

I think all of us feel the lure of taking our careers into our own hands and jumping on the self-publishing band wagon. I have friends who are selling very well, making six figures annually on their self-published books. I have given more than a passing thought to trying it myself. I have a series idea that I could do just for the Internet. Several books that I started and never finished could be perfect for Amazon and the other outlets. I have the advantage too of an audience which might be persuaded to try what I put up. So why haven't I done it yet?

Here's a sad truth, folks. Back in the day before I was published I would write for hours, days, weeks, months, okay years, because I had the dream that someday I'd sell a book. Now that the dream has come true, it's harder to stay motivated. I've found that without a hard deadline hanging over my head and a contract that would withhold a specific amount of dollars if I don't come through by that deadline, I'm a slug. I just can't get motivated. I've lost that fire in my belly.

What's my problem? I think part of it is that I know too many people who have put up good stories on Amazon, etc., and failed to see the great success that so many people brag about. Also, it really bothers me that the optimum price for big sales on these sites seems to be ninety-nine cents. Seriously? For my books which average a hundred thousand words? And take me months to write? I don't think so. And then there are the weekend specials when they are given away free. No freaking way! So I sit here, stuck on chapter three usually and never going much further. Because I wonder if it would be worth it.

And then there's the promotion I'd have to do. There are literally millions of books on Amazon. How do you stand out in the crowd? You have to create buzz. That starts with a great cover. I'd have to arrange that. And get the book copy edited(I have this issue with commas) and formatted. Then send out stuff to blogs and beg for reviews. Probably pay for an ad in RT so I could get a review there. Which is stupid because the reviewer there isn't my biggest fan anyway. You see how EXHAUSTING this is? I go back to bed and read a good book. A paper

book because I don't even LIKE my Kindle. Yes, I know I'm a Neanderthal and I don't apologize for it. And that's another thing. I want my books to be in bookstores. Even though there are fewer of those brick and mortars all the time.

So there you have it. I'm resisting the self-pub thing which I know you'll tell me is shortsighted. I'm bugging my agent, trying to get her to find me another contract for something, anything. Get me a deadline. I need an authority figure to stand over me with a ruler and a threat. I thought I was a self-starter. But one look at the mess in my office and it's obvious I'm not—only an imminent visit from my organized sister-in-law motivates me to start cleaning. So that lack of motivation seems to be true in all aspects of my life, writing included. Put my feet to the fire and I'm productive as hell. Give me all the time in the world and I'll take it and waste it.

One more word on the subject: I've seen and heard about many bad books out there that were put up hastily. I won't be the poster child for a poorly edited book with big glaring errors. Or tarnish a reputation I've spent decades building by being in a hurry to generate an uncertain cash flow. What goes up on the Net is there forever. Even if you take it down, someone will still have it. I've heard apologists say, "The book was full of mistakes but she was a good storyteller." Well, why wasn't she a careful craftsman too?

There was a feature on the national CBS news recently about an author who'd written with her husband a book every two weeks for over a year. They were making seven figures from Amazon. At least both of them were teachers, educated and hopefully careful enough to proofread their stories. They were market savvy too and wrote New Adult romance, a hot genre right now. But two weeks a book? I'd still be on chapter three, honing, tweaking, and figuring out where the story was going to go. I read a book recently that was so full of clichés I put it down and won't pick it up again. On Amazon I could ask for my money back. I call that lazy writing. It could also have been rushed writing. If you're a self-starter, doing what I should be

doing, at least take the time to put out a polished product. Your reputation is being built book by book. It's good to be a self-starter. But also know when to stop and take a breath.

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