

FAQs About Hiring a Ghostwriter for Your Book or Book Proposal

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When I speak with authors about working with them on their books, they usually have questions about what a ghostwriter does. Here are answers to some of their most frequently asked questions:

Q: What is a ghostwriter?

A: A ghostwriter is a professional writer who helps authors write, edit, and package their content into successful books, book proposals, and e-books. Ghostwriters may also work with authors to find an agent, explore publishing options, market a book, build a publicity platform, extend their branding, and write articles and blogs.

Q: Why would an author hire a ghostwriter?

A: Authors may lack the time, know-how, or writing skills needed to craft book proposals and books that will succeed in today's unpredictable publishing market. Working with a ghostwriter allows experts to stay focused on their area of expertise, rather than struggling to squeeze book writing into an already busy schedule.

Q: When is a ghostwriter hired?

A: A ghostwriter can join the team at any point during the creation of a book or book proposal. For example, some authors come to me with nothing but a wisp of an idea; I work with them to define their message, create a program, construct a compelling narrative, write a proposal, and design a strategy to connect with agents and publishers. Some authors are already working with an agent and/or publisher but need help fine-tuning their message or creating a successful proposal or manuscript. Others have a fully written proposal or manuscript that needs to be improved, revised, or completely reimagined and rewritten.

Q: What does the process of working with a ghostwriter look like?

A: An experienced ghostwriter is a flexible collaborator who works within whatever structure an author prefers. In general, however, I have found that the following process works well for writing a book: An author provides me with whatever content is available, and we work together to brainstorm the project in detail and create a table of contents. Once I start to write, we spend one or two hours a week on the phone discussing content on a chapter-by-chapter basis. When a chapter is written, the author reads it and provides feedback, which is incorporated into a revision. We continue writing and revising in this way until the manuscript is finished.

Q: Is ghostwriting legitimate? Shouldn't authors write their own books?

A: Bestselling books are frequently a team effort in which authors work with array of publishing experts, including ghostwriters, agents, editors, copy editors, designers, social networking strategists, and publicists. For authors who recognize the value of teamwork, collaborating with a ghostwriter can be the most effective way to create a book that resonates with readers, extends the author's platform, and sells well.

Q: What do ghostwriters charge?

A: A ghostwriter's fee depends on many factors, including the size of the project, the deadline, the amount of pre-existing content available, the amount of research needed, and the ghostwriter's publishing background. My fees are typical for a ghostwriter with an advanced level of expertise and multiple bestsellers. Contact me at alice@alicekelly.net for a quote for ghostwriting, editing, or hourly consulting.



Alice Lesch Kelly has written and edited many books, including *The Doctor's Diet* by Dr. Travis Stork, *Uncovering Happiness* by Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D., *Clean Design* with eco-designer Robin Wilson, and *Healthy Mom, Healthy Baby* with the March of Dimes. Her website is www.alicekelly.net.