

To Free Or Not To Free? That Is The Question

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So just over a week ago I scheduled a KDP select promotion and gave my book away for three days. Was it worth it? Yes, yes, yesss! In fact, yes with bells on, with knobs and whistles on, in fact, yes with extra cream, marshmallows and sprinkles on. It was that good.

You might have guessed by now that this is not one of those 'here's how to do it' marketing-strategy-type posts, because I really don't have all the answers, but it is, instead, simply my own personal thoughts and musings about going 'free' for a few days - as in giving your book away, not ditching your bra...

There are many and varied reasons for going free, just as there are many and varied arguments against it. I'm not looking to address these here, but simply to share my experiences of this process.

So why do I think it was worth it? Well, because, looking back, the whole thing was such huge fun it was actually exhilarating. 'Sales' of *Letting in Light* exceeded all my expectations. I had hoped I might sell a hundred or so, but not several hundred that it did sell. I was glued to my iPad, refreshing the sales report page on Amazon like a... well, like the kind of author I'm aspiring to be, I suppose. I watched in amazement as the line on the graph shot upwards each time I checked, and I have to say, what bigger encouragement do you need to keep on writing than by getting a glimpse of what it feels like to be selling huge quantities of books, and selling them, rather than giving them away.

What really did surprise me about going free was the amount of support I received, and lovely comments which came my way, particularly on Twitter. People who I had been chatting to over recent months stood up and were counted, and this was such a positive, energising experience that I wanted to give my book to them. I wanted to say have one on me, in thanks for all the support and encouragement I've received since *Letting in Light* was self-published at the end of June. These comments alone have given me encouragement to believe that what I'm doing is right for me.

Of course, while the downloads were flying, I did think to myself, 'Uh oh, I'm doing myself out of good money here,' but it was only a fleeting thought. I'm realistic, I know they were only being downloaded in such quantities because they were free. This isn't a post about the mechanics of book pricing, however, because what's more important to me is the understanding that, at this stage in my career, I am nothing to you but one of a very large number of authors shouting buy my book. After all, why on earth should you? I can tell you it's a great book, I can show you reviews from people who think it's a great book, but the only way you will believe me

is if you read it for yourself and happen to agree with me. Well, now hundreds of you are getting the opportunity, and to me, that's priceless.

Consider the question: If a tree fall down in a forest and there's no one to hear it, does it still make an noise? Then consider the question: If a book is a great book but nobody reads it, is it still a great book? So whilst I love the film Field of Dreams, and the quote 'If you build it they will come,' the same does not apply to books, more specifically to debut books. 'If you write it they will come.' No, they won't, they will stay away in droves.

So to finish, I would like to thank the droves who took the trouble to grab a copy of my book. I had an absolute ball going free, and you have the book with my blessing. I hope you enjoy it (and if you do, for God's sake leave a bloody review!).