

VIDEO 5:

How to Self-Publish a Book

A Bit About Sara:

Sara Bawany is a clinical social worker, an award-winning published poet, a writer, and a freelance editor. A graduate of The University of Texas at Austin, Sara received her Master's degree in Social Work and her Bachelor's degrees in Biology and Islamic Studies. She works at Facing Abuse in Community Environments (FACE), an organization that aims to hold religious and community leaders accountable for abuse in the Muslim community. She also volunteers with MAPS (Muslim Association of Psychological Services), a Dallas-based Muslim group of mental health counselors. She self-published her first book in September 2018, titled "(w)holehearted: a collection of poetry and prose," which you can find on Amazon, and it recently won Daybreak Press Publishing's "Best Poetry Book" award. Her work has been featured on TedX, the Muslim Youth Musings literary magazine, Voyage Dallas Magazine, and Brown Girl Magazine.

How to Self-Publish A Book:

1. What drew you to writing? How did you come up with your recent book?

I used writing as a coping mechanism to deal with some of the hardships I went through as a child. Growing up in a tumultuous home with my own mental health issues, and moving nearly every year to a new city or state across the country, as well as often being the only hijab-wearing Muslim woman or one of very few people of color, all of these things led to a very unique childhood experience where I felt that I had to grow up faster than I was meant to. Writing and poetry helped me process that. I wrote poetry for nearly ten years before I put the poems all together and published them in the form of my first book, "(w)holehearted: a collection of poetry and prose."

2. What route did you take in terms of publishing?

I self-published through Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP), which is a platform under Amazon. It's one of the most popular self-publishing platforms.

3. What's the first step to writing a book?

Write, write, write! And read. It's difficult to be an avid writer if you are not constantly exposed to words and ideas. When it comes to writing a poetry book, start with an outline and fill it in as you go, but be flexible because many pieces and manuscripts change over time the more they come together. Don't rush the process; do it when you feel more than ready. Ask for lots of feedback and don't be afraid to ask for help. It feels like an overwhelming process but there are many platforms out there that have simplified the process.

4. Is it worth putting your book on Amazon?

My book is on Amazon, as KDP is a platform created by Amazon itself. However, I try to be very conscious of the implications of where we choose to invest our time, energy, and money, and even the means we use to achieve our goals. From an ethical standpoint, Amazon is a deeply problematic company that exploits thousands of workers and has monopolized the market in such a way that the flow of income within the company has disproportionately favored its CEO (who has profited by the billions just during the last 2 months of this pandemic). As a social worker who is conscious of the harm caused, I have a growing internal conflict of utilizing Amazon for this work. On the flip side, Amazon is THE best place to put any self-published books, and Amazon Marketing Services helps you advertise your books to the public in a very effective way. Most of my sales came through Amazon, and with in-person events being impossible during the pandemic, it is all I have to rely on.

I give both perspectives because it is important to consider all sides to this. As a writer, you want to thrive and make your work accessible as much as possible, but the ethical implications are too great to ignore.

5. How do you actually publish a book?

Choose your process. There are 3 publishing options. Self-publishing, going through a traditional publishing house, and the third option is a hybrid. All three have their pros and cons but what drew me to self-publishing was that I could have complete control of my own work. I published through Kindle Direct Publishing but there are many self-publishing options out there (link below).

Conclusion:

Self-publishing is an excellent tool for writers who want complete control over their work and it is much easier to go about than it used to be.

Resources:

- https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/l/print-on-demand
- <https://selfpublishing.com/self-publishing-companies/>
- www.instagram.com/sara.bawany (check publishing highlights)

Thanks for reading! We hope this helped you guys.

Much Love,

the Headed Somewear Team

“Our Community of Women” Video Series

By Headed Somewear

Real women empower other women.

It's crazy because you HEAR those words all the time, but how much do we really practice them?

We hope to be more active in empowering the women around us by bringing our latest project to you. The “Community of Empowered Women” Series, launching with the prelaunch of our Mind & Soul Collection, keeps YOU in mind with thought-provoking conversations, skill set webinars, & FREE resources to help empower other women.

The thing is, we aren't just talk. We want to help women (including ourselves!) reach their goals, dreams, and aspirations by providing a support system for us all to lean on.

After all, we all have things to learn, skills to teach. Join our community - because you need women looking out for you, now more than ever.

We've got your back.