



# 5 Paths to Publishing Your First or Next Book

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*Choose what  
works for you!*

*“Writing your story will  
transform you. Publishing your  
story will transform the world.”*

**~ Ellie Shefi**

#1 International Best-Selling  
Author, Publisher, Member of the  
National Academy of Best-Selling  
Authors, Quilly Award Recipient

# What is the power of publishing?

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## **Increase Your Credibility**

Establish yourself as an expert and authority in your field.

## **Expand Your Audience**

Reach new clients, customers, and fans by sharing your expertise.

## **Amplify Your Message**

You were made to change the world—share your story for generations to come!

# What are the options?

In the past, you had to go through traditional publishing to see your book in print. Today, you have 5 main options for publishing your book:

## 5 Paths to Publishing a book:

1. Traditional
2. Self
3. Independent
4. Hybrid
5. Vanity

The key is to pick a path that works best for you and your goals.



# Path 1: Traditional Publishing



# Traditional Publishing

## Who's involved? And why?

- **You:** You write your manuscript.
- **Your Literary Agent:** Your agent shops your work to the big publishing houses, with the goal of one of the publishing houses agreeing to contract for the option to publish your manuscript. Your agent may negotiate your contract on your behalf.
- **Big Publishing House:** They decide if they want to give you a contract. They handle editing, formatting, design, printing, distribution, and at least some initial publicity and marketing.

## How does it work?

If you get a contract with one of the big publishing houses, it doesn't guarantee they will publish your book. The publisher will hold **exclusive rights** to your work, which means if they choose to publish your book, they have full discretion when it comes to editing, formatting, cover design, and even the title. The good news is that they handle everything for you: editing, design, formatting, printing, distribution, and initial marketing.

How do you get paid? You may get an **advance on your royalties**. If you do, you'll get some payment up front to sustain you during the writing and editing process, however it counts against your royalties (the percentage of revenue you get from book sales). If book sales are low, you generally will not have to pay the advance back—but you won't see any additional income either. Remember, **your agent will also take a cut of everything you make**.

If your book isn't a big hit right out of the gate, you're going to need to take on **additional publicity and marketing yourself** if you want to make any money. This can be costly and time consuming.





# Bottom line

*Is traditional publishing best for you?*

Fewer than 1% of submitted proposals are ultimately printed by a traditional publishing house. Most successful proposals come from professional writers with long track records of profitable book sales or from people who already have a substantial following such as celebrities, politicians, or high-profile executives.

If your goal is to maximize the prestige and credibility that comes with being a published author, you can always pursue traditional publishing and, if that doesn't work out, choose a different path later.

If you don't have the time or resources to take your chances with traditional publishing, keep reading for an option that may be a better fit for you and your goals.

# Path 2: Self-Publishing





# Self-Publishing

## What's the “self” part of self-publishing?

When you're self-publishing, you're not just the author. You're also in charge of your own editing, formatting, cover design, and marketing.

You'll need to choose a company to handle printing and distribution. Though you have options here, you take on all the financial risk and upfront costs. You'll want to carefully compare these services to ensure your investment is well spent.

## What can I expect from self-publishing companies?

For self-publishing, you'll be looking for a print-on-demand (POD) company. Each one works a little differently but, across the board, you get to keep control of your rights and set your own list price. Your costs and your percentage of royalties will vary.

If you go with Amazon's publishing service, you can upload your manuscript and have your book available to readers in a matter of days. That includes the eBook and print editions. Amazon provides a decent amount of support when it comes to guiding you through the process. They even have a simple cover design tool if you haven't already created your book cover. Your per book printing costs and percentage of royalties to be earned are stated up front.

Other companies like IngramSpark, Book Baby, and Lulu have similar features. Carefully compare your options so you know exactly what you're getting—know what support the company provides, what your costs will be, and what your percentage of royalties will be.



# Bottom line

## *Is self-publishing best for you?*

Self-publishing is ideal for writers whose primary objective is to get their message out into the world. Since anyone can self-publish, doing so will not boost your credibility or authority.

Self-publishing is also a great option if you're a person of many talents **or** you have time to find, interview, and hire experienced editors, formatters, and cover designers (as well as a marketing and promotions team if you're looking to have your book rank as a bestseller). You'll be managing all aspects of the process except the actual printing and distribution, so it's important that you have the time to devote to doing so.

If you're drawn to the benefits of self-publishing, but you just want to write, independent publishing might be a better fit for you. Keep reading to learn more.

# Path 3:

# Independent Publishing



# Independent Publishing

## How is it more convenient than self-publishing?

With independent publishing, all you need to provide is your manuscript. Independent publishers have relationships with vetted and trusted editors, formatters, cover designers, illustrators, printers, and marketers who can handle everything else.

There is also more flexibility when it comes to your publishing contract. Many independent publishing houses offer both complete publishing packages and a la carte services, thus allowing you to customize your services to meet your specific needs and objectives.

## What benefits can I expect from independent publishing houses?

1. **“Done-for-you” service.** Just like with traditional publishing houses, you can expect an independent publisher to handle everything once you hand over your manuscript. Unlike traditional publishing, you don’t need an agent, you know with certainty that your manuscript will be published, and you have more control over the final product.
2. **No surprise costs.** A reputable independent publishing house will breakdown your costs upfront so you never have to worry about unexpected expenses. This is a major benefit compared to self-publishing where the costs for hiring your own team can quickly spiral out of control.
3. **More credibility.** While not as prestigious as traditional publishing, independent publishing can help to boost your credibility and position you as an authority in your field.

# Bottom line

*Is independent publishing best for you?*

For many, this is the fastest, most convenient path to publishing a quality book.

Independent publishing is much more accessible than traditional publishing, which means you have a substantially higher likelihood of actually seeing your book in print. Unlike self-publishing, your book is being published by a professional outside source, so it can give your credibility a boost.

If you're able to manage the upfront costs, you'll be rewarded with a higher percent of your sales revenue than traditional publishing without the hassle of self-publishing.

# Path 4: Hybrid Publishing





# Hybrid Publishing

## What is hybrid publishing?

Just as the name suggests, hybrid publishing combines elements of traditional publishing, self-publishing, and independent publishing.

## How does hybrid publishing compare?

Similar to self-publishing and independent publishing, the financial risk falls on the author, but the royalties are higher than you would get with traditional publishing.

Just like independent and traditional publishing, you're only responsible for the original manuscript. Similar to independent publishing, you'll have more say in the final product than you would with traditional publishing.

Hybrid publishers have strict editorial standards. Similar to traditional publishing houses, they require manuscripts to be submitted for review and approval.

Though your chances of securing a contract with a hybrid publisher are greater than with a traditional publishing house, you still have to invest the time and effort into a submission process that does not guarantee you'll ever get your book published.



# Bottom line

## *Is hybrid publishing best for you?*

Every hybrid publisher is different, so you may be able to find one that's a great fit for you. The question is, will they feel the same?

Similar to traditional publishing, hybrid publishers are highly selective and do not accept all submissions. It is possible that you will invest significant time into submitting your manuscript only to have it rejected.

If the hassle and risk of the submission process isn't for you, you may want to revisit the option for independent publishing.

# Path 5: Vanity Publishing



# Vanity Publishing

## Isn't vanity publishing the same as self-publishing?

While both vanity and self-publishing are available to anyone who can cover the upfront costs, the similarity ends there.

Vanity publishing is a 100% “pay to play” option with no true quality standards. Fees are higher than self-publishing options, and often vanity publishers own the ISBN for your book; dictate the cover design, formatting, and sale price of your book; retain control of your final manuscript, and receive the royalties from the sale of your book.

## What can I expect if I choose a vanity publishing house?

Vanity presses have more in common with a copy machine than they do a publishing house. Although they present themselves as publishers, they are not publishing houses in the true sense.

While they may have someone do a quick single-pass editing review of the final manuscript, no one will review the actual content of manuscript or do any type of detailed quality control.

Your upfront costs will typically be very high and you may not receive royalties from the sale of the book. You need to be especially careful to read the fine print so you understand your financial commitment and exactly what you receive in return.

While many vanity publishing houses lure you with promises of enhanced credibility, in fact, because no one will review the content of your manuscript or ensure high editorial standards, releasing a subpar book with a vanity press may actually damage your reputation.



# Bottom line

*Is vanity publishing best for you?*

Vanity presses are known for preying on inexperienced authors, overpromising results, and delivering low-quality products at a very high cost to the author.

If your dream is to be a published author, go with a real publisher. If you want to share your story with the world, be sure you have a publishing partner that will support your goals without exploiting you. If you hope to attract new clients, work with experienced publishing professionals to create and deliver a quality book, inside and out.

And, if you're looking to enhance your credibility or earn money by publishing your book, don't even think about working with a vanity press.

# Next Steps

Choosing a publishing path comes down to one question: **what's your goal?** Evaluate what you want to achieve by publishing your book, then consider what publishing experience you want to have and what support you need to make it happen.

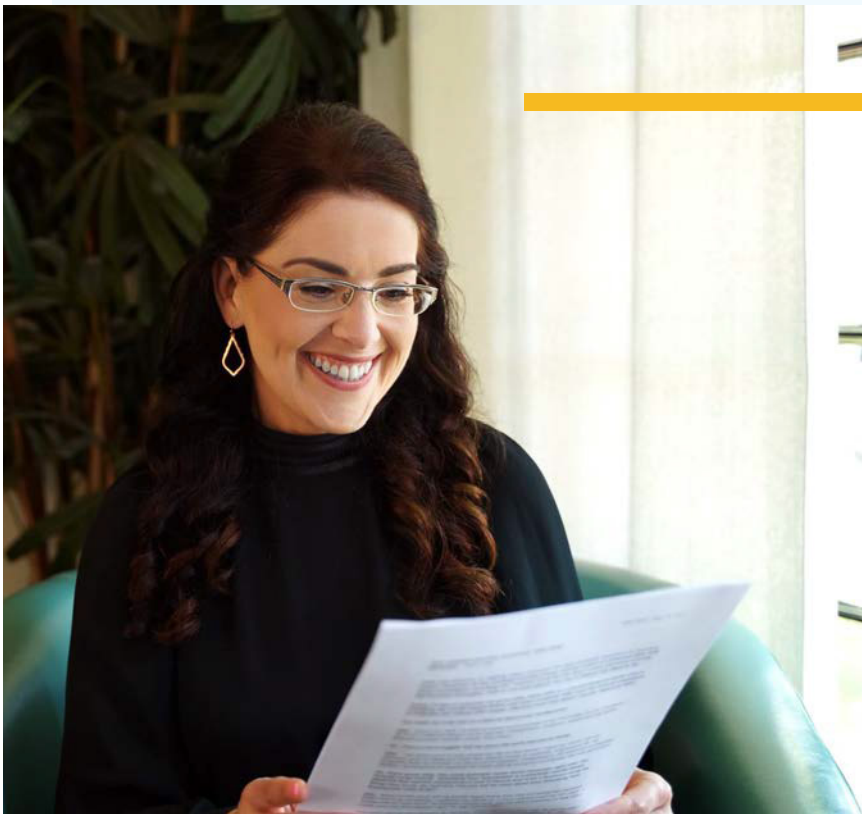
If you still have questions about which publishing path is the best fit for you and your goals, I'm here to help.

Visit [www.EllieShefi.com](http://www.EllieShefi.com) and book a free consult call with me. I'd love to answer your questions and guide you through the process!





# About Ellie



Ellie is your go-to coach for making your dreams of becoming a published author a reality.

She's a #1 international best-selling author, publisher, member of the National Academy of Best-Selling Authors, and Quilly Award recipient who has helped countless aspiring authors get their books written and published with clarity and ease.

[www.EllieShefi.com](http://www.EllieShefi.com)



@ellieshefi