

A novel idea

Want to make a dream reality? VIVA pairs up readers with experts to do just that. This month, Emma and Jim Wheat quiz co-authors Allan and Barbara Pease on how to get published...

THE MENTORS: Quite apart from raising five children and hosting motivational seminars worldwide, husband and wife duo, Allan, 55, and Barbara, 44, from Australia, have co-written 12 books, selling 20 million copies, including the best-selling couple's communication bible *Why Men Don't Listen And Women Can't Read Maps* (Pease International, Dhs111). Who better to turn to for the secrets of writing a book with your partner?



EMMA AND JIM'S DREAM...

Brits Emma, 38, and Jim, 35, quit their UAE jobs to travel. Back in Dubai, they've written a book on their experiences. "A few months after we met we stepped off the corporate ladder for a 10-month round-the-world adventure, and to figure out what we wanted from life. Exploring the globe, from Peru to the Bahamas, along with family time in the UK, we soul-searched hard. After talking about spending our lives together, Jim proposed and secretly arranged our Thai beach wedding.

While away, we felt completely rejuvenated. It got us thinking: if

our amazing life-changing adventures had helped us, maybe by sharing them, they could help others too?

We spent the final month of our trip staying at our Cyprus apartment, putting in eight-hour days typing up our four travel journals for friends and family. We wrote up our accounts separately, on our laptops, from hillside cafés in the winter sunshine and by log fires at night. Then, back in Dubai, after a chance meeting with Jo Parfitt, of Summertime Publishing, the idea hit us - we might have a book in the making!

Looking back, we were extremely naïve. We thought we'd just write up our journals, get them edited and, hey presto, we'd have a book. Putting pen to paper was difficult but the real learning

curve has been turning our words into a publishable standard.

Fortunately, Jo, who agreed to edit it for us, was brutally honest. But now we have the first draft of *Go Smell The Flowers*, what next? How do we know we've got a book that others will want to read, and how do we go about finding the right publisher? Allan and Barbara, help!

The next step: meet your mentor. Emma and Jim quiz authors Barbara and Allan on how to move forward with their book idea... DO YOU WRITE TOGETHER OR SEPARATELY?

Separately. I'll do the first draft from a man's perspective, using my research, then Barbara edits and adds the female version. We keep passing it back and forth until we get to the final version. **ARE YOU DISCIPLINED ABOUT WHEN TO WRITE?**

I write between 9am and 12pm - no phone calls, no wandering. If I can't think of anything to write, I'll just sit there until it comes. Some days I'll write one line, others six pages. If you wait for inspiration, nothing ever happens, so make it happen! Treat it like any business goal - with a plan of action and a deadline. **HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN YOU'VE GOT A BOOK IDEA THAT WILL SELL?** First, ask yourself, "What's the objective: business or personal?" If it's personal, that's fine but don't expect it to sell. If it's a commercial enterprise, ask, "How are we going to deliver what the public wants and at a good price?" Barbara and I write as marketers and salespeople first, authors second.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE TRANSCRIPT'S GOOD ENOUGH TO BE PUBLISHED?

Test it out. When we're happy with a chapter, we'll ask four close friends to read it, tear it to bits, comment, and explain why they've made those changes. If necessary, we'll re-edit and test again. Then, we give the final copy to another six people whose opinion we trust, and repeat. By the end, it'll have been read by 20 different people and we'll have done five to 10 drafts. Even our titles are chosen by the public, through focus groups - we



Left and above: Emma and Jim on their wedding day, 1 February, 2006, Koh Samui, Thailand

bend to suit public opinion. **WHAT IF YOUR EDITOR MAKES DECISIONS THAT GO AGAINST YOUR STYLE?**

Editors usually know what they're talking about - they edit books for a living. If we don't agree with our editor's decision, we'll go out and test it. We find 10 men and 10 women, and ask their opinion. If most strongly agree with the editor's comment, it goes in. If not, it stays out. **HOW DID YOU GET YOUR BIG BREAK?**

Don't wait to be discovered, it

won't happen. Seminars are great tools; word of mouth is the most powerful form of advertising. And get the media onside. Tell them why people should read your book. Write articles on spec for editors - do whatever you possibly can to promote your product. **HAVE SEMINARS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL TO YOUR BOOKS?**

Yes and no. Our books have sold in countries where we don't do seminars, but they serve

the publisher route, only sell the paperback rights - which is all that most publishers want anyway - and retain the hardcover rights so you can publish those yourself at cost and sell them directly as above

LITTLE BLACK BOOK

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- TO BUY BARBARA AND ALLAN'S LATEST BOOK, *EASY PEASEY PEOPLE SKILLS FOR LIFE* (PEASE INTERNATIONAL, DHS56), LOG ON TO WWW.PEASEINTERNATIONAL.COM
- WANT TO GET PUBLISHED IN DUBAI? CONTACT JO PARFITT: INFO@SUMMERTIMEPUBLISHING.COM OR WWW.SUMMERTIMEPUBLISHING.COM
- WANT TO WRITE A BOOK? FOR SOME TOP TIPS LOG ON TO WWW.OREILLY.COM/OREILLY/AUTHOR
- NEED AN AGENT? THEN CHECK OUT *WRITERS' AND ARTISTS' YEARBOOK 2006* BY TERRY PRATCHETT (APPROX DHS64, WWW.AMAZON.COM).

(seminars, direct mail and internet) to make 90 per cent profit. To avoid extra cost or hassle, ask the publisher to run off as many hard covers as you want, say 5,000, on the end of the paperback run - they usually will because it lowers their overall print run costs. It's a win-win!

DID YOU FIND A PUBLISHER EASILY FIRST TIME ROUND?

No, initially I self-published hard covers myself and sold 30,000 copies through seminars. Then I went about trying to find a publisher. It wasn't easy. I got 57 knock-backs. Eventually, I hopped on a plane to New York and knocked on doors. It's a law of averages: eventually you'll get a yes. I did, with Bantam publishing group, and went on to sell five million copies! ●

LET VIVA TURN YOUR DREAM INTO REALITY. EMAIL YOUR PHOTO, AGE, CONTACT INFORMATION, DETAILS OF YOUR GOAL AND PREFERRED MENTOR/S TO VIVAMENTORS@ITP.COM. WE'LL DO THE REST...

5 LESSONS LEARNED EN ROUTE

1. "I can do it! I know myself better, am more confident and go-getting," says Emma.
2. "To find win-win situations, and not to compromise, as someone ends up not being completely satisfied."
3. "To give and take positive, motivational criticism; working with Jim, towards the same goal - even when the goal posts shift - has brought us closer."
4. "Never put fixed limits on things," adds Jim. "Be flexible. If not, you may miss a better opportunity."
5. "Take time for the important things and people in your life. You never know when your time is up."