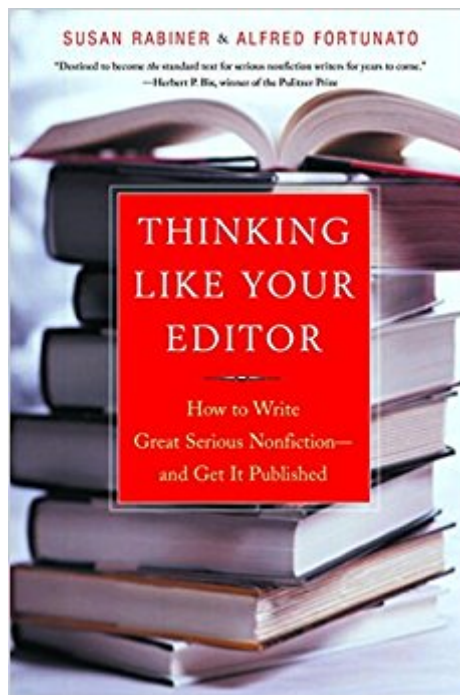




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Thinking Like Your Editor: How To Write Great Serious Nonfiction And Get It Published



Synopsis

Distilled wisdom from two publishing pros for every serious nonfiction author in search of big commercial success. Over 50,000 books are published in America each year, the vast majority nonfiction. Even so, many writers are stymied in getting their books published, never mind gaining significant attention for their ideas and substantial sales. This is the book editors have been recommending to would-be authors. Filled with trade secrets, *Thinking Like Your Editor* explains: why every proposal should ask and answer five key questions; how to tailor academic writing to a general reader, without losing ideas or dumbing down your work; how to write a proposal that editors cannot ignore; why the most important chapter is your introduction; why "simple structure, complex ideas" is the mantra for creating serious nonfiction; why smart nonfiction editors regularly reject great writing but find new arguments irresistible. Whatever the topic, from history to business, science to philosophy, law, or gender studies, this book is vital to every serious nonfiction writer.

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Customer Reviews

Two years ago, Betsy Lerner's *The Forest for the Trees: An Editor's Advice to Writers* offered an editor's-eye guide to aspiring writers of nonfiction. Now come Rabiner, former Basic Books editorial director turned agent, and her husband, Fortunato, a freelance book editor and writer, covering some of the same territory, but also breaking new ground. Wannabe authors might be shocked to hear that a fine writing style usually plays only a tiny role in whether a proposal becomes a book.

Instead, according to the authors, the freshness of ideas and the size of the potential audience drive the process the first three rules of book publishing, as stated here, are "audience, audience, audience." In part one, on submissions, the authors discuss how to put together a book proposal and, without sounding self-serving, whether to work through an agent or go solo. In part two, they move to the writing process. Especially welcome here is their discussion of research undergirding all writing: authors and publishers, they note, sometimes become too lax about accuracy in nonfiction. Part three discusses how authors and editors (both in-house and freelance) can work together well. They offer a necessary tonic in advice about the importance of establishing a good relationship with the editor from day one that includes an author understanding that the editor's world doesn't revolve around one book. A sample proposal accompanied by a sample chapter round out the book nicely. Hopeful writers will be the primary audience for this title, and they will find useful advice on every page, but a secondary audience could include avid consumers of nonfiction who want to understand why some ideas reach book form while others do not. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Rabiner, a former editorial director at Basic Books, and freelance editor Fortunato are now partners in the Susan Rabiner Literary Agency. Their book (like their agency) targets those who write serious or scholarly nonfiction but hope to reach a wide audience. They begin with the usual fantasy sequence, leading readers through a discussion about which publisher they should select for their work university press or other. The book then explains in detail why authors must do research and present balanced arguments in their writing and why they must also have tangible credibility but write with a sense of narrative to appeal to a wider audience. These are basics, stress the authors, that must be mastered before an aspiring writer can hope to start speculating about how to spend the advance. The authors advise writers to approach editors first and give tips on how to do so; agents, they explain, are readily acquired in the wake of success. Better than average, this title mostly avoids feeding fantasies in favor of detailing necessities. Robert Moore, Paraxel Intl., Waltham, MA Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

I have always wanted to write a book, but have had difficulty in finding a subject for which I was both knowledgeable and passionate, and which has not been covered by other writers. I finally came up with a great topic this summer. It was one of those moments where the goal suddenly seem crystal clear, but I did not know the path to reach it. I was prepared to pursue the self-publishing route.

However, I felt my subject was an important one that deserved more "professional" respect and visibility than might be garnered by a self-published book. I knew I would have to write a book proposal. As a novice author, I had no idea about the mechanics of the proposal process and how to maximize my chances of success. I researched several books on , and "Thinking Like Your Editor" seemed to fit my requirements precisely. It was a good choice. I very much appreciated the authors' approach. This book provided the "tough love" necessary to ensure that I was very focused on what I wanted to say. It was also reassuring to read that I didn't have to have everything figured out before submitting a book proposal - that in fact it was better NOT to have gone too far down the writing path before submitting the proposal. This book offers excellent tips on how to write effectively. It contains many illustrative examples of writing that misses the mark, and suggestions for how to improve your impact. Finally, I like that the book emphasizes the importance of narrative even in non-fiction. You're not writing a term paper or dissertation. A book needs to tell a compelling story, which many technical writers forget. That advice helped me hone my approach to my subject. I found a potential publisher through research on the web, looking up publishers of books in topics related to the one I wanted to write. I filled out their application. I also appended a detailed table of contents using the format suggested in "Thinking Like Your Editor," even though a table of contents was not called for in the application process. I submitted my application on a Monday, and on Friday that week, I got an email that my proposed book would be an excellent fit in this publisher's series on Space Exploration. I had a contract within two weeks. I highly recommend the book for anyone who is seriously interested in getting a book published. Even if you decide to self-publish, the advice in this book will be invaluable in helping you write a book that people will want to read. You still have to do all the heavy lifting, but this book gives you a plan for achieving your goals. Thank you to Alfred Fortunato and Susan Rabiner for putting me on the path to finally writing that book I've always wanted to write!

"Thinking Like Your Editor: How to Write Great.....!" I've read this important book by Rabiner and Fortunato twice, underlined practically every page and am circling for my third run of reading it again. Of all the books one can have for a writer wishing to publish, this is the tome of tomes. It is daunting, at times humorous, but most important contains the exquisite advice of a person who knows. Susan Rabiner has years of experience in publishing and editing. This book is not a quick read and a feel good light piece. It is clearly an important book to have for both research and how to, and to dispel the myths of publishing. It should NOT collect dust on the shelf but be embraced, frankly, daily during the challenging process of readying a book for market.

When I bought "Thinking Like an Editor," I was really struggling with my manuscript. As I have been reading the book, it has continually opened and expanded my capacity to write good non-fiction. The section on your books argument helped me focus in on the core question I am asking and answering in my book. From there, the tips of structuring the argument has been moving me forward on a daily basis. I have gotten in the habit of reading a few pages of "Thinking like an Editor." Before I write and really helps keep writing better and better content. Although the book does spent a substantial bit of time on the book proposal which I am not planning to do as I am self publishing, the content of the proposal section is extremely valuable to any non fiction book. Mike Stokes
Author, "The Mind Field." Due out in Jan 2015.

Excellent book that focuses specifically on writing a non-fiction book and preparing it for publishing. It's written from an editor's point of view(as the title tells you) and also from the perspective of a literary agent, so it has a lot of inside information, you might say. It's written from the point of view of the standard publishing house/author relationship, as of its publication date, so is less geared towards the growing self-publishing market. But believe me, it is invaluable for people pursuing that route too. Perhaps even more valuable since they likely will not have the added advantage of encountering an editor's point of view, in terms especially of aiming for a particular market. I've got a good deal of insight from it already that has changed my intentions somewhat. I've just about finished reading it, and will go back and read several parts again. That's how useful I judge this book to be.

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