

A Practical Guide

PLATFORM BUILDING 101 FOR SPIRITUAL WRITERS

www.writingforyourlife.com

ABOUT THIS PRESENTATION

- Targeted at spiritual writers in the platform-building stage
- Part 1: Strategic; Part 2: Tactical
- IMHO
- I am *NOT* a writer...this is from an entrepreneur's perspective

MARKETING IS NOT A DIRTY WORD

- The goal of your book is (or should be...) to somehow help someone
- How can you help them if they don't know who you are and what you have to offer?
- If you really believe that God is speaking through you, then this is sacred and holy work...

THE 2 MOST IMPORTANT THINGS

1. Find your market niche – that open space in the market, with adequate size, where you have expertise and can become known
2. Consistently and persistently create content to position yourself as the thought leader in that niche

THE CHALLENGE TODAY

- To self-publish or traditional-publish, you must have a platform (a following)
- It is difficult to establish a platform when everyone is online, trying to do the same thing
 - Not to mention all of the political angst
- So how do you rise above the noise?

THE MARK SCHAEFER FORMULA*

- Step One: Finding your place (identity)
- Step Two: Finding your space
- Step Three: Finding your fuel (content)
- Step Four: Creating an actionable audience

* From “Known; The Handbook for Building and Unleashing Your Personal Brand in the Digital Age”

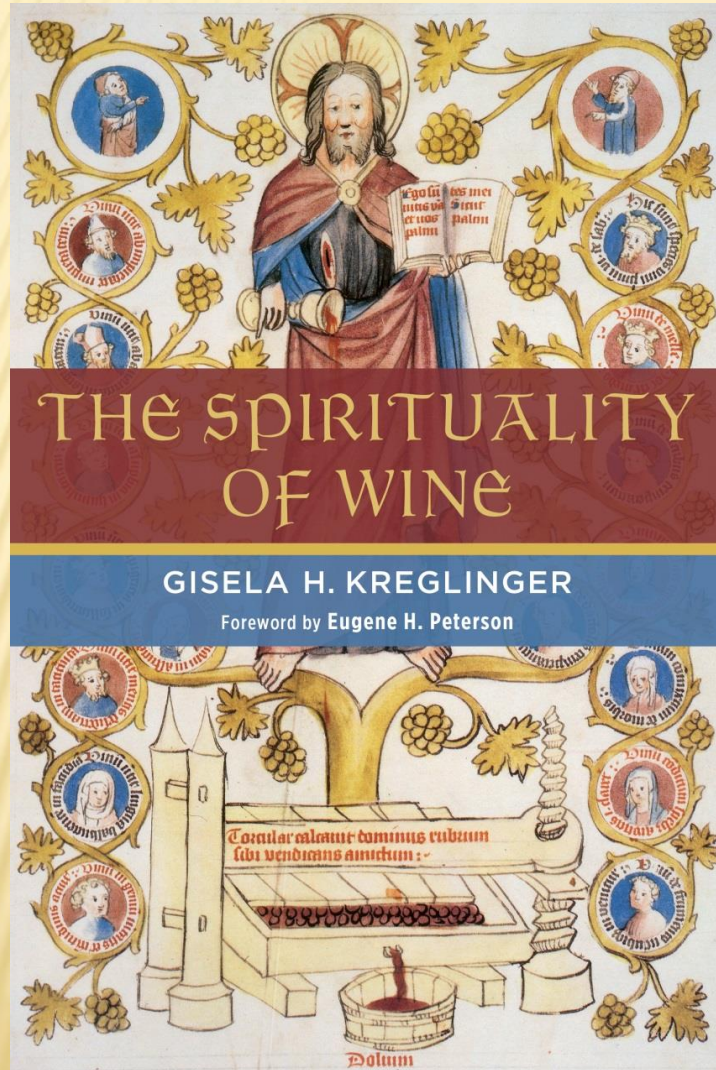
FINDING YOUR PLACE

- Place: “a sustainable interest and something you want to be known for”
 - Aligned with your strengths
 - Provides purpose by benefitting others
 - Distinctive topic
 - Inexhaustibly fascinating to you
- Finish the sentence: “Only I...”
- Gallup Company: Strengths Finder Test
- Write 35 headlines

FINDING YOUR SPACE

- Space: “an uncontested or under-occupied niche with enough people to matter”
 - The primary area in which people fail
- Potential methods for narrowing your focus
 - Area A and Area B (example: wine and faith)
 - Demographics (example: age group)
 - Geography (example: Alaska)
 - Interests (example: bicycling)
 - Platform type (example: podcasting)
 - Curation (example: Writing for Your Life)

FINDING YOUR SPACE: WINE AND FAITH



“...a fresh, holistic vision of the Christian life that sees God at work in all created things, including vineyards, the work of vintners, and the beauty of well-crafted wine shared with others around a table”

FINDING YOUR SPACE: DEMOGRAPHICS



Rachel Held Evans:
post-evangelical
women in their 20's
and 30's

*“Searching for
Sunday”*

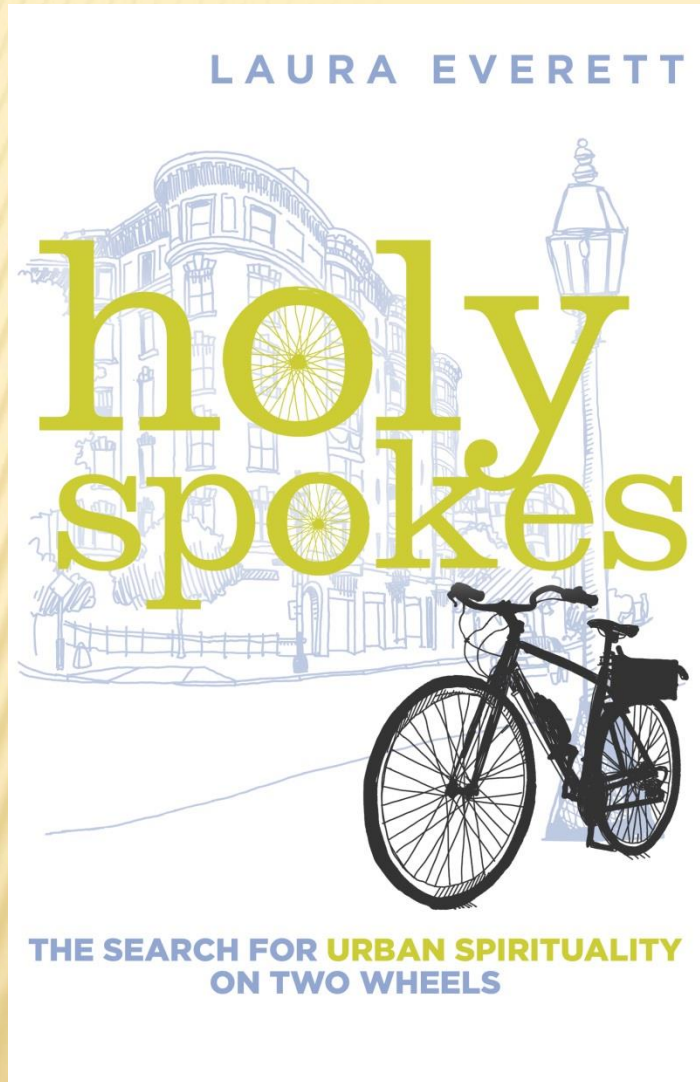
FINDING YOUR SPACE: GEOGRAPHY



Combines writings on faith and her family's Alaskan salmon fishing business

“Crossing the Waters: Following Jesus through the Storms, the Fish, the Doubt, and the Seas”

FINDING YOUR SPACE: INTERESTS



...tells the story of Everett's unlikely conversion to urban cycling. As she pedaled her way into a new way of life, Everett discovered that her year-round bicycle commuting wasn't just benefiting her body, her wallet, and her environment. It was enriching her soul.

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA MATTERS

- Your audience is there!
- Immense reach
- Publishers care (a great deal!)
- Made for content and branding
- Amazing way to be found
- No gatekeeper; direct to your audience
- Testing ground
- If you're not online, you don't exist

HOW MARKETING DIFFERS

- Modest and humble; not boastful
- Not viewed as commercial
- Professional, not too personal
- Not too frequent; not too noisy
- Engage kindly
- Artistic
- Balanced
- Partner frequently
- However, you MUST be true to who you are

YOUR PUBLISHER WILL NOT DO IT FOR YOU

- My view of publisher changes (generally speaking!)
 - They've cut staff and cut spending
 - They focus on fewer authors, existing authors
 - “Hits business”

YOUR PUBLISHER WILL NOT DO IT FOR YOU

- A publisher will:
 - Expect you to already have a website, Facebook, etc. **with a following**
 - Help with book launch promotion
- It isn't that difficult
- It isn't that time consuming

SELECTED CLIENTS



**Leslie
Leyland
Fields**

**Kathleen
Norris**



**Dominique
Gilliard**



Rev. Jen Adams

What Does It Take?

- Key drivers
 - ✓ Amazing content
 - ✓ Consistency
 - ✓ Format selection
 - ✓ Advertising

CHANNEL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Top priorities
 - Facebook, blog/website, email, Twitter, Amazon
- Secondary
 - YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn, podcasts, Goodreads
 - *These are generic recommendations – your priorities may differ*

FACEBOOK MARKETING PRIORITIES

- Consistency – leads to Trust
- Formats and Lengths
- Advertising
- Engagement

MEMES

- THE most important format
 - ~5X more sharable
- A photo with a one-liner of text
- Text is from you (excerpt or new)
- Important: use emotion to capture attention
- Important: make sure you have the right to post the photo
- Frequency: ~1X per week; boost it!

FREDERICK BUECHNER

*Here is the world.
Beautiful and terrible things will happen.
Don't be afraid.*



- Frederick Buechner

FREDERICK BUECHNER

“The place where God calls you
is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”



FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

- Bad news;
 - Very necessary in order to get new fans
- Good news:
 - Powerful, granular targeting is easy to achieve
 - Very measurable results
 - Spend a little or a lot

SUMMARY

- Social media is a must do
- Social media has tremendous value, but does not cost that much
- BE CONSISTENT!!
- Mix your formats strategically
- Spend on ads
- Marketing is not a dirty word...
- Find someone to help you get started

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For additional assistance, visit our Writer Support Services

<https://writingforyourlife.com/writer-support-services/>