

Writing Books for Fun, Fame & Fortune!

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RIK FEENEY

Writing Books
for Fun, Fame & Fortune!



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Writing Books for Fun, Fame, & Fortune! (Adobe eBook)

by Rik Feeney

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Disclaimer:

This book is written with the sole intent of expressing ideas on how to write a nonfiction book. The information provided is not "the way" to write a nonfiction book, simply one, actually several, of many ways in which a nonfiction book could be written. Every attempt has been made to provide the best possible information available at the time of publication, however, neither the author nor the publisher are responsible to any individual(s) or entities for the results he/she/it obtains by following the advice within this book. If you need specific advice about how to write a nonfiction book, you should seek out writing and publishing professionals to fulfill that need. If you need legal, accounting, or medical advice, especially psychiatric, you should seek out professionals in those fields, as neither the author nor the publisher are qualified to give advice in those disciplines. Neither the author nor the publisher make any representations, warranties, or guarantees about the success or lack thereof in either the publication or sale of any nonfiction product developed using this approach. You may have fun, you may get famous, you may make a fortune from reading and using the advice in this book - or not.

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Introduction

Sometimes ignorance is truly bliss.

That's especially true when writing a book.

If I sat you down and went over all the elements needed to write a book and eventually publish it, that task would seem insurmountable and quite likely you would never make the effort.

And the rest of the world would lose the unique, funny, inspiring, or educational expertise, words of comfort, or simple advice you have to offer.

I am here to make sure that does not happen.

I believe you can write a book if you have two things: persistence and determination.

That's all it takes.

Oops! I did forget one thing: **emotion**.

What you are going to do is turn emotion into English with a very simple and easy to use method I call the "Top-10 Writing System."

You see, I believe we are all experts at something. I have been a gymnastics coach for over thirty years, so I certainly have some expertise in that sport. I have written over 48 books, and I am the leader of the Orlando Florida Writer's Association writing group, so I can claim some expertise in writing and publishing. I have been an avid photographer for years with photographs published in books, newspapers, and magazines that's yet another area of expertise.

If I really took the time to review my various skill sets, hobbies, and interests, I'm sure I could find several other areas of knowledge others might find useful.

You can too!

Think of the various jobs you've held during your lifetime or think about what you do right now. You know something others outside the field or those just getting started would like to know.

What are your hobbies? What are you really passionate about in life? What unique life experiences have you had that others can learn from?

*“Writing is easy. All you have to do
is cross out the wrong words.”*

- Mark Twain

Part 1:

Writing

A

Nonfiction

Book

Write a nonfiction book

I am going to help you take that experience or information and turn it into a nonfiction book!

Nonfiction?

Yes, nonfiction.

Why are fiction writers so skinny?

For those of you who write fiction, I am going to save you from years of eating Ramen noodles, while you wait for a postal employee to show up with a publishing agreement.

I am going to show you how to finance your fiction writing addiction by publishing nonfiction.

Just as your life experience has given you unique knowledge, the fiction stories you write likely require a good deal of research on particular topics. You can turn this research into nonfiction books that help pay the bills while you wait to be interviewed by Oprah.

The key to writing these nonfiction books is emotion or rather turning emotion into English using my simple 10-step system.

The burning question is, ***What really pushes your buttons emotionally?*** (or what pushes the buttons of others).

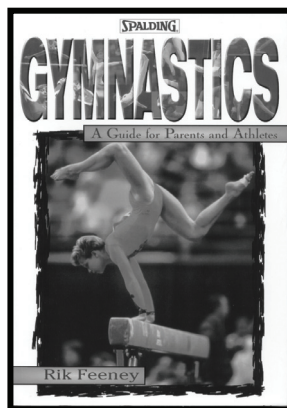
Actually, I should clarify that question. ***What really pushes your buttons emotionally about...?*** and you fill in the blank 10 times. **These Top-10 questions will become the working titles for each chapter of your book.**

Example

When I wrote the book *Gymnastics: A Guide for Parents and Athletes*, I asked the question, ***What really pushes my buttons emotionally about parents of gymnasts?***

Following are the answers I wrote down.

1. Why do parents ask so many questions?
2. Why don't parents understand that getting to class on time is critical for the gymnast's progression?
3. Do parents understand the gymnastics levels and why each gymnast needs to start in a basic-level class to learn foundational skills?
4. Why don't parents understand basic safety concerns in the sport of gymnastics?
5. Do parents understand the commitment necessary by both parents and gymnasts to make it to the highest levels in the sport?
6. Why do parents spread rumors when they don't understand what is happening on the gym floor?
7. Do parents understand that winning in competition is only part of the gymnastics experience?
8. How can parents, athletes, and coaches have a more harmonious experience?
9. Have the gymnast's parents considered that college green may be a better goal than Olympic gold?



10. What should parents do when the child is ready to move on to another activity?

Each of those 10 questions became working¹ titles for the chapters in my book. Before I go too far let me clarify that you can use any strong emotion to help you identify the 10 topic areas for your book.

For example:

- *What are the Top-10 things every woman should know or ask about when getting her car fixed?*
- *What are the Top-10 questions you should ask your doctor before undergoing surgery?*
- *What are 10 unique ways to create a quilt?*
- *What are the Top-10 ways to advertise free?*
- *How do you eat spaghetti with a spoon? (Top-10 ways?)*

Start your book right now

1. Pick a topic you are passionate about. The topic can be from any aspect of your life (work, play, hobby, experience, etc.).
2. Get yourself a nice pen and a set of 3X5-inch ruled index cards to keep with you day and night—even when you take a shower!

¹ A working title is a title used at the beginning of the writing project. As the book progresses, I might come up with a better title and replace it or it may become the final chapter title if it still works when the book is ready to go to publication.

3. Ideas about your topic will come to you at the oddest moments and it is your job to capture them – one idea per index card.
4. If for some reason you forget your cards or lose your pen, call your home phone and leave the idea as a voicemail message or use the voice recorder on your cell phone to capture the idea.
5. You may find the ideas coming in a mad rush, or you may start slow and collect the ideas over a few weeks, but the more you practice capturing these “aha!” moments the more frequent they will be. You will have primed your creativity pump, so to speak.

But first...

Start by writing down the 10 most important thoughts, ideas, concerns, or feelings you have about your chosen topic. The ideas you capture later on with the 3X5 cards can be sorted into the initial 10 categories of questions (chapter titles) to become a basic outline for your book.

Why the Top-10 questions?

I chose the number 10 because it seems to me everyone likes Top-10 lists. Everywhere you look, from David Letterman to *USA Today* you see Top-10 lists of likes and dislikes.²

Choose the 10 most important things you want someone to know about your topic.

² Hint: With all these Top-10 lists around, you may have a treasure trove of books already set to write using those lists as chapter titles.

- What questions are you asked most often (about your job, your experience, your hobby, or your passion)?
- Who most needs to know the answer (age, sex, race, education, income, job, geographic area, or physical shape)? Describe this group of potential readers, aka “your market”.
- What difference will the knowledge make to your reader? What are the benefits your book will deliver?
- What are the drawbacks? What will they miss if they don’t read your book?
- What pain will the message in your book relieve?
- What solution will your book provide?

Choose the number of chapter titles that fits the needs of your topic.

If you can adequately cover your topic in four chapters, then only have four chapters. If you need 16 chapters to cover the topic, use 16 chapters.

Once you have decided on the Top-10 questions (more or less), write down each question on an index card-one question per card.

Clear the table...

Next, clear off a spot on your table or on the living room carpet and place the 10 index cards in a line left to right. The order does not matter right now.

Under each index card (your chapter titles), place four more index cards. Your job is to think up four “Supporting Points” or ideas for each chapter title.

The Supporting Points may come from ideas you have already jotted down on the 3X5 cards you have captured ideas on over the past week or two or from ideas that pop into your head as you align these Supporting Points.

When you are done, pat yourself on the back, because you have just created the basic outline for your nonfiction book. (See a book outline example *Advertise for Free!* on page 22.)

In the book outline example, *Advertise for Free!* I only needed eight chapters to cover my topic. Under each chapter title, I listed four Supporting Points, shortened somewhat to fit in the tiny boxes for this example. You, however, will have the luxury of using your whole index card to state your Supporting Point.

Please, write only one idea per index card.

Why?

Limiting yourself to one idea per index card allows you to move your ideas from chapter to chapter easily, as you will likely refine your book layout several times. In addition, one idea may be relevant to more than one chapter, in which case you can make a duplicate of that card and place it where it is needed.

Release the hounds! (of creativity)

You are ready to start writing your book!

Grab a large bulletin board and pin up your cards with the chapter titles across the top and their respective Supporting Points below.³

The “Magic” of the Top-10 Writing System

The magic of the Top-10 Writing System is that each day you can pick any Supporting Point and write two pages or about 500 words on that topic.

One morning you may wake up and throw a dart at your board and find that day you will be writing on Chapter five, Supporting Point number three. The next day the dart lands on Chapter eight, Supporting Point number one, so you write 250 to 500 words on that topic.

But wait...

Let’s say you just don’t feel like tackling the subject of that Supporting Point on that day. Here’s the magic: You don’t have to! You can write on another Supporting Point. Write what feels right for you that day. The key to this system is that it is organic, not linear.

Linear versus Organic (choke!)

When you set out to write something the length of a book from beginning to end, your chances of reaching a choke point in the middle are staggering. Trying to make everything progress from

³ You can also buy plastic business card sleeves that fit inside a three-ring binder. Simply transfer your chapter titles and Supporting Points on to the blank side of the business card. Insert the chapter titles into the tops of the card sleeves, which will leave you four blank slots under each title to insert the Supporting Point’s cards. You now have a portable outline for your book!

your original premise and still reaching the end goal in the coming chapters, can fry your brain as you try keeping all your ideas in coherent order.

Solution: Don't even try.

Simply write each Supporting Point as an independent piece. Write until you have fully covered the concept of the Supporting Point. When you finish your first draft of every Supporting Point of every chapter, you are then ready to refine each element to fit into one coherent whole.

Kill your editor!

By that, I mean your internal editor. The first draft of your book is your chance to explore all sorts of ideas and writing styles. There is no place for an editor while writing your first draft.

The editor's place in the process is secure when it comes time to review and revise what you have written.

I'm serious. Kill your editor!

If you use Microsoft Word and see those green and red lines under words indicating spelling errors or questionable grammar, go into the toolbar and turn off the spell checker and grammar checker or, like everyone else, you won't be able to resist correcting misspellings or trying to write a better sentence. That is editing, not creating!

Turn off your monitor!

If you can't keep yourself from correcting errors, then turn off your monitor! You don't need to see your screen to type freely and turn your emotion into creative English text.

Write with abandon. Explore your ideas without restrictions. There will be more than enough time for editing and revision in the future, I guarantee it!⁴

Undue influence?

While I have extolled the virtues of creativity in writing, some fellow scribes have approached me asking for a simple system for developing the Supporting Points.

So, I stole the basic system I learned in a journalism lecture. In each Supporting Point, you will:

- Tell your reader what you are going to tell them. ***(Introduction)***
- Tell them. ***(Information)***
- Tell your reader what you told them. ***(Summary)***

In an alternate universe...

"Khan!"

Sorry, I couldn't resist doing a William Shatner impersonation or making a Star Trek reference.

In another universe, you could simply focus your Supporting Points on:

- The Problem
- The Solution
- The Benefit

⁴ When you do get to the editing process, make it a habit to keep everything that you remove, which may later turn into separate articles, blog posts, or ideas for other books.

Or, for you dyed-in-the-wool fiction writers:

- Complication
- Crisis
- Resolution

And, yes, you can use dramatic, fiction-writing techniques in developing a nonfiction book.

See the template ***Supporting Idea Development Outline*** on page 23 for help developing your Supporting Points.⁵

Let's do the math

If you have kept up with the steps already outlined, you now have 10 chapter ideas and four Supporting Points for each chapter.⁶

Your goal is to write approximately two pages or 500 words on one of your Supporting Points each day. Understand that 500 words is an arbitrary goal. You may need to write 1,000 words on a particular subject, or you may only need 250 words. Simply write until you have adequately covered the topic, then move on.

Remember, you can write your chapters and Supporting Points in any order. Write what feels right for you for each day.

If you have 10 chapters and write two pages for each Supporting Point each day (a total of 80 pages), it will take you 40 days to write the first draft of your book.

⁵ Remember, this is one idea how to do it, not the end-all-be-all answer. Do what works best for you.

⁶ Remember: The number of chapters and Supporting Points will vary. Create as many or as few as you need to effectively cover your subject.

You are the expert

Remember, you are the expert. Your employment, life experience, hobbies, and much more have already given you a wealth of knowledge. Write about what you know. Your opinion or your thoughts can help other people.

Don't get caught up in the idea that you need to research extensively. If necessary, read just enough to make your topic viable for your current needs, but focus mainly on expressing your own thoughts, rather than regurgitating the ideas of others.

Believe and achieve

I believe everyone has a book inside him or her that can benefit others. So, the bottom line is, "If you believe you can write a book, you can write a book." Print out your daily goal of writing and place the pages in a three-ring binder, so you can watch your book become a reality day by day.

Imagine this: In the very near future, you can say with pride that you are a published author.

Special Note: On page 24, I have included a copy of a blank template titled, ***Non-Fiction Storyboard***. Make copies of this template and carry them with you to jot down an outline for another book while you are waiting in line at the store, stuck in traffic, or when you feel the need to capture a brilliant idea. To give you enough room to write, I only included eight chapter sections on this page. You can use all eight, only four, or, if you need more chapter sections, simply make more copies and re-number the sections. ***Go for it!***

But, what if I can't write?

So what?

The most important thing is you have a solution to someone else's problem. (More on that in a moment.)

Right now, the most important thing you can do is to write down your ideas in the format I present in this book.

Don't cop out!

Do your best to put the ideas in your own words, but don't get hung up over grammar, punctuation, spelling, or even your author's voice (how you come across in writing).

When you are finished recording your thoughts and ideas, you can hire (or trade services with someone) an editor, ghostwriter, or book doctor to clean up your manuscript.

I'll try, but...

"I'll try, but..." is the sentence everyone uses as an excuse for failure in advance.

Don't even think you can get away with that with me!

As Yoda, the Jedi master said to Luke Skywalker, "Try? There is no try. There is only do or do not."

Words to live by.

The big BUT

Whenever I hear the word “but” tacked on after the phrase “I’ll try,” I know I am going to hear an excuse for failure in advance.

“I’ll try, but I think I’m having a baby that week.”

“I’ll try, but I’m all out of clean underwear. I only have my emergency granny panties left and I was saving them for a special occasion.”

“I’ll try, but my proctologist has scheduled me for brain surgery that week.”

Ridiculous? Maybe, but I have heard some bizarre excuses.

The bottom line

You can make an excuse or you can make an effort. The result from the former is a lot of hot air, the result from the latter is a document you can develop into a saleable book.

Keep in mind that this is not rocket surgery.

You are simply writing down some unique ideas, experiences, or guidelines that could help someone else.

In fact, the basics of marketing a nonfiction book are:

1. Identify a pain or problem (common to a large group of people).

2. Develop a solution and write it down in a book (like you are learning to do here!).
3. Sell your book with the solution for a good profit.
4. Rinse and repeat.

Pain trumps pleasure

To forestall any complaints from the glass is half-full side of the literary world, the reality is that people will do more to keep from losing something or to relieve a pain, than they will to achieve a higher goal or improve their health.

Most of us live in a “comfort zone” and can only be relied upon to act accordingly when we believe we are about to lose something.

You are going to lose

As a person with a fertile and active imagination, you stand to lose hundreds or even thousands of dollars in income if you continue to make excuses like, “I’ll try, but I’m not sure I can write.”

Just give it your best shot. The final document can be cleaned up later. And, if you talk to any ghostwriter, he or she will tell you it is infinitely easier to work from a written document than it is to create from whole cloth.

This subject is closed.

Now, write your book!

Non-Fiction Storyboard / Working Title: Advertise for Free!

Chapter 1 Title	Chapter 2 Title	Chapter 3 Title	Chapter 4 Title	Chapter 5 Title	Chapter 6 Title	Chapter 7 Title	Chapter 8 Title
Marketing, Public Relations & Advertising	A.I.D.A.	Mining Your Own "Acres of Diamonds"	Free Ways to Advertise	The Media Release	Brochures, Business Cards, & Flyers	Your Web Site	Television & Radio
Supporting Point #1 What is Marketing?	Supporting Point #1 Attention	Supporting Point #1 Customer Information	Supporting Point #1 Word of Mouth	Supporting Point #1 Formatting Correctly	Supporting Point #1 Developing the Brochure	Supporting Point #1 Domain Registry	Supporting Point #1 Start Local: Expand to Regional & National
Supporting Point #2 What is Public Relations?	Supporting Point #2 Interest	Supporting Point #2 Capturing E-mails	Supporting Point #2 E-mail	Supporting Point #2 WII-FM Content	Supporting Point #2 Business Card Savvy	Supporting Point #2 Developing The Site	Supporting Point #2 Looking and Sounding Good
Supporting Point #3 What is Advertising?	Supporting Point #3 Desire	Supporting Point #3 Referrals	Supporting Point #3 Free Articles & Reports	Supporting Point #3 Targeting Specific Media	Supporting Point #3 Flashy Flyers	Supporting Point #3 Search Engine Optimize	Supporting Point #3 Contacting Producers
Supporting Point #4 Consistency: Key to Successful Results	Supporting Point #4 Action	Supporting Point #4 Upgrading, Adding, Simplifying	Supporting Point #4 Parking Around Town	Supporting Point #4 Follow up & Thank you	Supporting Point #4 Looking Good In Print	Supporting Point #4 Show Me The Money!	Supporting Point #4 Online, PDF, & Print Media Kits

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Non-Fiction Storyboard / Support Idea Development Outline	
Chapter #	Support Idea #
WHAT?	
(A brief description of supporting idea, experience, information, or opinion.)	
HOW?	
WHY?	
WHERE?	
WHEN?	
WHO?	
<u>Body of the message:</u> 3-4 supporting points of information for the above idea, experience, information, or opinion.	
Summary: In one short paragraph summarize what you just told them.	
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Tell them what you are going to tell them.

Tell them! Use descriptive words, develop mental pictures, tug the reader's emotions.

Tell them what you told them.

Non-Fiction Storyboard / Working Title: _____ Date: _____

Chapter 1 Title	Chapter 2 Title	Chapter 3 Title	Chapter 4 Title	Chapter 5 Title	Chapter 6 Title	Chapter 7 Title	Chapter 8 Title
Supporting Point #1	Supporting Point #1	Supporting Point #1	Supporting Point #1	Supporting Point #1	Supporting Point #1	Supporting Point #1	Supporting Point #1
Supporting Point #2	Supporting Point #2	Supporting Point #2	Supporting Point #2	Supporting Point #2	Supporting Point #2	Supporting Point #2	Supporting Point #2
Supporting Point #3	Supporting Point #3	Supporting Point #3	Supporting Point #3	Supporting Point #3	Supporting Point #3	Supporting Point #3	Supporting Point #3
Supporting Point #4	Supporting Point #4	Supporting Point #4	Supporting Point #4	Supporting Point #4	Supporting Point #4	Supporting Point #4	Supporting Point #4

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