



3 Tips for Crafting That Perfect Book Title

p.s. and they're fail-safe and repeatable, too!

HINT: Print this workbook so you can write YOUR answers in it

- Do you have a book inside of you, just waiting to be written?
- Have others told you that you've got a great story to tell?
- Are you held back because you don't know how to get started?
- Does the idea of seeing YOUR name on a book cover excite you?
- Would some friendly and gentle assistance help get you going?

If you said “Yes” to any of those questions, this free workbook just might be the thing that helps you on the path to becoming a published author.



A little bit about me . . .

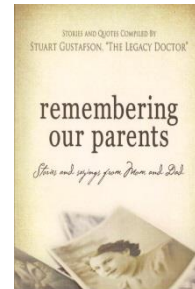
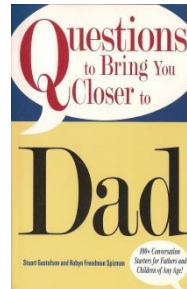
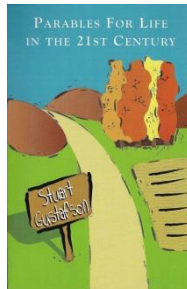
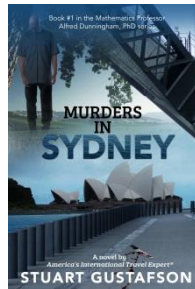
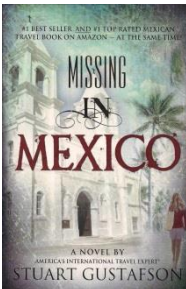
Education: B.A., Mathematics; MBA, Finance

Work: 29 years in high-tech before taking early retirement; taught college math and finance; speaker on cruise ships

Home: Boise, Idaho since 1993 (from Southern California)

Travel: Visited 55 countries, 160 cruise ports; have the U.S. Registered Trademark *America's International Travel Expert®*

Books: 15 published books (mix of fiction and non-fiction); creator of a novella series of mysteries (co-wrote the first 11)





Remember that saying, “Don’t judge a book by its cover”?

Guess what? People do

Images ARE important

People process images faster than words

Study: Only 20% chose novel because of author, while 52% chose based on the cover

Again, images ARE important, but

- > They aren’t the only source of buying interest
- > Unless you self-publish, you’re not selecting the image anyway
- > Most lists of books typically show only the title

We’ll get back to images later



TIP #1: Your first choice of a title doesn't have to be the BEST, but it does have to be GOOD

It's worth repeating

Your first choice of a title doesn't have to be the BEST, but it does have to be GOOD

What does that mean? It sounds a little anti-productive

One fact to remember about book titles:
They CANNOT be copyrighted

Only the contents can; not the title

So, unless your book HAS to be titled *The Great Gatsby*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, or *The Bible*

Pick another title

Use a subtitle

But times have changed – titles need more clarity



(By the way, no one is going to force you to do these exercises; they are included here as a way to help craft YOUR perfect book title)

Exercise #1: Write down the titles of five books that are in the same genre as “your book,” and that you think are pretty good.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

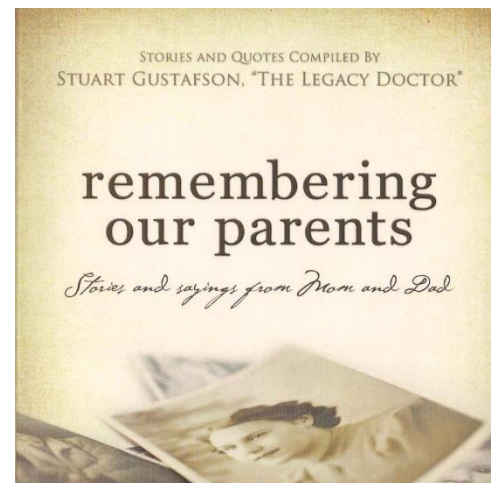
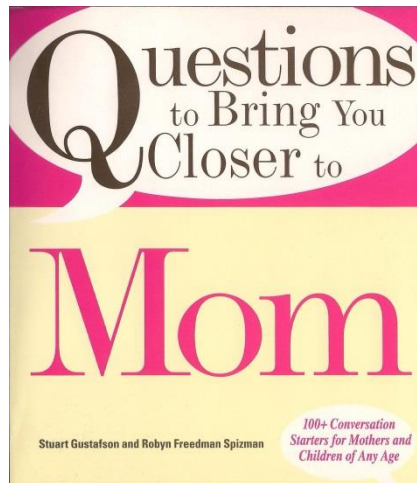
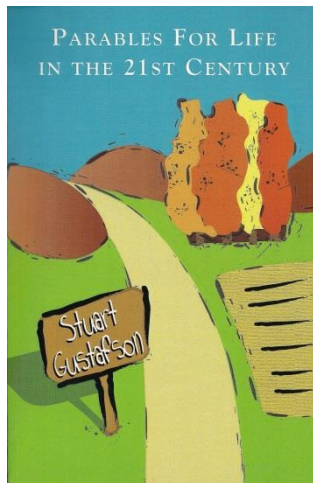
Now, what is the ONE word in each title that you think is a perfect fit for that book?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

TIP #2: How much do you want your title to reveal?

In non-fiction, your answer should be “as close to 100% as possible”

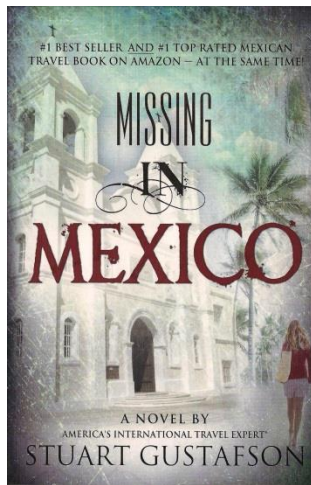
Back to three of my non-fiction books:



Looking at the titles, you know right away what each one is about.

There is no mystery (pardoning the fictional pun) in these titles and the books' contents. The reader knows exactly what to expect and what to get inside.

In fiction, you want some “definition of the story,” but you have to leave some suspense



As we see above, “someone” is missing in *Missing in MEXICO*; does the image of the girl walking away mean it was a young girl? Or is that just to throw you off?

There are a lot of “clues” in the cover of *Murders in SYDNEY*: a man hanging; a bloodied knife; the Sydney Opera House, and the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The idea of all of these is to pull the reader inside to see how they connect with each other.

The image of the Eiffel Tower reinforces that *Art Thefts in PARIS* is, indeed, set in Paris, France. Then the art frame with a missing canvas gives a strong hint on how the art thefts were conducted.



Let's go back to non-fiction titles

Compare these two [made up] money "book titles":

I've Made Tons of Money with This One Secret Trading Tip

How to Make 25% on Your Money Each Month Using One Little-known Trading Strategy

How about two diet book titles:

The Doctors Don't Want You to Know About This Diet for Losing Weight

How I Got Back to My Age 25 Weight, and the One Food You Can Eliminate for the Same Results

Finally, two books on dating:

I'm Not that Handsome, but Girls are Always Calling Me

Three Simple Things I Do Each Week that Ensures My Date Book is Always Full

Certainly graphics might help, but let's concentrate just on the words in the titles.

Did you notice the notice the difference in each of the paired titles?

While the first title in each pair is relevant to the book's content (or we think so), there's no imperative

It's all about the author, not the potential reader

Let's look at them again

I've Made Tons of Money with This One Secret Trading Tip

- How much is "Tons"?
- Is what "you" did repeatable?

How to Make 25% on Your Money Each Month Using One Little-known Trading Strategy

- "How to" – nice action words
 - "25% ... Each Month" - quantitative
-

The Doctors Don't Want You to Know About This Diet for Losing Weight

- Okay, so what?
- What doctors?

How I Got Back to My Age 25 Weight, and the One Food You Can Eliminate for the Same Results

- Age 25 weight? That intrigues me
 - One food to eliminate? That sounds easy
-



I'm Not that Handsome, but Girls are Always Calling Me

- Calling for a date or to tell you to bug off!
- Maybe I don't want to say I'm not handsome

Three Simple Things I Do Each Week that Ensures My Date Book is Always Full

- Three things – I should be able to do them
- Actionable with desirable results

Did you notice how the “same book contents” will have more appeal to readers when the title is essentially a micro-summary of the book itself?

Now to fiction



In fiction, you want some suspense or other reason for readers to want to know “what happened,” and “who did it”

Let's say your title is *The Girl in the Blue Plaid Dress*

First page should have some mention of the Blue Plaid Dress, or at least the girl who was wearing it

Essentially, what's the significance of a Blue Plaid Dress that it's in the book title?

If someone starts reading the book (by either buying it or getting a “Glimpse Inside”) but doesn't see anything related to the girl or the blue plaid dress -- you've probably just lost a reader. And not just for that book; but for all your books.

You want to hook a browser into a reader.

You already saw covers of three of my mystery novels, how the words in the titles say what is happening and where. The introductory pages do the same thing -- so should yours!

Exercise #2:

If you're wanting to write a non-fiction book, what are the key points you want your readers to get from the book?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

If you're wanting to write a fiction novel, what's the action that's going to take place, and is it in a certain location? If so, where?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____



TIP #3: Make a list of key words to help you develop the title

This is an **absolute must** for fiction, and it is a very worthwhile exercise for non-fiction

One word at a time (just one)

Don't think or process; just write words, one at a time that plays a role in the book

Set timer for 20 minutes; that's plenty of time

You'll actually do this in Exercise #3, so let's on continue for now.

Divide the words into categories:

- People
- Place
- Action

Use separate sheet for each category

Now, you'll sort the words using a method I learned in graduate school.

Rank sorting 10 items can be difficult when sorting ALL of them at one time

But comparing only 2 at a time is EASY



Start with a category, any one

Take two words, say A and B.

Which do you think is better, A or B? (let's say A)
Scratch off B and pick next, say C.

Which do you think is better, A or C? (let's say A)
Scratch off C and pick next, say D

Which do you think is better, A or D? (let's say D)
Scratch off A and pick next, say E

Which do you think is better, D or E? (let's say D)
Scratch off E and pick next, say F

Continue this until you've gone through the entire list in that category

Repeat the process for the other categories

Once you do this, you'll see how simple it is:

- Which one is better, this one or that one?

There's no fuzzy area, such as you get with more than 2 items

When done with all categories, see if the remaining words make sense when grouped together



If not, determine which word doesn't fit and why?

- Is there a better word in its category that makes better sense with the others?
- If so, use it
- If not, you might need to come up with more words in that category, or in all categories

Once you finally have all “your words,” add in articles, prepositions, etc., to construct a coherent title

For a series, once you have your first title, the others should follow the same pattern (remember my series? “what happened” “where” for each title)

A similar approach can be used for non-fiction

- Diet
- Finance, Money
- Self-Help
- Relations
- How To (of any sort)

Let's put that system to practice in our final Exercise



Exercise #3:

List single words in each of three categories (“Who,” “What,” “Where”) for the book you want to write, and then use the sorting method (on your own) that I described earlier.

WHO	WHAT	WHERE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



Here are those tips again; they're valuable for non-fiction and for fiction

TIP #1: Your first choice of a title doesn't have to be the BEST, but it does have to be GOOD

TIP #2: How much do you want your title to reveal?

TIP #3: Make a list of key words to help you develop the title (a MUST for fiction)

I hope you found these tips helpful; there are plenty more that I can share with you.

Come on over to my **Let's Get that Book Written** Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/letsgetthatbookwritten/ where we can all share tips on getting our books written. It's also where I'll be adding resources I have found helpful as I've written my 15 books.

You can also book a free 20-minute call with me to discuss anything you want to regarding books: calendly.com/stuart-gustafson

Thank you -- I look forward to working with as your books move through the various stages to completion!