



CALIBRATE

Your Work

A Strategic Market
Readiness Workbook



How to use this workbook

CALIBRATE is designed to help you make precise adjustments so your manuscript performs at its highest professional level in today's publishing market.



Precision, not perfection.

You are not trying to become flawless. You are identifying where a small, strategic shift will create meaningful forward movement.

For each section:

1. Rate Yourself Honestly (1-5)

Trust your first instinct. This is diagnostic, not performative.

2. Complete the Written Prompts

Clarity emerges through articulation. Do not skip the exercises.

3. Notice Patterns

Is one area consistently strong?

Is one area consistently uncertain?

Patterns matter more than individual numbers.

4. Choose One Precise Adjustment

Do not attempt to fix everything.

Select one strategic refinement to focus on this quarter.

A Note on Scoring

A low score is not a verdict. It is data.

A high score is not a guarantee. It is an indicator of strength.

The goal is not to inflate your numbers, but to understand where you are.
Specificity is power.

Before You Begin...

Pause. Take a breath. Approach this with professional curiosity rather than self-criticism. You are not behind. You are somewhere specific. And that specificity will tell you what comes next.



C – CONCEPT STRENGTH

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- My premise can be articulated in one compelling sentence.
- The central conflict is clear and specific.
- The stakes are evident in the premise itself.
- The idea feels distinct within its category.
- The story engine sustains a full manuscript, not just a hook.

Written Exercise

1. Write your book in 25 words or fewer:

Now:

Underline the conflict.

Circle the stakes.

If you removed your protagonist's unique lens, would the story still feel generic?

Write your answer:

Diagnostic Questions

- Is this concept high-friction or low-friction in the marketplace?
- Does the premise signal urgency or subtlety?
- Would an agent immediately understand how to pitch it?
- Does the idea feel inevitable once articulated?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low...

Focus on sharpening the premise before revising prose.

Refinement at the concept level creates exponential clarity downstream.

Do not polish sentences before pressure-testing the engine.

A – AUDIENCE PRECISION

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- I can describe my ideal reader in detail.
- I understand the emotional need this story serves.
- The tone matches the developmental stage of the audience.
- The content aligns with current category expectations.
- I can clearly state why this story belongs in this category.

Written Exercise

Describe Your Ideal Reader

Age:

Reading habits:

Emotional landscape:

What they are craving:

Now answer:

What problem does this story solve for that reader?

Diagnostic Questions

- Am I writing for everyone?
- Does my pitch sound vague when I describe the audience?
- Would a bookseller know where to shelve this immediately?
- Does the emotional promise match the reader's developmental stage?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low

Audience clarity precedes market traction.

Sharpen who this is for before refining how it is written.

Precision creates resonance. Resonance creates demand.

L – LANDSCAPE AWARENESS

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- I can name three comparable titles from the last five years.
- I understand how my book is similar to those titles.
- I understand how my book is different.
- I am aware of category saturation.
- I can articulate why this book feels timely.

Written Exercise

List Three Comparable Titles (from the last five years)

Comp Title 1:

Comp Title 2:

Comp Title 3:

For each comp, answer:

What makes it similar?

What makes mine distinct?

(Repeat the Similar / Distinct reflection for each comp.)

Diagnostic Questions

- Am I comping aspirational giants instead of realistic neighbors?
- Do my comps reflect current editorial appetite?
- Does my project align with what is actively selling?

• Can I articulate both familiarity and freshness?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low

Market awareness is not trend-chasing. It is professional positioning.

Study the shelf before stepping onto it. Clarity about where you belong strengthens how you enter the conversation.

I – INTERNAL CRAFT

INTEGRITY

Structure

- My protagonist has a clear external goal.
- My protagonist has a clear internal need.
- The inciting incident disrupts meaningfully.
- The midpoint shifts direction.
- The climax resolves both internal and external stakes.

Score: ____ / 5

Diagnostic Reflection

- Does the external plot pressure the internal arc?
- Does each turning point alter the protagonist's understanding or strategy?
- Is escalation visible and cumulative?
- Does the ending feel earned rather than convenient?

Take notes:

Scene-Level Strength

- Each scene advances plot or character.
- Scenes escalate tension.
- I remove scenes that exist only for mood.
- Emotional beats are supported by action.
- Dialogue creates movement, not repetition.

Score: ____ / 5

Written Exercise

Identify clearly:

Your Inciting Incident

Your Midpoint

Your Climax

If you struggle to define these precisely, structural refinement may be needed.

If This Section Scores Low

Strengthen structure before refining sentences.

Craft integrity is architecture.

Language is finish work.

Secure the beams before polishing the floors.

B – BUSINESS READINESS

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- My query or proposal is concise and compelling.
- My first pages demonstrate structural confidence.
- I have researched agents intentionally.
- I submit in planned waves rather than randomly.
- I revise between rounds strategically.

Written Exercise

Rewrite Your Pitch in Two Sentences

Sentence 1: Protagonist + core conflict

Sentence 2: Stakes + consequence

Now read it aloud.

Does it feel clear?

Does it feel specific?

Does it feel inevitable?

If it feels muddy, positioning needs refinement.

Diagnostic Questions

- Does my pitch rely on vague language rather than concrete stakes?
- Do my opening pages signal professional control?
- Am I submitting reactively or strategically?
- Do I revise based on patterns, or emotion?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low

Professional momentum requires infrastructure.

Before expanding your submission list, refine your positioning.

Before sending another wave, evaluate the data.

Intentional strategy creates steadier outcomes.

R – RESILIENCE

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- I do not interpret silence as failure.
- I can receive feedback without collapsing.
- I continue writing while querying.
- I understand that response times are long.
- I can differentiate market timing from personal inadequacy.

Written Reflection

When I receive a rejection, I tend to:

What would a steady, professional mindset look like instead?

Diagnostic Questions

- Do I personalize industry pacing?
- Do I over-revise after a single response?
- Do I pause creative work while waiting?
- Am I building emotional stamina alongside craft strength?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low

Resilience is not denial.

It is regulated persistence.

Professional writers build emotional steadiness alongside technical skill.

Longevity belongs to those who can stay.

A – ALIGNMENT

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- This manuscript represents my strongest current work.
- I am not querying it simply because it is finished.
- I believe this project opens doors rather than closes them.
- I am willing to pause if the data suggests adjustment.
- My long-term literary goals align with this submission strategy.

Written Exercise

Answer honestly:

Is this my lead story?

Or is this a roots project I am pushing too soon?

Now reflect:

If this project opened the door to the next five years of my career,
would I feel proud of that trajectory?

Diagnostic Questions

- Am I submitting from impatience or conviction?
- Does this manuscript reflect my current craft level?
- If I had two projects, would I choose this one to lead with?
- Am I chasing validation, or building a body of work?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low

Alignment requires discernment.

Not every finished manuscript is meant to lead. Not every strong project is meant to go first. Strategic patience protects long-term momentum.

T – TIMING

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- I query in intentional batches rather than continuously.
- I track response patterns before revising.
- I do not revise impulsively after one rejection.
- I allow time between submission waves.
- I evaluate data before making structural changes.

Reflection

Am I reacting or responding?

When I receive a pass, my immediate instinct is to:

A more strategic response would look like:

Diagnostic Questions

- Do I revise based on emotion or evidence?
- Have I gathered enough data to justify changes?
- Am I allowing the market time to respond?
- Is my submission cadence sustainable?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low

Professional timing requires restraint.

Momentum is built through measured waves, not frantic movement.

Data first.

Emotion second.

Revision third.

E – ECOSYSTEM

Rate Yourself (1–5)

Score: ____ / 5

- I receive informed critique from readers who understand my category.
- I have access to industry-aware feedback.
- I understand how agents evaluate projects.
- I am not navigating this process entirely alone.
- The environment around me strengthens rather than confuses my next step.

Reflection

What kind of support would most strengthen my next step?

Where am I currently over-isolated?

Where am I receiving noise instead of signal?

Diagnostic Questions

- Are my critique partners aligned with my market?
- Do I have access to professional-level perspective?
- Am I relying only on peers at my same stage?
- Does my environment normalize growth rather than panic?

Take notes:

If This Section Scores Low

Writers do not rise in isolation. Environment shapes momentum.

The right ecosystem accelerates clarity. The wrong one amplifies confusion.
Professional growth requires proximity.

FINAL INTEGRATION

Pattern Recognition

Circle your lowest two sections.

C – Concept

A – Audience

L – Landscape

I – Internal Craft

B – Business Readiness

R – Resilience

A – Alignment

T – Timing

E – Ecosystem

These represent your primary growth edge.

Patterns matter more than isolated numbers.

Reflection

My greatest strength right now is:

My clearest growth area is:

The one precise adjustment I will make this quarter is:

(Be specific. Measurable. Focused.)

Integration Reminder

You are not fixing everything.

You are selecting one strategic refinement.

Professional growth is directional.

Not frantic.

Clarity reduces overwhelm.

Precision builds momentum.



INTERPRETING YOUR RESULTS

What Season Are You In?

First, pause.

You are not behind.

You are somewhere specific.

And specificity is power.

Look at your lowest two sections.

Patterns matter more than individual numbers.

Now read slowly...



ROOTING SEASON

(Foundation Before Exposure)

If your lowest scores were in:

Concept

Audience

Landscape

Internal Craft Integrity

You are in a rooting season.

This means:

Your ideas may be promising.

Your voice may be strong.

But the structural or positioning foundation needs strengthening.

This is not failure. This is growth. Roots grow before wings lift.

Writers in This Season Benefit Most From:

- Structured craft refinement
- Deep revision guidance
- Audience clarity
- Strategic study of the marketplace

- Community that normalizes process

This is often where writers thrive inside Courage to Create.

It is a space designed for strengthening foundations, refining ideas, and growing professional awareness without premature pressure.

If this feels like you, your next step is depth.

Not exposure.

RISING SEASON

(Positioning and Professional Momentum)

If your lowest scores were in:

Business Readiness

Alignment

Timing

Ecosystem

Your manuscript may be strong.

But your infrastructure or strategy needs refinement.

You are not building roots.

You are preparing for wings.

Writers in This Season Benefit From:

- Submission strategy refinement
- Lead story discernment
- Industry-facing positioning
- Higher-level feedback
- Proximity to professional rooms

This is often where writers begin exploring more immersive mentorship and industry engagement.

If this feels like you, your next step is alignment and visibility.

Not more polishing.

WINGS SEASON

(Industry Engagement)

If your scores are consistently strong across:

Concept

Craft

Positioning

Professional Readiness

And your growth edge is primarily:

Timing

Ecosystem

Strategic proximity

You may be ready for deeper industry engagement.

This season is not about fixing.

It is about entering rooms prepared.

Writers in This Season Often Seek:

- Strategic submission planning
- Direct exposure to agents and editors
- Ongoing high-level feedback
- Accountability in a professional container

This is where programs like [The Verge](#) become relevant.

Not as pressure.

As infrastructure for serious momentum.

ONE FINAL QUESTION

Ask yourself:

Am I trying to skip my season?

Roots rushed into wings create stress. Wings denied when ready create stagnation. The goal is not speed. It is alignment.

GENTLE NEXT STEP

If you would like help interpreting your season and determining what environment will best support your next move, you are invited to book a Curiosity Call.

During this conversation, we will look at:

- Your manuscript pitch
- Your scores
- Your long-term literary goals

And determine whether you are rooting, rising, or ready for wings.

Because strong literary lives are built with discernment. Not urgency.

[[Book a Curiosity Call](#)]

