

Book Planning Clarity Worksheet

Define your topic, reader, purpose, message, and desired reader outcome.

A practical planning worksheet for writers who have an idea, a message, and perhaps one very opinionated notebook.

Use this worksheet when you want to move from "I might write a book someday" to "I know what this book is, who it helps, and what I can do next."

Best used with:

- a quiet 20-30 minutes
- a pen or keyboard
- permission to write imperfect first answers
- one small next step before you close the file

Before You Begin

You do not need perfect answers. You need honest starting points. Clarity usually arrives after the pencil starts moving.

Your goal

Name the book you are considering and why it matters now.

Your reader

Identify the person you most want to help, encourage, teach, or guide.

Your outcome

What do you want the reader to understand, believe, or do differently?

A simple planning rhythm

- Name the idea without over-polishing it.
- Choose one primary reader.
- Identify the central problem or question.
- Describe the transformation you want to support.
- Claim your useful credibility, without pretending to know everything.
- Choose one small next step and put it where it belongs: on the calendar.

1. Book Idea

Start with the idea as it exists today. It can be rough, messy, or totally disorganized.

Working title or topic: What do you think this book is about?

In one sentence, this book is about: Keep it simple and direct.

Why does this idea matter to you now?

What keeps pulling your attention back to this topic?

What do you already know you want to include? Stories, tools, lessons, chapters, resources, or examples.

2. Reader

A book becomes easier to shape when you know who is sitting across the table from you.

My ideal reader is: Describe a real person, not a demographic cloud.

What is this reader trying to understand, change, heal, build, or decide?

What has this reader already tried? What worked a little? What did not help?

What would make this reader feel seen in the first few pages?

What tone would this reader trust? Encouraging, practical, warm, direct, reflective, humorous, research-based, story-rich, etc.

3. Core Problem

What problem, question, or frustration will your book help the reader solve?

The main problem my reader faces is:

This problem matters because: What does it cost them emotionally, practically, professionally, creatively, or spiritually?

The belief, habit, or obstacle that keeps this problem in place is:

What question does my reader secretly want answered?

What should this book not try to solve? Set a useful boundary so the book does not become a life raft, toolbox, encyclopedia, and casserole dish.

4. Transformation

Your book should not solve every problem. It should help your reader move from one specific problem toward one specific outcome.

Before reading this book, my reader may feel or believe:

After reading this book, I want my reader to feel, believe, or be able to do:

The promise of this book, in plain language: Example: This book helps [reader] move from [struggle] to [better outcome].

Three ideas, tools, stories, or steps that may help create this shift:

What would make this book genuinely useful? Think clarity, confidence, action, relief, insight, or momentum.

5. Personal Credibility

Credibility does not require perfection. It requires relevance, usefulness, and authenticity.

My experience with this topic includes: Training, life experience, professional work, research, client work, or personal lessons.

The story or insight that gives me permission to write this book is:

What do I know because I have lived, studied, practiced, or observed it?

What boundaries should I honor? What am I qualified to teach, and what should I refer out or research further?

What do I want readers to trust about my voice?

6. Next Step

A book is built by decisions, not drama. Define your next actions.

The next smallest step I can take is: Choose something you can complete in 15-30 minutes.

I will do this by: Date, time, or calendar appointment.

What support, information, or resource would make the next step easier?

Clarity Snapshot

Use this summary to decide whether your idea is ready for outlining, research, or a conversation with a trusted guide.

Book idea	
Reader	
Core problem	
Transformation	
Credibility	
Next step	

Clarity matters more than cleverness. Usefulness matters more than perfection.
 Progress begins with one step.