



Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality  
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MODULE 2  
COMPLETING YOUR MANUSCRIPT

Sample Permissions Query Letter

When using copyrighted images and works for your book, you will need to obtain written permission from the author or artist.

The following pages provide three sample permission request letters directed to the hypothetical Art Miller, the artist of a hypothetical watercolor painting titled “Pieces of the Soul” that you, the author of a forthcoming book publication, *Heal Your Spirit*, would like to use in your book.

The first two sample letters are for reprinting “Pieces of the Soul” in one of the chapters of your book. One of those sample letters is assuming your book, *Heal Your Spirit* is being traditionally published and the second assuming your book is being self-published. A third sample permission letter is also provided, again to Mr. Art Miller, though this time, you’re seeking to use “Pieces of the Soul” in the book jacket and book cover design. The third sample letter presumes self-publication, because typically if your book is being traditionally published, your publisher will be in charge of designing the book cover, not you.

Read the annotations for all three sample letters so you get a sense of how to structure your query. The annotations for each subsequent sample letter will presume that you have read the annotations for the previous sample letter.



## Annotated Sample Permission Request Letter (Traditional Publisher)

Use a clear, informative subject line that states your purpose.

Genuine praise will take you far. Keyword here: genuine. Also, let the individual you're writing to know how you first heard about his or her work. People like to know, so satisfy that curiosity. Demonstrate that you are a genuine fan.

Introduce yourself to set up why you're writing to the artist.

Provide the following information:

- Title of your book
- Publisher information
- Publisher location
- First print run

Provide details on the work you are requesting permission for:

- Context in your book that the artist's work will appear in
- Title of artist's work
- Medium of artist's work
- Any copyright information you can find on the work
- Where you first came across the work
- How attribution will appear in the book

Manage the artist's expectations and look into negotiating free licensing. The sample phrasing here is a fair way to suggest your expectations to the artist.

Close the letter by thanking the artist. Be sure to include your signature line and contact information.

Re: Requesting Permission to Reprint Your Work

Dear Mr. Miller:

I first came across your portfolio of work and aesthetic style when you were featured in *Artist Magazine*. I have been following your artistic career ever since and one of my favorite pieces you've done is "Happy," which I recently saw showcased at MOMA.

I am the author of *Heal Your Spirit*, a book about how to heal soul fragmentation through past life regression techniques and mindfulness meditation. *Heal Your Spirit* will be published by Soul Publisher in New York. The publisher has told me that the first print run will be 5,000 copies. I am hoping you will give me permission to reprint one of your beautiful works of art, which I would like to use in my book.

In Chapter 3, titled "What is Soul Fragmentation," I would like to include a reproduction of your work, "Pieces of the Soul," which I believe is a watercolor that you did around 2013. I came across "Pieces of the Soul" in your portfolio on your official artist website and it immediately drew me in.

At your request, I am happy to send along the galleys to show you how your work would be presented in the book. If you are amenable to allowing me limited reproduction rights of your work in my book *Heal Your Spirit*, please kindly provide the credit attribution that you would like me to include. It is the publisher's custom to provide the attribution in the front matter of the book and also noted in small font as a caption underneath the image.

Regrettably, as an aspiring writer and this being my first book publication, I do not have the funds to pay a royalty fee. If you feel that you cannot give permission to reprint without a royalty fee, then I absolutely respect that sentiment and do understand where you are coming from. I understand that I will just have to find another alternative for an image in that section of my book, which won't be as wonderful as the privilege of including "Pieces of the Soul." That work of art is such an incredibly powerful visual.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you. It really would be an honor to reprint "Pieces of the Soul" in my forthcoming book, *Heal Your Spirit*.

## Annotated Sample Permission Request Letter (Self-Published)

Here is another example of an introductory paragraph to let the artist know where you first came across his work.

Although self-published, convey that you're a professional by referencing the ISBN and LOC.

Provide details on the work you are requesting permission for:

- Context in your book that the artist's work will appear in
- Title of artist's work
- Medium of artist's work
- Any copyright information you can find on the work
- Where you first came across the work
- How attribution will appear in the book

Manage the artist's expectations and look into negotiating free licensing. The sample phrasing here is a fair way to suggest your expectations to the artist.

Close the letter by thanking the artist. Be sure to include your signature line and contact information.

Re: Requesting Permission to Reprint Your Work

Dear Mr. Miller:

I was first introduced to your work in the *Spiritual Guidance* tarot deck that you illustrated for Tina Tarotist. Ever since I bought that deck, I have been a fan of yours and following your artistic career. I am so excited about your forthcoming oracle deck, *Animal Spirits*.

I am the author of *Heal Your Spirit*, a book about how to heal soul fragmentation through past life regression techniques and mindfulness meditation. *Heal Your Spirit* is going to be self-published and distributed through print-on-demand services. An ISBN will be registered, along with registration of a control number so the book is catalogued with the Library of Congress.

I am hoping you will give me permission to reprint one of your beautiful works of art, which I would like to use in my book. In Chapter 3, titled "What is Soul Fragmentation," I would like to include a reproduction of your work, "Pieces of the Soul," which I believe is a watercolor that you did around 2013. I came across "Pieces of the Soul" in your portfolio on your official artist website and it immediately drew me in.

At your request, I am happy to send along the galleys to show you how your work would be presented in the book. If you are amenable to allowing me limited reproduction rights of your work in my book *Heal Your Spirit*, please kindly provide the credit attribution that you would like me to include. I will provide the credit attribution in the front matter of the book and also in small font as a caption underneath the image of your artwork.

Regrettably, as a self-published writer and this being my first book publication, I do not have the funds to pay a royalty fee. If you feel that you cannot give permission to reprint without a royalty fee, then I absolutely respect that sentiment and do understand where you are coming from. I understand that I will just have to find another alternative for an image in that section of my book, which won't be as wonderful as the privilege of including "Pieces of the Soul." That work of art is such an incredibly powerful visual.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you. It really would be an honor to reprint "Pieces of the Soul" in my forthcoming book, *Heal Your Spirit*.

## Annotated Sample Permission Request Letter (Use of Image for Book Cover)

DeviantArt is a fantastic resource for finding up and coming artists. Many provide their artist website address on the “About” page. Trace the art that you like to the artist’s website to locate a contact address.

This sample query letter reorganizes the same content from the previous samples.

Offer to give the artist approval rights for how his work of art will be used on your book cover. That is only fair, and such an offer demonstrates your good faith and empathy for artists.

You’ll want to request a high-res image file for the artist’s work that you will be using for your book cover.

Re: Requesting Permission to Reprint Your Work

Dear Mr. Miller:

I first came across your unique surrealist style on DeviantArt and found your point of view to be deeply spiritual and fully expressive of my own creative sensibilities. I am hoping you will give me permission to reprint one of your beautiful works of art, “Pieces of the Soul,” which I believe is a watercolor that you did around 2013, based on the copyright information I could find.

I am the author of *Heal Your Spirit*, a book about how to heal soul fragmentation through past life regression techniques and mindfulness meditation. *Heal Your Spirit* is going to be self-published and distributed through print-on-demand services. An ISBN will be registered, along with registration of a control number so the book is catalogued with the Library of Congress.

I would like to use “Pieces of the Soul” in full color as part of the design for the book jacket and book cover. At your request, I am happy to send along my book designer’s proposed mockups for how the cover will look, incorporating “Pieces of the Soul.”

If you are amenable to allowing me limited reproduction rights of your work as the cover art for my book *Heal Your Spirit*, please kindly provide the credit attribution that you would like me to include in the front matter. I would also be asking for a high-resolution image file of “Pieces of the Soul” that the cover designer can use.

Regrettably, as a self-published aspiring writer and this being my first book publication, I do not have the funds to pay a royalty fee. If you feel that you cannot give permission to reprint without a royalty fee, then I absolutely respect that sentiment and do understand where you are coming from. I understand that I will just have to find another alternative for my cover design, which won’t be as wonderful as the privilege of including “Pieces of the Soul,” a truly incredible and powerful visual.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you. It really would be my honor to use “Pieces of the Soul” for the cover design of *Heal Your Spirit*.