



VICKY WEBER

Bestselling author: Disney, Penguin Random House, & self-published

When I started writing books, I never thought it would be my career, let alone make me money. I had an idea that I thought would make a difference. Like many other aspiring authors, I saw a gap in children's literature that I wanted to fill and THAT was the only thing in my focus.

#1 Treat it like a business

But what I quickly learned was that for my books to make the impact I desired, I had to treat it like a business. I had to learn...a lot. The whole industry, in fact. So I got to work.

Even with hundreds of hours of research, I still made a lot of mistakes with my first book. I secretly released it, assuming I would promote it later. **Big mistake.** When it didn't sell well, I started spending all my energy reaching out to book bloggers and book reviewers. That was my whole marketing plan! **Another huge mistake.**

#2 Have a plan in place

But I wasn't in it for the money, so I created and released another book. *This time, I picked a release date but I still had no strategy. No plan.* It actually sold better than I thought. (Not good, just better) I was selling about 20-25 books per month!

But I had so many more ideas and I needed my stories to start funding themselves. I didn't have thousands of dollars to keep shelling out but I was so passionate about my books...

...I was torn.





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So I looked at what I did right with that third book. I looked at what I could improve. And then, I released my fourth book: *Rhythm Rescue*. I made a plan and marketed it for months beforehand. My launch team had over 800 people on it and they shared with friends and family--other people just like them, which got me in front of MORE people within my target audience.

#3 Get in front of strangers (not family)

From there, the sales snowballed. I'd shown Amazon who my target audience was so they continued organically sharing my book alongside similar titles. My launch team continued talking and sharing. But most importantly, I continued to create a buzz. I created a successful, repeatable process. One I could continue to refine and implement with every new book that I produced.

Sure enough, 2 weeks later I got a Bestseller banner on Amazon.

...I cried.

It was incredible to see all my hard work come to fruition. I'd finally cracked the code!

And at that point, my release had earned me over \$15,000 in profit. It changed my family's life and that's when I realized—if I can do this, others can too.



#4 Never give up

I continued my repeatable marketing plan, each book launch more successful than the last. When *Step Met Skip* was released in July 2021 and sold over 2,000 copies in the first five days of publication.

And then, an editor from Disney reached out to me.

Your success is more achievable than you think. I speak from experience—you can do this. Invest in yourself, don't cut corners, and never underestimate the power of a great marketing plan.

#5 Success IS possible





BRITTANY PLUMERI

Bestselling, award-winning author: self-published

Being an elementary school teacher, I've read hundreds of children's books, which is why I was disappointed when I looked frantically for a book on kindness for my students and failed to find what I needed. That was the day I opened my laptop and started piecing together my very first story.

A few years later, my son Noah was born. He sparked my second book, a rhyming story about a mother's love for her child, based on one night as I rocked him to sleep. That was the push I needed.

#6 Write down your ideas

Frankly, I was tired of having so many ideas and doing nothing about them. I figured I would try and see what happened. I **didn't want to regret never taking the leap of faith.**

#7 Give your dreams a try!

I worked so hard on my first book and was thrilled with how it turned out...but then the self-doubt kicked in. I was so embarrassed about releasing my first book that I didn't tell anybody. And I now realize what a huge mistake that was: people can't buy your book if they don't know it exists.

But I let the doubt win because I was afraid of judgment. I was nervous that people wouldn't like something I'd spent so much time and effort on. Creativity is so personal so I feared the worst, knowing I would take criticism to heart.

#8 Don't let the doubt win

For my third book, it did. Before its release, someone told me that my story was terrible. That there was no place for it and that I shouldn't bother.

Boy, did that hit hard. I was crushed.

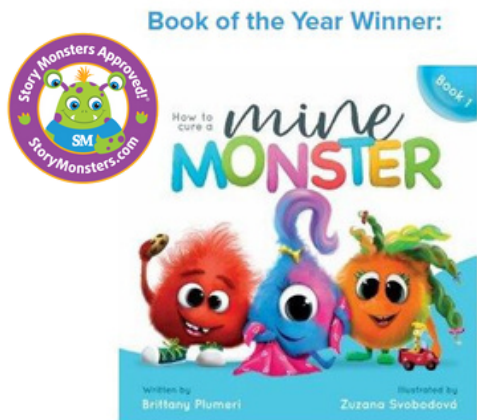
That person confirmed all my doubts--the thoughts in my head that told me I couldn't do this. That I couldn't be an author. That I had too much to learn and I wasn't good enough.





BRITTANY PLUMERI

Bestselling, award-winning author: self-published



How to Cure a Mine Monster

by Brittany Plumeri, illustrated by Zuzana Svobodova

But then, I took a moment.

And I realized that not everyone is going to resonate with my stories and that's okay. I don't write for everyone...I can't please everyone, nor should I want to.

#9
Write
for
YOU!

I buckled down and got critiques from people I knew would give me constructive feedback for improvement. Within a week, that same book was ready for publication. In June of 2020, it won *Book of the Year* from Story Monsters Ink.

#10 Hard work
pays off

Only a few months later, the story that was inspired by my son, *The Perfect Lullaby*, became a bestseller on Amazon. I couldn't believe how something so close to my own heart had also become close to strangers' hearts too. How something I created would make a difference in others' lives as well as my own.

My author journey allowed me to spend more time with my family and to take a longer maternity leave for my daughter than I had with my son. Those extra snuggles and memories are priceless.

But it also improved our financial situation. Where before, I couldn't make it out of the holiday season without a boatload of debt, the past two holidays have NOT been put on a credit card.

Now, I'm shouting it to the rooftops:

I am an author, and I am proud.





CHELSEA TORNETTO

Author (Rep. Storm Literary Agency): Scholastic, Familius

#11 Believe it
is possible

I always wanted to write - even as a kid - but I didn't really see that as a plausible job. It felt like saying, "When I grow up, I want to be a professional football player!" A nice dream - but not a realistic possibility. Luckily, I had also always wanted to be a teacher. So, I went to college, graduated, and started my teaching career. I was very passionate about the classroom, but I never stopped dreaming about writing.

One day, during my prep period, I came across Scholastic Professional Publications. They were open to unagented book submissions from teachers who had teaching strategies to share. It was the perfect combination of my two loves! So, I put together a proposal, sent it in, and eventually forgot about it.

Two years later, Scholastic bought my educational manuscript! They even paid me a \$3,500 advance.

Suddenly, being an author didn't seem like such a pipe dream. I only wished I'd sent that book in sooner!

#12
Don't
wait!

As exciting as selling my first book was, what I really wanted to write was children's books. With my Scholastic success giving me a much needed boost of confidence, I decided to attend the Highlights Foundation in Pennsylvania.

I didn't know anyone, and for an introvert like me, it was terrifying. It was also a HUGE challenge for me to put that much time (a whole weekend) and money (over \$1000 including the flight) into myself. Especially since my husband and I were both teachers with two young kids to raise.

...but it was 100% worth it.

#13 Invest in yourself





CHELSEA TORNETTO

Author (Rep. Storm Literary Agency): Scholastic, Familius

I met lots of other authors who were just like me, and realized that I could DO THIS. I also learned more about the industry in one weekend than I would have in an entire year on my own, and by that Sunday evening, I knew that I wanted an agent and wanted to go the traditional publishing route.

I began the long process of researching and querying. I joined SCBWI, attended conferences and webinars, and joined Twitter. I met SO MANY PEOPLE! Networking with fellow authors allowed me to find critique partners, make new friends, and learn so much.



#14 Network,
network, network!

And there is still so much to learn! Even now that I have an agent, I've realized that learning and growing as a writer never stops.



The biggest thing I've learned is that a manuscript that's "good enough to be published" isn't what publishing houses are looking for. The complex system of gatekeepers - agents, editors, acquisitions teams, etc. - only choose the best of the best to invest in. That makes traditional publishing VERY challenging!

But it also makes success that much more rewarding!

#15 "Good
enough" isn't
good enough