

tellwell

Guide to Self-Publishing

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PUBLISHING A BOOK IS EASY

We know it doesn't seem that way. There are many options out there, and understanding the publishing industry, especially for first-time authors, can be confusing.

Tellwell created this simple guide to walk you through the publishing process. We'll take a look at the five steps to publishing a book and go over the differences between the traditional and assisted self-publishing models, as well as the do-it-yourself approach. We'll also walk you through which publishing choice may be right for you, and introduce you to Tellwell and some of our authors.



A NEW ERA

You've decided to write and publish a book. Perhaps you even have a completed draft of a manuscript. Congratulations! You are following your dream of becoming a published author.

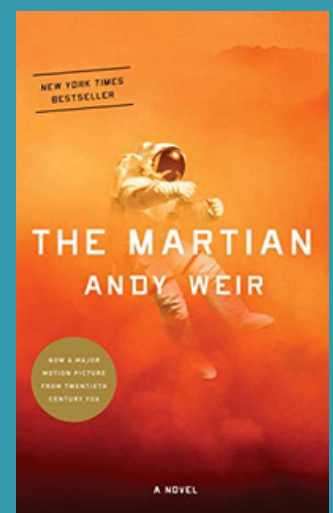
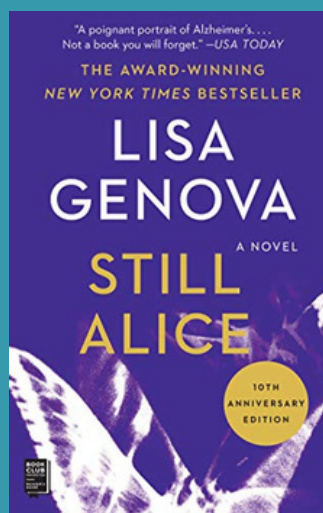
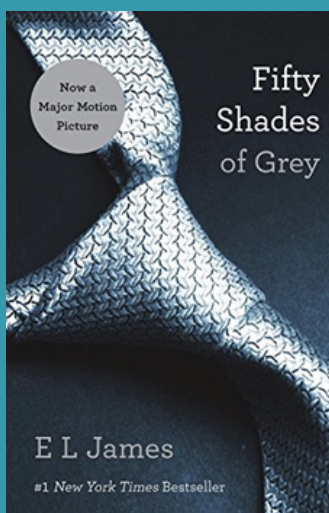
It's an exciting time to publish a book! Technology and new players are disrupting a traditional industry. No longer is it only the large companies deciding who does or does not get published.

Now, the doors are wide open. Readers, not publishers, decide which books succeed. A high-quality, well-edited manuscript; enticing cover design; and a strong marketing effort are crucial to success.

Independent authors are reaching levels of success unheard of decades ago. It's never been so easy to publish a book, motivating more people to share their work by publishing independently.

“ READERS, NOT PUBLISHERS, DECIDE WHICH BOOKS SUCCEED. ”

ISBNs FOR SELF-PUBLISHED TITLES INCREASED OVER 900% SINCE 2006. – BOWKER



E. L. James' *Fifty Shades* trilogy landed her on Forbes' list of the highest-earning authors. Her book was originally self-published.

Lisa Genova was rejected by traditional publishers and self-published. Simon & Schuster later acquired it for a reported half-million dollars.

Andy Weir's *The Martian* was a self-published Kindle bestseller before Random House and then Hollywood came knocking.

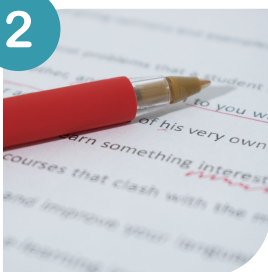
THE FIVE STEPS

The five steps to publishing are the same whether you go the traditional or self-publishing route



WRITING

You can't publish a book without writing it. If you are reading this guide, you probably have an idea for a book or you have already started working on it. If you are at this stage, write, write, write as much as you can until you have a completed first draft.



EDITING

When you write a book, you make thousands of creative decisions. By the time you are finished your first, second, or third draft, it becomes difficult to see how your readers will experience your manuscript. An editor provides fresh eyes and works with you to strengthen your writing.



DESIGN

Once the manuscript is edited, a designer creates a compelling cover that will help the book sell. The designer also lays out the interior of the book to ensure a comfortable reading experience, and confirms that the design files meet all print and ebook specifications.



DISTRIBUTION

Now that you have a finished book, it is time to make it available for people to buy! You can make your book available to about 39,000 booksellers, including Amazon, Indigo, and Barnes & Noble. Print-on-demand technology allows for printing one copy per purchase, saving you from having to print books in bulk.



MARKETING

Your book looks great and is available for sale online, but it won't sell itself! Now it's time to let the world know it exists. Book marketing basics include a website and social media presence, and to really create buzz you need to appear in the press and on podcasts, send copies to reviewers, and plan a book launch or tour.

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

VS

SELF-PUBLISHING



In the traditional model, the author must first find an agent willing to represent them. Agents have connections with publishing companies, and once you have representation, they will pitch your book to publishers. They try to get authors the best deal they can, and they receive a commission (usually 15%) for their work.

If a traditional publisher agrees to a deal, they will pay the author an advance for their book and, in exchange, receive exclusive rights to publish and sell the book.

The author then completes the writing of the book with editorial help from the publisher.

The publisher manages and controls the publishing and distribution process. They take on the risk of publishing the book and keep almost all royalties.

The traditional publishing process can take years to complete.

In the self-publishing model, the author controls the publishing process from start to finish. There is no submissions process, no advance on sales. The author takes on the risks and costs of publishing, but receives much more of the reward, in the form of royalties.

The author is in control of the publishing process: writing, editing, cover design, distribution, and marketing. They retain all the rights to their work.

Authors may decide to take on aspects of the publishing work themselves, such as design, editing, illustrations, and marketing. They may hire contractors to do this work for them, or they may choose to work with an assisted self-publisher, which have the added benefit of guiding authors through an unfamiliar industry.

Self-publishing a book is a much faster process than traditional publishing, typically taking months rather than years.



THE BIG PARADOX



There is a contradiction between what traditional publishers look for in an ideal author and what authors are often looking for in a traditional publisher.

In short, authors are hoping to find a publisher who will do all of the non-writing work, including marketing.

But publishers are hoping to find authors who already have an established audience to minimise the cost of marketing.

WHICH MODEL OF PUBLISHING IS BETTER?

Neither of these models is inherently right or wrong. Selecting the direction that is right for you depends on your goals and resources.

If you are an established author with a large marketing platform, then it may be possible to get a literary agent and publishing offers. In that case, you should weigh the pros and cons of any offers you get by asking: "Does the advance I'm being offered and the marketing investments they say they will make justify giving up creative control, revenues, and my book rights?"

But for the majority of first-time authors who don't yet have a large following, getting a literary agent to represent you and securing a traditional publishing offer isn't a viable option. Self-publishing or not publishing at all become the only two choices.

DO-IT-YOURSELF (DIY) VS. ASSISTED SELF-PUBLISHING



Many aspects of self-publishing can be done directly by a tech- and marketing-savvy author, but they require time, talent, and knowledge of the publishing industry.

Some of the more detailed steps in the publishing process include:

- Finding and hiring an editor
- Selecting a designer to create the book cover and interior layout, and ensuring they provide design files in the proper format
- Acquiring ISBN numbers, selecting BISAC codes and keywords
- Pricing the book
- Selecting the book's metadata, such as title, description, keywords, and categories
- Choosing a print-on-demand service
- Choosing a printing company for bulk orders
- Creating print-ready and ebook files
- Getting your book into the major ebook retailers
- Going through legal, tax, and banking paperwork with each distribution partner
- Creating and executing a marketing plan, such as building a website, engaging with social media, and generating reader and editorial reviews and publicity

WHY SOME AUTHORS CHOOSE TO WORK WITH AN ASSISTED SELF-PUBLISHING COMPANY

Authors can easily become overwhelmed with all the steps and decisions that need to be made. They benefit from guidance through the process, and a dedicated team to take care of the critical work .

It's why many independent authors choose to work with assisted self-publishing companies such as Tellwell. We act as a one-stop shop for authors to help with the entire publishing process.

Self-publishing companies have a team of editors, book designers, illustrators, marketing consultants, and project managers who work with the author from start to finish.

SELF-PUBLISHING

VS

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

PROS

- High royalties
- Full creative control
- Copyrights
- Fast turn-around times
- *You* decide whether your book is published, not a gatekeeper

CONS

- The author covers the up-front costs
- The author has to oversee the project themselves, or work with a self-publishing company
- The author needs to make many decisions
- The author has to market the book
- It takes a lot of effort to get it right

PROS

- Publisher covers up-front costs
- The author is paid an advance
- High prestige in some circles
- It's easier to get your book stocked on bookstore shelves
- May help you market the book

CONS

- Very competitive with an estimated rejection rate of 99%
- Slow—it may take years to publish
- Low royalties
- You give up creative control
- You give up copyrights

ASSISTED SELF-PUBLISHING

VS

DIY

PROS

- One-stop shop for all your publishing needs
- A talented team to help you bring your book to market
- A team of professionals to guide you through the process and offer advice
- Feeling empowered, educated and supported through your author journey

CONS

- Costs may be higher depending on your package
- The reputation and quality of services of self-publishing companies vary
- Not all companies offer the option of 100% net royalties

PROS

- You can save money if you do everything yourself
- Turn-around time is under your control
- The finished product is 100% a reflection of your work
- If you decide to hire contractors, you can work with them directly

CONS

- It's a lot of work to do everything yourself
- Quality may suffer if professionals are not involved
- Steep learning curve
- If hiring contractors, it can be difficult to effectively manage them all

QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN EVALUATING AN ASSISTED SELF-PUBLISHING COMPANY



There are a high number of self-publishing companies with varying reputations and quality of service. It's important to do your research and ask the right questions. Here are a few key questions to ask.

Does the company offer the option of 100% net royalties?

This should be a simple yes or no answer. Some companies, such as Tellwell, may offer 100% net royalties along with other options. There are, however, a number of companies who don't offer the option of 100% net royalties at all, while still charging for up-front services. This is something to be aware of in initial discussions.

Does the company have a reputation for quality work?

Companies pop up all the time, but don't last long if they don't do quality work, so it's important to ensure that the company you choose has a track record of delighting customers. Look at Google reviews, the Better Business Bureau, and other evidence to indicate a long list of happy customers.

Is the company charging fair market rates for the value of their services?

Be aware that there are some online commentators who believe it is wrong to charge for any publishing-related work, as if editors, illustrators, and other publishing professionals should all work for free. This is an outdated and incorrect assumption that usually comes from people who don't understand the full breadth of publishing options, and the upsides and downsides to each. The work of a publishing team is critical to creating a quality book and a satisfying publishing experience. The real question is whether the pricing is transparent and fair.

Will I be able to purchase my print-ready PDF files and ebook files—such as EPUB—upon publication?

Being able to purchase your print-ready PDF files means you can work with any printer you wish, in any country. Having the flexibility to choose a printing company for bulk orders means you have more options in the way of pricing, quality, and location. If a self-publishing company allows you to print bulk orders through them only, there is likely a substantial markup and you are not getting the best option. It may also force you to price your book too high to make up for the high printing costs. The EPUB file is important for book-marketing purposes, such as awards, reviews, and blogger/media outreach. Some companies may not offer the option to purchase these files, which greatly limits your printing and book-marketing options.

DECISION TIME: A 5-STEP GUIDE

STEP 1

SELF-PUBLISHING OR TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING?



Traditional Publishing

If you have an established following for your writing and feel confident your work can attract a professional literary agent, and you're willing to forego most future royalties to save the expense of initial production costs, your first step is to start reaching out to agents with a solid book proposal.



Self-Publishing

Are you eager to publish your book in less than a year? Do you want to keep creative control and the rights to your work? Do you want to earn high royalties and are prepared to invest in your book project? Then self-publishing is probably the best way to start.

STEP 2

DO-IT-YOURSELF OR ASSISTED APPROACH?



Do-It-Yourself

Are you technologically savvy, with graphic design skills? Do you have friends or family with professional editing or writing experience who would be willing to edit your work? Do you have knowledge of the publishing industry? Do you have time to invest in doing everything yourself? Is your budget limited? Then a DIY approach may be best.



Assisted Approach

Is a high-quality book with a professional cover design and edited manuscript important to you? Do you want help navigating the publishing process? Do you want to work with a team of experts who can offer advice and suggestions along the way? Do you have a budget to hire help? If you would like to work with a professional team who can help you navigate unfamiliar territory, then working with an assisted-self publishing company is a great choice.

DECISION TIME: A 5-STEP GUIDE

STEP 3

WHAT SERVICES DO YOU NEED?



Do you need help in designing a cover and formatting a book for various distribution channels? Do you need an editor for copy editing or thorough content editing? Do you need an author website and help marketing your book?

Narrow down the services where professional support would be valuable and start shopping around.

STEP 4

WHICH COMPANY BEST SUITS YOUR NEEDS?



When evaluating self-publishing companies, use our question guide as a framework. You will be evaluating companies on their services, pricing, reputation, and team. As part of your research, you should read Google reviews, look at the company's rating on the Better Business Bureau, and comb through their social media channels and website to learn about their staff and other authors who have published with them. It may be beneficial to keep notes in a document or spreadsheet.

STEP 5

MAKE YOUR DECISION.



Many companies offer free phone consultations, where you can ask questions about their services and packages.

Do your research, then make the decision that makes you the most comfortable!

WHY TELLWELL?

✓ With an easy-to-use author portal, Octavo, and a world-class team of publishing professionals, Tellwell guides authors step by step through the publishing process, with trusted publishing advice, guidance, and management suited to your needs and skills.

✓ Tellwell offers a full-service team approach. We are a friendly team of experienced editors, designers, illustrators, marketers, and project managers with exceptionally high standards of excellence.

✓ We offer the option of 100% net royalties, and have the smartest distribution model in the industry. Tellwell doesn't inflate the distribution costs at all. You are taking the risk, so you should receive all the rewards.

✓ We offer flexible printing options, including print-on-demand and competitive bulk printing. But if you prefer to print elsewhere, no problem! We will provide you with the files you need to do so. We do not lock authors into contracts with high printing costs that force them to price their book too high.

✓ We take author empowerment and education seriously. We have created numerous resources for each step of the process, including videos, webinars, and informative articles.

- Proudly published over 4,000 books
- Google review rating of 4.5 with over 200 reviews
- A+ rating from the Better Business Bureau
- Ranked among the top 50 fastest growing companies by Canadian Business Magazine
- Named one of the *10 to Watch* companies by Douglas Magazine

“ *We create a more vibrant culture by helping people share their stories.* ”

ABOUT TELLWELL

We are an experienced and friendly team of publishing professionals who want to give authors an exceptional publishing experience. We know the industry can be confusing and overwhelming. Our consultative approach guides and empowers authors throughout the process.

Tellwell was founded in 2015 by Timothy Lindsay in Victoria, British Columbia. Lindsay started Tellwell after he noticed a gap in the assisted-self-publishing industry. The major self-publishing companies were not offering 100% net royalties, nor were they offering a personalised and transparent approach to publishing. He built a company that offered both, and the best distribution deal in the industry. Tellwell has grown into an international company, serving authors in Canada, the USA, Australia, and Europe.

TELLWELL SUCCESS STORIES



Belinda Cai, *Red Fred*

Belinda Cai draws on her inspiration as a special education teacher who has worked extensively with students with autism, students with emotional disturbances and students with behaviour disorders in her book *Red Fred*. This emotional-learning resource references different emotions, and depicts the changing of emotions and zones of self-regulation through the use of illustrations. She hopes this book will guide children to create their own toolboxes and become self-aware, resilient, and lifelong learners.

David Scott, *Stargazer*

Award-winning playwright turned novelist David Scott's love of stories stemmed from his days running his family's drive-in theatre. IndieReader rated *Stargazer* 4.4 (out of 5), calling it "a treasure chest of an autobiography for insights into 20th Century Australian culture and movie industry history." Scott has been interviewed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, *The Shepparton News*, and *One FM Sheplife*.



Namita Mahanama, *Shining the Light on PND, My Mummy After Our Baby*

Namita Mahanama draws upon her professional knowledge as well as her own first-hand experience suffering through two post-natal depressions after having both of her children. *Shining the Light on PND* was created as a survival guide by allowing the reader to see exactly how she was thinking and feeling in hope that if you recognise this in yourself or your partner, you will gain the strength to reach out for help. Her honesty and authenticity in raising awareness of the condition is refreshing and aims to create a positive change in this arena of healthcare.



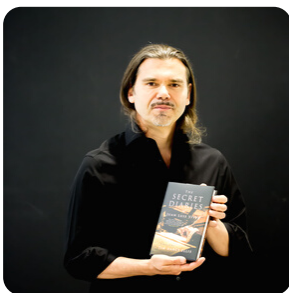
Laura Dubale, *Below the Sand*

Laura B. Dubale is a passionate educator and the owner of a cheeky German Shepherd, Mali, the inspiration behind her exciting series: *The Adventures of Mali*. A lifelong lover of children's books, Dubale saw the opportunity to portray the adventures of her mischievous pup in real-life scenarios that resonate with the reader.



Tim Darcy Ellis, *The Secret Diaries of Juan Luis Vives : A Novel*

Tim Darcy Ellis's historical fiction debut tells the story of an exiled Spanish Jew who fled Spain at the age of sixteen, and eventually made it to the English court of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Ellis's fascinating story of this Renaissance scholar appeared in the UK's *Daily Express* newspaper and on *BBC Radio* and the *English Renaissance History* podcast, among others. His book has been highly praised by BookTribke, Kirkus, BlueInk Review, Self-Publishing Review, and many others.



Dr. Monique Gliozzi, *Vestige, Hunted, Foresight, Diversity*

Psychiatrist and UWA professor by day, six-time author by night, Monique Gliozzi is known for her fast-paced, action-packed thrillers. Gliozzi has made numerous media appearances, including *CBS Radio*, *This Week in America*, *Radio Fremantle FM 107.9*, *Hollywood Book Reviews*, *Western Suburbs Weekly*, as well as multiple reader and book-review blogs.

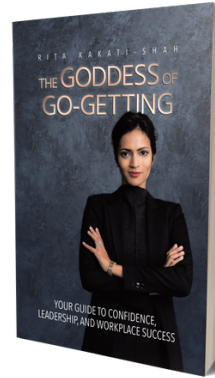




AUTHORS IN THE NEWS



DAN RUSSELL



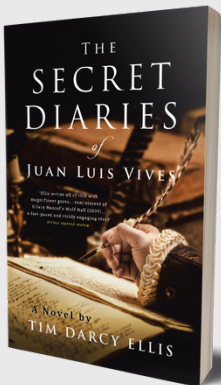
Starter Story



RITA KAKATI-SHAH



RENAISSANCE ENGLISH HISTORY PODCAST



TIM DARCY ELLIS



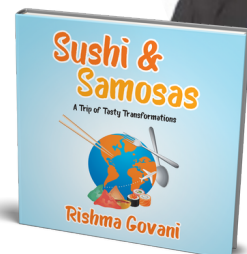
TOMMY SCHNURMACHER



JENNIFER RENIERIS



SHERYA GUPTA



RISHMA GOVANI

PUBLISHING PACKAGES



PUBLISH WITH TELLWELL

Tellwell offers four standard publishing packages for fiction and non-fiction books, and another five packages for children's books and colour books.

To customise a package to meet your specific needs, call us and speak with a publishing consultant at 1.888.415.1541.

STANDARD – \$1,899

A graphic designer will compose your book's front and back cover and lay out your interior. There are two revision rounds for each to incorporate your feedback. This package includes comprehensive paperback distribution to 40,000 booksellers worldwide.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

PROFESSIONAL – \$3,499

Included are cover design and interior layout, as well as distribution in paperback, hardcover, and the major ebook platforms. We help craft your book-marketing strategy. We'll also create a book backgrounder to help you get started!

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

ALL-INCLUSIVE – \$6,499

The All-Inclusive package takes your book to the next level by adding substantive editing and an author website. The substantive edit includes one round of content editing and one round of copy editing to enhance the quality of your manuscript. The author website helps you build an online presence, create a fanbase, and market your book.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

TRADITIONAL – \$12,999

It's called the *Traditional* package because it gives your book a similar treatment to that of a traditional publisher. This includes three rounds of editing: content, copy editing, and a post-layout proofread. Our full marketing support includes a book-marketing consultation and strategy, author website, book backgrounder, and Classic Marketing package.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)



COLOUR & CHILDREN'S BOOKS



STANDARD - \$1,899

The Standard package includes design and distribution. You'll get a book that looks great and is available in paperback format in mainstream sales channels. This package is best for people who don't need help with illustrations, editing, or publicity.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

PROFESSIONAL - \$3,399

The Professional package is perfect for authors who have their own illustrations. We provide editing services to polish your manuscript, and help with marketing your book.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

ILLUSTRATED - \$3,399

The Illustrated package takes it up a notch by offering up to eight illustrations. Your book will be available in paperback format to 40,000 booksellers and online retailers. You have the option to add hardcover, editing, or marketing support.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

ALL-INCLUSIVE - \$6,999

The All-Inclusive includes up to 16 illustrations. We design and distribute your book in paperback and hardcover format. We provide content and copy editing. Plus we develop a marketing plan, create an author website, and prepare a book backgrounder.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)

TRADITIONAL - \$9,399

The Traditional package is the all-out experience for children's book authors! It includes full editorial services, and we go the extra mile and execute the children's marketing services on your behalf.

[MORE DETAILS HERE](#)



Testimonials



Tellwell has been very professional, showing support and integrity throughout the two projects I entrusted them with. Being a new author, I was pleasantly surprised that the team allocated to me took a genuine interest in my books, even at the end of the projects.

– DR. MONIQUE GLIOZZI, **FORESIGHT, HUNTED, VESTIGE, DIVERSITY**



Tellwell's quotes were very clear. The staff were charming and accommodating for the fifteen-hour time difference and a tight deadline and skinny budget. My 500-book shipment to Australia not only arrived on time but a week early. The quality of printing and my specific paper requirement was met. Well done, Tellwell I sing your praises wherever I go and intend to print the next book with you.

– CHELINAY GATES, **LUCKY CHILD**



My experience working with Tellwell has been excellent, and I would highly recommend them to anyone else who would like to see their work in print. Each person I spoke to throughout the process was supportive and professional.

– LIBBY AGOSTINO, **ALL ABOUT DUDLEY**



I was thrilled beyond words when I saw the cover for my book. I was vague when they asked for what I actually wanted, but the fact that the designer was able to make something so magnificent from what I said was absolutely amazing. Not only were the staff very professional and helpful, but they helped me achieve my dream of publishing my book with all haste and skill.

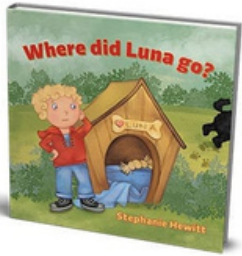
– ANDY PATMORE, **EVEN DEAD GODS DREAM, PARTS 1 & 2**



I was completely happy with Tellwell. Communication was immediate, I worked with one person for the entire process, my tentative suggestions for design were acted on quickly and surpassed my expectations, and in all categories I would give these folks a ten-out-of-ten assessment.

– W.P. PEART, **BECOMING: A NOVEL**

Testimonials



As a first-time author, I have found the process of publishing a children's book less stressful thanks to the good support and direction you get from Tellwell.

– **STEPHANIE HEWITT, *WHERE DID LUNA GO?***



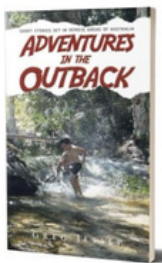
I can't recommend them enough. From first contact through to completion, Tellwell was great to work with. I appreciated the quick helpful responses to my questions—and there were plenty of them. What began as a daunting project ended with a book I am proud to make available to the world. Thanks, Tellwell.

– **JIM BEDARD, *OLD POND***



I thought when working with you guys that you were good, but I made a mistake—you guys are GREAT!!! I love the interior design . . . no, actually, I love everything, and I am very impressed by the cover. Thanks to you and the whole team. You guys made my day.

– **TYSON MUTOMBO, *SUNDJATA***



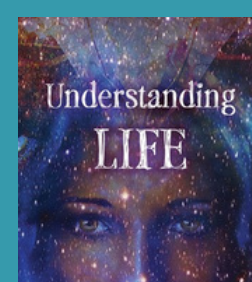
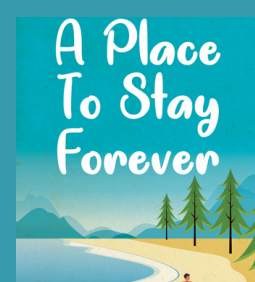
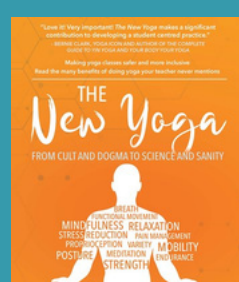
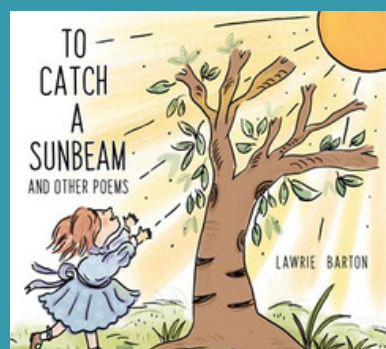
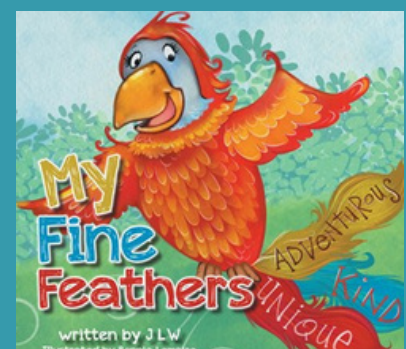
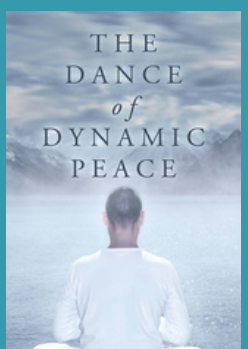
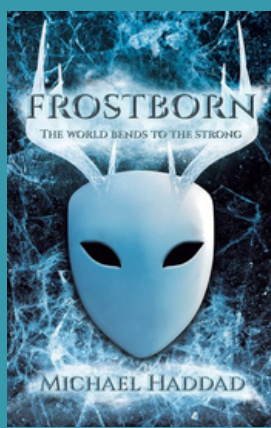
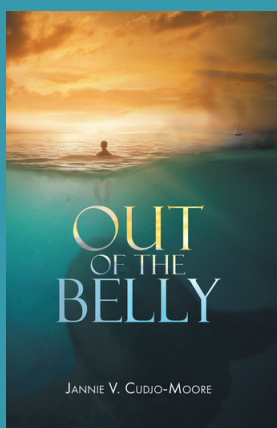
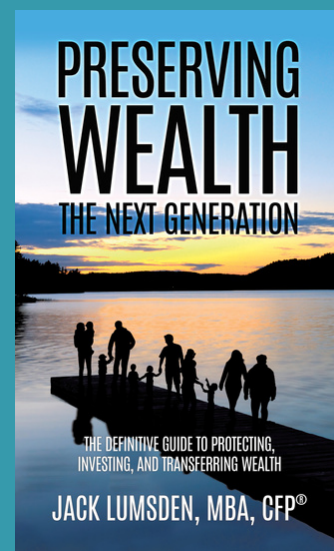
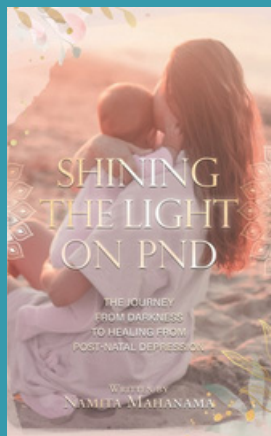
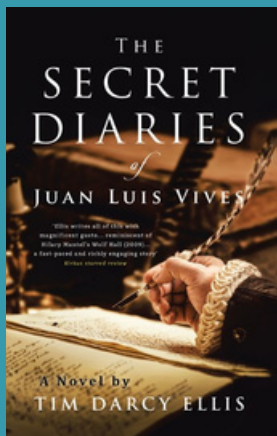
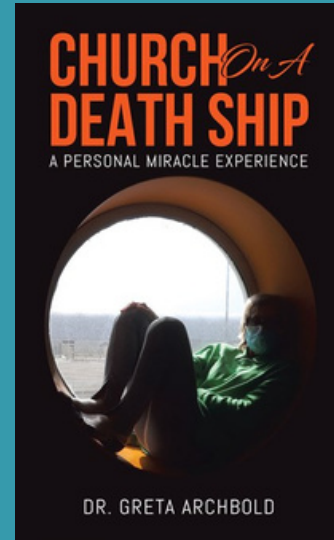
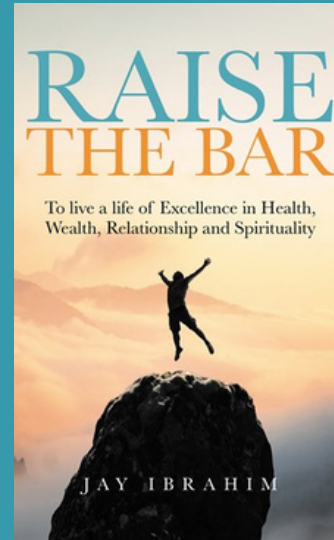
The whole experience, from initial contact through submitting my manuscript support in the revision stages to distribution has been outstanding. Every enquiry was answered promptly and suggestions were always thoughtful.

– **GREG JESSEP, *ADVENTURES IN THE OUTBACK***



Editing was fantastic. Supportive, collegial, and professional. I gained so much knowledge and felt so supported. Simon was absolutely awesome. The report I received was clear and showed a genuine interest in my work. It was like you were working "with" someone. Great work.

– **MARK ANTHONY, *LIT***



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