



# MANAGING MONEY & CRUSHING DEBT



Jason Brown described his book projects as "tremendous learning opportunities."

By Emily Deibler

Jason Brown graduated in December 2018 with a Master of Arts in Professional Writing (MAPW) from Kennesaw State University. He is currently a copywriter and copy editor at HNTB Corporation, a transportation consulting firm in Atlanta. In this Creative Activity Snapshot, he speaks about writing his budgeting book and working on a ghostwriting project.

## **What was writing your book like? How did you get started?**

*My book, **Margin Matters: How to Live on a Simple Budget and Crush Debt Forever**, was created over the past 10 years. Before I was married, I paid off \$13,500 in consumer debt in thirteen months. When I married, my wife had \$60,000 of student loan debt. My wife and I paid off her student loans, credit cards, and car loan in 2 1/2 years. We paid off \$75,000 of debt in nearly 3 1/2 years — with neither of us making more than \$40,000 a year.*

*I wanted to document this experience. However, writing a book seemed daunting. It wasn't until my son was born in 2016 that I wanted to start writing down my thoughts, so I could present them to him one day. I was an MAPW student who had enrolled in Dr. Anne Richards' technical writing class and our assignment was to write a how-to book; I knew what I wanted to do! **Margin Matters** started in class and progressed into my capstone. Dr. Richards and Dr. Chris Palmer, my capstone committee members, provided excellent feedback and guidance. I have written about 100 pages.*

*Over the decade leading into my MAPW work, I discovered leaders like Dave Ramsey, Clark Howard, and my pastor,*

*Andy Stanley. I examined their shows, sermons, and books, along with other books on the subject. I've interviewed individuals who have demonstrated wise financial choices in their lives.*

## **What was ghostwriting like? How did it help your studies?**

*Years ago, Scott Whitlock, the former KSU head softball coach, asked me to help write his memoir. Whitlock, inducted into the National Fastpitch Coaches Hall of Fame*

*in 2005, has retired from coaching and is currently KSU's senior associate athletics director. I Wasn't Expecting All This is a whimsical look at his coaching adventures and all the people he met along the way—not to mention his success in the softball world.*

*The goal of ghostwriting was to chronicle his stories without losing his voice and unique sense of humor. You develop a strong personal and working relationship with the author. This was my summer directed study with Dr. Richards in 2018. We have more than 200 pages written and plan to have this ready for publishing by spring.*

## **What are your current plans for publishing your book? Will you ghostwrite in the future?**

*For **Margin Matters**, my goal is to have it published by the end of 2019. I will likely self-publish but will explore my options. My book is a starting guide for individuals on creating a budget, saving money, and getting out of debt—and STAYING out of debt. I am targeting 125 to 150 pages. I'm not opposed to ghostwriting in the future; however, it'd have to be the right opportunity.*