

I WANNA WRITE A BOOK: PART I

NOT SURE HOW OR WHERE TO START?

Here are five steps to get you
from writing overwhelm
to writing now!



HELP!



WHAT'S YOUR STORY
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ARE YOU READY?

Are you ready to finally write that book you've been thinking about? A book is the ideal marketing tool for coaches, for people in the financial industry, for those in any part of the wellness industry. In fact, it is actually hard to find a profession that writing a book does not support! It not only perfectly positions you as the expert you are, but it also allows you to reach a much wider audience than you likely could on your own.

And I'm not forgetting about you, fiction writers!

Think about it. Just adding your book to Amazon has the potential to put your name in front of millions of new viewers each and every month. You don't have to be a marketing genius to know that those kinds of numbers can have an amazing impact on your business, with...

- Increased traffic to your website (and more opt-ins, too)
- Critical "social proof" in the form of testimonials
- Instant "expert status" (the kind that's only afforded to authors)
- New interview requests and other opportunities
- More coaching and other clients

And all of that before you've even sold a single copy!

Now the only problem is, well, actually writing the book.

You've thought about it, maybe jotted down some notes, perhaps you've even outlined a couple of chapters.

The Dreaded Overwhelm

But then, you stalled. Overwhelm set in, or you got busy, and now your book idea is stashed away on your hard drive collecting virtual dust. You may have been rewriting the same opening for the past five years now. Or maybe you never even got that far. Maybe you found yourself so confused about the whole process that you didn't even start.

Here's what you need to know about writing a book: it's not as difficult or overwhelming as it seems, especially if you can break it down into manageable tasks. It is easier still with the help of the What's Your Story - Author Services team.

STEP 1: WHAT'S YOUR BOOK-WRITING GOAL?

This is the step that every new author seems to skip, and it's probably the single most important decision you need to make! Without a book-writing goal, it will be extremely difficult for you to:

- Stay focused (you'll find your content wandering off-topic or you'll feel scattered)
- Stay motivated (you'll suddenly find lots and lots of things you'd rather do than write)
- Launch with authority (no great book launch starts with an uncertain fizzle)

Your goal can be personal ("because I want to be able to say, 'I wrote a book!'",), or it can be all business ("because I want to give it to my clients at my next live event").

Maybe you have always, always wanted to write—you have writing in your bones and have an unstoppable desire to publish a sci-fi futuristic bodice ripper! Maybe your goal is to land on the New York Times' bestseller list. Or you might want to use it as a lead generating tool. You may even simply want to make sales.

Not sure what your goal is? Here's how you can find out:

Do a little reconnaissance work among your competitors. Who has written a book? Chances are most of them have at least a book or two for sale on Kindle, if not on other platforms.

A quick peek will tell you what the goal was when the book was written.

Does it have a link (or several) to opt-in for a free gift? Is the book part of a series of small (30 pages or less) books? Is it frequently offered for free on Kindle?

If so, chances are this book is a lead generator.

Does the book sell for a relatively high price compared to others? Is it offered in print form as well as digital? Is it traditionally published through a company such as Random House or Penguin?

Books such as these are often used to improve market reach and brand recognition.

Finally, if the book is self-published but is available in print format, it may actually be a business card, designed to be given away at events.

So, what is your book-writing goal?

Exercise: Brainstorm your book-writing goal

What is the primary purpose you have for spending the time and energy it will take to complete this project? And don't be shy. No one will see this but you, so if your goal is to make sales or land on the bestsellers' list, say so!



STEP 2: REFINE YOUR MESSAGE

Now that you know why you're writing your book, it's time to decide exactly what your book will be about.

This isn't some high-level overview where you can say something like, "I want to write a book about branding." That's too general. For this step, you want to dig deep and clearly define your book's unique message.

Ask yourself:

- Who is my ideal reader? What is his or her life like? Why do they need this book?
- What is my area of expertise? What do I know that few others do? What unique insight can I provide?
- What's hot right now that ties into my message? How can I incorporate current happenings in my industry with my book?

One fantastic way to define your message and distill it down to its core elements is to write your back cover blurb. The combination of sales copy (you have to make it enticing enough to buy) with limited space forces you to include only the absolutely necessary information.

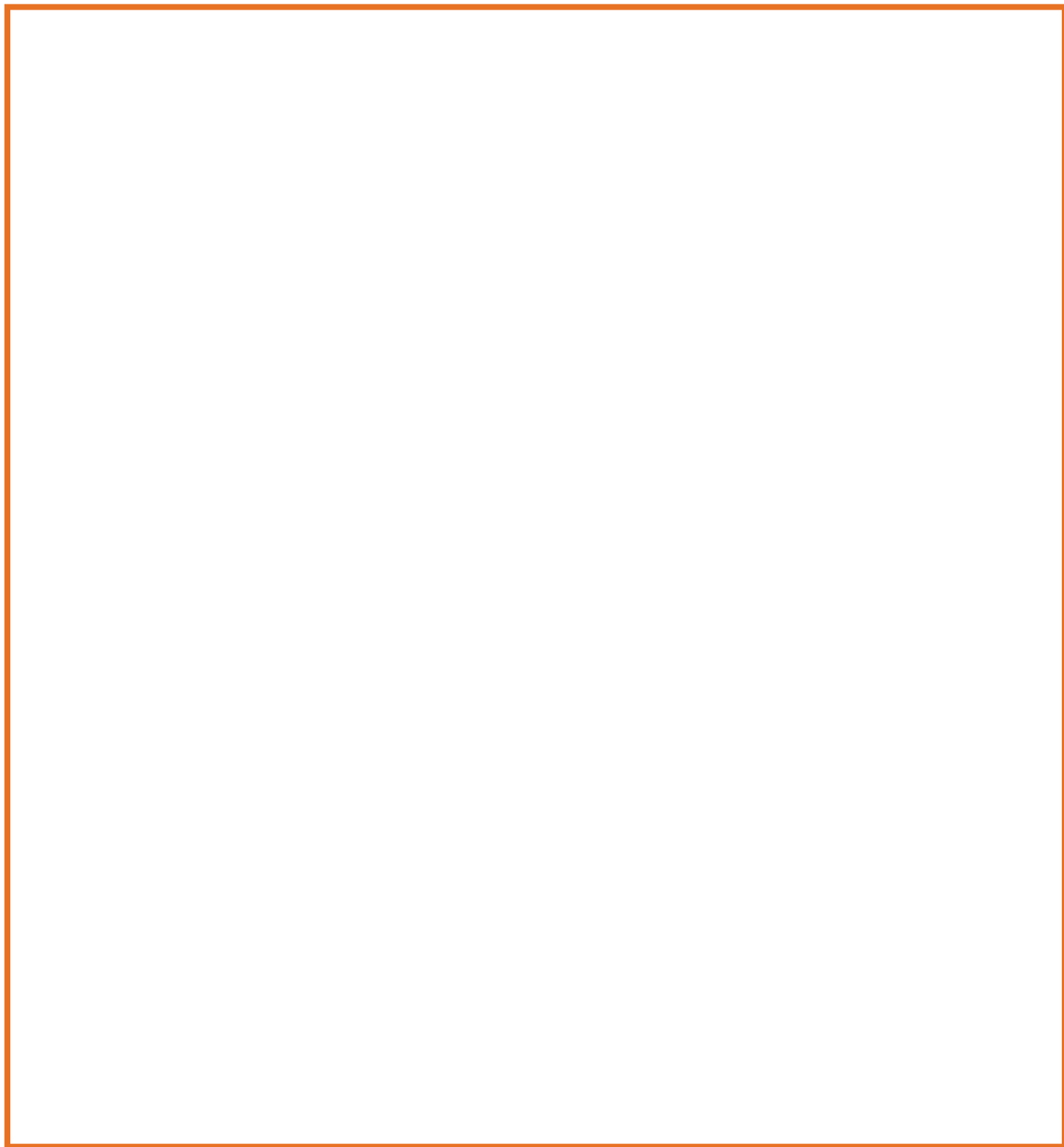
Not only that, but reading the back covers of books in your niche can give you important insight into:

- What other authors are writing about, and what their "slant" is.
- What your market finds appealing.
- Where the "holes" are in the available content.

Your back cover blurb should include who your book is for, why they need to read it right now, and what they are going to learn. It should be no more than three or four paragraphs, and you'll probably find that's more difficult to do than you think. Take your time and write several drafts.

And remember: once you're happy with your back cover copy, keep it handy. You'll want to refer back to it if you lose focus while writing your book.

Exercise: Write the back cover blurb for your book.



STEP 3: YOUR STORY MATTERS

Want to know the biggest self-imposed roadblock authors face? It's that small voice in your head that says, "Who are you to think you can write a book?"

Sound familiar? We all have that voice, so it can (and should) be ignored...at least when it comes to getting the words on paper.

But that voice does bring up a great question: Who are you? And why should your ideal reader pay attention?

But here's the thing you must keep in mind: You have an important message that only you can share. We all do. It's your job as the author to uncover your unique story and write your book from that point of view.

Get this right, and you'll instantly and easily attract your perfect audience—those readers who "get" you and with whom your book will resonate. They'll become raging fans who will help spread your message far and wide.

But first you have to determine what your story is and why it matters.

Some examples of author story include:

- The weight-loss coach who turned their life around by losing 75 pounds and now provides encouragement and support to people who struggle with their weight.
- The business coach who struggled for years to get their own business off the ground, and who now has a unique ability to see past the roadblocks that hold her clients back.
- The small business owner who discovered a powerful marketing method that tripled their income, and who wants to help other business owners thrive.
- The insightful writer who wants to write the next fiction classic that people will be reading 100 years from now. Something that shows the world as you see it.

Your story can be one of dramatic change, or an internal mindset shift, or even a very personal "why" behind your passion. Whatever it is, it's uniquely yours, and when you allow it to shine through in your book, you'll instantly set yourself apart from the competition to reach your ideal audience.

**Exercise: Write is your story?
What is the basis of your book?**



STEP 4: MARKET RESEARCH

Ask any top-selling author and they'll tell you that the biggest part of writing is actually reading. You simply cannot hope to write a book that will appeal to your market unless you know what they're already reading—and why.

During the market research phase of your book project, you're going to look specifically for the top sellers in your niche, plus the books your direct competitors have written (even if they never sold a single copy).

You'll want to pay attention to:

- Book length—does your market prefer lengthy, in-depth books or short reads suitable for an afternoon of study?
- Writing style—casual and fun loving or suit-and-tie-wearing formal?
- Platform—where do your ideal readers buy their books?

Beyond the basic though, you'll also want to dig deep to determine (record your findings in the box below):

- Broad topics—where does the demand meet your skill set and interest? That's the topic for your book.
- Slant—what angles have already been covered?
- The holes—this is the most important part...what's missing from the available books in your industry?
- Who are your ideal readers—what would they like to hear and how do you slant your book for them?

Exercise: Find, read, and review at least 10 books in your niche.

Title	Author	Notes

STEP 5: OUTLINE AND ORGANIZE YOUR CONTENT

There are two types of writers: those who plan and outline, and those who prefer to write “from the seat of their pants.”

While the loosey-goosey approach might sound appealing, for new authors it can be a fatal mistake. Without at least a rough idea what you’ll be writing about, it is easy to either lose momentum and not write anything at all, or (maybe worse) lose focus and meander through unrelated topics without a clear point.

The easiest way to avoid both of these book-killing scenarios is to outline and organize your material before you begin writing. You can do this with a number of different tools, depending on your personal preference:

- Specialist software such as Scrivener, or use Microsoft Word or Google Docs
- Index cards or sticky notes
- A word or text document
- A physical notebook and pen

Whichever your choice of tools, it’s important to outline your book so that it will make sense to your reader and so that it flows naturally from one subject to the next.

You may find as you’re writing that your outline needs to be adjusted. That’s perfectly fine. It’s not carved in stone. But do resist the urge to expand your book beyond the boundaries of your original goal. If your reason for writing the book is as a lead generation tool, then continuing to add more and more information—no matter how good it might be—is a waste of effort. Instead, save that material for the next in the series.

It is helpful to do some brainstorming at this point. Here is an example of a brainstorming session on the COVID-19 Pandemic.



As you can see above, once you brainstorm, you will notice some common themes. The themes could become chapter titles, whereas the individual items may become content.

For instance, themes above include:

- Missing people and isolation
- Relationships
- Health and wellness
- Fears
- Financial matters
- Leadership
- Parenting
- Environment
- What is the new normal?

An outline can help you avoid “scope creep” while at the same time answering that most difficult of questions, “What am I going to write next?”


Here’s an easy way to start outlining: begin by noting all the “must have” sections:

- Introduction—if you can get a friend or colleague to write this section, do it!
- About you—why you’re the perfect person to write this book
- Introduction—what the book is about in broad terms
- Conclusion—recap what your reader has learned and what she should do next

The chapters are what is between the Introduction and the Conclusion. That is where the meat of your content goes. You can organize them in the way that makes the most sense for you and your readers but do organize them. You’ll be glad you did if procrastination and frustration strike.

Exercise: Outline your book.





Outlining your book can be a difficult process. You should give yourself time to do it and also have someone, like an editor, look at it with you. After all, it is the pathway you will follow as you write. You wouldn't want to follow a pathway and find you end up in the wrong place, would you?

CALL ME: YOUR GUIDE THROUGH THE WRITING AND PUBLISHING PROCESS

It's often at this point where people call me. As a book coach, I can vet your outline and your starting points. We can discuss where you are now and how you will get from this, the start, to where you want to be: THE END. Those precious words are the goal of any writer!

Give me a ring. Let's discuss PART II: how to complete your book. You'll also want support on the remaining parts of writing, designing, publishing, marketing, and selling your book. Your story is important, your voice valuable. your writing efforts should be efficient and lead you to a completed book, ready to be devoured by your target readers!

By Jacqueline (called "Akosua") Brown

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