

The Wow Principles

e-newsletter

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Market Update

Chicken Soup for the Soul publishes approximately 12 mainstream titles each year. Many are additional volumes of already successful past titles. Although each title's subject content differs, there are generally 40 or more stories from first-time authors included in each book.

The best thing to do is check the *Chicken Soup* website every few weeks to see what's needed (www.chickensoupforthesoul.com). Click on "Possible Books" on the left hand column to see what's cooking. If you have a story to submit, follow the "Submit a Story" link and instructions.

REMEMBER, if you are submitting stories for one of the *Chicken Soup* or other book titles that we are developing, its best to submit directly to us. Visit our website for submission guidelines (www.PublishingSyndicate.com).

HOT STUFF!

Stories are needed now for *Chicken Soup for the Soul: People Helping People*. Submission deadline is August 2006, but the earlier you get your stories in, the better, REALLY! (We'll talk about the reason in next month's e-newsletter.) *People Helping People* is currently scheduled for publication in April 2007. IMPORTANT NOTE: Stories for this particular title should NOT be submitted through the regular *Chicken Soup* website. Instead, check the book's website guidelines for submitting directly to the coauthor (www.soulofthepeople.com).

The Writing Game

So how do you become one of those *Chicken Soup*-published writers? READ! Read *Chicken Soup* titles that feature stories similar to what you have an interest in writing. Notice how the published stories, or at least the best of them, don't get too preachy. That is one of the biggest problems we have with stories submitted for the *Chicken Soup* titles we work on—too many authors feel they have to summarize the meaning of their stories in the last paragraph.

Let your story do the telling and the teaching and the inspiring! After all, isn't that why you're writing it? Don't close your story by telling your readers what they should have learned or why they should be inspired by reading your story. If they NEED your explanation, then you didn't do your job as a storyteller, and you need to start over.

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The Writing Game (continued from page 1)

Most good stories generally have a beginning, a middle and an end. The beginning sets up your story's "problem," the middle works to further define the problem and move you toward resolution, and your ending should be the final result of you (or your main character) resolving and learning from the trials and tribulations you went through. It's really a three-act play—with lots of possible twists and turns along the way.

The best way to understand this and master it is by reading good short stories and then by writing your own—lots of writing and rewriting.

Dealing with Style Issues

Dahlynn and I are currently working on books for two different publishers, and it's always a challenge to keep track of which one requires serial commas, which requires spelling out numbers through 999 or only those under 10, and which one wants us to use specific "styles" (Head 1, Head 2, etc.) for the different parts of the manuscript.

When you're submitting a query letter or your novel's narrative outline or the first three chapters of your manuscript to a potential publisher, such style issues are not an issue. WHAT IS IMPORTANT is being consistent. If you're going to spell out "big" numbers, then do it with all your "big" numbers. Punctuate correctly, spell everything correctly, including your potential editor's name (don't depend on a three-year-old copy of *Writer's Market* for this information), and of course review your sentence structure and grammar.

What continues to amaze—and frustrate—Dahlynn and me are the number of self-professed professional writers who fail to do those simple things. PLEASE proof everything you send to a potential publisher/editor—even your e-mails.

Here are a few books you should think about owning, if you don't already:

- **DICTIONARY:** A good dictionary is required: What is provided by word processing programs such as Microsoft Word do not have every word you are likely to use.
- **STYLE GUIDES:** There are numerous style guides available. The two we use most often are *The Associated Press Stylebook* (we write for newspapers and many use this) and *The Chicago Manual of Style*. Most of the book publishers we work with use the *Chicago Manual of Style* as their base, but include a few changes that are specific to their particular writing style needs.
- **STYLE BIBLE:** It's not really a Bible, but should be, at least for writers. It's a tiny pocket book called *The Elements of Style* written by William Strunk, Jr., and E.B. White. I've had my copy since college (when it cost \$1.25). It costs more now, but it's worth every penny.

You can get these titles and more at many bookstores, or through our website link to Amazon. We've got a bit more description on our website bookstore to help you choose which ones might be best for your needs.

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Wow Personality



Not everyone works only with words when it comes to getting published. Photographers use their images and cartoonists convey their messages with a combination of written and visual media. Jonny Hawkins is one of those who has the artistic skills, coupled with a sense of humor, to make cartooning his avenue into the publishing world.

We purchased some of his cartoons for *Chicken Soup for the Fisherman's Soul*. Jonny provided all of the cartoons for *Chicken Soup for the Military Wife's Soul*, and he has contributed to many other *Chicken Soup* titles.

Jonny has been cartooning professionally since 1986. In addition to *Chicken Soup*, his work has appeared in *Barron's*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Field and Stream* and over 250 other publications. He has completed several books with Bob Phillips, *The Awesome Book of Heavenly Humor*; *A Tackle Box of Fishing Funnies*; and *Laughter*

from *the Pearly Gates* (Harvest House Publishers), which are available at bookstores or by contacting him directly at P.O. Box 188, Sherwood, MI 49089, or by e-mail at jonnyhawkins2nz@yahoo.com.

Editors? Good or Evil? Even though many writers, especially new writers, fear them, editors really are your friends. While you may not agree with everything they do to *your* words, learn from the good ones; after all, when an editor catches and corrects your accidental grammar and punctuation errors, typos and confusing sentence structure, YOU get to take all the credit for that brilliantly written article or story! Remember, the best writers in the world work closely with some of the best editors in the world.

Reader Questions

If you have any questions about writing, publishing and other related subjects, please send them to us at Questions@PublishingSyndicate.com. While we seldom have time to respond individually and personally to each question, we will try to include the most interesting or most-asked questions (and our answers) in future editions of *The Wow Principles e-newsletter*.

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