

Judging a Book by its Cover

Contributed by Cici Miller
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Face it. We do judge books by their covers. So, if you are writing a book, and/or self-publishing, then pay attention. We're drawn to a particular color, style, or cover art. Flat, dull book covers turn us away unless we're looking for a "serious" book. I know that when I venture into mega-bookstore Powells (four floors of new and used books), I'll feel so overwhelmed that I end up buying books just because of the cover. Writer Cici Miller offers some sage advice for writers who are self-publishing.

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You know it when you see it. It's the paper sandwich that looks so yummy you can't pass it up. It demands a second look. A well-designed book cover is no accident. It's the product of creative knowledge and great intuition. When you're meeting your sweetie's folks for the first time, you wear something special but not too garish, something that speaks volumes about what a great guy/gal you are.

My grandmother's advice to young women interested in marriage was, "Be pretty if you can, witty if you must, and pleasant if it kills you!" So it is with a book cover. Like a suitable suitor, it should be easy to love. Second, it should promise to enhance your life. A book cover must be both attractive and interesting before readers (like suitors) are willing to make a commitment.

Wisdom recommends using good common sense to impress the folks. If you're a mystery, be cryptic, enticing. If you're a self-help guide, be up-front and upbeat. For the right book, a humorous cover works miracles. Many a goofy guy or gal who dressed unwisely to meet the sweetie's parents, have been saved by being funny at dinner. The gist? Be different, but not so different it makes us squirm. Be funny, but not goofy. Above all, be professional. And if possible, make us stop in our tracks to check you out.

It takes courage and strength of heart to follow the path of creativity.

—Matthew Fox

Ceci Miller is the author of *Sacred Visitations: Gifts of Grace that Transform the Heart and Awaken the Soul*, endorsed by

Chicken Soul Author Marci Shimoff, Mars/Venus author John Gray, and bestselling author John Bradshaw. The book's touching, often magical, stories guide readers beyond mere memoir into the profoundly personal world of their own sacred experiences. Ceci's workshops teach the 5 Steps of Sacred Awareness. A student of meditation since 1976, Ceci's heartfelt stories of spiritual experience and contemplation--shared in articles, books, and public talks--have inspired meditators and seekers throughout the world. She is the author of two children's books and has co-authored and edited numerous books for adults. To hear Ceci read an excerpt from Sacred Visitations, or to hear her interviews with people about their spiritual experiences on the Sacred Visitations Podcast, go to <http://www.sacredvisitations.com/>