

**? ASK THE PRO**

BY KARA GEBHART UHL

**Ted Weinstein** is looking for talented, disciplined authors of journalism and narrative nonfiction, popular science, business and personal finance, biography and history, current affairs and more. Visit [twliterary.com](http://twliterary.com) for his submission guidelines and a nonfiction book proposal outline.

**BEST ENCOUNTER AT A WRITING CONFERENCE:** A slightly wild-eyed writer sat across from me with a haphazard stack of papers and proceeded to pitch me the proposal he had stayed up all night working on at Kinko's after his own printer had run out of ink. I agreed to read the proposal and called him back a few days later to say I'd be interested in representing it if he would work with me to cut it in half. We revised it together, I sold it to an imprint at Simon & Schuster that published it well, and it was even optioned for a movie. Only later did I find out that 26 other agents had already turned down [Bob Welch's] proposal for what became *American Nightingale*.

**DREAM CLIENT:** That's a bit like asking a parent who their favorite child could be. But I will say that I love any clients who cultivate their strengths and talents in their chosen area and who eagerly take advantage of mine. Ideally, authors and agents work as a team.

**BIGGEST PET PEEVE:** Lack of professionalism. Publishing is a business, and authors who treat their work and their careers with anything less than total focus and seriousness just aren't going to succeed.

**BEST QUERY RECEIVED:** A gorgeously written query for a biography from a university professor, which compellingly summarized every key element of a full book proposal. As Renée Zellweger said in the movie *Jerry Maguire*, she had me at "hello." Several of us vied to represent the author, and after I sold her book it went on to sell nicely and win a prestigious academic prize.

**WORST QUERY RECEIVED:** Too many to count—most make it immediately clear that the author didn't even bother to read my agency's website before querying.

**PERFECT DAY IN THE OFFICE:** In any week I have countless fascinating conversations with clients, prospective clients and editors. I get to immerse myself in all kinds of intriguing topics and help shape and sell proposals for books across an amazing range of subjects and genres. Closing a deal (or two) is of course the best way to cap any day—luckily there's a wonderful wine merchant near my office, so good champagne is never more than a few minutes away.

**BEST PUBLISHING ADVICE RECEIVED:** The best advice I hear isn't directed at me but at authors: Butt in seat. There are no shortcuts and there is no substitute for doing the hard work of writing and revising and revising again. [WD]

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**Ted Weinstein**

FOUNDER OF TED WEINSTEIN LITERARY MANAGEMENT, THIS AGENT SAYS HE LOVES BEING SURPRISED BY GREAT PROJECTS ON TOPICS HE HASN'T THOUGHT ABOUT BEFORE.

