

**Writers on the Move**  
**Holiday Season 2011**



**Writing and Marketing Tips**  
**A gift from us to you**

**Edited by Karen Cioffi**

**Writers on the Move  
Holiday Season 2011: Writing and Marketing Tips**

Edited by Karen Cioffi  
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Welcome to the Writer's on the Move's Holiday Season e-book.

We're offering this e-book as a gift to *thank you* for following our authors and writers, for commenting on our blogsite, and for following and subscribing to our site.

We will periodically offer new informational e-books that will hopefully help you on your writing and marketing journey.

In addition, Writers on the Move provides monthly workshops focusing on writing and marketing, and also features writing and marketing articles on an almost daily basis.

For informative and helpful articles, that will help you on your writing journey, stop by <http://writersonthemove.com>. And, be sure to sign-up for email delivery of posts as they are published.

We look forward to having you as a part of our writing and marketing world in 2012, and . . .

*We wish you a healthy, safe, and happy  
Holiday Season and New Year!*

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*Feel free to share this e-book with others, **but PLEASE BE SURE**  
that it stays intact.*

## A Meditation for Your Inner Writer

Meditation is an excellent tool that can profoundly impact your writing, as well as every area of your life. It is one of the best-kept secrets to a healthy body, mind and soul. For me, meditation is a daily practice and vital component to my writing work. People who meditate daily report feeling a sense of greater serenity and purpose. In addition, many people find that this time of inner reflection can ignite their creativity and dramatically reduce their anxiety level. Learning to meditate can be a challenging process. However, once you get the hang of it, this will likely be your favorite part of the day. Here is my personal meditation process that I use to connect deeply with myself and my “inner writer.”

Sit on the floor or on a cushion with your legs crossed. If you desire, you can sit on a chair with both feet placed flatly on the floor. Keep your back straight and envision each vertebra stacking one on top of the other, bone by bone. Place your hands on your knees with your palms facing up. You may choose to keep your eyes open, gazing at a fixed object in the room, or you can close your eyes. As you begin your meditation say aloud or to yourself “I am totally relaxed and completely at peace.”

State your intention for this meditation. Choose an objective that feels right for you and meets your needs on that particular day. Some examples of intentions are “I dedicate this meditation to increasing my creativity.” “I devote this meditation to world peace.” “During this meditation, I intend to let go of my writer’s block and receive inspiration and a flow of ideas.” Focus on your breathing. Slowly breathe in and out through your nostrils. Allow your whole body to relax. Let go of any muscle tension or anxiety. Gently let go of any stressful thoughts or worries. Visualize a blank television screen in your mind’s eye. Allow all of your thoughts to disappear. When your mind starts forming thoughts, words or pictures gently notice these thought forms. Then, bring your focus back to the blank television screen. Allow everything to simply exist without trying to change anything. If you are feeling tired or restless, notice these feelings and sensations and give yourself permission to experience them. Do not resist or judge anything that arises. Focus on breathing in and out and allowing everything to be exist.

If you distracted by outside noises such as sirens, telephones or loud neighbors, simply notice these distractions and let them go. Having thoughts occur during meditation is as natural as breathing. Welcome the thoughts and then quietly let them go as you surrender to silence. Focus on breathing in and breathing out. Continue this practice for twenty minutes. At the end of the mediation session, take several long, cleansing breaths. Listen deeply to yourself and the ideas and images that flow into your mind. Then, pick up your pen and immediately begin writing. What words of wisdom want to flow through you? Allow your words to flow out onto your page without judging to censoring yourself. This activity is most beneficial when you have at least thirty minutes to spend writing. However, if you are short on time, I encourage you to experiment with shorter segments that you can fit into your schedule.



**Aileen McCabe-Maucher** is a licensed clinical social worker/psychotherapist and registered nurse who has helped many people find inner peace and discover their unique life purpose. Aileen has fifteen years of experience providing individual and group counseling to a diverse client population. She is a graduate of West Chester University of Pennsylvania, Widener University, University of Delaware, and The Gestalt Therapy Institute of Philadelphia at Bryn Mawr College. Aileen studied yoga and the chakra system at The Yoga Lifestyle Center in Paoli, Pennsylvania. She is the author of the book, *The Inner Peace Diet*, which was published by Penguin/ Alpha Books and released nationwide on December 2, 2008.

A free sample of Aileen's books, *The Inner Peace Diet*, and *Find Your Life Purpose Now: Recipes for Making Your Dreams Come True* can be found here:  
<http://www.amazon.com/Aileen-McCabe-Maucher/e/B003IUBRLK>

## Good Deeds Speak Out

Good deeds are their own reward but many can have an extra spin-off when it comes to promoting or marketing your own writing.

Try helping others by speaking out for yourself. Help websites like [LibriVox](#) achieve their aim of creating audiobooks available free on the Internet. Books are taken from those in the public domain, in other words books which are no longer under copyright.

Anyone can volunteer. There are no speaking tests or auditions. All you need is a computer, some free recording software and a microphone if you have one. Many newer computers have a built-in mic.

The Frequently Asked Questions section answers any queries you may have and suggests encouraging forum topics for the nervous like, “What if I Suck?”

You can record as little as one chapter, you can suggest a book for yourself, you can ask for feedback before you start. You can even take on a solo project but that might be a huge time commitment.

### What’s In It For Me As A Writer?

Unpaid volunteers gain valuable experience and contact a circle of cyberfriends interested in the same thing: promoting reading and listening to books.

The forum rules are strict. No posting commercial links or comments with the intention of posting links to other websites. URLs in forum profiles are not publicly viewable.

However at the end of each section the readers are at liberty to say: “Recording by [your name] and give [your city, your blog, your podcast, your web address]”

Best of all, reading aloud teaches the importance of cadence and how the sound of words intensifies understanding and enjoyment. You learn techniques to use in your own writing and also to help with your own podcasting.

### Can I read my own book?

Not for LibriVox because it only records books already in the public domain. However, if you wish to read your own work they recommend [PodioBooks](#), where readers and listeners download free serialized audiobooks.

The Author Guidelines are comprehensive and must be read. It’s up to you to check that your content is as good as possible but PodioBooks insist that their technical guidelines are followed

to the letter to ensure acceptance on the site. There is also a community mentoring program where they give help and feedback on the technical side of things before you actually start.

As the site is for serialized audiobooks, choose one which will divide into several twenty- to forty-minute episodes. These are delivered weekly to subscribers or available for download.

Three of their books topped the Kindle charts in the first week of December: a sci-fi, a mystery thriller and a historical fantasy.

Not only can writers build up a fan following here, they can also earn from their work. Although the serialized audiobooks are free downloads, the site encourages donations from listeners as a way of showing their appreciation. The lion's share of these goes to the author.

Where else can I promote my book?

[The Open Library](#) is looking for volunteers to help develop its library with one web page for every book published. It already has over one million titles listed. Some, but by no means all, are free e-books. Readers can also use it as a link to borrow or buy many contemporary titles.

Volunteers add books and book descriptions, edit pages, report any inaccuracies. Again, it has a comprehensive list of Frequently Asked Questions.

And if they're not already added, why not add your own books and a list of website addresses where they can be bought?

That way, by helping a good book cause, you further your career as an author too.



**Anne Duguid** is a senior content editor with [MuseItUp Publishing](#). A news reporter and features writer, she has worked for national newspapers in the U.K. and in Europe. She blogs at [SlowandSteadyWriters](#).

## Many Hats, Many Options

Writers must wear a lot of hats. When I first started writing all I did was think of story ideas and get them down on paper. Back then, I wrote them in spiral notebooks and on legal pads. I had an electric typewriter but tried to perfect my story as much as I could before typing it. Now, we have the technology through computers and other techy tools that allow us to write and edit without having to start from the beginning and re-type everything repeatedly.

To meet the demands of a writing career I have a chapeau-tree full of hats. Only one is “writer”. The biggest challenge, for me, is meeting all the demands of promoting and marketing my books once they are published. Whether we publish with a small royalty publisher, one of the big houses, or indie-publish, there is a collection of hats that come under the marketing umbrella. Can’t you see me wearing my hat and sitting under a colorful umbrella? In Texas we’re suffering through a drought so I’m sure an umbrella would draw smiles. They are good for blocking the sun in July. What does all this have to do with writing and marketing plans? We alternately wear the hats and focus the majority of our time on actually writing with a balance of an hour or so each day for marketing and networking.

**Writer Hat:** Your first task: Write professional grade articles and books that are edited carefully.

**Editor Hat:** Learn to self-edit and join a critique group. When you’ve developed your manuscript as much as you can, then have a professional editor go through it before you submit your work to a publisher or agent.

**Public Relations Hat:** Assemble a Media Kit that includes a short bio, your photograph, information on each of your books. Be sure you focus on your latest release. Keep a list of interview questions and answers that can be used for a guest blog interview or the basis of a radio or television interview. A fact sheet about your speaking and workshop subjects is helpful. Put it in a two pocket folder with a spot for your business card. Make them available in hard copy or pdf from your website.

**Social Networking Hat:** Decide what online networking you want to include. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and LinkedIn provide ways of reaching your audience and getting to know other writers. Be consistent in your participation.

**Market Research Hat:** Identify who your audience is. Be specific. For example, if you write cross genre mystery/suspense/romance, then you can’t consider *all women everywhere* your market. Study trends and sales information available through Publisher’s Weekly and other industry sources. For example, narrow your target audience to women between 45 – 60 who have older children and access to more time.

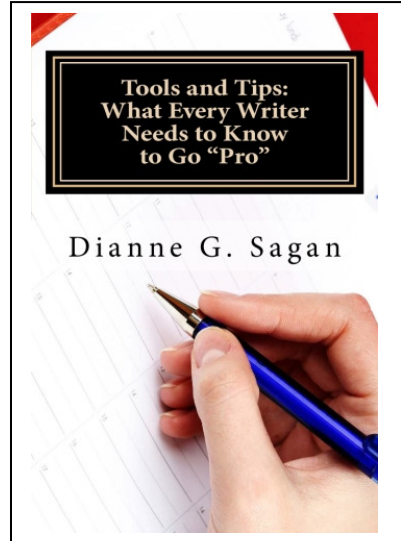
**Facilitator/speaker Hat:** Your personal appearances and teaching opportunities get you in front of people and build your platform. Book signings can be a part of wearing this hat, as well.

Every writer will wear these hats during their career. Developing each of these skills is a part of the writer journey.

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**Dianne Sagan**

<http://www.diannegsagan.biz>



# Media Release Distribution: Why It's Important

Call it what you want, a news release, a media release, or a press release. Whichever of the fore mentioned you prefer know that releases are a critical promotional tool for any business, especially in our ever changing technological world.

Suppose for a moment you have achieved the golden moment of signing your first or tenth book contract or your very first byline has been published for the world to read. I know, you are walking on air and you may even envision yourself shouting from the rooftops, "Hello world I'm a published writer!" Go for it, let out your delightful shout of joy. When you are done, it's now time to get down to business in writing your perfect release.

You may hem and haw a bit and wonder why such a formal announcement is important? For one, with the Internet at our fingertips promotional opportunities are just a click away. And second, just because your latest book or byline is published doesn't mean a large majority of the population even knows about it. Strengthen your chances in getting your name and platform out there by writing and publishing your releases. It is never too soon to set yourself apart from the pack. Establish yourself as an expert in your field by writing articles on your latest published works that compliments the subject matter. You can then write a release about your published credits and point your readers to your blog, website, and/or Ezine Articles page for your related articles.

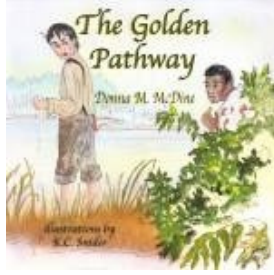
Keyword search and implementation into your releases is as critical as when blogging. You will be pleasantly surprised to see how quickly your name and material cross reference each other when doing so.

For instance, as I was writing this article I conducted the following Google search: "Donna McDine, children's author and publicist" and the first page of Google search found ten different listings of a mixture of my blogs, website, press release sites, interview stops, the Working Writer's Club, and Guardian Angel Kids Ezine. See how all my work intertwines with the other?

The proof is in the Google search! Don't wait. Get down to the business side of writing and create your release today. Are you still hesitating because you don't have published credits yet, how about you write up a media release of an interview or article you have posted on your blog. This is what I did early on in my writing career and still do. It's imperative you get the momentum going or your rankings will steadily drop. Consistency is instrumental.

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**Donna McDine** is an award-winning children's author, Honorable Mention in the 77th and two Honorable Mentions in the 78th Annual Writer's Digest Writing Competitions, Preditors & Editors Readers Poll 2010 Top Ten Children's Books, Global eBook Awards Finalist Children's Picture Book Fiction, and Literary Classics Silver Award & Seal of Approval Recipient Picture Book Early Reader ~ The Golden Pathway.



Her stories, articles, and book reviews have been published in over 100 print and online publications. Her interest in ocean life resulted in writing and publishing *A Sandy Grave*. Her first book, *The Golden Pathway*, was published by Guardian Angel Publishing, August 2010, as well as *Hockey Agony* and *Powder Monkey*. She writes, moms and is the Editor-in-Chief for Guardian Angel Kids, Publicist for the Working Writer's Club, and owner of Author PR Services from her home in the historical hamlet Tappan, NY. McDine is a member of the SCBWI.

Donna's Website: <http://www.donnamcdine.com>

Write What Inspires You Blog: <http://www.donna-mcdine.blogspot.com>

The Golden Pathway Blog: <http://www.thegoldenpathway.blogspot.com>

Author PR Services: <http://www.authorprservices.com>

# Revising and Editing Tips for Teachers to Help Students learn the Writing Process

Revising and editing. Most authors don't like this part of writing, but they are both necessary for the best story you can put out. When editing your manuscript, you may find yourself revising at the same time or vice versa.

When editing and revising, it is best to print out your typed document so that you can make marks on your papers and go back and fix things. Strategy: Use colored pencils to make your editing parts. Orange, green, red, yellow and blue. Make sure you can see the colors.

Steps to edit: (Taken from writing workshop data that was given to me from a sixth grade teacher whose classes I've been working with via Google Talk)

Read the story out loud. As you are reading it out loud, mark an orange dot under each word as it is read.

Check your capitalization and mark the beginnings of sentences with green. This is only for sentence structure.

Mark the ends of sentences (periods, question marks, exclamation marks) in red. You want to make sure your punctuation is correct.

Mark the beginnings of paragraphs with a blue paragraph notation. Sometimes as you are reading through you will find you need to make a paragraph break if you have several long paragraphs.

Check your spelling. Read your manuscript from end to beginning (no, you aren't reading the words backwards) and carefully read each word. Highlight in yellow any word you are unsure of the spelling.

When revising, usually the best thing is to set your story aside for a bit before coming back to fixing it up. Revising is looking at your story with "new eyes" and "re-see" it. Use the 6-traits of writing when revising:

Ideas and content - you want to make sure your story makes sense and flows from beginning to end and that you've maintained the ideas or plots throughout.

Voice - make sure you have maintained the voice of each character as well as your own voice. Every writer has a distinctive writing voice and if you stray from that from story to story, your readers will stop reading because they get accustomed to a certain style you write in.

Sentence structure - make sure you are writing in complete sentences, that you don't have dangling participles and that your sentences make sense. There are times for fragments (usually these are one word "sentences" and are used mostly for emphasis.

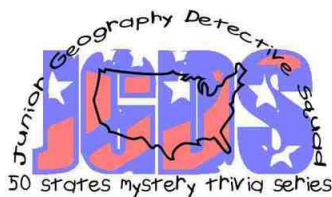
Organization - you want to make sure you covered all your points in a consistent manner and that your thoughts and ideas are organized in a standard story telling way - you need a beginning, middle and end and all points between need to flow from one to the other.

Word choice - when revising, you are making sure that the words you use are age appropriate and are the correct word. You may think a certain word you are using is the correct one but in reality it may be way off. Look up definitions; use a thesaurus and make sure you have the right word choice.

Writing conventions - this is the mechanical correctness of the piece and includes five elements: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar/usage, and paragraphing. Writing that is strong in conventions has been proofread and edited with care.

The writing process includes many revisions and edits. It can go from the prewriting (gathering your ideas, brainstorming, developing your characters and plots) to drafting to revising back to drafting back to revising to editing back to revising to editing back to drafting to revising to editing to completing the story. Remember, having someone else help you through the revising and editing process will make your story that much better, and not all suggestions made by another person have to be accepted but make sure that you do correct typos and simple catches that others find that you may have missed.

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**Ms. Elysabeth Eldering** is the award winning author of the Junior Geography Detective Squad (JGDS), 50-state, mystery, trivia series. Her stories "Train of Clues" (shared 2nd place story), "The Proposal" (third place winning story, now available as an ebook), "Tulip Kiss" (1st place winning story, available as an ebook), and "Butterfly Halves" (runner up, available as an ebook) all placed first, second, or runner up in various contests to include two for Armchair Interviews and two for Echelon Press (Fast and ... themed type contests). Her story "Bride-and-Seek" (available as an ebook) was selected for the South Carolina Writers' Workshop (SCWW) anthology, the Petigru Review. Ms. Eldering makes her home in upper state South Carolina and loves to travel, read, cross stitch and crochet. When she's not busy with teenaged children still at home, she can be found at various homeschool or book events promoting her state series and her YA paranormal mystery, Finally Home.



JGDS blog - <http://jgdsseries.blogspot.com>

JGDS website - <http://jgdsseries.weebly.com>

Elysabeth's blog - <http://elysabethsstories.blogspot.com>

Elysabeth's website - <http://elderling.weebly.com>

## Avoid the Empty Phrase Trap

As writers we are told to avoid clichés, to come up with a new and better way to describe and characterize.

Here are some of my pet peeves:

- Irregardless. It's just plain regardless.
- We'll meet at 9 a.m. in the morning. As opposed to 9 a.m. in the evening?
- The good doctor. Maybe he's a bad doctor.
- Very unique. Unique is a word unto itself. It doesn't need any qualifiers. What is fairly unique? Uniquely unique?
- At this point in time. Where else would it be?
- At the end of the day. Probably a good phrase the first 5 times it was used, but now...sick of it!
- Think outside the box. Again a good one the first 10 times, but...
- I personally believe. As opposed to I impersonally believe?
- It is what it is. Huh?
- To be honest. That makes me think you might NOT be!

[BBC's Magazine](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7733264.stm) has posted a funny list of its readers' most hated cliché phrases.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/magazine/7733264.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7733264.stm)

To be honest and fair, going forward, this is basically something that, at the end of the day, we're likely to touch base about again.

Let's face it, the fact of the matter is that literally all of us succumb to the use of these stock phrases — even when bringing our A game and giving 110%.

What are your most hated clichés — and how do you avoid them? Make a list as you read and listen and try to avoid them in your writing.

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<http://www.heidimthomas.com> A native Montanan, **Heidi M. Thomas** now lives in Northwest Washington. Her first novel, *Cowgirl Dreams*, is based on her grandmother, and the sequel, *Follow the Dream*, has recently won the national WILLA Literary Award. Heidi has a degree in journalism, a certificate in fiction writing, and is a member of Northwest Independent Editors Guild. She teaches writing and edits, blogs, and is working on the next books in her “Dare to Dream” series.

## Rewriting a Folktale - Walking Through Walls

When a writer's *muse* seems to be on vacation, she may be at a loss for story ideas. While there are a number of sites and tools online to help get the creative juices flowing, one tool that writers might overlook is studying folktales.

Reading folktales is a great way to spin a new yarn, especially for children's writing. I recently did a review of a children's picture book published by Sylvan Dell that was based on an American Indian folktale. This shows they are publishable.

Folktales, also known as tall tales, and folklore, are stories specific to a country or region. They are usually short stories dealing with everyday life that come from oral tradition that is passed from generation to generation. Most often these tales involve animals, heavenly objects, and other non-human entities that possess human characteristics.

There is Mexican folklore, Irish folklore, Chinese folklore, as well as folklore from many other countries that have tales unique to their area. There is also American folklore that encompasses stories from each of the 50 states. There is a huge supply of stories to spin and weave.

In addition to reviewing a couple of published children's books that were based on folktales, I wrote a children's fantasy story based on an ancient Chinese tale.

Interestingly, prior to receiving an outline of the tale from a Chinese nonfiction writer acquaintance, I never thought of rewriting folktales. But, once given the outline I loved the story and the message it presented. The outline itself was very rough and written with an adult as the main character (MC), which is often the case with ancient folktales.

After reading the story I knew the MC would need to become a child. Every children's writer is aware that children want to read about children, not adults. And, the MC needs to be a couple of years older than the target audience the author is writing for.

Based on this, the MC became a 12-year-old boy. And, since the ancient Chinese flavor of the story seemed perfect, I kept it and made the story take place in the 16<sup>th</sup> century China. After this was set, a title and the MC's name needed to be created.

When choosing a title for your book, it's important to keep it in line with the story and make it something that will be marketable to the age group you're targeting. I chose *Walking Through Walls* (<http://walkingthroughwalls.blogspot.com>).

As far as the character's name, you will need to base it on the time period and geographic location of the story, unless the character is out of his element. Since my story takes place in China, the MC needed a Chinese name.

To keep the flavor of your story consistent, you will also need to give it a feeling of authenticity. This will involve some research:

How did the people dress during the time of your story? What names were used? What did they eat? What type of work or schooling was available? What locations might you mention? What type of crops and vegetation would be present? What types of homes did they live in?

There are many aspects of the story that you will want to make as authentic as possible. And, it does matter, even in fiction stories; it will add richness to your story.

The next time you're in the library, ask the librarian to show you a few folktales. Then imagine how you might rewrite one or more of them for today's children's book market.



*Karen Cioffi is an author, ghostwriter, freelance writer, and editor. To learn more about writing and marketing visit <http://karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com>. While there, sign up for A Writer's World newsletter; you'll get two free site-related e-books in the process.*

### **Karen's children's books and nonfiction e-books:**

***Walking Through Walls*** (middle-grade fantasy adventure)

[http://www.amazon.com/Walking-Through-Walls-Karen-Cioffi/dp/0982659474/ref=sr\\_1\\_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1311470072&sr=1-3](http://www.amazon.com/Walking-Through-Walls-Karen-Cioffi/dp/0982659474/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1311470072&sr=1-3)

***Day's End Lullaby*** (children's bedtime picture book)

[http://www.amazon.com/Days-End-Lullaby-Karen-Cioffi/dp/1419691570/ref=sr\\_11\\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1220900352&sr=11-1](http://www.amazon.com/Days-End-Lullaby-Karen-Cioffi/dp/1419691570/ref=sr_11_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1220900352&sr=11-1)

**How to Write Books for Children: Writing, Publishing, and Marketing Children's Books**

<http://www.karencioffi.com/how-to-write-books-for-children/>

**Editing Books Like a Pro**

<http://www.karencioffi.com/editing-books-like-a-pro/>

**How to Start a Freelance Writing Business**

<http://www.karencioffi.com/how-to-start-a-freelance-writing-business/>

**To check out all Karen's e-books, go to:**

<http://www.karencioffiwritingandmarketing.com/p/karens-books.html>

# Turning Your Poetry Dabbling Into a Marketing Tool

Poetry doesn't sell. It's so often said (and validated by poets everywhere), that it has become something of a truism. If you write poetry, you probably do it for the love of it (and because you can't help yourself), and don't expect to extract much monetary value from it. You may well be supporting your poetry habit with a range of more lucrative types of writing like nonfiction or even working a day job. However, value doesn't always come in the form of cash. There's real value - and ultimately financial value, to be had by using your poetry as a marketing tool. So where do you begin? Here are a few tips to get you going.

- **Think themed chapbook**

Have a look through your existing poetry collection, and see if you can find a recurring theme that you can use. Some examples of themes which immediately suggest a market include (and I've used some of these myself) – Mothers, Love (in all forms or a specific aspect of love such as romantic love), Pets, Nature, your locale, a historical period, person or notion, politics, family life, humorous wordplay, or even sports. Some chapbooks that I've particularly admired from well known poets include one on phobias, one on romantic love, and one set in the world of Walt Whitman during his period on the battlefield. My own tendency seems to be towards writing scientific poetry – astronomy, physics, the genetic code, evolution. So don't limit yourself to cliché themes. If there's something you tend to gravitate towards, go with it. Another option is to think about what fits your other work - the stuff you want to sell, and theme the book around that - this way you'll be drawing in your target market. And speaking of markets...

- **Define your market**

Identify the market that matches the theme you came up with in the first exercise. Try to make of list of up to three specific markets, and then list another six examples of those. For example, if your market is florists, then come up with six florists you could contact when you go about marketing your work. Having a sense of where you're planning to market will help you plan and create your book in a much more coherent and effective way. Always keep your market in mind when you're constructing a book.

- **Construct your book**

This might sound like a bit thing but it's actually just a simple collation exercise. Start organising your poetry into a Word (or other word processor) file. You can use a Word book template for that - there are quite a few that come as standard with Word or you can search here: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/CL102209809.aspx>

There are some nice templates here:

<http://ezebooktemplates.com/free-templates>

Or you can just make up your own, putting in a graphic cover.

A chapbook could have as few as ten and as many as thirty pages of poems. Twenty poems would be about average for a small chapbook. Put them in an order that makes

sense and if there are any gaps or areas that require more poems, then write them! Once you've got everything together number your pages, add a table of contents at the front, and voila, you're almost there.

- **The all important bio**

This is the key - your bio. This is where you need to make your book work for a living. Include not only a little bit about yourself, but a link back (with an enticing offer like a free chapter) to your selling page for whatever product - your novel, your nonfiction, your audio series, etc, you want to sell. Also include an attractive photo. Don't rush this. This is what's going to make value for you.

- **Get someone else to read it for you**

Whatever you do, don't skip this step. Get a fellow writer or eagle eyed reader to read through it for errors, things that don't make sense and the overall ordering. If they like it, get them to give you a quote to use somewhere at the back of the book.

- **Get it out there**

Make sure you've got an enticing title, that the book looks good, and then turn it into a .pdf. If you're using Word 2007 onward, then you can just save as a .pdf. You could sell the book if you want, but you probably won't make much. Using it as a promotional tool, you can upload it to your website or blog and offer it as a gift for anyone who subscribes. This way you not only get more subscribers, more people reading your work, but you also draw in readers and potential customers for your big tickets items.

Writing isn't always about commerce and marketing. Sometimes it's about creating meaning, and that, of course is at the heart of poetry. But there's no reason why you can't create meaning, bring in readers and still sell your work. Using a poetry chapbook is a unique way to gift your work and still benefit financially from it.



**About the author: Magdalena Ball** is the author of the books *Sleep Before Evening*, *Repulsion Thrust*, *Quark Soup*, and a number of collaborations and anthologies. Find out more about Magdalena and grab a free copy of her literary cookbook *The Literary Lunch* at <http://www.magdalenaball.com>

## Writing With SMART Goals

Writing a book can be overwhelming. You look at that blank white page and wonder how you're going to fill up hundreds and hundreds of them. Or you're clipping along and suddenly become fearful those last few pages won't materialize. How do you deal with that? I think a good start is to steal a page from corporate America. It's called SMART goals.

We all have goals for our writing. But are they SMART? SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely. Let's explore how this type of goal setting works for writers as well as big corporations doing performance reviews.

**Specific** You might have started with this goal: I want to write a book. That's pretty general. But you can make it more specific by asking and answering a few questions. What kind of book do I want to write? Fiction or Non-fiction? If I'm going to write fiction, what genre? If I'm writing non-fiction, what's my topic. How many words or chapters do I plan to write? All these questions help you to take some broad, like writing a book to something specific like a 60,000 word murder mystery novel.

**Measurable** Is the goal you set measurable? Now that it's specific how do you measure it to know if you are making real progress? One way is to break the goal down into smaller measurable chunks. You know you want to write a 60,000 word murder mystery. In what time frame do you want this completed? Given your circumstances, you decide one year is your time frame for completion. So now you can make it measurable by saying you will write 5000 words per month. That's easy to measure. You can even break it down further by giving yourself a word count goal per week or even per day.

**Attainable** If you're like me, you might suffer from being overzealous. You create a goal, trying to be ambitious. However, the reality is, it's not attainable. When it's not attainable, you fail. And we don't want you to fail! So make sure the goal is realistic. If you know your child graduates from high school this year and you also have to spend some time away helping your mom for some scheduled surgery, you might want to revise your goal. Give yourself some more time. Or for months where you know you typically have a lot going on. Make your word count smaller and push more words to the month before or after. Give yourself a challenge. Stretch yourself by all means! But make sure it's not so far a stretch that you'll never make it.

**Realistic** This is what I call the kissing cousin to the attainable part. Besides being attainable the goal has to be realistic. If you know nothing about murder mystery novels or even suspense for that matter, then your goal might not be realistic. Maybe you need to change your genre? Or perhaps you need to become a student by reading good and bad murder mysteries before you try to write your own. A more realistic goal may be to spend the year studying the writing craft and the genre. Then the following year the goal you originally set might actually be realistic.

**Timely** The last piece is that the goal has to be timely. If you have met the other four criteria, you've likely already satisfied this criteria as well. But just in case you haven't, think of this as an

expiration date. This is when you want this goal to be wrapped up with the ribbon on top. If you gave yourself a year, when does the year end? Put a specific date on it. Circle it on your calendar as a visible reminder. You always know how much time you have left to keep pushing toward completing that goal.

Just like a company does performance reviews once a year using this system, as a writer you can do that same. Don't just do this process in you head. Write it down. Keep track of where you are meeting your smaller incremental goals and where and when difficulties or roadblocks arise. By doing that, you can see where you have the most difficulty and make adjustments. If you always miss a date by a few weeks or a few months, then you can evaluate to see if you are being realistic when you set the time line or if it's just not attainable in that time frame. Without this, you lose valuable information that can help you become a better, more organized and accomplished writer. Be your own company and start achieving with SMART goals.



**Marietta (Mari) Taylor** resides in Raleigh, NC with her husband of eighteen years and her two teenage daughters. Marietta is the author of *Surviving Unemployment Devotions to Go*. She is also a monthly blogger at the Go ask Mom Blog at [www.wral.com](http://www.wral.com). Her blog tagline is Mom of Teens. Marietta has a bachelor's degree in Biology and currently works in Healthcare IT. She loves forensics, devotions and great books.

## Breaking through with Believing Eyes

As a writer breaking through to the next level can be a staggering proposition. For some it's the first publication, for a mid-career writer with many books it could be achieving greater exposure and readership. Moving to a new terrain for the big dreamer might even be writing the next blockbuster. No matter where you are in this spectrum, you may someday find yourself trapped on a plateau not knowing how to reach the writing highlands. Many writers spend years stuck, trying to break through to the next level while their writing dreams wane. I have known a number of writers who felt so stuck they were ready to give up writing. Losing hope is a death sentence for any writer's career.

A colleague of mine had been writing for years and had a huge stack of rejection letters. After a conference she approached Eileen Spinelli, award winning author of numerous children's books, and shared her story. She told her it had been so long and hard that she was having trouble believing she would ever be published. Eileen moved in close, looked her in the eye and said, "Hope is a choice."

Eileen told her how it took her husband Jerry Spinelli, Newberry winner and author of more than twenty-five children's books, over ten years before he was published. During that time they both kept writing and when he didn't seem to have enough hope, she had it for him. Sonia Choquette, author of *Your Heart's Desire*, calls this your believing eyes. She talks about the importance of finding someone to support you and hold the vision of your dream. Although writing is a solitary activity, it requires the help of others who understand your goals and believe you will reach your dream.

If you want to climb out of your writer's plateau you need to find your believing eyes. They encourage you and push along, especially when you're struggling. They help keep your vision when yours becomes tired and blurry. It is my firm belief that writers, as do all artists, need believing eyes to accompany them on their journey. Unlike Jerry and Eileen Spinelli, for most people close friends, spouses and parents are not the best choice for the role of believing eyes. They don't understand the crazy landscape that a writer lives in. Usually it takes a fellow writer or artist; someone who understands the struggles and values the small triumphs along the way, to keep and nurture the vision.

So if you are feeling stuck, find a writing buddy or a critique group and let them become your believing eyes. Together...choose hope. Together...hold on to your dream and watch it grow!



**Mary Jo Guglielmo** is a writer, teacher and intuitive life strategist that helps clients push through their blocks, envision their path and take the necessary action to live their True North. She offers Artist Breakthrough sessions designed to help identify the blocks that are keeping a writer from moving their art to the next level. Let go of the starving artist archetype and find your personal success. Possible topics of focus will include steps to move past your energetic blocks, ignite your creative juices, improve your focus or identify a new direction for your next project.

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# Why Does a Writer Need to Read?

Sometimes you're bursting with ideas.

Sometimes you can't wait to get to your computer keyboard.

Sometimes you need help . . .

## Keeping the creativity well full.

If you want to keep your well of creativity well stocked, you need to read, read and read some more.

Very often I find myself inspired by another author, to write something totally different to the book or article I'm reading. Recently, I read a novel in which the heroine expresses her boredom with church history. I identified with her—then I remembered my fascination with the Holy Land when I visited there some years ago. I wrote a journal which I printed out for each of the members of our tour. Hmm. I saw potential for a number of articles on how history comes alive when you visit the location.

- A how-to book on pottery inspired a series of three devotional messages for a crafting retreat.
- An article on child discipline sparked a piece on writing that has been published in several places.
- A child's story of a man falling off a ladder inspired a Christmas parody on *The Night Before Christmas*, that was published in two writing magazines.

## How does reading help us as writers?

- It fills our imaginations, creating pictures of events which we've never experienced.
- It brings to mind other events which have either happened to us, or we've heard of.
- It helps us to "see" things in our minds and put them into words which we would otherwise never have thought of.
- It feeds us with ideas and situations we can use with our own characters, which we wouldn't have thought of otherwise.
- And of course we learn about situations and places we know nothing about.

We are often told that it's important to read in the same genre that we write. And yes, that is so. Otherwise how will we know what sort of books or articles are being read? However, it's also important to read in other genres. This expands our minds, increases our knowledge and inspires us to venture into other styles of writing.

So if you're struggling with a blank screen, switch it off and go and curl up with a good book for an hour or two. Oh, and always, but always, have a notebook and pen handy, to jot down those inspirations when they come.



**Shirley Corder:** Writing to Inspire and Encourage. <http://www.shirleycorder.com>

## 5 Great Reasons to Join A Writing Group

Writing for children and adults is fun and rewarding. It is also hard work. The road to publication can be downright frustrating. Many authors find a writing group, critique group, or a writing mentor or coach to help jump start improvements to current writing skills and begin moving towards the status of professional writer. Here are 5 great reasons to join a group or find a mentor.

**1. Improve writing skills-** A mentor or writing group can give you constructive ideas about improving your writing. It is a give and take relationship no matter how many members belong. A good working group of writers can help you improve your skills but together you all help each other network and market your work. Examples of what you may learn from group members include:

- Finding a niche
- Writing exciting action
- Revising and cutting unnecessary words
- Show, don't tell
- Character development
- Creating realistic dialog
- Markets for your work

**2. Grow as an author-** A writing group offers critiques for your work giving members concrete ideas on how to grow as a children's or adult author. The critique of your work teaches you not only how to accept criticism but how to improve. The feedback should be constructive and members soon begin to write tighter. It shows in the number of acceptances you will begin to see after several weeks or months with the same solid group of members.

**3. Set goals and a plan for success-** A solid writing group should have requirements including setting realistic writing goals and actions to reach those goals. The encouragement offered by your members will go a long way to help each writer set challenging goals and design a set of actions to make those goals happen. It keeps you accountable when you rely on others and you know they rely on you to grow and plan for a successful writing career.

**4. Exposure for your work-** As a member you have many opportunities to present your writing to the group. Your work can be presented on a personal blog, as a guest post on another member's blog, as an e-book for others, through affiliate programs on the sites of other authors, through contacts available from other members, agents and publishers who frequent member sites, or through other instructors who may offer services to the writing group in the form of presentations or classes. Being a member of an active writing group may give you access to contests, agents, publishing sites, and other potential contacts that would not otherwise be available for their work.

**5. Networking and Marketing-** Writing group members can develop a marketing plan and learn the skills for promoting their work by networking with other members. Active members should

write weekly marketing plans for promoting and begin early on to network on social media sites in preparation for their published book. Members can participate in virtual book tours for other published authors and develop techniques to build a writing platform for their own work. Lifelong relationships are built between writing group members, many who are published or have valuable connections to the publishing world. Lifelong professional relationships can be forged this way and it is a win-win for every member who participates. If you can't find a group, then look for a mentor or writing coach that will help you develop these same networking and marketing tools.

As you can see, there are numerous benefits when you join with other writers who have the same goals. Writing, polishing skills, networking, marketing, and promoting your work and your platform are all benefits from belonging to a solid group of writers interested in becoming published.

I can promise you a fun and successful learning experience if you choose to join a group of dedicated writers. Be open to learning, sharing, and promoting the work of other writers. They will do the same. Be courteous of others and respectful of their opinions, but also look for positive energy. If a group doesn't feel right, don't hesitate to move on.

The writing group you choose can only help you grow if you feel good about their process. Give yourself permission to move on if you feel your writing isn't moving in a positive direction, just don't make the mistake of thinking you don't need a group. Being an active member of a writing group will help your career blossom.



**Terri Forehand** is the author of *The Cancer Prayer Book* and *The ABC's of Cancer According to Lilly Isabella Lane* due to be released in the spring of 2012. Writing both fiction and nonfiction for children and health related material for adults including course material for nursing education, she also acts as a blog editor, blog writer, and contributing author on money matters for women. Terri writes from her rural home in Indiana where she shares space with her husband, 3 horses, 6 alpacas, and too many rescue dogs to count with visits from the grandkids thrown in. Visit her blog at <http://terri-forehand.blogspot.com> or her website at [www.terriforehand.com](http://www.terriforehand.com)

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## **A Bit About Writers on the Move**

One thing about marketing, it's an ongoing journey that's constantly changing. New technology, new sites and services, and new strategies create an ever-changing marketing world.

Writers on the Move was founded in 2008 by Karen Cioffi. Its original purpose was to provide a vehicle for authors to virtually tour each other in a unique ongoing platform.

Since then, we've tweaked our promotional strategies here and there and have evolved into a marketing group of authors and writers who with combined talents, knowledge, and experience are able to offer writing and marketing help to our readers and visitors through articles, features, book reviews, workshops, and other formats to come. In addition, we continually strive to increase our individual visibility.

And, now we're proud to include webinars to our list of informational tools.

We hope to continue to provide e-books on specific topics, podcasts, webinars, and other forms of information to help guide you through the writing and marketing jungle.

If you're interested in becoming a Writers on the Move member, or would like to provide a guest post. or offer suggestions on workshops, please email me at: [karencioffi\(at\)ymail \(dot\)com](mailto:karencioffi(at)ymail (dot)com)

Please put "WOTM" in the subject box.



## Quotes

“It’s not what you’ve done that matters - it’s what you haven’t done.”

~ *Mark Twain*

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

~ *M. Ghandi*

“God doesn't require us to succeed; he only requires that you try.”

~ *Mother Teresa*

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”

~ *Goethe*

“A professional writer is an amateur who didn’t quit. “

~ *Richard Bach*

"Easy reading is damn hard writing."

~ *Nathaniel Hawthorne*

"Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass."

~ *Anton Chekhov*

"If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot. There's no way around these two things that I'm aware of, no shortcut."

~ *Stephen King*

***Remember: Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained***