

My Journey

In this course, I will show you the exact steps I've learned on my way to publishing six books (at the time of this writing).

I didn't think I would ever write a book. The idea to write sort of snuck up on me. I found that I enjoyed writing as a way of expressing my thoughts, exploring my ideas, and explaining the lessons I've learned along the way.

I started my first blog in 2010. I had no idea what I was doing. That blog didn't really have a theme. It was mostly just a place for me to put my writing on public display. I never really thought that my blog would attract a bunch of traffic. Which is a good thing, because it didn't!

But it's also good that my first blog never had many visitors because even though I didn't realize it at the time, I was learning to write.

I was learning how to use words to tell a story.
I was learning how to structure my thoughts in coherent ways.
I was learning how to keep coming up with fresh ideas.

After awhile, I noticed that I had written enough decent material on that blog to think about turning it into a book.

That was 2011.

My options at that time were limited to self-publishing (which seemed like an enormous headache) and vanity publishing (which carried enormous expense). I didn't want a garage full of my own printed books, so I shied away from self-publishing. I also wasn't thrilled about vanity publishing because I didn't have a bunch of money to throw at my grand book idea.

I decided to pursue a traditional book publisher with my book.

But then I found out that most of the traditional publishers don't actually take book proposals from authors they've never heard of. That meant I would need to get an agent who would get my book proposal into the hands of the publishers.

So, I contacted an agent.

He replied to me with a proposal template. "Write a book proposal," he said, "then we'll see what we can do."

The proposal was more thorough than I thought it would be. It took me a full 18 hours to put into words who I was, why I'd written the book, the size of my platform, how my book compared with others like it that were already on the market, and what I would do to promote it.

Having never done a book proposal before, I thought I'd done pretty well on it. I sent it in with high hopes.

But I heard nothing in return.

Crickets.

Not a courtesy "Thank you" email.

Not a standardized "We're processing your proposal" email.

Not a rejection email.

Nothing.

As the weeks went by, I got discouraged. Then I got inspired.

Publishing my book began to feel like a quest that I needed to conquer. So, after a conversation with my wife, she gave me the go-ahead to pay the money to work with a vanity publisher.

By the way, in case you're wondering, vanity publishing is a hybrid approach to publishing where the author pays the company a certain

amount of money to handle the technical aspects of turning a Microsoft Word document into a printed book.

At that time, there were a few different companies that I could use to publish the book. I chose Westbow Press because they sounded more official than the others. Westbow had been a traditional imprint of Thomas Nelson Publishers, but Thomas Nelson had recently converted Westbow to a vanity imprint.

I ended up paying Westbow Press \$1,000 for them to publish my first book and make it available on Amazon. But I didn't trust their cover designers, so I also paid another person \$1,000 to design my cover and do the interior layout of the book.

That's right. I paid \$2,000 to get my first book published and listed on Amazon. It's crazy when I think about it now, but if there was another way to get it listed on Amazon back then, I didn't know about it.

Fortunately, Amazon has become an aspiring author's best friend. They've made it easier than ever to publish your book and begin making money from it.

That's the process that I will explain in this course.