

[By Patricia Hickman](#)



Writing a book is hard. Selling one? Even harder. Like many authors, I spent long hours writing, and even longer hours trying to market my work—often without the success I'd hoped for. Eventually I had to ask myself a hard question:

**Was I just “doing” the work... AND MORE HONESTLY, was I truly achieving anything?**

That moment led me to identify three mindset traps—what I call “*deadly bombs*”—that were quietly sabotaging my publishing efforts.

### **Bomb #1 Letting the Wounded Self Take Over**

Years ago, I developed a detailed marketing plan for a newly releasing novel. I shared it with a friend—a powerhouse in publishing—and he called it “brilliant.” Encouraged, I presented the same plan to my publisher’s publicity team.

But on a conference call with their department, my ideas were met with resistance. The publicist dismissed my entire strategy, saying none of it would work. By the end of the call, I felt foolish for even trying. I shelved the plan.

And then I asked myself:

**Why did I give away my authority so easily?**

Later—after a wave of frustration and reflection—I realized I didn’t need anyone’s permission to market my work. I funded the plan myself, launching a [social media giveaway campaign](#) that grew my audience by several thousand followers and boosted sales by over 3,000 copies that month.

Even better: the publisher noticed and called to offer expense money to extend the campaign. But the bigger lesson?

**Success doesn't wait for permission. It responds to action.**

### **Bomb #2: Letting the Wounded Self Take Over**

That call didn’t just frustrate me—it wounded me. One sentence from the publicist stuck in my head like a splinter:

***“Let us handle publicity. You just stick to writing—that’s what you’re good at.”***

Her message? I wasn’t qualified to lead my own career. And worse—I believed it, even if just for a moment.

But the truth is, it wasn’t her opinion that derailed me. It was my own wounded ego—the part of me that wanted to be liked, validated, and approved. That impulse to seek external affirmation can quietly poison your creative drive.

As Tim Keller once penned: We don't suffer from too little self-esteem—but from an ego that craves too much attention. What holds us back isn't just failure. It's fear of disapproval.

## **Bomb #3: Filtering Your Vision Through Someone Else**

At its core, the third bomb is the most dangerous:

### **Allowing someone else to define your goals.**

No matter how much experience someone else has, they can't see what's unfolding in your mind's eye. They don't know the readers you're writing for—or the personal mission behind your work.

When we outsource our vision, we dilute it. And when we delay action until everyone signs off, we lose valuable time, momentum, and ownership.

To take along some Words-to-Go, remember these three Ts for Action:

### **The 3 T's: Your Author-Entrepreneur Toolkit**

Whether you're a debut novelist or a publishing veteran, here's how I recommend disarming those bombs and moving forward with courage:

#### **Trust Yourself**

You are the best judge of how to speak to your readers. Don't mimic what everyone else is doing—stand out by trusting your instincts and approaching your marketing as creatively as you approach your writing.

#### **Toughen Up**

Not every voice deserves influence. Some criticism comes from people protecting their own territory, not from insight. Brush off the noise and keep your eyes on your long

game.

### **Team Lead Yourself**

Take the wheel. Be your own creative director. Yes, accept editorial feedback where it improves your work—but don't defer your vision to others. Keep refining your goals and build your publishing life around them.

The world doesn't need another copycat. It needs bold, brave voices who believe in their mission enough to take risks.

**Risk it!**



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