



Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality  
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MODULE 5  
PROMOTING YOUR BOOK

Workbook B  
Preparing Your Media Kit

The media kit is how you the author will be securing interviews and book reviews. Here's a dirty, unspoken tip: a reporter should be able to write a halfway decent book review or conduct an interview of you without having read your entire book, off your media kit only. I know as an author you hate that, but if a reporter can crank out content based on your media kit in a way that serves both you and the reporter's media platform, then you are a lot more likely to get that interview or book review. So when crafting your media kit, assume you are a reporter who knows nothing about your book. Off just your media kit, could you competently (using the word "competently" loosely here...) give an interview or write up a review about this author and the book? That's how you want to structure your media kit.

In terms of setting up business models based on your book, the media kit is also indispensable to the entrepreneur and social media personality. Your media kit is how you can land sponsors. Ever seen those online bloggers and YouTubers with incredible sponsorships? Sshh...the secret they refuse to tell you is that they're the ones who queried for those sponsorships. Either the blogger or the blogger's publicist or agent gave a media kit to that major corporate sponsor and from that media kit, the corporate sponsor decided to collaborate with the blogger. Once your business model is set up, landing corporate clients requires a media kit. The business media kit will be different from your author media kit, so you will need to create two. The business media kit typically contains sales success figures, notable clientele,

and notable business accomplishments, whereas the author media kit is more focused on promoting the book.

### Standard Contents of a Media Kit (or Press Kit)

Of course, you don't need to include everything listed below in a media kit, but do start by considering each one of these points to see what is applicable to you and therefore reasonable for you to include.

- Your Author Biography.** On a single sheet or its own independent file, present your author biography, which will include your experience, notable speaking engagements or publications, notable credentials, any awards won, and a concise summary of your author platform, based on the prompts provided in this workbook.
- Previous Books Published (Only if Applicable).** If this is your first book, then this won't be applicable. Otherwise, it's common practice for authors of multiple books to include a single summary sheet of all previous books published.
- Professionally Photographed Headshot.** Provide a professional looking headshot of yourself in 2"x3", 4"x6", or 5"x7" dimensions. If a soft copy is being sent to the one requesting the kit, make sure the resolution is 300 dpi print quality or higher.
- Press Release.** The unspoken purpose of providing a press release is to give content that the media can use when referencing you, your work, or the event you are promoting. Oftentimes you'll find media personnel to lift content directly from the provided press release and that should be fine with you! That's the whole purpose of providing them with a press release! You want to make it as easy on them as possible to help you promote you.
- FAQs, Frequently Asked Questions.** Providing FAQs help prospective interviewers formulate their questions and give journalists content for writing their articles about you. An FAQ is reference material for the media or press so that they can be more informed in the way they present their news.
- Media Clips (Optional).** Offer a listing of media appearances and where possible, provided hyperlinks so the journalist or reporter can check out the content for themselves. Prior to book launch, you should already have several media appearances under your belt, if you've been following along this course. The very first module of the course had you thinking about your platform so by now, you should have an easy time providing a list of media appearances.
- Author Endorsements.** Otherwise known as the "book blurbs." On a separate sheet, provide all the author endorsements or book blurbs you've collected.
- Contact Information.** On a single sheet or its own independent file, provide your contact information. This makes it easy for media personnel to search through your press kit and locate your contact.

## Professional Biography

Synthesize your responses to the previous prompts in this workbook to write your professional biography. Keep it concise and easy to read. No one is going to read your biography if it's longer than one page, so don't go over one page. In fact, keep it to 1-2 short paragraphs. While you draft your biography, keep in mind that the objective is to convey your qualifications as a professional in the field that your book topic is in. Add a sprinkle of personal information, so that people can relate to you.

Out of 300 different author biographies for book titles under the “Spirituality” category, the average word count for an author biography was 95 words. The median word count was 70 words. The shortest biography I came across was 40 words in length and the longest one was 200 words in length. Generally, if you keep yours to between 70 and 95 words, you'll be fine.

Leave self-praising adjectives out of your biography. I would discourage describing yourself as “talented,” or “accomplished.” But that's just me. You see it in author biographies all the time—interestingly, often in the biographies of the mediocre. There's this understanding we all have. If you need to be the first to self-describe as talented or accomplished, then you're probably not very talented or accomplished. These are words others should use to describe you, on their own volition, not words you use to describe yourself. An author biography just reads classier when you stick to facts and you don't overburden it with self-praise.

## Author Photographs

Here I would strongly encourage you to get professional author photographs taken. They make all the difference in the world. However, I didn't. The hubby and I read up on how to take professional photos (despite zero experience), tinkered with our DSLR, and just took hundreds of photos hoping we could get at least one good picture based entirely on probability. What were the odds of getting *zero* good shots, even accidental good shots, if we take three hundred pictures of my face? Yep. So that was our thinking and since math is reliable, we got one halfway decent shot out of the hundreds and that's what you see as my current author photo.

If you can, get a professional photographer. Don't just rely on math. Photographers have the chops and experience to tell a story with your author photo and help with your branding. They know the art of subliminal messaging through photography that amateurs like Hubby and me will simply miss. They also know how to edit and filter the photo post-production so you look *perfect*. If you do decide to hire a professional, then you won't need the below checklist. Otherwise, if you're going to DIY this like I did, follow the checklist and make sure you get one of each itemized type of shot.

### Profile Head Shot.

The objective of this photograph is to connect with the viewer through your eyes. This photograph must create a dynamic, experiential connection between viewer and author through the author's eyes in the photograph.

The background should be blank, a solid color, or minimalistic. Natural lighting outdoors that's very early in the morning or just a few hours before sunset is best. If you take the photograph in the afternoon, you run the chance of overexposure with the lighting and awkward shadows.

You want the head shot to be framed chest up with spacing all around the top of your head, and around your shoulder area. Don't worry so much about this during the photo shoot, because you can always crop the photo post-production.

In terms of clothing, opt for something that is not going to outshine your face, if that makes sense. Clothing should be such that when people look at the photograph, they remember your face, but cannot recall what you were wearing. Your clothes should be forgettable. Your face and eye contact, and your smile? Unforgettable. So your clothing cannot steal your thunder. Opt out of anything too crazy, bold patterns, overly bright colors, or anything that is going to clash with your background.

The profile head shot should be versatile enough that it can be cropped into a perfect square or look proportionate cropped into standard wallet size dimensions, i.e., 2.0 inches x 3.0 inches. Make sure you have in your files, ready to go, both a perfect square head shot and a 2 x 3 head shot.

❑ **Vertical Photograph (2 Different Shots: Portrait and Full Body).**

This is a full-framed standard size photograph that is vertical in landscape. Have a portrait shot and a full-body shot. For full-body shots, remember this: do not crop just above the feet or crop out only part of your hands and forearms. When you do that, the final product looks awkward and poorly proportioned. This has to be all or nothing. Go for everything so feet and hands are visible or zoom in close for the portrait. Don't crop around body parts. You won't be pleased with the final result.

Also, don't stand straight on, facing the camera with your torso. Instead, stand with your feet facing off to the side, and then twist your upper body so your head and shoulders face the camera head-on, creating an S-shape. Doing so immediately helps you to lose 10 pounds on camera. Plus, no matter how thin or stunning you are, head-on shots without that S-curve are going to make you look pudgier than you actually are.

❑ **Horizontal Photograph (2 Different Shots: Portrait and Full Body).**

This is a full-framed standard size photograph that is horizontal in landscape. For the portrait, position yourself at the one-third point of the photograph. Don't shoot yourself perfectly centered. In these shots, you do want a background with some minor visual interest, unlike the profile head shots. Some sort of beautiful natural landscape tends to work best, especially in the mind, body, spirit genre.

❑ **Candid Shots (At least 3 to 5 in your portfolio to choose from).**

Candid shots should be "the author in his or her natural habitat" type photos. Maybe it's a more personable, casual shot of you at your writing desk, very Einsteinian, with stacks of books and papers all around you. Or maybe it's a perfectly timed snapshot of you at a public speaking event. In the New Age field, you often see candid author photos where the author is meditating. That's fine, I suppose, though personally I don't find them to be in good taste.

Photoshopped pictures where there are orbs of light, unicorns, glitter, magical lasers, ostentatious auras, illuminated chakras, or an illuminated third eye are also not my first-choice recommendations. I'd avoid going in that direction, but hey, you do you.

## The Press Release

A template press release is provided in the "Media Kit Template" handout provided with Module 5. This section of the workbook will help you brainstorm how to draft your press release. Your press release should be about three paragraphs, approximately 250 to 350 words. It needs to be easy to skim. A lazy person reading only the first sentence of each paragraph should leave with a clear, cogent understanding of what your book is about and why your book is newsworthy, so be sure to test out that guideline when reviewing your press release.

### First (Opening) Paragraph

Below, draft the opening paragraph of your press release. In this paragraph, relay the title of your book, who you are, book release date, publisher, and a quick pitch as to why your book's topic is newsworthy. Are you revealing original research? Why does your book matter?

### Second Paragraph

Below, draft the second paragraph of your press release. What problem has your book solved? Is your subject matter controversial and if so, how? Tell a story. Each sentence should be a cliffhanger that motivates a reader to continue reading to the next sentence. Convince the reader that there really is a problem that affects many and now you are presenting a solution to that problem.

### Third (Final) Paragraph

Below, draft the concluding paragraph of your press release. Include a famous author's endorsement or a testimonial. In the final paragraph, drive home the point that there is a unique angle that the journalist can take with the newsworthiness of your book.

Also be sure to review the "Media Kit Template" handout in Module 5. It contains further instructions and tips on drafting a press release.

### Your Author FAQs

Brainstorm questions that you foresee to be frequently asked questions about your book. Some of those questions need to imply purchasing anxiety and assuage those anxieties that a prospective reader might have. In other words, even though you don't want an FAQ question specifically phrased as, "Why should I buy your book?" that should nevertheless be one of the questions you answer, with the actual question phrased more eloquently. The FAQs section is your chance to earn trust and to explain the premise of your book, demonstrate your expertise in the field, and also reveal insights into your personality. In the below space, brainstorm at least 10 questions for your FAQs.

#### Question #1

Your Answer to Question #1

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Question #2

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Your Answer to Question #2

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Question #3

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Your Answer to Question #3

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Question #4

Your Answer to Question #4

Question #5

Your Answer to Question #5

Question #6

Your Answer to Question #6

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Question #7

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Your Answer to Question #7

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Question #8

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Your Answer to Question #8

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Question #9

Question #9

Your Answer to Question #9

Your Answer to Question #9

Question #10

Question #10

Your Answer to Question #10

Your Answer to Question #10

After completing Workbook B, assemble the polished, designed Media Kit in the Media Kit Template handout.