

## **Nonfiction Beta Reader Questions**

### **Note for the author:**

To determine how broad the appeal for your book may be, try to rally a diverse group of beta readers—those who love your genre (and are the right target audience—newbies vs. field professionals, for example), those who love books generally and read broadly, and those with a background in publishing or writing (English-major types and especially other successfully published or well-read writers/editors of your genre).

Also, adjust the questions on this form as you see fit. (You would also be wise to include a nondisclosure contract with this form.)

### **Note for the reader:**

Please read through the entire book and mark any places that affected you emotionally (from mere annoyance or boredom to amusement, intrigue, or tears). Read through this form beforehand if you want to take notes as you go through the book.

Type your answers below each question. Some questions have two or more parts to them. Please carefully read the question and answer all parts of it.

If there are questions below that do not apply to this book, just put “N/A” and move on.

**Manuscript Title:**

**Date:**

**Primary audience of the manuscript (note if you feel the audience may be different from what the author intends):**

**Genre (biography, inspirational, how-to, immersion journalism, etc.):**

### **COMPARISONS & OVERALL INTEREST**

**Did you like this book and would you recommend it to friends? Why or why not (brief answer)?**

**Do you like other books in this SAME GENRE, and if so, how did this one compare in terms of entertainment or application levels? Was it too similar to anything else you've read or different enough to hold your interest?**

**Do you feel you are the target audience for this book—do you read this genre frequently? If you are not the target audience for this book, did you still enjoy it enough that you'd recommend it to someone who is the target audience?**

### **CONTENT & ORGANIZATION**

**Were you “hooked” by the opening of the book? (Meaning you were excited to read more or had questions that weren't answered immediately, which made you curious.)**

**What new-to-you insights and observations spoke to you most—and why? Would you suggest the author include more of a certain type of information or an approach to problem-solving?**

*Pages/examples:*

**Please provide a quick note on big-picture weaknesses to address or note which chapters and ideas seemed less-than-new or less-than-useful (and note any ways of revamping those sections that might breathe new life into them):**

*Pages/examples:*

**Is the manuscript well-structured and organized?** *Please give suggestions regarding the overall argument, approach, included material and evidence for the argument, lack of evidence or support, and organization of the manuscript. If possible, please provide very short chapter-by-chapter notes on key things to address in each chapter—from an organizational standpoint as well as addressing any other issues. This would be two or three sentences per chapter, noting things like “Cut this chapter; it does not support the thesis” or “move these examples to chapter 10 since they fit that chapter’s theme better”; you can also use this section to ask the author a question, for instance: “Did you mean for the reader to take this point from this example?” You may also group chapters together if there’s an overarching problem that dominates a set of chapters.*

**Overall thoughts?**

**Chapter 1:**

**Chapter 2:**

**Or**

**Chapters 3–6:**

**And so on . . .**

**Would the book benefit from an appendix, introduction, index or other additional sections that might clarify organizational intent, thesis, or reader impact/application?**

## **VOICE & STYLE**

**Is the manuscript's tone or narrative voice appropriate to the subject matter? Are there any audience-estranging biases or unintended prejudices coming through? Is the author's attitude too overt or inappropriate for the context of the work? Briefly explain.**

**If the manuscript is geared toward a specific religious denomination or a very specific/niche secular group, how is the manuscript relevant to the lives of those individuals? Is it only relevant to that unique audience, or could some sections (or tone/style/word choice) be adjusted to expand the audience?**

**List some examples of problems with style and word choice, and alternate examples of well-used/placed words and images, that can guide the author in revisions—explain why the positive examples comprise a more preferable approach in terms of writing/audience:**

## **FINAL COMMENTS/ MARKETABILITY**

**If needed, list any suggestions you may have for alternate titles or subtitles that might better hook the audience for this book.**

**In case the author wants to explore traditional publishing, where you can, suggest any specific publishers or agents you may know of that are particularly well-suited to this author's genre, style, etc. (If you know of a hybrid publisher that might be an excellent fit for self-publishing this genre, mention that as well.)**

**If there is anything not addressed in the questions above that you feel you should mention to the author, please do so now.**