

EPISODE 39

How Do We Avoid Rapid Release Burnout?

SEE THE SHOW NOTES AT: AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/39

Hi again! 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.

Before we get started, this episode of the Author Revolution podcast is sponsored by my upcoming rapid release series, The Windhaven Witches. Secret Legacy, book 1, comes out on September 15th with the remaining three rapid releasing a month apart after that. In addition, 50% of the royalties from Secret Legacy are being donated to the American Cancer Society in honor of those who are fighting or have lost their battle with cancer. I lost my brother Scott in 2016 to terminal brain cancer, but he was diagnosed when I was five years old and he was just turning two. Needless to say, cancer is something that's impacted my life for a very long time.

Okay, so for those of you who tuned in last week, you know that I didn't actually do a full-on podcast episode. My family and I took the week off to spend some quality time together and just chill out before all the craziness to come in September. I'm not just talking about the launch of the Windhaven books, either. School will be starting and it's bound to be a crazy time, any way you look at it. We still have no idea what school is even going to look like right now and I'm kinda scared to find out.



EPISODE 39: HOW DO WE AVOID RAPID RELEASE BURNOUT?

WWW.AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/39

At any rate, though, my family and I went camping, so we could remind ourselves why we only go camping once ever few years. The last time we went camping, it was 2016 and on the way home, I found out my brother was in the hospital and his tumors were back. This year, it was just a cluster of epic proportions. Day #1 and my husband Colin ended up with a migraine, then pulled his back out of alignment. By Day #2, it hurt so bad, we had to pack up so he could waddle in to the chiropractor's office ASAP. So, what should have been a 2 ½ day camping excursion turned into a 24 hour in-and-out trip, with a bonfire at home and an afternoon out on the boat (with a massive storm heading our way). Colin says we should. Try to go one more time before September, but I'm a bit dubious about all of that.

Needless to say, I started the podcast last year and last week was the first time I decided to kind of skip it. Granted, I can't really skip things. It's just not in my blood. So, I still had to leave ya a little mini-episode with the why and a few tips. Hopefully it was helpful enough to get you by. But this week, I wanted to expand on it.

Today, we're going to be talking about rapid release burnout. What it is, why it sucks, and how to combat it. Sound good?

Excellent.

In a lot of ways, this is like author overwhelm. I guess because most of the same rules apply. We're still authors and we're still dealing with a lot of balls in the air. The way it's different in my mind really comes down to the condensed speed of it all. Even authors who only publish one book a year can experience author overwhelm. But when you amp up your game and start rapid releasing, it's a whole new ballgame, baby.

I have talked about Author Overwhelm in the past, so for those of you who may not have listened to that episode, I'll make sure to link to it in the show notes. It was Episode #13, which aired back in January. There are nine tips in there to help you deal with overwhelm, plus a bonus one for those who listen to the end.

For the sake of not going over the same material so soon, I'm not going to really talk about those tips, so make sure you go back and listen or refresh on those tips if you need them.

Okay, so how does Rapid Release Burnout differ from regular old author overwhelm? Well, from what I've experienced, it's a drying of the creative well. Burnout zaps your energy, creativity, and, if I'm completely honest, your patience. Just ask my kids. Granted, I'm doing this all during the coronavirus pandemic and my kids have been home since March, so that might play into things a tiny bit, too. ;)

As rapid release authors, we're constantly in a state of motion. There's really never a time when we're not writing, editing, and marketing. Often, all at the same time. If you add on top other jobs, side gigs, kids, and other family or friend obligations, you might not even realize burnout is biting you in the ass until you're yelping in pain. You feel me?

Throughout the past 10 years, I haven't had the time or money to go on expensive vacations or getaways - in fact, I haven't even gone on a honeymoon yet with my husband and we've been married 8 years now. Burnout has been a companion of mine for at least the past five years, but one that I'm actively working on eliminating through a more intentional way of life. And I hope you can learn from my mistakes, especially if you plan on rapid releasing as part of your publishing strategy.

The way I know when I'm reaching burnout is when I start to dread sitting down at the computer or wish I could be anywhere else. That's truly the first sign. Then, if I push past those first warning signs, I find my brain starts to cease up and does its own thing – often, refusing to focus on the task at hand. So, what would normally have been a 45-minute project, turns into an all afternoon sort of deal. Mostly because I'm not focused. And usually – it's not for lack of trying. This isn't a procrastination sort of thing or an attention problem either. Even though it might seem like it. It's a full on, burn out thing.

Here's the thing, your brain needs a break and the longer you deprive it, the harder it is to stay on task. Studies have shown that even on the daily, you need to take a short break every 50-90 minutes or so will help you increase your energy, stamina, and productivity overall. When you don't get it, your work suffers and so does your happiness. I don't know about you, but I'm pretty sure my creativity springs from my joy. If I'm not happy, I don't write well. In fact, I usually end up getting sick, and then my characters all sound like they're pissed with the world and want to Thanos Snap everyone and everything.

So, what do we do to avoid this kind of burnout in the first place?

Well, obviously the first thing we do is: Take Breaks.

To start with, daily breaks throughout the workday are a must and something I work on. It's not always easy though. You'd think it would be, but when you're in the zone it's hard to break that concentration to go unwind for a bit. This is especially true when you work for yourself and not someone else. We really are our own worst boss. I tell you. But I have found that the more you force yourself to take those breaks, the better your productivity is. Hopefully you do, too. Which is why I continue to make it a priority in my workday.

So, at this point, you might be saying, that's great, Carissa, but what should you do to actually, you know...take a break? ANYTHING BUT WORK. Workout, go for a walk, have a conversation, meditate. Take it from me, you need to get up and away from your computer or any other electronic device if you can help it. Don't go over notes, listen to author podcasts, read books (unless it's for absolute pleasure), basically avoid anything that might pull your thoughts into your author work. The point is to use a different area of the brain from what you've been flexing for the past 50-90 minutes. That part needs a break.

If you're working another job on top of your rapid release schedule, all of this stuff still applies. Look, we can do both – but it means our time as an author is also split with something else that's vying for our attention. The potential for burnout actually increases because you are going like gangbusters at one job, then trying to continue the momentum on your writing. You need to be realistic and set realistic expectations for what you can accomplish while including breaks into that timeframe.

If the 50-90-minute rule doesn't work for you, find a rhythm that does. One study actually suggests the best method is 50 minutes of work, with a 17-minute break in between. Set a timer, if you have to, to remind yourself when it's time to stop and move around. Regardless of how you do your breaks, ideally, they should be between 15-20 minutes, obviously with more time at lunch.

Now, more than that, there are also studies that show you should even be taking a longer break from your home and normal routines by traveling at least once a year, and ideally twice a year. In fact, they even go so far as to say that when you don't travel, you're reducing your life expectancy. Part of the reason for this is due to the fact that most of us aren't getting enough exercise, so our cardiovascular health decreases, thus making it more likely that we'll die early. Not good. We have too many books and stories to write!

So, my advice is to get out there and travel the world. It's one that I'm going to be implementing more into my life in 2021, even if it means just traveling to a campground and spending a week in the woods. Yes, dammit, I will make it a full week if it kills me! HA!

In total, the goal is to have 30-45 days spent on vacation/travel days per year through this endeavor. This means you have 2 longer vacations of 8-14 days or so each, then multiple smaller breaks spread throughout the year in 1-3 day increments. I can tell you right now, I've sucked royally at this - like I said earlier in the podcast. My family and I haven't always been rolling in money. Not that we are now, but we're doing much better than we were. My husband Colin came to the US with the clothes on his back and I was going through a divorce we first met - trust me, those aren't cheap. Plus, both Colin and I are 100% self-employed and have been since 2014. With all of this, it's made it not only hard to take days off in general because it's not like we get PTO, but also to afford going anywhere when we do take time off. I'm hoping this list-aim will at the very least, increase the awareness of my author brand enough so I can afford to take us on a nice week-long vacation somewhere nice next year. Maybe even out of state. We'll see.

Okay, so what exactly are the benefits of traveling? I'm glad you asked.

Creativity boost - which is something that does not go amiss with us authors. Not only do we write better and feel more connected to our stories, but the life experiences we obtain help us to create even more exciting things later on down the line.

Stress relief - This is a big one and probably the most important one for me. There's a lot of stress being an indie author and even more when you turn to rapid releasing. You need to find an outlet for that. Otherwise, stress will mount and eventually, it can lead to heart attacks, stroke, and other health nasties. Plus, it can pack on pound, thanks to the increase in cortisol in the body.

Productivity boost – When you have a lot to do, the last thing you need is to have week’s worth of down time, staring at the cursor on your screen. That time can be better spent on vacation somewhere. Then, when you come back, your productivity is on track and you can rock through that to-do list with renewed sense of purpose.

Overall, burnout is your body and mind’s way of saying that it’s reached max capacity for how much it can do and it needs to unwind. Rapid releasing books can certainly bring on the workload and if you’re not careful, it can lead to some serious burnout.

One of the biggest pieces of advice I can give you when it comes to rapid releasing your books is this: Find a better why than money.

I have seen many authors go down in flames because they started the rapid release track, saw monetary results and then felt trapped by their own editorial calendars and monetary goals. If they say sales slack or felt they weren’t being fast enough, they put undue pressure on themselves to perform.

Don’t do that.

Rapid releasing is a tool and it’s one that’s meant to help you build your audience and income, yes. But it can’t be the only reason you do it or you’ll kill yourself trying to keep up the momentum.

We’ve just entered the 3rd quarter of 2020 and by the 4th quarter, I want you to be thinking about 2021 and how you’ll leverage vacation time and breaks into your year so you can rapid release successfully, but keep it all balanced, too. Deal?

I will be doing the same. In fact, I’ll even share with you my plans for 2021 in October.

Okay, guys, so that's all I have for you today. Even after such a hectic and not-so-relaxing camping trip last week, I still feel better having broken away from my normal routine for a few days. I know more time will be even better, and I'm committed to making it happen next year.

Now, let's take this discussion online. Are you in my Author Revolution Facebook Group? If not, join today for free and tell me about your break schedule and vacation routines. Do you go often? Or are you on the verge of burnout? I'd love to hear how rapid releasing or writing your books has changed the way you take breaks - or not.

As a reminder, if you'd like to download the transcript from today's episode or find an easy to click link to any of the sites we talked about today, like a link to Episode 13 on Author Overwhelm or a few of the studies I referred to, be sure to head over to authorrevolution.org/39. It's all there waiting for you.

One final reminder: this podcast episode is sponsored by my upcoming rapid release series, the Windhaven Witches. Slowly but surely I am increasing my preorders on all sites - Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and iBooks being the biggest ones. If you're a reader who wouldn't mind spending \$3 to help an indie author make her dream come true on becoming a NYT bestselling author, I encourage you to purchase Secret Legacy on all three sites. It's 99¢ wherever books are sold - ebook form, of course. Not only will you be helping me make a dream a reality, actually in more ways than one, but you will also be donating 50% to the American Cancer Society.

Alright guys, until next time... Go forth and start your author revolution.