

How to Get Published – My Short and Long Answer.

By Bryan Hutchinson



The short answer is quite simple: Just go ahead and do it!

Really, that's the short answer. If you have written a book there are several good quality "Self-publishing companies" that will publish your book and make it available to the public via their very own online book store and what's more is that they will also add it to just about every other online book store as well. Yes, including Amazon! As a matter of fact, Amazon offers publishing too.

Now, are you ready for the long answer?

If so, get a cup of coffee or tea, or any kind of beverage, because, if you're serious about publishing your work this part's going to take a few extra minutes to read. I want you to be comfortable. Some of what I am going to reveal to you, you may not like, but you will want to know it anyway. The reason I am writing this is because it is one of the most common questions I receive. I keep most emails and recently did a

search on this subject and I have received over 2000 queries relating to this topic in some way. Therefore, I decided to write my two cents about the topic in my own way. My experience is simply that I am a successful self-published author; I have little to no other connection to this business. However, when you have some success and are published, folks get curious as to how and why.

Here's my two cents on getting published:

What I mentioned above was how to get published right away through self-publishing; however, most people still may want to get traditionally published instead. That's okay, but unfortunately a lot of people wait ten years or more before their book is accepted and for some, their book is never accepted by a traditional publisher, or an agent for that matter. That doesn't necessarily mean the book isn't good; however, it could mean your book or query letter was never completely read or considered.

If you go to most any literary agent's website they will tell you up front that they receive thousands of letters a week. That's right, *thousands*. Also, if you read enough self-help how-to-get-published books they have advice on writing the best letter possible to get noticed, but let's be honest here: A thousand or more letters a week? Think about if you get that many letters or more, can you read them all? And then, the following week and the week after that, thousands more of those same type of letters coming in. How many would you genuinely read? Now keep in mind you have to get the rest of your job done at the same time. Of course, some do get their letters read and accepted to be sure, but there's always someone who wins the publishing lottery! More likely, though, it is about a certain subject the publisher or agent is looking for to meet market needs at the moment.

But, let's say you do win the publishing lottery, what then? You will typically have to wait another year or two before your book is published. Then after it is finally published it still may not reach the inside of an actual book store and only be available online. Book shelf space in book stores is extremely limited. Next, the marketing of the book is probably going to be on you too. Yes, the publisher will more than likely release a press release or two and that may or may not get published in newspapers, but ultimately the majority of the marketing will be on the writer. And let's again be honest here, even if you write about your favorite charity, or just want to help people, readers are not going to know your book even exists unless you market it. That's just the way it is.

Another thing about being traditionally publishing is that your book may or may not be published in the manner that you intended. What I mean is that traditional publishers have formulas for success in the marketplace and your book will need to fall into that formula somehow. This may mean that it will need to be edited or rewritten all together. Case in point, I turned down one traditional publisher because of suggestions I received about rewriting my first book [*One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir*](#). I also rejected an edited version of my same book. The reason is because my book was no longer 'my book' and a lot of the emotion I had allowed to seep into my writing from my personal experiences was gone. Maybe I was simply naïve at the time, but I felt the 'heart' of my book was gone and believed that if I published my book that way I would be selling out. That's where 'intentions' come in to play. My intention was not to put a book on the market that met certain formulas in order to be successful and sell a lot of copies. My intention was, and still is, to put my emotions, fears and life on the line in the written form in order to share what I experienced to benefit others. So, what I am

saying here is examine your intentions and that will help you decide what is best for you.

Publishing in general, regardless of traditional or via a 'self-publishing' company, is a business. Publishers are about profits and margins and the ever so important bottom-line. However, traditional publishers may pay author's fees, advances and royalties, whereas the 'self-publishing' companies are paid by the author to publish their work and in return, give them a royalty for each sale. Note that self-publishers are geared to sell *to you*, the writer and if you can sell your book to others that's a bonus for them! So, let's talk about that a little.

If you want to publish your work and bypass traditional publishers, be warned that it will be expensive and you possibly never will make your investment back. It's not just the publishing of your book that costs; you must buy any copies you want to give away for reviews etc... for example I have only 2 copies of *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir* and I no longer send out any copies or keep extra copies about the house. Therefore, when someone requests a copy from me, basically, I buy the copy for them and also pay to send it. I rarely do that anymore. The book has become extremely well known on its own merits, besides it's too expensive to continue buying copies of my own book. Not saying I don't on occasion, but that's rare. However, I just published my new book [*Adult ADHD can be Sexy*](#) and because it is new I have purchased a certain amount to send out for reviews, and also to give away to members of my [ADDer World ADHD Social network](#) for those who participated and won contests I created on the network.

Book publishing is not easy. First you have to write a book. If you've already written a book, well, that's great and most the work is already done, but if you haven't let me tell you that I have met a lot of people who say they are going to write a book but never do. It's one thing to

want to write a book and to say you're going to write a book, but it is another thing to actually write a book. It sounds easy, but be assured that it is anything but easy. It's a lot of time, energy and work with very little in returns, if anything other than a pat on the back – some people don't even get that. The likelihood you're going to be traditionally published, if you've written a book, is small. However, if you are popular (and I am not talking about 5000 friends on a social network) in your world of experience then your chances of getting traditionally published go up. Very famous people have little difficulty in getting traditionally published, as a matter of fact traditional publishers will seek those type of people out, even going so far as to allow them a ghost writer to help with the writing. Remember what I said, publishers are a business! Never forget that. As a writer, you can't afford to.

At the moment, I prefer 'self-publishing' and I am very happy with my results. Because of my experiences with 'self-publishing' I have actually turned down a couple very small traditional publishing companies. This is important to mention because as my name continues to spread and my books become more and more popular, traditional publishers are more likely to take notice. Self-publishing can be a gateway, but once you are self-published and your books spread on their own merit, you can also become a little picky too, because you now know that being traditionally published is not a necessity, or maybe I am still a little bit naïve.

Did you know that J. K. Rowling the author of the Harry Potter novels has sold more than 400 million copies? But she was also rejected by 12 publishers first! 12 publisher rejections may not seem like a lot, but after you get your first rejection letter you may think differently about that. More importantly though, what this means is that rejection is not the be-all-end-all. However, I have ADHD and I am extremely impatient at times... go figure! So, I had already pre-planned a self-publishing rout

to getting my first book out there. I believe in my messages within my book and I didn't want to wait for any green light to be of benefit to others. I couldn't really afford 'self-publishing', but I saved and saved in order to do it. I do not concern myself with regaining any investment, because the letters and messages from readers around the world has done more to help heal me than many other things I have done in my life. Again, you will want to examine your intent to determine the direction you will go. However, *One Boy's Struggle: A Memoir*, has indeed covered the investment it took to publish it and covers the costs of running the ADDer World websites. It has taken off in ways I never imagined and I am truly grateful for its meaning to others, as well as to myself. You may think it was a gamble, but it was a choice.

I think traditional publishing is going to see many changes over the next few years. There are many self-published books that are doing as well, or even better than traditional published books in the market place. But if your prime goal is to be on book shelves across the nation and not only online, then traditionally published is the way you want to go. Your chances will greatly increase if you already are well known and have connections in the business. Query letters will need to be sent, but a better rout is to get to know someone in the business that can help you. You also need a solid marketing plan upfront. Having a marketing plan will make your book more attractive to publishers and agents.

Some believe visiting book stores is the right place to start. It's not. Visiting book stores alone, is not the answer here. Book stores are not really connected to publishers per se; they are connected to distributors. So a lot of folks think going to book stores to inquire will help them, maybe it will, but not as likely as meeting people who are actually involved with the publishing companies *directly*. Meeting people online 'in the business' is not that hard, but for various reasons I think it's best

to actually go visit publishers and make in-person appointments with editors and/or agents, if you can get those.

Ultimately, traditional publishing is still better than self-publishing. The line is getting blurrier and blurrier as online shopping becomes more common. One of the biggest setbacks of self-publishing is, as I mentioned before, the ‘cost’. You probably won’t get rich self-publishing or even traditionally publishing for that matter, but with self-publishing, if you are not careful and selective, you could invest a lot more money than you may ever make back. Be warned.

Also, if you do choose self-publishing be very careful as to which company you choose. The prices for self-publishing vary to extreme amounts depending on which one you choose. Examine them all and decide which suits your needs the best. Be even more careful about selecting any additional ‘packages’ with your self-published book. I don’t recommend letting this type of publisher do your marketing, you’re a better marketer for your book. Even better, hire a reputable professional marketer if you can afford it. In this respect, be very careful about hiring an online marketing offering. Don't take their word for how good they are, check out their past clients and how well they have done thanks to the marketing of that agency. If most or, worse, none of the clients have not sold over 5,000 books, my advice is to look elsewhere.

Whatever you do, if you’ve written a book – *don’t give up*.

Once you are published and have attracted readers, value them and treat them with the highest respect and admiration. Readers are your most important allies. Always try to respond to your readers in some way and let them know how important they are to you. Remember, if you don’t have readers, then your books are not being read and in effect, dead.

Value your readers because if they read your book, they value you and what you are writing about, too! Never forget that.

My success in publishing my books is not that I am an exceptional writer or that I have some kind of hidden connections. If I had those hidden connections I would have started out traditionally published and you would have read about me in the beginning in perhaps the New York Times or Wall Street Journal. Ultimately, books are about the content, what's written between the covers. The biggest mistake I see from those struggling to get their books to spread is that many have written what they think others want to read. They have fallen for the trap belief, that if I write about 'this' or 'this' every-one's going to want to read about that. The reality, I believe, is that the best books are those written without any concern for what others want to read and come about from the writers inner desire to write about something important to him, or her, - even if, and perhaps because the topic seems of no concern to anyone else.

This has been my two cents on the subject.

Good luck!

Bryan

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