



## So You Want to Write a Book ...

Alex Mitchell helps people to get their book from an idea to a reality.

Here Alex shares some insights for budding authors.

It's often said that 80% of people want to write a book. But of those that start, only 20% actually finish. This certainly shows us something – writing a book is a great idea, but not as easy as it first looks.

I'm a book coach and editor, and every day I help aspiring authors who have discovered that writing your first book is a pretty steep learning curve. What seems like a purely creative process actually requires a lot of planning and thought.

There needs to be a clear structure, a mould for your creative outpourings to flow into. Otherwise, like preparing a cake without a cake tin, you end up with some fabulous ingredients in a big messy pile on the oven floor. It's a waste of your precious time, energy and creativity.

The good news is that you can avoid this, and get back on track if it happens, by using three powerful questions. When you sit down and really work through these questions, the power behind them becomes clear.

### Why are you writing?

There are lots of reasons to write a book, and none of them are right or wrong. You don't need to tell anyone, so you can be honest.

The reasons why you are writing are your inner goals, and as with all goals, if you aren't clear what they are, you have a pretty slim chance of reaching them.

### Here are a couple of common reasons:

You have a burning desire to share a message that will help people

You want to raise your public profile and be seen as an expert

You want to create a keepsake for your family

You want to make money and be a bestselling author

You feel you have a talent and want to create something beautiful

You want to open up a new avenue for your teachings, with a view to bringing in lots of paying clients.

These ideas are just the tip of the iceberg. You may have other reasons, you may resonate with many varying, and even conflicting reasons. Decide what you really want from this, as the answer will direct the way you structure your book, the way you have it edited, the production style you use and your marketing plan. A book designed as a family keepsake will follow a completely different preparation and production process to one that is designed to showcase your expertise and propel you forward in your career.

### Who is your reader?

A little tip – if you are tempted to say ‘everyone’, remember that ‘everyone’ has not been the reader of any single book. Perhaps you feel that everyone SHOULD read what you have to say, but the reality is that they won’t. People will read what they want, not what you believe they need.

The opposite approach is actually more effective. The more you can niche down who your reader is, the higher your chance of finding a place in the market. If you speak clearly to one group, others will hear you as well. If you speak in a general overview, no one is engaged.

Alex Mitchell conducts writers’ workshops at her inspirational location in the Glasshouse Mountains. All photos



Once you have your ideal reader worked out, knowing their gender, age, socio-economic status, interests and fears, you can write to them. You can imagine them sitting in front of you, and so accurately choose your voice, tone, complexity of language, depth of detail and even what to include and what to leave out, based on what that person is interested in.

What a powerful self editing tool!

### What are you trying to say?

As a new author, it's tempting to share all your ideas in your first book. However the most successful books have one central message, and say it well. Think about your why question.

If you are writing a how-to book, will it cover every step from start to finish or just one aspect of the journey? Which gems of writing brilliance can be kept for book two, or your blog, or website?

Sometimes the answers to these questions can raise further questions and sometimes they will even result in a change of direction in your writing. Isn't it better to know these answers now, rather than once you have finished your manuscript and handed it to your editor? Take some time to reflect and to plan. If you need a little help to find your way, get in touch and we can do it together.



*Alex Mitchell is an independent book coach and editor based on a pineapple farm on the Sunshine Coast. She has helped hundreds of local and interstate authors to achieve their book publishing dreams.*

*Alex has a reputation for freely sharing her extensive knowledge of the book planning and publishing process in a down to earth style. She offers one to one coaching, small group author workshops and Skype consultations.*

*Visit [www.AuthorSupportServices.com](http://www.AuthorSupportServices.com) to find out how Alex can help you write the book you imagined.*