

# Writing Tips from Ellen Cassedy

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## Hate Book Promotion? Three ways to make it work for you



How the Journal was written

“I love writing, but I *hate* book promotion. It’s just not who I am.”

Is that you? All you want, you say, is to sit blissfully in your garret where you belong.

I sympathize -- to a point. But I don’t agree -- not at all. Here’s why.

Promoting a book means expressing in words who you are, what you think, how you feel, what you imagine -- and sharing all that with other people.

Isn't that exactly what writing a book is all about?

Think about it. Writing a book and promoting a book are both about speaking up. Proudly having your say. Joining in the conversation. Being heard.

So if writing a book is what you like to do, promoting a book is surely something you can not only tolerate but actively enjoy. Here are three ways to take joy in book promotion:

**Start *before* you publish.** Long before I found a publisher, I sought out opportunities to be heard about my subject. I gave talks at libraries, community centers, and more. I wrote articles for newspapers and magazines. These opportunities were energizing and inspiring. They helped me test out the best ways to communicate what I had to say, and that helped me write a better book.

**Target your “super fans.”** In the run-up to publication, I made a list of the people I most wanted to read the book. I included not only people I knew (family, friends, mentors, people who'd read drafts) but also writers and thinkers I didn't know but admired. The first promotion task I gave myself was to inform these people about the book. Reaching out in this way felt as important as writing the book in the first place.

**Embrace the challenge.** My book promotion plan requires me to communicate my “message” in lots of different ways. I have to -- or as I see it,

I *get* to -- write articles, op-ed pieces, guest blogs, website copy, press releases, email blasts, Facebook posts, and tweets. I have to -- that is, I *get* to -- craft book talks and conference presentations, give interviews, and succinctly describe the book to people I run into.

All of which involves solving problems, finding the right words, expressing myself to the best of my ability.

Just like...writing a book.

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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](http://www.ellencassedy.com).