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EPISODE 62

How to Make Your 2021 Better Than Your 2020

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Welcome to 2021, my friends!

It's been a wild ride getting to this point, hasn't it? If someone were to tell me a year ago about the Pandora's box someone opened for Christmas 2019, er... covid... I would have said to stop reading my books because it's gone to your head. But, as my mother-in-law would say... here we are.

These past few weeks I've been doing a lot of self-reflection and contemplation about what it is I want the next year to look like. If you've been following this podcast, you know this already. I started this process earlier in 2020 by mapping out my year's releases and getting vacation times, etc. plugged in. However, this past week I had to make a tough decision to alter that plan.

In the past 4 or five years, I've taken on more than one person can chew and it's resulted in a lot of stress and an undercurrent of, believe it or not, regret. Regret that I'm not as present as I should be for my kids. Regret that I'm not putting enough attention into each project because I'm trying to do too many things.

Now, in the past, I've been able to set projects aside for a time. But I've never actively cancelled a book's preorder on Amazon. When I set a date and put the preorder links up, I have always, always adhered to it. Until now.



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Yes, I actually made the decision to pull the plug on Immortals and Amends for now. I took both preorders down, which meant releasing all of the preorders that were already placed on the titles. While I have new dates in mind, I haven't decided if I'll put them back up for preorder just yet or not. Thankfully, Amazon is cutting some slack this year for preorder cancelations, though. Normally, if you cancel a preorder, the Amazon gods ban you from using the preorder function for a full year. But COVID changed that a bit, I guess. How long they'll be more lenient remains to be seen, however.

When I set my dates for my releases this year, I was still in the throes of Windhaven and honestly thought I could jump from one big project to the next without batting an eye. And I probably could have if I hadn't forced myself to slow down and take some much-needed time off. It started with taking Saturdays off after years of no days off. Ever.

But then I took time off for holidays and then took a full week and a half away from things from Christmas to the 4th of January. Now, when I say time off, I mean I did NO WORK for my clients or myself. I only did what I wanted to do. If it was read, I read. If it was take a bath in the middle of the day, I did. If it was start a puzzle, clean my kindergartener's room, or have a long chat with my daughter... I did. And you know what I discovered?

Life is beautiful when you slow down.

Sure, it's not actively advancing my career. But it is grounding me in the moment and making everything I do more worthwhile.

I used to think the faster you go, the faster you reach success. But that's not necessarily the case. Sometimes, you're chasing something that's just out of reach. And no matter how hard you try, you... can't...quite... reach it.



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In the meantime, life still goes on around you.

Now, I grew up in a house where my dad worked incessantly and when he wasn't at work, he was at the bowling alley. I rarely saw him. Heck, even at big events, he would be there for only as long as he had to and he'd leave because he "had to work."

I never liked that part of him, but I somehow managed to become him.

Ironic much?

Well, I do love my irony, but not so much in this case. However, this revelation did lead me to uncover the aspect I was missing in teaching indie authorship. It's not just about all the things we have to do to be successful. It's about the process itself. It's about trusting the process and being secure in the knowing that the process will get you there eventually.

And by there, I mean, success. I mean the income we are all hoping for. I mean readers who are so excited for your next book that they can barely stand it.

It might not happen right away. It might not happen after four books, or eight books, or twenty books... but eventually, the compounding effect will tip the scales.

Anyone telling you that they've found "the magic bullet" that will instantly make you a six-figure author is blowing smoke up your backside, my friend. So, please don't buy into that. Not from me, not from anyone. There's no guarantees. There are only probabilities.



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So, rather than chasing that elusive dollar, let's set some better goals for 2021, shall we? Let's focus on our happiness and the happiness of those around us. Let's emphasize how to enjoy this wild ride of being an indie author and the journey we take to get to our idea of success. Sound good?

Okay, so while I don't ordinarily recommend cancelling a book's preorder, this year felt like a special circumstance to me. I want to be able to give you the advice that's been bubbling up under the surface for so long. At my heart, I truly am a teacher. I love to take in information that feels disjointed and chaotic, and make sense of it for others. It's what I do.

Just ask my 6-year-old. Remember when I said I cleaned his room? Yeah, we even organized his Legos into 10 bins based on size, shape, or use. Neurotic? Perhaps. But you know what? He's kept it clean for a WEEK.

If I had a mic that could drop, I would totally do that. HA!

Okay, so here's the thing. I really do want 2021 to be your best year yet. I want it to be MY best year yet, too. So that's why I devised 5 tips to make the most out of your planning and goal setting for this year.

Forget resolutions. We're gonna learn to trust the process. Ready?

Okay, here are the 5 tips to make 2021 better than 2020 right out of the gate.

Start with an Intention – You can't make something better without first understanding what it is you're trying to change. So, for example, my intention for 2021 is to continue to build on my back catalogue, but to do so with more balance. Some people will also set an intention by using a word or two to describe the year.



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For me, those words would be MOMENTUM and BALANCE. I don't just want momentum in my businesses, I also want to do it in a way that's sustainable for me and my family. That way, I can start right where I'm at without wishing I was somewhere else. Have you ever felt like that? Driven to keep going because you're not where you want to be? Yeah, stop doing that. Just trust that you're making progress and building your momentum. Whoops, went on my soap box again. Okay, so to recap – set an intention you want for this year, then put it somewhere you can see it every single day. I have my intention set as my wallpaper on one of my computer screens. I see it every single day. Where can you put yours?

Stop Trying to Do it ALLLLLLL – Oooh, this one hits me so hard. When I go into detail-oriented mode and start seeing all the things I've been letting slide, I start feeling like I need to do more... do all the things! But honestly, if you've been letting it slide this long, there's a chance it might not be as necessary as you think it is. Remember 80% of our gains in life come from 20% of our efforts. Ask yourself if what you think you should be doing is even necessary or if it's just busy work or something you were told you needed to do. If it's necessary, but you don't like doing it, or you're not good at it, now that's another matter. Hire that stuff out to a PA or someone who does know how to make magic with it. At the end of the day, though, I want you to let go of the projects and things you "think" you need to do and focus on the true needle movers. Now, with that in mind, number 3 is...

Get Laser Focused on What Works – Unfortunately, everyone's audience is slightly different. What works like clockwork for one author will not work for another. That will mean you need to be paying attention this year to work works best for you. Get laser focused on the routines, patterns, habits, and systems that work best for you as an author and your personal audience. Then, do more of what WORKS and less of what feels like work. You feel me?



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Spend MORE Time Doing Things You Love – You can't have a better year than 2020 if you're not able to take time off to enjoy the world around you. Take it from someone who knows. Pick up a new hobby. Try a new TikTok dance, heck take up hiking, kayaking, or something else that gets you outside and away from the confines of your home. Goodness knows we all need that one right about now. The more you enjoy nature, the better life feels. It's actually a proven, scientific fact. Look, at the end of the day, do more of whatever it is brings you joy. And finally...

Love Up Your Peeps – Whether you live in a crazy busy house like I do, or you just want your friends and extended family members to know how much you care, take time to reconnect with them. If COVID is still a thing, make routine calls part of your week. If restrictions are finally lifted, spend time with those you love and remind them just how important they are to you. If there's one thing this pandemic has truly brought home, so to speak, it's just how precarious and precious life is. Don't end the year with regret in your heart for the things you didn't say and the time you didn't spend with those you love. We lost my grandma and my father in law in 2020 and if there's one thing I wish I would have done better with, it's letting both of them know just how much they were loved and important.

BONUS TIP: Okay, so I have a bonus. You didn't think I'd end at just five, did you? In order to make 2021 a better year for you, it also means putting your health (both physical and mental) first. Make small steps to improve your diet, increase your physical activity if you need to, and learn to see the signs that you need a brain break and/or mental health day. Meditate. Whatever it is you need to do to feel better in your own skin, make sure you do it. This is also a big one for me. I have a tendency to stress eat and say SCREW IT to my workouts when it feels like things are out of my control. Then, I regret it a month or two later when I realize the workouts and eating right were actually helping me. We are such weird creatures, I'm telling you.



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The reason I put this one last though is not to make it an afterthought, but to reinforce what you're already thinking this time of year. Consider it your reminder that yes, focusing on your health and wellbeing is worthwhile. You should do that. Maybe even right now.

Okay, so hopefully I've got you all dialed in and motivated up. You're going to rock this new year, my friend. Just remember to take it one day at a time and you'll see the magic start to unfold.

Now, don't forget, I'm hosting a live 1-hour masterclass next week on The #1 Secret to Building a Successful Indie Author Career. We're going to bust some indie author myths, as well as have some straight talk about what's working in the industry and what's not. Plus, we'll have some fun, too. Not even gonna lie. If you're ready to invest a little more time into laying a solid foundation for your author career, head over to authorrevolution.org/masterclass to get signed up.

As always, you can download the transcript to this episode in today's show notes by heading over to authorrevolution.org/62.

Next week, I'm bringing on my good friend, Paul Heingarten. Paul and I go way back and we're going to be talking about his indie author journey. So, be prepared to be inspired.

Alright my writerly friend, that's a wrap for this week. Remember to go set that intention for the year and hold it close. You got this.

In the meantime, go forth and start your author revolution.



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