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## The Author's Toolkit: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing and Publishing Your Book

**Mary Embree**
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“For most of us who possess the soul of a writer, there are book ideas that call us, begging us to write them and bring them out of obscurity. I think it would be sad to reach the end of our days and realize with regret that we never did get around to writing that book—the one that tugged at our heart for so many years,” writes Mary Embree in her excellent basic guide to writing and publishing.

Embree asserts that, while creativity may be a gift, “craft is something we can all learn,” and her third edition of *The Author’s Toolkit* proves that she is a capable, effective, and passionate teacher; whether one writes fiction or non-fiction, her book provides sage advice, encouragement, and much-needed resources for beginners and published authors alike.

Embree includes basic skill sets, like confronting a blank page, deciding what equipment will be required, and determining how to do necessary research. More technical information encompasses topics like up-to-date style and usage guidelines, examples of formats and manuscript styles, and a brief but thorough review of the rules of writing and editing. Her thorough discussion of working with editors and agents will help the reader to determine whether or not another professional is needed and to select the right one for the job. The various roles and responsibilities of each person involved in the publication process are clarified, which can help writers avoid misunderstandings that can delay, or even forestall, the publication of their books.

Ethics and legal concerns are also addressed, and examples of various types of legally-binding publishing agreements are provided, together with clear explanations of the rights and obligations that bind the signatory parties. Rounding out the book’s offerings are an overview of the self-publishing process and some of the many forms that alternatives to traditional publication can take. In all cases in which the author feels her expertise falls short, she quotes and credits those whom she considers more qualified, or refers readers to their work. Embree’s step-by-step guide gives writers a good understanding of what it takes to write and publish a book, and the encouragement they need to take action and get their words in print.

Mary Embree has worked in television production and script-writing, created a documentary and educational videos, and is the author of three published books. She has served as a consultant, editor, teacher, and sounding board for many writers, and is the founder of the Small Publishers, Artists, and Writers Network.
KRISTINE MORRIS (January / February 2011)

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