

## Most Common Mistake Writers Make

by Chazda Albright -

<http://greatstorybook.com/common-mistake-writers-make/>

This entry is part 13 of 16 in the series [Devil in the Details](#)

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*The most common mistake writers make is one I never would have bet money on. This really surprised me, so I thought I should write about it. Finally.*

**As a writing teacher, there is nothing I love more (really!) than helping people boost their creative projects. Any. Way. Possible.**

**Every week, I enjoy reading and answering emails from writers and illustrators about their creative questions, problems and projects.**

Interestingly, there are trends to certain types of emails. It's really uncanny. Not just that certain questions trend, but that these trends come in waves like the tide.

For example, I'll sometimes have a week where 5 people ask about how to get their books into

bookshops. That is strange. Another week, 3 people might ask about the same structural issue with their writing. It comes in waves, something I can't completely explain – not to this *degree*, anyway.

Publishing has seasons and so does writing. I observe this in myself, certainly. But still... the email questions I get really do have me doing a lot of smirking and scratching my head sometimes.

### Answering Questions

The great thing is, this seasonal trending makes it easier for me to decide what to write about for GSB. People tell me what they want to know! Then I tell them about it.

There are always topics [no one thought to ask me about](#) that I just write because it's cool but probably obscure, and I do love those because they're fun to write.

But I'm personally more attached to the articles I've written [as a response to someone's question](#). I know then that I'm [directly helping](#) someone get to their next step.

And I'm happy to help any way I can.

### What I'm Asked the MOST

There is one topic though that I get emails about on a very regular basis. With this one thing, there is never a lull – it's a pretty constant flow. I feel the need to bring this up because... of all the topics I ever expected to be asked, I never would have guessed [this](#) to ever trend.

I really thought this would be the rarity.

Very often, writers will contact me and want to know if their book is good. Unfortunately, they all too often ask me this question *after* they've published it. (Obviously, asking me beforehand would be much, much better!)

What's interesting about these emails is what they all have in common. I'm going to list for you these attributes and you tell me if this sounds familiar to you. For each point, I'll explain how to deal with it.

#### 1. Apologetic

In these emails, all of them, the writers contact me with a very apologetic tone. They haven't done anything to me – except ask for my help on a book post-publication.

"I hope this isn't unprofessional." If you've written these words to me, don't feel badly about it! I read this sentence or a close variation on it every week. Really – every single week.

What is interesting about this to me is that it suggests the person asking for my help believes on some level that what they've done isn't professional. Let me put your fears aside: you're right; it *isn't professional*.

But not to ME – I’m a teacher. I *want* to help you, so asking for my help isn’t unprofessional. What’s unprofessional about it is publishing a product before it’s ready for the public.

But it isn’t the end of the world. If you’ve put a sub par book on the market, you can fix it. Especially if it’s an ebook, this isn’t too difficult to repair.

### **How to Replace a Print Book (with a better version)**

If it’s in print, you need to unpublish that version so that it becomes [Out Of Print \(OOP\)](#). When you publish the book again, edited and buffed, you’ll need to release it as a new edition with a new [ISBN](#).

The unpublished, or OOP, print edition of your book will *never disappear from the internet market*, but people won’t be able to obtain it.

### **How to Replace an Ebook**

Ebooks can be updated by the author (so long as the author is also the publisher) at any time, and this will actually replace the previous version of the book. To do this, you’ll simply follow the instructions of the ebook publisher you’ve used.

## **2. Secret**

Most often, the writer neglects to give me the title of their book. Almost always they don’t provide a link for me. So they’re asking for my help regarding a certain book they’ve written, but *at least subconsciously, they don’t want me to actually see it*.

Not providing a title or link makes it more difficult for me to answer questions about it.

So what I do is Google the author and see what pops-up. Sometimes I get a hit, but usually not. Then I see if I can search for the author’s name on Amazon. Sometimes I still can’t find the book.

If I can find it listed, I see whatever I can about it and give the writer feedback about that. I also invite them to send me the actual book so I can give better information. Sometimes they take me up on that offer, sometimes they don’t.

## **3. Non-marketed**

In most of these cases, the book has been published but there has been no marketing done at all. I call this The Published Secret Book Syndrome.

What this tells me is that the author feels so unsure about how their story will be received, they want to hide it. It’s published, but not really. It’s on the market, but no one knows about it.

To be clear, this is *how the author feels* about it, not me. This is my observation of only what the writer is telling me about their work. I haven’t read the book at this point - only their apologetic email asking for

help.

If you're wondering, yes. If and when I do finally see the book, it's clear that considerably more work should have been done before publication. I express to the writer what should be changed to fix the book, and sometimes (not always) the writer will follow through and make those changes.

Sometimes, though, the book is such a mess, the only thing to do is unpublish it and move on to the next book. Some writers take this route instead.

It's really hard to see this happen. Honestly, a publisher's rejection of my own work is easier for me to take.

**The most common mistake I see writers make is self-publishing a story that isn't ready for the market. If you have also made this mistake and want to fix it – Bravo! You *can* and absolutely should.**

### How to Avoid Mistakes: Get Answers

I can help you with your questions, as ever – but if you want to take your writing and book marketing ability a step further (so that your next story is solid), I invite you (PLEASE DO THIS!) to take the [FREE Mini-Course](#) we just launched.

It's a series of three compact video sessions that answer the most frequently asked questions I get. These are my FAQs from writers, essentially, but there's no way to answer any of them in just a paragraph or two each!

So I made it a mini-course.

You also get downloadable cheat-sheets and worksheets and links to more detailed information - so you aren't left hanging about any particulars.

IF YOU ARE actually left hanging about any particulars, just let me know. Send me an email, as usual. I'll add that to the mini-course and make it even better.

**Keep creating, no matter what.**

**This entry is part of the series**

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