

The 7 Fatal Mistakes That Kill Your Book Before You Write Page One

A Guide for Experts, Entrepreneurs, and Thought Leaders Who Want to Publish Without the Pain

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Why Most Books Never Make It Past the Idea Stage

You have the expertise. You have the stories. You probably even have a drawer full of notes, voice memos, and half-finished Google Docs.

So why isn't your book written yet?

Here's what I've learned after ghostwriting books for entrepreneurs, coaches, and business owners: **the problem is almost never a lack of knowledge or writing ability.**

The problem is that you're making one (or all) of seven critical mistakes before you even start writing. These mistakes don't just slow you down. **They kill your book entirely.**

The good news? Once you know what they are, you can avoid them. Or better yet, you can work with someone who's already navigated these pitfalls dozens of times.

Let's dive in.

Mistake #1: Writing for “Everyone”

I get it. Your message could help a lot of people. Maybe it could help everyone.

But here's the brutal truth: **books written for everyone get read by no one.**

When you try to appeal to every possible reader, your message gets watered down. You end up writing in generalities instead of specifics. You avoid taking strong positions because you don't want to alienate anyone.

The result? A book that feels bland, forgettable, and irrelevant.

Real Example

I once worked with a business coach who wanted to write a book about “leadership for anyone in any industry.” Sounds inclusive, right? But when we sat down to outline, every chapter was full of vague advice that could apply to anyone from a startup founder to a middle manager at a Fortune 500 company. It had no edge, no specificity, no memorable examples.

We pivoted. Instead, we focused the book on first-time founders navigating their first year of leadership. Suddenly, every chapter had concrete scenarios, specific challenges, and actionable solutions. The book became ten times more powerful because it spoke directly to one reader's experience.

What Actually Works

Pick one person. Write for them. Not a demographic or a target market, but an actual human being with specific problems, fears, and goals.

When you write for one person, everyone who shares those problems will feel like you're speaking directly to them. That's when your book becomes powerful.

Action Step

Right now, describe your ideal reader in one paragraph. Give them a name. What do they do? What keeps them up at night? What have they already tried that didn't work? Get specific enough that you could spot them in a coffee shop.

“But what if I alienate potential readers?”

You will. And that's exactly the point. The readers you "lose" by being specific were never going to buy your book anyway because generic advice doesn't compel anyone to act. The readers you gain will be deeply loyal because they'll feel like you wrote the book specifically for them.

The Ghostwriter Advantage

A good ghostwriter will push you to get specific about your reader, even when it feels uncomfortable. We know that **narrow beats broad every single time**.

Mistake #2: Starting Without a Structure

Most people think writing a book means sitting down and starting on page one.

That's like building a house by nailing boards together and hoping it turns into a bedroom.

Without a clear structure, you'll write yourself into corners. You'll repeat yourself without realizing it. You'll get 20,000 words in and have no idea where you're going next.

Then you'll quit.

Real Example

A client came to me with 30,000 words of content she'd written over six months. She was stuck and frustrated. When I read through it, I discovered she'd explained the same concept four different times in four different chapters because she had no outline guiding her. She was writing in circles.

We stopped everything and built a structure first. We mapped out exactly what each chapter needed to accomplish and how they'd build on each other. Once she could see the roadmap, the writing became effortless. She finished the remaining 40,000 words in eight weeks.

What Actually Works

Outline your book before you write a single sentence of the actual manuscript. Know what each chapter accomplishes. Understand how the pieces fit together.

Think of your outline as a roadmap. You wouldn't drive cross-country without one, and you shouldn't write a book without one either.

Action Step

Open a blank document and write down 7-12 chapter titles. Under each one, write 2-3 bullet points describing what that chapter will teach or accomplish. Don't write the actual content yet. Just map the journey your reader will take from beginning to end.

“But won’t an outline kill my creativity?”

No. It frees it. When you know where you're going, you can focus on writing well instead of figuring out what comes next. You can be creative within the structure, not despite it. Every building needs a frame, but that doesn't make architecture boring.

The Ghostwriter Advantage

We build the structure for you. We take everything in your head (and in those scattered notes) and organize it into a logical flow that keeps readers engaged from start to finish.

Mistake #3: Trying to Sound Like Someone You're Not

I can spot this mistake from a mile away.

You read a few bestsellers in your genre. You loved the author's voice. So you try to write like them.

Or worse, you try to write like you think a "real author" should sound. Formal. Academic. Overly polished.

Here's what happens: your writing feels stiff and unnatural. It doesn't sound like you. And readers can tell.

Real Example

I worked with a marketing consultant who sent me his first attempt at a chapter. It was full of sentences like "One must endeavor to ascertain the optimal methodology for audience segmentation." When we hopped on a call to discuss his ideas, he said things like "You gotta figure out who you're actually talking to, right?"

Night and day difference.

I told him to forget everything he thought he knew about "book writing" and just talk to me like he'd talk to a client. We recorded our conversation, I transcribed it, and that became the foundation of his book. Readers loved it because it felt like he was sitting across the table from them.

What Actually Works

Write like you talk. Use the same words, the same rhythm, the same personality that makes you compelling in person.

Your voice is what makes your book different from the thousands of others on the same topic. Don't sand it down trying to sound "professional."

Action Step

Record yourself explaining one of your core concepts to a friend or colleague (or just to your phone). Listen back. Notice the words you use, how you structure your explanations, where you get animated. That's your voice. Now write like that.

"But won't casual language make me seem less credible?"

Only if you confuse “conversational” with “unprofessional.” You can be clear, authoritative, and credible while still sounding human. In fact, the most successful business books today are the ones that ditch the corporate jargon and speak plainly. Readers trust authenticity more than formality.

The Ghostwriter Advantage

Our entire job is capturing your authentic voice. We listen to how you explain things, what words you use, where you get excited. Then we translate that onto the page so readers feel like they’re having a conversation with you.

Mistake #4: Treating Your Book Like a Brain Dump

You have a lot to say. I know.

But your book isn't a place to include every single thing you've ever learned about your topic. It's not a memoir of your entire career or a comprehensive encyclopedia of your field.

When you try to cram everything in, your book becomes overwhelming. Readers don't know what to focus on. They can't see the through-line.

Real Example

An executive coach wanted to write about leadership development. In his outline, he had chapters on communication, delegation, conflict resolution, time management, emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, team building, performance reviews, hiring, firing, budgeting, and personal wellness.

That's not a book. That's twelve books.

We narrowed it down to one core transformation: helping new executives transition from "doer" to "leader" in their first 90 days. Suddenly, we knew exactly what to include and what to save for the next book. The result was focused, actionable, and actually finishable.

What Actually Works

Your book should have one core message or transformation. Everything else is supporting evidence.

Ask yourself: What's the one thing I want readers to know, believe, or do after reading this book? Then ruthlessly cut anything that doesn't serve that goal.

Action Step

Complete this sentence: "After reading my book, readers will be able to

_____."

If you can't finish that sentence in ten words or less, your book concept is too broad. Narrow it until you can.

"But I have so much valuable information to share!"

You do. And you can share it in blog posts, courses, workshops, podcasts, and yes, other books. But trying to fit everything into one book dilutes your message and exhausts your reader. One powerful idea executed well will always beat ten good ideas crammed together.

The Ghostwriter Advantage

We're experts at knowing what to keep and what to cut. We've seen enough books to know when something is essential insight and when it's just noise. We protect your reader's attention like it's gold.

Mistake #5: Ignoring the Content You Already Have

You probably have more book material than you realize.

How many podcast episodes have you recorded? How many blog posts have you written? How many client emails have you sent explaining your process?

Most entrepreneurs I work with are sitting on 50,000+ words of existing content. They just don't realize it can become a book.

Real Example

A client told me she had “no idea where to start” with her book. I asked her to send me everything she’d ever written about her topic. She sent me:

- 47 blog posts
- 12 LinkedIn articles
- 23 podcast episode transcripts
- Dozens of client onboarding emails

We had over 80,000 words of raw material. In three months, we turned it into a 55,000-word book. She didn’t have a content problem. She had an organization problem.

What Actually Works

Audit what you already have. Your social media posts, your email newsletters, your presentation slides, your coaching session transcripts.

A huge chunk of your book is already written. It just needs to be organized, refined, and shaped into a cohesive narrative.

Action Step

Spend 30 minutes gathering every piece of content you’ve created on your book topic. Blog posts, videos, podcasts, social media, emails to clients. Put it all in one folder. You’ll be shocked at how much you already have.

“But won’t that make my book feel like recycled content?”

Not if it’s done right. Repurposing doesn’t mean copy-pasting. It means taking your best ideas from scattered places and weaving them into a cohesive, intentional

narrative. Readers won't know (or care) that you've said some of these things before. They'll just appreciate that everything they need is in one place.

The Ghostwriter Advantage

We know how to take your existing content and transform it into something that feels fresh and intentional, not recycled. We find the gold in what you've already created and build around it.

Mistake #6: Perfectionism That Paralyzes

Let me guess: you've rewritten your first chapter seventeen times and it's still not "ready."

Or you can't start writing because you haven't figured out the perfect title yet.

Or you're waiting until you have a completely clear six-month block of time with zero distractions.

Here's the truth: **perfectionism isn't protecting your book's quality. It's preventing your book from existing.**

Real Example

I had a client who spent eight months "preparing" to write his book. She read every book on writing. She took courses. She bought expensive software. She created the perfect writing space in her home office.

But she never actually wrote.

When we started working together, I gave her one rule: write badly on purpose.

Her first draft didn't need to be good. It just needed to exist. Within six weeks, he had a complete manuscript. Was it rough? Absolutely. But you can't edit a blank page. Three months later, after revisions, she had a published book.

What Actually Works

Done is better than perfect. Your first draft is supposed to be messy. That's what editing is for.

Give yourself permission to write badly. Get the ideas out. You can polish them later.

Action Step

Set a timer for 20 minutes and write one section of your book with zero editing. Don't reread what you've written. Don't fix typos. Just get words on the page. You'll be amazed at how much progress you can make when you stop judging yourself.

"But what if my writing isn't good enough?"

It won't be. Not in the first draft. That's completely normal and expected. Even professional writers produce terrible first drafts. The difference is they keep going anyway because they know the real writing happens in the revision. Your job in the first draft is just to get your ideas down. Quality comes later.

The Ghostwriter Advantage

You don't have to write a messy first draft because we do it for you. You just need to share your ideas, stories, and expertise. We handle turning that into actual chapters. No perfectionism required on your end.

Mistake #7: Going It Alone When You Don't Have To

Writing a book is hard.

It takes time, focus, skill, and persistence. It requires you to be a writer, an editor, a project manager, and a strategist all at once.

But here's the thing: **you don't have to do it alone.**

You wouldn't do your own legal work or build your own website from scratch (okay, maybe you would, but you shouldn't). So why are you trying to write your own book when there are professionals who do this for a living?

Real Example

A financial advisor spent two years trying to write his book. He'd write on weekends when he had energy. He'd get a few chapters done, then life would get busy and he wouldn't touch it for months. He'd come back and hate what he'd written, so he'd start over.

Two years. Zero finished books.

When he hired me, we finished his book in four months. Not because I'm magic, but because writing books is what I do every single day. I know the process. I know the pitfalls. I know how to keep momentum going even when motivation fades.

He got his time back and his book done.

What Actually Works

Recognize what you're good at and what you're not. Your zone of genius is your expertise, your stories, your insights. Writing might not be.

That's okay. You can hire someone to handle the writing while you focus on what you do best.

Action Step

Calculate how many hours you've spent trying to write your book in the past year. Multiply that by your hourly rate. Now ask yourself: would it have been worth investing that amount to have a finished book right now instead of still being stuck?

“But isn't hiring a ghostwriter expensive?”

It can be. But so is spending two years of your life on a book that never gets finished. So is missing out on the speaking opportunities, client credibility, and business growth that a published book creates. When you factor in opportunity cost, going it alone is often far more expensive than hiring help.

The Ghostwriter Advantage

We take the entire writing burden off your plate. You show up for conversations, share your knowledge, and review drafts. We do everything else. Your book gets written without you having to become a writer.

What Happens Next?

Now you know the seven mistakes that kill most books before they start.

You have two options.

Option one: Avoid these mistakes on your own. Use this guide as your roadmap. Be disciplined about structure, audience, and voice. Carve out the time and do the work.

Option two: Work with someone who's already navigated these pitfalls fifty times over.

I'm Anya, and I ghostwrite books for entrepreneurs and experts who want to publish without doing the writing themselves. I handle everything from structure to final manuscript so you can focus on what you do best.

If you're ready to get your book written without sacrificing your time, sanity, or voice, let's talk.

Next steps:

- Connect with me on LinkedIn:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/authoranyabosnjak/>
- Visit my website: <https://anyabosnjak-ghostwriter.com/>
- Email me directly: authoranyabosnjak@gmail.com

Your book doesn't have to be hard. It just has to get done.

Let's make it happen.