

Think you have a book in you?

We've all heard the overly quoted statistic.

81% of the population wants to write a book, but only 1% actually does.

In 2016, writing and publishing a book isn't only possible, but it's easier than it's even been before.

There's something amazing about being able to say you've written a book. Your self-esteem goes up. When people know you've written a book they have more respect for you. It can add credibility to your career or business.

When I received a proof copy of my first book, the feeling was euphoric. I felt a mixture of pride and disbelief.

*I created this.*

Once you've published your first book, you can stand proudly among the 1% who has done it, your bucket list has one less item, and at minimum you get a cool souvenir.

If it's halfway decent you'll earn a profit. You write the book once and it continues to pay each month (even though sales will likely drop after a few months, which is why many successful self-published authors write multiple books).

The bad news? Books aren't exactly easy to write. In order to write one, you're going to need to have a healthy writing habit. You're also going to have to come to grips with the fact that your first draft is going to suck and will need to be rewritten several times.

Even the polished, final version of your book *won't be that good*.

That's okay. Your first book is for learning. This isn't going to be one of those cheesy "Write Your Book in 7 Days and Sell 1,209,283 copies," type of posts. It's just me sharing what I know from experience.

Don't expect your first book to sell 10,000 copies, make the New York Times Best Seller List, and launch your career into the stratosphere. It's not going to happen. But if you become a better writer and publish more books, your income will grow.

Regardless of the results, the process is worth it. I've met a bunch of self-published authors with varying success, and 100% of them are happy with their choice to write and publish their first book.

If you're thinking about writing a book, you should write one.

## **Setting Expectations**

I've seen some authors sell a decent amount of books their first try. I don't personally know any who had breakout success with their first book. Your first book is an experiment and a learning process. If you go into the process with unrealistic expectations you'll end up disappointed.

It's important to understand what you want and what your goals are for your career as an author. Some just want to cross writing a book off of their bucket list. Others want to turn it into a full time living. Some use their books as launching pads for a business.

I've broken down the author types into three different categories. Each category requires a certain level of commitment, both mentally and financially.

Figure out which one you are (or aspire to be) and plan accordingly.

### **Author Type # 1 – The Laborer of Love**

The laborer of love has dreamed of writing a book for a long time. Of course they'd like their book to sell, but it's not their main reason for writing the book. They just want to be able to say they did it. At this level, you don't have to break the bank on cover design, editing, and marketing.

### **Budget Range - \$300-500**

### **Author Type # 2 – The Serial Writer**

This is the type of person who writes multiple books in order to make a full-time living as an author. They write quality books, but they keep tight deadlines to write multiple books a year. They take pride in their writing, but they're more business minded and aren't hoping to become the next Hemingway.

Most successful self-published authors fall into this category.

[Steve Scott](#) is a great example. He started writing short books (20-30k words) every 3 weeks. He now makes north of half a million dollars per year in royalties after having written more than 60 books. He used his platform and authority as an author to pursue more business ventures, but book royalties are his main revenue source.

[Joanna Penn](#) is another great example. She's published 19 books -- half fiction and half non-fiction. She says that "none of her books are breakout hits," but the cumulative amount of royalties added up to [nearly six figures in the past year.](#)

Lastly, take a look at the [income reports](#) from serial author Michael Stawicki. He waited a year before publishing the reports to give a clear view of the struggles he faced early on. In his first few months he made little money and even *lost money some months*.

Now, according to NYT Bestselling Author Kevin Kruse, Stawicki "makes more money than 75% of self-published authors."

When you read statistics about self-published authors not making much money, the data often includes writers who only write one book.

You're definitely not going to be able to make a full-time living from one book if you don't already have a huge audience. I'd be interested to see the numbers for serial authors who dedicate themselves to publishing multiple books. I bet the numbers are more favorable.

I plan on writing a new book every 4-6 months. I take my reputation as an author seriously. I want to write quality books, but I want to move towards a full-time living too. This schedule gives me enough room to make those cumulative sales but also gives me enough time to produce quality work.

Sales for my first book have averaged anywhere from \$225-\$300 per month. Not exactly "swimming in money," but I did make a profit and I imagine with several books published the monthly figures will start to grow.

I personally know an author who has written about 30 books, which enabled him to write full time. It seems like it's not only possible, but also feasible to make a living as an

author with the serial book writing strategy. It doesn't take master level writing skills. It just takes work, diligence, and patience.

Authors on this level spend more on quality editing and design. They also spend a lot on advertising for their book launches.

### **Budget Range - \$500-1,000**

### **Author Type # 3 – The Authorpreneur**

This is the Holy Grail for aspiring writers. This is when your hard work and persistence pay off and you're able to make more than just a comfortable living through your writing. The Authorpreneur takes the credibility they've gained from their books and leverages it to make money in other ways.

Their income streams include:

- Online courses
- Speaking engagements
- Affiliate income
- Sponsorship
- (High amounts of) book royalties

At this level, the author usually has a very large following (10,000 to 100,000+ email subscribers). Once you have a large audience it's hard to fail.

Got a new book out? Send an email to your subscribers and sell 1,000 copies on day one.

Launch an online course? You can convert at .5% and still make a king's ransom.

I can't speak on exactly what it takes to get there because I'm not there. But here are some things I can safely say about making it to this level.

- You have to work hard.
- You have to build a large email list
- You have to develop relationships with influential people.
- Most of the writers I've noticed on this level have been at it for 5-15 years.

While this is an ideal goal, if you set your sights on this level too early you'll burn out. If you compare yourself to these people you'll feel insecure. If you blindly copy their techniques they won't work.

Take it one book at a time, use blogging and book writing to build your following, develop trust and rapport with your audience, and be patient.

The only reason I included this author level is to give you something to aim for long-term. This is my long-term goal, and I keep it in the back of my mind when I feel like giving up.

*It's my dream.* It might be yours too.

It's extremely difficult to pull off. Anyone who tells you it isn't is lying to you. But if it's your dream you should move towards it and believe in yourself.

Authors at this level have major book launches that cost a lot of money. Usually they'll have contract with a publishing house.

Self published authors at this level spend a lot of money on design, editing, and marketing. James Altucher, author of Wall Street Journal Bestseller, *Choose Yourself*, [spent \\$31,000.00 to publish his book](#). It went on to sell more than 350,000 copies.

### **Platform or no Platform?**

A platform means having a group of people who've given you permission to communicate with them. An author platform usually consists of a blog and an email list. Having an email list of people who you can market your books to increases your chance of success.

Seth Godin says you should start marketing your book "three years before it comes out," by building a platform.

If you're in the labor of love camp, then don't worry about having a large audience before you launch. For all other types, you might want to consider building a following before you launch first book.

When I wrote my book, I had no following. If I had a bigger following at the time the book would've succeeded on a higher level.

Here's the thing – when you don't have your own following, you're relying on the book retailers and advertising companies to promote your book. This can only take you so far.

Every single book I've seen succeed on a large scale was by someone who had an email list.

So how large is large? Well, it depends on who you ask. Some authors have 100,000 email subscribers. Some have a few hundred.

It's more important to have engaged email subscribers than it is to have a large email list with people who aren't interested in you or your work.

Taylor Pearson, author of *The End of Jobs*, sold 5,000 copies in his first month with just 700 email subscribers. He had a couple of things going for him.

- The book was well written.
- He had a great professional network established prior to the book release.
- He had an [insanely good marketing plan](#).

A smaller email list with high engagement can help your book sell if you use smart marketing like Taylor.

Right now I have around 1,400 email subscribers. I'd like to see that number in the 3,000-5,000 range when I launch my new book at the end of the year.

The value of having email subscribers is that they can help your book get the “lift,” it needs to succeed on Amazon and other platforms.

If your launch goes well and you get a high amount of sales during your first few weeks, Amazon will help you market your books by recommending them to customers.

They're in business to make money too, so if they see that a book is already doing well, it makes sense for them to promote the book too, because they get a commission from every sale.

If you just want to get your feet wet in publishing, you can start with no following. If you're looking to play with the big boys and girls, work on building a following first.

I might come out with a list-building guide in the future, but there are several bloggers who can do the subject more justice than I can.

Here are the best resources on the Internet for building your email list:

**Free Resources:**

- [Video fruit](#)
- [Smart passive income](#)
- [Jeff Goins](#)

**Paid Resource:**

- [Serious list building for authors](#)

[callout]If you're deciding to work on building your blog following and email list first, you can always [click here](#) to save this guide for later when it's time to start writing.[/callout]

## The Nuts and Bolts of Writing a Book

Alright. After that long-winded introduction I'm sure you want to know how to actually write the damn thing.

This is the process I used to write my book. I'm not saying it's the best way. It's just the way I learned how to do it.

### Step 0 - (Optional) Research Phase

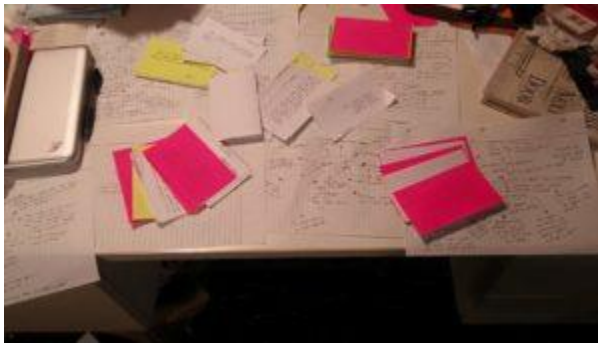
If you're worried about your book being low quality because it lacks due diligence and research, by all means take the time to research first.

Depending on the subject of your book, research may be necessary. Once you've pinned down your idea, you can decide if you want to do research for your book.

I read a lot. So before I even had the idea for my first, I'd been collecting and organizing information I read in various books.

I used the "note card technique," to research and collect information. I learned about it from best selling authors Ryan Holiday and Robert Greene. You can read about [the entire process in detail here](#).

It helped to have a stack of quotes, facts, and anecdotes to draw on before I got started on writing the book.



The collection of facts and quotes I used to write my first book.

Patience is key when it comes to creating quality work. If you want your book to be more authoritative, it's smart to make it well referenced. But if you're writing something like a memoir or fiction then research isn't necessary.

## **Step 1 – The Idea**

If you have an idea for a book already, skip to step two.

If you don't know what you want to write about, here are some primer questions to help get you started:

*What can you talk about with ease?*

For me, living a strength based and purposeful life was something I always talked about.

*What do you like to read?*

If you don't like to read, then you shouldn't write. Period. I love to read books about personal development, business, psychology, spirituality, and marketing.



*What's your worldview?*

I learned this exercise from popular author Jeff Goins. He says to create a worldview statement to get a focus for the subject of your writing. The statement goes like this: all \_\_\_\_\_ should \_\_\_\_\_. Mine ended up being: All people should use their natural talents and strengths to become successful.

*What pisses you off?*

The fact that people blindly follow the rules of society pisses me off.

Using these questions and other similar questions can help get your ideas flowing. If you're still stuck, try writing down 10 book ideas per day for a week. After a week, take a look at what you came up with and narrow it down to a broad subject you can write about.

It's better if you've given your book idea some serious thought before you write it, but I also don't want you to suffer from "analysis paralysis."

Your first book probably won't be great. You might as well ship it and learn something along the way.

This is *my philosophy*.

I'm not from New York, nor am I a stuffy, elitist writer, so I don't really care about anything related to the word "literary." I just want to see people grow and share their thoughts with the world.

## **Step 1a – The Mind Map**

The mind map is basically a brain dump of everything you can think of to include in a book about the topic you've settled on.

I take the main subject, write it down, circle it, and start branching ideas off of it.

The ideas branching off of the main circle may end up being chapters or sections of chapters, but at this point it doesn't matter. The entire purpose is to get down everything you can to see if there's enough "meat," there for a whole book.

Some people like using post it notes and large sheets of construction paper to write the mind map on. There's also [mind mapping software](#) you can use if you like.

I set a timer for a half an hour to do my first round of mind mapping. Then I step away from it for a while and come back for a second round. I'll sleep on it for a day then repeat the process one more time.

For your first book, you can move quickly on your ideas, and a couple of rounds of mind mapping should be enough to get you started.

When you move forward in your author career, you'll have a more elaborate thought process and you might let ideas marinate for months, even years, before you make the decision to start writing a book.

Slower thought processes will lead to higher quality work, but in my opinion, you want to get that first book out there simply to get the "write a book monkey," off your back.

## **Step 2 - Outline**

Once you have your mind map complete, you need to turn it into an outline.

To create your outline, start grouping similar topics on your mind map. You'll start to notice patterns with the your ideas and they'll start to form into chapters and sub sections. There are a couple of different ways you can structure your book.

### **Fiction**

Fiction books usually follow a three-part story arc. There's the introduction/plot formation phase, the climax, and resolution. I know absolutely nothing about writing fiction so that's all I can say to that.

### **Non-Fiction**

Here's a general outline for structuring a non-fiction book.

The chapter and section structure is easy to follow and it's neat. It looks like this:

[Chapter A]

- Section A
- Section B
- Section C
- Section D

It's the one I would recommend to first time authors.

Take your mind map and organize the ideas into chapters and sections.

Take the ideas that are similar to one another and group them together. Each of the groups becomes a chapter, with each individual idea within a group becoming a section of the chapter.

This won't be the final version of your outline, but it's enough to get started. You'll find out that by the time you're done with the finished product, it won't resemble what you started out with.

### **Step 3 - Writing the Rough Draft (30-90 Days)**

Here comes the fun part!

If you have the outline of the book nailed down, the writing shouldn't be *too difficult*. Coming up with good ideas is the tricky part, but once the outline is complete and you have a good grasp on the subject you're good to go.

When writing my first book, I repeated the mind mapping and outlining process for each chapter. I did this because I wanted to draw out any new ideas.

You're not going to flesh everything out in your initial mind map and outline, so it's probably a good idea to see if there's anything else you can add.

For example:

Let's say my outline for Chapter A looks like this:

[Chapter A]

- Section A
- Section B

- Section C
- Section D

I'll go through the mind-mapping phase again for 10-15 minutes. After that, I'll re create the outline for the chapter and it might look something like this:

[Chapter A]

Section A

- Subsection A
- Subsection B
- Subsection C

Section B

- Subsection A
- Subsection B
- Subsection C

Section C

- Subsection A
- Subsection B
- Subsection C

You get the idea.

The more you can flesh out ideas and structure before you start writing, the easier it will be.

### **Rules For Writing Your Rough Draft**

1. Don't Edit Anything - Your first draft is going to suck big time. The whole purpose of the draft is to get your ideas on paper and to see if you have enough there for a book. If you self-edit while you're trying to write your rough draft, you'll end up in "self-editing hell," and run the risk of never finishing your book.

I've seen this happen to several authors. They get bogged down in editing purgatory and never escape.

2. Write every day - Your rough draft should be written in "rapid writing mode." If you write every day, you'll be able to complete a rough draft of your manuscript in 30-90 days depending on the length of the book. I set a goal of 1,000 words per day for my draft, but it's up to you to decide your pace. I wouldn't go lower than 500 words per day. I'd also suggest writing at the same exact time every day too. It helps build a habit.
3. Don't look things up while you write - If there's a fact or quote you're looking to insert, you can find it later. Just leave yourself a note in the text e.g. [Insert statistic here] and come back to it on your second time through.
4. Concentrate - This goes without saying, but you shouldn't surf the web and check your phone during scheduled writing time. Whatever time block you dedicate to your writing should be done in a state of absolute focus.
5. Have fun! - Writing your first book will be one of the most exciting times in your life. Every day of the rough draft phase *was a blast for me*. You have several headaches ahead of you, so enjoy the rough draft phase.

## **Step 4 - Read Your Book Out Loud**

You're going to end up editing your book multiple times before you send it off to a professional editor.

In the first editing phase, you're going to read the entire book out loud to yourself. Why? Because you'll catch tons of phrases that sound weird and don't make sense grammatically.

Some people like to print out the entire book and mark it up with a red pen. I made edits in real time on a word document. It's up to you.

## **Step 5 - Editing Phase 2 - The Chopping Phase**

During this editing phase, you're going to want to go through and take a hard look at the structure of your book, the concepts in it, and the way it reads.

Writing is always the easy part. It's difficult to cut out portions of your book, but it's necessary.

Remove any unnecessary sentences, paragraphs, sections, or entire chapters.

I tried using some posts from my blog in my first book. Some of the ones I included didn't fit the subject matter well or they interrupted the flow of the book, so I removed them.

Many sentences were removed. If I repeated myself I removed the sentence. If the sentence was "fluffy," and didn't do much to support the topic I removed it.

As a rule of thumb, you should remove at least 25% of the book. There's no way it's good enough to need less editing than that.

After you've removed a good portion of the book, go back to the beginning and add some flare or expand on topics you might have glossed over.

## **Step 6 - Editing Phase 3 - Beta Readers**

Beta Readers are a group of people who agree to read the semi-finished draft of your book. I reached out to other authors I knew as well as friends of mine to read my manuscript.

Beta readers will help you catch any spelling or grammar mistakes in the book and they'll also make comments on the overall structure and provide input for improvements.

There's also another benefit to having beta readers. When your book is published on Amazon, you can ask them to review the book.

Reviews are important when it comes to marketing your book for a couple of reasons:

- Amazon uses reviews as a part of its ranking algorithm.
- Reviews provide social proof. If a random buyer sees your book with a lot of reviews they're more likely to buy it.
- Certain advertisers require your book to have a handful of reviews before they'll allow you to use their services.

Once you've received feedback from your beta readers you can work on finishing the final phase of your manuscript.

## **Step 4 - The Polishing Phase (1-2 Weeks)**

In this phase you can incorporate the feedback you received from your beta readers and look through your manuscript to see if there's anything missing.

Does your book flow well from chapter to chapter?

Is your voice consistent throughout the book?

Can anything be added to make it better -- stories, statistics, or concepts?

You want the book to be as complete as possible before you send it off to an editor. You also want to read through it a couple of times to catch any spelling or grammar mistakes before it's sent off.

You're hiring an editor because they're supposed to catch every mistake, but you want to do your part in making sure it's checked as thoroughly as possible.

## **Step 5 - Send Manuscript to Editor**

If you're serious about your book becoming a success, professional editing isn't optional. If your book has spelling or grammar errors it will turn people off. Even worse, they'll leave you bad reviews on Amazon.

There are two different types of editing -- copy editing and developmental editing.

Copy editing is only for spelling and grammar mistakes.

With developmental editing, you collaborate with an editor to make sure your book has a strong narrative and reads smoothly. Developmental editing can turn a good book into a great book, but it's expensive. Good developmental editing will cost you thousands of dollars.

The choice is yours, but for your first book you might want to stick to simple copy editing. When you have a book or two under your belt, you can work with a top-notch editor to work on your NYT bestseller.

You can find an editor on freelance websites like [freelancer](#) and [upwork](#).

These sites allow you to post a job listing where different freelancers can bid on your job and give you estimates of how much it will cost to complete.

It's important to set your budget beforehand and also make sure you set a clear deadline for how long you want the editing to take.

Most editors charge by word count. Some charge per hour (try to get a fixed price if they say they're hourly.) Don't be afraid to negotiate. A good copy editor will cost you a couple hundred bucks.

So what do you do while your book is being edited?

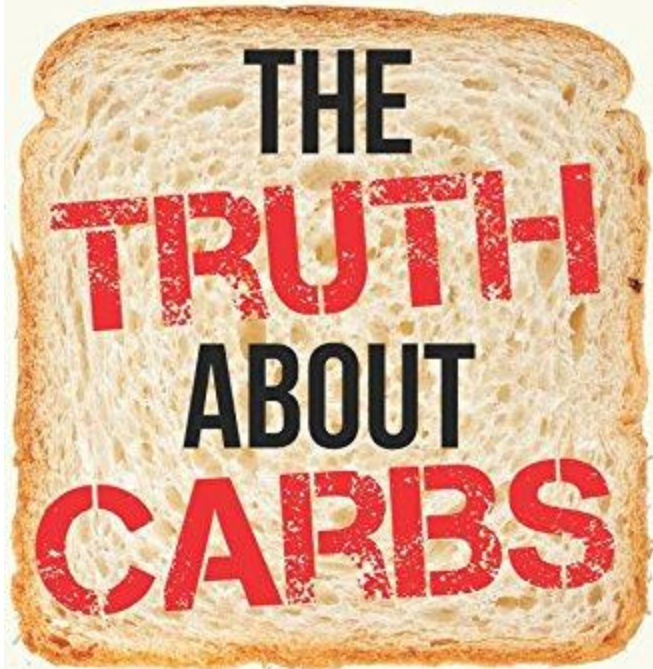
When your book is being edited, you can start to search for a cover designer. Your book cover is definitely something you don't want to pinch pennies on. When it comes to books on Amazon and other online retailers, *they're definitely judged by their covers*.

If your cover looks unprofessional, people will pass on your book. You also want to make sure your cover looks good as a thumbnail image. With the cover for my first book, the subtitle was too small and was hard to see in thumbnail version. Unfortunately I didn't realize it until it was too late. Here are some great examples of well-designed book covers with appealing lettering.



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HOW TO EAT JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF CARBS  
TO SLASH FAT, LOOK GREAT NAKED,  
& LIVE LEAN YEAR-ROUND



Nate Miyaki

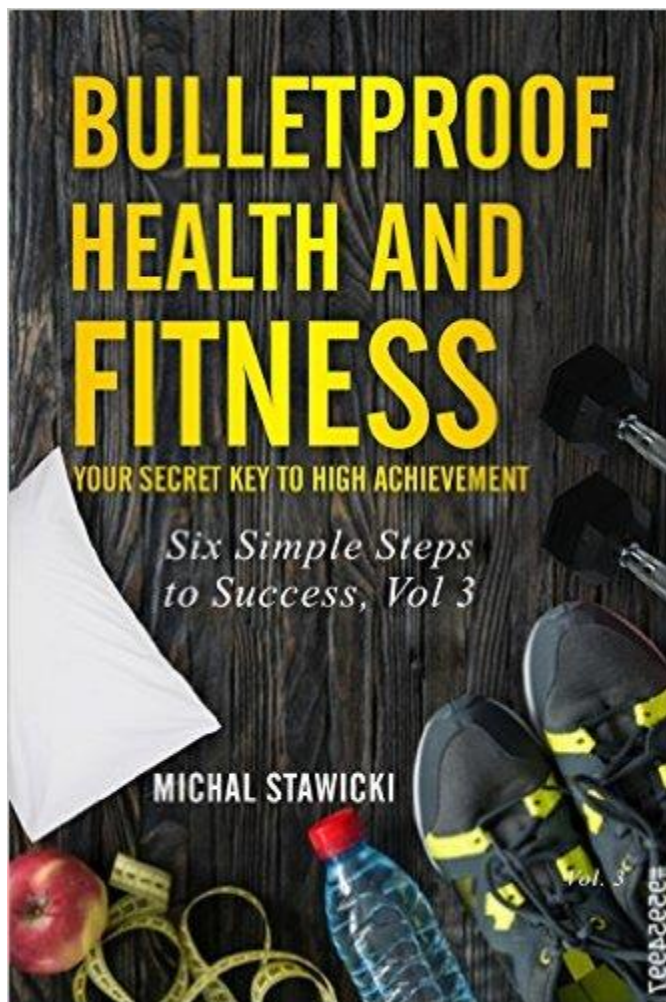
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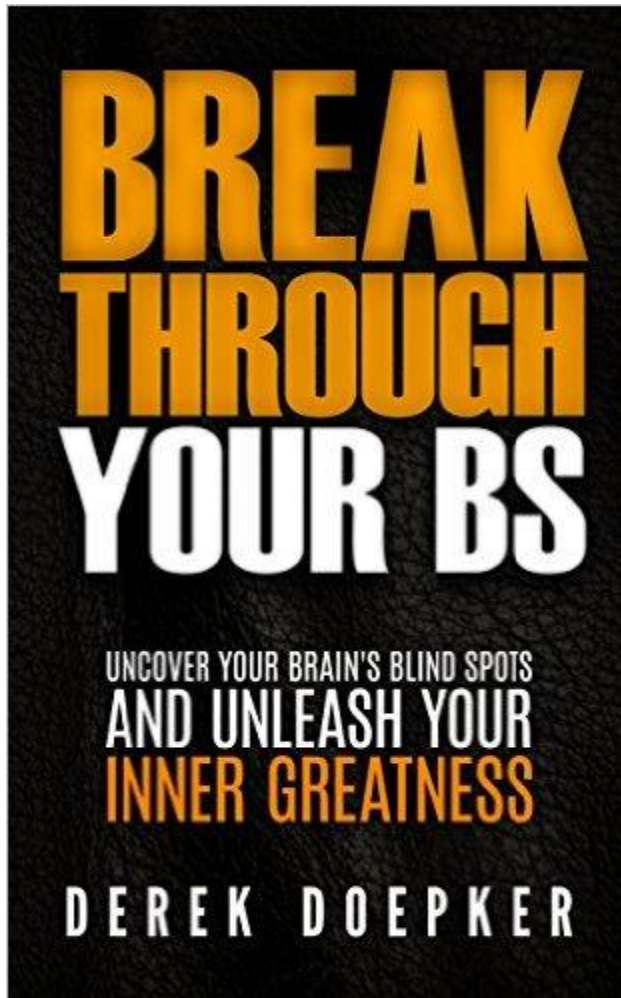
# BULLETPROOF HEALTH AND FITNESS

YOUR SECRET KEY TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT

*Six Simple Steps  
to Success, Vol 3*

MICHAL STAWICKI





You can go for a more graphic heavy style if you want, but the ones I've seen do well usually have crisp lettering and eye-catching colors.

Prices for book covers can range anywhere from \$100-\$1,000. For your first book, get something nice but don't break the bank.

Here are some resources for finding book cover designs:

[archangelink.com](http://archangelink.com)

[happyselfpublishing.com](http://happyselfpublishing.com)

[99designs.com](http://99designs.com)

**Step 6 - Incorporating Feedback/ Final Edit**

When you receive your manuscript back from an editor, you might be taken a back at the amount of suggested changes. I've seen some authors get really upset at the comments and suggestions they've gotten.

Keep a few things in mind when you're looking at feedback from an editor:

- This is their job. If they make a suggestion it's based on solid knowledge and experience.
- They want your book to do well, which is why they made the suggestions.
- It's not personal.

Ultimately, it's up to you to decide whether or not to accept your editor's changes. Of course you'll want to correct the grammatical errors they found, but if they make some suggestions about structure or subject matter you have the power to make the final decision.

Once you've completed making the changes, you're going to want to read over the manuscript over a few more times to make sure it's *juuust* right. I'd set a limit at 3 -- you don't want to fall into self editing hell.

After your book is edited, you want to hire someone to format your book so it can be uploaded to Amazon and other retailers. You can use the freelancer sites I mentioned before to find someone to format your book.

## **Picking a Title**

I didn't really like the title of my first book (The Destiny Formula), and the subtitle was way too long (Find your purpose. Overcome Your Fear of Failure. Use Your Natural Talents and Strengths to Build a Successful Life.)

The best advice I've heard for choosing a title is to make sure it clearly communicates what your book is about. It should also be succinct. Don't try to be too cute or clever. You also want to use your sub-title to explain the benefits of your book.

## **Conclusion**

I was going to dive into a section on how to publish your book on Amazon, but that will likely require another 4,500 word guide just to explain it. I'll leave you with these parting thoughts.

Writing your first book will be one of the most awesome/scary/anxiety ridden/fantastic/stressful/joyous/at times miserable parts of your life. It's an emotional roller coaster that's well worth the price of admission. Remember to have fun. Your first book isn't going to sell a bunch of copies. Keep your expectations low. Enjoy the process of growing as a writer. Begin plotting the idea for your next book.

My book was released in January and I'm just now starting the work for my second book. If I could go back in time I would begin writing my second book right after I finished marketing my first. I made a nice little profit from writing one, but in order to reach my goals I'm going to have to write more. The good news is they'll be higher quality each time and my audience will be larger each time.

If you're serious about becoming a full-time writer, I suggest you get started on the process.

**P.S.**

If you're really serious about learning how to write, publish, and market your first book, there are paid resources to teach you how.

Self Publishing School has helped hundreds of authors publish their first book. I took the course and I made every penny back and then some. They have two different options -- pro and master level. The master level includes 8 one hour coaching sessions, but it's much more expensive.

Here's a link to a [free video series](#) that explains what the course is about. If you like what you see and decide to buy the course, I'll give you unlimited coaching sessions with me for free. It's an affiliate link, so I do make a commission on the sale **at no extra cost to you.**

If you have questions about the course prior to purchasing feel free to email me at [ayodejiawosika@gmail.com](mailto:ayodejiawosika@gmail.com)