

Guide To Writing Your First Book

GUIDE TO WRITING YOUR FIRST BOOK



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E-mail: onadebi@yahoo.com

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Scripture quotations noted KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to potential writers and writers who want to improve their writing skill. It is also dedicated to my younger brother-Onatufe Edebi who has just begun writing his first book.

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INTRODUCTION

The powers in books go beyond the type written words. A book is a world of its own, which passes some form of knowledge or experience from the writer to the reader. It has become one of the popular means through which knowledge is spread across long distances, to teach the do's and don'ts, experiences and experiences that do not have to be experienced, means to achieve and many more. Through books, we learn from the experiences, knowledge and deep insight of people we may never come across, thus acquiring the knowledge and mind power of such individuals into ourselves.

It is therefore not unusual, but rather a good thing that you choose to write out your own knowledge into books, which people may study and be empowered with what would be useful to their lives.

Think of it, if books had never been written, we'll probably be about a thousand years behind our present time, because the rate of spread of knowledge would be very negligible.

Thank God for books!!!

Chapter 1

WHAT FASCINATES YOU?

What is it that fascinates you? You'll probably be thinking "wow! My neighbor's car, your friend's house or probably setting up a business of your own."

However, aside from being fascinated by certain things, have you gone beyond the place of fascination and just desire to see or have those things? Have you read books and done your research work on how much you'll need to save to get your own car; or bothered to find out how much it money you'll need to save up to establish your own business? -The legit way. If your answer is yes, then you are almost ready for writing, but if your answer is no, you better start doing your research.

I checked up the meaning of *writing* in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and discovered that writing means, "to think of and record." "Think" from the same source means 'to use the power of reason', but I like to see it as "the use of the power of in-depth knowledge." I've expansiated this because I want you to understand that it is only logical to write on what you have in-depth knowledge about, so that even if your book is criticized, it cannot be contradicted.

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Deciding What To Write About

Now that you know, knowledge of what you want to write is important, pick one topic out of your list of fascinating things (the one you would gladly and easily do research work on)

*While writing this book, I came up with a simple and straightforward way of writing your books or articles. I've abbreviated this system into one word-**DREW***

D-Decide (on what you want to write)

R-Research (Find out, and learn about what you want to write)

E-Edit (Editing and organizing your research journal into its potential book)

W-Write (Put your work into writing)

Hopefully, you have decided what you want to write about .Yes? Great! So, we can move on to the R-research of the **DREW** system.

Say you want to write a book about crafts; you can go to your local library, crafts shop, read books on crafts or even browse the World Wide Web for information on crafts to help you with ideas on the colour of dye, the length of cloth and all necessary materials and information needed for the writing of the book.

Personally, I recommend you go to your local library, browse the Internet or ask highly experienced people for information relating to what you want to write.

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However, it is not just enough to ask questions, read and observe; you must also learn to take journals. Write down every valuable information realized from your research, as this would be the foundation of your potential book. It may seem a little stressful at first, but in time you'll get used to it, and who knows? You'll probably start enjoying it. Take notes when you browse through various websites for information, read books related to the sort-after information.

EDITING

When you are through and sure that you have done a thorough research work, it is then time to sit down, go through your journal and begin the third step of the **DREW** system.

Before you go on, you ought to understand that there are many times one tends to just stop at one's research journal and believe that there is no reason for editing. Maybe you organized your journal so well while taking down notes and feel that no other improvement can be made on the book. Well guess what? You're wrong! There is always room for improvement as long as something-including books, is not perfect; and I don't think it is possible to find a book that is perfect to everyone's reading. Aside from that, remember that it's a journal; you may have failed to notice little mistakes such as the ones listed below:

- ❑ Wrongly spelt words
- ❑ Grammatical error
- ❑ Omitted punctuation marks/Punctuation errors
- ❑ Excessive repeating of words

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□ Disordered writing

As perfect as you may be in English, you are prone to making mistakes. I suggest you give someone highly proficient in English (maybe an Editor) to proofread your work, if you are not so good at it.

After proofreading and correcting errors in your journal, it is only logical that you begin to organize your work; as order plays a very important role to your readers. You must also be able to excite your readers with words and order with which your book is written. Your punctuation marks and paragraphs are not to be counted out when considering your readers.

Now, I hope you see why editing your work is very important in writing your book. Since, we're clear with that, lets move on to see how you can write out your edited work.

WRITING

This is the really less stressful part of writing. Well, that is if you have done your research and a good editing job on your journals. Primarily, it involves a transfer of your organized journal (potential book) to a neat viewable source. Personally, I like to have a hard copy of whatever I write; so when I am through organizing my journal, I simply rewrite it into a new notebook or type it directly into a computer and have it printed out. If however, you are going to be storing your work on a computer, it's advisable to always make a backup copy (you never always can tell what would happen).

Having learnt and understood the **DREW** system, lets apply it (for a start) to something

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lightweight, like article writing for your local newspaper/magazine.

Chapter 2

ARTICLES-A GOOD START

If you remember the first time you drove a car or rode a bike, you'll be sure to remember that you did not just get on the wheels, start the engine and started driving flawlessly. You probably started with assistance from someone experienced to help you grab the basic concepts of driving. So also, writing a good book is not something you just wake up one morning, decide to do, and by evening you're through. Writing a novel, fiction or even a drama requires time, lots of imagination and determination to finish. But you know what? You can start with something small relating to what you want to write; as time passes by. You can start with an article.

Your First Article

When I wrote my first article, I was not so sure what I was writing about, but I just wrote it. Why? 'Cause I wanted to be an author. That should however not be the case. Make it a habit to read lots of books and articles relating to what you want to write, and then make a head start to writing your book by first writing your own article. Though your first article may not turn out to be as good as you expected, just be sure of what you are writing, and with time-as you write more articles (maybe from your second or third) you'll have more experience in writing, which would go a long way in helping you write your first book. You would also be able to tell through writing of articles if you really are cutout for writing long books or something short

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and simple, like inspirational write-ups, poetry or articles for newspapers and magazines.

The second article I wrote-THE A TO Z I BEHELD was more of inspirational than my regular write-ups, and I do think it was better than the first one, (though they are in no way related) because this time, I knew and had a good understanding of what I wrote about. The article goes as:

I beheld the sky and its wonders and saw Astonishment
I beheld the earth and its flowers and saw Beauty
I beheld the animals and beasts of the air, land and sea
and saw the hand of the Creator
I beheld the full moon and to me was it like a blooming
Daisy...

It's like driving a car, the more often you drive it, the efficiency with which you drive it increases. So don't just rush into writing a book, be patient enough to write something small for a start, then you can view your readers comments, respond to them and know where to improve on your writing skills.

After Writing Your Article

You'll probably be thinking "how can I get people to read and comment on my articles when I 'm through writing?" Very simple! You can have your article published in your local newspaper, a bulletin or probably a popular magazine. But for a wider audience, I advise you put it on one or more websites on the World Wide Web and request comments from viewers after they have read the article. This would also help you to know how

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people react to certain issues and what they feel about them.

As at the last time I checked, you could submit your articles free of charge and maintain your copyright on sites like articlecity.com, faithwriters.com and many Ezine sites.

If you take time to write out a few articles, you would discover that it is not as hard as many people think. You should however not relent after writing your articles, still bearing in mind that it's a book you want to achieve in the long run. Keep reading and writing more articles, so as to improve yourself for your task, and prepare *TO BE A WRITER!*

Chapter 3

BEGINNING YOUR FIRST BOOK

I am in a strange land
I will learn their ways
I will surely not relent
-Onaefe U. Edebi

Since you've made it this far, let's get serious with what we are out to achieve-your first book. This is a time to remember the **DREW** system explained in Chapter one. You've probably written many articles on different topics, so you'll better know now, what you want to write about (I assume you have already decided that).

Always, it is nice to choose a catchy title for a book, but what would the contents say about its given title? You must know that any prolonged deviation in any chapter of a book, from the impression its title gives causes the reader to

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become unsure of what he/she is reading and maybe even go dump the book. We all know that you must choose a good title for your book when writing, however it is not just enough for you to choose a good and catchy title, you must be able to relate the contents of the book with both its title and named chapters.

What I am simply saying is that the chapters of your book should always relate with one another and also with the title of your book. This convinces your reader that you're "hitting the nail directly on the head", with minimal digression from the stated topic.

Relating Your Chapters

Think of someone who is given ten blocks, each of them marked with a number ranging from 1 through to 10. The person is told to arrange the blocks in an ordered form, which the person does as 1,3,5,2,4,6,8,7,9 and 10 in a straight line. Such person has actually arranged the blocks in an ordered form, but in a very wrong 'number order' form. So also, the chapters of your book can be right, but in a very wrong order.

Always make an extra effort to ensure that the chapters of your book relate in the right way and order, while corresponding with your previous and next chapters. This shows uniformity in the message being outlined in the book.

No one started walking the day he/she was born, but rather went through a gradual and related process of sitting, crawling then walking

Once in a while (when necessary), relate what the reader is reading at present, to something that has

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been read in a previous chapter. This helps to give the reader a better understanding of what is being read, and also tell the reader that you are not “driving off track”.

However, in slight contrast to this, you should note the importance in giving the reader a sense of interaction with the words of the book, if you want to prevent the reader from tiring out of reading your book. Many times, these are through illustrations, which are most often digressions from the reader’s present topic. In such cases, I advise that the extent of digressions be put under control, while somehow relating the illustration to the present topic.

Assuming you’re writing about engine maintenance in cars; you might want to make the reader have a better understanding of what you have written by describing a situation when you caused a long traffic, due to a specific engine problem that could have been avoided, if some maintenance had been carried out on certain parts of the car engine. This is a good way to make the reader feel excited and part of your experience; but never over do it! As much as you want to give your readers a clear understanding of what you have written, it is always good to keep your digressions minimal, so that the reader would have a smooth continuity of what is being read.

As in relating each line of your articles with the previous and next lines, try as much as possible to relate your chapters with one another, and also with the given title of your book.

You should also note that limiting your digressions does not mean limiting your mind power when

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writing. Say you're writing a novel, you don't expect going straight to the point would make the novel very interesting; there has to be quite a number of illustrations and digressions to add suspense to the novel. The major fact that you should take note of here is 'how much digression or illustrations you use in your book greatly depends on the nature of the book you are writing'. For instance, a novel would most likely contain more digressions than an inspirational book or motivational book.

Some Optional Features

When you are through writing your manuscript, (Chapter one to Chapter...) you might consider imputing into your book some optional features. Some of which include:

❖ Introduction

It is a written explanation of a book at the beginning of the book. Usually, it helps a first-time reader of the book to have an introductory knowledge of what the book is about. It is not always compulsory to have an Introduction, but I do recommend it as a necessary feature for any book.

❖ Preface

This is similar to the Introduction of a book. On a general level, it gives information of what a book is about, its contents and sometimes, a relationship to the same book, which has been published before as an earlier edition.

❖ Forward

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To have your book forwarded simply means to have someone read and comment on the manuscript and sometimes the author. The comments pertaining to what the person has read and understood would then be printed on one or more of the beginning pages of your book.

Normally, a known and respected person forwards a book.

❖ Acknowledgement

It's another feature that a writer may employ to show gratitude to people who in one way or another helped in the writing and/publishing of a book. It is however advisable that your acknowledgement be made as short and straightforward as much as is possible. This ensures that the reader would be able to recollect the names of acknowledged persons without difficulty.

By applying the knowledge of all these in writing your book, I see nothing but success waiting for you.

Chapter 4
BUILDING YOUR WRITING
CONFIDENCE

“If the success journey was without hurdles and hard work, everyone would be successful with laziness”

It’s good to know that you now have the basic knowledge needed to write your first book-that is the foundation needed to writing your first book. However, in reference to writing what you are certain about, you might often still come across writers who have written one, two or more (possibly good) books and quit writing. Many times, this is as a result of negative response to the author’s book by readers.

As much as your readers’ views, opinions and criticisms help you write a better book than your previous one(s), they may also greatly discourage you from continually writing; if you take them personally.

Remember the **DREW** system in Chapter one, ‘R’-Research ensures that you know and understand what you are writing. So, when you write a book which you understand and are certain of, you can stand tall with confidence of your written words. However, this certainty may be criticized by readers, which may possibly affect you as the author (causing you to relent in your writing).

The totality of this chapter is to make you understand that no matter how good your book is, it most likely would not be pleasing to six billion people. I hope you’re still following! One of the

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concepts of building your writing confidence is to learn to accept criticisms, look into and study it to know what and how your readers think and feel about the book. If studied well, the criticisms might be your springboard to writing your bestseller.

The criticisms if taken into deep consideration and study can help you discover new ways to write your book and make it more “reader-appealing”

Your first book would most likely not be your best and may therefore attract quite a number of criticisms. I advise that you prepare your mind for criticism before publishing, and be determined in your heart that no matter the amount of criticism you would still write more books on issues you understand-that you will not relent.

You have to be determined. Write! Write!! Write!!! But be sure of whatever you write.

Carry On With A Positive Attitude

In as much as you prepare your mind for criticism, it is always good to have a positive attitude and belief in your book.

What was your motive behind writing your book? Probably to be a best-selling author, make lots of money or write a book that touches and moves the heart of its readers. Whatever your reason for writing it, you should always carry the positive belief that your motive would be accomplished.

Let the man who doubts in his heart not expect to receive anything from God

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Your power of positive thinking is also a determinant in how far you go as a writer. For instance, the person who may have had a bad experience-probably in the number of book sales may think within hi/her heart “why should I bother myself writing another book, when the first one only sold eight-hundred copies?” That is the mindset of the negative thinker. Now, listen to the mind of the positive thinker, “OK! Maybe my book did not sell as much as I had hoped. This time I’ll put in more effort, using the experience from my first book to write my second”.

As long as you are certain of what you have written, always have a positive thought towards it. Believe that your book can and would be a best seller, a book that touches the heart of its readers and even make lots of sales.

However, it is not just enough to write a book. You should be able to write something that can cause a positive impact on the reader; and this you’ll achieve, by being a positive thinker.

Read More-Write More

There is a very popular saying, which goes “practice makes perfect”. I don’t know for sure who said it, but I do agree with it. Just as in reading a book, the more you read, the more you are enlightened. So also, the more you write, the more unto perfection you become. I’ll like to paraphrase this into a verse of the Bible-“The effectual fervent writing of a writer availeth much unto perfection”.

If you don’t relent, you’ll want to write more; and a good way of ensuring that you write more-professionally, is to read books written by

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professional writers. As you read more, you'll begin to know and understand new concepts of writing.

An important note here, is that every concept you learn can be manipulated to form your own style of writing. You don't have to imitate the writing style/order of some other writer.

As you read more, get ideas from books of experienced writers. Spice up the ideas, write more and watch your book-writing transform into a totally new and exciting experience.

Get into the habit of thinking positively about your book, because as you think in your heart towards your book, the most likely it would be for that book.

Chapter 5

WINNERS NEVER QUIT

“In any task you do, always fall back on the proposed goals you set out to achieve as a backbone of encouragement in times of discouragement”

-Onaefe U. Edebi

Having come this far, you shouldn't have any reason to stop or slow down your tempo. I guess it's been quite exciting, fun filled and sometimes stressful writing to where you are now. It would be absurd after coming this far to think up a negative thought towards publishing your book.

Picture yourself in a situation in which you spent about six months writing a book, you then came across a book of similar content to yours (obviously written by a professional writer-someone who has years of experience in writing). After reading through the book and comparing it with the contents of yours, you feel a sense of total dissatisfaction towards your book.

This is unfortunately many times the case, and the potential author loses the potential of being an author. The one major fact that the potential author has failed to realize is that the writer of the 'read book' is an experienced writer, who has most likely written many books before the one that has just been read.

You just got into the writing business or are still learning of it, so you don't have to lay emphasis on your book being as good as that of an experienced writer. Look past the dissatisfaction, learn from the work of the experienced writer and see how you can use the ideas obtained while reading his/her book to improve yours.

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You have already come this far; so don't make all the efforts you've put into writing your book vain by quitting on yourself or the book.

Encourage Yourself

It is important to be mindful of the fact that you might often feel the need to be encouraged during the process of writing your book. It is not a bad thing, but the truth is that, unless a professional writer is assisting you write your book, you would most like face discouragement, even more than the "no-commenters". You have to be able to encourage yourself at all times, because outside your family members, (who may possibly have doubts in your book) it is most likely, no one will.

A very simplified way of encouraging yourself is to set out goals of what you want to achieve from the publishing of such book, before starting to write the book. You might ask how this would help. Well, the scope of this methodology is "as you write your book, when times of discouragement sets in, you can always fall back on the goals you set out before you began writing your book, to encourage you to the very end of your book. The principle here is that, if you never finish your book and have it published, you would never achieve your set out goals, as regard the book. So each time you think of the goals you've set out to achieve, you are encouraged to finish the task you have started.

One thing that differentiates winners from quitters is the constant setting of their eyes on the goals they have set out to achieve

EPILOGUE

Writing is an art. Like the ability to easily socialize; in some, it is naturally inborn, while to others it is learnt and improved upon. If you know within yourself that you are naturally good in writing, let not the talent go to waste. If however, you are not so good in writing, but have a keen interest in it, there is good news. The art of writing can be learnt and improved upon. You can be as good as, and even better than the person who has the writing skill inborn, but does not exercise it very often.

Dare to continually write and be read of, for your consistency in writing would greatly determine if your writing skills would regress or improve.

There would always be room at the top of the success ladder for you if you are persistent in improving your writing skills.