



5 Top Tips for New Authors

Mindy Gibbins-Klein
Founder of
The Book Midwife®

5 Top Tips for New Authors

Mindy Gibbins-Klein

Preparing to write your first book can be an exciting yet 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 start writing with lots of enthusiasm, but stall or quit somewhere along the way, either from self-doubt, lack of discipline or a jumbled manuscript that is too hard to fix.

Still others manage to finish their books but feel they are not quite right, like they've failed to achieve their desired outcome.

I'm Mindy Gibbins-Klein, best known as Founder of The Book Midwife®. In this article, I'm going to walk you through five things you should think about *before* getting started. With the right attitude and information, you *can* write and publish better books. More successful books.

1. Write for the right reasons

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 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 you feel you should be thinking commercially about the book and you don't really feel that way, this can create internal conflict and an uncomfortable feeling, which makes it difficult to write, much less promote one's work.

2. Be realistic about the time you can invest

If you want to create a full-length book, one way or another you are going to need to find some time to do it. The total amount of time you will invest depends on many factors, but let's just say the book is not going to write itself. You can save many hours though, by working with a good coach and a proven process.

I have worked with over one thousand authors over two decades, and most of them write their first drafts in about six weeks, dedicating a few hours a week, with focus and a good plan. One client even wrote an excellent first draft within two weeks! 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 your book. Every author 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 a priority or motivation issue, and you can definitely get help with that by working with a good coach.

3. Acknowledge *all* progress

The saddest comment I hear (far too frequently, in fact) is that the author is not making any progress. I tend to haul out a cheeky coaching question like, '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 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. Definitely don't discuss your topic, outline or content with anyone except your book coach. Then go fill yourself up with plenty of encouragement from your coach, your peer group, and inspirational reading material.

5. Be creative

This may sound like an obvious thing to say to authors, 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 a more conversational style or even a different topic. 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 authors, successful business people and your book coach, and start thinking outside the box. I wish you all the fulfilment, happiness and success you deserve!