



Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality

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MODULE 3 TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Who are the traditional publishers?

The Big ~~Six~~ Five

There used to be six traditional publishing houses that dominated the global market. They were referred to as the “Big Six,” which were as follows:

1. Simon & Schuster
2. HarperCollins
3. Random House
4. Macmillan
5. The Penguin Group
6. Hachette

Then in 2013 Random House and Penguin Group merged to form Penguin Random House. Now there are five main publishing houses, or the “Big Five.”

1. Simon & Schuster
2. HarperCollins
3. Penguin Random House
4. Macmillan
5. Hachette

Most of the other well-known publishers are imprints of the Big Five. For example, Touchstone Books is an imprint of Simon & Schuster. Tarcher Books, Plume, and Putnam are imprints of Penguin Random House.

To submit your manuscript to one of the Big Five, you need a literary agent. However, some of the smaller imprints or subsidiaries of the Big Five may be more open to direct author submissions. Submission guidelines are typically provided on the publisher website, so you’ll know whether you can submit directly as an author or whether you will need to go through an agent.



Small to Medium Presses

After the Big Five and their imprints, you have the small to medium size publishers. Realistically, you're going to be submitting your nonfiction spirituality book to one of these small to medium size houses.

Among the bestselling nonfiction books in the "New Age and Spirituality" category, you'll find the following small to medium publishing houses:

<i>Small/Medium Traditional Press</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Amber-Allen Publishing www.amberallen.com	San Rafael, CA	
Beacon Press www.beacon.org	Boston, MA	
Findhorn Press www.findhornpress.com	United Kingdom	Gaia Books, Imprint Godsfield Press, Imprint
Hatherleigh Press www.hatherleighcommunity.com	Hobart, NY	
Harmony Books crownpublishing.com/imprint/harmony-books/	Nevada City, CA	Imprint of Crown Publishing Group
Hay House www.hayhouse.com	Carlsbad, CA	
Kensington Publishing Corp www.kensingtonbooks.com	New York, NY	
Llewellyn Worldwide www.llewellyn.com	Woodbury, MN	
Mandala Earth Publishing www.mandalaearttheditions.com	San Rafael, CA	Focuses on Eastern religions
Namaste Publishing www.namastepublishing.com	Vancouver, Canada	
New Harbinger Publications	Oakland, CA	

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www.newharbinger.com		
New World Library www.newworldlibrary.com	Novato, CA	
North Atlantic Books ww.northatlanticbooks.com	Berkeley, CA	
Octopus Publishing Group www.octopusbooks.co.uk	United Kingdom	
Oneworld Publications www.oneworld-publications.com	United Kingdom	
Parallax Press www.parallax.org	Berkeley, CA	
Prometheus Books www.prometheusbooks.com	Amherst, NY	
Quirk Books www.quirkbooks.com	Philadelphia, PA	
Schiffer Publishing www.schifferbooks.com	Atglen, PA	
Schocken Books knopfdoubleday.com/imprint/schocken/	New York, NY	
Seven Stories Press www.sevenstories.com	New York, NY	
Shambhala Publications www.shambhala.com	Boulder, CO	
Weiser Books / Red Wheel redwheelweiser.com	San Francisco, CA	
Whitaker House Publishing www.whitakerhouse.com	New Kensington, PA	Specializes in Christian literature

The above is by no means an exhaustive list, though it's a good one to start with if you're thinking about submitting book proposals to the small and medium presses. Use the template provided in Handout 8 to help you stay track of who you're submitting queries and proposals to. Enter in every one of the above publishers you'd like to submit to and look up the current submission guidelines for book proposals and who to address your query to. Look for who the current acquisitions editor is.

When researching traditional publishers to query, you'll want to expand beyond what is provided here. The latest edition of *Writer's Market* is a great place to start researching more publishers who would be interested in spiritual and New Age nonfiction and also names and contacts for literary agents, if you're interested in pursuing the Big Five.

Note that some of the above-listed publishing houses are imprints or subsidiaries of one of the Big Five. For example, Harmony Books is an imprint of Crown Publishing Group, which is an imprint of Penguin Random House, part of the Big Five. Schocken Books is an imprint of Knopf Doubleday, which is also an imprint of Penguin Random House. Beacon Press, Hatherleigh Press, Kensington Publishing Corp, North Atlantic Books, Parallax Press, Prometheus Books, Quirk Books, Seven Stories Press, and Shambhala, among others, are distributed through Penguin Random House.



Independent Publishers vs. Independent Publishing

Small traditional presses are also referred to as “independent publishers” (or affectionately, “indie publishing”), which can get confusing, since “independent publishing” is often used interchangeably with “self-publishing.” An independent publisher is still a traditional publisher, though it is likely to be a small or regional press. Independent publishing, on the other hand, is not traditional publishing at all. Take care that you don't confuse the two.