

WORKSHEET: FIRST STEPS TO WRITING A NON-FICTION BOOK

In one sentence, tell me what your book is about (the statement your book makes): _____

Why do you want to write this book? _____

Who is your audience for this book? (Who is being addressed—Who would buy this book: adults, children, men, women, teens, professionals, students, etc.?)

Why are you addressing this person or group? (What need do they have that your book can address or fill?)

What do you want to give to this audience through your book? (What is the take-away value?)

What action do you hope your reader will take after reading your book? (mental, emotional, spiritual, physical, etc.)

If you were to walk into a bookstore, what section of the store would your book be located? (biography, memoir, self-help, religious, academic, art, cooking, sports, pets, crafts, etc.)

What is the main venue through which you envision your book being sold: bookstores, online, speaking engagements?

Why do you want to be an author? _____

What is the title of your book? (If you don't have one, think up something to use as a working title)

Have you begun outlining your chapters? If not, you need to assign a topic to each part or chapter so that your book makes a cohesive whole statement (the statement you wrote in the first question on page 1 of this worksheet).

Below are some prompts to start fleshing out your book by chapters. Start this exercise by writing out your book's statement again:

My book's statement in one sentence: _____

Now, go back up to the last step and write a number next to each topic you listed above in the order you think they make the most sense as your book's chapters. Here are some helpful hints:

- The first chapter in all great books begins in the middle of a crisis or some painful, stressful or challenging circumstance. For a memoir, begin your first chapter in a true-life experience that caused you to write this book.
- Subsequent chapters in a non-fiction book, such as a memoir, should follow the storyline from chapter one but must build toward the solution to the problem or circumstance stated in chapter one.
- Use back-story or present-day facts to round out chapters in memoirs or personal testimony books to keep the reader engaged.
- When you get to the chapters near the last 1/3 of your book, be careful not to be too preachy. Keep your words in first person, "I" "we" and not "you should" or "if you do such and such, you too will feel what I felt" etc.
- Read books that are similar to the one you want to write and model the chapter sequence and note the way the book builds and climaxes.

Now that you have your chapter topics, write one paragraph describing each chapter. Begin each paragraph using your descriptive phrase from page three. Keep your paragraphs within the limit of lines printed on this worksheet. This will help you discipline yourself to get to the point and not wander off topic.

Chapter 1: _____

Chapter 2: _____

Chapter 3: _____

Chapter 4: _____

Chapter 5: _____

Chapter 6: _____

Chapter 7: _____

Chapter 8: _____

Chapter 9: _____

Chapter 10: _____

Great work! Please make a copy and send back to me as this will help me give you a quote to edit your book. If you can scan it and e-mail, that would be faster, but if you prefer to mail it, let me know and I will give you my mailing address.

Again, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Warm regards,

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