One weekend I sold 1,087 copies of my book in just 48 hours.

That’s pretty significant, considering that in the previous five and a half months since my book had launched, I’d only sold a little over 3,800 copies.

What made such a difference? Having an experimental mindset.

**Writing = Emotion**

Writing, of any kind, is an emotional process. It is a terrifying thing to put a series of words together to form a cohesive narrative that will help people, entertain them, and just maybe, change the world.

As the great Stephen King said in his fantastic book *On Writing*:

> You can approach the act of writing with nervousness, excitement, hopefulness, or even despair—the sense that you can never completely put on the page what’s in your mind and heart. You can come to the act with your fists clenched and your eyes narrowed, ready to kick ass and take down names. You can come to it because you want a girl to marry you or because you want to change the world. Come to it any way but lightly. Let me say it again: you must not come lightly to the blank page.

So naturally, the act of *selling* your work is also an emotional process. Here are just a few of the thoughts and emotions I’ve experienced while marketing my book:

- **Fear** – “This isn’t going to work. Nobody is going to buy it.” Or even worse, “This is going to work! People are going are going to buy it, and then hate it.”
- **Shame** – “My book isn’t selling. I suck. What are my friends / family / colleagues—all those people who think I’m crazy already—going to think?”
- **Guilt** – “I’m not doing enough to sell my book.”
- **Exhilaration** – “This thing I’ve always wanted to do is finally happening!”
- **Happiness** – “People are buying my book and actually liking it!”

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[Out:think]
It’s OK to feel these emotions—both the good and bad. What causes real problems is when those emotions drive our marketing decisions.

What is the experimental mindset?

The experimental mindset comes in four steps:

1. Look for opportunities
2. Try a new opportunity
3. Evaluate results
4. Plan the next step

Think back to your chemistry class in high school. Were you emotionally attached to the outcomes of your experiments? Of course not! You followed the instructions in the book and recorded the outcomes. If the outcomes were right, you moved on. If they were wrong, you evaluated what went wrong and tried again.

Two benefits of the experimental mindset

When you start making your marketing plans from an experimental mindset, two wonderful things start happening:

First, new opportunities present themselves.

Through my experiences working with authors, I’ve brushed up against paid advertising a few times and been extremely underwhelmed. Most of the time, the economics just aren’t there to support the method.

Most authors are making about $2 per sale of a book. If you buy pay-per-click advertising such as AdWords or Facebook advertising, you have to convert an extremely high percentage of people to buy your book in order for that expenditure to make sense.

Because of that fact, I had pretty much written off paid advertising as a good source of book sales. However, with the 10k Experiment, I’ve forced myself to start looking at new opportunities—ones that I would have previously ignored. So when a good friend recommended that I advertise through BookBub.com, I decided to go for it.
The result? I paid $160 to promote *Your First 1000 Copies* and ended up selling 1,087 copies in 48 hours. Since I was running a $0.99 promotion on my book (while still making 70% royalties), that means I netted roughly $753.

Also, I achieved a ranking of #95 out of all books on Amazon.com, making *Your First 1000 Copies* a Top 100 Amazon Bestselling book. At the same time, I also hit #1 among all editions of all business books on Amazon.com.

More importantly, those sales got me 11% closer to my goal of selling 10,000 copies.

*All of that happened because I was in the experimental mindset.* I’m always looking for new opportunities and am willing to try new things, just so I can learn what works and what doesn’t.

**Second, the experimental mindset removes emotion from the equation.**

When I separate my self-worth from my book sales and treat my efforts like lab experiments, all I’m looking for is data. I try new things, watch the results, adjust, and try again.

I tried the BookBub.com advertisement just to see if it would work. If it failed, I was out some money, but at least I knew that it wouldn’t work. If it was successful, then it would put me on a path to look for similar opportunities.

It was an unemotional decision.

**How to move into the experimental mindset**

Of course, the process wasn’t unemotional at the end. It was exciting to see the sales rolling in and my Amazon ranking grow so rapidly! I was texting my friends and driving my wife crazy with my frequent updates.

If it hadn’t worked, I would have felt frustrated. Wasting $160 isn’t fun. Neither is being wrong. But here’s the important thing about taking on the experimental mindset: you must separate your decision-making process from
your emotions.

If something works, that’s great. Get excited! If it fails, that sucks. Be sad!

However, when it comes time to deciding what to do next, remove your feelings from the situation, consider your opportunities, look at the data, and make the best decision you can.

Make your decision knowing full well that you might be completely wrong. But you are not your book sales.

The caliber of your writing is not reflected in your book sales. Your career as a writer is not destroyed by one failed marketing experiment.

Results of an experimental mindset

The result of this mindset: more book sales.

Too many authors don’t try a new marketing method because they’re afraid it won’t work. They’re afraid of failure. The result of this is missed opportunities and missed book sales.

Step back from the situation, separate your emotions from your marketing decisions, and start treating it like a lab experiment. Look for those new opportunities, try them, see if they work, and then use that information to make a new and better decision.

If you can do that, you’ll soon see those new opportunities start to turn into book sales.
Thanks for Reading!

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