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## Writing a Book with a Collaborator

by Dan Poynter

Writing a book with a co-author is usually a very close relationship. You are not two independent writers placing your work between the same covers. Each of you is drafting sections or chapters and exchanging them so that the other may edit and add content.

Some authors work best alone; they find that a co-author slows them down. But Maryanne Raphael loves working in collaboration. Maybe it is because she began writing before she learned to read so she had to have a collaborator, her grandfather, who typed her stories, as she dictated them. The first story they submitted was called *Pray for the Wanderer*. It was not too long before Maryanne got her first rejection slip—at age five. Fortunately, she persisted.

Thirty years later when Maryanne told a Catholic nun the story, she said, “Oh, I have a wonderful story about Wanderers.” This time Sister Roberta dictated the story and Maryanne typed it, tightening and adding a few items. They mailed it to *Catholic Digest* who published it under both of their names. Sister Roberta had taken a vow of poverty so she insisted Maryanne keep the entire check. No wonder Maryanne loves to collaborate.

“I’ve always believed in writing without a collaborator, because where two people are writing the same book, each believes he gets all the worries and only half the royalties.”

—Agatha Christie, English mystery writer.

Collaborations are easy to get into and hard to get out of. Most business partnerships have about the same track record as marriages. A marital divorce is hard on the kids. A collaboration divorce is hard on the book. Some authors may be better off hiring a content editor or a ghostwriter. See *Is There a Book Inside You?*

Be careful of collaborations. Do not team up with someone you would not go camping with.

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