
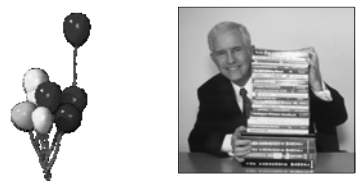


*Dan Poynter's*  
**Great Titles**  
 Sell More Books




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*Dan Poynter's*  
**Great Titles**  
 Sell More Books & Speeches



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"Anyone who says you can't judge a book by its cover has never met the buyer from Barnes & Noble."  
 --Terri Lonier



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## Speakers

- 📖 Titles sell speeches too
- 📖 Covers are one-sheets

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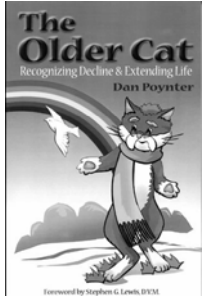
## Write Down Your Title

- 📖 Book or Speech
- 📖 On a fresh sheet of paper
  - 📖 Add to it as we discuss title structure.
    - 📖 Don't cross out an idea
    - 📖 (Easier to edit than to create).

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## Collect Title Possibilities

- 📖 The Aging Cat
- 📖 The Ageing Cat
- 📖 The Declining Feline
- 📖 The Older Cat



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## Draft Your Back Cover First



- Do not focus on your title/subtitle yet
  - (You will try to get all your benefits and features into them.)
- Draft the back-cover sales copy
  - Then pick out some words for the title/subtitle

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## What Number are You?

**Introvert**                      **Extrovert**

0 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 10

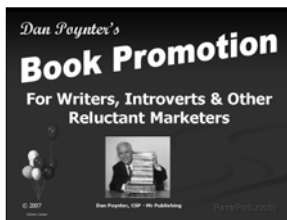
Uncomfortable in crowds.  
No Radio, TV or Autographings.  
Must promote from home.

Short attention span.  
Needs help with writing:  
Editor or ghostwriter.



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## Speech Title Examples



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## Speech Title Examples

- Book Promotion for Writers, Introverts and Other Reluctant Marketers.
- The Book Game for Speakers, Extroverts and Those who are Stalking Oprah.

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## The Glance Test

- Readers do not *read* the book first
- Retailers.** Buy from covers. Sales reps do not lug books
- Wholesalers** want you to submit the cover--they don't judge the content
- Reviewers** select the books that appear to be the most interesting.

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## You Will Discover How to:

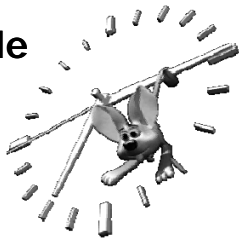


- Draft a title that gets attention.

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## Schedule

📖 Titles: 60 minutes



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## What is in the Handout?

- 📖 Slides
  - 📖 Take notes on a separate sheet
  - 📖 "Surprise slides" not included

Handout is also available free from the Forms Bank at <http://ParaPub.com>

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## Think for a Moment

- 📖 How do you shop for a book?
- 📖 What gets your attention?
  - 📖 Title/Subtitle?
  - 📖 Graphics?
  - 📖 Quality of manufacture?
  - 📖 Name of author?
- 📖 How do you make a buying decision?

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## Your Book's Title

- 📖 In an advertisement. The headline contributes 75% of the pulling power
- 📖 A good title sells 15% more books in mail order
- 📖 Sales reps feel the title is 33% of the sales package
- 📖 The "hook" that determines sales.

The single most important piece of ad copy writing you will do for the book

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## Promises

ETERNAL LIFE REGIONAL	Live Longer Now Fit for Life Live Extension Ageless
CURES AND MIRACLES REGIONAL	Natural Cures "They" Don't Want You to Know About Love, Medicine & Miracles The Eight-Week Cholesterol Cure Miracle Cures
MAGIC NUMBERS REGIONAL	1000 Places to See Before You Die The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People 10 Stupid Things Women Do to Mess Up Their Lives The Five People You Meet in Heaven
FLATTERY REGIONAL	Women Who Love Too Much Smart Women, Foolish Choices Meditations for Women Who Do Too Much How the Irish Saved Civilization

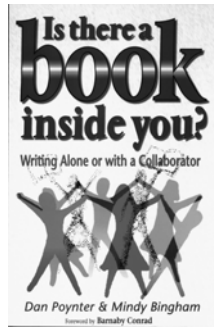
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## More Promises

FAMILIAR APHORISMS REGIONAL	Don't Know Much About History Don't Sweat the Small Stuff Wherever You Go, There You Are Life is Uncertain...Eat Dessert First
SATISFYING SYMMETRY REGIONAL	When Bad Things Happen to Good People What to Expect When You're Expecting How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk Good to Great
EUPHEMISTIC OXYMORONS REGIONAL	The Dance of Anger The Year of Magical Thinking Siblings Without Rivalry Wealth Without Risk
IMPOSSIBLE PROMISES REGIONAL	Nothing Down Eat More, Weigh Less Spontaneous Healing No More Menstrual Cramps

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## The Title May Come First



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## The Title has Three Purposes

1. Attract attention
2. Describe the contents
3. Create interest in the text.

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## So where do you begin?

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## Select a *Working* Title

- 📖 Before you write the book
- 📖 You will alter it as you write
  - 📖 Easier to edit than to create

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## Title/Subtitle Should be

- 📖 Descriptive
- 📖 Clearly indicate the subject of the book
- 📖 Test them on colleagues

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## Start with the Key Word

Dan Poynter's parachute books all start with the key word *parachute* or *parachuting*

- 📖 *Parachuting, The Skydiver's Handbook*
- 📖 *Parachute Rigging Course*
- 📖 *(The) Parachute Manual*
- 📖 *Parachute Rigger Study Guide*
- 📖 *Parachuting I/E Course*
- 📖 *Parachuting Manual with Log.*

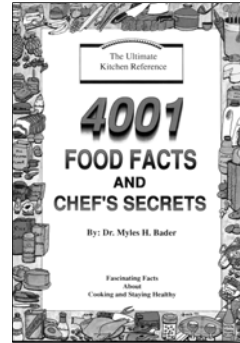
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## Computer Searches

- 📖 *Silk Worms & Sewing Machines*
  - 📖 Would not be easily found
- 📖 *The Parachute Manual*
  - 📖 Under key word : "Parachute"

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## Do not Start with a Number



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## Get the .COM for the Title

- 📖 <http://www.Self-PublishingManual.com>
- 📖 <http://www.WritingNonfiction.com>
- 📖 <http://www.OlderCat.com>
- 📖 <http://www.ParachuteManual.com>

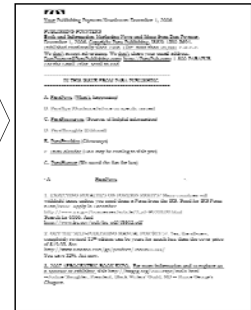
(And get your own name dot com)

ParaPub.com



## FMI: Free Newsletter

- 📖 Goes to 38,000+ authors, publishers & speakers
- 📖 Full of tips & resources
- 📖 They forward it to colleagues.
- 📖 Circulation grows by 200/week
- 📖 Sign up at ParaPub.com
- 📖 (You can't beat FREE)



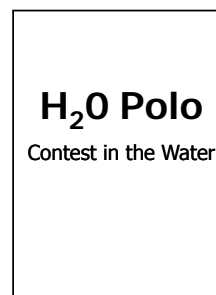
ParaPub.com

## Do not Mislead

- 📖 *What Color is Your Parachute?*
  - 📖 About job hunting or skydiving?
- 📖 *Concrete Mathematics*
  - 📖 About math or building construction?
- 📖 *Roots*
  - 📖 About Black History or gardening?
- 📖 *Chicken Soup for the Soul*
  - 📖 Inspiration or cooking?.

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## Titles Should be Obvious



(Water Polo)

"Assume the buyer lacks imagination"  
– Mark Sanborn

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## Title Should Contain *Benefits*

- 📖 *Changing Children's Behavior*
- 📖 *How I Raised Myself from Failure to Success in Selling*
- 📖 *Home Repairs Any Woman Can Do*
- 📖 *How to Live with a Neurotic Dog*
- 📖 *The Complete Guide to Retirement*
- 📖 *The Delights of Chinese Cooking*
- 📖 *Physical Education Handbook*
- 📖 *The Complete Chess Player*
- 📖 *The ABC of Orchid Growing.*

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## One Word may be Enough

- 📖 *Chutzpah* by Alan Dershowitz
- 📖 *Boom* by Tom Brokaw
- 📖 *Giving* by Bill Clinton wrote
- 📖 *Blink* by Malcolm Gladwell
- 📖 *Leadership* by Tom Peters
- 📖 *Freakonomics* by Levitt & Dubner
- 📖 *Winning* by Jack & Suzy Welch.

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## Short Titles

- 📖 Have great visual impact on the cover
  - 📖 "Billboard" effect
- 📖 Are authoritative in their simplicity
- 📖 Are easy to remember & easy to say
  - 📖 Single syllable words
- 📖 Words should relate well to each other.

"Your title should be 5 words or less or people have to use their brains to repeat it."

--Jeff Herman, Literary Agent

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## Narrowing the *Readership*



What percentage of the visitors to Disneyland go without kids?

There are thousands of books on Disneyland and Disney World

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## Narrowing the *Scope* of the Book

Garden Way sold 1,500 copies of *The Squash Book*. They changed the name to the *Zucchini Book* and it sold 300,000 copies.

The new title is more specific.

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## Book's Capacity

- 📖 Guide to
- 📖 Complete
- 📖 Manual
- 📖 Handbook
- 📖 Elementary
- 📖 Advanced
- 📖 Introduction to
- 📖 How to
- 📖 Fundamentals of
- 📖 BTW, "Classic" may mean "old."

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## Character

- 📖 Academic work
- 📖 Technical volume
- 📖 Popular book

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## Easy to Read (and Grammatically Correct)



Filed or shelved under:  
R for Rx  
or  
P for prescription?



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Authors, as a rule, are poor judges of titles and often go for the cute or clever rather than the practical.

—Nat Bodian

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## If People are Confused About Your Title

- 📖 They may not find your book because it was mis-shelved by a confused clerk.
- 📖 They may be too embarrassed to ask for it, and
- 📖 They may not recognize the contents and pick it up if they run across it.

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## Image Should be Positive and Successful

- 📖 *I Got Dumped Handbook*
- 📖 *We, the Lonely People*



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## Image: Positive

- 📖 *Born to Lose* v *Born to Win*
- 📖 *Coping with Back Pain* v *Conquering Back Pain*
- 📖 *Don't be a Victim* v *Fighting Back*.

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## Image: Pleasant

- 📖 Prevention books are hard to sell
  - 📖 *Don't Get Burned: a Family Fire Safety Guide*
  - 📖 *How to Avoid Bicycle Theft.*

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## People buy the Specific over the General

- 📖 *The Art of Courtship* sold 17,500 copies
  - 📖 *The Art of Kissing* sold 60,500. More specific
- 📖 *Eating for Health* sold 36,000 copies
  - 📖 *Care of Skin and Hair* sold 52,000 copies. More Specific
- 📖 *The Art of Controversy* - very few
  - 📖 *How to Argue Logically* - 30,000. Includes a promise
- 📖 *Patent Medicine and the Public Health* - 3,000
  - 📖 *The Truth About Patent Medicine* - 10,000. Exposé
- 📖 *An Introduction to Einstein* - 15,000
  - 📖 *Einstein's Theory of Relativity Explained* - 42,000.

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## People buy Nonfiction to Learn Something or to Solve a Problem

- 📖 *English Composition Self-taught* - 12,000
  - 📖 *Grammar Self-taught* - 31,000
- 📖 *Masterpieces of American Wit* - 9,000
  - 📖 *Popular Jokebook* - 37,000
- Love and Sex:
  - 📖 *What Every Boy Should Know* - 37,000
    - 📖 *What Every Girl Should Know* - 66,000
    - 📖 *What Married Women Should Know* - 112,000
  - 📖 *Fleece of Gold* - 6,000
    - 📖 *Quest For a Blonde Mistress* - 50,000
  - 📖 *The Tallow Ball* - 15,000
    - 📖 *The French Prostitute's Sacrifice* - 54,700.

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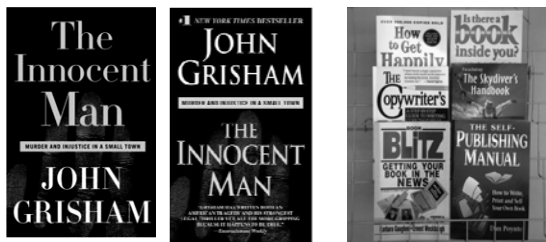
## Add a Clarifying Word

- 📖 *The King Enjoys Himself* - 8,000
  - 📖 *The Lustful King Enjoys Himself* - 38,000
- 📖 *The Mystery of the Iron Mask* - 11,000
  - 📖 *The Mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask* - 30,000
    - 📖 Personalized
- 📖 *Neuroanatomy Made Easy*. Sold OK
  - 📖 *Neuroanatomy Made Ridiculously Simple*.
    - 📖 Sold better.

Then we have the *Dummies* books

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## Title Placement on Cover



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## Check for Competing Titles

- 📖 *Books in Print & Forthcoming Books in Print*
- 📖 Amazon.com
- 📖 Movie titles at <http://us.imdb.com/search>
- 📖 Song titles at <http://lyricsworld.com/search>

If your title *sounds* like another book, stores may palm-off the other one.

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## Plays on Words

- 📖 Eat, Drink & be Merry
  - 📖 *Eat, Shrink & be Merry*
- 📖 Dancing with Wolves
  - 📖 *Dancing with Lawyers* by Nicholas Carroll, JD.
- 📖 *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*
  - 📖 *Let Me Thrill You Sweetheart.*
  - 📖 *Let Me Kill You Sweetheart.*
- 📖 And some relationship books by Bob Mandel
  - 📖 *Heart Over Heals*
  - 📖 *Two Hearts Are Better Than One*
  - 📖 *Open Heart Therapy*
- 📖 *Women who Love Too Much* by Robin Norwood
  - 📖 *Women Who Shop Too Much, Overcoming the Urge to Splurge.*
- 📖 *How to Flatten Your Stomach* by Jim Everode
  - 📖 Melvin Powers published *How to Flatten Your Tush* by Coach Marge Reardon
- 📖 *The One-Minute Manager*
  - 📖 *The One-Minute Lover.*

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## Titles Can't be Copyrighted

- 📖 Too many books; not enough words.
- 📖 Avoid being accused of unfair competition

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## Titles can be Part of a Trademark ®

- 📖 Must be used in 3 or more places
  - 📖 Speech title, CD, business name, line of products, etc.
- 📖 See
  - 📖 <http://www.uspto.gov>
  - 📖 <http://www.uspto.gov/main/faq/index.html>

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## TM and Playing on Words

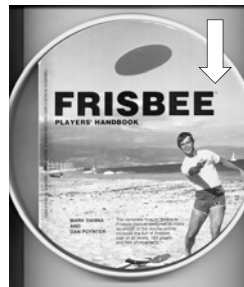
- 📖 *Think & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Speak & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Pray & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Mail & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Write & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Incorporate & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Risk & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Meet & Grow Rich*
- 📖 *Sell & Grow Rich*



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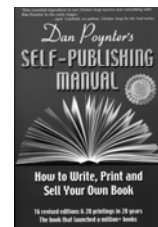
## Avoid Proprietary Names

- 📖 Checkerboard Square ®
  - 📖 Ralston-Purina
- 📖 Kleenex ®
- 📖 Linoleum ®
- 📖 Escalator ®



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## Branding



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## Perpetuating the Brand



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## Roger C. Parker

Don't create a book, create a brand

Your book will brand you,  
(not the other way around)

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## Avoid Title Confusion

- 📖 You will get their orders and returns
- 📖 You could be sued for capitalizing on the other book's success

See <http://www.IvanHoffman.com>

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## Beware of Working Titles

- 📖 Girls: *Choices, a Teen Woman's Guide to Self-Awareness & Personal Planning*
- 📖 Boys: *Choices II*
  - 📖 *Choices Too*
  - 📖 *Son of Choices*
  - 📖 *Changes*
  - 📖 *Challenges, a Teen Man's Guide to Self-Awareness & Personal Planning.*

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## OK to Change a Title



- 📖 Bruce Lansky of Meadowbrook Press took *The Rainbow Book* which had sold 25,000 copies in three years and changed the binding, cover, name, size and price.

*Free Stuff For Kids* sold 500,000 copies in two years and made #6 on the *New York Times* Bestseller list.

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## Check on the Title

- 📖 Amazon.com
- 📖 000Domains.com
  - 📖 URL

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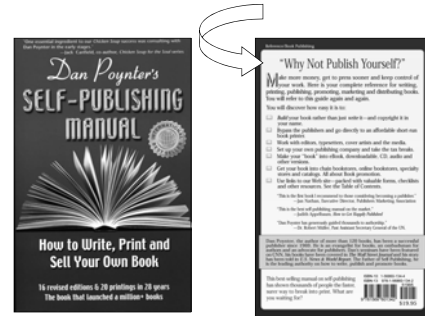
## Titles that were Changed

- 📖 *The \$320,000 Customer* became *Customers for Life*
- 📖 *At This Point in Time* became *All The President's Men*.
- 📖 *Judah; A Tale of Christ* became *Ben Hur*
- 📖 *The Birds and the Bees* became *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex but Were Afraid to Ask*.
- 📖 *Private Fleming, His Various Battles* became *The Red Badge of Courage*.
- 📖 *Before This Anger* became *Roots*
- 📖 *They Don't Build Statues to Businessmen* became *Valley of the Dolls*.

For a list of more titles that were changed, get Document 156 (free) from [Http://ParaPublishing.com](http://ParaPublishing.com)

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## Move One to the Back Cover as a Headline



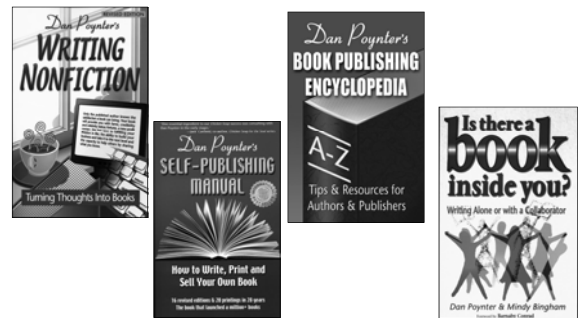
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## Subtitle

- 📖 Longer
- 📖 More descriptive
- 📖 Combined with the title, should completely describe the book

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## Complete Book Descriptions



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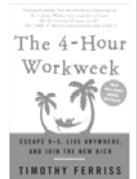
## Mix a Catchy Title with a Descriptive Sub-title

*The One-Eyed Monster; How to Control Television Viewing Before it Controls You.*

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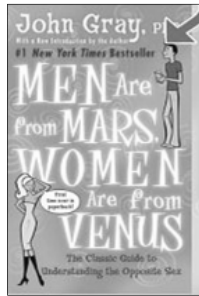
## Testing Titles/Subtitles

- 📖 Colleagues
- 📖 Focus groups
- 📖 Bookstores
- 📖 Social network groups
  - 📖 Forums/Listservs
  - 📖 Blogs
- 📖 Google Ad-Words
- 📖 "Shop it around" to your book's market.



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## Remember: John Gray Fought for his Title



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## Forums (Cheap Surveying)



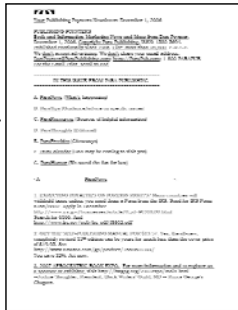
- ☑ PUB-FORUM. <http://www.pub-forum.net/>
- ☑ SELF-PUBLISHING. <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/self-publishing/>
- ☑ PUBLISH-L. <http://www.publish-l.com/>
- ☑ SmallPubCivil. <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/smallpub-civil/>
- ☑ Fiction\_L. <http://www.webrary.org/rs/flmenu.html>
- ☑ Children's Books. <http://www.egroups.com/search?query=youngchildrensbooks>
- ☑ Children's Books. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CBpublishing/>
- ☑ IND-E-PUBS. eBooks. <http://www.ind-e-pubs.com/>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ebook-community/>
- ☑ POD Publishers [http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/pod\\_publishers/](http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/pod_publishers/)
- ☑ Publishing Design <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/publishingdesign/>
- ☑ Book Signings/Mini Seminars. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/booksigners/>
- ☑ Copy Law. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/copyright-future/>

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## FMI: Free Newsletter

- ☑ Goes to 41,000+ authors, publishers & speakers
- ☑ Full of tips & resources
- ☑ They forward it to colleagues.
- ☑ Circulation grows by 200/week
- ☑ Sign up at ParaPub.com
- ☑ (You can't beat FREE)



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## If You Are

Thinking,  
Planning  
or Writing



Writing with  
someone  
else



Publishing  
or  
Promoting



The New Way  
to Write,  
Publish &  
Promote



Your Learning Resources

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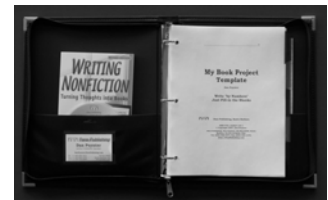
## Books

- ☑ Books or CDs on the table are *For Sale*
- ☑ Cash, check, credit card.
- ☑ Check  Ship or  Carry
- ☑ Self-service: fill out the form
- ☑ Honor system: take the books

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## Template: Just fill-in the Blanks

- ☑ Zip-up binder
  - ☑ Portable & secure
- ☑ Each book page with instructions
- ☑ Copy of *Writing Nonfiction* with examples.
- ☑ CD with pages formatted and laid out.



\$297

See <http://ParaPub.com>

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## Please Take a Moment to . . .

- 📖 Fill out the Evaluation Form
- 📖 Let me know what to keep and what to change

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## Please Tell Others About this Program

See Program Details on the Website



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## ParaPublishing.com Web Site



Search

- 📖 Site info
- 📖 Ezines
- 📖 Success Stories

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## More Help with your Project



- 📖 The Calendar in *The Self-Publishing Manual*
- 📖 <http://ParaPublishing.com> Our Web Site
  - 📖 InfoKits
  - 📖 Book Shepherds
  - 📖 *Suppliers List*
  - 📖 Affinity Groups (Listservs)

If there is anything you did not understand today, contact me.

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## What is a *Good* Title?

One that sells the book

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## Questions

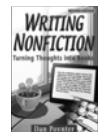


While we are finishing up and taking questions, please take a moment to tell me how you liked today's presentation, by

- 📖 Filling out the *Evaluation Form/Questionnaire*

and

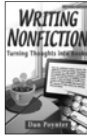
- 📖 Signing up for the FREE *Publishing Poynters* ezine



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## Questions

While we are finishing up and taking questions, please take a moment to tell me how you liked today's presentation, by



☞ Filling out the *Evaluation Form/Questionnaire*

and

☞ Sign up for the FREE *Publishing Poynters* ezine

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You are putting a large amount of effort, time, and creativity into your book...

your title deserves the same consideration

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You are putting a large amount of effort, time, and creativity into your speech...

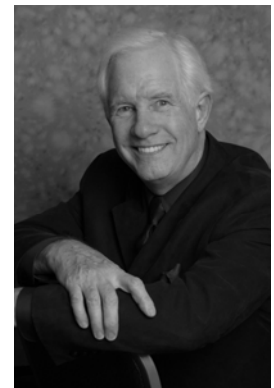
your title deserves the same consideration

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My name is Dan Poynter

and

I want your titles to be better



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H  
I  
M  
E  
D



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