



30-Day Book Writing Bookcamp!

Week 3: Planning Your Book Chapters for Maximum Impact



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30-Day Book Writing Bookcamp – Week 3

It's time to talk about your book structure. A chapter is not just a blob of writing that has an arbitrary cut-off point. Nor is it “just” a step. A chapter is a way of inspiring your reader to continue on throughout the whole book without overwhelming her with a long stream of prose.

Chapters help readers stay organized in their perceptions. Our brains naturally like to “sort” things, no matter what personality type we have been labelled (or labelled ourselves). Chapters create clarity and interest, and allow readers to easily assimilate and be impacted by points we wish to stress.

Many first-time authors don't really understand the function of book chapters, hence so many “complete” story chapters, where the author's main chapter topic is dealt with in its entirety. You might think that is a good thing to go full-circle within a chapter, if you've never written a book before.

But, most times, it's not.

Step One: Understanding How Chapters Work—and How to Effectively Use Them

Like books, chapters have beginnings, middles and ends. In a self-help book, you do want to make a statement with your beginning, present your information during the middle section... but instead of ending with the end (wrapping up your chapter topic in a neat little package that circles back to and proves your beginning statement) you want to finish by leading your reader firmly to the next chapter—and preparing them for it.

Think of your chapter ending as a **call-to-action**. You're going to tell your reader what you want them to do next—that is, read on to the next chapter—and throw them an **incentive** that will make them eager to do so.



So, your chapter flow will look something like this:

1. You open with a premise or statement that sets your reader up to expect your topic—and any chapter resolution promised in that statement.

Example:

Let's talk about table settings...

2. Your middle—all the content in between the beginning and the end—then provides a pleasing mix of anecdote and information (with anecdotes being few and short—just enough to “show” not tell—keeping your information concise, clear, lively, active and progressive)
3. Next, provide a **wrap statement** that brings the reader, full-circle, back to your opening statement.

Example:

Knowing the proper way to set a table for the most complex state dinner will give you the confidence to know when to break rules—and how to do so with style!

4. Finish with a **teaser** and **call-to-action** that makes the reader anxious or eager to continue reading through to the next chapter.



Example:

This will serve you well in North American and most European dining circles—but what if you are presenting a full-course Japanese meal? And—let's pile on the pressure—what if your guests are newly-arrived from Japan, don't speak English and have never been outside the country before?

Our next chapter will be your best friend! You need to know not only the correct place settings, utensils and the order in which to serve your authentic Japanese meal, but also the reasons behind these customs.

Knowing the **logic** will help you remember the **order**—so read on!

You can make this teaser and call-to-action as simple or conversational as you like. Instead of the above, you could choose instead to put the following after your “wrap” paragraph:

NEXT: Chapter Six—Japanese Customs and Cutlery

In a book where you are creating non-sequential chapters (**independent** but related modules, offering a variety of choices, as opposed to a necessary progression) using a simple CTA like the one immediately above gives the reader the opportunity to decide whether or not she actually wants or needs to read up on Japanese Customs and Cutlery. If your particular reader is a busy person on an immediate-fulfillment mission, she will appreciate this. How you handle your chapter endings depends on your book's purpose, type and unique readership, as well as on its tone and voice. But take the time to get to **know what the rules are** before you keep, bend or ignore them.



Step Two: Create Flow and Impulsion from Chapter to Chapter

You know what “flow” is, but let’s clarify “impulsion”.

The best way to describe impulsion is to use a show jumping metaphor as an example...

A horse that is rushing at its fences, head stuck out, is straining. He may look dashing and exciting to non-riders, but expert riders know before this particular horse ever takes a jump that it is liable to refuse the jump, crash into it or knock the poles down—because it is ahead of its center of gravity and **there is not enough driving power** (impulsion) from its hind quarters to provide the necessary flow and spring.

It is also unbalanced—meaning the rider will have difficulty controlling it. It has gotten “ahead of the bit” and the horse is in control (and will be all over the place).

If your horse is in control, you will be trying to keep up, and that’s where tangents start appearing, and you start forgetting the points you are making in your race to “hang on”.

Impulsion in writing comes from your well-planned outline and your clear vision of what point needs to come next.

- If you are working only from a book topic, your horse is definitely ahead of the bit.
- If you are working from an outline that consists of a chapter topic, you’ll rush in and out of control: You’ll find yourself properly gathered to propel yourself over the next jump—and dashing madly, behind the bit, for the one after that.



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- If you are working from an outline that consists of a chapter topic plus carefully-chosen, progress points outlining what needs to happen next, your horse will be fully under control, with adequate impulsion.

In plain English, each well-chosen point will “drive” your narrative forward naturally and logically into the next point.

To add an even more refined level of impulsion, make a note within each chapter outline as to what the big take-away is for each chapter.

Here's an example of these principles in motion:

Chapter Four: Thinking Like your Protagonists

- ✓ Importance of writing a detailed bio and background for each protagonist
- ✓ Write scenes in the first person before writing them in the third person
- ✓ Keep each protagonist's unique personality in mind and write each event from that particular protagonist's point of view
- ✓ Mix of introspection and action (how it cements personality)
- ✓ The “Mary Sue” phenomenon—where your protagonists are all clones of you—and how to avoid that trap
- ✓ Using the Myers-Briggs free personality test to confirm each protagonist's character—and give you a comprehensive summary of their individual personality type

TAKE-AWAY: Myers-Briggs as a unique new tool for establishing your protagonist's characters

Move these to “Chapter Five: Character Exercises”

? Separate chapter?

And do your best to ensure good flow that leads the reader naturally from one chapter to the next. Two ways to do this:

- When writing your first draft, don't go back to edit. Keep the "story" moving forward
- Always keep at the forefront of your mind that the reader should want to know "what happens next"

Step Three: Isolating Ideas, Principles and Actions

When writing your outlines, understand that they won't be perfect outlines immediately. It will be—as with everything else in writing—a process. You will create an outline, realize you've omitted a key point on a chapter, insert it then notice that:

- Another point needs to be given a chapter of its own
- Yet another point needs to be moved to a different chapter
- A final point needs to be deleted altogether

How do you decide which point needs which treatment? Let's turn again to our previous example of an outline in progress:



Chapter Four: Thinking Like your Protagonists

- ✓ Importance of writing a detailed bio and background for each protagonist
- ✓ ~~Write scenes in the first person before writing them in the third person~~
- ✓ ~~Keep each protagonist's unique personality in mind and write each event from that particular protagonist's point of view~~
- ✓ Mix of introspection and action (how it cements personality)
- ✓ The "Mary Sue" phenomenon—where your protagonists are all clones of you—and how to avoid that trap
- ✓ Using the Myers-Briggs free personality test to confirm each protagonist's character—and give you a comprehensive summary of their individual personality type

Move these to
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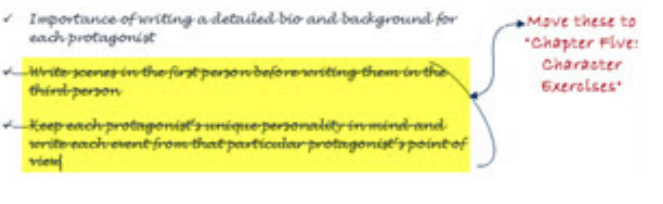
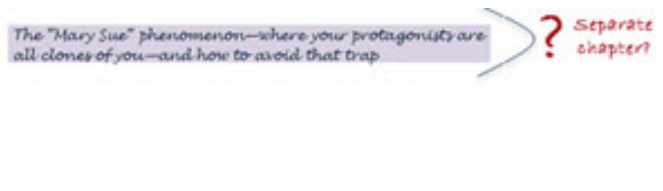

TAKE-AWAY: Myers-Briggs as a unique new tool for establishing your protagonists' characters

Start with your take-away, which often coincides with the **main chapter topic** (which is itself a sub-topic of your **main book topic or theme**). Everything in the chapter should deal exclusively with the chapter topic, but lead up to the take-away point.

So in the example above, the main topic is "Thinking Like your Protagonist": Your take-away is the little-used-or-known tool for creating uncannily accurate psychological profiles.

Anything that does not directly deal with "thinking like your protagonist" needs to be removed—but where to?



<p>If you are going to deal with this point in another chapter, move it to that more appropriate chapter.</p>	
<p>If it is an idea that could generate several points of its own, move it to a new chapter.</p>	
<p>If it is completely irrelevant to the CHAPTER topic AND book angle, remove it altogether</p>	

 = A traditional editor's symbol for "delete"

When isolating different types of writing, it also helps to know what those components are. Most self-help books contain more than one of the following types of writing:

- Story (anecdote, parable, metaphorical example)
- Action step (instructions, commands, directions)
- Narrative (straight prose)

In addition, **each paragraph should have one single point.**

When writing self-help books, the shorter the paragraph, the better.

Bullet points, screenshots and diagrams can be helpful too in getting your point across and increasing reader clarity.

Breaking things down into “steps” is a great way to present sequential **actions** you want your reader to take. And just like your book or chapter, your paragraphs need a beginning, middle and end. This may sound obvious, but many people struggle with when to break paragraphs into new ones.

And, now that you know all that—don’t overthink the structure when writing! Concentrate on your story and message. Let the “story” flow spontaneously. You’ll find that if you’re aware of it, structuring will come naturally.

Step Four: That All-important First Chapter and Hook

Don’t break your brain, when trying to come up with that dynamic, attention-grabbing opening. Chances are you will end up completely changing your opening when you reach the editing stage anyway. Why? Because once your book is well under way, your true opening hook will become magically clear to you. It may be halfway down your first-draft first page or it may be two pages in. You may scrap the entire first chapter—but it will become clear as your book takes on a life of its own. (The important thing? Just **start writing your book!**)

That being said, when it’s time to finalize your book opening, take a tip from successful fiction writers and **start with the action**. Throw your reader off the train. Take her by surprise. Grab her by the eyeballs.

Little did I know, that sultry Wednesday in July, 2005, that by the end of the day, I would be a thousand dollars richer. I was a single mom with a three-year-old daughter, trying to make ends meet as a waitress and living in my parents’ basement (along with a furnace that made me dream of subway trains going off the rails). So did I win a lottery or something?

Just make sure **your ideal reader** will empathize with and relate to your first line and first paragraph.

Ask yourself: “**Why will she care?**”



With our particular sample paragraph, the answer is that...

- A single mom also living with relatives under less than ideal conditions and barely making ends meet will care. She will identify and empathize with your story.
- A male truck driver interested in making money gambling, who is single with no children and who has a hefty annual income, plus investments, will not care

Your book title will do much the same as your opening paragraph: It will **hook your ideal reader** and **repel the wrong one**.

The Single Mom's Guide to Freedom: *How to Bring Cash in Quickly and Get Out of Your Parents' Basement*

...is NOT going to attract your male, childless trucker whose solitary passion is gambling.

In fact, he's not going to be looking even in the same section. (That is why it's also important to place your book in the right sub-category, as well as main category—so it will be found by the right reader.)

Every paragraph has to **advance the action or the story**. For example, if you're writing an inspirational memoir, it has to make the reader want to keep reading, to find out what happens and how it ends. If you're writing a "how-to book", each step has to logically follow the previous one, until your promise is fulfilled—but it has to make it sound excitingly easy for your reader.



If your sub-title is “How to Make a Lace Doily Using Kitchen String” your book should end **when the promise is fulfilled** (when your reader is happily holding up her completed kitchen-string lace doily).

Resist the urge to continue on and give the History of Lace Doilies. Weave that into your backstory or prologue, well before the end. Or insert it after your final call to action, on a separate page as an appendix only for those truly interested.

Step Five: Where to Put those Calls-to-action—and When to Insert One

If you want to give a call-to-action, that’s a different story altogether. It’s only logical to put your call-to-action at the end of your book—but do separate it from your body text (i.e., leave a gap of white space between your actual end and your CTA). Make it visually different too so that it stands out, as Jim Edwards does at the end of his book, [How To Write and Publish Ebooks: The Top 20 Questions Every Ebook Author Needs To Ask](#).

Bottom line: as I stated before, you CAN make money with free ebooks, but it’s not a cakewalk. You need a strategy and you need to take action in order for this tactic to work. But, once you get your offer nailed and your distribution channels figured out, this can turn into a VERY profitable source of customers and lead to some great viral pass-along as friends tell friends about the great free ebook they just found!

More Information

If you liked this Kindle Book then you’ll LOVE this! Why? Because if you really want to sell ebooks for HUGE profit margins, this is what the top ebook authors do <http://7dayebook.com/kindle-ebook-in-7-days/>

You can put your CTA in your final sentence, but do this in a simple and direct manner, as Dr. Mike Moreno does in his book, [The 17-Day Diet](#).



Keep those cards and letters coming ... and visit me on the 17 Day website, www.the17daydiet.com, for more help and advice on how to live the diet and stay healthy and fit.

If you think that your CTA should only be placed at the end of the book, however, you are blowing amazing opportunities. CTAs should be spaced out at strategic points all through your book. For example...

- Before the body content and "action" begins
- When you mention an upsell (e.g., your coaching packages or closed, paid Groups)
- In appendices
- At the conclusions of chapters
- At the conclusion of major steps or points
- Whenever you feel a reader may need background information or instructions that can be found elsewhere (e.g., on your website)
- On your "Resources" page at the end of the book

In fact—anywhere there is a logical opportunity to place a CTA that will generate:

- Help for the reader
- More sales for you
- More publicity for you



- Publicity for your Joint Venture partner(s) or interviewees
- Sign-ups to my list

Two final points about CTAs:

- CTAs included at the beginning or during the body content of your book should not take your reader **away from your book**. (Put these types of CTAs at the END, in an appendix.)
- They should tell the reader **what to do next**—and why they might want to do it.

The biggest sin, however, is not to include CTAs at all!

Step Six: How to Leave Readers Satisfied, Joyful—but Wanting More

If you have paid attention to the steps in weeks 1, 2 and 3 of this 30-Day Book Writing Bookcamp, you are already well on your way to knowing how to leave your readers satisfied, joyful and wanting more. But let's stress once again—the real key to achieving this is to **stop exactly when you have fulfilled the book's promise**.

If you want them to want more, however, let them know that **more is available**.

- Invite readers to follow you on your blog or website (and offer a juicy incentive)
- Reference your programs and other products as opportunities naturally allow
- Have products ready for all levels of potential or current clients, including:
 - Coaching packages



- D-I-Y workshops
 - Self-study courses
 - More books
 - Accompanying workbooks, templates, cheat sheets, checklists, etc.
 - Live events
 - Coaching packages
 - Special deals or coupons for book purchasers
- List your other products programs and groups at the end of your book
 - Give them blatant invitations—"Follow me on Facebook" (with a link to your Page)
 - Reassure them you are there to help as they progress beyond the book's journey
 - Tell readers how to contact you (not just where, but exactly **how** to do so)
 - Recommend your next book—and have it ready
 - Keep writing! (Regularly! Schedule it as part of every workday!)

These are all great tactics, but they are, in the end, just tactics. The real way to make readers want more is to be genuinely passionate and enthusiastic about helping them and about sharing your stories, methods and insights.



APPENDIX A: ACTION PLAN - CREATING CALL-TO-ACTIONS

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Your Company Name/Title_____

Tagline: _____

Date: _____

Complete this action plan to ensure you place more than one CTA in strategic places within (or after) your book.

ACTION PLAN: CREATING YOUR CALL-TO-ACTIONS

At the beginning of my book:

Sign up to my list

Download companion material (e.g., free worksheet)

Join a Group or Forum

Within the body content of my book:

Related product or book that is better-suited than the present book for any reader who is about to lose interest

At the end of my book:

Invite readers to follow

Invite readers to share

Invite readers to check out my upsell

Invite readers to sign up

Link to my review page

Ask yourself these questions:

- Is this the most logical and natural place for this CTA—or am I “forcing” it?
- Will this CTA take my reader away from my book?
- If so, is that desirable at this point?

Essential CTAs Every Book Should Have

My essential CTAs:

(Prepare code and URL, as well as CTA text. Have them ready to insert in advance, when you are writing.)

Follow me on
social media

Sign up for my list

Share this book
with your friends

Leave reviews on
platforms (e.g.,
Amazon,
Goodreads)



Follow me on social media CTA:

Sign up for my list CTA:

Share this book if you loved it CTA:



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Please leave a review CTA:

On Amazon:

On Goodreads:

Other platform:

CTAs to upsells and other books, packages and products:

1.

2.

3.



EXERCISES: LOOSENING UP AND STARTING YOUR STORY

1. Write three different opening paragraphs for your book. Start with action. Put your reader right in the moment.

Version 1



Version 2

Version 3



2. Write **six different opening sentences** for each of these three alternate beginnings. (Choose sentences already contained in the opening paragraphs or write new ones.)

Now re-read what you've written and **copy the opening hook and paragraph you like best** out of these exercises into your fresh, new book file. Start writing! Enjoy! 😊

APPENDIX B: CHECKLIST

- I understand that book chapters help readers (and authors):
 - Organize their perceptions
 - Continue on to find out “what happens next” till readers reach the final promise/resolution
 - Assimilate information more easily
 - Have specific structure components
- I understand that chapters are a microcosm of the book in which they are contained; each having a beginning, a middle and an end
- I understand that chapters are often most effective when the conclusion of the chapter involves an invitation and incentive to read the next chapter
- I am opening each chapter with a statement or premise that sets my reader up to expect the chapter topic—and any promise made in the opening
- I aim to provide a dynamic and pleasing mix of different chapter components (e.g., narrative, anecdote, instruction, etc.)
- My title gives me and my book a strong, clear identity and my sub-title spells out my book’s promise
- I am working from an outline that consists of a chapter topic plus carefully-chosen, progress points outlining what needs to happen next—not just a book topic or chapter topic alone
- I am making sure each well-chosen point drives my narrative forward
- I have noted the big take-away for each individual chapter




- I am resisting the temptation to constantly go back and edit
- I am focusing on telling my story in one draft before returning to do any editing
- I am keeping the story moving forward
- I am keeping in mind that my reader should want to know “what happens next”
- I understand outlining is a process, and that I should go back over my outline when ready to write, to analyze whether or not:
 - Certain points need to be given a chapter of their own
 - Other points need to be moved to a different chapter
 - Other points need to be deleted
- Every point in my chapter deals with or relates directly to the chapter topic and/or take-away
- Each paragraph has one single point
- I am using visual aids to help with message clarity, including:
 - Bullet points
 - Screenshots
 - Diagrams
 - Photos
 - White Space
 - Steps
 - Lists

- I am not overthinking my structure, but now that I am aware of structure, I am allowing my story to flow smoothly and naturally—while working closely from my revised outline
- I understand that I should and probably will change my opening hook and paragraphs after the first draft is completed. For now, I am focusing on just getting started—and writing!
- I am doing my best to start with an active, dynamic opening sentence/paragraph/scenario that will instantly drag my reader in.
- As I write new points, I am getting into the habit of asking myself “why will my reader care?”
- I am keeping my Reader bio in mind as I write (focusing on that specific reader)
- I understand that I should not strive to make everyone care—just my ideal reader
- My book title and sub-title directly reflect the book's tone and content, and is geared to attract my ideal reader
- Every paragraph advances the story and/or the book goal, until it has fulfilled the book's sub-title promise
- I have ended the book when my book promise has been fulfilled—and no later
- I am putting extra related but non-story-advancing information on appendix-type pages or working them into my “story” earlier (or in the prologue/acknowledgements/other front-level pages)
- I understand that I should end my book with a strong, cheerful, direct call-to-action

- I understand that I should place more than one CTA at several natural points within the body text of my book
- I am ensuring that CTAs do not take people out of my book before they have finished reading it—except to my own:
 - Sign-up page
 - Upsells
 - Offers
- I am putting all CTAs that take people away from my book at the end, after the conclusion
- I am looking for natural opportunities to insert the perfect and most logical CTA:
 - Before the body content and “action” begins
 - When I mention an upsell (e.g., a coaching package or closed, paid Group)
 - In appendices
 - At the conclusions of chapters
 - At the conclusion of major steps or points
 - Whenever I feel a reader may need background information or instructions that can be found elsewhere (e.g., on my website)—without taking them out of the “story”, if possible
 - On my “Resources” page at the end of the book
 - Anywhere there is a logical and powerful opportunity to place a CTA

- I understand that CTAs should generate:
 - Help for my reader
 - More sales for me
 - More publicity for me
 - Publicity for my Joint Venture partner(s) or interviewees
 - Sign-ups to my list
- I am including essential CTAs that tell my readers what to do next
- I have products and packages ready for those readers who will want more, including:
 - Coaching packages
 - D-I-Y workshops
 - Self-study courses
 - More books
 - Accompanying workbooks, templates, cheat sheets, checklists, etc.
 - Live events
 - Coaching packages
 - Special deals or coupons for book purchasers
 - A sign-up incentive to help my reader stay in touch
 - Other _____
- I am letting my reader know that more of me/my products/my services are available—and how to get it



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- I am ending with blatant, direct invitations to follow me on social media or sign up for my newsletter/updates/list
- I plan to keep on writing—and make it a habit

