

An extract of three letters from

DEAR NEW BOOK COACH

A QUIET COMPANION

Ruth Bullivant



Greetings!

Dear New Book Coach,

After a few years running my own business as a book coach, and after three decades working in other people's business in the law, I was finding out things about book coaching, clients, business, and me that I thought I probably ought to share with others who were just starting out.

It sometimes helps to know that it's normal to feel scared, overwhelmed, and anxious; it's even more fun to laugh with a friend over the absurdities of every day business life and to share in the sheer delight of the good days.

The result was a small but handy book, *Dear New Book Coach – A Quiet Companion*. The book is structured in a way that reflects the growth of a coach from the first days of running your own business through to beginning to find your feet. It's about the *feelings* of being a solopreneur and it never (I hope) tells you *how* to do business.

This little pamphlet extracts three of the letters and I am thrilled to have the chance to share them with you at Jennie Nash's invitation. If you would like to hear the Introduction to the book, you are welcome to listen to it: <https://ruthbullivant.com/dear-new-book-coach/#start>

Wishing you all the very best in your new career! If you ever wish to get in touch to let me know how things are going, my email is: books@ruthbullivant.com

Ruth

Dear New Book Coach – A Quiet Companion

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On setting up in business

Choosing your people

Dear New Book Coach,

We are so anxious when we start in this business to work that some of us start by working with writers and on books that don't make us happy. That was the case with me.

It's perfectly excusable. We're keen to get as much experience as we can, we need to earn to pay the bills, and most of all, we are service-oriented. If someone asks for our help and there is the least chance we can help them, we tend to leap in rather than hand them off. No need to beat yourself up about that.

But, sooner or later, you are going to have to work out what work does make you happy. Niche, Refine, Define, call it whatever you like, but notice what's happening with each client, and each piece of work you encounter. Keep a note over a year and tally it up.

You may say, "I like that type of work and want to do more of it," and so set yourself a challenge to hunt for more work like that.

Or you may say, "I don't like working with clients who lack a sense of humor," so you find ways to identify potential clients whose sense of humor is similar to yours, and hard-wired into their outlook on life.

Once you start to make those distinctions, you're making a plan for yourself.

In the meantime, be open to all the opportunities. You won't know what you want until you try things out.

Ruth

Defining your ideal client

Dear New Book Coach,

We spend a lot of time trying to define our ideal client.

It's helpful to think in terms of behaviors or values, as much as what our ideal client is writing about.

Compare these two clients. I worked with them last year.

One routinely missed or pushed deadlines back. They tended to argue against my feedback, convinced more of the rightness of their own opinion than wanting to weigh up the advice they were paying for.

The other filled my inbox with well-thought-through assignments. They constantly moved their book on. They reflected on what they were achieving and what coaching helped them with, and they dug deeper for more truth, but they always prefaced their submissions with a thoughtful understanding of my time and effort. They never demanded; they always shared.

Toward the end of their coaching phase, one of them assumed we would go on working together. The other asked if we might go on working together.

Can you guess which one did which?

Ruth

On goal-setting

One year from now

Dear New Book Coach,

After my last letter, were you saying how difficult it is to define what success means to you right now? To be able to say it in a way that you could drive a nail through it and hang it on the wall, and say, *That's what I want to have achieved.*

You're wondering how at some point in the near future you can stop and look at where you are and say, *Did I mean to be exactly here?*

In true coaching fashion, let me ask you a few questions. I want to help you determine what value you get from the hours you work. And I'm not talking about the money.

What if you were simply to have spent more time thinking about how you feel as you work, and to have made intelligent adjustments so that you always move in the direction of ease in your working life?

What if, when you do your review, you can say to yourself, I have selected the exact work I chose to do from clients I wanted to work with. I've adjusted my hours to suit me—not based on how much I want to earn—to enable me to fit in [my writing/elder care/mountaineering/teaching my cat to swim].

What if you felt complete peace of mind about the work you have done, to know that you have carried it out with grace, and have been useful, really life-changingly useful, to the writers you have encountered?

What would getting satisfaction from a job well done make you feel about your identity in this new career you have chiseled out for yourself?

Ruth

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¹ Hey. I had to include this. I'm a lawyer by birth.