

# BookMarketingUpdate

The newsletter that helps you sell more books.



## How Million Dollar Authors Make "Miracles" Happen

By Steve Harrison

*"I read somewhere that everybody on this planet is separated by six other people—six degrees of separation between us and everyone else on this planet. The President of the United States, a gondolier in Venice ... just fill in the names."*

—Ouisa Kittredge, a character in John Guare's play, *Six Degrees of Separation*

Members of my Quantum Leap coaching program recently came to Philadelphia for an intensive three days in which my coaches and I helped them craft a specific plan for achieving their goals.

One of the big themes that emerged from those three days was the power of leveraging your existing relationships and the relationships that others have.

For example, one member has a fantastic endorsement on her book cover by Shaquille O'Neal. How did she obtain that? She knew a lawyer who works with him.

Another member has entered into a deal worth \$3.5 million with an organization that has agreed to buy her books in quantity over the next few years. How was she able to make that happen? Simple. She met someone in Quantum Leap who referred her to the organization.

A tried and true way of making marketing miracles happen is to capitalize on the influence that one person has. But I'm often shocked at how rarely authors and speakers think about accessing the "six degrees of separation" in a strategic way.

Sure, many people are using Facebook and LinkedIn to get publicity and exposure. But often, they're not asking to be connected with people of influence who could help them.

I once had a Quantum Leap member say to another member, "Would you like to meet President Clinton? I know him."

It's a good example of how ordinary people can often have

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extraordinarily surprising connections or relationships.

## Tell everyone you know about what you're doing or trying to do.

How many people know that you have written or are writing a book? If I asked your neighbors, friends, business associates and relatives about you and what you are doing, would they be able to tell me?

If you want to quickly get on the path of becoming a Million Dollar Author, form the habit of telling everyone about what you're doing. Carry your book everywhere you go, and be open to starting conversations about it.

Let me give you a simple step-by-step system for creating powerful connections, even if you're an introvert and don't think you're a great salesperson. If you follow these steps, I guarantee that marketing miracles will happen to you.

### 1. Decide who you're ultimately trying to reach.

Let's say you've written a book called *Guarding Your Child's Self-Esteem* and you want to reach parents of elementary school kids. The first step is to think about people of influence who could introduce you to parents and tell them about your book.

You'd likely be thinking about teachers, principals, heads of organizations like the PTA, ballet instructors, religious leaders and Scout leaders. You could also contact HR executives at corporations, because many employees have kids.

These are the people who might be willing to spread the word about your book or purchase it as a gift. Or perhaps they might invite you to do a talk or book signing.

### 2. Make a list of everyone who knows you personally.

One of the best book promotion strategies is also one of the most basic. Make a list of everybody you know—and I'm talking about *everybody*. Neighbors, coworkers, aunts, uncles, cousins, people who are members of your church or synagogue, health club or share similar activities. With some brainstorming, this list could easily contain more than 100 people who know and respect you.

Commit to set aside a certain amount of time or reach out to a certain number of contacts every day to simply let them know what you're doing.

### 3. Start contacting the people on your list.

Once you've compiled your list, begin reaching out to the people you know. A great approach is to send out personalized emails and use a subject line like this: "Betty, I need your advice."

Or, when you see someone you know, simply ask if you could get their feedback on your new book. Tell them your marketing coach (yes that's me) has told you to talk to people who have a good head on their shoulders, and they're one of the folks that you thought of first.

### 4. Explain what you're doing and why.

If they're receptive, tell them what you're doing, and more importantly, why you're doing it. Here's a sample script to show you how this conversation

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Steve Harrison's

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could go:

“Did I ever tell you about the new book I’m working on? It’s called *Guarding Your Child’s Self-Esteem* and it will be coming out in a few months. My book is designed to help parents raise more confident kids. It’s based on a lot of research I’ve done and on my experience raising my own children.

“While it’s not something you may need, I’m really excited about this book. It’s going to help a lot of parents stop shouting at their kids so much, and be able to listen and connect to them on a much deeper level.

“In my own life, I know my parents love me, but they yelled a lot and we weren’t close when I was growing up. As a teenager, I rebelled and made choices I later regretted. Now I’m on a mission to help more parents connect with their children.”

## 5. Ask who they know who could help you.

The next step is to ask for their help. You can say something like this:

“I’m trying to let as many people know about what I’m doing as possible. Any time I can get parents to stop shouting at their kids and really listen to them, I know it’s going to change their lives and their kids’ lives.

“My plan is to reach out to people of influence—anyone who could let parents know about my book or invite me to talk to parents.

“I’m in the process of getting feedback from people whose judgment I respect. From what I’ve told you, do you think there’s a need for this kind of book? If you were in my shoes, what would you do to get the word out?”

If they offer any suggestions, you can respond:

“That’s really helpful feedback. I’ve discovered that everyone usually knows someone I should touch base with. Who do you know who’s currently a teacher, principal or church leader? I’d love to send them a copy of my book.”

If they suggest a name, ask these questions:

“How well do you know her? How do you suggest that I connect with her? Should I send her a note or a copy of my book? Or would you feel comfortable introducing me to her?”

## 6. Follow up on all leads and thank everyone who helped you.

I’ve learned that if you approach people sincerely and authentically, they’re likely to try to help you and offer contacts you can approach about your book.

It’s important to make them feel comfortable, and tell them upfront, “If you can’t help me, that’s fine. I don’t want you to feel pressured.”

That tone is very important. At the same time, you want to convey your optimism that they might be able to give you an idea or know somebody you should talk to.

What often happens is they may get in touch with you days, weeks or months later and say, “I ran into someone who might be interested in your book. I thought of you and gave them your name.”

Finally, make sure you send a thank you note to anyone who has offered suggestions or contacts. Then follow up on all the leads you’re given. You never know what they’ll lead to.

You may recall my recent Million Dollar Author Club interview with Greg Reid about his book *Three Feet From Gold*. Reid mentioned that in the first chapter of *Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill tells the story about a man who was digging for gold but stopped three feet from a massive gold mine.

I know that some people will simply read this article and do nothing with it. But if you’re one of the few to actually do what I’m suggesting, you will find that you’re even closer than three feet from gold. 