



Daniel Wiseman makes books for kids. More specifically he draws the pictures on the inside and outside of the books that are read to children. He's done this for over 16 books so far, and doesn't plan on quitting anytime soon. He lives and works in a little cabin with his brilliant wife and two beautiful sons in Knoxville, Tennessee. They spend the day playing, learning, drawing, building, laughing, and crying (the kids more-so than him and his wife). If he's not perched in his studio drawing, you can find him hiking, hanging at the lake, or cooking with his family.

Daniel will be accepting applications for: Illustrators (or possibly author/illustrators) who are looking to push their visual storytelling skills, gain insight into what editors and art directors look for in illustrating a book, and just how to create appealing/polished art for picture books.

1. If you could be in any movie or tv series, what would it be and what character would you play?

The first one that comes to mind is Doc Holiday in Tombstone. Though it would probably be better to be Wyatt Earp and not die of Tuberculosis at the end.

2. If you could have any supernatural power, what would it be and why?

Easy...Mind Control

3. What are your five favorite picture books not written, illustrated, and/or edited by you?

- a. The Smallest Girl in The Smallest Grade by Justin Roberts and Christian Robison
- b. Wofie the Bunny by Ame Dykman and Zachariah Ohora
- c. I Was So Mad by Mercer Mayer
- d. The Bad Mood and the Stick by Lemony Snicket and Matthew Forsythe
- e. Leo: A Ghost Story by Mac Barnett and Christian Robinson
- f. How to be a Lion by Ed Vere

4. What writing and/or publishing-related accomplishment are you most proud of?

There isn't any one thing really, however I am very proud of the body of work I've created in a fairly short time. Since my first book in 2017, I've illustrated 16 picture and board books with some incredibly talented authors.

5. What about mentoring excites you most?

I really love my job, and getting to help others find this same joy is what really excites me about mentoring.

6. What are your strengths as a mentor?

I feel that because I have the experience illustrating several books (picture and board) for many different major publishers, I can really help others hone their illustration and visual storytelling skills to be in line with what editors and art directors look for.

7. What is your feedback/critique style like?

I'm not entirely sure, as I haven't mentored many people. I'm not a harsh person, and am more likely to help push someone in the right direction through highlighting their strengths, rather than focusing on their weaknesses.

8. What are the most important things you're seeking in a mentee?

I'd love for my mentee to be an illustrator who is a fan of the humorous and absurd. My illustration style is rooted in charm, and humor, with bold colors, and strong expressions. I'd like my mentee to be someone who is interested in creating visuals that are funny as well as charming.

9. Who are you not the best mentor for?

An author who is not an illustrator, or someone who is really, terribly mean.

10. How will you help your mentee and their stories develop?

I can certainly help with industry insight. I can go through each step of the process of working on a book, from thumbnails and sketches, all the way to final art and revisions. There's a lot to the process that I was unfamiliar with before I started. I can help work through those areas. Things such as illustrating for board books versus picture books, page counts and formats of different types of books, page breaks, etc... I can also critique, and help hone portfolios to be enticing to agents. I'm an open book (pun intended), and I'm more than happy to lend any knowledge I have from how to draw a porcupine, to how to create fun Instagram posts.

11. What is your style of communication like?

I'm very laidback and easy to talk to, although I'm a bit irreverent and opinionated :) I'm open to just about any style of communication, though I don't like the phone very much. I'd rather do a Zoom chat as opposed to sitting with the phone held up to my ear for an hour. I'm usually free to do something in depth like that once a week...probably later at night. I have 2 kids that keep me pretty busy during the day. I'm also available to email any time, and am usually pretty responsive.

12. What are you looking for in the applications you receive?

I'd love to see applications that show a passion for the craft of creating art for picture books. I'd also like to see that the applicant is someone who isn't easily offended or off-put by criticism. Part of making each book is taking A TON of constructive criticism, and making revisions. It's easy to get disheartened if you can't get past your own ego.

13. Any tips/advice for applicants to make their applications and/or manuscripts shine?

Show that you have the ability to create art from a child's perspective, and that it is inclusive of all the different types of children.

14. What advice or inspiring and/or motivational words would you like to offer up to anyone applying to be your mentee or simply reading this questionnaire?

You can do it! Before I became an illustrator I thought that it was some mysterious job that only a select handful of lucky people got to do. Fortunately that's not true. You just need to know the steps of the process to get there, and have a portfolio that shows your true love for the craft.