

Why Self Publish? Why Not!

By **Tony Williams**

**Author: To Hell And back Three Times
"The Cancer Experience"**

Hello,

As you read this I am preparing to go back into the hospital for triple by-pass heart surgery and heart valve replacement. I feel that my overcoming Cancer Three Times, a continuous battle with diabetes, severe neuropathy and thyroid disease would have been the pinnacle of my medical accomplishments. But I find myself in life's test mode of adversity again and just like always I'm leaning and depending on God, to do what he does, that's make me well.

I am writing to ask first, and then offer my personal answer to a question pertinent to most if not all writers, publishers, composers and artists, WHY SELF PUBLISH? If you noticed the title heading I answer with WHY NOT! I being a business person first would like to initially point out that I did not write the book on self-publishing, the business, however like most of you reading this I have had to overcome the stringent hurdles of the publishing business as a whole from the beginning of a concept to which type of binding will be used.

You might want to observe the structure and process of the publishing business from the driver's seat as it could provide you with a more in-depth view throughout my next five reporting journals. I will share with you through my personal exploration, some of the more intricate details of self-publishing and together, we will discover, what we may have not known about self-publishing and how to do it. We will effectively determine, which method of operation would be best for our specific situation and finally derive, at user-friendly options for future reference.

I have found that there is a certain passion that writers have about their work, just as a carpenter carefully molds his wood to fit the often-challenging curves of space and finally makes the perfect fit. I believe that Writers place words and metaphors both carefully and freely, to describe themselves using a lot of love, deep thought, and sensitivity as accurate vehicles to portray their commitment for the art. As one should expect, a carpenter skillfully chooses wood based on his experience and personal choice. Writers make those same decisions in their efforts to bring life to their vision.

I self-published, first off because I was tired of simply just telling people about my project trying to garner the type of attention that I thought would get me some sort of book deal or BIG opportunity. Good News! It didn't happen that way. I, like many of you had just grown plain tired and disgusted with the antics or charade of trying to get my story in the hands of some individual who I thought or we think can actually make a difference. Sorry! They usually can't, I mean I don't want to sound like the old grumpy stump because I've had a hard time getting my story published, BUT! And that is a big BUT!, I'm sure you can easily complete this statement.

How many times have you sat and read stories, poems or even articles from contributing writers that you thought have no merit or credibility? WOW! My story is better than that, you say to your self. How many movies have you seen, that get thousands of dollars spent on catchy trailers, even with an all-star cast and after you got there, got settled in, popcorn soda and your favorite movie partner the script starts to go downhill from the very opening until your partner woke you up at the end. The whole process of being published really starts the moment of you first experience thought that says to you, I should write a book, poem or story.

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When you look at this process realistically you are truly self-published anyway. The evidence is in the following facts.

When YOU interview, either electronically or in print no one at the publishing company YOU'RE signed with can tell YOUR story like YOU. Depending on what type of deal YOU have with the publisher, YOU will be responsible for YOUR publisher recouping it's initial investment first (BEFORE YOU SEE A DIME), to include any monetary advance, travel setup or arrangements for interviews or in store promos, normal marketing and any creative marketing costs that may be incurred.

YOU WILL PAY any and all TAXES that come as a result of income generated through book sales efforts.

Make sense so far?

Before we start the actual process of exploration and discovery let's establish a point of reference for why information and support is important. The primary answer is we love the art form of writing and want to be PROPERLY compensated in one way or another. We next, have not, because we KNOW NOT. I have found that you can do something wrong for so long that it actually becomes your right way of doing that thing. To escape mystery, rumor, illusion and the misery of them all, I personally like to obtain as much information and support concerning issues of relevance to my world, and my offering help to others through my work.

I have further found that not having because I don't know is just as disappointing as not being discovered by the big agent or publishing company. This pet peeve comes partly as result of me being African American, lack of information and support is one of the key tools we lack for success in the African American community, don't forget we are typically not people who share our findings and

factual data. THIS MUST CHANGE! Here we are deep in the 21st century and without a doubt the electronic revolution is in full effect, the information highway has come to stop at no point, as consumers have virtually become properly courted by the electronic age. This my friend speaks to the most valuable player in the world, OPPORTUNITY!

Remember we are subject to reject that which is not prospect, buzz word prospect-prosper notice any resemblance, exactly we want to all want to be a part of that which is successful. I think that you, me and we can be as successful as we want and allow the boundaries to be set in parameter by our success itself.

Self-publishing has been and can be very rewarding and there are some prominence in association such as in the recording industry. Warner Books is a division of Warner Brothers records, powerful music giant Bertelsmann or BMG started as a small press printer then went on to schoolbook printing, newspaper, and eventually short stories and still a very huge mainstay in the publishing business as well as the progressive movement it has shown in the record business. I feel that self-publishing will definitely be the cornerstone of the publishing business just as independent labels are to the Music industry.

Any do it yourself help guide is always suspect to hidden angles that prove to be non-productive as well as discouraging and sometimes outright frightening. We will use our opportunity to stray from reverse positions, to explore self-publishing in truth, reveal methodology of self-publishing with fact, and relish in the value of sharing that which is essential to upward mobility and progression with regard to self-publishing and the business thereof.

**You can reach me direct
www.tohellandback3x.com**

**Send questions or comments to Tony Williams
at yselfpub@yahoo.com**

SELF PUBLISHED AUTHOR

Shades Of Reading Magazine: Tell us a little about you the person and the writer?



Rena Finney: I'm from a small town on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. I'm very family oriented, and someone who is thankful for every moment of every day. Rená the writer...I feel like I'm standing at the threshold of something wonderful

and exciting. Writing is not only what I do, it's who I am and quite frankly I've fallen in love with it. The great thing about it is, the fit is perfect.

SORMAG: Tell us about your book?



FINNEY: It's about the power of love, the journey to forgiveness and the summation of letting go. The main character Gwendolyn James loses her sister to a horrible disease and their vow to share everything with one another is broken. Left with more

questions than answers, Gwendolyn's world spins out of control. After much soul searching, rediscovery and the revelation of truths and hidden secrets she discovers that she's ready to live again.

SORMAG: Why did you choose to self-publish?

FINNEY: Self-publishing has given me the opportunity to breath life into my dream and to proudly be the first to introduce it to the world. I get to test the market, establish a readership and at the same time I'm working harder at it because it's my baby and I am driven to see it and my future efforts thrive.

SORMAG: What is the most gratifying thing about self-publishing?

FINNEY: To know that I'm following in the footsteps of so many self-publishers who believed enough to create their own avenue of _expression and who now rank as best-selling authors.

SORMAG: What is the biggest problem you faced as a self-publisher?

FINNEY: Some markets just don't embrace books by self-published authors and as a result, it takes a lot of effort and a lot of work to become visible.

SORMAG: Do you want to self publish other people?

FINNEY: I'd love to publish others later down the road. I'm working hard now trying to learn all I can and to perfect my craft to the point where I can reach back and help others become publish.

SORMAG: How did you choose a designer for your cover?

FINNEY: A close friend and mentor recommended Mr. Keith Saunders of Marion Designs to me. After a couple of conversations with Keith, he grasp what I wanted and my vision of Halfway was born. He is definitely one talented brotha.

SORMAG: Did you assemble a team to work with you (i.e. editor, printer, publicists, etc.)?

FINNEY: Let's just say that this part was definitely a learning experience.

SORMAG: How did you decide about pricing for your book?

FINNEY: Basically I researched the market for similar books in size and genre and comparatively set the price.

SORMAG: What strategies did you decide to use to promote your book?

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FINNEY: I promoted on-line through my website. Locally, I've gotten into a couple of small bookstores, one of those being an AA bookstore. I was fortunate in being featured in my county's newspaper. Amazon.com has been added and I'm currently working on other on-line sellers.

SORMAG: What was your first book signing like?

FINNEY: Actually my first formal signing will take place February 11th at Lorton Public Library in Lorton, Va. with author/friend Tracee Garner.

SORMAG: What was the most unusual place your book was sold?

FINNEY: My husband's job. He works for an electric cooperative and the support I received from his co-workers was overwhelming.

SORMAG: Our theme for this issue is Family Literacy. If you have children, what type of reading activities do you do together.

FINNEY: My kids are 18 and 14 and I although I no longer read to them, I stress the importance of literacy almost daily. Because of the seed that I planted early, they continue to read at least one book a month (outside of school assignments).

SORMAG: What do you do to promote literacy?

FINNEY: I work at a college library and during our National Library Week activities we incorporate reading to the pre-school children at our university's early childhood center.

I even adorn a clown outfit, change my name for the moment to "Jellybean" and spend the afternoon reading to our future generation of leaders.

SORMAG: What was your favorite book as a child, and as a teenager?

FINNEY: As a child it was Dr. Seuss anything. I had each and every book and read each one repeatedly. As a teenager I loved, I know why the Caged Bird Sings.

SORMAG: What advice would you give to those interested in self-publishing?

FINNEY: Just do it! As long as you stay on the sideline, you'll never get in the game. Believe in yourself and your talent.

SORMAG: How can readers reach you (mail, email, website).

FINNEY: Snail mail me at P.O. Box 1655 Parksley, Va. 23421, e-mail renafinney@yahoo.com and visit my website at www.renafinney.com and sign my guestbook. I'd love to hear from you.

SUPPORT

SELF PUBLISHED AUTHORS

PICK UP A BOOK AND SUPPORT A DREAM

This is a new feature for SORMAG. We would like to recommend books for your writing library. Our next issue we will offer a free copy of featured book. If you would like to be eligible for book sign up for our writer's list:

Shades Of Reading Magazine: Please give the readers a brief bio on you the person and the writer.

Carmen Leal: I am an author, storyteller, and singer and have written five books including *You Can Market Your Book*, a marketing tool kit for published authors, and *WriterSpeaker.com*, an Internet research and marketing guide for writers and speakers. My newest book, *The Twenty Third Psalm for Caregivers* will be released in June 2004, followed by *The Twenty Third Psalm For Those Who Grieve* in 2005. My writings have been featured in *Writer's Digest*, *Guideposts*, *Focus on the Family*, *Decision Magazine*, the *Orlando Sentinel*, and numerous national and local publications. My personal experience stories have appeared in dozens of compilation book series.

A storyteller with a dramatic testimony, I is a popular presenter at women's retreats, church groups, conventions and conferences. My wit, humor, and poignant personal observations, coupled with my down-to-earth style and common sense approach to dealing with life, inspire my audiences.

Through my transparency, I has the ability to encourage and bring hope to all. Using songs to enhance my message, I weave music into my presentations using a rich clear voice. The combination of my writing, speaking, and singing allows me to be used in a variety of forums.

I am married to the world's greatest Webmaster and the mother of two adult sons. I live in Naples, FL. but my heart is in Hawaii where I go to visit my sons.

SORMAG: Tell us about your book?

LEAL: *You Can Market Your Book* is a *Writer's Digest Book Club* selection. This is a practical down-to-earth manual that gives the essentials for every writer in helping them sell their own book.

Whether your book is fiction or non fiction, for children or adults, you'll learn innovative ideas and valuable tips. *You Can Market Your Book* includes everything an author needs to know about the world of marketing.

Each chapter is filled with tips and strategies on topics such as speaking as a promotional tool, working with the media, online marketing, book reviews, and more. *You Can Market Your Book* features Web site resources practical advice from industry experts.

SORMAG: What would you like your readers to take away from your book?

LEAL: Every industry has rules to follow if you want to succeed. *You Can Market Your Book* covers the rules for the marketing section of the publishing industry. Every author can be a marketing maven once they know the rules. Get the book, learn the rules, sell your book.

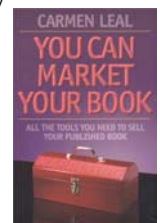
Beyond sending out review copies, most publishers spend few resources on marketing. Today it's up to the author to do everything possible to sell enough books to pay back their advance or even to become a best seller.

SORMAG: How can this book help a recently published author?

LEAL: Marketing can be intimidating. What this book will do is to demystify the process and make it fun. It's filled with proven ideas that any author can adapt to their own books and their own style.

SORMAG: How can readers get in touch with you? (email, snail mail, web address)

LEAL: I can be reached at Carmen@writerspeaker.com or visit my Web site at <http://www.carmenleal.com>



The Tax Man Cometh

By
Michele Claybrook-Lucas

The late Reginal Lewis, creator of a billion dollar business empire, TLC Beatrice International, was once quoted as saying "You've got to pay your taxes."

New Year is a time for beginnings and resolutions. It is also the perfect time to prepare for the upcoming tax season. The assessment of your tax position should be the prerequisite for any new savings plan or other financial endeavor. January and February are excellent months to start gathering financial data in anticipation of filing your income tax by April 15th.

By law, all financial statements summarizing earnings for the previous year must be received by January 31. However, you can start getting organized before receipt of these forms. Pull together any statements that you've maintained throughout the year. Most account information can be obtained online. Reviewing this information can give you an idea of what you may or may not owe in April. Doing a projection early in the year allows ample time for saving money to pay an anticipated tax bill. A tax review also allows you to decide the complexity or simplicity of your tax scenario.

Complex tax issues belong in the hands of the professionals, such as an accountant, preferably a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) or financial advisor. Don't allow your confusion over taxes be the cause of late filing.

Fortunately, most tax filings are not complex. The majority of people will complete their own filings using forms 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ to prepare and submit their returns. These forms can be found online at:

<http://taxes.yahoo.com/fedforms.html>

As a result of the tax reform act, there are many tax credits available for low and moderate income tax payers. Two of these credits are:

Child Care Credits

This credit can be realized through an employer plan, up to \$5,000 in the form of a pre-tax deduction, or as an individual credit. The individual credit maximum is \$2,400 for one child or \$4,800 for two or more children. You may claim only one of the two credits.

Credits for College Students

Hope Scholarship credit is available for up to \$1,500, if you have a dependent student who is in their freshman or sophomore undergraduate years. The Lifetime Learning credit of 20% of qualified expenses up to \$5,000 can be used by anyone who qualifies. Both credits are subject to income phase-out limits.

For a more comprehensive listing of tax credits and incentives go to: www.irs.com

If you are eligible for a tax refund, file early. Uncle Sam does not pay interest on payments owed to you. However, if you file late, Uncle Sam will assess applicable taxes and penalties.

Happy New Year! Happy Filing!

Michele Claybrook-Lucas is the author of "Quilting a Life: Piecing Together Livelihood, Lifestyle and Life Dreams" available at www.bbotw.com and www.career-mosaic-consulting.com

Shades Of Reading Magazine: Please give the readers a brief bio on you the person and the writer.

Evelyn (Eve) Hall: I am a published author and poet, residing in, Atlanta, GA. My work has been published in several magazines including "Ancient Wind Press" "Mature Living" "Rainy Day Corners" and "Consumer Issues" I have won several writing contests, winning, 1st – 5th places. I have written and marketed, three poetry chapbooks. My first children's book, entitled "Dante's Poetic Playground" was released Aug 2003.

I am not a disciplined writer, I write when the mood hits me. When I have "writer's block" I will read.

Some of my favorite authors are: Alexis Pate, Timm McCann and Margaret Johnson-Hodge, who I have all met.

SORMAG: Tell us about your current book?

HALL: It is a 40 page paperback full of children's free verse and rhyme poetry. It was written by a child at heart, for all those who are children at heart.

SORMAG: What would you like your readers to take away from your book?

HALL: I want readers to take away from my book that poetry is good for the heart and soul, no matter what age you are.

SORMAG: What was the best writing advice you received?

HALL: The best writing advice I have received was to write what I know. I have found that might work flows more readily when I follow this advice. It makes it fun and not work.

SORMAG: How can readers get in contact with you? (mail, email, website)

HALL: Readers can contact me by e-mail,

cagedbird2u@yahoo.com or by signing my guestbook at: www.poeticparadise.ipfox.com I answer all my mail, personally, for now :)

SORMAG: Can you give us a sneak peek at your next book?

HALL: I would love to give you a sneak peek at my next book. It is entitled, "Dante's Alphabet Book of Color." This book is a part of a series of books that I am waiting to have published. It is one my favorites because it is, non-fiction. A lot of research went into this book. It is a multi-cultural book with well known people whose names begin and end with the 26 letters of the alphabet. Of course, "O" is for Oprah. :)

I hope she gets to see the book. If its illustrated in a fine way, I think it will be a very good seller.

ROCHELLE ALERS

SECRETS NEVER
TOLD

POCKET BOOKS

TRADE PAPERBACK

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Query This

By
Dana Smith-Mansell

I sent another query, the twentieth one today,
With tongue in cheek I wonder, what is it they will say?

“An astounding work of literature, we’ll publish it right away,”
“Just send one thousand dollars, that’s all you have to pay.”

Or perhaps the rejection letter, will come with usual dismay,
“No thank you” blunt and to the point, is all they ever say.

I continue with my submissions and queries, but no one looks my way,
Ignoring them I forge ahead, with vengeance coming into play.

And now I have a surprise for impetuous critics who said “nay”.
My book is on the best-seller list, now what do you have to say?

Have you read A Love Worth Fighting For?

Pick up a copy at your local bookstore.

A Love Worth Fighting For
Katherine D. Jones
BET Books

Unknown Love

by Deborah J. DeShields

Do you see the moon tonight, though you are far away?
Is it the same full moon that I see when the day is nothing but a faded memory?
If I reached out to touch a single beam of its cool, white light,
And at the same time you reached out to touch the same beam,
Would we connect within our thoughts, our hearts, our souls?
Would you feel the warmth of my hand reaching, touching, feeling,
Expressing love in such a way that only the moonlight can carry it through time,
And space, and distance?

Do you see the moon tonight, illuminated by a gentle glow?
Is it the same full moon that sheds light on a night that would
Otherwise be dark and lonely?
If I walked down the lighted path, paying no attention to the surrounding darkness,
And at the same time, you walked the same path, yet from a different direction,
Would our hearts meet at a crossroad in time where we could share openly,
Without hesitation, today and all of our tomorrows?

Do you see the moon tonight, fading as the sun rises from beneath the earth?
Is it the same moon that brings forth the sun which promises the scent of a budding rose,
And the melody of birds singing high above the trees?
If I wake to the morn promised by the light of a new day,
And at the same time you wake to the same light, the same day, yet in a
Completely different world,
Would our dreams fade, as did the moonlight? Or would they remain
Until a new moon appears on the horizon and at last
We express undying love?

Do you see the moon tonight, as I see it, knowing that somewhere in the world
You are there . . . smiling, laughing, breathing,
Feeling with your heart?
If I close my eyes, will I find comfort in the moonlight,
And will it forbid any doubt I may have
That you are real, that your love is real,
And that although we do not share the same space,
We do share the same moon, the same sun, the same tomorrow,
And more importantly . . . Life?

Deborah DeShields is the author of numerous short stories and young adult mysteries with four publications in those genre's and has one publication on Internet marketing. She has received awards for two of her children's short stories and recently became agented for a romance novel. She is currently reworking a historical-fiction novel and under consideration by a major publisher. She is the founder of a non-profit organization that assists needy families and recently retired from that work after 17 years.

By profession, she is an accountant and administrative services business owner.