



There's Still Time! Write Your Book virtual training

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Braindump your ideas. Write down all those inspired, creative ideas in a cute journal. I get a lot of my journals at the dollar store, because I go through them like water. You can also buy them at Amazon, book stores, Walmart, Target, and other places. Don't edit yourself for correct spelling, punctuation, or grammar during this braindump. Just dump all the ideas down on paper or on your laptop, computer, iPad or record them with a recorder. The key is to get them out of your head onto paper or your writing device to jumpstart your writing. Ready, set, write!

Brainstorm with other writers. Let's face it, speakers and writers are a different breed. Some would say even a little weird! Definitely different. We only get each other. There's nothing like being in a room with other speakers and writers or entrepreneurs to get those creative juices going and new, inspired ideas. Join a mastermind, enroll in a writing class or a training like this, or have a writers' MeetUp. You can also join a writers' group where you share your writing to get encouraging feedback or even constructive criticism about the book you're writing. Hang around other writers who will encourage and inspire you to write your book, and pray for your writing success (and not be jealous of it!).

Butt in chair. I've had numerous people ask me how I've written 10 books (eight are currently available for sale on Amazon here: <http://www.amazon.com/Beth-D-Jones/e/Boo4B62HoA>) I tell them by sitting my butt down in the chair and writing it! That is really the way you do it! (You can also record your book and have it transcribed.) The way you write a book is *one word at a time, until it's finished*. You may be encouraged to know that you don't have to write your book in order! You can write the last chapter

first, then the middle of the book, then the intro and first chapter! Margaret Mitchell did this writing her famous novel, *Gone With The Wind*, that later became a \$1.45 billion grossing movie, according to Google. Some people have asked me how I knew the book was “done.” I just had a sense of “fullness” and “completeness” about the book; I felt God’s peace that it was finished. Of course, I edited my books for spelling, grammar, and content, and the editing process may require much rewriting. For many people, the hard part is just getting started! JUST DO IT! Start writing today!

To outline or not to outline. Author Joanna Penn says that outlining is the process of setting out the main events of your book, and working out the plot from beginning to end. It can be a rough 1-pager, a series of sticky notes, or a detailed, comprehensive document. As a writer, I don’t usually heavily outline my books. I get the idea for the book in my head, pray about it, and then I just start writing. Under the “Muse” (a term for inspired writing, and I believe God is my Muse!), the writing seems to flow effortlessly. With my last two books, *The Cinderella Story: The Power of Shoes*, and my only fiction book that I’ve written, *Storm Tossed* (both which became Amazon Best Sellers in their categories and sub-categories), I outlined a little before writing the books. I wrote tentative chapter titles and then a few notes about what that chapter was going to be about. Some (especially famous or very successful) authors do heavily outline their books. Outlining can help you to know what to write next, helps you with ideas for changing the plot or having new ideas, and to find problems and holes in the plot or characters. An outline can serve as a guide for writing your book, especially if you have a lot of fears about writing or get writers’ block. You can always change the writing, and throw the outline out the window, because sometimes writing seems to take on a life of its own (as this long paragraph attests!). It’s really up to what you prefer to do, whether you like outlining or not, and whether it actually helps your writing.

Research keywords and categories, especially for Amazon. Want to become an Amazon Best Seller author? This is really how I accomplished it! I signed up in the beta group for Shelley Hitz’s *Author Audience Academy*, and in this writers’ training, she taught us about the importance of finding the right keywords and categories for your Amazon book (or wherever you publish your book!). With her training, I am now the author of eight Amazon Best Sellers, something I’ve never accomplished before as an author! The key is to “drill down” and get very specific on the sub-categories at Amazon. Amazon allows you seven keywords for your eBook. You want to make sure to have keywords that will enable your targeted market to find your book, that they are searching for. Study books on Amazon that are selling well, and learn what keywords, categories, and sub-categories those authors are using with their books. It would take much longer than the time I have available here to teach this, so I encourage you to sign up for Shelley’s more comprehensive, excellent training today. I’d really appreciate you signing up for it under my affiliate link! You can learn more here.

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Choose your book cover image. I almost always find the images for my books at Istock. <http://www.istockphoto.com/> They have beautiful pictures. You can also find images at Free Digital Photos, Dollar Photo Club, and Lightstock.com, which has Christ-centered, royalty-free images. It's so important that you like (and I believe, even love) the image for your book. An author friend of mine was annoyed because her graphic designer kept choosing images and colors for her book cover that she didn't like, I exhorted her to stand her ground, and keep persisting until the graphic designer delivered what she wanted. It's her book! The image is very important, I believe almost as important as the content inside. You want to love it, and you want others to be drawn to it, too. You've heard the expression, "Don't judge a book by its cover," but people do. People are either drawn visually or repelled by a book (or eBook) cover. It can mean the difference between them clicking on that "Buy now" button or clicking off to go somewhere else, and the decision is usually made in a split second. I often buy the image for my book (or eBook) cover as I'm writing the book, to inspire me to keep writing and to finish. Make sure you carefully choose the image for your book cover.

Hire a professional graphic designer, editor, and/or formatter. I can't stress this enough. When I first started out as a speaker and writer, I was given very bad advice by a writing and business coach to do everything myself in business. This was WRONG advice for me! It left me stressed out, frustrated, and even angry. Since I discovered outsourcing (hiring people to do tasks for me), I'm now free to use the gifts God has anointed me with—speaking and writing! I highly recommend my graphic designer Christine Dupre, who designed the beautiful covers on my print books and Cinderella series eBooks. She is on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/christinedupregraphics>. For professionally formatting and editing your print book and eBooks, I highly recommend Hanne Moon of Heritage Press Publications at <http://heritagepresspublications.com/>. Christine and Hanne are my writing team, and they are amazing! If you want to quickly upload your eBook to Amazon and are on a very tight budget, I recommend outsourcing the graphic design of your cover and the formatting (converting your Word document to ePub format for the Kindle at Amazon) to workers at Fiverr. <https://www.fiverr.com/> Make sure they have high ratings and good recommendations.

Edit-and edit again! I believe as Christians, we are strive for excellence in all we do. Not perfection, but excellence. We are stewards of everything God has given us, including our gifts of speaking and writing. As a Christian author, you don't want to do sloppy work, filled with spelling and grammar errors and terrible content. You want to do your very best for God, so that when you see Him face to face, you will hear "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." (Matthew 25) I always use Spell Check to edit my books, and I do this several times, before having the document converted to ePub for the Kindle at Amazon, and/or my formatter/editor Hanne. Even with several edits for grammar and spelling (by you and your editor/formatter), there may still be a couple of mistakes. This is when you have to let go and let God, and get over your perfectionism (ask me how I

know this! As my friend Rochelle Valasek says, I'm a recovering perfectionist! Almost every book, even by famous authors, has some mistakes in it. But it's important to try to catch as many as possible before going to print or hitting that button on Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) at Amazon to go live! You don't want readers writing bad reviews because your book/eBook was filled with spelling and grammar errors, or formatted terribly. You want your work to stand out among all the other authors, and to be excellent quality.

Upload your book to Amazon at Kindle Direct Publishing. You can be a published author easily today and make your writing dreams come true! Kindle Direct Publishing, or KDP, allows you to independently publish to reach millions of readers.

<https://kdp.amazon.com/> The face of publishing is changing now. So many people are writing and self-publishing books for the Kindle at Amazon and/or for the Nook at Barnes & Noble. There's also options like SmashWords, BookBaby, and Draft2Digital. You can self-publish your print book through Create Space, Lulu, and iBookStore (iTunes). Find out more at <http://www.trainingauthors.com/publishing/self-publishing-ebooks/> Self-publishing no longer as the stigma it used to. Will you become an overnight success, a famous, extremely wealthy author on the New York Times Best Seller list? My honest answer is not likely. But I believe if God has given you a book to write, then you need to write it. You can make money writing, from your royalties. KDP can pay you 70% in royalties, compared to the average 6-15% royalty rate.

Marketing mania. When I've told my writing students in other writers' training that writing the book isn't the hardest part, they get discouraged because they are having such a hard time just getting started to write the book! But it's the truth. Yes, writing a book is hard work, but marketing the book is the hardest part! I always compare writing a book to birthing a baby. In pregnancy, you carry that baby (in a healthy pregnancy) nine months. You can't wait for that baby to come by the last trimester! When the baby's ready to come, you have to push to deliver that baby! It's labor. But after you have the baby, now you will have to feed and bathe the baby and change poop diapers! You'll be taking care of that baby for 18 years! It's the same thing with a book. After you write the book, you have to market and tell people about the book. How will they buy it if they don't know you wrote one? Of course, you don't do this by going around parroting, "Buy my book! Buy my book!" or people will run from you and not buy it. You offer valuable content, build relationships, and share about your heart message with others. That will sell your book! If you don't know anything about marketing (like me!), you can take classes online and learn from others how to market your book and your business.

This is the checklist for writing and publishing your book in a nutshell. If you want to find out more, contact me at beth@bethjones.net. My prayer is that you will make a decision to begin writing your book this year, and finish it. You can do this. I didn't know how to write a book when I first started. God has helped me to write all 10 of my books, every

step of the way. He brought the right people into my life to encourage and help me (coaches, graphic designer, formatter, editor, cheerleaders, prayer warriors). God provided the money for me to write and publish my books, when there just seemed no way possible. He is good that way. He will help you, too.

Pray and ask Him to help you. He has put that writing gift inside of you. He planted the seed of that book into your heart, and He wants you to write it! JUST DO IT! There's still time! Write your book!

I pray this checklist and writers' training has encouraged and blessed you. If you have any questions, email me. If you need prayer or encouragement, I'm just a prayer away. May God anoint you to speak and write for His glory, bringing honor to Jesus with the words you pen. I pray God uses the message of your book to encourage, uplift, heal, and bless others, and that He pours out abundant financial blessings on your writing. Your words matter. Your story matters. Your words have impact and influence.

Ready, set, write! When your book is published, please let me know so I can read it!



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If you need a speaker for your women's conference or event, please contact me at beth@bethjones.net.

My Amazon Author Page: <http://www.amazon.com/Beth-D-Jones/e/Boo4B62HoA>

