

# Is Self-Publishing Right for Me?

by Silvia Acevedo

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*This is part of a series of posts about self-publishing written by Silvia Acevedo, Indie/Self-Publishing Coordinator for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators-Wisconsin. For more posts, visit <http://www.silviaacevedo.com/the-publishing-pen/>*

The question I get asked most as SCBWI-WI's Indie/Self-Publishing Coordinator is "Is self-publishing right for me?" I usually take a deep breath and ready myself for a long conversation because those asking are generally at the beginning of their publishing journey and are hoping for a quick overview of self-publishing. Really, though, self-publishing is a nuanced and personal decision, so let's back up.

Ask yourself these three questions:

1. Are you done writing your story? If so, huzzah and congrats. Move on to Question 2. If not, that's where you need to start. Finish your manuscript. Make it the best it can be. And then consider Question 2.
2. What is your goal with self-publishing? The answer to this question will oftentimes answer the question about whether self-publishing is right for you and which method is the best choice.

If you want to publish, say, a family memoir, and give out less than, say, 25 books at a family reunion, then, yes, self-publishing is right for you. A traditional publisher would clearly not want such a small and limited project.

If your goal is to have your work placed in bookstores across the country, having expended little to no energy in creating the physical book or promoting it to market, then no, self-publishing is not right for you. Although some self-published works do land a national deal eventually, there was a lot of work logged before reaching that success.

If your goal was to be traditionally published, but your manuscript hasn't been picked up by an agent/editor/publisher, and you've decided you are the best person to ensure your story sees the light of day, then yes, you are a good candidate to self-publish.

These are just examples, though. Only you can decide what's best for you.

And notice that I did not mention money (earnings). What one author considers good compensation for a year or more writing a book is peanuts in the mind of another author. And, anyway, being traditionally published doesn't guarantee you good pay on your writing any more than being self-published does. Too many variables. So let's consider Question 3.

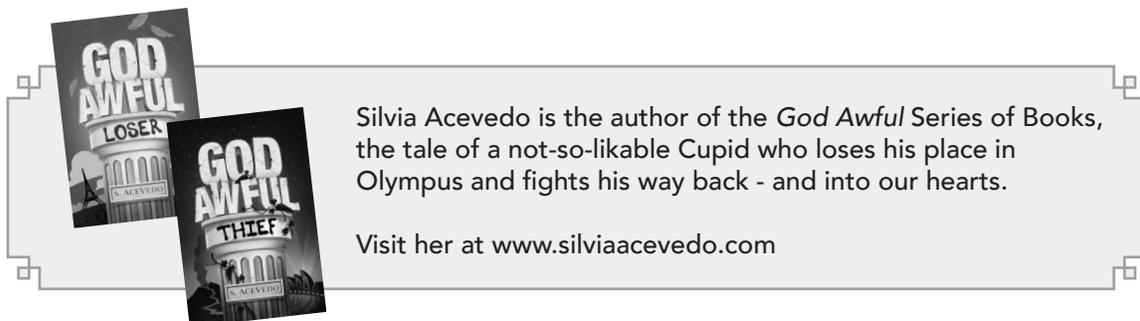
3. How willing are you to learn new things? Develop new skills? Get out there to promote your work? OR how willing are you to pay someone else to do that which you can't or aren't willing to do?

Understand something. There's an awful lot of self in self-publishing. And it is a long-term project. You are choosing to do the work of a traditional publisher to get your creation out into the world. You will (alone or with semi/professional help): write the manuscript, edit it, choose your publishing platform or printer, format the text and inside art, design a cover image, submit all to a printing platform, check print-runs, submit advanced copies to reviewers, finalize distribution methods for book suppliers, promote your book, and become a millionaire (Results may vary.). There is a lot to do even within this very basic list. Some publishing platforms make the process relatively easy. Other platforms require more work. Either way, to go into self-publishing with blinders on about the work involved is to be dishonest with yourself.

If, after reading these questions, you think self-publishing isn't for you, don't give up on your dreams. Keep writing. Keep submitting to agents and editors. Keep learning what you can about the publishing business, and keep up with news about self-publishing. The process of self-publishing gets easier every year, it seems, and more and more people are doing it. What one person can do, so can another. Your journey is your own no matter your path.

If you've read these questions and decided the idea of self-publishing excites you and strikes you as a fun, mind-expanding challenge, why not go for it?

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Silvia Acevedo is the author of the *God Awful Series* of Books, the tale of a not-so-likable Cupid who loses his place in Olympus and fights his way back - and into our hearts.

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