

HERE ARE MY TOP TEN TIPS

(not necessarily in any order)

TIP #1: UNDERSTAND YOUR MOTIVES.

At one time, it was vocational suicide among academic professionals to self-publish anything. If you “had” to self-publish, it may have meant that no one else wanted to publish your work. This would imply that your work was low quality, substandard, useless, maybe even dangerous, revolting, or illegal.

The stigma of self-publishing seemed to confine itself to academic circles and to academically oriented publishers. For example, Huffington Post refers to self-publishers as “the lepers of the literary world,” despite the fact that some of the greatest writers of all time self-published at least some of their work, including, for example, Mark Twain, Edgar Allen Poe, e. e. cummings, Beatrix Potter, Benjamin Franklin, William Blake, Walt Whitman, L. Frank Baum, and many others. HuffPost makes it clear that anyone can write and publish anything, no matter how incorrect or misguided (as they clearly demonstrate). Huff adds, “You are not Baum, King, Poe..., Strunk, Twain or just about any one of the famous writers who once dabbled in self-publishing. And...you’re not going to be.”¹

Well thanks for the vote of confidence Huff. Maybe readers would rather hear from someone who actually successfully self-publishes, rather than from a declining publication that would eagerly criticize Mark Twain because he had the temerity to **gasp* self-publish!*

I’m self-publishing *this* book because I have information that I think other people may benefit from. I’m writing for people who are interested in self-publishing but don’t know much about it. Your own book idea may be a

¹https://www.huffpost.com/entry/famous-writers-who-selfpu_b_4303994

memoir, a biography, a children's book, a devotional work, an art book, a textbook, or an instructional manual.

I read several books about self-publishing when I was starting out, but they didn't answer important questions such as how much money do you charge for a book? How much does it cost to print books? How can you succeed as a self-publisher from a business point of view? Where do you get books printed? What about cover art, proofreading, page layout, interior design, photo credits, references, copyrights, ISBNs, LCCNs, bar codes, and so on?

So here we go. Let's talk about the things that HuffPost seems to know little about.

Here are several reasons you would want to self-publish your work:

(a) Because you want to learn how to self-publish. That was my initial reason. I believed that the knowledge I would gain from self-publishing would exceed the value of the master's degree that I would likely never need. Developing a unique skill that could possibly provide a benefit during winter months and off-season schedules seemed like a worthy undertaking. My hunch was correct. I'll explain more about that later.

(b) Because you have unique knowledge that is valuable to only a small number of people. Major publishers aren't interested in putting their time and money behind your passion or your niche topic. My thesis was about "humanure," a word I had to create, a contraction of "human" and "manure." That's what my thesis was about — shit. I believed that no publisher would touch it with a ten-foot shovel, so I didn't even ask. Nevertheless, as I write this, I have directly sold 80,000 copies of the book and continue to sell about 5,000 a year. The book spawned six foreign language print editions (so far) and an additional 12 entire or partial translations in other languages available as

eBooks. Plus, the book won numerous awards and is now in its fourth self-published edition. I also wrote three additional books on other subjects in the meantime, both softcover and hardcover, black and white, and color, in my spare time, still employed full-time in the construction trades. This book you're reading now would be my sixth self-published "title."

Allow me to interject here an important fact. Every new book *edition* is considered a brand-new book in the book trade. Each edition has a unique ISBN (International Standard Book Number), and a unique LCCN (Library of Congress Control Number). Minimal changes, or lots of changes, can be made to justify a new edition to a book. Those changes can include new cover art, additional or edited content, different binding, price, subtitles, color versus black and white, and so on. New editions are "front listed" in advertising catalogs, as opposed to backlisted, where older books remain in the back of catalogs and the new books are highlighted in the front. So if you have one book in three editions, you actually have three books. One "title" perhaps, but three distinct books in the book trade.

So technically, I've self-published 12 books when all the editions are taken into consideration. The one you're now reading would be my 13th book.

(c) Because your work would be altered by a publisher in a manner not acceptable to you. Censorship is alive and well in the 21st century. If your subject matter includes political, social, or religious subject matter, health research, medical commentary, personal experiences, or satire that is not popular with the government or the ruling elite, your work can be buried, blocked, canceled, or attacked, if not entirely destroyed, by the major publishers, printers, distributors, and media outlets that are owned or controlled by psychopathic billionaires.

Many successful authors had their books rejected by publisher after publisher because the publishers didn't foresee any real financial return being generated by the books. This is understandable from a business point of view. But your book is your passion, and no one believes in it more than you do. Self-publishing was once difficult. Now it's easy. Once you self-publish your work, you own it, and you control it.

(d) Because you want a bound printed copy of your work. Maybe you want your book available in print for posterity. Maybe you just want to write a family memoir and print 20 professional copies for family and friends. Maybe you have a children's book idea and want to try it out and see what kind of reception it gets before diving in deeper.

Digital publications disappear at a flick of a switch. Will anyone a century from now read a digital eBook published today? Not very likely. The life of a print book, on the other hand, can span many generations and can provide a reader with an inside look at what may have been happening way in the past. Lately, I've been reading several books written a century ago about medical issues such as vaccines and infectious diseases. I really appreciate the people who took the time to write these books and the other people who made the effort to keep them in print for so long. They tell stories and reveal information that no medical or big pharma publisher would dare to mention today. Such is the value of a print book.

(e) Because you like to write. Some people like to sing. Some like to dance. Some are painters, sculptors, teachers, artists. Writing is an art, and some of us just like doing it. Other people find it difficult and hate doing it; they would rather read than write.

Everyone has his or her own preferences when it comes to reading. I prefer nonfiction. If you like to write mys-

teries, for example, read mystery books. Some will be good, some won't. Pay close attention to the writing styles and book designs. Copy the good ones, but add your own flair.

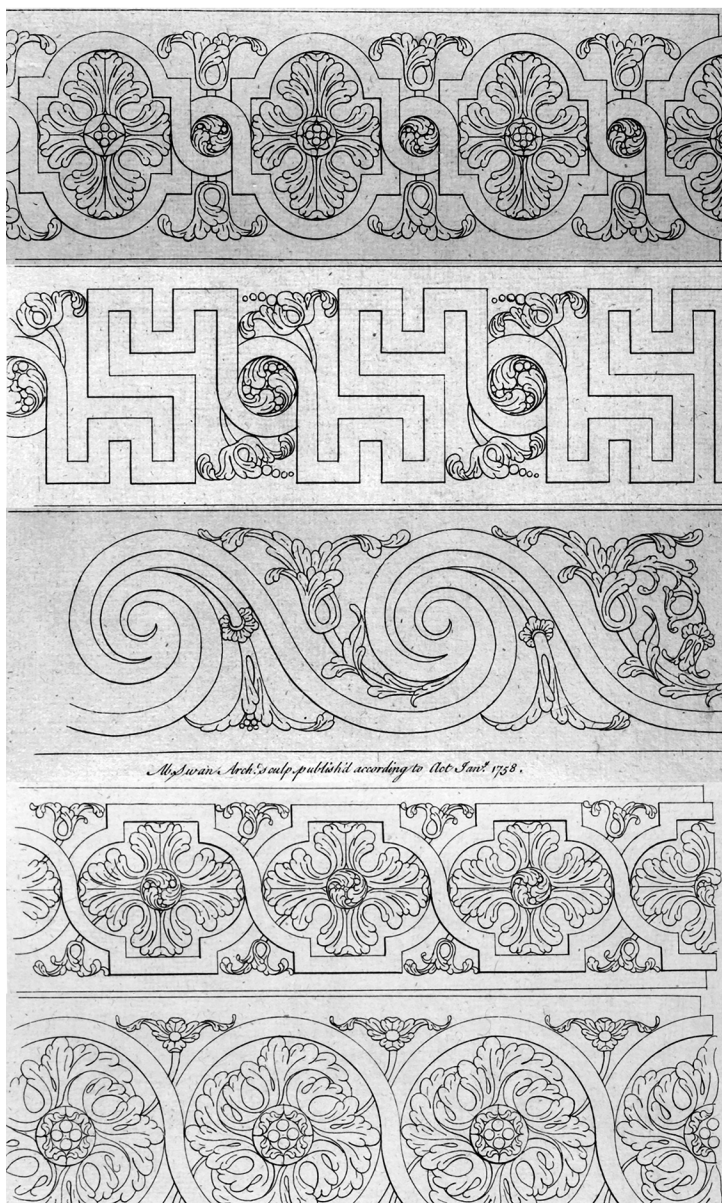
Most self-publishers are unlikely to win any Pulitzer Prizes, or get rich and famous, but we will put our thoughts down in writing, and some people will read them and we hope even benefit from them. We might even change someone's life for the better.

Furthermore, self-publishing skills can often develop into photography skills, page layout and design skills, research and continuing education, website development, business skills, computer skills, videography, public speaking, world travel, professional consulting, and development and sales of products related to the subject matter of your writing. My endeavors include all of the above.

There is just something about having a book in your hands, rather than words on a screen. Don't get me wrong, eBooks are fine. You may be reading this as an eBook. You can save your eBook on your device and share it with your friends. You can often cut and paste from it.

But a print book doesn't disappear when the electricity goes out or the battery dies. You don't have to turn on a computer or other electronic device to read it. You can curl up in your favorite chair when all is quiet, glass of wine nearby, and dive into your book. You can give a print book, after you've read it, to friends or family or even leave it for descendants. Or pull it off the shelf weeks, months, or years later, for reference or for inspiration.

One of the worst reasons to start self-publishing is because you want to become rich and famous. Let's take a look at that in the next chapter.



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