

## **Insights from a Writers' Conference**

by Dennis Hooper, copyright © 2018, distributed on Tuesday, March 13, 2018

My first writers' conference....Five 90-minute sessions....Tons of information....A huge increase in my "to do" list....A realization that I should have started writing my book months ago!

My book exists--in my head. Several are swirling around in there. At some point in the conference, it became evident that if I don't write the first book, the second and third ones won't ever exist, either!

The conference changed my thinking from "Should I write a book?" to "How will I publish my book?" So much guidance was offered that I have many more questions to answer than before I attended!

Readers of my articles over the past fifteen years have occasionally suggested, "Hey, Dennis, you should write a book! Just take twenty or thirty of your best articles and put them together."

That sounds simple, and it works for humor essayists like Dave Barry and the revered Atlanta Journal columnist, Lewis Grizzard. Assembling disparate articles won't work for leaders. I'd rather write something that flows smoothly and delivers an in-depth treatment of a particularly relevant concept.

I did some reflecting yesterday, seeking to identify some big insights I gained from the conference.

**What am I waiting for?** Repeatedly it became apparent that I'd be in better shape if the book (any of my multiple options) were already written.

**I can write!** Like anyone else, I sometimes doubt my abilities. However, every time I chatted with another attendee and mentioned I'd published almost 500 articles over the past sixteen years, their eyes got wide and they said some version of, "Well, choose one to expand and write your book!"

**I have lacked vision.** Many people see themselves as future authors. Far more attended this conference in Atlanta than I expected. I found a listing of 27 additional writers' conferences just in the month of March! If all those people can imagine themselves as authors, I can envision it, too!

**Traditional publishing or nontraditional?** There are significant advantages to both! And significant disadvantages to both. This is going to take some additional investigating—and thinking!

**Writing the book is only 5% of the work!** Uh-oh! This was a huge shock! Marketing my book will fall heavily to me., even if I go with a traditional publisher.

**My "platform" is woefully small!** I heard this word more in one day than I typically do in a year. "Platform" is the number of people who know of me and might be interested in my material in a book.

**My "to do" list grew a bunch!** Although I learned a lot, I'm feeling overwhelmed. I'm clearly going to have to prioritize. And one of the items on the list that I can't overlook is writing the book!

**You can help!** You are part of my existing "platform." Will you help me expand it? Think about your colleagues or your boss. Would they like to be more effective? Send his or her name and e-mail address, requesting it be added to my distribution list. I'll contact the person and confirm it's okay.

I expect to increase the frequency of articles coming to you in the next few months, probably snippets of my book as I write it. I covet your feedback and suggestions! Thanks in advance!

\*\*\*\*\*

*Dennis Hooper is an Executive Coach in Atlanta, helping organizations improve their quality and depth of leadership. Contact him at (404)-575-3050 or e-mail to [dennis@buildingfutureleaders.com](mailto:dennis@buildingfutureleaders.com). Over 400 previous articles are on his website, [www.buildingfutureleaders.com/article-archives.html](http://www.buildingfutureleaders.com/article-archives.html).*