

Our Little Secret



Write a Book in 6 Weeks
(and have fun doing it!)

By Karen Rowe



www.frontrowseat.com

Our Little Secret:
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*"Writing is an adventure,"
~Winston Churchill*

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Introduction

Two years ago on a sunny day in July, my editor called me up out of the blue and asked if I'd like to write a book about chocolate.

Would I like to win the lottery and move to Paris? Would I like to eat butter croissants every morning and never gain a pound? Would I like Javier Bardem to knock on my front door and take ME on a fantasy date?

Yes, yes I would. I'd like that very much.

Mostly, there was silence. Because I initially thought he was deking me out. I was waiting for him to punch me in the arm twice and call punch-buggy.

Once it sunk in, I really started warming up to the idea.

Getting to write a book is great, but being specifically asked to write "food porn?" Where do I sign up?

The publishers wanted the book out by Valentine's Day, which meant I had roughly eight weeks from blank page to final manuscript. Plus, I had a two-week vacation to Belize already planned, so that knocked my time down to six weeks. Six weeks.

This e-book outlines my process during that six-week time span; the process I followed to be able to meet my deadline. I want to let you in on a little secret. Lean in. A little closer. Okay there. Now, what I'm about to say will change the way you approach writing a book forever. Ready?

It wasn't that hard.

Nothing I am writing here is Earth-shaking. I have not reinvented the wheel. My premise is simply this: I wrote a book in six weeks, and it was a relatively easy process. Of course I had some tough times. There were moments when I never thought I was going to finish; there were events I had to miss. There was also immense creativity, enormous satisfaction and shhh! Don't tell anyone: a lot of fun and laughter.

It's okay. It'll be our little secret.



Chapter 1

The Starting Block

"Writing is just work - there's no secret. If you dictate or use a pen or type or write with your toes - it's still just work." ~Sinclair Lewis

There is definitely a general belief that writing is really hard. And it can be—if you choose to make it so. We have all heard the stories of writers toiling over manuscripts for a lifetime, only to scrap them in disgust years after the fact.

J.K. Rowling admitted to “paralysis” working on the second Harry Potter novel. Samuel Taylor Coleridge spent his last years agonizing with writer’s block, quite possibly because he was out of his mind on drugs.

That doesn’t have to be you.

Writing is simply this: a process. For a book of 45,000 words (or, roughly 250 pages) six weeks is a solid, realistic—albeit daring—timeline. But I proved it can be done.

If you’ve picked up this book, I am willing to bet that you have tried and failed in the past to write a book on your own. What went wrong? Well for starters, you were trying to do it on your own. This time around, make a commitment to find time and complete this manuscript in six weeks. Follow the process:

Step 1: Mechanics – 1 week

Step 2: Research – 1 week

Step 3: Writing – 4 weeks

I’ll show you how. C’mon, let’s go.

Step 1: MECHANICS (aka: the easy stuff)

Before you get started, there are a few things you need to set in motion to set yourself up for maximum success. Step 1 is intended to help you clarify your ideas, get you organized and keep you motivated.

Activities:

- Visualization
- Inspiration Board

Time allotted:

No more than 2 days

FIND INSPIRATION

Cut out some pictures. Read your favourite authors. Play some music. Go for a walk. What's important here is to get excited about your book. Don't think you have a book yet? Then get excited about your ideas! Be your own cheerleader. Don't start worrying before you even start about the details, the future, how it's all going to look. Don't scold yourself for not having done it before

now. That's not what this is about. Find purpose and be moved to create something of which you can be proud. Get caught up in the excitement. You are only six weeks away from completing your manuscript! You're a soon-to-be published author! Hooray.

*How are you
going to find your
inspiration? How can
you work smarter, not
harder?
How can you
make it fun?*



Here's how I did it: The very first thing I did before I started writing was throw a party. Yep, really. I look for any excuse to gather a bunch of people together. So, I hosted a "Chocolate Focus Group." The publisher wanted some recipes included in the book, and though I was more than capable of doing it myself, why would I?

Divide and conquer, I say. The good thing about being pressed for time is it forces you to be creative and ask for help. Crazy, right? I assigned anyone who was interested a recipe to bake at home and bring to my house. Then I asked for feedback. We ate until our eyes turned into chocolate and voted for our favourite recipes. The Better-than-Brad-Pitt brownie was the runaway winner.

I had oodles more fun doing it this way, created a sense of community, had some laughs, ate delicious chocolate desserts and spent an afternoon of my time testing the recipes instead of a week. Research never tasted so good!

Other suggestions :

If a chocolate focus group isn't your thing, here are a few other things that might work for you. I'm sure you come up with your own. Now I feel like I should warn you: I am going to get a little woo-woo on you. Warning: Deepak Chopra alert!

VIZUALIZATION

Think about your favourite person in the whole world. It can be anyone at all, alive or dead, but there needs to have been a special connection with you personally which brings you positive memories.

- What do you like about this person?
- Why do they make you feel good?
- Why do you enjoy being around them?
- What would you do for them?
- How could you support and show your love to them and
- How do they show support and love to you?

Sit with that for a minute or two. Spend some time going over fun times and fond memories. You can choose to do this while you are on a walk, at home, wherever you like.

Got it? Do you have a clear picture?

Now, transfer all those good feelings for your favourite person in the world over to your idea or your book.

Start treating your idea (and ultimately your book) like you would this favourite person.

Have you caught yourself thinking the following about your book: What about cover design? What about ISBNs? How do I format the interior? I don't know enough about publishing. I don't know enough about writing a book. I'm not an expert. No one is going to publish me. Who do I think I am?

Sound familiar? Put those bad thoughts down and back away slowly. They are only getting in your way.

Are you thinking the following about your friend: Why are they friends with me? What does she see in me? I don't know enough to be friends with her. I need to get better at becoming a friend before we can hang out.

No, of course not. So why are you thinking that about your book?

Instead, congratulate yourself for your ideas, trust and believe that your book is going to rock (because it will) and hang on to your dream, hang on to this excitement. Buy yourself some pom-poms. Get excited about your work and maintain this visualization of treating your book like a friend. Come back and refer to it if you ever feel stuck. She'll be there for you when you need her.

INSPIRATION BOARD

If you have heard of the Law of Attraction, you may also have heard of vision boards or treasure maps. I like to call them inspiration boards. The idea is that by surrounding yourself with images of who you want to be, what you want to have, and where you want to live or visit, your life

changes to match those images and desires. Gearing an inspiration board towards your book specifically will have the same result.

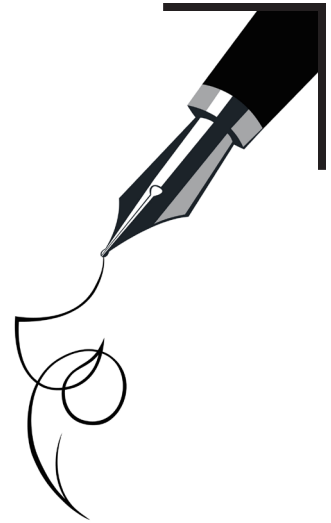


Here are some ideas to include on your Inspiration Board:

- *Setting*
- *Characters*
- *Who your readership will be*
- *The message you are trying to convey*
- *The tone or feeling you want your book to evoke*
- *Your vision for the final product*
- *How much money you want to make on your book*
- *Where you see it being published*

Inspiration Boards are simple and fun – it's a poster board onto which you paste or collage images that you've torn out from various magazines. I think a few hours spent doing this at the start is time well spent. I'll be honest with you, I didn't do this with either of my first two books, but have with my third; it helped me to get clarity and vision.

When you're done, slap it right up next to your workspace. According to the Law of Attraction, clearly stating what you want will help you attract it. Vision boards, simply put, add clarity to your desires and feelings.



Chapter 2

Practical Details

"Protect the time and space in which you write. Keep everybody away from it, even the people who are most important to you." ~Zadie Smith

Still a part of Step 1, this section takes care of all the essential writing particulars:

- Create a workspace
- Get an external hard drive
- Open a folder
- Spoon-feed your tasks
- Document your journey
- Tell everyone you know

Time allotted:

3 days

CREATE A WORKSPACE

Set yourself up for success. Clear space in your home and surround yourself with things that motivate you—family pictures, inspiration boards, quotes from authors. Then take care of the mechanics: anything you may need in terms of stationary or computer supplies. Buy some eye drops, make sure you have good lighting and back support, and proper ergonomic keyboard. You know the drill. Most importantly, this should remain a dedicated space for writing. That doesn't mean that you can't write elsewhere, but the only thing that is done in that particular space is writing.


GET AN EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE

Do I even need to mention this? Back up your work. If you don't have one, or don't know what this is, find someone who does and get one. This is not an optional step. If you get a virus or somehow lose all of your files or any part of your manuscript, it sucks. You may have to start all over again. And yes, smug Mac users, this can happen to you as well. External hard drives—not just for nerds.

If that really isn't going to happen, then email a copy of your manuscript to yourself every night or save it onto a USB stick if you must.

OPEN A FOLDER

Starting is the hardest part, so breaking tasks down into small and manageable chunks makes the task seem much less daunting. Open a folder on your computer and name it. If you already have a working title for your book, then great. If not, call it whatever you want. My first book. The Next Great American Novel. My Literary Masterpiece. International Best Seller. Whatever inks your pen.



Are you congratulating yourself yet? You should be. Opening a folder and naming your book prepares you to lay the groundwork. Once you have a home for your book, you can start.

SPOON-FEED YOUR TASKS

In her book *Four-Day Win*, Martha Beck calls this “playing halvesies:”

“By making your goals broad and far-reaching, you guarantee they will be immediately sabotaged by your inner meanie.” We start out with what we think are realistic goals, but most of the time they are not; otherwise, we would already have accomplished them. Play halvesies with yourself until your goal is ridiculously easy to attain, or until essentially, it would be an embarrassment not to complete it. Your ego simply won't allow it. Breaking tasks down into bite-size chunks and spoon-feeding them to you creates a No Excuse zone.

Here's how it looks:

So your goal is to write a book? Great. How do we make that more attainable? Break it down.

Write a book → Spoon-feed → Do an outline → Spoon-feed → Create a mind-map → Write the first chapter → Spoon-feed → Write the first two pages. Keep spoon-feeding → Write one para-

graph. Now you're getting the hang of it. Keep on going → Write a sentence.

What would an even smaller portion of a sentence be? A smaller portion of that would be opening a folder on your computer and naming it something awesome and inspiring.

You can do that, right?

DOCUMENT YOUR JOURNEY

Everyone knows the fairytale of Hansel who filled his pockets with little white pebbles, which led him and Gretel back home. Do this with your writing. I blogged almost every day during my first book. Not only did it create a community of support, but it helped me to remember parts of my process when I got to Book #2. It may also end up being really valuable if, say, you ever want to write an e-book or coach others to write a book.

I believe this goes for anything. You'll never be in this position ever again. It'll never be your first book, or your first baby, or your first funeral. Writing it down, leaving pebbles will make it easier for you and for those walking the path behind you. Trust me, you'll forget what it feels like. You think you won't, but you will. Show where you've been and remember how far you've come.

TELL EVERYONE YOU KNOW

Stating your plans publicly means...well, you have got to go through with it. Now others can hold you accountable.

Use Twitter or Facebook to announce your deadline (which in case you were sleeping earlier, is six weeks from TODAY) as your status update. Now that you have a new blog, keep friends and family posted with your daily word count, funny research tidbits and progress posts.

And another thing: start referring to yourself as an author. I, _____, am a published author. It helps. And besides that, it's fun. I believe that everyone has a story to tell, so go ahead and tell yours. People want to hear what you have to say.

Okay, so you have officially started your book. Congratulations!

See? Easy!



Chapter 3

Building Momentum

Most of life is routine - dull and grubby, but routine is the momentum that keeps a man going. If you wait for inspiration you'll be standing on the corner after the parade is a mile down the street." ~Ben Nicholas

Last part of Step 1, this section will give you the skills you need to succeed and maximize your effectiveness:

- Ask for support
- Rearrange your schedule
- Find a hide-out
- Make it Fun
- Take care of your body
- Get into a Jerry Seinfeld mindset

Time allotted:

2 days

ASK FOR SUPPORT

Ask friends and family to support you by leaving you the hell alone (or coming to your chocolate focus group and then leaving you the hell alone.) Don't get hurt or angry when they actually do

what you've asked. It takes some getting used to, but keep your eye on the prize – it's all for the greater good.

REARRANGE YOUR SCHEDULE

If you are serious about writing a book in six weeks, then you essentially have no choice but to give your schedule a major overhaul. Put your life on hold. Now I know that sounds scary. And impossible. And not so much fun. Hear me out. You can accomplish absolutely anything if you focus on nothing else for a fixed amount of time. Think you don't have time? Be honest, how much did you really spend on Facebook this week? How much time did you spend on your couch watching American Idol? If you spent that time writing, your book would be done by now. You'd be surprised how much you can get done when you commit and focus.

Now I realize this is not always an option for everyone: you have children, a family, a full-time job, or any combination thereof. In that case, look at options for putting your life on hold for smaller periods of time. Who can offer support? Can a spouse or family member take care of your children for the day or the weekend while you focus on your project?

If this isn't possible, can you take a week or two of vacation time and work at home while the kids are at school? If they're still at home, wake up a few hours early, write during nap times, or after they have gone to bed. Can you enlist the help of your husband or wife to cook a meal on a certain night? Can you work a babysitter into your family budget? Whatever you decide, make it happen. Make a schedule. If you need to start small, then start small. Set aside half an hour a day, or make every Tuesday night "writing night" and go from there. Remember, spoon-feed your tasks.

FIND A HIDE-OUT

Prepare to go there during your research or writing phase. No internet, cell phones or TV. Try three to five days to start. If you can manage a week or two, even better. Just get away. When I go out to my hide-out, I know that I am going to get some writing done. I have heard it referred to as a sensory deprivation tank, writing hibernation heaven, the bubble, the woods and the cocoon. If you're a mom, this is otherwise known as a vacation.

Other options are signing up for a writer's retreat or going to a writer's colony. Setting a clear intention to write and giving yourself this time may be the biggest favor you do for yourself.

MAKE IT FUN

Find a way to incorporate the things you love. Here's just a few of the things that keep me going:

- Socializing
- Time with friends and family
- A glass of wine
- Food
- Dancing

I found a way to include all these things into my daily writer's life. It made writing a lot more pleasurable. If you love family, find a way for your kids to help in the writing or research process. Exercising? Include it. Dancing? Go for it. I would regularly take dance breaks in the middle of my writing, either to blow off steam or celebrate a goal achieved. I frequently played air guitar, bobbed my head, jumped up and down, and lip-synced my way through a writing block.

Karen says

During the writing of this e-book, I happily made a fool of myself while belting out AC/DC, Tori Amos, M.I.A., 50-Cent, Annie Lennox, ABBA and the Afro-beat pop group Amadou & Mariam.

Do you have a favourite tune? Yeah, you do. Go ahead and rock out in your living room. I won't tell, promise.



I bet there's a way to include almost every one of your passions.

In order for you to succeed—really succeed—you need to be able to complete with grace. To do that, embrace all parts of you and work your passions into your everyday life. You definitely don't want to get to the end of your book in an exhausted, grumpy, heapy mess, hating it, hating yourself, hating the process and never wanting to write another book so long as you live.

In other words, suffering is optional. Choose to make it fun and easy. It's up to you.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY

Eat well, sleep well. Writing and creating requires concentration and a great deal of energy. Having soda pops or take-out and a generally poor diet will only wane your energy and create a shorter attention span. Sugar crashes and cravings only get in the way. I don't care if you eat like crap the rest of the year, for now, be really good to yourself. High-energy meals and snacks are the only way to go.

Take frequent breaks and stretch often. Your body will thank you.

GET INTO A JERRY SEINFELD MINDSET

Jerry Seinfeld treats his comedy like a full-time job. He gets up, has breakfast and coffee with his family and then makes the daily 15-second commute to his office and writes from 9 to 5 Monday through Friday. He treats his comedy as if he was physically going into a day job.

That's great for Jerry Seinfeld. And it's really good, solid advice. Here's the thing: strict schedules don't work for me. I feel claustrophobic. The stricter and more rigid my schedule, the less likely I am to follow it. For me, schedules completely suck the joy and life out of writing.

If you're one of those people that forget to eat breakfast if it's not written down, go to town. For me, a general word count is about all I can handle. Even then, I will often take all day to complete it, instead of tackling it first thing and getting it over and done with. I am most definitely not saying this is the way you should do it; I'm just telling you how the page turns in my world.

This is the end of the first week. You can choose to do the above in any order you like, and it's fine if some of the steps overlap. Just get your ducks in a row so we can move to the next phase.





Chapter 4

Research

"There are three things that writers love; praise, money and interruptions."
~James Frey

Depending on the type of book you have chosen, you may be able to skip the research portion altogether. Chances are there will still be a certain amount to be done, in which case, these pointers will come in handy:

- Avoid make-busy work
- Resist the Pit
- When in doubt, check it out
- Where's the fun?
- Unplug yourself
- Write down all your great ideas
- Flattery will get you everywhere
- Be good to yourself

Time allotted

1 week

AVOID MAKE-BUSY WORK

Let's face it, you could do research for years and still not know everything about your topic. Block

out specific research time. For me, it was about two weeks. Research can end up being a number of things: a slippery slope, a safety blanket, and a clever form of procrastination. It actually gives the appearance of “Work”. You get to say, “Yes, I am working on my book” when in actuality, you are stalling. What makes it even more furtive is that you feel as if you’re working, when what you’re really doing is cutting and pasting everyone else’s words instead of making any progress with your own.

Research is not about leaving no stone unturned; it’s about bringing to light a certain and specific piece of information. Period. Find it and then move on.

Here’s how I do it: Every time I find some interesting information pertaining to my topic, I cut and paste it into a document and credit it immediately, meaning I cut and paste the URL, the author’s name and email into a file. You may need the author’s contact info for copyright permission. At this point I am just gathering information; I don’t use necessarily use all of it. Your research will serve you well when you head to your time in the hide-out.

Put your research into your own words IMMEDIATELY. When you stumble upon the BEST and most perfect morsel of information and you have verified its source, make it your own right away.

What happens otherwise is that you end up with dozens and dozens of files.

RESIST THE PIT

Some of the best advice I ever got was from fellow author Lisa Wojna, who warned me against going down the black hole of research. A black hole is a region of space from which nothing can escape, including light. Around a black hole there is an undetectable surface which marks the point of no return, called an event horizon. Just stop yourself before you get there. One minute you are looking up something really interesting pertaining to your topic; next thing you know, you are entering your credit card number for the new and improved Chop-o-matic Pro. If you find yourself here, stop! Save yourself. Shut the internet down. This is procrastination at its most stealthy.

How do you avoid the black hole of the research process? By backing away from your computer. Quickly.



WHEN IN DOUBT, CHECK IT OUT

Be careful of using absolutes, or drawing extreme conclusions from only one source. You want to

use the most reputable sources possible, and have at least two, preferably three, different sources corroborating your information.

If you are trying to position yourself as an expert on a particular topic, make sure your information is accurate. On the internet, there are many urban legends, myths, and some misinformation. You'll notice sometimes that every website reports—almost verbatim—the same facts. That's your clue. If the information is copied word for word, chances are, it's false. Often what happens is that feeder websites have gotten their information from the same source without verifying if it's actually accurate. When in doubt, check it out at the library or through reputable sources. You may be surprised what you find.

It happened to me: When I was writing *For the Love of Coffee*, all of my sources reported the same specific thing. It doesn't matter what it was, and I don't want to embarrass anyone, but it wasn't actually, you know, true...

Luckily my editor knew it to be a common misconception and caught the mistake.

Where's the fun? I know, so research doesn't sound much like fun, right. Well, let me tell you, there is no end to the bizarre, quirky, hilarious things that my research on both chocolate and coffee turned up. Personally, I only write about things that interest me. The weirder and more arcane, the better. There was the great story about the Chocolate Hero twins, one of whom was decapitated, and the discovery that Forrest Mars--the man who built the Mars empire--grew up in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, an hour-and-a-half away from where I grew up. The discovery of chocolate covered-bacon (oh yes, they did!), the 88-pound chocolate bear Latvia gifted to Estonia, chocolate-fueled cars, the British ambassador who was publicly humiliated in Bolivia, stripped naked, strapped to a donkey, force-fed a barrelful of chocolate and paraded around the city of La Paz. I don't know how many days I just spent laughing out loud in front of my computer. Remind me to tell you about the time I accidentally found out that Maya Gold—a top-quality Belizean organic chocolate—is also, ahem, a Hungarian porn star.

UNPLUG YOURSELF

First, you're going to have to forego the web for a while. Working from an internet-free computer will help get a magnitude of more work done. Once the research is complete, it is possible to write for hours—even days—without it. The internet is a crutch. If you need to verify or expand some information, write your question down on a pad of paper and go look it up at a later time. In fact, having set internet time is a great way to be laser and direct. You are a man in a mall on Christmas

Eve: you're in, you're out.

I'm willing to bet 9 times out 10 that very urgent, pressing detail you just had to know will lose its importance a few hours later. Not having an internet-connected computer suddenly becomes a really great natural selection process. You're only going to go back to look up the things that are really important.

"Get in, get out. Don't linger." ~Raymond Carver

Next, turn off your cell phone. You can return calls on your hour off, or when you've met your next deadline. Change the message so people know you are deliberately ignoring them; they'll understand. Again, this may not be fully possible, but try – at least for several hours a day. Remember that support I was telling you about? Now's a good time to cash it in: recruit a loved one to screen calls for you. If they are old enough, this is a great way to get your kids involved. They love doing stuff for mom or dad. It makes them feel important and trusted.

FLATTERY WILL GET YOU EVERYWHERE

Give credit where it's due. If you heard it somewhere, credit it! Complete transparency is important. In the information age where nothing is new and everything is easily verifiable, doing your homework surrounding sources will save you time and headaches...and potential lawsuits in the future. Most writers are more than happy to share our work. Not only is it great publicity, it massages our egos. Have I mentioned size matters? The "Fair Use" rule of copyright law says one author may make limited use of another's work without permission. Various people and jurisdictions have spent a lot of time and resources agonizing over what "limited" means, but Fair Use usually includes: criticism and comment; news reporting; research/scholarship; nonprofit/educational uses; and parody. Anything else is (again, usually) protected by copyright, so tread carefully and err on the side of caution.

Karen says

Write down all of your great ideas.

When you are writing, keep a notebook with you at all times. Inspiration and great ideas will come out of nowhere. Things will hit you half-way through dinner, in the shower or in the middle of a conversation. Capture them as fast as you can.

Often, inspiration will hit just as you are drifting off to sleep at night. Think you'll remember the idea in the morning? Think again. Write it down. If that's too much work, try keeping a tape recorder, cell phone, iPhone or some type of recording device by your bed, so you don't have to turn the light on. Just speak into it and go back to sleep. You're going to love yourself in the morning.




A final word of caution: none of that will necessarily protect you from being sued; it's a valid defence if you are, but you may still have to actually mount (and pay for) that defence. The chances of this are small, but better to be aware now.

BE GOOD TO YOURSELF

Do one thing a day that has nothing to do with writing. I went for a walk or outdoor exercise and allowed myself one hour a day. The hardest part of my day was the mid-afternoon slump between around 3:00 and 4:00 pm, so that's when I chose to take my breaks. I could do whatever I wanted.

My only rules were:

- I had to be gone and back in an hour
- I could think about anything but my writing
- I could never take the same path twice



Writer's tip: Stretch out your legs, back and arms. Get the blood flowing. Taking little 5-minute stretching breaks can re-invigorate you and help you stay or get back on track.

This was one of the greatest favours I did for myself. I have loathed exercise in the past, but turning it into a reward completely transformed how I viewed it.

You may choose to alternate; spend some of that time with family or friends, or get some errands done, though generally, this is me time. Reward yourself. Indulge. Splurge. Go for a massage. Have sex. Whatever. Just make sure it's only for AN HOUR. And doesn't turn into an all-afternoon or all-day thing. If you can't trust yourself enough to get together with your friends (or your spouse) and limit that time, then find something you CAN do and that will work for you.

"The most solid advice for a writer is this, I think: Try to learn to breathe deeply, really to taste food when you eat, and when you sleep really to sleep. Try as much as possible to be wholly alive with all your might, and when you laugh, laugh like hell. And when you get angry, get good and angry. Try to be alive. You will be dead soon enough." ~William Saroyan



Chapter 5

Writing

I love being a writer. What I can't stand is the paperwork."
~Peter de Vries

Time allotted

4 weeks

I am being really generous here. I believe you can get a rough draft of your manuscript done in less than a week if you choose. My Writer's Retreat participants leave with a rough draft in hand after 5 days.

- Set it...and forget it
- Throw your alarm clock in the garbage
- The rough draft- Barf it up
- Let the Introduction write itself
- Ask for Support
- Give credit where it's due
- Reward yourself
- Be prepared
- Just write
- Always write to one person
- Never come back to a blank page

SET IT...AND FORGET IT!

Thanks to the legendary Ron Popeil for that one. (See? It's easy to casually-yet-officially credit your sources.) Set yourself a daily word count and meet it. Every day. Deadlines are non-negotiable. Don't let yourself off the hook. Don't let that small inner voice talk you out of writing and into watching TV or going out...or procrastinating...or any general sabotage of that nature. We talked earlier about finding a variation of the Jerry Seinfeld technique and sticking to whatever method you chose. If you really are having a hard time keeping your goals, and can honestly and genuinely say that you have given it your all (I would try it for at least a week,) then modify your goal, but only slightly. If you had a goal of say, 1,500 words a day and can't meet it, then try for 1,300 or 1,200. It's about setting realistic goals, yes, but the book will never get finished if you don't make a concerted effort to power through.

THROW YOUR ALARM CLOCK IN THE GARBAGE

My most successful writing time is the morning. Let's be clear: the morning for me is between 10:00am to 1:30pm. Respect your own natural biorhythms. After leaving the regimented life of teaching, it was one of the few luxuries I afforded myself. Do whatever works for you. When you are in a situation where you're writing in massive quantities, the best thing you can do is write at your own rhythm. Do not shock your body awake at unnatural times or try to force it to stay awake when it's telling you to go to bed. Find a way to do this that will still get your deadlines met.

WHAT IS A ROUGH DRAFT?

You aren't in high school anymore. The rough draft of a manuscript is different from the rough draft of your English 30 paper. Believe it or not, it's actually a little easier. You have likely been taught to self-edit as you go; this is great, unless you let it get in the way of your writing progress. Let go of your perfectionism. A rough draft is just that—rough. Let go of the belief that it has to be perfect before you submit it to your editor. It is not your job to edit. Writing may be a solitary endeavour; writing a book most certainly is not. There are many, many people involved in the writing of a book: your editor, an illustrator, a graphic designer and a publisher, to name a few. Align and connect with talented people and resources that will help make your book a success, and the writing will be a breeze.

The key to writing a rough draft is letting go of your inner editor. Let go of the need to be perfect.



It's a process. Keep that in mind.

BARF IT UP

So what is your part in the book? The writer is responsible for the content and the ideas. That's it. A rough draft is the shindig of those ideas together on the page. Puke it out and let the professionals sort through the messy bits. Just get them out. Of course, you do will eventually need to submit a rough draft that is coherent, so you can go back afterwards. But don't let that get in your way during the initial brainstorming and creation piece. Your English teacher very diligently taught you to edit as you go. That's great for a 1,000-word essay on the history of Western Civilization; not for a 45,000-word manuscript.

LET THE INTRODUCTION WRITE ITSELF

I believe that things like the book title and the introduction will take care of themselves. Make it easy and write the introduction as you go. When I was writing For the Love of Chocolate, I found

Karen says

I visualize my reader deciding whether to buy my book. She will either flip through it, glance at the table of contents, or skim through the introduction right there in the store. I believe a strong introduc-



tion will make for a good hook, inciting her to buy the book.

the most striking or funny information jumped out at me. Something about it made it notable. Keep in mind any major themes or recurring ideas which would serve as glue to tie the book together. Chances are, if it interested you, it will interest your reader.

Here's how I did it: I opened a file, named it "Introduction" and then cut and pasted these juicy tidbits into the file as I went along. Once I was done the book, I'd find that I had more than enough information to give my readers a really firm grasp of my book. It also allowed me to set the tone and clarify my message.

ASK FOR SUPPORT

Did I say this one already? It bears repeating. Most people have the toughest time with this one, so I'm saying it again. Remember all those good ideas you had at the start to invoke support from family and friends? Now's the time to cash those chips in.

GIVE CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

If your neighbour stopped by with a warm, home-cooked meal in the depths of your book writing, thank her. Be grateful for those who help you, even in the smallest way; they may have no idea

how much their small act of kindness meant to you. A signed copy of your book will go a long way as a sign of kudos.

REWARD YOURSELF:

Iris Murdoch said that one of the secrets of a happy life is continuous small treats. This is especially true when writing.

- Treat yourself. Pick short, pleasurable things that will break up your day, de-stress, relax or re-inspire you. This is not time to fold laundry. You want to stay motivated or re-energize yourself. Examples include a hot shower or bubble bath; your favourite meal or snack; half-an-hour of mindless TV or internet time.
- Make yourself a deal. Sometimes, I would reward myself with a movie before bed; but I didn't get to watch it if my work didn't get done. For me, it was a great motivator. Sometimes, bed was the motivation.
- Keep your agreement. When you say a half hour, mean it. Don't let yourself get distracted. You would be surprised what chores you suddenly enjoy doing. I never loved dishes as much as when I was writing at the Hideout. It was a well-deserved and welcome break in my day.

Make sure the reward fits the goal. Bigger goals get bigger rewards.



BE PREPARED

This is going to be hard and suck as much as you let it. Learn to minimize the suckiness by taking it easy on yourself. There are going to be ups and downs, moments of intense creativity, euphoria and satisfaction, and moments where you could no more type one lousy, single sentence as fly to the moon. Blech! Ptui, ptui. Go with the flow. Learn when to push it, and when to take a break. I know that type of advice is not particularly helpful, but in this case, trust your instincts.

Most importantly ... Just WRITE. Write always. Never ever stop writing.

Writing is like everything else; the more you do it the better you get. Don't try to perfect as you go along, just get to the end of the damn thing. Accept imperfections. Get it finished and then you can go back. If you try to polish every sentence there's a chance you'll never get past the first chapter." ~Iain Banks

Science-fiction author Theodore Sturgeon coined the best phrase for authors: “Ninety percent of everything is crud.” Doesn’t that make you feel better? Approach your writing with this in mind. I promise it will make it less frustrating. Get writing. And own it, baby. It’s your crap. Surround yourself with good people who love you and can honestly tell you whether or not that’s true. The more you write, the greater the selection.

“The waste basket is the writer’s best friend.” -Isaac Bashevis Singer

ALWAYS WRITE TO ONE PERSON

Essentially, you want to create an avatar of your ideal reader. Get a clear picture in your mind of who this reader is and write to him or her specifically. What is the name, age and sex of your avatar? What are his likes and dislikes? Why is he reading your book? This means using ‘you’ instead of ‘him’, ‘her’ or ‘them’. You aren’t writing to the entire world, or even a specific group of people, like moms. You are writing to one, specific mother.

You want her to be nodding her head as she reads your book.

Here’s how I do it: I act as if I am having a conversation with my avatar. Picturing this person is like having him sitting right next to me giving me advice and keeping me honest. I picture his feedback, his reaction, his advice, and his skepticism. He guides me to a clearer idea of what I’m really trying to say. I have several different avatars, and who I write to depends on the piece. They all have names and are real people. I almost always choose the same person and it’s someone I’ve known for years. He keeps me real. My avatars keep me grounded, connected and rooted in who I am at my core.

So, who is the closest person to you? Who knows you the best, or who knows this subject the best? Your husband, your best friend, a co-worker? Remember that favourite person you were visualizing before we started writing? Write to that person. The closer the relationship, the better and clearer your copy.

NEVER COME BACK TO A BLANK PAGE

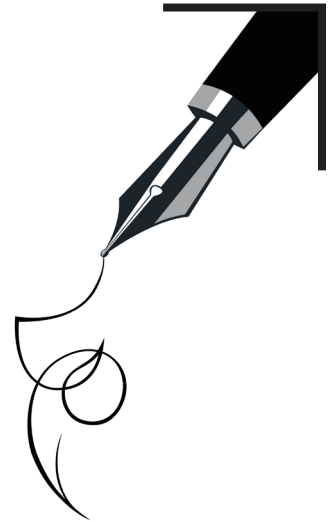
This was, for me, the best piece of advice I ever got. In addition to being counter-intuitive, it’s a little tough to master at first. Most of us want to keep going while we’re on a roll. Now I come along and tell you to stop. Great, you’re thinking, that was the one thing I thought I was doing right. And you are. But I guarantee that making this one minor adjustment will keep your momentum going

and ultimately improve your longevity. If you are on a roll, stop writing just before you run out of things to say. Coming back to a blank page can be demoralizing and cause you to get stuck. Don't go on writing and writing and writing because once you're finished, you'll find yourself asking: "What's next?" Then you get up and walk away from it, and it's hard to rebuild that momentum. Hemingway said it best: "When you are going good, stop writing."

The best part of this technique is that if you stop yourself when the going is good, you can't wait to get back to it because you know what you want to say next. Roald Dahl said, "If you stop when you are stuck, then you're in trouble!" You'll never have anything to come back to.



And that, friends, is how you write a book in six weeks or less and have fun doing it. Here a few more pointers to familiarize you with the magnificent world of writing.



Chapter 6

What Happens When I Get Stuck?

*"You fail only if you stop writing,"
~Ray Bradbury*

DON'T FREAK OUT WHEN YOU FREAK OUT

Sometimes the pressure of writing a book can be overwhelming; you will definitely have moments when you crack under the pressure. Breathe, this is normal.

Just after I had made my first deadline and submitted half of my book (20,000 words), I had a freak out. I spiraled into a sloppy pit of despair. I had eight days to finish the rest of my manuscript, another 25,000 more words. I had been averaging about 10,000 a week, which meant I was running out of time.

I called my publisher to renegotiate a later deadline. This was actually a really good move. The problem is, they won't always go for it. In my case, it wasn't an option - but it's always worth asking. If you are going to try to renegotiate, make sure you do it as far in advance as possible. Do not - I repeat, do not wait until the last minute. They have an entire team ready and waiting for you to finish so they can start the pre-production, so the more notice they have, the better.

Was I having fun? No, I was not.

There are a couple of other ways I could have made it easier for myself:

- 1) I deserved a reward. I should have been congratulating myself for meeting that deadline with a

pedicure or some other equally fabulous treat. This was big! What happened instead was that I was wallowing in self-pity, fear, self-sabotage, you name it.

- 2) I could have given myself (gasp!) a break. I know walking away from my writing gives me more clarity, perspective and ideas when I stop thinking about it. Coming back to the screen with a fresh set of eyes generates more productivity.
- 3) I could have had a cocktail.
- 4) I could have asked for support... oh look at that. Here we are again. Remember this from chapter 1? Now's the time to call it all in.
- 5) I could have found a way to blow off some steam. Remember that fun-list you made up at the beginning? Refer to that now. Mine was:
 - Socializing
 - Time with friends and family
 - A glass of wine
 - Food
 - Dancing

Do one of the things on your list. Look for ways to create some breathing room. Have the freak out, take the night off, talk to your friends, go for dinner, go dancing, go to a hockey game, play sports. Whatever you need to get it out of your system. Then quit your whining and get back to work. The next day.

25,000 words in eight days seemed impossible. There is always a way. And there was. I made my deadline.

DON'T COMPARE

This was one of my toughest and hardest lessons to learn. My second book was written under completely different circumstances than my first. Don't compare yourself to anybody else's experience, including your own past experiences. Nothing is static. Accept that and organize yourself accordingly.

Karen says

Tame the beast

There are many strategies you can use to help you Tame the Beast. For me, the Beast was fear and insecurity. I found that affirmations helped. Daily, and especially when I was struggling, I said things like "I am a talented, competent and dedicated writer," "I write with joy and ease," "I stay on task," "I meet my deadlines," Positive self-talk works. So do visualizations, meditation, exercise, music and a myriad of other therapeutic remedies. Find what works for YOU.



SCALE THE WALL

You're going to hit a wall. You are. I'm sorry. There's no way around it. Now I know the title of this e-book is "Write a Book in Six Weeks or Less (and have fun doing it)" but I need to tell you the truth: you're going to get stuck. It'll happen, so let me walk you through it.

Right around the time of my I-only-have-8-days-to-write-25,000 words-freak out, I had to surrender. But it took me some time to get there. I remember being exhausted, angry and bitter. I wanted to be done. I was so close but felt so very, very far away. I was tapped out emotionally and mentally. I had covered the entire history of chocolate from the Meso-Americans in 1000 BC all the way to the present day; I had talked about sex & chocolate, chocolate and health, it felt as if I had unearthed every quirky, nutty, crazy, bizarre, weird story, and did-you-know factoid known to man; I had circumnavigated the globe in my Around the World in 80 Chocolates chapter. I had covered traditions and tales from eighty different countries. I had talked about the world's chocolatiers, the history of Italian chocolate makers, Ghiradelli, Hershey, Callebaut, Lindt, Mars, Cadbury, Fry and Rowntree...I wrote about M&Ms, Baker's chocolate, Nestle, the Ganongs, Whitman's, Russell Stover, Ferrero, Tobler and Suchard...

I had written about all the unusual things people pair with chocolate: chocolate bacon, chocolate insects, sauerkraut and chocolate, chocolate beer, frozen chocolate beer on a stick, clothes made of chocolate, bizarre American food holidays, trivia and facts, chocolate butterflies, plants...chocolate cartels...the cocoa slave trade...cocoa boycotts...cocoa tree diseases...

I had chocolate jokes and chocolate quotes.

I had chocolate definitions and classification, chocolate tasting, what to drink with chocolate, different types of chocolate and the steps of cocoa harvest and production. Then I included a section called A year in the pursuit of chocolate. All the different things you can do—museums, chocolate festivals, factories, chocolate train rides. I had readers gallivanting from Canada and New York to Grenada, Belize, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium and Australia.

And then I had 12 motherloving chocolate recipes.

I was drowning in chocolate.

I was tempted to stretch out my word count for the 8,000 words and talk about how people really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really like chocolate.

I was done, done. With a capital D. I had exhausted all of my topics and gone through every one of the research files and written about everything I had wanted to write about, finished everything that I had started. And I still had 8,000 words left to write. Eight thousand. I thought I was going to die.

But I didn't.

As outlined above, one thing I should have done was walk away and take a break. No creative good can come from sitting and scowling and cursing at your computer screen. Walk away. You never want to create a situation you hate out of something you used to love.

You will get more clarity and greater perspective on your ideas when you stop focusing so intensely on them. You can't will the creativity to happen. I felt trapped. Like I had painted myself into a corner. I couldn't afford the time for a break, which ended up costing me more time.

Here was my big lesson: as soon as you treat writing as something you have to do, you take the fun out of it. I needed to start thinking of it as something I "got" to do.

Here's what I did right:

- 1) I asked for support on my blog. And by ask for support, I mean I whined and complained and lamented my tough writer's life, how much it sucked to be sitting at home and getting paid to do what I loved. Boo hoo! Sometimes you just gotta. Get it out. Let it go.
- 2) I got some more ideas and suggestions about things to write about, like chocolate anuses. Yes, really.
- 3) Alcohol saved the day: I realized I hadn't addressed chocolate and alcohol and eeked out another 1,500 words on chocolate liqueurs, creme de cacao, schnapps, and the differences between the various brands.
- 4) Two of my friends volunteered to take a section for me and write a little on a topic pertaining to chocolate that interested them. Shhhhhh! That's a big secret. Remember, divide and conquer. Share the load. Hi everyone, my name is Karen and I got some help with 1,000 words out of 45,000 on my book. I thought I was going to get struck by lightning. Do what you gotta do.
- 5) I talked to another author. She gave me some great advice that literally changed my entire approach to writing: authors aren't journalists.

Let me say that again: authors aren't journalists. As an author, you don't need to remain non-partisan. It was my book; I could write about whatever the hell I wanted. I had been careful not to make the Big Chocolate companies sound too mean and awful, taking care to write as many positive things about them as negative. I was trying really hard to be objective. I had been hesitant to talk about Fair Trade, even though I'm really passionate about it. Uh, except that's what books are for. Duh. So that prompted 2,000 words that kicked ass about the difference between organic, fair trade farming practices and large mass-produced plantation coco. I felt completely liberated. The 4,500 words of content I got from asking for help got me up and over the brick wall. I coasted through those last 3,500 and made my deadline on time.

Try and give yourself a couple of days between writing and submitting your manuscript to re-read it in its entirety. If you can, try reading it out loud. These few days give time for things to settle and allow you to come to the work with fresh eyes and renewed perspective.



Before you submit your work, my last piece of advice is this: Try and give yourself a couple of days between writing and submitting your manuscript to re-read it in its entirety. If you can, try reading it out loud. These few days give time for things to settle and allow you to come to the work with fresh eyes and renewed perspective. You also get to enjoy all your hard work. Try and approach it from a reader's perspective and ENJOY it.

Lastly, once you have pressed send, let it go.



Chapter 7

How Do I Make My Work Better?

"The most essential gift for a good writer is a built-in, shock-proof B.S. detector. This is the writer's radar and all good writers have it." ~Ernest Hemingway

SELF-FORGIVENESS

Elizabeth Gilbert, author of Eat, Pray, Love says while discipline is important, it's sort of over-rated. She believes the more important virtue for a writer is self-forgiveness. "Because your writing will always disappoint you. Your laziness will always disappoint you. You will make vows: 'I'm going to write for an hour every day,' and then you won't do it. You will think: 'I suck, I'm such a failure. I'm washed-up.'

Continuing to write after that heartache of disappointment doesn't take only discipline, but also self-forgiveness (which comes from a kind and encouraging and motherly love). The other thing to realize is that all writers think they suck."

HIRE A PROFESSIONAL

Do not skimp on page layout, cover design or editing, either. Hire an editor to proofread and edit your text and. As plain as I can say it, hiring a professional for support will get you better results, faster.

HIRE THE RIGHT PROFESSIONAL

Editors do a whole range of stuff I don't even pretend to know about. Like verify and check facts,

names and dates. They work on grammar, sentence structure and improve the readability of your work. It is very detail-oriented, agonizing stuff I'm glad I don't have to bother with. They know when to take the comma out and when to leave it in. They know whether or not the period goes before or after the bracket. People actually know that stuff. If it weren't for my editor, I'd have no idea that I overuse my semicolons, for example. Editors catch misinformation that, if printed, could tarnish your credibility. Finding one who understands you and your writing style is also important and will add consistency and credibility to your work. Consider your editor like a make-up artist: he makes you look good. Like already, he's slashed half of the above paragraph. I was going on a bit.

"Remember: Your second draft is your first draft, minus 10%" ~My editor

HELP THEM TO CREATE MAGIC

My editor is a magician. I love and trust his work. But as fabulous as he is, he doesn't have supernatural, mind reading powers. (Well, only sometimes.) In other words, you need to give them enough information. Especially when just starting out or working on a new project, don't assume they know exactly what you want. They are magicians yes, but it's up to you to supply the rabbit and the hat. So communication is key.

Karen says

Yes, editors are most certainly magicians. But, it's up to you to supply the rabbit and the hat. Communication is key!



KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT

Editing, like anything else, is a process. Editing may include two or three rounds, and the better and clearer the relationship, the better and clearer your final product will be. Your editor will be able to deliver exactly what you need, and quicker.

Here are a few guidelines to help you find the right editor for you:

- Find out if your work styles jive. To me, the editor is as much a part of my book as I am. Work is required on both sides and it should be collaboration. That's the key to progress. Does he or she feel the same way about the level of contribution and involvement as you do?
- Be clear on payment agreements. How much is required in advance, or upon receipt of the first draft/final changes.

- The first draft is the road map to the final product. Be prepared for the final draft to be dramatically different from the first draft. In fact, expect it, welcome it. Use the first draft as a touchstone and remember: it's a creative process.
- You're meant to go through each and every one of your editor's bastardizations of your work, and either accept it or change it back. Your editor will ask for further clarification, or suggest significant changes or re-wordings. Take the time to read and, more importantly, consider each of them. If you disagree with ANYTHING, you can reject his advice, ask for clarification/explanation, or accept it. Any of those three options should be 100% okay with him, across the board, on small corrections or big suggestions or anything in between. Never forget: this is your book and your name is on the front cover.
- Editors are on your side. They're not trying to make you look bad. Just the opposite, in fact. Let them do their jobs.

The above also applies to graphic designers, illustrators or any other professionals you may need to hire. You'll be glad to have them. Marvel as you watch them turn your raw work into a polished masterpiece.

"I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter." ~James Michener



Chapter 8

Celebrate

"The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate."
~Oprah Winfrey

CELEBRATE GOOD TIMES, COME ON!

When the book is done: celebrate your ass off. Don't just celebrate once. Celebrate at every level and for every accomplishment: when you open your folder, when you meet your first word count, when you finish writing, when you send it off to the printers, and most especially when you get a copy of it in your hot little hands.

We have a tendency as a society not to mark our accomplishments. Don't make that mistake: this is big; don't sweep it under the rug.

Here's how I did it: After my first book, I threw my own launch party. It was a theme party and inexpensive. Since my first book was on chocolate, we featured chocolate martinis, had chocolate desserts and kept it simple and fun.

Hosting a book launch after publication is a great way to generate sales, thank those who helped along the way and make your family really proud. Photo op!

If you don't want to throw yourself a launch, then just invite some friends over, go out, celebrate with your family, or any way you please. Just make sure you commemorate the accomplishment. This is the best part. Own it.



Chapter 9

Create a Network Within Your Community

"Coming together is a beginning, Keeping together is progress, Working together is success."
~Henry Ford

This is now easier than ever. With all sorts of blogs, membership-based sites, including Nings, which are online platforms for people to create their own social networks, there are helpful communities everywhere. Just because we are alone in front of our computers, there's no need to think we're all by ourselves.

Try and find a writing critique group where you live. Travel writer Alexis Grant says the challenge with finding a critique group or writers to form one is that they can't be just any writers — they have to be good ones. "You want to find writers who are at least at your level, preferably better and more experienced than you so they'll help you improve."

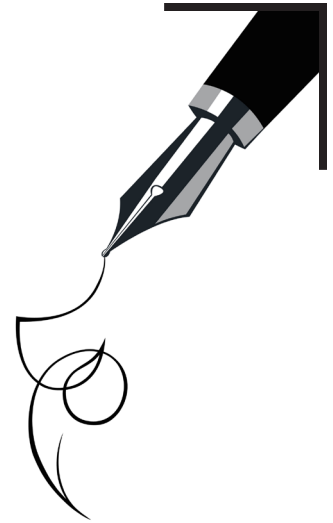
Better yet, join a group with a leader who is professional and does this for a living, such as myself. Meeting once a week will be invaluable to your writing process. It'll help with momentum, accountability and creative collaboration; it will inspire, motivate and give you a place to commiserate. More importantly, it will make you a better writer.

If you can't find in-the-flesh writers, online critique groups have value and are worth exploring,

but I gotta say, in-person groups are always preferable.

Alexis Grant has a few helpful suggestions on where you can seek out your tribe:

- Join your local writers' guild
- Ask at the library or bookstore
- Use social media. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
- Search online groups
- Go to a writers' conference
- Google it. Google is always your friend



Chapter 10

Why You Should Hire a Writing Coach

"Coaches who can outline plays on a black board are a dime a dozen. The ones who win get inside their player and motivate." ~Vince Lombardi

A writing coach has two things that you don't right now: experience and connections. Imagine how good it would feel to cleanly, clearly and confidently finish your book in six weeks? No more excuses. What would that be worth to you? Why should you hire me, Karen Rowe, specifically? I have the Magic Pill.

Here's what my gift can do for you:

- I know all the ins and outs of the writing process.
- I provide one-on-one in-person strategy sessions to which add clarity and vision to your ideas.
- I help you set goals for the fun and timely completion of your book.
- I ensure the quick and painless creation of your rough draft. I provide ongoing internet and phone support.
- I make it fun and easy.
- I give you access to my Rolodex: I have a team of experienced and qualified professionals in-

cluding an in-house editor and graphic designer to get you the best deal possible. In fact, their services are included in my pricing so you don't have to pay extra. There are no hidden fees.

- If you have a business, I could show you how every year you could be publishing a book geared towards your ideal client.



Chapter 11

What To Do Next

*"Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it;
boldness has genius, power and magic in it."
~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

So now you've read the e-book and you're probably feeling a little overwhelmed or stuck. And maybe you don't know what your next step is. You're thinking, 'It looks good on paper, but how do I do this in the real world? What should I do now?'

Pick up the phone. Call me for a complimentary 30-minute phone consultation. What can I do for you in 30 minutes? I can help you write the first paragraph of your book. I can give you feedback on your book idea. I can offer my professional opinion after 10 years in the book industry.

You choose the results in your life, so why not choose to make this book happen? Calling me is the quickest route to making your dream of becoming a published author finally come true!

Schedule yourself a time to speak with me by clicking on this link:
<http://calendly.com/frontrowseat/30min/>

You'll be so happy you did.



Write a book in 6 weeks

Checklist

Step 1: Mechanics- 1 week

Step 2: Research – 1 week

Step 3: Writing – 4 weeks

WEEK ONE – MECHANICS

Inspiration: (2 days)

- ☐ Visualization
- ☐ Inspiration Board

Practical Details: (3 days)

- ☐ Create a workspace
- ☐ Get an external hard drive
- ☐ Open a folder
- ☐ Spoon-feed your tasks
- ☐ Document your journey
- ☐ Tell everyone you know

Building Momentum: (2 days)

- ☐ Ask for support
- ☐ Rearrange your schedule
- ☐ Find a hide-out
- ☐ Make it Fun
- ☐ Take care of your body
- ☐ Get into a Jerry Seinfeld mindset

WEEK TWO – RESEARCH: (1 Week)

- ☐ Avoid make-busy work
- ☐ Resist the Pit
- ☐ When in doubt, check it out
- ☐ Where's the fun?
- ☐ Unplug yourself
- ☐ Write down all your great ideas
- ☐ Flattery will get you everywhere
- ☐ Be good to yourself

WEEKS THREE THROUGH SIX – WRITING (4 weeks)

- ☐ Set it...and forget it
- ☐ Throw your alarm clock in the garbage
- ☐ The rough draft- Barf it up
- ☐ Let the Introduction write itself
- ☐ Ask for Support
- ☐ Give credit where it's due
- ☐ Just WRITE
- ☐ Always write to one person
- ☐ Reward yourself
- ☐ Be prepared
- ☐ Never come back to a blank page
- ☐ Celebrate!
- ☐ Plan your Book Launch

Remember, if you get stuck:

- ☐ Ask for support
- ☐ Take a break
- ☐ Reward yourself
- ☐ Blow off some steam
- ☐ Tame the beast
- ☐ Don't compare
- ☐ Talk to another author

Make Your Work Better

- ☐ Forgive yourself
- ☐ Hire a professional
- ☐ Hire the right professional
- ☐ Know what to expect
- ☐ Create a network within your community
- ☐ Hire a writing coach
- ☐ Celebrate!
- ☐ Set up a time to speak with Karen. <http://calendly.com/frontroweseat/30min/>
- ☐ Get your free 30-minute phone consultation



About the Author

Karen Rowe is the published author of For the Love of Chocolate and For the Love of Coffee. She is also a freelance writer and writing coach. Her passion is helping others tell their story. She specializes in helping entrepreneurs develop intellectual property for their businesses. Her fun, humorous and easy approach to her process is popular with her clients.

She has lived in Calgary for the past 8 years. She is a great cook, loves yoga, reading, travelling and a strong cup of coffee in the morning. She is currently working on her next book about dating. Turns out, not everything is the man's fault.

Contact her through her website at www.frontroweseat.com or follow Karen on Twitter @FrontRoweSeat.



About the Editor

Maclean Kay was always supposed to be a journalist. It just took him a long time to realize that. Maclean worked as a marina harbour master, corporate security advisor, and in the Prime Minister's Office under Jean Chretien before deciding to lose the tie and go back to school.

Since then, Maclean's work has appeared in local, national and international publications, including the National Post, Financial Post, and the Globe and Mail. He is the current Managing Editor for MOMeo Magazine, Troy Media's BC Bureau Chief and a feature columnist for the Victoria Times-Colonist. Maclean lives in beautiful Victoria, BC, with his wife Melissa, where he is researching and writing his first book, enjoys SCUBA diving, and follows the Calgary Stampeders football team a little too seriously.



About the Designer

It took Rachel Rasmussen a dozen years of landing "bigger and better" jobs in publishing and communications and moving cross-country (a few times) to realize, as it turned out, she simply wasn't built to work in a cube.

She joined the team of snap! web marketing solutions in 2009 and has been happily partnering with business owners and creative types ever since, helping them pull together the pieces of their marketing and communications projects.