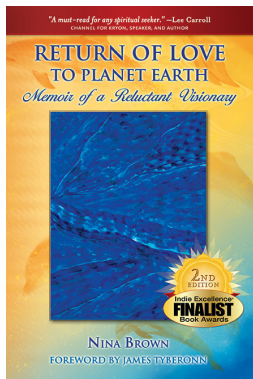
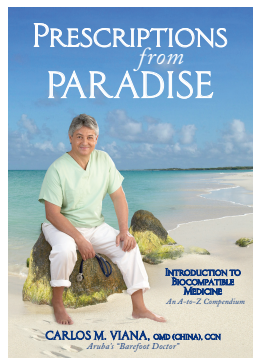


WELCOME TO BLESSINGWAY'S third bimonthly newsletter. This issue features eBooks, which some people feel will replace the books we have been purchasing for years at brick-and-mortar stores, the only kind of books many of us have known since childhood. Everyone has an opinion of eBooks—many pro, many con, but one thing is for sure, eBooks are here to stay.

### *Exciting News about our Authors and Publishers*



- The song “You Have Forgotten Me” by Ron Edwards, author of the forthcoming *Dawning of the Age of Magnificence* and a homeless veteran upon his honorable discharge from the army in 1985, was adopted for the sound track of a video recently presented at the Supreme Court to bring the issue of veteran homelessness to the attention of the justices.
- Japanese, Turkish, and Simplified Chinese rights have just sold for Kiesha Crowther's *Message for a Tribe of Many Colors*, increasing her number of foreign rights sales to 13.
- Carlos M. Viana's *Prescriptions from Paradise* was named a finalist in the USA Book News awards, in the category of Health: Alternative Medicine.
- *Return of Love to Planet Earth*, by Nina Brown, is a finalist in the USA Book News awards in the Spirituality: Inspirational category.
- Carlos Viana and Nina Brown both had articles appearing in magazines last month.

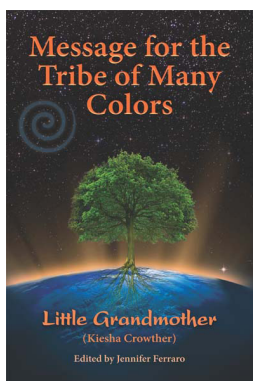


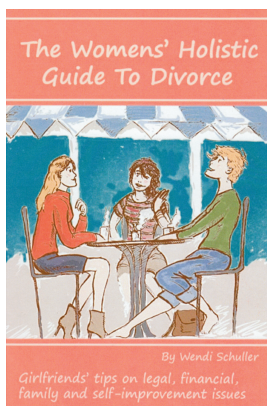
### *New Services Now Available*

To meet the growing needs of authors and self-publishers, we have expanded our range of services to include audiobooks, SEO (search engine optimization), and transformational public speaking—all with the help of experts at special Blessingway rates.

- Consider an audiobook if your fiction or nonfiction title would lend itself to this format, complete with original music, professional voice-overs, quality recording, and distribution if desired.
- SEO is the mastery tool for driving traffic to an author, or publisher's website. Through SEO evaluation and tracking, your site can get onto page 1 of the search engine results pages and stay there amidst the changes constantly being made by Google, Yahoo! and Bing.
- An upcoming teleclass—a series of 3 90-minute sessions by phone—complete with call-ins is being designed for authors and publishers seeking to present book talks from the heart. We have seen authors immersed in the weekend version of this program transform their speaking skills and confidence levels overnight.

Give us a call to find out how these services can enhance your sales and outreach.

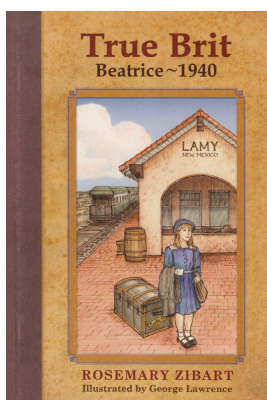




## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, KINDLE!

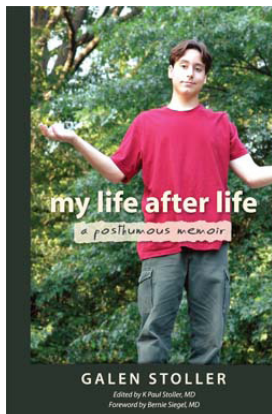
November 19, 2012 marked the fifth anniversary of Kindle, and while sales have recently begun to dip electronic books now constitute about 25 percent of all trade book sales. But not everyone is elated.

- Cultural critic Joe Queenan, in an essay headlined “My 6,128 Favorite Books,” notes: “Electronic books are ideal for people who value the information contained in them, or who have vision problems, or who have clutter issues, or who don’t want other people to see that they are reading books about parallel universes where nine-eyed sea serpents and blind marsupials join forces with deaf Valkyries to rescue high-strung albino virgins from the clutches of hermaphrodite centaurs, but they are useless for people engaged in an intense, lifelong love affair with books. Books that we can touch; books that we can smell; books that we can depend on. Books that make us believe, for however short a time, that we shall all live happily ever after.” (*Wall Street Journal*, 25 Oct 2012)
- Novelist and nonfiction writer Anne Lamott concedes, “EBooks are great for instant gratification —you see a review somewhere of a book that interests you, and you can start reading it five minutes later. [But] to me, a printed book is like a cathedral or a library or a beach—holy space.” (*New York Times Book Review*, 25 Nov 2012)



## A SURPRISING MESSAGE FROM LIBRARIES

- People who check out eBooks from libraries tend also to *buy* books at an impressive rate, and their buying has accelerated over the past 6 months.
- According to an online poll of 75,000 library patrons, those who borrow eBooks also buy about 3.2 print books per month.
- Another study found that 41 percent of patrons who borrow eBooks buy the last book they read.
- OverDrive, which powers library websites, reports that it is now in two-thirds of US libraries and is able to service 87 percent of the US population.

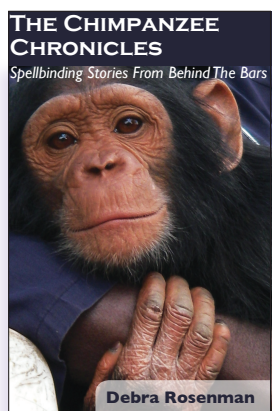


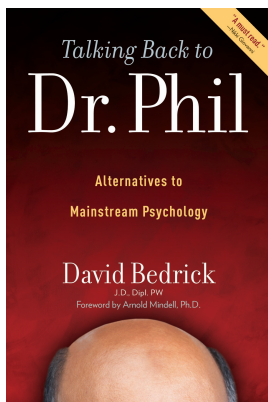
## 5 WAYS TO SELL MORE eBooks THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Whether you write or publish fiction, children’s books, or nonfiction titles that can be given as gifts, December is your prime selling season. To make the most of it:

1. **Send an email to friends, colleagues, and customers** on your mailing list reminding them that your book makes a great gift for [describe the kind of person who would enjoy your book].
2. **Ask friends and family to recommend your book** as a gift item or buy copies to give to others.
3. **Promote the book on your social networks**, taking care not to sound annoyingly promotional. Encourage people to share the message with others.
4. If you sell directly to customers on your website or ship books to stores, **launch a holiday promotion**, such as buy one and get one at half price. If you sell through other online venues, offer special bonuses with the purchase of your book, such as half price on other titles you publish, and have people email or send their sales receipt number to you.
5. If you have a Kindle eBook, **remind people to give it as a gift** by simply clicking the yellow “Give As a Gift” button on the right side of any Kindle book page on Amazon.

If your book does not lend itself to gift giving, plan a promotional campaign for mid-January to offset slow holiday sales.





## THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN PUBLISHING AN eBook

1. **Sales fluctuate.** A bestseller this month may drop off next month and again be a bestseller two years from now. Remember, eBooks are forever.
2. **Proficiency counts.** Books that sell best are well written, professionally designed inside and out, priced low, and carry good product descriptions.
3. **Exploit all platforms.** Kindle is still the most well-known platform, but remember to also upload your eBook to CreateSpace, BN.com, Smashwords, Overdrive, and select others.
4. **The more the merrier.** The more books you have for sale and the more you keep adding to your virtual shelf-space, the better you will do.

## THE RULES FOR SUCCESS HAVE CHANGED

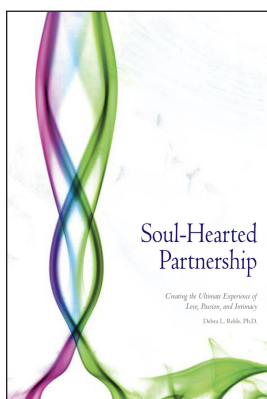
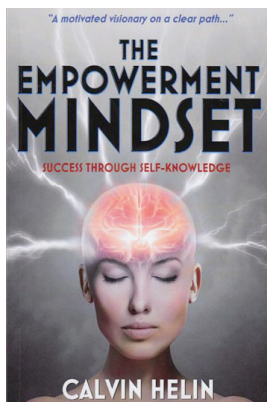
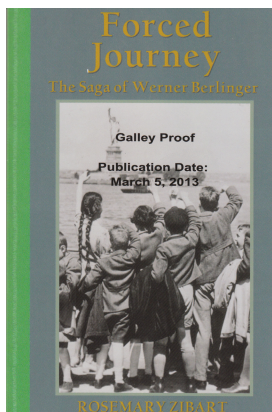
Whether you are a digital-first publisher or a self-publisher who has released one or more print books, be aware that the rules for successful book publishing and marketing have shifted.

### ■ Old Rules That Don't Work

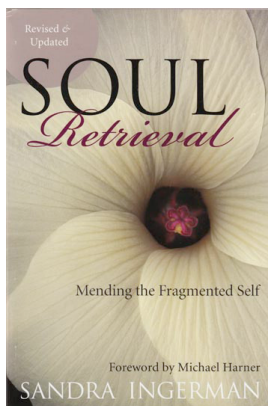
1. **Advertising.** Few people purchase an eBook because they see it in a Facebook, Google, or print ad, or any other kind of ad. It appears eBooks sales, unlike those of hardcovers and paperbacks, are not ad driven.
2. **Author appearances.** While book talks and author presentations sell print books, they don't sell eBooks. Travel is expensive and your time is better spent promoting your title.
3. **Unsolicited bulk mailings.** Remember spam. No one appreciates a hard sell.

### ■ New Rules That Work

1. **Use your fans.** Send advance eBooks to your dedicated fans, social network followers, folks on your mailing list, and interested parties found on Goodreads.com, offering a freebie in exchange for an honest review.
2. **Social network.** Taking full advantage of Twitter and Facebook means focusing on what you have to offer, not what you have to sell.
3. **Lower your price.** Put your eBook on sale if it is not selling as fast as you would like. The more eBooks you have available, the easier it is to do this without hurting your pocketbook. Patience is required since you may not see instant results.
4. **Write more.** The best advertisement for your writing is your writing. The larger your virtual shelf-space, the more you'll be discovered.
5. **Diversify and experiment.** Exploring new genres and playing with new formats may help you sell more books.
6. **Collaborate with peers.** Do guest blogs; trade endorsements; review each other's eBooks; and buy each other's eBooks. Support one another—you're all in the same boat, and you all need to row.







## 7 REASONS FOR FLAGGING eBook SALES

If you are not selling many eBooks and wonder why and how to reverse the situation, it may be because:

### 1. Nobody knows the eBook exists

You might be struggling with obscurity, especially if you're just getting started and stepping into the digital world without an established fan base. To gain name exposure, give away a free eBook (the best way to promote your title), advertise on Goodreads (hinges on number of clicks on your title); and guest blog (which gets your name and book title out to a much wider audience).

### 2. The writing needs work

Potential eBook buyers can download samples before purchasing. Therefore, if your writing is not compelling in the opening chapters, "browsers" will not convert to "buyers." To evaluate whether your writing needs further development, ask yourself:

- Do my other titles occupy top slots in Amazon's "Customers Who Bought This Item Also Bought" section?
- Are the majority of reviews positive?
- Do readers write to say they enjoyed my work?

If your answers to all three questions are "no," it is probably time for an upgrade. Rushing to publish is never a good idea, especially since it's impossible to accurately evaluate our own writing. Participating in writers' workshops, where strangers critique your work (and you critique theirs), is almost always enlightening. Your fellow writers may become your toughest critics, then when they start suggesting that your material is nearly ready for a readership you can feel comfortable placing it in the hands of a professional editor to fine-tune it for publication.

### 3. Your cover art and blurbs need work

First impressions count, so if your cover is amateurish potential buyers might assume the writing is too. Have your cover professionally designed then get as many blurbs as you can and cherry pick the best to use for promotion.

### 4. Your work isn't easily categorized

If you write fiction and your work is difficult to define, choose a popular category that best represents it. Subcategories are welcome too.

### 5. There's too much front matter before the content starts

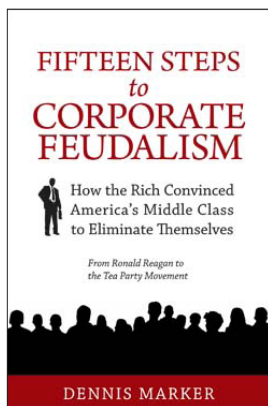
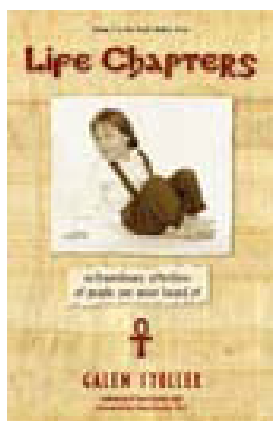
When downloading samples, prospective buyers can easily be turned off by excessive front matter. If you have a long dedication or acknowledgments section, a list of other works, a note to the reader, or a long license statement, prospective buyers may not have enough time to get into the story or central idea of the book.

### 6. Your eBook is priced too high

If you have an established fan base, you can get away with charging more for your work, but if nobody has heard of you a high retail price forces the reader to take a risk. The higher the price, the greater the risk. If you are an unknown author, consider retailing your book at \$2.99, then the better known you become the more you can charge.

### 7. This is your first eBook, and it was just published

Most eBook success stories reveal that authors don't sell many eBooks their first six to twelve months after publication. However they eventually reach a tipping point where sales take off. The timing of the tipping point often depends on the release of book reviews.



## HARNESSING THE POWER OF BOOK REVIEWS TO SELL MORE eBooks

Reviews help get your eBook noticed by potential customers, persuading a certain percentage to buy it. Following are a variety of sources for reviews that can appear throughout the life cycle of your book, the most positive of which should ultimately be posted on your website.

1. **Endorsements.** Endorsements can usually be posted in the review sections of online retailers' sites, as well as appearing in printed promotional material for your book.
2. **Critical reviews.** Traditionally, critical reviews appear in media such as book review journals, newspapers, literary magazines, and other publications. It's generally best to start locally then branch out.
3. **Customer reviews and testimonials.** Often people who enjoy reading a particular book will post a review or a brief testimonial (recommendation) on sites like Amazon, Goodreads, or Facebook, or even write a note to the author. So, make it easy for your customers to provide reviews and testimonials.
4. **Book blogs.** Thousands of blogs post book reviews on a regular basis. Research book review blogs ([www.bookreviewblogs.com](http://www.bookreviewblogs.com)) to determine the types of books featured, estimated size of the audience, and submission requirements.
5. **Topical blogs and specialty media.** Opportunities abound for reviews of nonfiction books in blogs and publications that are geared to a particular topic or aimed at a particular target audience. If you are a nonfiction author seeking book reviews, offer to provide articles for the relevant blogs and publications.
6. **Virtual book tours.** Book blogs, topical blogs, podcasts, and online radio shows are potential hosts for virtual book tours, where authors visit a different site each day promoting their book and garnering reviews.

Keep an eye out for other opportunities to get reviews for your eBook. For example, offer review copies on reader networks like Goodreads and LibraryThing. Also ask people who send you a nice note about your book if they would be willing to post their comments on sites like Amazon or Goodreads.

To your digital success!

Our sincere best wishes for a festive and loving holiday season. In the coming year, may your visions for your book come true.

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