

Writing Tips from Ellen Cassedy

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Book Promotion Buddies



Sara and I knew each other from a writer's group and loved each other's work. When we were assigned the same publication date for our new books, we decided to get together and help each other out with promotion.

Here's what we did:

Strategize. Several months before our books hit the shelves, we sat down and drew up a comprehensive promotion plan for each of us. The plans included: website, press kit, e-mailings to friends and acquaintances, speaking engagements, social media, reviews, awards, blogs and guest blogs, interviews, placing articles and excerpts in publications, outreach to educators, libraries, and book groups, and outreach to special audiences (children of spies for Sara; Jewish and Lithuanian audiences for me; memoir-writers for both).

Our kitchen table meetings took place every couple of weeks. Everything was

fair game for brainstorming: How to organize our desks – folders, baskets, color-coded tabs? How to sign books – just “best wishes,” or something more? How to handle long-winded audience members at readings? Is it too soon to nag the blogger who promised an interview? What’s too aggressive and what’s just assertive? What’s too bashful and what’s appropriately polite?

Share information. Sometimes it’s easier to come up with ideas for places to speak or people to approach if it’s *not* your own book. One unbroken rule: we didn’t horn in. If Sara was hot on the trail of a coveted radio show or reviewer, she didn’t share her contact with me until after her pitch had been accepted or rejected.

Promote each other. We Facebooked, tweeted, and posted reviews on Amazon, Goodreads, and the like. We talked to friends and people we meet about each other’s work. After umpteen hours talking about your own book, it can feel great to wax eloquent about someone else’s.

Complain. We shared our blues – a little. When we felt jealous of each other, we tried to say so out loud, be kind, and remind each other that there are many opportunities in the world.

Cheer. “Good for you!” “You were great!” “You’ll be great!” No one can hear those words too often. And it feels good to share in another writer’s success.

Ellen Cassedy is the author of *We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust* (Univ. of Nebraska Press, 2012). To see all of her Writing Tips, visit her website at www.ellencassedy.com.