



Using Facebook to Spread Your Book's Important Message

by Julia Schopick

In my previous column for *IBPA Independent*, "Taking to the Waves: Using Radio to Get the Word Out," I wrote about my favorite method of book promotion: being interviewed on talk radio. Being a guest on over 100 shows has helped my book, *HONEST MEDICINE: Effective, Time-Tested, Inexpensive Treatments for Life-Threatening Diseases*, maintain its position as an Amazon bestseller since its publication in January of 2011.

In this column, I will share how to best utilize my favorite social media platform: Facebook. Used together, radio and Facebook make an unbeatable combination.

Facebook has helped me accomplish feats I never could have accomplished without it. It can do the same for other independent authors. For example, I have connected with people in the media who have invited me to become a regular guest on their shows; I have met foreign publishers for *HONEST MEDICINE*; and I have been introduced to people who have agreed to contribute chapters to both *HONEST MEDICINE* and to the book I am in the process of writing with co-author Don Schwartz.

Thanks to Facebook, I have connected with other successful authors and "friended" several nonauthor experts in fields related to mine—all of whom I was confident would want to know about my work and my book. But without Facebook, these connections would never have happened.



I participate regularly in discussions in Facebook groups made up of people whose work I admire, and who admire my work. I do this by following the conversations in these groups and adding valuable information whenever I can. For instance, I am an active member of approximately 15 Facebook groups—both US and foreign—devoted to spreading the word about low-dose naltrexone (LDN), one of the treatments featured in *HONEST MEDICINE*. I regularly participate in discussions in several of these groups.

Whenever I post an article, share another person's article, or leave a comment, I do so with the purpose of educating my friends and followers. By providing valuable information, I become known as an expert, and people want to buy books that are written by experts.

I didn't always feel so positively about Facebook. As a matter of fact, soon after *HONEST MEDICINE* was published, when a colleague encouraged me to use Facebook to spread my message, my exact words were: "I'll never use Facebook. Facebook is dumb."

But, ultimately, I'm glad I went against my own advice, because I soon realized that Facebook was a promotional goldmine. It took me a while to figure out how to best promote my book on Facebook, but once I figured it out, I was hooked.

Why is Facebook such a valuable tool for authors?

First and foremost, authors are wordsmiths, and Facebook is a place where words can be used effectively. Compare this with Twitter, where you are limited to 140 characters.

Second, Facebook is a platform for connecting people on a personal level. While LinkedIn is a business-to-business social networking platform, Facebook will help you connect directly to potential readers, as well as to other experts who will want to help promote your book to their followings.

Here are some Facebook don'ts, followed by Facebook dos—along with personal examples of how I've used Facebook creatively. You and your authors can apply these methods to promoting your books.

Facebook Don'ts

Too often, authors think that posting their book on their own Facebook pages is enough. Not only is it not enough, it is actually too much. Posting about oneself or one's book over and over is shameless self-promotion. And, because of this, it is counter-productive. No one wants to see the same thing over and over—especially if it is only about you. Using Facebook effectively is about education: sharing information that your friends and followers will find useful. It is not about telling the world how wonderful

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you and your book(s) are. If you use Facebook creatively, people will figure this out for themselves.

In my previous column, I pointed out that, if you are an effective radio interview guest, who shares valuable information, your host will often promote your book for you. Similarly, if you use Facebook effectively, your friends and followers will do the same.

There are exceptions to my rule about not posting directly about your book. For instance, if your book has been published in a foreign language, announce this on Facebook, since your friends, followers, and group members will want to know about it. When *HONEST MEDICINE* was published in the Netherlands as *Eerlijke geneeskunde*, one Dutch Facebook group (LDN gebruikersgroep), which is dedicated to spreading the word about low-dose naltrexone, promoted this new edition. I was then able to share

The image shows a blue rectangular graphic with white and yellow text. At the top, "SIX★PENNY GRAPHICS" is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Below that, "Book Design" is written in a large, elegant, yellow cursive script. At the bottom, in a smaller white sans-serif font, it says "Book Covers ★ Interiors ★ Print Design & eBooks" followed by "sixpennygraphics.com (866) 421-8872".

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their posting on several other LDN Facebook pages—both US and foreign.

Similarly, if you have been quoted in an article, or have appeared on a radio show, in which you shared information that your friends, followers, and group members will find interesting, it is appropriate to share a link to the article or show. Be sure, when you do this, to write an introduction explaining why people should be interested in reading the article or listening to the show. Without such an introduction, you may come off as being a shameless self-promoter.

Another don't: Do not get involved in Facebook fights. These famously occur during political campaigns, but they can also occur following controversial posts on a variety of topics. Many people—authors included—do this to their detriment. You will never win. In fact, doing this will keep you from your goal: educating your public about the field for which your book is known.

Facebook Dos

There are several ways authors can use Facebook effectively.

- Have two Facebook pages: a personal page and a fan page for your book. Why two pages? First, Facebook won't let you have a fan page without a personal page. Also, more importantly, Facebook limits you to 5,000 friends on your personal page, while you can have an unlimited number of followers ("likes") on your business (or fan) page.

Takeaway Tips

Follow these quick tips for Facebook success.

Don't:

- Endlessly self-promote
- Get involved in Facebook fights

Do:

- Maintain a personal page and a fan page
- Share trustworthy news in your area of expertise
- Engage others in conversation
- Be an active, but polite, commenter
- Show others you value them
- Connect experts with one another



- Become known as a respected educational resource for solid news in your area of expertise. With all the "fake news" abounding in the alternative medicine field (how many "cures" of "all cancers" can there be?), I have become known as an expert who vets her sources. I can spot fake news a mile away. Once, I was hoodwinked: I shared a fake news posting. I decided to come clean. Instead of taking my fake post down, I apologized for it. This actually solidified my reputation, rather than compromising it further.
- Post and share articles about advances in the field or fields for which your book is known. For instance, my expertise is in the area of integrative medicine, so I share and post articles that expose pharmaceutical industry duplicity and financial ties—two topics discussed at length in my book. I am extremely gratified when my friends and followers share my postings and leave comments.
- Encourage your friends and followers to engage in conversations based on your postings.

- Become an active—and always polite—commenter. I receive e-mail notices about Facebook postings and comments that relate to my topic. When appropriate, I add my two cents. Often, I will provide a link to a study that either backs up or refutes a statement that has been made by a Facebook friend or follower.
- Let people know you value them by “tagging” them. Tag your friends by typing the @ sign followed by the person’s name. This way, you will alert your friends when you mention their name(s).
- Be helpful by connecting other experts to each other. For instance, I recently introduced two experts to each other by tagging both of them in a comment. The result: One of them, who convenes an annual conference dedicated to disseminating information about integrative cancer treatments, invited the other, an integrative cancer practitioner,

to speak at an upcoming conference. Definitely a “win-win”!

If you follow these Facebook dos and don’ts, you’ll soon be regarded as an expert, and you’ll sell a lot of books! •

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Julia Schopick is the best-selling author of HONEST MEDICINE: Effective, Time-Tested, Inexpensive Treatments for Life-Threatening Diseases. A seasoned radio talk show guest who has appeared on over 100 shows, Julia is often invited back for follow-up interviews. In addition, she successfully uses social media, particularly Facebook, to promote her book. Julia coaches other authors on how to use these promotional techniques effectively. To learn about her coaching service, Honest Medicine Communications, go to HonestMedicineCommunications.com. Write to her with questions at Julia@HonestMedicine.com.

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