

Entrepreneur, Author Empowers Aspiring Authors with Dreams to Write, Publish Books

By Andrea Blackstone

Jessica Tilles, a resident of Upper Marlboro, Maryland, regards literacy as a tool for change.

“It has the power to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and build bridges between cultures and communities. Through reading, we can explore new ideas, learn from diverse perspectives, and foster empathy,” said Tilles.

She has been a change agent who nurtures other author’s dreams, and by building her own audience.

“I have self-published 12 titles of my own through Xpress Yourself Publishing (XYP), the independent publishing company I established in 2000,” Tilles said.

The entrepreneur stated that writing gives us a voice to share our own stories; advocate for ourselves and others; and contribute to the broader narrative of society. “Indiscretions,” her latest published work, was released June 2024.

Tilles is a proven visionary who has taken chances to leap forward with her endeavors.

“In 2006, I expanded XYP to include works by other authors, publishing titles from 80 different writers until 2015, when I closed submissions indefinitely. While this period was an exciting and fulfilling experience, I decided to refocus XYP strictly on my own publications,” the award-winning publisher and best-selling author said.

Tilles created The Writer’s Assistant in 2000 because she was passionate about publishing her first novel, “Anything Goes.”

“At the time, book publishing was a costly endeavor, and I had very limited funds. With no background in graphic

design or book production, I took it upon myself to learn everything I needed to know. Using Terry McMillan’s “Waiting to Exhale” as a guide, I began to understand the intricacies of formatting. I noticed the book’s copyright page mentioned it was “set in Caslon,” which I assumed referred to the font. After searching for and finding Caslon online, it became my go-to font for formatting, and I have been using it for the past 24 years,” said Tilles.

The ambitious writer eventually designed a new book cover using a royalty-free image. The step led to her development of additional graphic design and book formatting skills.

She added, “Over time, I improved, and as word spread, other authors began to ask for my assistance with their book covers and formatting. This demand for my services led to the official establishment of The Writer’s Assistant. In 2009, I rebranded the company as TWA Solutions and Services to expand beyond book publishing. Now, 24 years later, I am a professional book cover designer, editor, formatter, website designer, ghostwriter, and book coach, providing comprehensive support to authors throughout their publishing journeys.”

While Tilles remains deeply entrenched in the literary industry, she noted that a common misconception that many of her clients have about the writing and publishing process is that it is a quick and straightforward journey, although following detailed steps helps to achieve the best results.

“They might assume that once a manuscript is completed, the rest of the process—such as editing, formatting, and marketing—will be relatively simple and fast,” said Tilles.

She also said, “Writing is just the beginning; a manuscript typically benefits from thorough editing to enhance its clarity and impact. Formatting the book for various print and digital platforms involves technical aspects that ensure it looks professional and is compatible with different devices.”

According to Tilles, the development of a comprehensive marketing strategy, reaching readers, and development of an effective author platform are other important aspects of the publishing process.

Tilles also stated that an effective way for an author-to-be to begin to pen a book is to establish a clear writing routine and set manageable goals.

“Begin by dedicating a specific time each day or week to writing, even if it’s just for a short period. Consistency is key to making progress,” she suggested.

The veteran writer advises aspiring authors to start with a simple outline or concept for their books while jotting down main ideas, themes, and the general direction they want their story to take.

“This outline will serve as a roadmap and help guide you as you start writing,” said Tilles.

Tilles noted that joining a writing group or community can be helpful. Engaging with other writers can provide support, motivation, and valuable feedback.



Jessica Tilles, owner of TWA Solutions and Services, offers services that cater to both the literary world and beyond. Tilles, a veteran wordsmith, business owner, and book coach has published works by other writers as well as her own.

Photo courtesy of Jessica Tilles

Additionally, Writer’s Digest (www.writersdigest.com) is a valuable resource that Tilles often recommends to fellow authors. Articles about writing techniques, tips for self-publishing, and resources about query letter guides, and advice on finding literary agents are some of the areas that Tilles mentioned are available through it.

“As an author and someone who has always been passionate about storytelling, I am committed to promoting literacy and helping others discover the joy and potential that comes with it,” said Tilles.

Visit TWA Solutions and Services via www.twasolutions.com and Tilles’ author website via www.jessicatilles.com.