

Reader Views

Book reviews, for readers, by readers.

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Interview with Patricia L. Fry

Author of *The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book*

Welcome to Reader Views Patricia. You have written a book that is a definitive guide to successful authorship detailing critical information about the publishing industry. It is a pleasure to have you speak about your book with Juanita Watson.

Juanita: Patricia, you have written many books and articles regarding writing, publishing and promoting books. What motivated you to write this one?

Patricia: “The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book” was a longtime coming. My first few writing/publishing-related books were sort of niche topics—article-writing, book promotion, how to write a book proposal and a handbook for young writers. But I realized, while working with authors and talking with hopeful authors at book festivals and writers’ conferences, that many of them were still struggling. They were approaching the process of writing a book all wrong. They needed a great deal more help, guidance, information and resources than I had offered through my other books or than I could offer through my numerous articles and workshops. I recommend my books and colleagues books, but I truly couldn’t find what they needed under one cover. So about a year and a half ago, I decided to write that book.

Juanita: “The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book” is full of invaluable information that must have taken years research. Do you feel your book would help with all problems a new or experienced author may encounter?

Patricia: The publishing industry is changing and there are a lot more options and opportunities out there for authors now than ever before. Of course, authors are going to come up with new questions from time to time—that’s why I always ask people who purchase any of my books to contact me via email if they have any questions that the book didn’t answer. Although, I worked on the book for a mere ten months, it represents 20 years of my own experiences as a published author and as a publisher. It is also a result of the research I do every month (and have done for the past 5 years) toward writing the SPAWN Market Update. This is an 8 to 13-page newsletter brimming with industry news, resources, publisher/agent interviews and opportunities for authors and freelance writers. This time-consuming project has helped me to keep my finger on the pulse of the industry. Plus, I used all of the best publishing-related books, newsletters and

Web sites I know about to collaborate my information and I interviewed several industry professionals. If a hopeful or struggling author reads this book from cover to cover and then uses it as a reference while they're working on their project, they have a much better chance of succeeding in this business.

Juanita: I truly appreciate your authenticity and the heartfelt concern you have for authors. You make yourself very accessible through email, and continue to keep current in the industry, passing on new information through your newsletters. What has been the feedback so far from readers of your new book?

Patricia: The feedback, so far (and remember, this book is only a few months old), has been extremely positive. But think about it, the hopeful or struggling authors who read this book and takes it seriously, can conceivably save thousands of dollars, earn thousands of dollars and, potentially, experience the publishing success they so desire. I do enjoy helping authors and freelance writers. You know, there wasn't much help or support out there for serious career writers when I entered into this biz. I feel as though I blazed some trails. I didn't realize this until people started asking me for advice. I was startled by how much information I had gathered through my experiences over the years. And I have to tell you, I feel blessed to have experienced the yukky right along with the good, because you learn from both. I've made mistakes. I've been treated poorly by publishers and editors. And I am constantly researching, watching, studying and learning for my own benefit as well as for those who read my books and articles.

Juanita: Why do you feel so many people have the dream of writing their own book?

Patricia: I wonder about that sometimes. Maybe a large portion of the population has always wanted to write a book and we just didn't know it because it was a far-reaching dream. The dream has become more realistic. Now, anyone can write and publish a book. We have the technology and we have countless more publishing options.

Juanita: Many people attempt to write and publish a book yet get caught up in the business aspect of the process. What advice would you give to aspiring authors that get discouraged along the way?

Patricia: Know what publishing is all about BEFORE you write the book. Study the publishing industry. Understand publishing options and the ramifications of those options. Understand your responsibilities as a published author. Write a book proposal before writing the book, especially for a nonfiction book. If you are writing fiction, at least be aware of the genre in which you are writing and know your options. Who is your audience? What is your competition? Also be prepared to promote your book. Almost all new authors, who have not done their homework, go into publishing expecting their book to sell by the truckload through major bookstores nationwide. They don't realize, until they learn something about the publishing industry, that the author is responsible for promoting his/her own book. It's a shock when they find out that their book may never see the inside of Borders or Barnes and Noble. This doesn't mean that it won't sell. It might sell well in an appropriate venue. But how will the author recognize the appropriate venue unless he/she spends some time understanding the industry and his/her responsibility within it. If you know what you're getting into beforehand, you will be prepared and you have a much greater chance of succeeding.

Juanita: You have written many books and articles, are president of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network), teach seminars and workshops, and have an editing and consulting service. What is the most rewarding aspect of the work you do?

Patricia: I've been writing for publication for over 30 years. Hundreds of my nonfiction articles have appeared in over 200 different magazines such as *Writer's Digest*, *Canadian Author*, *Writer's Journal*, *Entrepreneur*, *Cats Magazine*, *Woman's Own*, *Your Health*, *Catholic Digest* and many others. I'm the author of 24 books. Eight of them are writing/publishing-related. I established my own publishing company in 1983 before publishing was fashionable. I love to write and still do a lot of writing. But I've discovered that it is more rewarding to help others with their writing projects. I do that through my books, workshops and by working one-on-one with clients.

Juanita: Where do you think the future is in books with so much information being available over the internet?

Patricia: There is nothing like holding a book in your hands or curling up with a good book. The Internet is a wonderful research tool, but a book can have so much more information in easily accessible form. All you have to do is refer to the index in order to locate the information you need. Sometimes, as you know, it takes hours to find enough information or appropriate resources on the Internet.

Juanita: What has been the biggest challenge you've overcome in your writing career that would be inspiration to your readers?

Patricia: Probably becoming comfortable with risk-taking. Anytime you put yourself out there through your writing, you are making yourself somewhat vulnerable. I mean, rejection is always a possibility. In order to be successful as a freelance writer, you must risk rejection. In order to be successful as an author, you must take even greater risks—trusting a publisher or publishing service or financially backing your project, for example. This is why it is so very important to understand the business of publishing before entering into it. For some, various methods of book promotion means taking risks—risking rejection from the public who might bypass your book at a book festival, for example, or who may walk out on you while you're speaking about your book. For me, hanging out my shingle as an editor and publishing consultant was risky. But I've learned to weigh the negatives against the positives in these situations. Sure, I'm risking something every time I put myself out there in any manner—self-publishing a new book, requesting a book review, agreeing to an interview, giving a workshop, attempting a new promotional activity. But one thing is for sure, if I don't take the risk, I won't ever have the opportunity to succeed in that area. And I have to say that I have experienced success far more often than not. When I didn't, it was usually due to lack of research and knowledge.

Juanita: Patricia, that is great advice that obviously comes from experience. Your career and present endeavors can only serve as great inspiration to authors and aspiring authors. I have read the book review written for *Reader Views* and have to completely agree with the rave recommendation given by the writer. She, an author herself, states that your book is uncomplicated and straightforward, and she 'can't see how you could possibly fail' using the information and guidance in your book. You have compiled a wonderful book Patricia, certainly outperforming others on the market. Do you have any additional comments for your readers?

Patricia: Keep on writing. If it is in your heart to write, write. But when you decide to enter into the big, unknown field of publishing, shift gears from creator to businessman/woman. If you can't do this, hire someone to work alongside you in your publishing endeavors. And don't forget to have fun along the way.

Patricia's website: <http://www.matilijapress.com/> and blog: <http://www.matilijapress.com/publishingblog/>