

Local Authors Reveal Their Secrets of Success

Excerpt from Article by Linda Sechrist

Originally appearing in *Natural Awakenings*, Collier/Lee Counties Edition

December 2007

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How they Navigate the World of Book Publishing

by Linda Sechrist

That most quoted of English writers, Samuel Johnson [1709-1784], aptly defined a writer's powers when he declared, "The two most engaging powers of an author are to make new things familiar and familiar things new." Even Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803-1882], whose timeless wisdom still attracts readers, confessed that all his "best thoughts were stolen by the ancients."

While it is true that few new thoughts ever make their way from pen to paper, still each year millions of recycled words make it into print, creatively strung together by writers seeking to describe and express the facts, foibles and aspirations of the human condition.

For their part, readers continue to yearn for gifted storytellers capable of weaving fresh tales in which they can lose or find themselves. The Association of American University Presses points to recent proof of this voracious appetite by booklovers who keep U.S. book publishers in the business of printing an average of 172,000 titles annually.

Because 78 percent of today's new titles now come from small self-publishing companies, the playing field is now more level for increasing numbers of first-time authors eager to enter the writing game. The most ambitious embark on what some have described as a marathon baseball game without a seventh inning stretch.

Natural Awakenings got curious about the sustaining inspiration, stamina and self-motivation required to take a stand and hit a home run at today's publishing plate. So we queried 11 local book authors about their experiences. Here's a peek at their surprising stories.

On Catalysts

According to the Authors Guild, every successful nonfiction book sells at least 7,500 copies. Period. That qualifies **Lynda Meyerholz**, a self-published author and licensed mental health counselor in Estero, as a bona fide success. Now in its fifth printing, her first book, ***Codependency Sucks***, continues to be the base of her busy professional practice supported by her second book, ***Recovering from Childhood in America***.

Meyerholz relates how in penning her first early pages she was following a suggestion made by the director of a treatment center where she had checked herself in 25 years ago. As she made her way through the recovery and writing processes, she observed how everything fell into place for her. Asking that Spirit inspire and lead, Meyerholz reports that, "Everything I needed was provided, including the advantage of working with online booksellers."

It turns out that many self-published authors find they owe a huge debt to Internet booksellers. Of course, whether or not a book sells depends on the quality of its message.

For **Chalmers Brothers** of Naples, personal growth workshops in the 1980s and a 1995 personal coaching certification were the spurs under his personal writing saddle. Though he didn't capture on computer the golden nuggets of wisdom from his consulting and coaching experiences until 2001, he went on to

