Whenever I have a client who's self-publishing, especially those who are just dipping their toe into the world of publishing for the first time, there is a host of information I want them to know. I can't communicate all of it, but here's what you can't *not* know:

1. **Editing Process**
   When a contracted manuscript is submitted to a traditional publisher, the process will typically involve:
   - One or two rounds of developmental editing
   - A round of copy editing
   - Several meticulous rounds of proofreading, looking for the tiniest errors: an extra space after a period, a "zero" that's really a capital "O," or a "there" instead of a "their."

   Readers have been trained to expect an error-free product, and even a few errors can cause the reader to lose confidence in the book, and set it down. While this rigorous level of precision isn't always possible when self-publishing, your readers will be best-served if you put this important work into your book up front.

2. **Book Cover**
   Whether readers will be browsing through a bookstore, scrolling through thumbnail images on Amazon, or buying from a merch table, *the cover matters*. It both signals what's inside and whether what's inside has value for the reader. Even if you have the technical skills to create a cover using your photo editing software, don't. Resist the urge. There are tried and true principles relating to images, colors, font styles, and font sizes that make for great covers. Let a professional design the cover of your book.

3. **Book Design**
   Have you ever noticed that the inside of a traditionally published book, all the pages of content, have been *designed*? Care and attention have been given to the precise measurements of margins, as well as the size and shape of fonts in the text, chapter titles, headers and subheads. None of this is accidental. Each choice was made to serve the book and serve the reader. Although certain independent publishing options might aid you with book design, it's up to you to ensure that nothing about the design creates a barrier to a reader reading your book.

4. **Books Are Hard to Sell**
   Before you sink your own dollars into publishing a book, have a plan for how you will market and distribute the book to your target audience. Don't just throw it up at Amazon with millions of other books and hope for the best. You've been warned.

The purpose of your book is to serve the reader, and a well-written book with a sharp design does that. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well.

I am for you,
Margot
www.wordmelon.com