

**Skim *Successful Nonfiction*** Click to get a look at each chapter

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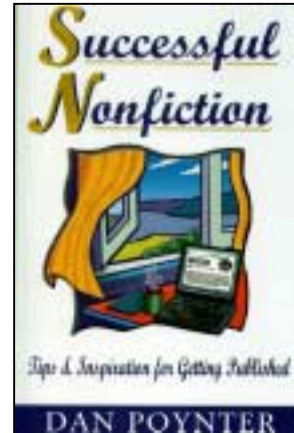
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### **Chapter One**

**38 tips on how to write**

**Write a Page-Turner**

**Get the reader past page eighteen.**

Start your book off with an *action chapter*; make it exciting. Like the introductory part of a speech, Chapter One should arouse the reader and whet his or her appetite. Too many authors want to start from the *beginning* and

describe their research or put a boring history chapter first. The reader wants to know “where to” and “how to”. Do not sedate the reader in the first chapter; encourage him or her to read on.

It has been reported that most book buyers do not get past page 18 in a new book. They buy it, bring it home, begin reading, and then put it down on the bedside table. And they never get back to it. Your book has to be exciting in the initial pages to keep the reader involved and reading.

Getting a customer to buy your book is not enough. You want your buyer to read it, underline it, highlight it, talk about it, move to action and profit from it. A satisfied reader will recommend your book to friends and your fan will buy your next book.

Hit the page writing.

**“It is the writer's fault, not the reader's if the reader puts down the book.”  
—David Halberstam, author.**

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## **Chapter Two**

### **11 tips on why you should write**

#### **Cherish Fame**

**Authors are held in high esteem by our society.**

Imagine people coming up to you at a business meeting or industry convention with a copy of your book and requesting an autograph. Imagine passing a bookstore and seeing your book in the window. Imagine being interviewed for a magazine article.

Actress Cynthia Hunter returned to her high school reunion in Minnesota. Classmates were impressed that she had gone to Hollywood and had appeared in numerous films and TV shows. When she slipped out to do a radio interview, the word quickly spread among her classmates that she had written a book to help actors break into the business and was chatting live on the biggest AM station in town.

By the next evening, *author* Cynthia Hunter had achieved celebrity status with her classmates. They bragged they knew the author of a brand new book: *Hollywood, Here I Come!* Being an author was even more important than being an actor.

Sports stars, movie stars and book authors achieve fame, but authors are also respected and revered for their knowledge.

**“Books through the ages have earned humanity’s high regard as semi-sacred objects.” —Richard Kluger, author and editor.**

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### **Chapter Three**

**4 tips on why your writing project should be a book.**

#### **Realize the Value of Information**

**Information *about* a product or service earns more than the product or service itself.**

Pick just about any product, service or industry and you will find that the consultants, seminar leaders and authors are making more money than the business owners.

Patti attended a real estate seminar to learn more about the speaker's angle on the business. Of course, the speaker was selling books and tapes in the back of the room (BOR sales).

Later she went to work for the speaker's seminar company and discovered the company made more money on books, tapes and seminars than on real estate.

She also discovered that she bought the wrong book. She did not need a book on real estate. She needed a book on how to write a book because there is more money in information.

Your nonfiction book contains valuable information that people will buy to save time and money.

**“The new source of power is not money in the hands of the few but information in the hands of many.” —John Naisbitt, author, *Megatrends 2000*.**

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### **Chapter Four**

**21 tips on what to write**

#### **Write Your Nonfiction First**

**Nonfiction is easier to sell.**

Fiction is an art that comes from emotion; nonfiction is a craft derived from information.

As entertainment, fiction has to compete for peoples' time with other books, taking in a movie or playing with the kids. Nonfiction, on the other hand, does not compete for readers' time, with any other book or any other activity. Each nonfiction book is unique.

Hal Zina Bennett has written two novels, four children's books and more than 25 nonfiction books including *Write From the Heart*. He is good at, and likes doing both, but says "fiction does not pay as well."  
TenacityPR@aol.com

Most publishers will urge you to work on your nonfiction first and to save your fiction until you can afford it. Spend your time writing how-to's—valuable information that people buy in order to save time or money.

Fiction writers tend to be creative, interesting people who are fun at parties. But nonfiction writers drive better cars.

**"It is better to have a permanent income than to be fascinating." —Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Irish-born writer and wit.**

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## Chapter Five

### 7 tips on doing research

## Attend Writers' Conferences

**Get out of the house; network with your peers.**

Writers' conferences are markets that bring buyers and sellers together. If you have a manuscript or an idea to pitch, conferences have the agents, editors and publishers you want to meet.

These events inform, entertain and console. They are a venue for being inspired by successful authors and a place to meet the (often) otherwise unapproachable editors, agents and publishers. You will also meet other writers who are trying to figure out the secret to getting published.

Author-Speaker Leslie Charles attended the Maui Writers Conference to find an agent for her latest project. Patti Breitman liked her idea and Leslie liked Patti; they joined forces to smooth out the proposal. *Why Is Everyone So Cranky?* had three major bidders at auction and while two tied, Leslie picked Hyperion and their six-figure advance.  
[LesChas@aol.com](mailto:LesChas@aol.com)

Two of the larger, more successful and best-known annual events are the Santa Barbara Writers Conference in late June and the Maui Writers Conference over the Labor Day weekend.

**“Editors and agents troll for new talent at writer’s conferences. Attend at least one a year and swim toward the bait.” —Paul Raymond Martin, author, *The Writer’s Little Instruction Book*.**

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## **Chapter Six**

### **9 tips for building your book**

#### **Get a Model Book**

**You do not have to reinvent the wheel.**

What do you want your book to look like? Visualize. Visit a bookstore. Check the section where your book will be, then look into other sections. Find a book you like—on any subject. Consider the binding, layout, feel, margins, type style, everything. Then buy it.

Use this book as a *model*. Tell your editor, typesetter and printer you want your manuscript to look like this book.

Patricia went to a bookstore and noticed that the smaller mass-market paperbacks were fancier than other softcover books. The storeowner explained that the mass-market books were sold on newsstands and had to compete for attention with magazines.

She bought one she loved. The jacket had an embossed (raised) title and a hologram. She took it to her printer and said she wanted the same for the jacket of her hardcover book.

According to Brenner Information Group, graphic design consumes 13.5 percent of the budget for fiction titles and 3.7 percent of the budget for nonfiction titles.

Your typesetter and book printer can deliver any format you wish. Just give them some guidance.

There is no need to plan a book when you can adapt an existing great design.

**“Creativity should be admired but copying is faster.”**

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## Chapter Seven

### 3 tips on Copyright

#### **Know How Much You May Borrow**

**Borrow *ideas*, borrow *facts*, but do not steal *words*.**

Copyright covers the author's presentation or *expression*—a sequence or pattern of words. It does not protect *ideas*. If you read and blend the ideas of other authors and put the collective thought into your own words, that is perfectly legal. This is how most nonfiction books are written—from research.

Do not repeat any of the research materials word-for-word. Some of the material is not yours so copying could be plagiarism and you would be guilty of copyright infringement. Adapt the *ideas* from many sources so that your work is not *substantially similar* to any of them.

In *Feist Publications, Inc. v. Rural Telephone Service Company, Inc.*, 111 S.Ct. 1282, 1287-88 (1991), the court held that the listings (facts) in a telephone directory were not protected by copyright.

Facts may not be copyrighted either; they are free for anyone to repeat or use in a manuscript.

**“Copy from one, it's plagiarism; copy from two, it's research.” —Wilson Mizner, screenwriter.**

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## Chapter Eight

### 10 tips for finding the right agent or publisher

#### **Expect Rejection**

**Great writers have their work returned, too.**

Remember Moses climbed the mountain, lifted up the two tablets of stone and received the Ten Commandments. Then he returned to the people.

You have heard all that before but do you know the rest of the story? A couple of days later, Moses climbed back up that mountain. The thunder roared, the lightning flashed, the clouds parted, the skies opened wide and the face of the Lord appeared. A voice said: “Moses, why are you back here so soon?”

Moses replied: “I did what you said. I carried the tablets down to the people. They are sending the tablets back with this note.

Thank you for your submission, which we regret has been found unsuited to our current needs.

Stephen King had three novels rejected before Doubleday bought *Carrie*. Sam Sinclair Baker had 17 publishers reject his *Scarsdale Diet*. Richard Bach’s agent said, “Look, no one cares about a talking seagull right now.” Never be discouraged. Even the best writers are sometimes rejected.

**“Be Persistent. Editors change; tastes change; editorial markets change. Too many beginning writers give up too easily.”**

—John Jakes, author, *North and South*  
and many other books.

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## Chapter Nine

### 6 tips on book promotion

#### **Don’t Host Autograph Parties**

**When my parents taught me not to write in books, they did not know they were raising an author who would autograph them.**

An autograph party says, “Come and appreciate me (and buy a book)”; a seminar says, “Come on down and I will give you something free (information) that will improve your life.” Always think of the *benefit* to the potential customer. How can you lure them out of the house and down to the store?

Patricia Bragg (Health-Science) publishes health and fitness books. To promote her mini seminar at a local bookshop in Santa Barbara, she posted handbills in all the local health food stores. Then she made a postcard mailing to her customer list within a 50-mile (driving) radius. The store was packed and she was on for over four hours—until closing time. The store sold out on many of her titles and gave out rain checks.

<http://www.bragg.com>

Autographings are not a party in your honor—you and your book are not even known yet. Your appearance is a promotional opportunity requiring hard work.

Book signings are a form of product promotion not available to producers of other goods or services. Bookstores, both chain and independent, stage events to attract potential customers into their stores. Authors are the draw.

These mini seminars may lead to longer ones for other groups at other locations—for money.

**“Never do an *autographing*; always offer a *mini seminar*. Attract buyers to your autograph parties.” —Terri Lonier, author, *Working Solo*.**

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## **Appendix**

**Your Action Plan**

**Writing Resources**

**Web sites for writers**

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