

Finding the Shape of Your Book



A gentle guide to form, not force



Wisdom Publishing

Opening

Most people think the hardest part of writing a book is the writing.

In reality, the hardest part often comes earlier.

It's the moment when you ask:
What kind of book is this supposed to be?

This guide isn't here to answer that question for you.
It's here to help you listen more closely to the answer that
may already be forming.



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Why Shape Matters

When people feel stuck, it's often not because they lack ideas.

It's because they're trying to pour one kind of knowing into the wrong container.

- A book that wants to be reflective will struggle if forced into a rigid guide.
- A book that wants to teach will feel scattered if it stays too open.
- A book that wants images will feel cramped if it's only given words.

Finding the right shape doesn't limit your book.
It frees it.



Common Book Shapes (Without Hierarchy)

There is no better or worse form.
Only what fits.

Here are a few common shapes books naturally take:

Nonfiction Guide

A book that offers clarity, insight, or understanding around a topic you know deeply.

Workbook or Journal

A book designed for interaction, reflection, and personal process.

Reflective or Philosophical Book

A companion book. Often poetic, open-ended, and meant to be read slowly.

Illustrated Book

A book where images carry meaning alongside or beyond the text.

Hybrid Forms

Many books don't fit neatly anywhere. That's not a problem. It's often a sign of originality.

You don't need to decide yet.

You only need to notice what feels most natural.



Listening to the Book Itself

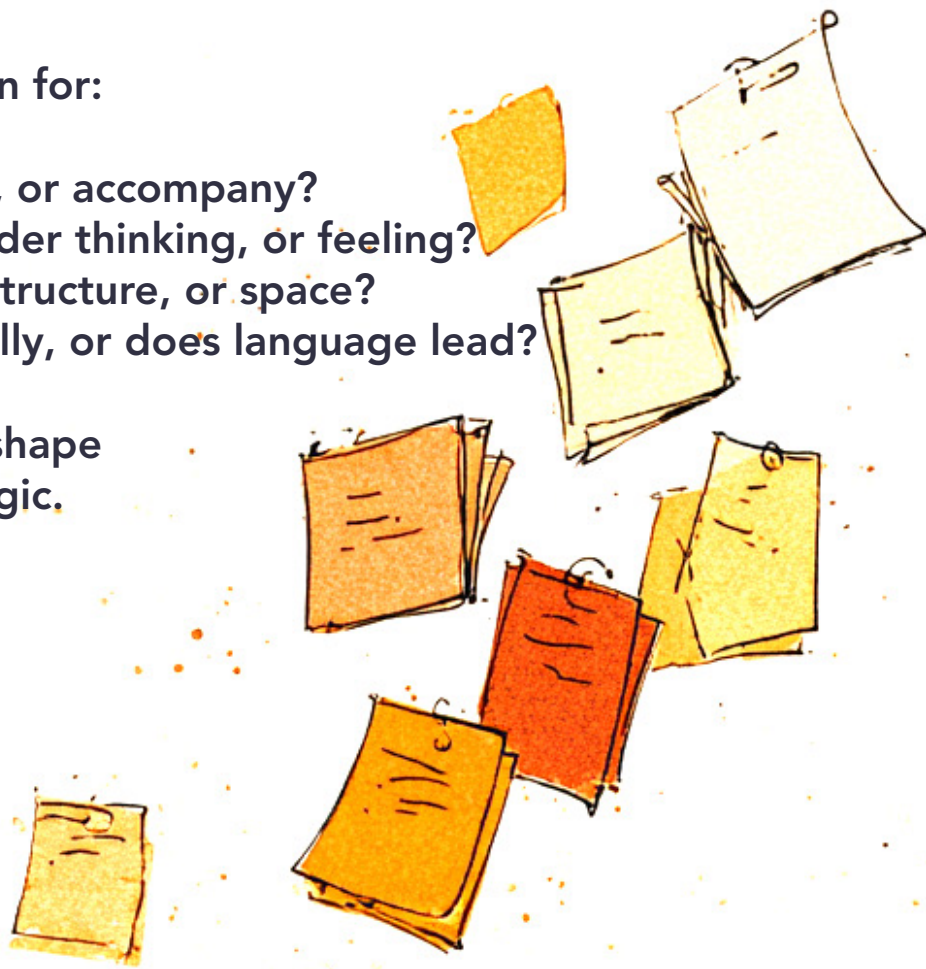
Instead of asking,
What should I write?

Try asking:
What does this want to become?

Some gentle cues to listen for:

- Do you want to explain, or accompany?
- Do you imagine the reader thinking, or feeling?
- Does the book ask for structure, or space?
- Do images come naturally, or does language lead?

Books often reveal their shape
through sensation, not logic.



Why Forcing a Shape Creates Resistance

Many people choose a form because it seems practical, marketable, or familiar.

That can work, but it can also create quiet resistance.

You may notice:

- loss of momentum
- confusion about content
- endless rewriting
- a sense that something feels off

This doesn't mean the book is wrong.
It usually means the container is.

When the shape aligns, writing often becomes calmer and more coherent.



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You Can Change Your Mind

One important truth:

You are allowed to change the shape of your book.

What begins as a guide may become reflective.

What starts as text may invite images.

What feels large may want to be small.

This is not failure.

It's listening.

Many finished books only reveal their true form halfway through the process.

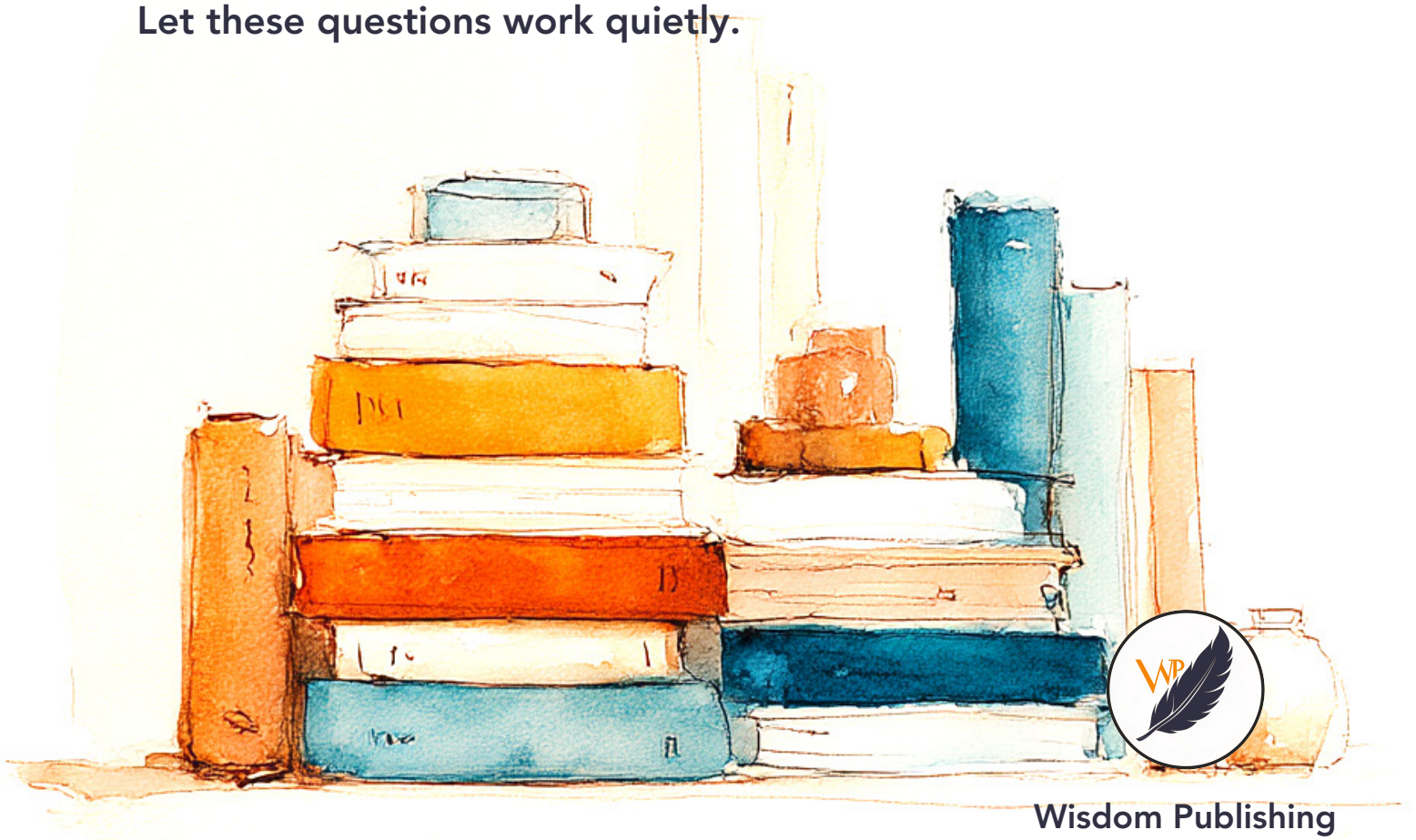


Gentle Questions to Sit With

You don't need to answer these immediately.

- If this book were finished, how would I hope someone feels after reading it?
- Would I want the reader to do something, or simply be with something?
- Does this book want to teach, witness, guide, or reflect?
- What form feels like relief rather than effort?

Let these questions work quietly.



Closing

You don't need to choose the perfect shape today.

You only need to notice which shapes feel possible, and which feel heavy.

The right form doesn't demand more from you.
It supports you.

When a book finds its shape, the rest of the process often becomes gentler.

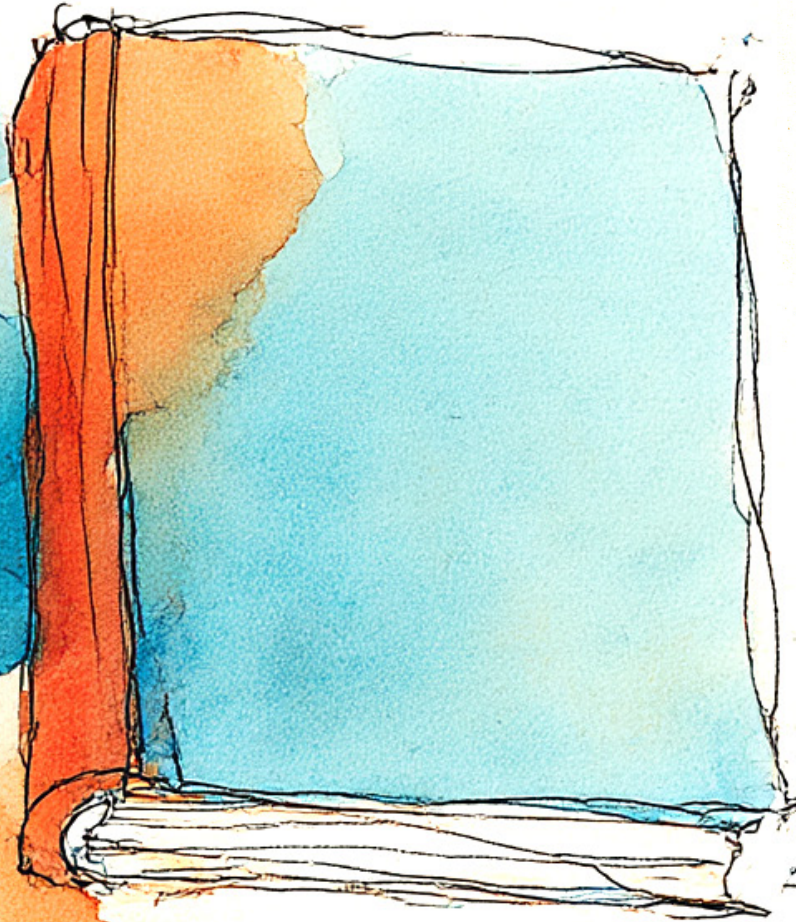


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A quiet note

If you'd like support sensing the shape of your book, and holding that structure as it takes form, you can learn more about working with me at wisdom-publishing.com.

There's no rush.
Just an invitation.



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