

101 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU WRITE A BOOK



101 questions to get you really
thinking about your book.

DALE DARLEY

101 Questions To Ask Before Writing A Book

Dale Darley

Welcome

Writing a book is a big undertaking and something that I think people often shy away from because it feels too big. When you look at what is involved, it can seem like a big undertaking; however, when you look at each part as a chunk, it does and will start to feel manageable. This ebook has been designed for you to assess each part of your book journey.

I liken writing a book to a chocolate bar, although that depends on how you devour your chocolate. Imagine, if you will, a large bar of unwrapped chocolate. As you look at it, you will see it is generally made up of lots of little squares. Each square is an element of writing your book. The key is to take your book a chunk at a time. Just as I have put all of the questions into chunks.

Grab your journal and take a deep dive into your motivation for writing a book. These journaling prompts are not designed for you to tackle in one go. No, you need to chunk these, too. Start with each part and explore, remembering to reflect.

My goal is that at the end of this process, you will see that writing a book is achievable and that you can see a way to make this a part of your day-to-day business.

Enjoy the journaling process.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dale".

PS: Grab your copy of [Plan Your Non-Fiction book](#) or [The Memoir Made Easy Planner](#)

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About You And Why You Are Writing A Book

You will, of course, have noticed that books don't write themselves. You do need that all-important ingredient called motivation. I believe motivation starts with getting your head around the why of your book and making sure it is the right one.

- Why do you want to write a book?
- How do you perceive writing a book will change your life?
- Why do you want to share your story, knowledge, skills or experience?
- How do you feel about sharing your words?
- Why are you the best person to be writing this book?
- Are you writing a book you would like to read?

Success And Writing A Book

Success means different things to different people. You may write a book and never publish it, yet it is a success because it has helped you to heal. Success could be that your book has helped to raise your visibility and attract new clients. You may have more speaking engagements. You could want to become a bestseller and sell thousands each week. You have to decide what success means to you and embrace it.

- What will this mean when you successfully publish and become a published author?
- What are your success habits, and how can you use them on this project?
- Which successful author do you identify with and why?
- Would you feel your book was successful even if it wasn't a bestseller? (hint: the answer is yes, writing is hard work and being one of the small percentage of people who do publish means you rock!)
- How will you profit from writing a book?

About You, Your Business And The Business Of Writing A Book

Writing a book starts a long way before you start to plan it. People often tell me they have had a book inside them for years. Some tell me they have written many words but have never felt compelled to publish. When it comes to books, my observation is that sometimes books are written to help us to heal, and these may well have served a purpose, and sometimes books are waiting for the right time to emerge.

When you know why this book aligns with your brand and business and what you want to create, things fall into place. Your business is about creating and delivering value, and a book is a vehicle to help you to do that. So get clear on where you want to go and what you want to create first.

- What do you want to create in the world that brings meaning to you?
- What are your top five values, and how do you want to express who you are through these?
- What is the vision for your life and business – where does your book fit?
- What is your business's core message?
- What is the core message of your book?
- How do the two connect?
- What do you want writing a book to do for your business?
- How do you know that this is the right book?
- If you could visualise your book on the bookshelves, which other books would it nestle alongside?

Your Personal Brand

A personal brand is about what you want to be known for and seen as. In the corporate sense, a brand is an image etched in the public's mind through the culmination of all communications and experiences with the organisation. A personal brand isn't much different. Every interaction you have with others, what you wear, what you say, what you don't say, how you react facially or through body language create an image of you. Everything you do either builds or detracts from your personal brand.

Personal branding is the process by which we understand who we are, what our message for the world is, and how we then 'market' ourselves to others. The key to your success is to find your message and calling (aka purpose) and get compensated for it.

Understanding your Personal Brand is the key to planning the direction of your life, business or career. It enables you to create a unique position for yourself in the world. In addition, it will help you to focus on how you create value and experiences for your clients while staying true to your values.

Whether you want one or not, you already have a personal brand – simply by being you, you have a brand. What you do with it is up to you. If it needs bringing into alignment, then you choose to do that. Life is always about choices, and while it may be tempting to say I don't care what others think, or they can take me or leave me, the reality is your personal brand is how others perceive you. Writing a book supports that perception.

- What do you want to be known for?
- What are you an expert in?
- How do you already demonstrate your expertise?
- How would a book support this?
- How do you see your book working for you and supporting your brand?
- How will writing a book change the perception of your brand and what you are known for?

Your Book Ideas

You will have many ideas for books; I know that I do. The key is choosing the right idea. This comes back to the earlier question of asking what you want to create but also looking at what book is the right book for right now? Writing will be easier and more enjoyable if you choose your best idea.

- What are your top 5 book ideas?
- If you have to choose one, which is it? (no thinking, just go for it)
- What kind of book are you writing?
- What are the three to four core ideas in your book?

Your Book Plan

A book plan is important as it keeps you on track and focused. Yet so many people don't have one. I like to create a plan which has my book journey set out in stages. I like to reflect often and celebrate when I have completed each stage.

- What are the major steps in your book plan?
- What tools will you use to make it easy for you to stick to your plan?
- What is your planning style (hint – think of your learning style and how you get things done)?
- What has to happen to make you stick to your plan – any plan?

Product Blueprint And Roadmap

A book outline lends itself to becoming a product blueprint from which you can create a roadmap for developing your products and services. You can define a 24-month development plan from the book blueprint that includes ebooks, journals, planners, courses, workshops, retreats and signature programs.

- What else could you use your book for? Don't know - book a strategy session. <https://www.memoirmadeeasy.co.uk/work-with-me>
- List at least five other products and services your book could become and consider why these would help you to add value to your customers

Market Research

Market research is all about making sure that there is a gap for your book. One of the best places to research is Amazon, particularly the book reviews. Also, make sure that you check out your competitors and learn from them.

- What other competitive titles are there in your genre?
- What books are in the Top 100, and what can you learn from them?
- What makes your book stand out from its competitors?
- What is the biggest thing that you have learned from your market research?
- What can you learn when analysing competing titles (hint: look inside the table of contents and download samples)?

Your Book And Ideal Reader

When you are writing a book, it is vital that you have a picture of who you are writing it for in your mind. Many people struggle with ideal client avatars but get this right, and your ideal reader profile will emerge. Make sure when you are writing, you are focused on the needs of that one person, and you will create a better book. You need to think carefully about your book's category so your reader can find it.

- What genre or category is your book in?
- Who is your ideal reader? First, spend some time getting to know who they are.
- Why are they reading your book?
- What questions is your ideal reader asking?
- How does your book help your reader?
- What is stopping your reader from solving their problems?
- What keywords does your reader use when looking for answers?
- What is the journey this book takes your ideal reader on?
- What will your ideal reader get as a result of reading this book?
- How will your ideal reader feel when they read your words?
- What do you want your ideal reader to do as a result of reading your book?

Your Book And Your Story

Not everyone wants to write a memoir or personal story, although everyone does have stories to tell. Consider if your story will add value to your reader and, if so, which slice of life is relevant. If you are sharing anecdotes, what are they, and how do they add to the learning that your reader will get? Writing your story can be emotional, and for me, there is the aspect of writing it to heal, in which case do you want to publish, and if you do, how does it add value to your reader's life and learning?

People who are writing personal stories find that at the end of the process, they don't want to publish because the book's purpose has been fulfilled. When this happens, I would encourage you to think about how else you could use the content/

- Which part of your personal story or stories will you add?
- Why those stories?
- What is the key message of your story?
- How will sharing your story add value and change your life and that of your readers?

What Stands In The Way Of Writing A Book?

Let's get good old writer's block out of the way. Writer's block is always about what lies beneath your resistance, not the blank page. One of my favourite activities is exploring writer's block and developing ideas for moving past it and completing a book. Then, when you understand what stands in your way, you can choose how to change these things.

- What stands in the way of you starting this book?
- What are your perceived biggest obstacles to getting this done?
- What if there weren't any obstacles? Would you still write this book?
- What barriers have you encountered in the past around writing a book?
- What are the implications if you wrote this book and did not succeed?
- What could you do that you aren't doing right now that could make this happen?

Your Book Title And The Chapters

Even if it's only the working title, having a book title will bring your book alive. In the 'my book exercise,' one of the first jobs is writing the title and getting used to telling others that this is your book. I find that my titles change often, and that's ok because, eventually, you will find the one that resonates with you.

When you have a title, it's like an umbrella for the rest of the journey. When your umbrella is up, the outline seems to flow. The outline is your ideal reader's journey towards a good result or outcome. Use these questions to have a go at brainstorming your book idea. Grab a big sheet of paper and some coloured pens and have fun.

- What is the title of your book - no thinking - just write?
- How can you draw your reader in with your book title and subtitle (hint – keywords and understanding your ideal reader)?
- What is the first chapter title?
- How will your book flow? Brainstorm or list each of the chapters
- Now you have the chapter list, what will each chapter cover (be brief)?
- What questions does each chapter answer?
- What are the key messages of each chapter?

Writing A Book And Your Time

The phrase making time always amuses me. We all have 24 hours, so the idea that we can make more time seems odd. However, there are many ways in which we can waste time or not use our time productively. Right now, if writing a book is a priority, considering how to become a more productive writer is a must.

What works for me is to write first thing in the morning before my doggie walk. Then, on the walk, I have time to reflect. Then, later in the day, when the working day is over and the last walk is done, I put my computer on my lap, leave the TV on in the background and edit. The key is to find a routine that works for you.

I've known clients say they will miss their morning writing time when the book is over. They have cultivated this great habit and seen their books come alive, and now they are left with a hole to fill.

- What activities could you swap to 'make' time for writing a book?
- What do you perceive as your biggest time-wasting activities? I dare you to add up the hours...
- Why have you never found the time to write your book?
- How will you determine if writing a book is a good use of your time and resources?
- What time strategies would work for you?
- How much research time have you factored in?

How Will You Write Your Book?

There are many ways to write a book. You can write it, blog it, use transcriptions from videos and podcasts, talk about it, and ask someone to co-write or hire a ghostwriter.

The pleasure for me is to write the book myself. I adore writing and love the feeling of the words flowing from me onto the page. But this is not true of everyone, and this comes back to your motivations for writing a book. If this is an exercise in raising your visibility and you have the budget, perhaps hiring a ghostwriter is the best option.

- Will you do all of the writing?
- How can you make writing enjoyable for you?
- What are your preferred writing strategies?
- What can you do to become a more productive writer?
- What has to happen to increase the pleasure of writing a book?
- Will you blog your book?
- What is in your editing plan?
- What is your editing process?
- Who will help you to edit and proof your book?
- What tools can you invest in to support the writing and editing process?

Cover Design

One of my favourite and sometimes frustrating tasks is deciding what the book cover will look like. Sometimes I can wander down many rabbit holes researching on Amazon and looking endlessly at images and fonts. I have learned that you need a good cover design specification and designer. My cover designer gets me and usually comes up with ideas that need hardly any tweaks. You need to get to know your designer and trust that if you are open and positive in your communications, you will get a great cover.

- What kind of covers are catching your eye right now, and why?
- What do you want your cover to convey to your ideal reader?
- What kind of images conveys the essence of your book?
- How do you want your ideal reader to feel when they look at your book cover?

Publishing Your Book

Self-publishing is a wonderful way to get your book onto the shelves quickly. It has become a hugely popular route for many writers. You have total control of the process, even if you do have to share your profits with your publishing platform (Amazon). However, for some, it is important to be traditionally published. This will take longer, and you will have less control of your book. To ensure that you sell your book to a potential agent or publisher, you will need to write a book proposal. Be prepared for rejections, and when you find the right publisher check out how to make the relationship work for you both.

- What publishing route will you follow, and why?
- If your first choice is not available, what is plan B?
- What is the publishing deadline?
- What might get in the way of you making that date?
- Is there anything that would prevent this book from being published?

Marketing Your Book

Marketing is something that many leave to the last minute. I always recommend starting to market your book before you start writing. A launch plan will help you to focus your mind and the tasks. If you start it early, it won't be a mad rush when you hit publish. Then, of course, there is the all-important question of what goes into your marketing plan. You need to look at the business's overall marketing plan and goals and align your plans. They are not separate, yet many see them as so.

- What is going into your launch plan?
- What is your marketing strategy for this book?
- What would it mean to have an Amazon number-one bestseller?
- What is your marketing budget?
- What resources do you need?
- Who will do the marketing?
- What measurement metrics do you have in place to show that this has been successfully executed?
- How often do you plan to update and relaunch your book?

And finally, some tips.

1. Write every day. Writing is a muscle, and it likes to be exercised.
2. Get rid of distractions
3. Get support for those moments of self-doubt and dwindling motivation
4. Have a plan, chunk it all down and reward yourself at each milestone
5. Take breaks and reflect often
6. Do not rush the writing of your book

Planning and writing a book with a proven system also helps.

Meet Dale



I am dedicated to guiding, inspiring, and empowering women, helping them embrace their boldness, bravery, and brilliance. My mission revolves around creating a nurturing environment where women feel respected, heard, and encouraged to unleash their inner wisdom and creativity. I focus on supporting women through the complexities of this thing called life, offering coaching and mentoring to reignite their inner spark and providing clarity and a renewed sense of purpose and inner peace.

My approach is rooted in the belief that every woman has an inner creative force, a source of inspiration and wisdom that I call the “womb of creation” or the sacral chakra. My passion is to help women reconnect with this power. Through a blend of methods, I aim to establish a safe and nurturing space for women to explore and rediscover their heart's desires, dreams, and passions.

In this journey of rediscovery and reinvention, I serve as a guide, sounding board, and partner. Whether seeking a fresh direction, a gentle nudge, or simply a space to reconnect with one's dreams, I am here with open ears and an open heart. I am committed to empowering women to confidently shape their lives and step into their power.

As a lifelong advocate for the transformative power of journaling and writing, I have dedicated myself to inspiring others through the written word – my journals and books. My journey with journaling began as a way to make sense of the world, tap into my inner wisdom and evolve into a better version of myself. I have also used it to ‘save my life’.

This commitment to self-exploration and growth was put to the ultimate test in 2018 when I suffered two spinal fractures. Combining therapeutic journaling with extensive research on nutrition, energy medicine and self-care, I rebuilt my bones and my entire life.

As an author, writer, and course creator, my work revolves around the philosophy that words are not just tools for communication but vehicles for transformation. Known for my ingenuity, creativity, and strategic planning skills, I am highly adept at converting abstract concepts into tangible solutions.

I love to bring my own brand of quirkiness into my work, lightening up even the most serious of endeavours. Contrary to my father's opinion, many find my humour endearing and consider me one of the kindest souls they have met.

When not busy with my writing and furrries, I am an avid reader, always looking for the next great idea to share. A firm believer in lifelong learning, I continuously seek to broaden my understanding of the world and beyond. And when I need a break? You'll find me walking my beloved furrries or indulging in a slice of cake.

My mission is simple—to inspire, empower, and support others in connecting with their divine inner wisdom. By being brave, bold and brilliant, I believe we all can discover the incredible untapped potential and wisdom within us.

You can discover more at – www.daledarley.com

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