



5 Top Tips for New Authors

by Mindy Gibbins-Klein (The Book Midwife™)

Preparing to write your first book can be an exciting and a very daunting time. Like any new project, it involves stepping into the unknown. So many people think about writing books and never do it. Others produce books that are not quite right, failing to achieve the desired outcomes. In this document, Mindy Gibbins-Klein, best known as The Book Midwife™, walks you through five things you should think about before getting started. With the right attitude and information, you *can* write and publish successful books.

- 1. Write for the right reason.** When I say ‘right’ reason, people immediately think I am being judgemental and saying that some reasons are right and some are wrong. Not at all. What I am saying is that some reasons are right for *you* and some reasons are wrong for you. For example, I sometimes get clients who say, a bit sheepishly, that they really don’t want to make a lot of money from their books. They are writing for very personal reasons, such as wanting to leave a legacy for their children or really wanting to help people. Why be sheepish about that? Those are very altruistic reasons. The other side of the spectrum has people saying that they have received some communication or attended some event where they heard they could make a lot of money by writing books and ebooks. Yes, you can make a lot of money, but in my opinion, if that is the main driving force behind the project, the content won’t necessarily be the best that it can be. Furthermore, if a writer feels s/he *should* be thinking commercially about the book and they don’t really feel that way, this can create a conflict and an unsatisfactory feeling, which makes it difficult to write much less promote one’s work.
- 2. Be realistic about the time you have available.** If you want to create a full-length book, one way or another you are going to need to find about 100-250 hours. The total depends on many factors, but let’s just say it is not going to happen overnight. I have worked with hundreds of people over many years and only one has ever written an excellent first draft within a month. You may be interested to know that he completely cleared his desk of everything else during that time and worked on the book for about 80 hours per week. If you work full time or even part time, have family commitments or other commitments, then you simply won’t be able to drop everything else to write. Every writer has a different work style and you need to be realistic about your own patterns and situation. If you find yourself wasting time and procrastinating when you actually could be writing, that is another issue and you can definitely get help with that by working with the right coach.
- 3. Acknowledge the progress you make.** The saddest comment I hear (far too frequently, in fact) is that the person is not making any progress. I tend to haul out the old coaching question, ‘You are not making *ANY* progress?’ at which point they have to admit

they have made some progress but they are not happy with it. As you can imagine, while the focus remains on what is not happening and what is left to do, the person feels demotivated and unhappy. If this happens to you, in your writing or any other area of your life, I would like you to catch yourself and think of one small thing you have accomplished. Really accept that for yourself and feel good about it. Then think of another step you have made. And, if you are feeling bold, think of a third. By this time, you should be feeling great and excited about continuing with the writing.

4. **Become a selective listener.** When you are writing, you will receive a lot of feedback from well-meaning friends and family. In my case, it ranged from ‘Well, I hope you have not given up the day job yet’ to ‘Do you know how hard it is to get a book published?’. Writing can be such a personal experience that it can feel very intrusive when anyone else comments on your process or your output, and even more so if those comments are ‘constructive’ (read: negative). My best advice to you is to whip out a big smile and nod your head. Don’t get into any discussions that you feel would drag you down. Then go fill up with plenty of encouragement from your coach, your peer group, inspirational reading material.
5. **Be creative.** This sounds like an obvious thing to say to writers, but you would be surprised how many people are not creative about the way they write, the topics they choose, where they market their work and much more. Just because you have always written matter-of-fact scientific pieces does not mean that you cannot try your hand at fiction. Just because you have not yet placed your book in the high street bookstores does not mean there aren’t some progressive smaller retailers that would love to stock it. I have seen some superb new books and promotional campaigns that only saw the light of day because the author was willing to take a risk and look at things a bit differently. Get ideas from other writers, successful business people and your coach, and start thinking outside the box. I wish you all the fulfillment, happiness and success you deserve.