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Q: What influenced you to become an author?

A: I'm the eldest of 6 siblings, who grew up on a Kibbutz in Israel. A Kibbutz is a small community where people live and work together. Our Mom was an early childhood educator who used to play with us. Part of that play was conducted through rhyme. I think that's probably where I got my passion and love for words and rhymes.

There were always children's books around us. I remember that I had a collection which I cherished and used to quote whenever I could, even when I became "too old" for children's books.

I suppose it was only natural for me to become a children's author, as I wanted to give children the same sort of wonderful experiences I had as a child.

Q: Growing up, what authors and illustrators inspired you?

A: Where to begin? :-)

Since I grew up in Israel you might not have heard of some of them:

1. 'A Tale of Five Balloons' by Miriam Roth, illustrated by Ora ayal
2. 'Once Upon a Potty' by Alona Frankel, who also illustrated the book.

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3. 'Yertel the Turtle and other stories' by Dr, Sues

4. 'An Apartment for Rent' by Leah Goldberg. The illustrator, Shmuel Katz, lived in the same Kibbutz I lives and I remember visiting his studio many times. I was always amazed by his talent.

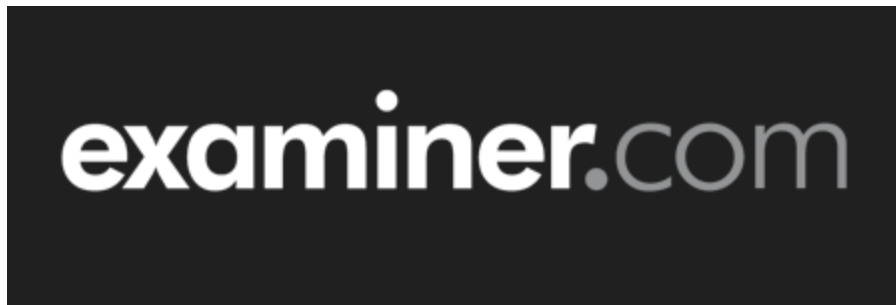
There were many more but these are my top four. I still have them on my shelf and read them to my children.

Q: How did you go about getting your first book published?

A: About five years ago I came up with the idea for a children's cookbook. Besides being a children's author I'm also a pastry chef and I teach children how to bake and cook through my business Playful Kitchen. Back then I knew nothing about publishing and believed the only way to get my book published would be to find an agent or a publisher. I sent nearly 100 query letters to different publishers, just to get rejection letters or no responses at all. I felt both discouraged and disappointed.

It was then when I learned about Amazon KDP and decided to give it a try. I wrote a children's book, inspired by my daughter, found ani

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illustrator and in about a month my book was ready and available to millions of readers.

At first, I published my book as an ebook only, but later I figured out how to publish a paperback, hardcover, and even audiobooks. Now my books are available both in print and in electronic forms.

Q: How did you think up the idea for your books?

A: I'm both a mother and a child in heart, so inspiration is all around me. The inspiration for Sparkly Me was my daughter; my little princess.

As a young girl I was a tom-boy, so when my daughter started to ask for sparkly things and act girly I kind of needed to investigate that through writing, as it was a somewhat unfamiliar concept to me. Writing about it helped me discover this mysterious and unknown area.

I also wanted to inspire young girls to be totally happy with whom they were. I believe that there are too many conflicting messages that make girls feel bad about both their body and mind. My goal as a writer and a mother is to contradict those messages.

The inspiration behind Who's Under the Bed was my son who was

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terrified of monsters at some point. I wrote the book to help his cope with that fear through humor.

All my books are inspired by my children their friends (My Snow Day, Sarah's Wishful Day, Fabulous Me and more). I also write books that I wish I had when I was younger. I care about empowering children and bringing ethnic diversity to the children's book market.

Q: What are your books about? Do you have a favorite?

A: My books are always about having fun; I want children to allow their imagination run wild and to get positive and empowering messages conveyed through the stories.

I write about topics that interest children: from fearing monsters to enjoying the snow or rainy day with their family and friends. I write about fulfilling dreams and accepting yourself for who you are.

It is hard to pick up a favorite, but few of my favorites are Who's Under the Bed, Sarah's Wishful Day and my new book My Playful Kitchen.

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Which started this wild journey and will be published soon. My Playful Kitchen is a children's cookbook which combines child-friendly recipes with parenting tips and fun food-related facts. This book will help build a child's confidence and develop a closer bond with your child in the kitchen.

Q: How do you find your illustrators?

A: On-line. I usually post an add describing the project, and chose the best illustrators out of the hundreds of portfolios I get. My illustrators are from Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, and Armenia. I have to connect to their style right away and then interview them to make sure we are a good fit for each other. Once I find a good illustrator I stick with them💎

Q: You are also a speaker. What has that experience been like thus far?

A: I love speaking. I love connecting with people, and I love sharing my knowledge and experience. This is basically how I got into public speaking:

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When I first started looking for a publisher after writing My Playful Kitchen, I sent nearly 100 query letters to different publishers, just to get rejection letters or no responses at all. I felt both discouraged and disappointed. It was then when I learned about Amazon KDP and decided to give it a try. I wrote a children's book, inspired by my daughter, found an illustrator and in less than a month my book was ready. Well, at least that's what I thought... I was sure the illustrator would format the book for Kindle, but I was wrong, so wrong!

When I realized she wasn't going to do that for me, first I panicked because I had no idea how to get my book published, then I called two e-publishing coaches and left messages. I was desperate for help but they didn't call back and I then realized I needed to do it myself. Figuring out how to do everything was extremely hard and time-consuming. I spent hours and hours collecting information and implementing it. There were just too many technical steps to follow, and I had no support or help. I felt overwhelmed at the beginning, then discouraged, and then I became just plain annoyed. It was maddening! Publishing a book for the first time can be very frustrating.

This experience is the reason I decided to become an e-publishing

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coach, because I just don't want to see anyone struggle the way I did when they want to get their dream book published! Because it doesn't have to be that hard. Publishing a book can be a fun and exciting experience.

I always share this story when I speak to get people inspired, and to show them that they can overcome any obstacle. I also offer 20 minutes complimentary phone call to help people get unstuck and move forward toward fulfilling their publishing dream with Amazon.

Q: To date, what has been the most rewarding part of being a professional author?

A: The most rewarding part is by far connecting with my fans.

Last year I got an email from a lady who lives in Mississippi and read stories to her 8 years old neighbor. She told me that this child's parents have no time for her and they rarely read her any books, so she spends many hours with her elderly neighbor. She also told me this child loves my books, so I ended up sending her some of my books as a Christmas gift.

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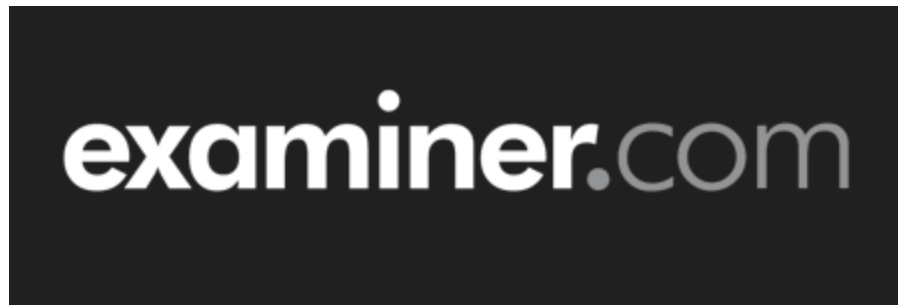
I also got phone calls from children who read my books and loved them. There's nothing better than connecting with your fan on such a personal level. That's why I always let my fans know how to connect with me via my website, Facebook, and Twitter.

Q: What advice would you give someone who is aspiring to be an author and/or illustrator?

A: Don't waste any time and do it yourself!

The worst part for me about looking for a literary agent was that they seemed to make their decisions based on how many followers you have or how big your mailing list is. They also (obviously) judge your work, and for some authors, this could be devastating if they don't hear what they wanted to hear. Books can be a subjective matter, rather like artwork, and what 'does it' for one, might not 'do it' for the next person. When you decide to self-publish your book, you put your work out there and let the readers be the judge. Believe in yourself, because there is a

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good chance that they will appreciate your work when the publisher didn't.

Keep in mind that a traditional publisher will not do the marketing for you either, so why should you give them control over your art?

The bottom line is to try and put yourself out there as soon as possible.

The good news is that today it's easier and cheaper than ever.

Remember – your work can make a difference in the world!

Q: Are there any upcoming projects or events that you would like to mention?

A: On February 9th I will be speaking about self-publishing at the Small Business Administration in NYC (SCORE) at 10 am.

On April 20 I will be at the Emerson Community School in NJ at 7 pm.

I also offer a 20 minutes complimentary phone call to help people get

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unstuck and move forward toward fulfilling their publishing dream with Amazon.

Soon, Amazon will release a few short videos where I discuss my journey and advise children's authors. Those videos will run on Amazon's social media channels.