

Author's Guide

Have you written a book? Congratulations! I hope you take time to celebrate this important beginning step. Then, when you are ready, there are many more steps on your creative journey to bring this book to the printing press and into the hands of your readers. My name is Maria Blon. I have self-published four books and have two more books being created. I love helping people write and publish their books in cost effective ways, so I put together this brief guide, beginning with writing and going all the way to promoting your book. I don't earn money from any of these referrals I share. Even my books and business donate all profits to our [HEART in Haiti School](#).

Writing

Whether you have an idea for writing a book, have begun writing or have your book already written, it is wonderful to have guidance along this journey. Writers are often thought of as being solitary most of the time, but connecting with a community of writers to share celebrations and challenges can be so supportive, inspiring, and motivating. You may want to search online to look for groups which you feel called to join or check out the [Birth a Book](#) program and [Writing Retreats](#) at [heartsblooming.org](#).

Your Readers

Have you considered who your readers are and what they might want to receive from your book? This step is really important because often we initially write for our own benefit, to share with the world how we think, feel and experience life from our own unique perspective. This can be extremely valuable and healing. However, in order for the book to be appealing to more than you and a few close friends, going back to view your book as a reader who doesn't know you, will help you fill in gaps of understanding. Sometimes we forget other people have not walked in our shoes and they may need some help understanding what life is like from your perspective. Sometimes this can be challenging to do on your own, so it is important to ask for help from professionals or people who are readers of interest for your book.

Editing

Even experienced authors need several sets of eyes reading and editing their prose, because after working hard on creating a book and rewriting when considering the reader, it is not easy to be objective and spot areas in need of revisions. There are editors for different purposes, from helping you adjust the flow and correct grammar, to suggesting organizational improvements or many more. You may go onto a website like [Fiverr](#) to find an editor or through an internet

search. I have been lucky enough to hire my friend [Zhenya Goma](#) who is skilled at helping me organize and edit my books. My husband Tom is a great proofreader, which means he does a final check for punctuation, spelling and formatting. This is important because you and your editor will go through your manuscript many times and can easily miss errors.

Audiobook

A great way to give a book a thorough checking is to record the book as an audiobook. I use the free program [Audacity](#), which you can download online. This takes some time to learn how to record and edit, but then you can upload your book through [Author's Republic](#). The audiobook to be available in a number of different places like [Libro](#), [Audible](#) and many more

Cover

What would you like the cover of your book to look like? It is important for you as the author to get a feel for what visuals represent your message. Unless you are an artist or graphic designer, you may need help to bring your vision to reality. You can check out [Canva](#), which is a graphic design program for free online. I love this program not only for book covers, but also for social media posts and creating images for email newsletters and fliers for events.

Publishing

When you are ready to publish your book, there are a few options. You may choose to see if there is a publisher who will print and distribute your book. In order to be successful with Traditional Publishing, it is important to have a platform and following. What this means is you have a clear message to share with your audience and a lot of people who are ready and waiting to purchase your book. Building a platform and following takes time, unless you are lucky enough to get a lot of attention by having a YouTube video go viral, are invited to be on Oprah or something big like that. For many of us who are not famous yet, learning how to connect with our audience can take time and patience to learn and try out different techniques. A great book which offers guidance on how to get your book published is the *Writer's Market* 100th Edition.

Another option is to self-publish your book. There are companies where you can pay a lot of money to do this and they guide you along the way. I did this for my first printing of "Living Passionately" and would not do that again. Amazon is the easiest way I have found to self-publish and it doesn't cost anything to do this. They have lots of videos and articles to teach you how to sort out the technical aspects and make the process very easy. In order for the book to be available to libraries and bookstores, like [Well Worn Books](#), select Expanded Distribution. You will earn

less money per book, but there is more potential for the book to be seen and purchased by a wider audience.

Promotion

Holding your very own book for the first time is really exciting and for some authors, this is enough, to have the book for themselves, family and friends to read. If you would like to have more people find and read your book, then there is promotional work to be done. There are over 10,000 books published per day, so knowing who your audience is and creating a plan to reach out to them is going to be important. Since there are so many options to try, finding guidance for this part of the journey can be really helpful. Below are a few options to try which don't cost anything to get the word out. This is your job to send people to the bookstore. If you self-publish, you are your own marketer. This might include setting up a website, Facebook or Instagram, speaking on podcasts, giving talks or holding events at bookstores or libraries or other place where your audience can find you.

1. **Elevator pitch** Write and practice a short description of your book, which you could share with someone in a short amount of time, or as the name implies, on a short ride on an elevator. This is important because first, you get clarity about your book and you have this ready to share anywhere you go.
2. **Mailing list** Collect your family and friends' email addresses so you can involve them in the excitement of your new book. You may want to use an email service like Mailchimp, which has a free option. Then the goal is to build your email list with people who are potential readers of your book. You can do this through some activities mentioned below.
3. **Networking** Finding ways to get the word out involves meeting new people. There are in person and online networking groups, all with different interest areas. Most towns and cities have chamber of commerce events and there are networking organizations like BNI (Business Networking International). You may also check out interest groups on social media or meetup for more opportunities.
4. **Author events** like scheduling a book signing or hosting a class related to your book is a great way to introduce people to your book. Every bookstore is different in their willingness to have author events. Bigger bookstores have waiting lists for authors to schedule an event and some won't bring in anyone unless they have a strong platform and following for their books. Smaller, local bookstores like [Well Worn Books](#) are generous enough to offer their space for free and share the event with their mailing list and social media followers. Your job is to invite all of your family, friends and followers to attend your book signing or events. Libraries are another free option where you can reach out to new people.

Remember to bring a piece of paper to collect names, phone numbers and email addresses. You can do this in a fun way and ask them to enter to win one of your books by filling out their information on a slip of paper. This raises the excitement to let people know they can win a prize and if you have something to give to everyone, like a bookmark with information about your new book, this fosters goodwill to all who attend.

5. **Podcasts** are a great way to get the word out about your book. There is a Facebook group called the [Podcast Collaborative](#) which helps connect Guests with Podcasters. I have received wonderful voice coaching from [Sara Giita Flores](#).

Wishing you the best on your writing, publishing and promoting journey!

Feel free to reach out to me with questions at 2mariablon@gmail.com or go to www.heartsblooming.org/gift to schedule a one on one video call with me.