WHAT BOOK SHOULD I WRITE

Stop Overthinking It and Choose Your Business Book Topic

GILLIAN WHITNEY

Easy Peasy Books Series

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For the prospective authors who already know they've got a book in them but are stuck because they're overthinking it.

You know who you are.

This one's for you.

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Introduction

Standing at the Crossroads Like Alice

"Would you tell me, please, which way
I ought to go from here?"
"That depends a good deal on where you
want to get to," said the Cat.
"I do not much care where," said Alice.
"Then it does not matter which way you go,"
said the Cat.

— Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

For twenty-one years, that was me. I stood at the crossroads with a head full of book ideas and no clue which direction to walk. I kept saying, "I want to write a book," but like Alice, I didn't much care which one. I just wanted to get somewhere, anywhere, as long as it meant I was finally an author.

But you? You're different. You're reading this book, which means you do care where you want to go. You don't want to write just *any* book. You want to write the *right* book. A book that supports your business, reflects your expertise,

and makes sense for where you are right now. A book that actually makes sense for you.

And if you feel stuck, I understand that completely. I've been stuck so many times that I could give guided tours of that stuck place. My notebooks were overflowing, my computer filled with digital scraps, and I had enough half-started manuscripts to wallpaper a small room. I became the queen of unfinished books. If that sounds familiar, you're in the right place.

Let me take you back to the moment all this began.

I've shared this story in more detail before, in another book, but this time what matters is what finally became clear.

Many years ago, I was pushing a stroller with my toddler in it while listening to a scratchy old Les Brown cassette tape about not dying with your music still in you. As I walked, I felt a spark of determination and said to myself, "Someday I'm going to write a book."

Fast-forward twenty-one years. I was walking down a familiar path, only this time pushing a stroller with my little dog in it. I was listening to Tony Robbins on my phone, and suddenly the scene felt like an instant replay from my past. Same kind of path, same kind of inspirational voice nudging me toward my potential. Two decades had passed, and I still hadn't written my book.

The dream was the same, but I wasn't the same person. Somehow "someday" had turned into "never."

I realized the problem wasn't that I lacked ideas. The problem was that I had too many of them. If I'd only had one book idea, I probably could have powered through it. Instead, I collected ideas like they were going out of style. Fiction, nonfiction, business topics, personal stories. The more ideas I gathered, the less progress I made. Every new idea felt like a possible book, which only made it harder to choose. And every time I tried to write one, another potential book would wave its hand and shout, "Pick me! Pick me!"

This is how twenty years slipped by.

While I dreamed of becoming an author, all I really had was a collection of half-started manuscripts. Eventually I started to worry that I'd missed the boat on this one.

Looking back, I now see that my problem was in asking the wrong question. I kept asking, "What should I write about?" when I should have been asking, "Which book should I write first?" That one simple shift can change everything. The first question keeps you stuck. The second moves you forward.

Who This Book Is For

This book is for business professionals who want to write their first nonfiction book but feel stuck choosing which idea to pursue. Maybe you have too many ideas competing for attention. Maybe you have content scattered across different platforms and don't know how to organize it. Maybe you keep starting books but never finishing them.

If you've been saying "I want to write a book" for months or years but can't seem to make any progress, this book is for you.

What to Expect

This is not a book about how to write your manuscript (I cover that in *From Expert to Author: How YOU Can Write YOUR Business Book*). This is a book about making the decision so you can start writing with confidence.

By the end of this short guide, you'll have:

- Identified content you've already created that could become your book
- Narrowed your possibilities from many ideas to your top three
- Evaluated those ideas using a clear, practical framework
- Chosen your first book with clarity and confidence
- Created a "Not Yet List" to honor your other book ideas without letting them distract you

The majority of the work can often be completed in a single plane ride. Skip the in-flight movie and choose your book instead. Or spread it across a few focused evenings if you prefer. It's designed to be quick, practical, and effective. No overwhelm. No endless analysis. Just clear steps that move you forward.

Your First Book

Marie Kondo teaches people to hold their belongings and ask, "Does this spark joy?" I needed to do the same with my book ideas. Not to see which ideas sparked joy, but which ideas made sense for me to write right now. Some ideas needed to be saved for later. Some needed to be thanked and released. But only one needed to be chosen as the place to begin.

Your first book doesn't need to be perfect or profound. It doesn't need to solve every problem in your field or be the book you'll be remembered for. It just needs to be the right book for right now. The book that aligns with who you are, who you want to help, and where your business is headed.

"Your first book doesn't need to be perfect or profound. It just needs to be the right book for right now."

Because once you finish your first book, the second becomes much easier. And the third even easier than that. The hardest part isn't the writing. It's the choosing.

I wrote this book because it's the book I wish someone had handed me twenty years ago. I wasted too many years circling the same decision, starting and stopping, always wondering what if. I don't want that for you.

You have ideas worth sharing. You have expertise someone needs. You have a unique way of seeing the world that could make someone else's journey easier. Your readers don't need your book twenty years from now. They need it today.

So in this book, we're going to explore your ideas, identify your ideal reader, and look closely at the content you already have that could become a book. Think of this as your guide through the publishing rabbit hole, without all the twists and turns Alice encountered.

I took far too long to choose my first book. Not because I was unprepared, but because I was overthinking instead of deciding. Don't repeat my mistake. Don't let the next twenty years slip by while your unwritten books follow you around like persistent Cheshire Cats.

You're going to choose the right book to write first. And you are going to choose it with intention, clarity, and confidence.

Ready? Together, we'll figure out which way makes the most sense to go from here.

Chapter 1

When Too Many Ideas Become the Problem

"Why, sometimes I've believed as many as
six impossible things before breakfast,"
said the White Queen

If you're anything like me, you probably wake up believing in at least six different book ideas before breakfast. The problem isn't your creativity. The problem is knowing which direction to take first.

This chapter is about why so many smart, capable professionals get stuck before they ever begin. Having multiple book ideas isn't a flaw. It's a sign that you think deeply, notice patterns, and care about what you share. The challenge isn't coming up with ideas. It's choosing one without feeling like you're making a mistake.

The Curse of Creativity

You sit down to focus on one idea. Almost immediately, another one taps you on the shoulder and asks for attention.

That experience is more common than most people admit.

When you have many good options, the abundance itself becomes the obstacle. Choosing one feels risky because every other option feels like something you might be giving up.

It's like standing in an ice cream shop with dozens of flavors and a growing line behind you. You want to make the right choice, so you sample and compare. You think it through carefully. The pressure builds. Somehow, you still walk away without ordering. Or even worse, you order three flavors, take a bite of each, and let them all melt.

For years, that was me. My ideas lived everywhere. Half-finished notebooks. Digital documents. Workshops I taught. Talks I gave and never revisited. I was constantly creating, but nothing ever became a finished book.

So Many Books Inside You

If you have more than one book idea, it doesn't mean you lack focus. It means you've lived, learned, and paid attention.

Books often grow out of:

- Problems you've solved repeatedly

- Patterns you've noticed others miss
- Experiences that changed how you think

Each of those could become a book. And one day, many of them probably will.

Even while writing this book about choosing which book to write first, I collected new ideas. A publishing guide. A gratitude book. A book of behind-the-scenes stories about famous authors. Every one of them felt important.

Every one of them also threatened to pull me away from finishing what I'd already started.

Here's what I learned the hard way: One completed book is worth more than ten half-written ones.

Traps That Keep You Stuck

Indecision rarely looks like procrastination. More often, it looks like being thoughtful, responsible, or strategic.

Here are some of the most common traps.

Research That Never Ends

You tell yourself you need more information before you can decide. More Google searches. More case studies. More preparation.

Research can be useful, but at a certain point it stops helping and starts protecting you from making a decision.

Comparison That Undermines Confidence

You notice that other people have already written about your topic. You start questioning whether you have anything new to add.

You're not trying to write the first book on a subject. You're writing the book that only you can write, shaped by *your* experience and *your* perspective.

Perfection That Delays Action

You convince yourself the idea needs more clarity. Or better timing. Or one more round of thinking.

There is no perfect first book. Waiting for one keeps you in planning mode indefinitely.

Distraction Disguised as Inspiration

A new idea appears and feels exciting. It seems more interesting than the one you were just working on.

New ideas feel good because they don't require commitment yet. But constantly restarting means nothing ever gets finished.

The Stories We Tell Ourselves

You tell yourself you're too busy. That this isn't the right season. That you'll come back to it later.

Underneath those stories is often a quieter fear. Fear of judgment. Fear of being wrong. Fear of choosing the wrong thing.

The stories feel reasonable. They also keep the book unwritten.

The Cost of Not Choosing

Keeping your options open sounds wise, but it has a cost.

Professionally, your expertise stays scattered. Your reader keeps waiting. Opportunities pass quietly by.

Personally, your confidence erodes. Your dream stays in the someday category. That inner voice asking why you haven't done this yet gets louder and louder.

The biggest cost is simple. While you're debating which book to write, none of them get written.

I know this from my own experience. I often wonder how many people I could have helped if I'd simply chosen one idea and followed it through.

"One completed book is worth more than ten half-written ones."

Permission Granted

Here's what I wish someone had told me earlier.

You don't have to choose forever. You just have to choose first.

Choosing one book does not mean abandoning the others. It means giving one idea your full attention instead of splitting your energy across all of them.

Later in this book, you'll create a Not Yet List. It's a place to safely store your other ideas so they don't compete for your attention while you focus.

Think of your book ideas like travel plans. You may want to visit many destinations. You can't go everywhere at once. You choose one trip, pack for it, and go. The others will still be there when you return.

The First Book Advantage

Your first book doesn't need to be your most ambitious or most important work.

It only needs to be helpful to your reader, aligned with where you are right now, and possible to complete.

Every author you admire had a first book. Not their best book. Just their first.

And here's the part most people miss. Your first book becomes the foundation that makes every future book easier.

The hardest part isn't the writing. It's the choosing.

That's what this book is here to help you do.

In *Alice in Wonderland*, the problem was never that Alice couldn't walk. It was that she didn't know which direction to take. Once she understood where she wanted to go, the path mattered a lot more.

You're at that same crossroads now. You don't need to rush forward or have everything figured out. You just need to choose a direction.

This book won't help you write faster. It will help you choose wisely.

Looking Ahead

In the next chapter, we'll look at book ideas that are already closer than you think. Ideas you may have been building toward for years without realizing it.