

The
Wow

e-newsletter

by Ken and Dahlynn McKowen

Principles

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www.PublishingSyndicate.com



The “New” Chicken

Marking a momentous occasion is important, and with the release of this issue, we’re celebrating the third anniversary of “The Wow Principles e-Newsletter.” We’ve reached out to our subscribers every month since November 2005, and our database has exploded with writers from all over the world!

Chicken Soup for the Soul books is also celebrating an anniversary—the series has been on the market for 15 years! Wow! And we’re honored that the new publisher and editor of Chicken Soup—Amy Newmark (pictured)—agreed to an interview to mark this special occasion.

Before we start, here’s a bit about Amy: she has had a very successful 30-year career as a writer, speaker, financial analyst and business executive in the worlds of finance and telecommunications. A magna cum laude graduate of Harvard, Amy majored in Portuguese and minored in French, earning a summa cum laude on her thesis which concerned popular poetry in Brazil, and whether this popular expression/poetry would survive the modernization of Brazil. Fast forward through the next 30 years: Amy became a leader in the telecommunications industry, wrote many books on the subject, started her own hedge fund in the early 90s, and has served on the boards of many public companies. After all that, she returned to her love of writing, stepping in as publisher of Chicken Soup in 2008. She and her husband live in Connecticut and have two grown children and two almost-grown children who are in college.

Dahlynn McKowen: Congratulations on becoming the new publisher of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. You’ve taken on quite a successful book series, with, to date, over 200 titles created and over 112 million copies sold. With your vast writing background, it’s obvious you could have started your own series: What was the lure of Chicken Soup?

Amy Newmark: The *Chicken Soup for the Soul* brand name just can’t be beat, and why would we want to anyway? Jack and Mark originated the idea, and they deserve full and ongoing credit for this brilliant concept.

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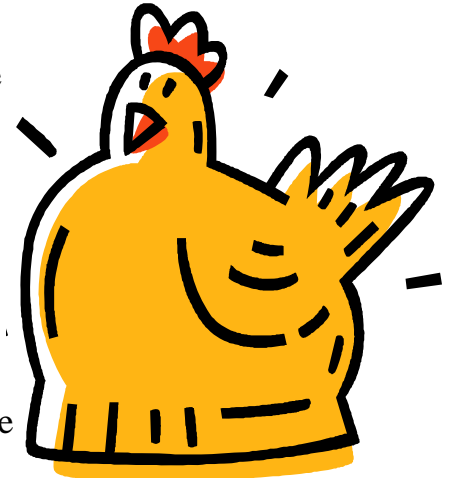
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There have been many imitators but no one has the credibility and the market clout of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, and no one else has Jack and Mark! I think we get the best contributors and we have the most impact of any of the “compilation” series out there.

DM: We’ve received a lot of questions from our Publishing Syndicate subscribers asking why Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen would hand over the reins of Chicken Soup to new management. Will both Jack and Mark continue to be a part of the series?

AN: Jack and Mark are so busy with their non-Chicken Soup writing and speaking careers that they realized they needed additional hands “on deck” to handle the daily operations and to take advantage of all the opportunities of our new “digital age.” They sold a significant stake in the company to an investment partnership led by Bill Rouhana and Bob Jacobs, who have extensive experience in building an Internet presence, TV and film production, licensing, and marketing and promotion. Bill is our Chairman and CEO (and my husband) and Bob is our President. Jack and Mark remain large owners and are very involved in the company. In fact we meet and talk regularly with both of them, in addition to Patty Hansen, Patty Aubery, Barbara LoMonaco, and D’ette Corona. Barbara and D’ette remain key full time employees and the rest of the Chicken Soup gang are still involved but focusing more on their other activities.



DM: With over 200 different titles in print thus far, and with many more coming out each year, many have stated, in both the media and bookstores, that Chicken Soup has oversaturated the market. With the transition to new management, how will you rebrand the Chicken Soup name and image?

AN: We don’t agree that you can have too many Chicken Soup books out there, especially as we start to cover new topics. We have recently published books on divorce, empty nesters, middle school, high school, and getting into college, all brand new topics for Chicken Soup. Next month we will publish a book for Catholics and a fun book on resolutions, and early in 2009 we will publish a book on basketball. As you can see, every one of these books is on a new topic never covered by *Chicken Soup for the Soul* before!

We are having a great time finding new topics to explore, and also presenting old topics with a

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new twist, such as our upcoming book on “power moms” which has lots of celebrity stay-at-home and work-from-home contributors.

DM: Your website and story call-outs have been promoting the fact that Chicken Soup is returning to its successful formula of including 101 stories in each new title. Can you share with our subscribers why you’ve returned to this formula, and what the impact will be both for them and Chicken Soup readers?

AN: We are committed to delivering real value to our readers – 101 stories per book – which makes our books a better read, and of course gives our contributors a better chance of having their stories selected. We have also completely redesigned our cover design and our interiors, and we have switched to a higher quality paper. The new look is fresh and contemporary and makes our books even more attractive as gifts.

DM: Are there any new submission guidelines our subscribers should be aware of before submitting stories for consideration?

AN: The guidelines are the same as before—we thought *Chicken Soup for the Soul* was already doing a great job of collecting quality stories. So same as always: 1,200 words or less, true first person narrative, not previously published elsewhere. If you have a great story, but you are not the world’s greatest writer, don’t worry about that; we will edit it with you. And as always, you retain ownership of your stories and can resell them to other publications as well since they are copyrighted in your names—we pay you for the right to publish the story in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* products.

DM: There seems to be some confusion amongst our subscribers in regards to payment for stories published. Would you please clarify Chicken Soup’s payment structure, and also clarify why



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contributors can no longer purchase books from Chicken Soup in small quantities?

AN: We are slightly increasing the compensation now; it will be still be \$200 per story, but we will also pay \$200 for poems, and we will send you ten free copies of the book instead of one copy. Contributors will still be able to buy books at half price, but only in cases of 20 which we will have shipped via UPS from our distributor, Simon & Schuster. Contributors had cut way back on their ordering of smaller quantities from the company in recent years—at \$7.50 per book, plus \$3.00 for postage and the padded envelope, contributors are better off buying small quantities from Amazon at \$10.17 per book, and they will get the books faster too, as the media mail service from the post office is pretty slow.

DM: Another question we’ve received has to do with the books (i.e., backlist) released under the prior publisher, as many of our subscribers have stories in these books. What are your plans for promoting the backlist?



AN: We are concerned about the backlist slowly disappearing from store shelves, since typically in the publishing business, it is all about the “front list” and publishers do not have much of an opportunity to promote the backlist. We also know that even the largest bookstores cannot carry all the old titles, and they tend to focus on newer books anyway. We decided to re-invigorate the backlist by putting out a series of “Best of” books which promote the backlist books by reminding readers that we have those wonderful old titles. We are now undertaking a massive effort to reach the contributors whose stories were chosen for the “Best of” books in order to send them a free copy of the “Best of” book in which their story appeared and also to offer them a chance to buy the books at half price.

DM: At least once a month, Publishing Syndicate receives an e-mail pitch for a new Chicken Soup title. We refer these inquiries to the Chicken Soup website, where he/she can download a book proposal package. With the management transition, this link is no longer available on your website. Does this mean that you are no longer accepting book proposals?

AN: The link to a book proposal form was actually removed in 2007, long before we came in as management, in response to legal concerns. Chicken Soup often heard from dozens of people suggesting the same topic, usually a topic we were planning to cover anyway, and we wouldn’t want

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someone claiming they were the official “owner” of an idea which was actually suggested by many different people, including ourselves!

DM: And now for my last question: You’ve already discussed your new direction for *Chicken Soup for the Soul*...do you have any new “scoops” for Publishing Syndicate subscribers?

AN: We have not widely publicized that we have hired an excellent literary publicity firm called Phenix & Phenix which will be working closely with our contributors to get them publicity for their stories. They have already set up interviews for some of our contributors. So it will be pretty exciting to be a Chicken Soup contributor—we are really focusing on the individual stories of the contributors, not on the books overall—so it should be a fun time to be a *Chicken Soup for the Soul* contributor, with appearances in magazines, on the radio and TV.

We appreciate Amy taking the time out of her busy schedule to talk about the “new” *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. For more information, please visit www.ChickenSoup.com.



**Calling all travel writers!
We need your help!**

We’ve been working on our new venture—PlacesToDiscover.com. After thirty years of travel writing, we’re finally posting hundreds of our past stories (updated, of course) and thousands of photos. And as each week passes, more and more of our work will be added.

These stories will be available to travel publications for purchase. In March, we will begin contacting hundreds of magazine/newspaper editors, advertising the website as a great place to find travel stories *and* travel writers (interested yet?).

As much as we’d like to, we can’t possibly visit and write about every place in the world. On January 12th, we will begin accepting/posting stories from travel writers. There will be a nominal fee for posting and promoting your stories, but when a travel editor sees your work and wishes to make a purchase, you negotiate the price and you keep it all. Other such marketing services retain a percentage of what you are paid—often 30 percent or more.

We’ve nearly completed the participation agreement and submission details. In December, we’ll e-mail you this information under separate cover, so stay tuned!

HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF! HOT STUFF!

Chicken Soup for the Soul

www.ChickenSoup.com

Amy Newmark, the new publisher and editor of Chicken Soup for the Soul books, is featured as this month's lead story (see page one). Her fresh approach and new ideas will help grow the Chicken Soup brand even more, but she can only do this with YOUR HELP! Be sure to check out the seven new titles just announced; information is below. GET WRITING!

The Golf Book: **Deadline: December 1, 2008 HURRY!**

College Campus Chronicles: **Deadline: Dec. 31, 2008**

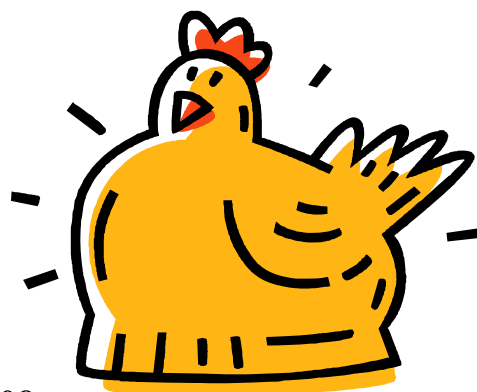
Extraordinary Teens: **Deadline: December 31, 2008**

Learning From Our Cats: **Deadline: January 31, 2009**

Learning From Our Dogs: **Deadline: January 31, 2009**

Not Really Retired: **Deadline: June 30, 2009**

Endurance Sports (Run, Cycle, Swim): **Deadline: June 30, 2009**



Our Best and Brightest (Soldiers and Veterans): **Deadline: March 31, 2009**

Tough Economic Times: **Deadline: March 31, 2009**

A Book of Miracles: **Deadline: June 30, 2009**

Dysfunctional Families: **Deadline: June 30, 2009**

Teachers: **Deadline: June 30, 2009**

Thanks, Dad: **Deadline: June 30, 2009**

Thanks, Mom: **Deadline: June 30, 2009**



A Cup of Comfort

www.CupofComfort.com

Dog Lovers II: **Deadline: December 15, 2008 HURRY!**

Grieving Heart: **Deadline: February 1, 2009**

For Fathers: **Deadline: March 1, 2009**

Go for it! Get published! 