



**AUTHOR RESOURCES**

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# From Speaker to Author

**11 WAYS TO TRANSFORM YOUR SPOKEN  
MESSAGE INTO PUBLISHED CONTENT**

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## **YOU'VE ALREADY GOT WHAT IT TAKES**

You may be looking with a skeptical eye at the distance from a blank page to your dream of becoming an author. But it's not as far as you think, nor as hard as you fear, when you begin your journey with the good ideas you're already talking about.

Classes.

Sermons.

Seminars.

Workshops.

Podcasts.

Interviews.

Business presentations.

Even soapbox speeches.

Your best ideas and stories are deeply connected to your life's work. You are not just talking. You are delivering a message that informs and inspires the way people live every day.

People look to you as a leader who empowers them to pursue opportunities and solve problems. They trust you as a mentor who speaks to the fears that keep them awake at night. They respect you as a guide who points the way to health and wholeness in life and relationships.

That's why it's worth transforming your spoken message into published content for greater reach and influence. Even with a compelling *why*, you might have doubts. Welcome to the club. Perhaps you're saying to yourself:

*Somebody else already wrote it.*

*I'm not a good writer.*

*I don't have time for a writing project.*

*My last book half killed me. I can't do that again.*

These may be true statements, but they are false stories. In the words of Voltaire, “Doubt is an uncomfortable condition, but certainty is a ridiculous one.”

Yes, there are lots of authors, blogs, and books out there. But there are lots of speakers, pastors, and teachers too—and yet you have found your place and your voice among them. That's the true story, the one to hold on to.

So hold on, and look at how far you've come already.

## THE PUBLISHING ADVANTAGES OF BEING A SPEAKER, PASTOR, OR TEACHER

If you speak to groups on a regular basis, you have a well of content to draw from. You also have an audience and an opportunity to hone your communication skills. Make the most of these advantages.

Hopefully you're already taking practical steps too:

- Record everything.
- Catalog your recordings along with your notes, slides, and other presentation tools.
- Get quality transcripts of the content you want to develop in writing. Services such as [Rev](#) and [SermonScribe](#) can help you.

Not long ago, when a popular author was speaking at a conference, he allowed time for audience questions at the end of the session.

Just before the questions began, he explained to the audience that he would be using his smartphone to record his answers as fodder for future blog posts. He placed his phone on the lectern and turned on a recording app.

Great idea.

Even if you only speak occasionally, always be thinking of how to capture your spoken content. Then you can consider how best to publish it.

You may already have a blog up and running. You may be planning your first book or your next book. Anything else?

On the pages to come, you're invited to look beyond your blog or book. They're not the only ways to connect your message to your audience. And if one of your goals is to earn income, you might be leaving money on the table if you don't make effective use of other solutions.

You can use any of these publishing solutions alongside video and audio content, but we will focus on written resources. You may discover that you can tackle some of them yourself or with the help of your team. You can also enlist the support of an editor or ghostwriter.

Keep your mind open to possibilities. And remember, no matter what you choose, you're starting with significant advantages over other authors.

Now, let's take a closer look at each of the 11 ways to transform your spoken message into published content. These solutions can help you squeeze the most juice out of the good ideas you're already talking about.



## **SOLUTION #1: BLOG**

You already know this, so let's agree from the start: If you have commitment issues, think long and hard about whether blogging is the right solution for you. The minimum best practice is weekly, with few exceptions.

You're a speaker. That doesn't require you to be a blogger too. We've all stumbled into enough ghost-town blogs that start out with enthusiasm, only to be deserted after a half-dozen posts. Please don't do that.

However, if blogging is your goal and practice—perhaps a way you're choosing to build your platform—then keep at it. Set up an editorial workflow that allows you to post consistently. If consistency is a challenge for you, or you're simply overwhelmed, then find someone who can handle your speaking transcripts and help you get the writing done.

You can find plenty of advice online about blog topics, word counts, and headlines. To gain exposure beyond your blog, you can write guest posts for other blogs and use channels like [Medium](#). Mostly you need to know [what not to do](#).

If you use slides when you speak, you may already have some images to go along with your posts. The same goes for using video clips. Establish a consistent visual format and be mindful of copyright permissions for the images you use.

*Do I have recordings or transcripts that can be given new life as blog posts?*

## **SOLUTION #2: BOOK**

Print publishing is still alive and kicking, even with the availability of e-books and audiobooks. According to Pew Research Center, [two thirds of Americans still read print books](#).

With about 8 to 10 hours of speaking transcripts, you can develop a trade book of 50,000 to 60,000 words. The editing process can bring out an overall storyline to engage your readers. You won't use every spoken word in writing.

Whenever you develop a new talk, keep detailed source notes so you can cite attributions in your book. Always save *all* your

notes, even what you don't use in spoken delivery. That way, if you end up with a few holes in your chapter outlines, you'll have a head start on developing additional material.

Your book will require a significant investment, whether you go the route of self-publishing or traditional publishing. Either way, do the homework to develop a book proposal. It will help you clarify your message, your audience, and your market.

For self-publishing, you'll need to determine the cost of printing and weigh the options for storage or print-on-demand services, plus marketing and distribution. For the traditional route, you'll most likely need an agent to help you land a deal.

If you're ready to dive deeper into your options for book publishing, you'll find [Jane Friedman](#) and [Michael Hyatt](#) to be two of the most respected voices in the industry.

And don't expect to go it alone. You'll need collaborators who can support you with developmental editing or ghostwriting, copyediting, proofreading, publication, and marketing.

*Do I have a series of talks that could form the basis of a book? Or a collection of one-off talks that could be edited to fit a unifying theme?*

### **SOLUTION #3: E-BOOK**

An e-book can be a quick solution for you. A single talk often provides an ideal amount of content that can be read in one sitting, or maybe two. In 30 to 45 minutes of speaking, you'll generate 4,000 to 6,000 words. Get a transcript, clean it up, place it in a branded template, and you're good to go.

For easy-to-use paid templates, check out options such as [Beacon](#) and [Vellum](#). Or to create an EPUB file in Sigil's free open-source software, follow these [step-by-step instructions](#).

Delivered online, your e-book can be read, shared, printed, and downloaded for future reference, all with a simple click. It may be provided free, or for purchase, or in return for an email list sign-up.

Even if you've already adapted your presentation into a series of blog posts, you can compile the same content as an e-book; [Beacon](#) automates this option. Or complement a blog post by offering a related e-book with more in-depth information.

*Do I have an e-book hiding in a one-off topic I've presented as a workshop, sermon, or guest speaking engagement? Or perhaps a short series of two or three topics?*

Before we move on, you may be wondering about the difference between an e-book and a white paper.

These days, in the mechanics of publishing, there's not much difference. You can deliver a white paper electronically or print a hard copy.

The distinction is the content and positioning. White papers tend to be viewed as documents that build or defend a case. They often cite research or analyze data. Their subject matter may be heady or academic. And they may be written in a more formal tone, often with industry-specific language.

While blogs and e-books can seem trendy, a white paper connotes educational or thought-leading content that positions you or your organization as a subject matter expert.

#### **SOLUTION #4: MAGAZINE ARTICLE**

Print and online magazines publish articles from 200 words to 2,000 by a wide variety of authors. Article formats can vary widely, giving you plenty of options for how to structure your message.

Yours truly—the person who wrote this e-book—has also served as managing editor for several in-house magazines published by nonprofit organizations. So here's a tip from experience: Q&A articles and listicles are the quickest and easiest formats to write. These continue to be popular because

readers like them. Just don't use structure as a gimmick. Make sure your message shines through.

Look for magazines within your field of expertise, including professional associations, nonprofit groups, and your alma mater. Apart from income you can earn by placing an article, you can also reach a new, like-minded audience.

Big newsstand names may come to mind first, and you can typically find their submission guidelines online. Meanwhile, don't overlook opportunities in specialized [trade publications](#) that reach influencers in your industry.

Check the consumer magazine listings in [Writer's Market](#) for more options. When you find one that interests you, do a little more online research about the company that publishes it. The same company may publish other resources too.

Do your research on the publications most likely to find your topic relevant. Then you can propose and submit your article according to the appropriate standards and deadlines.

*Have I spoken recently on a topic that might make a timely article? Or a recurring theme that's coming around again?*

## **SOLUTION #5: ANTHOLOGY**

This word may come with lingering impressions of a poetry class you either loved or hated. No worries. Poetry is not the point here.

An anthology is simply a collection of any number of works by one or more authors. For example, an old favorite—[\*Listening to Your Life: Daily Meditations with Frederick Buechner\*](#)—draws from decades of writing. You don't have to wait that long. You could compile an anthology that brings together several topics you've spoken about, or choose a central theme.

If you already have book chapters or blog archives, consider how they could be repurposed in an anthology. For an even broader reach, you could collaborate with other speakers and authors create a collection that all of you would enjoy sharing with your respective audiences.

*What are some of my most popular topics that could be featured in an anthology?*

## **SOLUTION #6: JOURNAL**

Life hackers, spiritual leaders, and business professionals all tout the merits of journaling. Some turn to the next blank page of a well-worn Moleskine notebook to capture the day's thoughts. Others use an app.

Still others enjoy a guided journaling experience around a specific theme or life experience. That's where your content comes in.

Begin by selecting excerpts from your presentation then add thoughtful prompts or questions. You could create a one-year journal, but a month or season might be just enough.

Although a journal can be published as an e-book, be mindful of how your audience will use it: they'll want to write in it. A shorter journal can be delivered as a PDF document to be printed at home. A longer journal, or one intended as a keepsake, will likely serve best as a hard product.

*Among my speaking topics, which ones might prompt personal reflection in a journal format?*

## **SOLUTION #7: DISCUSSION GUIDE**

Beyond reading and reflection, you can get people talking about your message in all kinds of settings—at home, school, church, or work, or in a local pub or coffee shop.

Books often include questions to accompany each chapter, but don't miss simpler opportunities. A blog post, e-book, or article can work just as well to get a conversation started.

Email messages and social media posts can also be used for discussion, especially within a designated group or forum.

Ask thoughtful questions. Prompt stories and examples. Draw out comparisons and contrasts. Explore the application of ideas to life.

*Do I have a speaking topic—or a series of several—that can be adapted generate discussion?*

## **SOLUTION #8: TRAINING WORKBOOK**

A training workbook may be similar to a discussion guide, but it's likely to offer more structured and sequenced lessons.

Perhaps you originally delivered your presentation as an educational seminar, webinar, or sermon series. Perfect. Other presentations may adapt to training purposes too.

As you consider your possibilities, remember that learning can take place almost anywhere—in the backyard, on an airplane, and yes, in a classroom.

In a workbook, you can guide one or more learners to explore your message. You can include how-to steps and hands-on activities along with journaling and discussion questions.

Depending on the subject matter, student profile, or instructional methods, you might want to create a more complete package with a student workbook, a teacher guide, and a slide deck or video clips. All of this can be published in hard copy package or as a digital download.

*Do I speak with authority on a subject that others could learn or be trained to teach?*

## **SOLUTION #9: EMAIL SERIES**

An email list is key to building your platform as a speaker and author—an important topic that’s too big to address here. Whether you already have a growing list, or you know you need to work on it, these ideas can help you.

Much like blog posts, email can deliver a series of related messages, usually three to six, sometimes more. The content might be virtually identical to your blog. But the strategy is different and—good news—you don’t have to make the commitment that blogging requires.

Broadcast email systems allow you to schedule and automate the delivery of each message in a series. [ConvertKit](#), [Emma](#), and [MailChimp](#) are popular choices with scalable options for lists of all sizes.

You may have received a series of email messages to welcome you as a new subscriber to a blog. That's a smart option, but think beyond it too.

For example, a Christian publisher recently delivered a series of weekly Advent messages featuring book excerpts by several authors. Not only did these messages provide inspiring content and attract new email subscribers, they spread the word about books that readers might enjoy themselves or purchase as Christmas gifts for friends and family.

Consider how an email series could work with excerpts from sermon transcripts or business presentations. You might provide how-to lessons for a particular project. Or guide families through life transitions. Or deliver fresh ideas to renew inactive relationships on your list.

Another benefit of email is focus. While your blog or website may be designed to tempt clicks on various options, email can point your readers' attention toward a single call to action. And forwarding makes email easy to share.

*Do I have a one-off or seasonal speaking topic that would adapt well to a series of email messages?*

## **SOLUTION #10: SOCIAL MEDIA SERIES**

Along with your regular social media updates, you can explore a theme throughout a week or month by creating a series of related posts. To do this, you'll break up your spoken message in to bite-sized pieces. Consider numbering or graphics that help readers identify each post in the series.

Your social posts can link to your blog, echo your email series, or promote your book or e-book. And remember, if you develop questions for a journal or a discussion guide, you could also adapt them for social media. Plan ahead for integration and efficiency.

Channels like Facebook and Instagram allow longer character counts than Twitter. Even so, the most engaging posts are still 80 to 100 words, with an image or video as often as possible.

If you're using a scheduling app such as [Buffer](#) or [Hootsuite](#), even better. You can post the entire series at once. Then monitor your social media accounts to engage in the conversation as the series rolls out.

*How would a social media series complement other content solutions I'm planning to create?*

## **SOLUTION #11: RESOURCE BUNDLE**

This one's a wildcard. And by now, chances are you've already picked up on some of the ways to bundle various publishing solutions. With planning, you can create combinations that help your audience more fully learn and experience the benefits of your message. Here are just a few possibilities:

- Blog + Journal or Training Workbook
- Book + Discussion Guide + Email Series  
+ Social Media Series
- Article + E-book or Training Workbook
- Social Media Series + E-book
- Anthology + Email Series

These resource bundles can be enhanced by the integration of video and audio resources too.

As your mind is spinning through the possibilities, don't panic. Let's do a reality check on communication essentials that can help you take a thoughtful approach to publishing your message.

## REALITY CHECK

Good ideas communicated poorly are almost always perceived as bad ideas. That's the last thing you want to happen. Yet it's a risk when translating your spoken words to written form.

As a speaker, you use vocal inflections, facial expressions, and body language to convey emotional energy. You'll want to express as much of that energy as possible in the writing and packaging of your content.

Many speakers and verbal processors do the opposite. They've somehow gotten the idea that good writing needs to be more proper than the way they speak. No. Your writing should sound like you. Your voice, whether spoken or written, sets you apart.

As you develop your writing voice, make sure your message flows in a way that makes sense to your reader. If you take tangents in your speaking, you may need to reorder them in writing. And be careful of negative or humorous statements that rely on tone and timing to deliver the intended effect. What gets a laugh on stage may need to be edited to get a laugh on the page.

Your readers, along with your listeners, will become members of your audience. Describe them however you like—audience, platform, tribe. They're anybody and everybody who shares

your passion and resonates with your message. The first rule of communication is all about them: Know your audience.

Because, here's some good news:

**People appreciate and share good content.** Because you've already delivered your content in presentations, sermons, or lessons, you've had an opportunity to see how an audience responds to your message. You've sensed where your words touch a need or a nerve. You know what worked and what didn't, which gives you a head start on editing your content for publication.

But beware of the bad news:

**People are fickle consumers of content.** You are too. The truth is we all are. We just say "consumers" when we're talking about other people. All of us have options galore. It's no wonder we're choosy. We're overwhelmed.

Let's take blogging as just one example. Every day, [2.5 million posts are published on WordPress websites alone](#). Add to that social media, streaming video, and much more content clamoring for attention.

We can't possibly absorb all the information coming at us, so we give our time and attention to the content we find most rewarding. Usually it's content that is easy to access, easy to

understand, and easy to share. In other words, it's market-savvy content.

Sometimes, speakers who are motivated by a sense of calling—like helping people find fulfilling lives—don't like to think in marketing terms. As if marketing sucks the soul out of their message. But you have to be smart about consumer behavior if you want to reach and influence more people.

And here's more good news if you're a speaker, pastor, or teacher—even if you sometimes doubt yourself:

People's lives are changed for the better thanks to your message. Think of the influence you hope and pray for, multiplied by greater reach. That's why it's worth the effort to communicate well in speaking and in writing.

Writing is a way to achieve greater reach. For some people, the spoken word goes in one ear and out the other. You cringe to admit this, but it's a reality you can handle.

In addition to loyal listeners who know and appreciate you as a speaker, you could also reach an audience whose learning preference isn't wired for sound. Given the opportunity, they will read and reflect on your message. They'll let it soak in. They'll quote it and live it. How are you going to reach and influence them? The answer begins with more questions.

## MOVING FORWARD

Your goals will help you decide which publishing solutions to pursue. Maybe you already have specifics in mind, such as:

- Provide a resource to add credibility and take-home value to my speaking engagements.
- Engage unreached audiences by appealing to their needs and habits.
- Give my existing audience an outreach or referral tool to share with friends.
- Create an incentive that attracts people to purchase a resource or make a donation.
- Extend the useful life of archived content by introducing it in new ways.

If necessary, take the opportunity to clarify your goals by asking questions about the three following aspects of any publishing endeavor.

**Content:** You already have a head start on content. Now it's time to dig into your archives and determine the message you want to deliver in writing. Also consider the content you are developing now or planning for the future.

*Do I have content that is ‘evergreen’ or essentially timeless? Or does it speak to an immediate topic? What unique value does it deliver?*

**Platform:** It’s crucial that you build your platform, which begins with understand your audience and the needs and desires that attract them to your message.

Be very specific when describing your audience—age, life stage, mindset, occupation, gender, income, and anything you can think of to complete the picture of a living, breathing person. Your audience is not a statistic or a list count.

*What audience am I already reaching? What other audiences have needs or interests that would resonate with my message? How am I prepared to engage with existing and new audiences?*

**Solutions:** As you weigh your options, keep in mind that you can begin with a *minimum viable product* before you go big. For example, you could develop blog posts, an email series, or an e-book before investing in a chapter book.

*How do my audiences prefer to engage with content? How can I package my message to appeal to them? Would it be best for me to begin with a minimum viable product?*

With these questions in mind, you're can revisit which solutions you'll use to transform your spoken message into published content. Among the 11 solutions outlined in this e-book, perhaps one of them stood out to you. Start there.

No matter how choose to move forward, you'll multiply your reach and influence. All because you want to see people's lives change for the better. And isn't that what got you talking in the first place?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hello, I'm Rebecca, the owner and creative spark behind Story Solutions. I'm a collaborative writer, ghostwriter, and story branding coach with more than 25 years of experience in cause marketing and communications. I work with speakers, leaders, and organizations to extend their influence in writing.



You can find me at [www.Story.Solutions](http://www.Story.Solutions).

## MADE FOR SHARING

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