



Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality
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MODULE I
INTRODUCTION TO PUBLISHING SPIRITUALITY NONFICTION BOOKS

Brainstorming a Speaking Engagement

While you birth and write your book, you'll also want to be establishing your author platform, as noted in Workbook B. Use this handout to help you brainstorm and outline your speaking engagement concept. Who your "Target Audience" is should match the character profiles you constructed at the close of Workbook A, and as explained further in Workbook B.



What is the concept for your speaking engagement?

What topic will you be talking about? This can be one of the four topics you brainstormed in Workbook B. You can also use this guided brainstorm to help you plan out a presentation or workshop for a conference. You can write key phrases here or jot your notes in stream of consciousness. Just get down the basic idea or concept for your talk.

Give your speaking engagement a tentative title.

With the understanding that this is tentative and subject to change later, write out the title you envision for your speaking engagement.

Select a time length for your event.

30 minutes

40 minutes

1 hour

2 hours

Other:

What is the main objective your event will achieve?

If you are writing your book on a topic in Spirituality, then the objective of your event will be themed around inspiring your Target Audience or to push your Target Audience to a new depth of thought on a particular topic. Now, with that in mind, phrase your objective specifically to the topic you've selected per the previous prompt. Your objective should be phrased as "To..."

To...

What is the main take-away point from your talk?

If your Target Audience leaves the event remembering only one single point, what should that point be? This may or may not be related to the substantive content of your talk. For example, a talk can be on holistic health and nutrition, but the main take-away point you want to emphasize is, "your body is a sacred temple." What is the underlying message implied by your entire talk? What is your purpose?

Identify three important secondary points

While your main take-away point might be in the subtext of your talk, the following three points will be addressed directly during your talk. Think about the three most important points of your talk that will be substantively covered in your speaking engagement. (Feel free to modify this prompt and brainstorm up to five important secondary points. Note that more than five and you risk losing your audience. Keep your points simple and memorable.)

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Outline your event by 10-minute increments.

Think about your event in 10-minute increments and what sub-topics will be covered during that span of time. Will your introduction take only half of an increment, i.e., 5 minutes or a whole increment? What will be the first sub-topic you cover? How long should it take you to cover that sub-topic? Will you be reserving time at the end for question-and-answer? If so, how many increments, i.e., 10 minutes? I find that structuring the outline of your talk in 10-minute increments is the best way to organize your talk so that you have a realistic understanding of how to occupy the duration of the speaking engagement and the time you'll need to allot for each sub-topic. The below table assumes a 60 minute talk. Draw lines to separate each new sub-topic in the outline. Ex. For 15 minutes, draw a line mid-way down half an increment to box out one and a half increments for that sub-topic. Modify the table as needed.

10 minutes	
10 minutes	
10 minutes	

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Where will your event be held?

If online, consider...

Podcast. Will you be recording the event by podcast and therefore audio only? Is your podcast available from your personal website only or will you syndicate it with one of the online podcast platforms, such as Apple iTunes, Stitcher, Pocket Casts, etc.?

Live streaming video webinar. How will you get the word out about your live streaming webinar? Don't just think about the date and time most convenient for you; think about dates and times that would be most convenient for your Target Audience. (Example: If your Target Audience holds down a full-time office job, then scheduling your webinar for Wednesday, 11:00 am is not ideal.)

Prerecorded video webinar. How concerned are you with copying and pirating of your webinar videos? If it is very important to you that your webinars are not pirated, then think about professional hosting services that will prevent user downloads of your videos. If you allow end users to download the videos, then you risk pirating.

Note for Webinars. Consider hosting services such as AnyMeeting.com, ReadyTalk.com, MeetingBurner.com to help you put together polished, professional webinars and also to help you with registering your participants.

Cost of Event. Will your event be free? If your only objective is to build an author platform from scratch, then it may serve your purposes better to offer your speaking engagements for free, at least initially. However, if your event will be imparting highly specialized knowledge, then I would recommend charging a fee, even a nominal one.

If local, consider...

Transportation and parking. How accessible is the location of your event? Think about how your Target Audience is most likely going to get to your event. If by bus, subway, or other public transportation, then the time and location of your event has to take public transportation into account. If by car, will parking space be available? I confess that I have opted out of attending events that I otherwise wanted to attend just because I knew there wouldn't be free parking, and I have a strong suspicion I'm not the only one with that train of thought.

Adequate seating. Few things aggravate an attendee more than inadequate seating. Plan ahead and make sure the location of your event will provide enough seats or space for everyone.

Equipment. You will probably need a microphone and audio equipment. If you're using a PowerPoint presentation, then you will also need a projector and a sufficient screen to project the slides onto.

Your overhead costs. Will you have to pay to rent space for the event? If so, then charging a fee for the event will help you cover the overhead. Here you will have to do a cost-benefit analysis. Can you realistically attract enough attendees to not only cover your overhead, but to make the entire speaking engagement worth your while? Also, for any event that will be over 3 hours long, as a courtesy you will want to provide drink or light snacks. That may also need to be factored into your overhead, along with any policies of the space you're using—will they allow the serving of food and drink?

Additional Tips

Promote yourself with grace, i.e., do not actually promote yourself at all.

I am from the school of thought that hard sells of yourself or your products and services during a speaking engagement that was represented to the public as being informative or educational is bad form. I will also acknowledge that hard sells seem to work, and the strategy is immensely effective on unsuspecting audience members. But the prospective audience members who wield true power will be savvy enough to see right through hard sells, and you will have established your reputation in their eyes, and not a very good one at that. A reputation takes a lifetime to build and only one misstep to destroy. I discourage any form of hard selling of yourself during a speaking engagement, unless you've made it clear from the onset that the talk will be *about* you. Unless the talk is clearly going to be *about you*, avoid talking about yourself other than the quick in-and-out biographical introduction. The best way to promote yourself during a speaking engagement is to not promote yourself at all. Let your knowledge, expertise, and grace speak on your behalf, and your Target Audience will catch on right away. *However*, you *do* want to give your Target Audience a way to contact you or look you up after the event, if they so choose. Provide your contact information during the event and make your contact information, website, social media accounts, etc. readily available to attendees.

Dress respectfully.

Dress in a way that clearly conveys your respect for your Target Audience. You are humbled and happy that they have attended your event. You are grateful for their support. Their appearance at your event is important to you. You have put in a lot of time and effort to make this speaking engagement as great as it can possibly be. These are the ideas that need to be communicated through the way you dress. Instead of thinking about the dress code as trying to earn respect, think of it as trying to show respect.

Contemporaneously engage multiple physical senses.

PowerPoint presentation slides are encouraged because they help you to stimulate your audience's visual along with audio senses. By giving the Target Audience information by way of seeing alongside hearing, you immediately make your event more engaging. Encouraging tactile exercises during the event also keeps the audience engaged. Handouts mean there is something for the audience members to touch, and even subliminally, that helps to keep your audience captivated. Offering light food or drink at some point during the event is also a surefire way to satisfy an audience.

Bring a sign-up sheet for your mailing list or newsletter.

On the subsequent pages in this handout is a template sign-up sheet form that you can use. Print out several sheets and always have them available along with two pens for audience members to share their e-mail address or contact information.

