

Making the money to open OneMoreWord Books

written by Holly

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By Holly Lisle

Post copied from OneMoreWordBooks.com

Now I know what I want to do. I want to publish fantasy serials—related world- or character-based stand-alones set in well-developed, fun universes.

I want to be able to offer a good advance, I want to be able to offer good royalties and an excellent contract. I want to have a strong, interesting, atypical online presence for the house that may include the development of role-playing games based on the series, interviews and online presences for authors, and other goodies.

And what I need now is money.

I've gone over all sorts of sources for funding, and here's the thing. I don't do government handouts—I didn't do them when the kids and I were squeaking along below the poverty level, and I won't do them now. Morally, ethically, personally, I don't approve of government handouts. So I won't be applying for any grants. I'm not interested in using other people's money in the form of selling shares, and by doing so losing control of the business and the way it's run. HOW it's run is as critical to me as what it is. I don't want to incur the moral obligation of accepting donations, and I won't even consider the potential financial devastation that comes with taking out loans.

Which means I'm simply going to have to earn and save, and build slowly.

I have limited control over my professional publishing career—I could have a magnificent windfall with a New York Times bestseller or five, and suddenly have the money to do this. But it hasn't happened yet, and after 30+ books, I'm not holding my breath, and I'm not making business plans based winning the publishing lottery.

Ben Franklin's adage and life philosophy, Do Well By Doing Good, offers guidance. Find ways to pay forward, find ways to create new and desirable services and products, make sure people benefit, that the work is worthwhile, that something good comes into the world because of it, but also make sure the work can pay its own way. Do what you can yourself, bring in volunteers when it outgrows one person, pay if it's a for-profit venture. (Forward Motion was never intended to make money, so I built it around an entirely volunteer culture. I hope with this project to be able not just to teach folks to fish, but to pay them for the fish they catch.)

I have a way to do that. The income I do have some control over is my little online bookstore. I can—and will—write more books for that. My own titles and my own work will be the primary source for funding the publishing house, though I'll add additional writing-related nonfiction as well. I don't make much money from selling other folks' books because I don't charge them much for having the books on the site (currently 10% of the cover price after PayPal and affiliate fees). So other people's writing non-fiction will help a little, but not much. And fiction is currently selling at the less-than-breathtaking speed of about one copy of each title per month—adding fiction to my list will not help my plan at all—and it doesn't do much for the writers, either—so in almost all cases, I just won't.

My only way to increase my publishing fund other than to write more books is to add more affiliates. So I will be pushing the HollyShop Affiliates program, because that's my distribution, and the farther I can reach with the books I have, the more

work each book does for me, and the more I can put aside to fund the publishing house. **If you'd like to have a part in getting OneMoreWord Books off the ground, join the affiliate program, get other people to join through you, let me pay you for your help, and help me make enough money through the store that I can regularly bank it. We can all do good by doing well.**

I'm good at living and working on shoestrings; have been doing it all my life. I figure I can do more with a dollar than a big corporation, because to start with I'll do most of the work myself, and I won't pay me. But I still figure that an advance of \$5000 plus initial print publishing costs of \$10-\$15,000 per book, plus website development that includes content development of probably another \$15,000, minimum, plus guerrilla advertising and distribution, and I'm looking at needing \$50,000 in a OneMoreWord account before I can even start looking at manuscripts, and at least \$5000/month in set-aside income (money I don't have to live off of and can just pump into the business) simply to keep the doors open. That's a tiny start-up cost for a business, but it's a whole lot of money to me. And while my objective is to take the business to profitability while creating jobs for writers, artists, editors, web designers and others, and to do it by offering wonderful books, the best business plan in the world cannot guarantee that will happen quickly. Or at all.

I'll be taking OneMoreWord Books site offline in a month or so; I don't want to babysit a board I won't be using, because those things turn into spam magnets. I have my goals, I have my direction, and I have my plan, and now it's time to do the work to make this happen.

I'm going to archive the OneMoreWord board messages and work from them. Everything you've said has helped me find my direction and figure out what it is that I want to do beyond writing, and what I have to do to get there. Thank you for taking the time and the effort to throw things at the wall

with me.

Beyond this last discussion here, such conversation as we have about the publishing company will go back to the weblog until I'm ready to start locating website programmers and looking for manuscripts. Then I'll bring OneMoreWord Books back, and let you know through the weblog. Realistically, I think I'm looking at about five years. I have optimistic and gloomy timelines, too, including the "this whole wonderful project dies an ugly death" one, which is why none of this is going to happen using other people's money.

But I think OneMoreWord Books is a dream worth fighting for. So wish me luck. And pitch books for me if you're willing.

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