

**WRITE TO EXPAND YOUR INFLUENCE**  
**DTS Women's Leadership Conference Notes, 2014**  
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**Writing is like laying bricks—masonry.** It's not magic. One is not born with "the gift." It takes hard work. Most of writing is rewriting.

**1. Consider blogging.**

Create a calendar. Know you can work ahead. Have a month's worth loaded before launching.

Come up with ideas. Will you have a brand? Or just writing stuff about your life for the folks back home?

Start by guest posting for others. Do you like doing it? Can you keep up with the load? If you have your own blog, link back to it at the end of the guest post.

Consider starting a group blog. Post every other week. Can you keep up with the load? Come up with ideas? Do you like it?

Your own blog:

Blog at the same frequency every week.

Do time of day at same time. Consider east/west coast drive/subway times.

Link to other posts within your blog at the end of the post: "For more on this topic."

Tweet your posts.

Put your posts on Pinterest.

If a post is more than 400 words, has keyword, and has links, Google ranks it high.

- In guest post link back to at least one thing I've written on my blog using keywords
- Capture the readers with an incentive to visit my blog. Give them a reason to return. E.g., indoor activities to do as family with free printable with 35 rainy-day things to do as a family. [Click here to download](#). At the site was a landing page to sign up for newsletter. When people signed up, they got the download.

Google LOVES outbound links. They like to think you are interacting.

- Content is king
- Graphics are queen

- Numbered posts are gold (Six steps to forgiving; three reasons never to forget your heartbreak; short, sweet, to the point) Header texts!
- Nothing means anything if you don't capture leads

Top ten ways to...

35 verses to know...

Seven ways to...

But nothing means anything if we don't capture leads. Get people to subscribe. Get them to sign up for newsletter. Blogging is great, but selling product is via newsletters.

## **2. Pitch an Idea to an articles editor.**

Study the publication.

Analyze the stats.

Write a query letter.

## **3. Take a look at self-publishing.**

Numbers on sales:

41% happen via ecommerce

22% come through chains

2% supermarkets

2% used book stores

2% non traditional (eg., health food store w/ books)

8% mass merchandisers

3% indie stores

The rest small

Trends:

- Digital readers and dedicated readers buy avg of 10 books/year)
- 2 of 3 people now own a digital reader of some kind. Kindle or Nook or iPad or laptop or phone.
- Growth of fiction
  - Before ebooks, non-fiction outsold fiction about 8 to 1.
  - 79% of ebooks sold in this country are fiction.
  - Fiction now outselling non-fiction 4-to-1 on ebooks.
  - Amazon approaching 20 million books.

BUT

- Christian houses are dumping their fiction lines
- People are moving to reading on phones worldwide

Most authors will work with publisher AND self-publish books.

- Convert blog content, including comments.
- If you do a memoir, make it reader focused.
- Writers today have hybrid careers of both trad and ebook publishing.
- Know you will have to do all your own marketing.
- But that is pretty much true of traditional publishing today.

#### **4. Craft a proposal.**

Mary Demuth has fiction and non-fiction templates.  
Michael Hyatt has them, too.

Write a summary of your plot or topic in compelling prose.

List your typical reader. Do not say *everyone*.

Provide a list of similar works and how yours differs. Do not say yours is unique.

Include a marketing plan

- Rely more on your own speaking and writing than endorsements.
- Know the first thing a publisher will look at is your platform (sales potential).
- Read *Platform* by Michael Hyatt.

#### **5. Write stronger prose.**

- Use strong verbs
- Use active voice
- Turn negations into assertions

Know how to use Bible punctuation.

- Hyphens, n-dashes, m-dashes
- Biblical book references

Make numbers match.

Know where to put terminal punctuation.

Know how to use the Oxford comma.

*Find more free writing resources at [aspire2.com](http://aspire2.com).*