interesting things: news items, links to great sites, promotional info, personal information. You can respond directly to that person – yes, even if they are “famous” ! This can potentially get you noticed by them. You can “re-tweet” other people's posts i.e. pass them on if it is something interesting. You can ask questions and respond immediately to other people you have connected with, even if they are across the world. It is not a waste of time if you use it effectively. It's **word of mouth, sharing, collaboration, crowd-sourcing and relationship building** all in one site.

Why should authors use Twitter?

* **Online knowledge and influence.** Millions of people belong to Twitter including some of the most influential people online today. If you want to be an author who sells books, you need to be where the action is and learn from authors already doing it e.g. [@neilhimsel](#)



neilhimsel

Name Neil Gaiman

1,358,127
followers

* You can **network with some great people** you might never have met otherwise.

* You can **promote yourself**. You shouldn't promote all the time but you can add links to your blog posts, your website or notices of your appearances. People will naturally go to your site if they like what you are saying, so it becomes part of an integrated online marketing strategy.



Connect with me on Twitter [@thecreativepenn](#)

Authors Should Podcast: 5 Reasons You Should Start Now



I have recently talked to a few podcasters who have achieved print publishing success after podcasting their novels.

Podcasting has enabled them to build a fan base of raving fans which has persuaded publishers of their potential. Click on the links to listen/download the fantastic interviews with [J.C. Hutchins](#) , [Seth Harwood](#) , [Tee Morris](#), [Mur Lafferty](#) and [Pip Ballantine](#).

Podcasts are serialised audio distributed via a feed so people can subscribe in iTunes or other feed readers. You can podcast your own book, or use an interview or talk-show format. Here is my [podcast page](#) so you can see how to subscribe. Here are 5 reasons authors should podcast.

1. **Get your work out there.** Podcasting is a brilliant way for you to have your work out in the public. You will find listeners who love your work and can connect with a whole load of authors who also podcast.
2. **2. Meet your audience where they are.** Audio is a fantastic medium for communication. How many people do you see listening to iPods on public transport? How many people drive to work and can't read? People like to consume information and stories in audio format. It is now even easier to do this thanks to iTunes and other podcast catchers. How many more people could you reach if you have your book/writing in podcast as well as print format?
3. **Build your platform for free.** All authors want to sell books, regardless of whether they are traditionally or self-published. Publishers also want to sell books. Therefore, platform building is important to everyone! Podcasting is a free medium you can use to build your platform even further. People will connect with your voice and you may even end up getting a publishing deal off the back of the platform you build (as per the authors mentioned above!)
4. **Improve your work and your performance.** When you read your book out loud, several things will happen. You will hate your own voice. You will see flaws in your writing. You will play around with character voices (for fiction). You will decide to change things to suit a vocal performance. You will improve! This is great practice for when you are speaking at some amazing book festival and asked to read a few paragraphs of your book!
5. **Fun!** Podcasting is actually great fun. There are only some basic things you need to know and easy software to use. You can use it as a way to connect with people who you want to talk to. I love my podcast interviews because I get to talk to very cool people! People also want to talk to you because you are promoting them, so it helps everybody!

Check out [Podiobooks.com](#) for free podcast novels.

Would You Rather Be A Best-Selling Author Or A Best Writing Author?



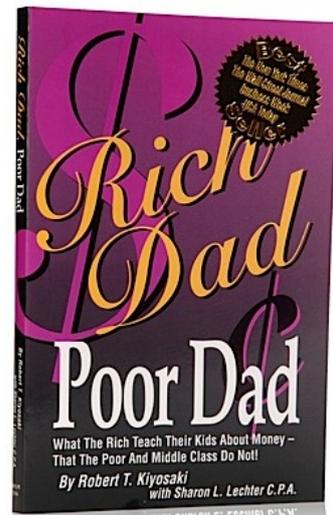
Dan Brown's new book [“The Lost Symbol”](#) was published in September to blockbuster sales. At the Sydney Writers Festival earlier this year, it was pointed out that [literary fiction doesn't sell](#) and one of the panel asked authors to 'please write more books that sell'. After all, it will help you as an author as well as the suffering publishing industry!

So what do we aim for as authors? On the one hand we want to win prizes, be literary geniuses and praised for our glorious ability with words. On the other hand, we want to make money! (after all, most literary prizes are very small!)

Here are some examples of best-selling authors that cannot be considered “literature”, but are definitely books that are popular and have touched the hearts of millions (and made a lot of money for their authors and publishing houses).

Dan Brown “The Da Vinci Code” has sold more than 80 million copies. The movie made more than \$700 million at the box office. I have read “The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail”, the non-fiction book that the ideas came from, as well as perhaps the literary equivalent Umberto Eco's “Foucault's Pendulum”. I enjoyed both other books, but Dan's comes out tops in terms of popular appeal!

[Robert Kiyosaki](#) with **The Rich Dad series of books**, which have sold over 27 million copies in 109 countries. Robert is a multi-millionaire, and says himself “I am a bestselling author, not a best writing author”.



JK Rowling of Harry Potter fame is constantly criticised by literature fans especially for her [use of adverbs](#). But that hasn't stopped her from becoming [the first ever billionaire author](#) and loved by millions around the world.

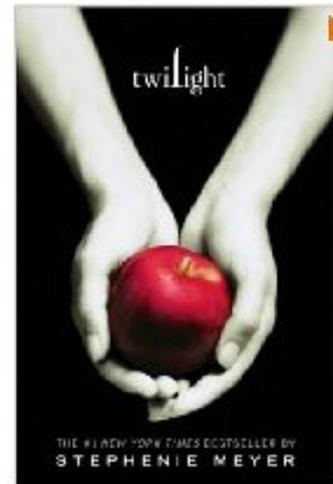


The Chicken Soup for the Soul series by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen is just a bunch of stories told by real people in simple language. Those simple stories have touched hearts in [40 countries and sold over 112 million copies](#), as well as developing into a self-development franchise model.

Stephenie Meyer with the Twilight series. Stephenie is even [criticised by Stephen King](#) on her writing ability, but that hasn't stopped her books [selling over 30 million copies](#), as well as the movie rights and associated merchandise.

There are many literature prizes. The Man Booker is just one of them that I follow. I found [this excerpt on the impact of winning the Booker Prize](#) on Yann Martel, author of "The Life of Pi" (which is a great book!).

"...after the announcement of the Booker win, Life of Pi sold 7,150 copies in the UK, making it the bestselling hardback fiction that week.... D.B.C Pierre "Vernon God Little" went from a sale of 373 copies to 7,977 in the week after"



Clearly, literary fiction sells less than mass market popular fiction.

Now, I love books of all kinds. I have a lot of literary fiction, stacks of non fiction and many popular fiction novels (although those often get recycled through second-hand bookshops!) I go to Writers Festivals, I have taken writing courses. I write journals and poetry and have 3 non-fiction books to my name. I have always wanted to win the Booker Prize because of the prestige!

But I have decided that I want to be a best-selling author, NOT a best-writing author lauded by lit fic critics! I want to write well, but not be classed as literature. I want to be popular, not literary.

How about you? Would you rather be a best-selling author or a best writing author?

Related articles:

- [Dan Brown: How does he do it?](#)
- [Lessons Learned from Dan Brown: The Lost Symbol](#)
- [Why authors should write a series: Lessons learned from Patricia Cornwell](#)
- [Thriller novels: Lessons learned from Matthew Reilly](#)
- [Audio: Writing thriller novels with JC Hutchins, author of 7th Son](#)

How To Feature On The Most Influential Websites In The World

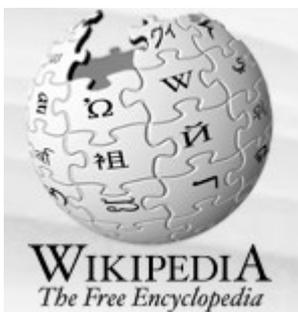


Being a writer is a business. If you write books or articles, you want people to read them and preferably pay you for it. It would be fantastic if lots of people paid you for writing because then you'd be Stephenie Meyer, but we've all got to start somewhere!

So how do you get readers? One way is to cultivate small groups on niche websites, speak in person, communicate with individuals on social networks and maintain your own quality blog and web presence. All this is definitely important!

But you must also go where the people are. If you have a presence on the most important sites on the internet, more people will find you. The [current list of most influential sites](#) in the world from Read, Write, Web include: Wikipedia, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Google, MySpace, Facebook, Apple.

How do you get on these sites? The big guns on the internet have been around for years or are celebrities. It's taken me around 18 months to build a small, but growing, online presence, so don't expect to get there overnight. But here are some useful posts to read around why and how you can use these influential sites. The brilliant thing is – they are all free!



Wikipedia: Everyone is using Wikipedia now for online research. It has been shown to be as [correct as the Encyclopedia Britannica](#), and a recent [interview with Jimmy Wales, the founder, discusses accuracy](#). Here is a useful article [on writing effectively for Wikipedia](#). I am in the process of trying to write my own Wikipedia page so I'll do a post on this when I have learnt it myself!

Next, the social networking sites. If you doubt social media at all, read this first => [Writers need social media, and social media needs writers](#)



YouTube.com: Now you can get a cheap Flipcam or iPod Nano with video, it is easy to get on YouTube. You can also use your webcam for a static picture, or build your own video using stills and music. Here's [a post on how to build your own Book Trailer](#) using free software MovieMaker. I have been doing a [series of videos on my NaNoWriMo experience](#) which have just been one take with my iPod Nano. And of course, the poster boy for video is Gary Vaynerchuk, [whose 10 book deal for Harper Collins I discuss here](#). Here's [my YouTube channel](#) if you want to connect.



Flickr.com is a brilliant site for photos that I mainly use for [Creative Commons](#) photos for this blog, and my ebooks. However, it is also picked up in search engines and people go looking for photos there for other projects.

I have had several of my photos featured in various online articles, which have all been linked back to my site. So it also works as a traffic tool. It is definitely worth creating a page and loading some photos on it, even if it is just your book covers, your promo photos and media appearances. [Here's my Flickr site.](#)

Twitter.com. You may have noticed I love Twitter. It is my primary social network of choice and I am very active on it [@thecreativepenn](#). There's a good reason too – it is HUGELY popular now and brings traffic to my site as well as enabling some fantastic online relationships. If you don't know anything about Twitter yet, [read this article first](#). Then go ahead and join up!



Google.com People use Google to find things by searching. If you want people to find you by searching, you need to have a blog that is regularly updated on your niche topic. Here's [how to setup a blog](#), and [here's 10 tips for effective blogging for authors](#).

Facebook: [How authors can use it for book promotion](#). You can also join [The Creative Penn fan page](#) if you want to connect with some more people!



Apple.com. You can get into the Apple Store in a few ways.



a) Create your own podcast and syndicate the feed to iTunes. Here's [5 Steps to Make Your Own Author Podcast](#). You can [Subscribe to The Creative Penn podcast here on iTunes](#).

b) Create your book as an iPhone app. [Al Katkowsky did this – here's an interview with him](#). Here's an article with [13 Tools for Building Your Own iPhone App](#). This is definitely on my list for 2010 so I'll post a how-to article when I have done it!

That may all be a little overwhelming, but the point is that you can be on the top influential websites in the world. There are people there and you need to be part of the conversation. These are all key aspects of [author platform building](#) which is what publishers want these days, so you just need to put some time in and it will start to make an impact.

Image Credits: [Tome Reader by Ozyman](#), [Apple by Vascellari](#), [Facebook by AJC1](#), [Wikipedia and Google by aahyeah](#),

Related article: [Overwhelmed Online? 3 Steps to Start Your Author Platform Building](#)

Book Trailers: 11 Steps to Make Your Own



Book trailers are videos posted online and distributed via video networking sites like YouTube. These can be big budget blockbuster movie clips, or budget MovieMaker slides to music. You can make it an advert or a social media fun clip that people want to watch.

It can be a human interest story made more like a documentary. It can be a cartoon. Essentially, it is anything you want it to be. Anything that catches people's attention.

You can get a [professional](#) to make you one or you can make your own for little or no money. [I made this one with Windows Movie Maker](#) (which is on on most PCs). It took me several hours but was essentially free, and you don't have to be too techy to make one too.

1. Research other book trailers that are similar to what you would like to do. Just search for book trailers on [YouTube](#). decide what you like and don't like (and what is within your capacity and budget)

2. Write a brief script for the trailer so you can get it straight in your head and understand what images and text you will need (I just did this on Microsoft Word)

3. Find and download images to match your words. You can use your own or get free ones online by googling "royalty free photo". I use [Flickr Creative Commons](#) or [iStockPhoto](#) which I find easy to use with a variety of pictures (I did pay a small amount for some photos). You can also use movie clips.

4. Import the pictures into Windows MovieMaker (File -> Import Media)

5. Order the pictures. Drag them into the movie bar at the bottom of the screen in the order you want. Right click and Cut to remove again. Basic drag and drop functionality. Remember to save regularly!

6. Add script by clicking on the picture in the movie bar and then clicking Edit -> Titles and Credits. You can add text in various styles, colours and transition effects here. You can add text before, on top of or after your pictures.

7. Edit. Once you have got the basic pictures and text setup, see how long your movie is. Most book trailers are no longer than 1 minute 30 seconds. Edit as necessary by clicking and dragging the size of the boxes to shorten the time frame they show on the screen.

8. Find music to match the length of your movie (or cut to fit). I used SoundSnap.com but you can google “royalty free music” to find other sites. I searched on audio length within classical music and listened to a few before choosing.

9. Check you are happy with everything and then Publish your movie to your computer.

10. Find tags. Now you have a file you can publish it to the internet movie sites to get some viewers. You need to know what tags you want to add to your video when you upload it, so I suggest you also research what people are searching on in your genre. I use Google Keyword Search which has a number of tools and recommended related words.

11. Upload your video to appropriate sites. I have loaded mine to YouTube and Google Video so far. It takes some time per site, unless you use a video submission site like TubeMogul. You can submit manually to sites like Revver, MySpaceTV, Metacafe, Yahoo Video, Book Trailers, AuthorsDen. No doubt there are many more!

Final Step: Promote your video! Remember to also use the embed links to post to your own website, blog and social networking sites, or the URL to share the link.



NaNoWriMo Final Video on Lessons Learned and How The Novel Will Progress in 2010

Annotations Editor

thecreativepenn
December 02, 2009
(more info)

Subscribe

Joanna Penn from <http://www.TheCreativePenn.com> talks about not winning NaNoWriMo but still being very happy with progress, as well as lessons learned about outlining... and more

URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fK6gxcz0;>

Embed `<object width="425" height="344"><param`

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Connect with me on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/thecreativepenn>

<http://www.TheCreativePenn.com>

The Author 2.0 Model



Your Internet Hub – Blog/Website

The Free Line

WRITE AND CREATE

Writing 2.0

Cross-media
Mobile
Flash
Collaboration
Blog
Wiki

SELL

Author Entrepreneur

Books
Products
Speaking
Affiliate
Commission
Freelance

PUBLISH

Self-Publishing

Print on Demand

Ebooks



7 Weekly Tasks For Writers



There are so many things we are meant to keep up with nowadays! There's real life, family and the day job, plus exercise and chores... oh yes, and then there's writing, marketing, social networking, selling, promotion and all things book related.

To keep you sane, here are 7 weekly tasks for authors. That's just one per day... surely we can all manage that!

1. **Write.** The most important thing for authors/writers is to write. It should be every day, but at least once a week. You might be working on a new book, or some articles, or your diary. But certainly, you must write!

2. **Take an Artist's Date.** As we write, we use up creative reserves that need filling now and then. The Artist's Date is from Julia Cameron's [The Artist's Way](#), an excellent book. It is just time out to refill your creative well. Maybe a trip to the local art gallery, or bookshop, or just a walk by the river on your own. Anything that sparks ideas and allows your mind to absorb, not create.

3. **Learn something new.** Continuous learning will keep you on the edge of success and stop the stagnation that occurs when you don't learn. There is no excuse for not learning now, as knowledge is so freely available on the internet. I read other blogs, listen to podcasts, download audiobooks, read physical and ebooks, there are even online University courses for free now.

4. **Network with authors, bloggers or readers online.** Social networking is supportive and can also help with learning, promotion and reading, so you may be able to achieve multiple tasks in one hit! You can network in person at a writer's group or seminar, or network online through Twitter, Facebook and other communities. You can always find a niche online with other people interested in what you are doing.

5. **Read.** Stephen King says "Writers are readers" and if you don't have time to read, you aren't a writer. I'm not sure you need to be told to read, as most of us can be seen with books in hand at every spare moment! I'm the bookish nerd in the corner!

6. **Do something towards marketing and promoting yourself or your book.** This may be a blog post, a guest post/article, perhaps a press release, a YouTube video, calling someone who could get you a speaking gig, emailing a bookshop, creating a marketing plan. There are so many ideas, but even 1 per week will get you so much closer to your goals. That's 52 marketing/promotion actions in 1 year!

7. **Celebrate.** So often we get through weeks of producing and writing slog and forget to celebrate what we are doing. Write down your word count, number of books sold, income, website stats and subscribers, twitter followers and any other stats that are meaningful to you. Return to this every few weeks and see how far you have come. **Well done for this week!**

The Law of Attraction For Writers



The **Law of Attraction** gained a huge audience with the global success of [The Secret](#) a few years ago, and is still followed by many although there also seems to be a bit of a backlash against it's popularity these days.

Whatever your opinions of the Law of Attraction, **the principles can still help authors and writers** on their journey.

The basic principles ([according to Wikipedia](#)) are: Decide what you want, Ask for it specifically, Feel, behave and know that you already have it, Be detached from the outcome and the extra piece that is very important (and often missed) is...**Focus on doing what you need to** in order to achieve it. **Take action** and it will happen.

How can the Law of Attraction help you as a writer or author?

- **Deciding what you want** from your journey as a writer is important if you want to achieve goals along the way. If you want to write a book, you need to make that decision and then work towards it. If you don't know what you are aiming for, you will not make a career or a success from your writing or your books.
- **Ask for it and believe you can have it.** This is related to positive affirmations and is a lot about how worthy you feel. Can you say out loud "I am creative, I am an author"? You need to be sure that you can achieve what you ask for, or it won't happen. Whether you ask God or the Universe, or just yourself for what you want, then you need to have this positive energy behind it. You can be a writer, you can be an author, you can sell your books.
- **Act as if you already have it.** In other words, Fake it until you make it. Start saying those affirmations and telling people who are a writer (you are writing aren't you?!). Soon enough, it will be true.
- **Be detached from the outcome.** It isn't not caring about what happens. It is about taking the unexpected in your stride and changing direction as things happen. You just don't know the way in which you will become a published author.
- **Focus and take action.** Once you have decided on what you want and you have the mindset to succeed, **you then have to put in the hours and the effort to make it happen.**

You can have what you want, but what will you do to make it happen, and what price do you need to pay?

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Authors: 5 Ways You Can Be Your Own Alchemist



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Alchemy is the science and art of turning what is base into something precious. It means transformation and renewal, death and rebirth. There are many myths, legends and secrets around alchemy and it has been a creative muse for many people throughout the centuries.

Here are 5 ways you can be your own alchemist:

1. **Take your darkest and hidden secrets and turn them into nuggets of gold.** We all have our dark and dirty memories, but you can turn them into the basis for brilliant writing. It is not about baring your soul, but using what is down there and transforming it. Fictionalise it. Use the lessons to share your wisdom. Your story is original and people want to hear it. You are unique and you can shape that into brilliance.

2. **Edit your work dramatically. Turn your worst writing into something great.** Sometimes our writing itself is base and dirty. It needs refining, sometimes drastically. The alchemist used fire to destroy and refine. You may need to be as brutal with your writing to make it into something beautiful.

3. **Transform yourself.** Learn, grow and change to develop your self and your writing. “*The book you write will change your life*” Seth Godin. I truly believe this. The experience of writing a book, whether it is for you alone or for many readers, can transform you into a new person.

4. **Test and refine your methods and works.** The alchemists were always looking for new ways to reach The Philosopher’s Stone. To be the one to finally turn lead into gold. They were chemists, scientists always experimenting. You also need to experiment as an author. Learn from failure and continue to move on. Try different techniques and methods. Include new ways of writing as well as book promotion and sales options. This is a lifetime of work, so you have time to make the changes.

5. **Include both spirituality and practicality into your writing.** Alchemists have been linked with both the science of chemistry and also esoteric spirituality. Combining both creates a powerful writing career. Authors need to stay in touch with their soul and spirit in order to create and give their energy to the work. But equally, authors need a practical sensibility in order to deal with business, publishing and book promotion. To be entirely focuses on one without the other is useless.

15 Ways Modern Art Galleries Can Inspire Writers

I love modern art galleries and go to them whenever I am in a large city. They spark creative ideas and I leave feeling refreshed and ready to write more!

Here are 15 ways Modern Art Galleries can inspire writers and authors.



- 1. Writing Exercise:** Sit in front of a piece of art/installation/painting and write what you see. Describe the piece and what it says to you. Modern art is fantastic for this because you can't just say "It's a portrait of a young woman with a dog". Often the pieces are entirely based on your interpretation.
- 2. Use as a setting in your novel.** Notice all the physical details of the place, the various rooms, how you could use them. Would your characters meet here in the vast white open space of the main hall? Or in one of the obscure video dark rooms with disturbing images on screen? How does the setting inform their relationship?
- 3. Write notes from the display description.** Just copy down phrases that touch you in some way. I did this at the Tate Modern a few weeks ago: "*I work until enough of my art has flowed into its body*" (Jean Arp). What images do these words conjure up for you? My notes also said "body parts on a baking tray" and "jackdaw and hooded crow skewered by arrows". I bet you can see those images!



Artist Cornelia Parker likes hanging objects in space

- 4. Free associate from one of the pieces.** Just write down all the words that come to mind. Do it in a [mind map format](#) so you can spiral off in all directions from each word. One of the evocative pieces at the Tate was "[30 Pieces of Silver](#)" by Cornelia Parker.

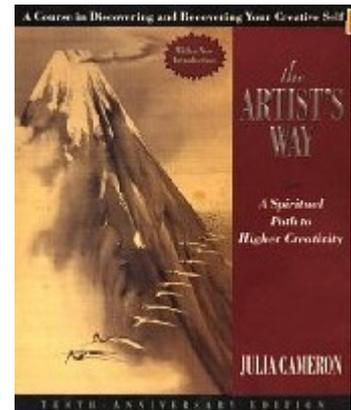
The words bring to mind Judas and betrayal (for me anyway!) but it was a hanging installation of circular displays featuring discarded silverware crushed by a bulldozer. You could free associate on that alone for hours!

5. Listen for dialogue. Certain types of people go to Modern Art Galleries, but you don't know who they are until you listen. Sit in the lobby or a public area and listen for snatches of conversation. Write notes on what you hear. This will give you plenty more material and surprising insights into what others think of the piece.

6. Browse the gift shop for marketing ideas. I have found Modern Art Galleries have great gift shops with quirky ideas for items related to static pieces of art. Can you use some of these ideas in your own marketing?

7. Use it as your Artists Date.

This is an idea from Julia Cameron's [The Artist's Way](#) (brilliant book!). As creative people, we give out a lot of our ideas and creative juice which needs replenishing sometimes. An Artist's Date is time out to refill our creative wells and allow new ideas to surface and spark.



8. Change your writing scene. Sometimes the act of writing somewhere else can help you with ideas and different sections of your project. Buy a coffee in the Gallery cafe and sit and write for an hour.

9. Use it as a venue for a meeting with another author. Sometimes we can spend so much time writing alone, it is good to connect in person. Modern Art Galleries often have great meeting places so you can hang out and chat, and then wander round the galleries together doing some of the exercises above.



10. Understand you need to get your work out there.

Many writers get stressed by the slow progression of their book and the difficulties they face along the way. They may procrastinate over every last sentence and potential problem. Modern art is a good wake up call for this as you will hate a lot of the work displayed, and you will wonder how the hell that could possibly be a) finished and b) worthy of an art gallery. But the artist has said "this is my work" and people can like it or not. It is out there and people are reacting which is better than having it in a studio or computer away from the world.

11. Understand the Body of Work. I love this phrase and feel that as authors we need to embrace it as visual artists do. The book you are working on is one piece of a whole lifetime, a whole body of work embracing all you are and all you want to express in the written word. I don't think the successful visual artists stop and obsess over one piece, they are moving onto the next. Get that book out of you and move onto the next one. Embrace them all as experiments along the way!



12. Research one of the Artists for a character sketch. Pick one of the pieces you like (or hate) and write down the name of the artist. When you get home, Google them and find out more about their work and their history. Use this for a character sketch. You may be surprised by what you find. For example, I am fascinated by [Patricia Piccinini](#) whose very cute Vespa characters I fell in love with at one exhibition, but delving further into her work, you find she does these [disturbing mutated creatures](#) as well. What a fantastic mind!

13. Research one of the Artists and evaluate their online presence. Visual artists need a 'platform' as much as authors do. How else can you sell work and get exhibitions and press coverage. Google one of the artists and evaluate their online presence. Do they use multi-media? Do they blog? Have they had media attention? How can you learn from them?



14. Use your visit to inspire a blog post. Your blog needs new content and it gives you an excuse to write! This post is my own example.

15. Be silly. I find some modern art utterly ridiculous! As authors we need to be a little silly sometimes and [not take ourselves so seriously!](#) The galleries often have children's areas with play things or just take a friend and laugh at whatever takes your fancy. I took my husband once and we ended doing tracings on coloured paper with crayons on one exhibit (it was interactive!) and bouncing off huge white foamy trees. Fun, fun, fun!

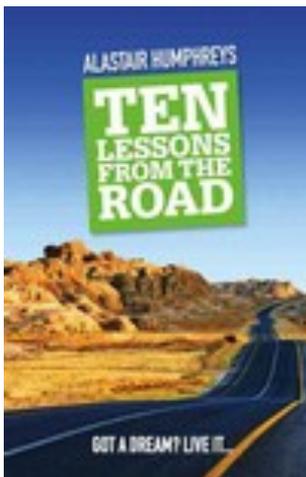
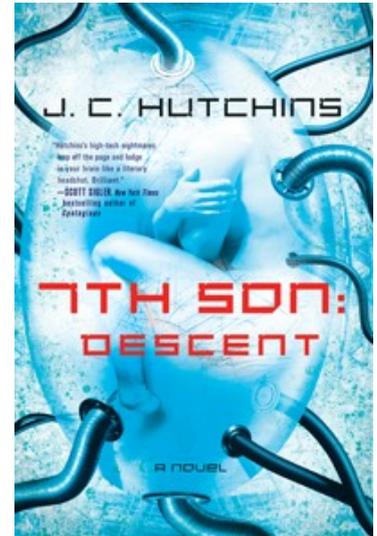
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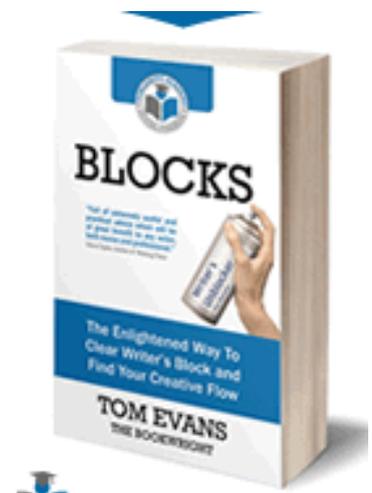


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About Joanna Penn and The Creative Penn



Hi, I'm Joanna Penn! I'm the author of 3 non-fiction books, a blogger at [The Creative Penn.com](http://TheCreativePenn.com), a speaker and an international business IT consultant. I am also the creator of the [Author 2.0 Program](#)—Using web 2.0 tools for writing, publishing, sales and promotion.

I'm British, but I currently live in Brisbane, Australia. I'm passionate about helping aspiring authors understand their options in the new world of Web 2.0. There are **amazing opportunities** for writing, publishing, internet sales and promotion right now for people who grasp the possibilities.

I started TheCreativePenn.com after I self-published my first book and wanted to share what I have learned along the way. I have just started on the writer's journey myself so I share everything in the hope it might help you too (and save you money and time!). The blog is now [no. 4 on Australia's Top Writing Blogs](#) and features on [AllTop.com in Books](#). It was also voted one of the [Top 25 Best Writing Blogs on Editor Unleashed 2009](#).



If you enjoyed the articles in this ebook, then [you can subscribe to the blog and get updates by email or in your RSS Reader here](#). Then you won't miss any going forward!

If you want to know a bit more about me, then check out these posts and interviews:

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Thank you so much for reading
this ebook.

If you have any feedback or questions, please do contact me:
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I'll see you on the blog in 2010!

Joanna.



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