

*How to*  
COMMIT *to a*  
BOOK IDEA



# We know how it is for a lot of writers.

You have so many brilliant ideas that it's hard to know where to start. There's the novel about the twin sisters and the other novel about the corrupt lawyer, and then there's the memoir about how you lost all that weight and the other memoir about dropping out of med school to start a non-profit. Also, everyone keeps telling you that you should write a business book about how to kickstart a non-profit, and you keep thinking, *Yes, I should!*

You have an outline and a couple chapters for each book — well, *kind of* an outline. You have a good solid sense of what the book is going to be about once you write the outline — and a good solid sense seems like it's enough.

But when you sit down to write, you can never really get a grip on what you're doing, so you write a few pages, edit a few passages and then switch from project to project, zipping from one file to the other, satisfied that all your great ideas are at least inching forward. But you don't actually accomplish anything. You don't write a book.

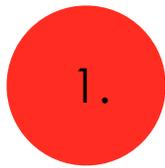
**You can't, because committing to any one idea means that you'd have to leave the other excellent ideas behind, and you can't bear to do that. It would feel like leaving a child behind.**

So you don't commit. You just keep adding projects to the hopper, paralyzed

by your own brilliance.

## THE WAY FORWARD

There are two ways to proceed. Pick one.



**1. Pretend to commit** — If you're having a hard time committing to one idea, pretend to make a commitment. Choose the project that is tugging on your the hardest and give yourself over to it. Give yourself a week or a month *and only work on that one project*. During the trial period, take some actions towards actually bringing the project to life.

- See what website domains are available and maybe even buy one.
- Check out the competition and see how your book stacks up. When you see the competition do you think, “My book is so much better” or do you think “They’ve got it covered and I have nothing to add” ? A fiery competitive spirit is a good indication that you care enough about this idea to see it through.
- Write some blog posts on the topic of your book idea — and yes, this applies to fiction, too. You don’t have to publish the posts. Just see what it feels like to write the posts.
- Go to popular blogs on the same topic and comment. See how it feels to be “public” with the idea.
- Try telling people about your book. When they ask when you are writing, tell them and see what their reaction is like. Do you like their reaction? Or does it make you cringe? This is some good intel.

At the end of that trial session, you may feel that you have the momentum you need to keep going. You may also decide that you really don't want to spend another minute on that idea — at least not now. That's a good result. Put the documents related to the idea in a folder in an archive and forget about it.

Now move onto the next book and try again.

2.

**Don't commit.** If you don't think you can make a commitment to an idea, then decide not to commit to any. Seriously. Decide that you're not going to be writing a book right now — not the novel, not the memoir, not the awesome business book. If you can make that decision and go on about your life doing other things – working, studying, making killer apple pie, learning to play the guitar, going on Saturday morning bike rides – then perhaps you're not meant to write a book right now. Or ever. See if you can live with that for a month, or six months, or a year. And if you can live without being a writer, then so be it. You will save a lot of trees, and you will no doubt accomplish other amazing things.

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