



EPISODE 25

*The Author's Ultimate Guide to Writing
Productivity During COVID-19*

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Well hey there, stellar writerly person. Welcome to a brand-new episode of the Author Revolution Podcast. I'm your host, international bestselling indie author, Carissa Andrews and CEO of Author Revolution, the author's source for all things rapid releasing.

So, here we are, episode 25 of the Author Revolution Podcast. The world has changed drastically since we started airing last October. I can quite honestly say I couldn't have predicted this level of change, but the more I reflect on it, the more I can't help but think this is the change we've all been longing for and it's a global prayer being answered. Hear me out. I know things are dire. I'm under no illusions about that and I do appreciate the severity of this pandemic. But for those of us who are adhering to the guidelines for social distancing and self-isolation, we're as safe as we can possibly be. In this episode, I want to talk about 9 ways to stay productive with your writing goals, even during such an upheaval. This won't be the stereotypical kind of list of tips, either.

So, when I look at this from a higher level, taking myself and my family out of the equation, I can't help but feel like this is the universe helping us evolve to our next level. When I look at the global changes taking place because of our absence - things like cleaner waters, less pollution, animal sightings, etc - it gives me a sense of hope that while there is upheaval, there is also change in action that's raising us up to something better.



**EPISODE 25: THE AUTHOR'S ULTIMATE GUIDE
TO WRITING PRODUCTIVITY DURING COVID-19**

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We're shedding the old so we can make way for the new. And because humans, for better or worse, hate change - we have to either be on the brink or be forced into it some other way. Typically, that trigger is pain. This pandemic is no different

Here's the thing: the way the world has been operating hasn't worked for us and it hasn't worked for a long time. We have deserved better for ourselves, our families, and the planet. People are only now realizing how much time is wasted doing things the way they've always been done. Whether that be going to school, commuting to a job, or even the way we communicate with each other.

Within this quarantine, we've started connecting to what's real again. We've been going to for walks and moving our bodies. We're reading more, talking more, making healthy foods, learning new things, enjoying the arts and creativity. Yes, there are others who lean into fear and anxiety, but that's not me - and it's not what you'll find in any of my material. Not in my podcast, not in my Facebook live events, and not in my books, either. Respectfully, it's just not the way I operate. So, if you're looking for a place to commiserate, keep moving, my friend, you won't find that from me.

Instead, I will challenge you to be open. Open to change, growth, creativity, and inspiration.

Does that mean you have to be a non-stop productivity machine? No, you don't. But I also don't think you should sit and wallow in a pool of self-pity. Nothing good comes from that mindset. Not on a normal day and not during a global pandemic. Every thought you think, every action you take, every habit you make feeds your brain and strengthens the neuropathways until you no longer are conscious of those negative thoughts. They just exist and then you believe them.

Screw that. You can be gentle. You can be creative. You can still be productive.

Interestingly, when I was researching for this talk, I found a bazillion posts on why you should IGNORE the coronavirus-inspired productivity posts. In the majority of them was the beating of war cry of those wanting an excuse to lounge on the couch with a bag of chips, ignoring the rest of the world until we go back to normal.

Here's the thing, my friends. There's no going back. The old normal doesn't exist and thank god for that. It was crap. Now's our time to reinvent ourselves and our lives. It's not going to happen overnight, but it's going to happen - whether you put conscious effort into it or not. You may as well be the master of your universe, amiright?

So, where do we author start? How do we embrace productivity without feeling disingenuous or inauthentic?

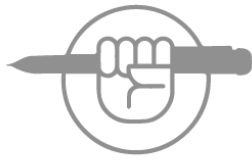
- Re-evaluate Your Routine - First and foremost, you need to reevaluate your routine. Your schedule has likely been completely disrupted anyway, so why not recreate it and mold it to what you really want? When disruption of any kind happens, it's hard to feel a sense of balance. I remember when I first started working from home 100% in 2014, I didn't always feel the best. I didn't know what my day should look like. These days, I use the Full Focus Planner to stay on track with my goals and daily tasks and what's beautiful about it, is you re-evaluate every quarter to see what worked, what didn't, and how you want to adjust. I just switched to my Q2 planner and did this myself, and you know what? It's reinvigorating. You can see how far you've come and think about where you really want to go. You can even lay out what your ideal week would look like to you. Regardless of what your writing and author goals are post-COVID-19, the point is to take the time to really reclaim your life and mold it to what you want it to look like. I can't tell you what that will look like or how you should manage it. You need to do you.



- **Be Bored** – Look, being productive ISN'T just about getting shit done. It's about knowing when to rest and rejuvenate. So, maybe that's the point those other posts were trying to get at, but failed. Creativity breeds through boredom. If you're feeling anxious, or fearful, it might not be the best time to be productive in the moment. Instead, it might mean giving yourself the gift of space and time. Allow your mind to absorb all that's changed and allow the new path to emerge. Bruce Lee said, "Empty your mind. Be formless, shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. If you put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Water can flow, or it can crash. Be water, my friend."
- **Write in Sprints** – If you've been laid off or suddenly find yourself with more time than you've ever had to write, it can be daunting. You might have all day, but it doesn't mean your brain's ready to write all day. Even if you want to. If you're feeling motivated and ready to get those words on the page, write in sprints. Decide what those look like for you and use them. Set a time for 5, 10, 20, or even 30 minutes, depending on your current level of writing habit. Build them up as your mind engages with your story. You'll know when you're ready for longer stretches of writing time because it will happen without you even knowing. You'll be in your scene, look up at the clock, and realize you just wrote for three hours, not 30 minutes.
- **Headphones, Take Me Away** – If you're anything like me, you've got a lot of other people cooped up in the same 2000 square feet. Many of them might even use your name over and over like it's going out of style. Do yourself a favor, my friend – get some noise canceling headphones. You know, the ones that are massive and cover your whole friggin' head. When I really need to focus, I put those one and crank up my playlist. The kids (usually) know that if they see those on my head, I'm not listening and they either need to wait, or signal to get my attention because I can't hear a word they're saying.



- **Get Yer Butt Outside** – Look guys, it’s spring. Get some fresh air and go for a walk. Life isn’t all about productivity and getting things done. I know I push myself like it is, until I realize I’m a haggard mess and have to pull back. Then, it’s a conscious effort to get more Zen. It’s something I’m working on daily. Now, I don’t know about you, but us Minnesotans are somewhat used to being trapped inside for long stretches of time. It’s not to say we like it, but it is to say that we know the realities of cabin fever. That’s why the second it’s above freezing, you’ll find us outside in our shorts and jacket. Yes, this is an actual thing. Don’t even get me started on sandals and socks. The point here is, if you can get outside, do it. The fresh air clears the mind, lifts the spirits, and trains the cardiovascular system. You really can’t go wrong. Now, I will mention, however, I know an author or two that use these awesome walks as a way to either learn something new through podcasts, audiobooks, or audio lessons – or, if they have a mic that can cancel the sound of the wind, they’ll dictate part of their story or even their outline while walking. If you feel up for it, give it a try.
- **Move Your Body** – Research has found one of the best ways to invigorate your mind and build new neuropathways is by moving your body. Yes, that means plan to get an actual workout in. Ideally, something that combines cardio and strength-training. I’m currently getting my butt handed to me by Autumn Calebrese at BeachBody. I’ve been doing the 21 Day Fix and 21 Day Fix Extreme – both Real Time – since the beginning of the year. I’m almost done with the 4th round and loving it. Granted, I die a little inside when she combines 10 minute hardCORE with Cardio, but hey – I live life on the edge. ;) I workout mid-morning and what I find from this is that I reach my peak performance for writing my novel about 10:30am. So, if I switch gears and workout at 11am, I’m done by 11:30, eating lunch about noon, and back to work at 1pm feeling refreshed and ready to rock whatever writing is left for the day – whether it’s for Author Revolution, the Windhaven Witches, or client work.



- **Permission to Play** – If the idea of creating right now feels daunting to you, but you still feel the call to write, it could be that your idea isn't fully formed yet. If this is the case, forget trying to create something astounding or mind-blowing. Instead, give yourself permission to play. It's way less stressful to play than it is to create anyway. So, try something and don't judge it. Maybe it will suck. So what? Maybe it will be awesome. Try something new that you've never done before. Write in 3rd person, write in verse, focus on a character's full backstory. Whatever it is, have fun exploring and seeing what comes of it – minus the pressure.
- **Get Perspective** – They say life is 10% what you experience and 90% how you respond to it. I'm inclined to agree. When you feel your mood or perspective dragging you down, and it might, I get it... whether it's about your writing or life in general, it's the perfect time to ask yourself what you're really feeling. Sometimes, what comes up has nothing to do with what you think it does. For example, you might be mad or upset that your writing sucks or you're no good – when in reality, you're worried about a family member who's considered an "essential employee" and who has to work every day around people. Get centered when you feel your perspective leading you down a path of irritation, frustration, or upset. Ask yourself, what is this moment trying to teach me?
- **Give Grace** – to yourself and to others. We've all been humbled by the way this experience has disrupted every aspect of our lives – yes, even me. So, allow yourself to feel whatever it is you're feeling. Allow others to feel what they're feeling without judgement, too. We're all doing the best we can with what we have. So, if you're not the most productive, don't beat yourself up over it. Know that there will be good days and bad days. That's just life. Some days will be better than others.

Here's what I believe: I believe you need to trust your own inner voice and listen to its calling right now. If it's saying you need to pull back, it's because something new is trying to come through and you have to get still enough to hear it. If you feel the urge to create, it's because that inspiration has already sparked and you're ready to take action on it.



I also believe that now is a wonderful time to write and create. I believe you can be productive by both writing and by being still. I believe you are wise beyond your years and if you silence your mind, you'll realize you already know what it is you want to do with this time you have.

That's my two cents, anyway. Well, my friends, that's the end of another great episode. I hope it inspired you and gave you something valuable to you can think on and incorporate into your new norm. Next week, I want to bounce back into the Rapid Releasing Realm as we ask the question, "Does timing matter when rapid releasing?" Well, it all depends on your goals, of course. So, let's chat on it!

Before I go, I need to ask – have you subscribed to this podcast? If you enjoyed this episode, why not subscribe now? New episodes drop every Wednesday and, in the future, I plan on doing some fun bonus ones, too. But in order to find them, you'll want to be subscribed because they won't go out in any emails. It's like dropping little surprise gifts and who doesn't like surprises?

Don't forget you can head over to authorrevolution.org/25 if you'd like to look over the show notes or get in on the special Rapid Release Roadmap beta test offer that's going on until the end of April. Remember, the doors close May 1 on this particular offer and it will never be sold for \$97 again. So, if you think you could learn a lot from this course, don't miss out. Get enrolled today.

So, until next week, my writerly friend...

Go forth and be awesome.



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