

EPISODE 33

How Authors Can Make a Difference in the World

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Hello again and welcome back to 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.

Now, before we get started, I would like to mention that this episode is sponsored by my upcoming novel, *Secret Legacy*. It's the first book in the *Windhaven Witches* series, and comes out on September 15th. For all of 2020, I am donating 50% of the royalties from *Secret Legacy* to the American Cancer Society. For the month of June, I've set a goal of reaching 500 preorders on Apple Books. So far, I'm 10% of the way there. If you have an apple device, an iPhone, iPad, or even a MacBook, you have access to Apple Books. Preorder it today for just 99¢ and your purchase goes toward helping those fighting their battle with cancer.

All of this segues nicely into the topic I want to talk about today, which is how can authors make a difference in the world? There are a few ways we can make a positive impact.

Obviously right now, one of the big social uproars, and rightly so, is the Black Lives Matter movement and protests. As a white woman living in the middle of Minnesota, which I'm sad to say, is predominantly white, I'm struggling with the best way to support the BLM cause. I am 100% an ally and have been for as long as I've been alive. I can't even imagine being in a place where it's okay to put one race above another. However, being in central Minnesota, I'm not close enough to be a part of any of the big protests and even if I was, I have people in my household with immune systems that can be compromised by the coronavirus.

So, what can I do? Sure, I could take to the social media scene, as I've witnessed other authors doing, but to me, I don't know, it falls flat. I don't spend much time out there anymore, I'm frankly too busy, and when I do, it's like stepping in between your parents when they're having a fight. All sides are screaming and no one is listening. I don't want to be that kind of person.

With all that being said, I've been doing a lot of listening and doing a lot of thinking regarding our society, where we are, where we're headed, and taking a critical look at the country's narrative right now. I may not be black, but I do have the power of the pen. I may not be gay, but I do have the power of my voice. I may not be fighting cancer, but I do have the power to raise money with my books.

Do you see where I'm going with this?

We are all one race – the human race. We need to love and support one another and celebrate our differences. Those differences are a thing of beauty and they always have been. As authors, we have an obligation to shine a light on that beauty.

The first way we can really make a difference is by writing (and truthfully reading) books that are multicultural. Did you know there's even an event called Multicultural Children's Book Day? My friend Rebecca Flansburg has been a part of the organization and planning of this event for a number of years and was the reason I was first introduced. The idea is to provide children with books that celebrate diversity and show them how beautiful the world really is. The event takes place in January, with the next one being January 29, 2021. However, if you'd like to get involved with the actual event, they have a timeline on their site of what they do to get prepared for the day. For example, in July, they're beginning to look for Author Sponsors. Perhaps you could be one? If you're a book blogger or have kids, you can also sign up to get free multicultural books to read and review with your kids. I've done this in the past and my kids still read their multicultural books over and over.

Another great resource is the We Need Diverse Books site. The nonprofit has ways to get involved through volunteering, as well as scholarships and grants available for YA and children's book authors who want to write books that celebrate diversity.

As authors, whether we write children's books or not, we can also celebrate diversity by writing in characters who are of different ethnicities, colors, sexual orientations, have disabilities, have mental health problems, who struggle with drug additions, or are poor—everything. Not only does this help to highlight the beauty and “oneness” of our differences, but it opens both the reader and the writer's perspectives just a little bit more, which, in my opinion, is part of the point. In my opinion, this doesn't mean you have to always make the main character that person, and this especially true if it would come across as disingenuous. But if you are able to, taking the time to step into someone else's shoes when they are different from your own can be an enlightening endeavor.

It can also give someone who is that person, say a trans black woman or a down syndrome man—a book or character to root for. Everyone deserves at least one book that really resonates with them as a human being.

Be vocal. This doesn't mean rolling into every online fight and running your mouth off when you don't have all the facts. Don't be a troll and definitely don't say things you don't mean. We all can make the mistake of speaking before we think. I get it, it happens. As authors, we have a duty to not only ourselves, but our audience, to do what's right to the best of our ability. As we get more well known, our platform becomes wider and it means people we can reach more people. However, it doesn't mean that platform is always stable. You can still trip up and piss a lot of people off. Just look at JK Rowling right now on Twitter. It doesn't matter how big or little your platform is, you still need to stop and think:

- Is it true?
- Is it helpful?
- Is it inspiring?
- Is it necessary?
- Is it kind?

The goal here is to speak your truth, but to also know that sometimes our truths can be someone else's pain or trigger point. Sometimes they'll misunderstand you. Sometimes, they won't listen. But as long as you stay true to your heart and say things out of a place of kindness, you will help create a vision for a better future.

Donate to causes. As authors, we can highlight causes that are near and dear to us. As you heard in the beginning of this podcast episode, I am donating 50% of my royalties from Secret Legacy to the American Cancer Society. This is because cancer has played a big role in my life.

I was just five years old when my middle brother, Scott, was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. He wasn't meant to live past two years old, but somehow miraculously made it to 35. This cause was chosen early in 2020, so it's nothing new for me. It wasn't chosen because of the craziness happening right now in our world. It was chosen because I knew a list-aim title means selling a lot of books and if that was the case, I should do some good with it, too.

For those who are speculative fiction authors looking to celebrate gender differences, you should check out the Otherwise Award, formerly the Triptree Award. The organization has been around for a while, and I highly encourage you to go out to their website to check them out. But you can donate, volunteer, and read books recommended by the group, as well as the award-winning pieces. They also stand in solidarity with racial justice and have provided a list of books celebrating black authors who imagine the world...otherwise.

Whatever your cause, find one to support that is in alignment with your soul and your journey. This year, it might be the American Cancer Society, next year it might be something totally different. One year, it might be to donate time. The next, it might be money. Wherever you're at and whatever you can do, let's go forward into the second half of 2020 striving to make the world a better place. Deal?

To Recap:

1. Write and read books that celebrate our differences.
2. Be vocal.
3. Donate to causes that make the world a better place.



As a final reminder, this episode was sponsored by my upcoming book, Secret Legacy, where 50% of the royalties in 2020 are being donated to the American Cancer Society. June is our month to highlight Apple Books, so if you have an apple device, be sure to check it out and preorder it for just 99¢.

Okay, I know that this was a bit heavier of a topic for us here at Author Revolution, but I feel it was an important one. Next week, let's switch gears back to writing and talk about those covers. Do they matter as much when you're rapid releasing a series? We'll find out.

Don't forget, if you want to download the transcript, or find links to anything we discussed today, you can grab them by heading over to the show notes at: authorrevolution.org/33.

Well, my friend, that's all I have for today. Hopefully it gave you a little inspiration on what you can do as an author to make a difference in the world today. It can be a dark place out there at times, but we can shed a little light when we use our words wisely.

So, until next time...

Go forth and be the change.



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