



I am a writer!

I AM GETTING IT DONE!

I am sharing ideas worth sharing!

I AM CREATING PASSIVE INCOME!

I AM DOING IT!

Each and Every Day!

TWELVE WEEK BOOK

FIRST CHAPTER NON-FICTION BOOK GENERATOR

Your first paragraph begins with a story. Why? Because that is how the best-selling self-help, how-to, and inspirational books begin. Can you do something different? You could. But why not start with a formula that has been proven to work by a number of New York Times bestselling authors? Max Lucado, Napoleon Hill, Robert Greene, Michele Obama, and Marie Forleo have all shown that there is a formula that works. You are writing your own ideas, and in the end, the book you will write will be unique, but by following a developmental framework that has been proven to work, you are sharing your own ideas on a proven foundation.

A well-told story does not begin at the beginning. It begins with the action. This is the first line of your book. The first line captures attention, creates intrigue, and makes the reader want to know more. It does not need to explain, share a message, or do anything else. It just needs to be interesting.

Think of the story told at the beginning of the bestselling book *Factfulness* by Hans Rosling and touted by Bill Gates and Barak Obama. The book has sold over a million copies – and that is in Japan alone! It has been translated into over thirty-six languages. The English version has sold tens of millions of copies and tens of millions of copies have been sold in other languages. By any benchmark, it is a bestseller. The opening story is from the author’s own experience. He shares how he became a doctor.

The opening line in Rosling’s introduction is: “I love the circus.”

The book is a defense of the health of our modern world. To some extent, it is a book that fits best within the genre of statistical analysis. It is also a public health book and a book that covers war, poverty, finances, and pandemic. It is a heavy book. Those who purchase the book probably have a smile when they read the unexpected first line. He goes on to briefly explain in the following sentence what he loves about the circus: “I love to watch a juggler throwing screaming chain saws in the air, or a tightrope walker performing ten flips in a row. I love the spectacle and the sense of amazement and delight at witnessing the seemingly impossible.” He then tells a story in a two-sentence paragraph: “When I was a child, my dream was to become a circus artist. My parents’ dream, though, was for me to get the good education they never had. So, I ended up studying medicine.”

Despite penning a book heavy on statistical analysis, Rosling captured the reader’s attention with stories. I will even go so far as to say that if Rosling had not captivated the reader with stories, the book would have never been a bestseller and would have ended up in the bargain bin.

Another New York Times bestselling author, Marie Forleo, used her life experience to deliver an engaging opening line. In *Everything is Figureoutable*, Forleo’s opening line is: “My mother has the tenacity of a bulldog, looks like June Cleaver, and curses like a truck driver.” She shares a few lines about her mother’s attributes and then a short paragraph on her own story as a kid where she learned to save money, clip coupons, and redeem the proof-of-purchase seals for free stuff. The point of her story is that life is not complex. That problems come our way, but that, ultimately, every problem is *figureoutable*.

Writing your own book is figureoutable. To begin writing your book, you should begin exactly as other bestselling writers do. Tell a brief story.

Think of a story from your own life, the lives of your clients or customers, or even from the public stories of well-known people. This is a story where the main character has a problem. It’s the same problem the reader has. And the story should also have a happy ending. The person with the problem overcame the problem. We do not need to know all the details; the author does not have to tell all the details. All we need is a big-picture story of someone who had a problem and found a resolution. The story does not even need to be factual.

This is important. In a non-fiction book, what is true is the truth, not the stories. Stories can be composites of previous experience or from multiple people. They can be metaphorical and even entirely fictional. In most professions, and even in non-professional books, we are required to keep the confidences of non-

public figures. This means that to be ethical, we cannot tell the real story as the facts of the story actually are. For example, as one who writes psychology books, I might think of one particular patient when I share a story. But because I cannot violate the confidentiality of a specific client, I will create a composite or change the details, geography, demographics, or other elements of that client to tell a story. What is non-fiction in the story is the meaning of the story, the takeaway from it. But the facts of most of the stories I write about are works of fiction.

Now think of the most interesting part of the story. Usually, it is the drama of the trauma or the excitement of resolution. It does not matter if this is the beginning, middle, or end of the story. It could be a statement of fact that the story will reveal or some other attention-getting sentence. This is the first line of your book.

First lines from bestselling non-fiction books:

“Life is difficult.” Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*.

“The first thing they always did was run you.” Michael Lewis, *Moneyball*.

“In the mid-1990s, the city of Baltimore was attacked by an epidemic of syphilis.” Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point*.

“Do you think you got enough sleep this past week?” Matthew Walker, *Why We Sleep*.

“Gillian was only eight years old, but her future was already at risk.” Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica, *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything*.

Now think of your first line. Think of a story with which you might begin your book and consider the characters in the story (it could be you, a client, a public figure, or even a group of people.) This is a story that will be used to start your book. It will illustrate the purpose of your book and the need it fulfills. Think of this first line. You can always edit it later. In this template, we are creating a first draft. If you were telling a story about the topic of your book, what would be an interesting way to start? Write that first sentence here:

Now tell the essential elements of the story in a short paragraph, illustrating the heart of the problem which the reader has bought the book to solve. Details and facts are not necessary, just enough to illustrate that the reader's problems are problems others have. You could be writing about yourself, people you know, clients you have, or really anyone. You do not have to state your relationship with the person. The story is here so that the reader will relate immediately to the emotions in the story, not the facts of the story. We want to experience commonality or create rapport through the telling of the story.

Tell the story here in three paragraphs. Keep the paragraphs short. I like using three paragraphs, so my story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Tell what happened, what it was like for the person (usually attaching emotion), and what it is like now. Use sensory imagery: "I remember walking through a haze of acrid blue cigarette smoke as I made my way to the back of the noisy casino." Sight, smell, and sound make it more vivid for the reader. Give your story a happy ending because later in the book, you will relate your solutions to how well the introductory story ended up. Write your three paragraphs now:

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

Next, write a paragraph introducing your big idea and the problem that exists. Relate it to the story above.

Expand the story to the reader's experience. Share your big idea. You could have statistics defining a problem or refer to a well-known person who faced a similar problem, or in other ways, highlight why the book on this subject is important. Define the scope of the issue, what is at stake for the reader, and explain the theme of your book concisely. Write a paragraph that introduces your main idea as well as the problem that exists:

Write a paragraph specifically to the reader, asking the reader to look inside themselves to see if any aspect of the story or the big idea are things to which they relate. This is important. Speak to your reader, ask them questions, and engage them in the work you are creating. Asking rhetorical questions is a great strategy here. Imagine you are sitting in a coffee shop with your reader. You are writing to someone. Ask questions in your book, just as you would as if you were sitting with somebody. Write a paragraph that invites the reader to examine themselves:

The next paragraph will be your thesis paragraph. Every book needs a thesis. You have already identified the problem with both your story and your big idea. Your thesis often comes from the subtitle if the subtitle exists, and if you have not yet written a subtitle, your thesis is a good place to start looking for one.

The formula for a thesis is: “If _____ happens _____ will be the result.” For example, if you are writing a book about exercise as a way for overcoming depression, the thesis might be, “In this book, I will share easy to learn exercises that will help you overcome depression.” If you are writing a book about changing careers, the thesis might be, “In this book, I will show you how changing careers changes not only your job, but also your happiness, satisfaction, and sense of security and significance.”

If you are writing a book about copywriting, your thesis might be something like, “In this book, I will demonstrate how good copywriting not only creates reader interest and more sales, but it also creates a sense of fulfillment in the consumer who is satisfied with their purchase long before the product arrives.”

Write your thesis statement here. The easiest way to do this is to begin my writing, “In this book, I will share with you how when _____ happens, _____ is the result.” Of course, you are free to write it in any format you want, but this is a great first line for the thesis paragraph. Write your thesis statement:

Share another story that is different but also illustrates the point of the book. Having another story to illustrate the problem and potential solution, one that is different than the opening story, is important. It lets the reader know that even if they are different than the subject of the first story, they can still relate to the ideas. If I shared my own experiences in my first story, I might now write a story about someone very different from me. I am a married fifty-five-year-old Caucasian male living in Texas. In the next story, I might write about an unmarried female living in Singapore. But both stories would be about the theme of the book and promote the idea that the same solutions exist universally. Diversity creates interest. Make sure your examples, stories, and anecdotes are very diverse. The result will be readers seeing themselves in the pages of your book. Write another story illustrating the problem and potential solution:

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

Now it is time to establish your authority and credibility. Share a paragraph about yourself as the author. What is your expertise? Focus on your personal experience with the topic. If it is a book on depression, even if you are a therapist, relate to your depression as well as to your training. If it is a book on preparing for retirement, share your struggles with financial planning, even if you are a financial planning expert. Write a paragraph about your authority and credibility as the author:

Now write a paragraph sharing how else you know that the contents of the book are valid ideas. Do you work with clients who have implemented the ideas? What were their results? Have you researched the subject and have data to back up your claims? Write a little about your successes in helping others, learning from leaders, or seeing change when the thesis happens:

Relate to the reader again: In the stories you have written, you have shared ways for people to relate to the problem, the thesis, and to find hope that an outcome or resolution is possible. Now it is time to relate to the reader again and focus on “the promises” of the thesis. If the reader makes a change, does something different, or learns what you are writing about, what will be the outcome for them? Make a list of promises! This will excite the reader and give them hope and motivation to read the next chapter.

Write a paragraph that tells the reader what to expect and what good things will happen if they keep reading! You could create bullet points or a paragraph with a few wonderful things spelled out. You want the reader to know that the result of fulfilling the thesis and taking action on your ideas will make a difference. Write a paragraph explaining what the reader can expect:
