

STUFF THE SAUSAGE  
Seven Things to Do While You Wait for a Contract  
by Rhonda Dragomir

A. Introduction

1. Pursuing a writing contract is like making sausage.
  - a. You fasten the casing, stuff ingredients in the hopper, and start turning the handle.
  - b. Only when the casing is full is the sausage ready to meet the world.
2. From first efforts to published book, there's a whole lot of grinding!
3. It's important to make good use of that time, so when you're ready to sign a book contract, you're fit for a gourmet meal.

B. Seven Things to do While You're Grinding

1. Build platform
  - a. Create accounts on social media.
  - b. Choose one or two that best fit you and your personality.
  - c. Start posting regularly.
  - d. Follow and be followed.
2. Network
  - a. Attend conferences, network intentionally.
  - b. Create and hand out business cards.
  - c. Make one-sheets and learn how to make an effective pitch.
  - d. Set appointments with agents and editors.
  - e. Pass the bravery test: introduce yourself to faculty members.
3. Enter contests
  - a. Contest wins are key to creating name recognition.
  - b. Find and enter contests by using the Christian Writers Market Guide.
  - c. Contests that offer critiques are of great value.
4. Study your craft and improve your skills
  - a. Find free resources and classes online.
  - b. Fiction writers – learn and master the skill of show, don't tell.
  - c. Join a critique group and get feedback from other writers.
  - d. Read award-winning books in your genre.
5. Write articles and short stories
  - a. The article market is easier to break in than the book market.
  - b. Write and submit articles to national publications.
  - c. Submit to anthologies that publish new writers (such as Chicken Soup for the Soul).
  - d. Remember to include writing credits in your proposal.
6. Study proposal writing
  - a. Learn the elements of an effective proposal.
  - b. Study the market of your genre; learn where your readers hang out.
  - c. Polish, polish, polish your bio.
  - d. Learn how to write a good synopsis.

7. Query agents
  - a. Signing with a literary agent is necessary to break into the top markets.
  - b. An agent can help you know where you have the best chance of acceptance for publication.
  - c. If you decide to self-publish or indie publish, you may not need an agent.

C. Conclusion

1. There's plenty of other things to do, but don't forget to write!
2. Pray for guidance, strength, and endurance.
3. Above all – keep grinding. 100% of writers who give up never reach publication.