

EPISODE 56

Getting Organized for 2021

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Welcome back to the Author Revolution Podcast! I'm your host, international bestselling indie author, Carissa Andrews - and CEO of Author Revolution, your source for all things rapid releasing.

First, a word about our sponsor.

Making plans to kick off your author revolution in 2021 can feel a little daunting when you first get started. Especially if being organized really isn't your jam (or let's face it, you've just got too much going on with all the kids doing distance learning from home). Well, you don't need to put off your writing career another year. Instead, I've got you covered with the Author Revolution 2021 Quickstart Publishing Kit. In it, you'll get clear on your book launches, daily writing goals, and so much more with the PDF downloadables and swipe files I've built exclusively to get you moving fast. I want 2021 to be as successful as possible for you. That's why I'm offering the kit for just \$27. Head over to authorrevolution.org/quickstart to get signed up.

I don't know about you, but I'm extremely grateful to be an author in the current economic climate. Knowing I have a career that I can do from the comfort of my own home has been incredibly important - but especially this year. With social distancing measures in place and all of the business closings, being able to rely on my own imagination and business sense has proven invaluable.



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However, I don't know about you, but having kids home and distance learning is not conducive to productivity... or, as it turns out, learning. We've made it through a full week of having all four kids home and I can say with certainty, kindergarteners are not distance learning material. Not that that's earth-shattering news of any kind, but you get the point.

One thing I've learned about myself is that I actually really enjoy the ability to deep dive and focus on a project. Whether that be writing, coaching, podcasting... or creating my courses.

When you're constantly interrupted, or having to help a kid stay focused, it's insanity inducing. Thank goodness for Colin, or I'd be 100% drooling in a corner and chewing on my hair.

I don't know how kindergarten teachers do it. As much as I love teaching, that's one profession I would not want to take on.

So, Mrs. Neva, my hat is off to you as you try to wrangle this class of 30 kindergarteners in google classroom meets three times a day. I'm fairly certain, you're a saint.

Now, moving on, as a quick status update, I did promise that I'd make progress on Amends - my NaNoWriMo project and book 2 in the Diana Hawthorne series. While I can't say I did the full 4K, I have managed to get down about 2K words.

Hopefully you guys are doing a better job getting your nano projects completed.

Like I said last episode, while I might not be getting all the words down this month, I know come December, I'll be in full swing. I don't really have any choice, since Amends it due to Suzanne. Right?

With Thanksgiving coming up, I'm taking Thursday through Sunday off this week, so the only thing I'll be doing is writing in Amends, hanging out with my immediate family, and cooking our Thanksgiving meal on Sunday. Yes, we're celebrating Sunday, because my two oldest are at their Dad's house this week. But that's okay, as it turns out, it gives Colin a couple of extra days to make our dining room table, since he's moved on from our office to fix up that room.

Speaking of this crazy moving project, for those of you who listened to last week's episode and wondered what the heck was up with the sound, I have to say wow - recording in a mostly empty room does not sound as cool on the mic as it does when you belt out Christmas carols. HA! So, sorry for the sound quality. Hopefully it will continue to improve as we get more stuff in the office to dampen the sound a bit.

Okay, so moving on from my lackluster NaNoWriMo progress and crazy sound fiasco... This week I want to talk to you about getting a plan put together for 2021.

You might remember a couple of weeks ago, in episode 54 to be exact, I talked about creating a vacation plan. But now, I want to open the discussion further and talk about creating a 2021 publishing plan.

All too often, we let our writing process dictate our publishing plan, rather than the other way around. While that might feel more comfortable, it can also be a pathway to procrastination. After all, work expands to fill the time available for its completion. And when the completion date is open ended... well, you get the point.

So, I want to talk about my process for getting organized with my publishing as I head into a new year in the hopes that it will shed some light for you and give you a little bit of inspiration to get started on your own plans today.

The way I view indie publishing is by breaking it down into four separate pillars: Planning, Writing & Editing, Publishing, and Promoting. For those of you who end up joining my digital course Rapid Release Roadmap in 2021, you'll see this trend continue into the way I teach the course as well.

When I'm sitting down to make a plan for the new year, it obviously always starts with a plan. I need to know the who, what, where, when, why... all of that. I start by asking myself how many books I want to publish. Over the years, I've found that for me, and for most of my students, four books a year is a solid plan. It's not too crazy, and in my experience it's totally doable, even if you have another job you're working while your backlist is growing.

Once I know the number of books I want to release, I decide on a release plan. For me, that's typically one of two ways. I either launch one book per quarter, or I save them up and launch them one after the other in a 4-week apart rapid release—something I call the 4-All Around release strategy.

How you release your books will depend on the way you operate and your marketing budget. Sometimes it's helpful to release one, get a month or two of royalties in, and release another one. You do you but test out different options if you don't know what works best for you yet. I like to create a quarterly plan when I'm organizing my year. That way, I can refocus and get myself on track if I find my goals are slipping. It's kind of like a year end refocus like this, but three more times a year. HA!

When I know how I plan to release, I work backward from that date to determine some of the other important dates. Things like, when I need to get the manuscript to the editor, when I need the cover, the layout, and final files. There's obviously a lot of moving parts, so having a handy sheet that helps me keep track of a book's info in one nice, neat place is especially helpful for me. I also put the most important ones on my desk or wall calendar.

Once I get writing, I personally don't think much about word count tracking. I let Scrivener do its thing. However, I know there are a lot of you who love to keep track and I have a few resources for you to try out if Scrivener's tool isn't adequate enough.

1. Story Origin has a new goal tracker on its site that many authors are raving about. It might be just the tool you're looking for.
2. WordKeeper App is a new one I've personally been testing out.
3. If you're a spreadsheet fan, my 2021 Author Revolution Publishing Quickstart also includes a Google Spreadsheet tracker that was modified from RJ Blain's original 24 book tracker. Since most authors I know, rapid release or not, don't have the bandwidth to write 24 books a year, her spreadsheet was a bit overkill. But her concept was solid. That's why I spring boarded from her work and I think you'll love it. However, if you do purchase the kit and like it, throw RJ some love by purchasing some of her books.

One of the areas I've struggled with in the past was staying on track with any kind of budget for my books. Just like writing and publishing, you're most effective when you have goals to target. This includes knowing how much you have to spend on things like your cover, editing, and most of all, marketing. It's super easy to either spend no money at all (because let's face it, in the beginning, that's about all we can afford), or throw money at things and never know whether or not those were effective dollars spent. I have a budget sheet I use to keep myself on track and so I know what I'm willing to spend for a book's launch, so I know if I have more or less to throw at the next launch down the road.

This year, in addition to upping my ad spend, I've also gotten smarter at my marketing efforts.

Gone are the days of just running ads, sending people to my books, and hoping they'll someday buy another one or end up on my mailing list. Instead, I've been working with Stephen Gordon, you know, the email marketing genius behind Email Marketing Superstars, to make very deliberate funnels for my onboarding readers.

So, not only am I pulling people over to my email list, but I'm nurturing them through a sequence that guides them through the process of reading, reviewing, and moving on to the next book in a series.

Ideally, the thought process here is that while this automation engine runs in the background, reviews and sales will continue on without as much promotion and ad spend. And we can all benefit from that, right?

We're coming up on the end of this podcast episode, but I really do want to bring things back around to a focus of gratitude. Things might be hard as we juggle our new norms. We might have to get used to working more with kids at home, or having kids that need to be focused. But we, as authors, are in a very unique position to do some incredible things in the coming years.

Think about it, if things continue the way they're going - with the virus causing most of us to work from home, and kids to be away from school - at least we can still create products that have an evergreen shelf-life. They unless you're writing a book that's bound to current affairs, it won't matter when a reader gets hold of your book. What matters is they read, love, and maybe even review it.

If we use our time wisely, this could translate into a fantastic situation that allows us to get our back catalogue up and establish our base of readers. Imagine for a moment, that we're now at the end of 2021 and gearing up for 2022.



How will you feel knowing you were able to plan out and launch four books in the past twelve months? You now have 4 new titles that readers are consuming and it's bringing in passive income that helps support your family, regardless of what's happening in the outside world.

That's pretty powerful stuff.

That's really why I designed the 2021 Author Revolution Publishing Quickstart Kit. I wanted to give you guys some tools that you can use right now, today, to start mapping out and planning your 2021 so you can get some quick wins while making huge strides in your author journey.

The kit has a ton of goodies in there that I personally use. But the biggest win, at least in my eyes, is the Author Revolution Quickstart Email Marketing Funnel you can implement right away - as long as you have a lead magnet or book ready to go. Don't be like me and wait until you've been at this for years before implementing a good author email marketing funnel. Truly, the value in a good relationship with your readers is more sales and people on your list who you can call friends. What's better than that?

If you're interested in knocking 2021 out of the park and getting a headstart on Rapid Release Roadmap, I encourage you to check out the kit. It's just \$27 and has tons of downloadable PDFs and digital tools ready for you. If you're interested in checking it out, head over to authorrevoltution.org/quickstart to get signed up. I will also mention if you're planning on joining Rapid Release Roadmap in January, snagging this kit will put you a step ahead and a competitive edge. If you're into that sort of thing.

Whether you check out the kit or not, whether you join Rapid Release Roadmap or not, I want you to know that I am here to support you 100% on your author revolution.



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I truly believe we are called to authorhood for a reason. We have stories living inside us that need to be told and readers who are meant to experience them.

So, as we end, I want you to know that I am so grateful to you for being here, for listening and supporting the podcast, and for doing all you can to make an author career and life you love. You are going to do great things, my friend. I can feel it. I wish you a wonderful and safe Thanksgiving in this crazy year of 2020.

As always, you can always find out more in today's show notes at authorrevolution.org/56.

Alright my writerly friend, I'm off to get that outline nailed down so I can start writing...

Whatever your plans are for the rest of the week, go forth and start your author revolution.



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