



Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality

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MODULE 4 SELF (OR INDEPENDENT) PUBLISHING

Why You Need a Copyeditor

The following document is part of a five module series on publishing nonfiction books in the category of spirituality, metaphysics, occult, and New Age. Module 4 is on self-publishing. The previous module instructions were audio lectures, downloadable MP4 files you can listen to. However, prior to putting together Module 4, my laptop broke, and to record those audio lectures, I was using a recorder app on that laptop. I don't know how to record audio files with my desktop computer. Thus, in lieu of audio MP4 files, Module 4 instruction will be provided by the script or transcript I would have read off of to produce said audio files.

Since the following text was intended to be notes I read off of to create audio lectures, the tone may be informal and the sentence structure imperfect. Please forgive and acknowledge that you are reading what should have been transcript notes for an audio lecture.

- 01 Introduction to Self-Publishing
- 02 Why Self-Publish Your Book
- 03 Publishing Tarot and Oracle Decks
- 04 Understanding ISBNs, Bar Codes, and LOC Listings
- 05 Why You Need a Copyeditor
- 06 Where to Go From Here

BEGIN AUDIO LECTURE TRANSCRIPT:

You cannot trust yourself to copyedit your own manuscript. Even if you are an editor or have experience with copyediting, it doesn't matter. You might do a fine job copyediting somebody else's book, but it's really hard to do the same quality work for your own book.

When you're the one who wrote the text, when you go to reread it, you run the risk of seeing the sentence as it's supposed to be rather than what is actually there, because in a way, you're seeing what's in your mind rather than what's on paper. That often happens with writers. It doesn't mean you're incompetent. It means you're human. For example, when writing *The Tao of Craft*, there were several places in the manuscript where instead of writing Taoist magic, T-A-O-I-S-T, I wrote T-A-R-O-T magic, or Tarot magic. But when I myself would go to reread those lines, I didn't see Tarot magic, I saw Taoist magic because my mind knows the sentence is supposed to read "Taoist magic" so that's what it sees, rather than the error in plain sight, Tarot magic. A copyeditor will pick up on that error, because their brain isn't pre-programmed with biases the way your brain is. Again, not entirely your fault. It's human. A common error among lawyers, for example, is statute and statue. Instead of typing out statute, you type statue, but when you go to review your own work, your brain sees statute, correctly, and not the typo you made, statue. It often takes a paralegal to catch the mistake.

Your copyeditor doesn't necessarily have to be a professional that you hire. You can totally go with a friend who also happens to be an English major who everybody knows is a damn good writer. That works. Anyone with halfway decent verbal skills and a Virgo-dominant chart is going to be a great copyeditor for you.

Also, and this may be jumping ahead to Module 5 just a little, but make sure you get a copyeditor for your marketing and promotion materials as well. When you self-publish, you're the one who has to write your own book description, taglines, pitches, query and cover letters, press release and media kit, but get someone else to review it for you. That's because what you think are the main selling points and most interesting parts of your book might not be what Joe Public thinks is most interesting. Get a neutral third party who represents Joe Public to help you read your marketing materials to make sure you're highlighting the most provocative aspects of your book. I promise you, more times than not, when it comes to what's the unique selling point of your book, you don't know what you're talking about. Get a neutral third party to tell you.

Also, remember that Word List I talked about generating back in Module 2? If you did as I said and you now have a complete Word List, the copyediting phase is when you put your manuscript and Word List side by side to make sure all words on that Word List are spelled and capitalized consistently throughout the manuscript.

Remember the outline of each chapter, also from Module 2? During the copyediting phase, just take a few moments to check back with the outline and see if you've hit all the points you want to hit in each chapter. Does each chapter serve an important purpose? What you intended to be the three most memorable points of each chapter—does your copyeditor agree? When you give

your manuscript to a neutral third party to read, does that third party point out the three memorable points you listed?

Review each chapter and ask yourself: (1) Does this chapter entertain? (2) Does it inform? (3) Does it inspire? (4) Does it persuade? Each and every chapter of your book must hit on at least one of those four objectives. If it wasn't entertaining, then it must be informative, inspirational, or persuasive. If it wasn't informative, then it better be entertaining, inspirational, or persuasive. Get it? Every chapter, every paragraph of your book in fact, *must* achieve one of those four goals. During the copyedit phase, make sure this has been achieved. As for why you need a copyeditor, it's because you're not always the best person to adjudicate whether your book entertains, informs, inspires, or persuades. You really need someone else, preferably someone who is a total bitch but who loves you and wants the best for you, to tell it to you as it is.

END AUDIO LECTURE TRANSCRIPT.

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