



## Publishing Nonfiction Books on Spirituality

benebell wen

### MODULE 5

### Commentary

*In Modules 1 through 3, commentary was provided as downloadable audio files. However, by Module 4, the laptop computer I used to record the audio went defunct, so the course materials that should have been presented as audio, with the category label “AUD” were just the PDF documents of my transcript notes prepared for audio recording. For the final Module 5, what should be the audio lecture portion of the course is now presented as written commentaries. Much of the commentary was written with the intention of being script, so please forgive the casual, informal style of the content. In the course syllabus, all Commentary files will bear the category label “ESS” for blog-style essay.*

## The Author’s PR Schedule

Recall how busy you felt when you were writing your book and going through the publishing process. Your book promotion campaign schedule is going to be busier than that. If your book promotion schedule doesn’t leave you feeling like you wish it was more like the “good old days” when you were just “busy” writing your book, then you’re not doing your book promotion correctly.

If you want to make it to the top, optimize public exposure for your book, and you don’t want to pay money to hire a publicist, then you need to be scouring the Internet for media platforms that you might have missed, might not have known about, and media contacts. As I keep repeating, check the “Spirituality” or “Lifestyles” categories of various mainstream media platforms and skim for articles that are even remotely related to your book. Note the byline and the journalist who wrote that article. Can you find that journalist’s contact information? Query that journalist and see if he or she might be interested in covering a story about your book or an angle that relates to your book. For instance, let’s say you’ve written a book on tarot and you’re now holding yourself out as a tarot expert. You find a journalist who has covered psychic predictions of political events. Okay, cool. That’s enough up your alley. Reach out to that journalist about some recent, timely, and “newsworthy” beat relating to tarot and how you can help be a point of authority on that topic. For example, a recent rise in tarot use by Hollywood celebrities, or tarot and psychology now trending, or whatever.

Also plan to schedule at least one interview per week for the two months prior to release of your book during the pre-order phase, the month of your book release, and for three

months after your book release. This window of opportunity is when your book feels the most fresh and so it's easiest to generate buzz about the book.

Doing an event that raises your public profile as an author must become part of your everyday routine. It has to be like the mundane weekly ritual of swinging by the grocery store, or taking the kids to piano lessons every Wednesday night. You need to make PR part of your weekly work. Don't let a week lapse without having done *something* that week to raise your public profile.

That's how you ensure the success of your book, how you make sure you get as many eyeballs to your book as you possibly can.

Make it part of your daily to-do list to check media sources for any news that's trending that comes close to your areas of expertise. If yes, pounce on that immediately. Remember how you'd wake up an hour early to write your book? Well now, wake up an hour early and spend 30 minutes checking online sources for new opportunities to gain publicity and spend another 30 minutes drafting and working on query letters to gain more publicity.

Create checklists in your daily planner and write notes to yourself about your observations on topics in spirituality that's trending. Witchcraft making its way back in the mainstream news and you've seen a couple different reporters getting on that bandwagon by writing outsider-looking-in pieces? Did you just publish a book on witchcraft essentials? Then you better get out there and reach out to these reporters, telling them all about who you are, how long you've been practicing witchcraft, and oh, by the way, you've even written a book on traditional witchcraft. They'll love to interview you for their pieces. Even better: did so-and-so journalist totally distort the practice of witchcraft in that recent viral piece in mainstream media on witches? Write a response piece and contact the editors of that magazine, introducing yourself, why you're a credible source for writing a response piece, and then try to get your article published. Most likely your response piece will go viral, too.

After finishing your book, your writing days are nowhere near done. Now instead of writing in the manuscript, you're writing articles on tangential topics related to your book, writing query letters, and writing up answers to interview questions. If the amount of writing you're doing now during the book promotion phase isn't anywhere near the amount of writing you were doing finishing your book, then you're doing PR wrong. You've got to work your ass off at PR if you want to effectively promote your book and give that book its best chance at success.