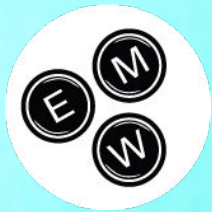


# Self-Publishing Success

What Worked, What Didn't, & What I Would Do Differently



# GHOSTWRITING & EDITING SOLUTIONS

ERICK MERTZ WRITING

[GHOSTWRITING](#)[MEMOIRS](#)[SCREENWRITING](#)[CONSULTING](#)[COPYWRITING](#)

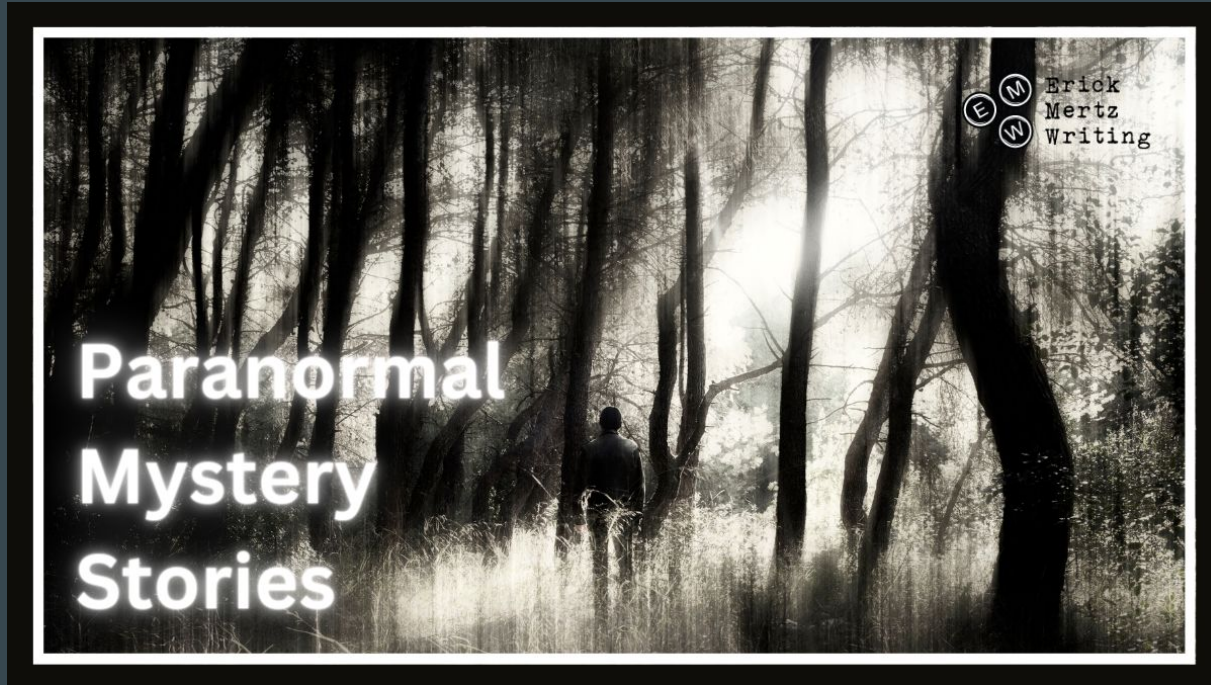
## HIRING A PROFESSIONAL GHOSTWRITER

*DO YOU HAVE A STORY THAT YOU NEED TO TELL?*

I believe everyone has at least one book they would love to write and get out into the world.

If you're like most people, however, something always seems to get in the way of sitting down to actually write that story. Whether that obstacle is time, or not knowing exactly where to start, barriers tend to arise when we sit down to put inspiration to the page.

[www.erickmertzwriting.com](http://www.erickmertzwriting.com)



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# Trivia Question Time

*For A Signed Copy of One Of My Books*

**On June 6th, 1977, the Portland Trail Blazers beat what team to win their one and only NBA Championship?**



# What To Expect From The Course

Our goal, as authors, is to write high quality fiction that satisfies reader expectations and keeps them coming back for more.

Sales and accolades are a part of successful self-publishing. I believe that those sales come as a result of good reader relationships.

We're not going to talk about Amazon advertising, marketing or social media. These can be elements of your success, however, they are not evergreen fundamentals.

Everything in this course is aimed at one goal: creating a strong, long-lasting relationship with your ideal reader.

# What Is Self-Publishing?

Self-publishing is the process by which authors independently produce and distribute their own written works, such as books, eBooks, and other forms of written content, without the involvement of a traditional publishing house.

Self-publishing enables individuals to take full control of the entire publishing process, including writing, cover design, editing, formatting and distribution.

Self-publishing allows authors to retain creative control, ownership rights and a larger share of royalties generated by their books.

# What Is Traditional Publishing?

Traditional publishing is the traditional method of publishing books through established publishing houses. In this model, authors submit their manuscripts to publishing houses, which evaluate their commercial viability, literary merit, and market appeal.

If accepted, the publishing house takes on the responsibility of editing, designing, printing, and distributing the book to bookstores, libraries, and other retail outlets.

Traditional publishers typically employ teams of professionals, such as editors, designers, and marketing experts, who collaborate with the author to ensure a high quality final product. They also handle tasks like securing copyright, negotiating contracts, and promoting the book through various marketing channels.

In traditional publishing, the publisher assumes the financial risk and typically pays the author an advance against royalties and a percentage of the book's sales.

# I've Heard Of Hybrid Publishing... What Is That?

Hybrid publishing refers to a publishing model that combines elements of both traditional publishing and self-publishing. In hybrid publishing, authors collaborate with a publishing company that provides a range of services and resources to assist in the publication process.

Unlike traditional publishing, where the publishing house takes on the financial risk and covers the costs associated with editing, design, production, and distribution, hybrid publishing requires authors to contribute financially to the publishing process. Authors often pay a fee or invest in a publishing package that includes services such as editing, cover design, formatting, and marketing.

Hybrid publishers typically provide professional services similar to those offered by traditional publishers, but the degree of author involvement can vary. Authors retain greater control over their work and have more say in the decision-making process, such as cover design, editing changes, and marketing strategies.

Overall, hybrid publishing aims to bridge the gap between traditional publishing and self-publishing, offering authors a middle ground where they can access professional publishing services while retaining more creative control and a share of the rights and royalties.



# Some Facts & Statistics About Self Publishing

Self-published books have been gaining a notable share of the book market. According to data from Statista, self-published titles accounted for approximately 23% of all e-book purchases in the United States in 2020.

The number of self-published books has been on the rise. In 2020, the total number of self-published titles in the United States reached over 1.6 million, as reported by Bowker, a leading provider of bibliographic information.

With self-publishing platforms, authors can earn up to 70% or more of their book's royalties, depending on the distribution channels and pricing.

# More Facts & Statistics About Self Publishing

“Fifty Shades of Grey” by E.L. James was originally self-published as an e-book in 2011. This erotic romance novel gained immense popularity and eventually caught the attention of a traditional publisher. It went on to become a global best seller, selling millions of copies worldwide and spawning a successful book series and film franchise.

“The Martian” by Andy Weir was initially self-published as a serialized novel on Weir’s website, “The Martian” gained a dedicated following and received positive reviews. After its self-published success, it was picked up by a traditional publisher and released as a print book in 2014. The novel became a New York Times best seller and was later adapted into a critically acclaimed film.

“The Joy of Cooking” by Irma S. Rombauer was initially self-published in 1931. “The Joy of Cooking” has since become an iconic and enduring cookbook. It gained popularity through grassroots marketing efforts and word-of-mouth recommendations. The book has been continuously revised and updated, remaining a best seller for decades and serving as a staple in countless kitchens.

# Self Publishing Success

*Why Look At It Through The Lens Of Mistakes?*



# Mistake #1: You Don't Know Your Story



# Why This Is A Mistake:

- In the “plotting versus pantsing” debate, most younger authors don’t have strong enough storytelling skills to make it up as they go along.
- Plotting your story before writing does take longer up front. In the long run, however, plotting your book offers a more direct path.
- Not really knowing your story causes most authors to lose momentum, especially if they’re trying to write a series.
- Readers can smell it when an author doesn’t have a good sense of where their story is going.

# The Remedy?

- Read widely within your genre and subgenre.
- Specifically, if you're plotting a series, read multiple books in the same series so you get a sense of progression.
- I highly recommend working with a writer's group/critique group or a developmental editor to lock in the plot of your book.
- Have an idea where your series is going.
- Early on in the process, employ beta readers who will give you honest feedback about your book.

# Mistake #2: Ignoring The Market



# Why This Is A Mistake:

- There is no book that is for “everyone”.
- Readers bring expectations to books – a lot.
- Readers break the general genres, such as science fiction or mystery, into more refined sub-genres. Think space opera or cozy mystery.
- Knowing your market allows you to position all aspects of your book properly, everything from the cover, to the blurb, and the story itself.
- When readers expect one thing and get another, you end up with bad reviews. They assume the mistake is yours, not theirs.



# The Remedy?

- Research books in your category.
- Listen to podcasts, watch YouTube channels, read blogs.
- Drill down deep and make sure you focus on a blend of independently and traditionally published books within your subcategory.
- Read from best-selling and well-reviewed books and understand what the specific tropes in that sub-genre are.
- Market your books to readers, other authors and professionals using the right sub-genres.

# Mistake #3: Improperly Priced Books



# Why This Is A Mistake:

- Proper book pricing converts to better sales.
- Pricing books too high creates a barrier for readers who are unfamiliar with you. Conversely, books priced too low can create the perception that the book is not valuable enough.
- Royalty percentage is based on the book's list price. Amazon specifically creates an incentive for authors to price their eBooks books within a certain range.
- Don't underestimate the value of using free or discounted books in your pricing strategy.

# The Remedy?

- Research how books in your category are priced. Price expectations differ widely between different genres.
- If you're writing a series, consider graduated pricing of your books, with books early in the series priced lower than ones that come later.
- Understand that on Amazon, the best royalty percentage for eBooks falls in the list price range of \$2.99-9.99.
- Make use of the free days/discount days afforded to you on your chosen platforms.

# Mistake #4: The Wrong Cover



# Why This Is A Mistake:

- Your cover provides your book's first impression to a reader.
- The cover of your book, print and eBook, needs to clearly convey both the broad genre and the specific subgenre.
- Studies show that online book buyers will look at hundreds of covers in the process of shopping. Your book's cover needs to stand out, grab attention, and draw the reader in.
- The reader's first impression of the cover leads them to click on the book's listing, making it the first point of conversion.

# The Remedy?

- Research the bestselling books in your subgenre.
- Give special attention to the *independently published books* in your subgenre and get familiar with what the cover expectations are.
- Imagine standing out while fitting in. You want to give the reader what they want in a cover in ways they've never seen.
- Create a desktop file of covers you like to share with your designer. Communicate what you want in the design and use those covers as points of reference for how you want them depicted.
- Show your cover to friends, fellow readers and writers to get feedback.

# Mistake #5: Editing? Too Expensive





# Why This Is A Mistake:

- Readers don't judge your book specifically as an "independent book". However unfair it seems, they compare your book to every other book they read.
- Readers will not forgive typos, grammar errors and inconsistencies, however good the story is. These types of errors lead to lost readers and, ultimately, negative reviews.
- Skipping editing is a mistake because editing is not expensive, especially when compared to negative backlash.

# The Remedy?

- Understand the type of editing you need for each stage in your manuscript development.
- Research and compare the cost of line editors and proofreaders.
- If you are worried about cost, consider using a program like Grammarly and/or ProWritingAid to clean up your manuscript.
- When it comes to layout/design, hire a professional designer, or, if you are technically inclined, a program like Vellum to make sure the book formatting is clean and easy to read.

# Mistake #6: Ignoring The Mailing List



# Why This Is A Mistake:

- Having a mailing list gives you something that nothing else can: access to an audience that you own and control.
- Building a relationship with readers is the backbone of content marketing. Readers buy books from authors they feel a connection to.
- Cultivating that strong, responsive mailing list takes time, so it's better that you start now than later.
- When you build a strong connection with your readers, they become the most effective tool in your marketing plan.

# The Remedy?

- Start yesterday... or, OK, more realistically, today.
- Sign up for an email marketing tool like MailChimp or Mailerlite.
- Build slowly by bringing on your family and friends.
- Identify aspects of your life or writing journey that make you interesting or relate to the topic you're writing on.
- Don't feel pressure to be a world class email marketer today. Instead, develop a low-stress strategy for reaching out to those readers by starting simple. There is no reason to put pressure on yourself early.

# Mistake #7: Network With Other Authors? Nah



# Why This Is A Mistake:

- Your fellow authors become *the most invaluable resource* on your uncertain journey to building a brand and career.
- They're not your competition!
- People love to help other people.
- Every author needs favors and support that only their fellow author can provide, everything from blurbs, reviews and ARC reviews, connections, author swaps, mailing list connections, referrals, etc...
- Trying to find this support elsewhere is expensive.
- This is a mistake mostly because the time for making good relationships is never better than right now.

# The Remedy?

- Don't look at your fellow authors as your competition.
- Think of them as colleagues in an uncertain field. Writing & publishing is difficult and everyone else is trying to figure it out, too.
- Don't think of networking with the "connect with people above you" mentality. Lose the idea of above or below relationship. Everyone you meet today is a valuable connection tomorrow.
- Offer to do favors for your fellow authors. Everything from beta reads, ARC support, writers groups. Help build up your community.



# Trivia Question Time Again

*For A Free Hour Consultation*

**In 1844, what territorial capital became the first incorporated US city west of the Rocky Mountains?**



# Resources You Can Trust

## General Self-Publishing Resources:

Reedsy

[www.reedsy.com](http://www.reedsy.com)

The Writing Life

[www.thewritinglife.com](http://www.thewritinglife.com)

Jane Friedman

[www.janefriedman.com](http://www.janefriedman.com)

The Creative Penn Podcast

[www.thecreativepenn.com](http://www.thecreativepenn.com)

Kindlepreneur

[www.kindlepreneur.com](http://www.kindlepreneur.com)

## Cover Designers & Editorial Support

Miblar

[www.miblar.com](http://www.miblar.com)

Book Baby

[www.bookbaby.com](http://www.bookbaby.com)

IngramSpark

[www.ingramspark.com](http://www.ingramspark.com)

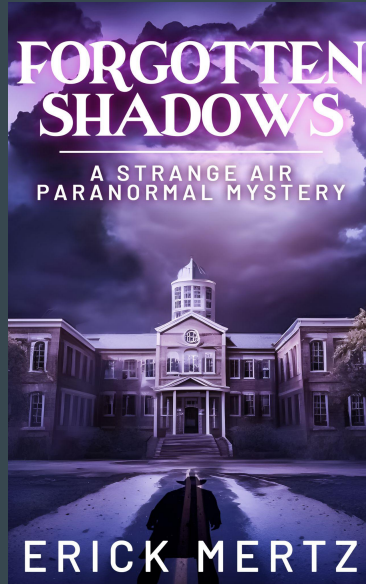
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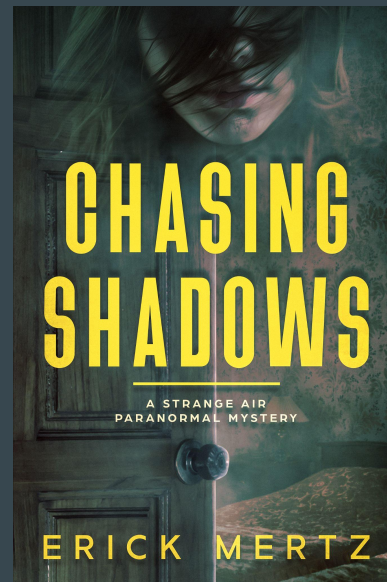
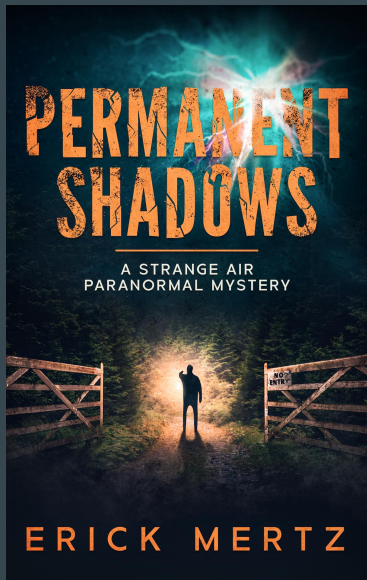
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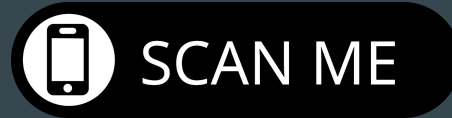
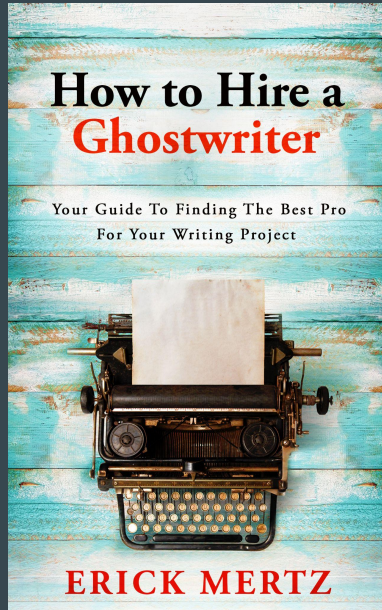
# *Get The Free Series Starter*





**These Books Are Free Today**

# Another Free Book?



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