

Guidelines for Getting Publicity through Writing

(By Catherine Dowling)

BEFORE YOU PUT PEN TO PAPER

- Decide whether you want to write for a magazine/newspaper or for a journal. Articles in magazines/newspapers are informal, shorter, in simple language and don't require much research. Articles for journals need to be longer, more formally presented, have references to other literature and/or research.
- Use the database of publications on the IBF website to find suitable publications to send your article to. If there are none listed for your country, ask in your local library for your country's equivalent of the Writers' and Artist's Yearbook or the Writers' Market. These are books which list publishers world wide, including magazine publishers. Or do an internet search.
- Once you have identified suitable publications, try to get a copy of them. Any copy will do. You can often get free electronic copies through the internet.
- If the journal/magazine publishes guidelines on submitting articles to them, get a copy of these too. (most publishers now have such guidelines)
- Read the guidelines and the copy of the magazine/journal thoroughly. Follow the guidelines when writing. If it says 1,000 words, don't submit 1,500 words. It will be rejected.
- Look at the style of the writing, length of articles, what the readers of the magazine are interested in.
- Then spend a lot of time thinking about your potential readers. What are they interested in? What are the important things in their lives? What are their problems? What is their educational level? – this will determine the style of your writing.
- Then spend as much time again thinking about how breathwork can help them with their problems. We may think breathwork is the best thing since sliced bread and our motivation may be to share this with the world – and get paying clients at the same time. But if your article doesn't touch something important for the reader, they will stop reading after the first paragraph. Or more likely the editor who gets your article will stop reading after the first paragraph and send it back to you. Example: A Parenting magazine might be interested in an article on how breathwork can help parents stay calm, get on better with their children or cope with stress but they are unlikely to accept an article on how breathwork improves sports performance. A glossy women's magazine might be interested in how breathwork can help you look better, have better sex, etc., but won't be too interested in breathwork and alcoholism. Find the angle that the magazine's readers will be interested in.

A small number of magazines devoted to complementary therapies have sections where they feature a particular therapy. These may take general articles on breathwork. Feature sections of newspapers can do this also. But for most publications, you need an angle – stress, parenting, asthma, etc.

- Be very clear about what you want to say

- Be very clear about the promises you make for breathwork. Are they realistic, ethical? Or could they mislead people, attract people who are desperate and need other forms of support that you can't provide.
- Mind map your ideas if this helps you. To mind map you write down all the ideas that come to you about your chosen subject. Then you merge ones that are related and eliminate ones that don't support what you want to say. Mind mapping tools are available free on the internet.
- If you can, phone the magazine/journal and ask if they would be interested in the article you are proposing. If you can't get someone to talk to about this, try to get the name of the person you should send your article to.

READY TO WRITE

- Just start writing. It helps if you have your mind mapping done and if you have listed your points in the order in which you are going to write.
- Then keep writing until you're finished. This is your **FIRST** draft. The word 'first' is very important here.
- Put it away.
- Come back to it the next day or later, read it and **DON'T DESPAIR**. It will probably look like crap to you. But it is your first draft. Most of the craft of writing takes place after you've written your first draft.
- Begin the process known as rewriting. Some writers rewrite up to 20 times. Rewrite your piece as many times as you need to until you are reasonably satisfied with it. Leave time between each rewriting and come back to it fresh.
- To spice up your writing include examples, short case histories, etc. But if doing this, make sure you disguise the identity of the person you are writing about and get their written permission to write about them.
- Give it to a friend or family member for feedback but don't take the feedback personally.
- Then type it up in the format the magazine/journal requires (with footnotes if appropriate). Make sure to include your name and contact details at the end of magazine/newspaper articles. There is no point in getting your article published without telling the reader how to contact you.
- Email it to the magazine/journal and include a short cover
- If it is to be published, make sure your contact details are published with it. Otherwise it is not much use for contacting clients. Don't assume journalists and editors will remember to put your contact details in with the article so politely remind them before it's published.
- If you are rejected, try to work out why that might have happened. Did you send it to the wrong magazine/journal? Was it badly written? Did it follow the publishers guidelines?
- Make any changes you think would improve your chances and send it to the next publication on your list.

KEEP TRYING. IT'S LARGELY DOWN TO BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME WITH THE RIGHT ANGLE.