

EPISODE 64

*The #1 Mindset Shift Indie
Authors Need to Make*

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Welcome back, my writerly friend.

Yeesh, 2021 is off to an interesting start.

I don't know about you, but I've been doing a lot of reflection the past couple of weeks. Between the continuing explosion of coronavirus cases, the capitol insurrectionists on the 6th of January, and the transition of power in the White House this week, it's really put into perspective for me our human need for security. When things shift too much under our feet, it's hard to feel like there's any stability in our life at all.

It's fair to say that our world's in chaos and upheaval right now and it's crossing into more than just the way the political theater is playing out. As authors, we absorb the information in the world around us in ways we don't even comprehend. Much of the undercurrent makes its way into our books as we try to process the events. It's part of the reason you've seen an explosion of books about pandemics and dystopian societies.

We need a way to make sense of the world when nothing seems to make sense. In addition, we've been threatened in a way not many generations have. We've transitioned from a relatively peaceful state, to feeling like even the healthiest of us could lose our lives by an invisible force that's raging like wildfire from person to person.



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We're stretched thin with children being schooled from home - all while we try to work from home. Many of us haven't seen another location outside of our house for months and months... And if that's not enough, it feels as though our country (at least in the US) is on the brink of another civil war.

This is heavy stuff, guys. Heavy, heavy stuff.

But here's the thing I know to be true... We were chosen for this.

For one reason or another, we were born here, to be the agents of change. We are forged from the remnants of stars simply to be alive at this time and place and do our magic. I think many of us have felt like we belong to something bigger...Or we're destined for something more. But we haven't quite been sure what.

I know I've felt that way. Many times over. And sometimes, just when I think I have it all figured out, the sand beneath my feet shifts again and I'm left questioning my assumptions. Have you ever felt like that?

When that happens, I have a tendency to double down. I dig my heels in and do whatever it takes to build some stability. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Unfortunately, building something stable on shifting ground isn't real stability at all. It's the illusion of stability.

This goes for houses, governments, family structures, and even careers. I believe many of us enter the indie author world for two reasons and often they're deeply intertwined. #1 we're insanely creative and we need an outlet for that creativity. Most of us found some sort of comfort in the written word. Maybe someone said we were good at it. Maybe we just liked the way we could mold the words to our will. The second reason is that a part of us is looking for our creativity to pay us back. If you're in other groups or if you've been around awhile, it often seems like it's so easy for them. We see their incredible results and think if they did it, why not me?

And while that's totally true, sometimes we forget that we're all on our own unique paths. What worked for one author, may not work for another. You can't replicate every result or control the outcomes. You're still a unique individual with a ton of unique circumstances playing out.

Plus, the moment you write "the end" and submit your story for the world to read, it's no longer yours to control at all. It's the world's to receive and consume. They make judgments based on its appearance, blurb, ads, promotions, reviews... Some of those you can alter, others, not at all. Like bad reviews...

As Joss Whedon (Buffy creator and my personal writing inspiration) said, "All worthy work is open to interpretations the author didn't intend. Art isn't your pet—it's your kid. It grows up and talks back to you."

I've seen it so many times - authors, myself included, want our writing to be the thing that creates monetary abundance in our lives. And while it might, a more pointed question we need to be asking ourselves is... should it?

Especially in the beginning as we get our writer's cap firmly planted on the top of our head. Nothing is without consequences. What happens if an early success puts us off of writing because we can't maintain deadlines, or don't have our plans put firmly in place yet? If our foundation lacks stability, it'll all still come crashing down - just with bigger style and louder fanfare. You feel me?

Through the past ten years, there have been many times where I asked myself whether or not I was cut out for writing and even indie publishing because I wasn't earning the profit that I thought I should. Or the fact that my books aren't as "popular" as some of my peers when they're clearly in the same genre and written just as well.

Then I realized what often stops us in our tracks is the whole comparisonitis.

We turn to others for justification of our direction, or our current location. We want to be seen as just as good as someone else. Validated, I guess.

But we can't compare our beginning to someone else's middle or end. We need to start where we are and keep putting one step in front of the other.

About two years ago, I had a shift in thinking that really did change the way I approach my author career. I can't say it's always held steadfast, but it has helped me weather the ups and downs of indie authorship and I think it will help you, too.

As much as we wish we could declare a successful author career from day one, the truth is, being successful and earning a living with your writing takes time. There, I said it.

Back in the day when I first started, everyone believed if you wrote it, readers would come... of course, the stories of Amanda Hocking were pretty popular around that time and she's from my state - so I mean, come on! If she did it, I could, too!

However, the element of the equation that's missing here is that for the majority of us, perseverance has to be our bedfellow. We have to view our writing and authorship as a long-game that is continually played over and over. We don't stop when we get it right... we keep going until we can't get it wrong.

So when I say it takes time, we're talking about years. Years of consistently writing and putting out books so you know how to build worlds your readers will love. Years of getting to know your readers. Years of connecting with other authors to create partnerships, newsletter swaps, and comraderies. Years of learning the ecosystem of indie authorship. Years to grow that backlist and really leverage it with email marketing and promotional campaigns.

I know that doesn't sound sexy and it doesn't sound like the story you've been sold. But the reality is, for the majority of authors, if you want to make a meaningful living as an indie author, it means making an investment.

This is the investment of time, of learning the craft, of learning your role as an authorpreneur. Because let me tell you, with the 20+ hats you gotta wear, there's zero chance you're going to learn it all in a matter of minutes. Sorry, guys. And sometimes, having a successful indie author career will mean the investment of money. Particularly if you want to take in new information that will shorten this process down some. Or if you want to run ads, promotions, have professional edits or covers designed... Only you can decide where and how you invest in yourself and your career. But you have to know that 100% at some point, money will get involved.

When I first started, I did everything (and I mean everything) on the skimpiest budget known to man. I did literally EVERYTHING myself. Website, check. Covers, check. Writing, check. Blurb, check. Editing, marketing, ads, reader engagement and social media... check, check, check, and check.

So, for those of you who are in the beginning of the journey and the only thing you can invest is your time, know you're not alone. If anything, I think this is the norm over the exception.

What matters most isn't how much you spend when you don't have a lot. What matters is that you make SOME investment. Start for free by shifting your mindset from this quick-fix mentality plaguing the indie author community. It's a myth for 98% of us.

Instead, go in with eyes wide open.

Know that in order to start seeing some substantial income, it's going to mean having 22-28 books in your backlist. T

hen put a plan in place to tackle that backlist. Figure out how many books you can sustainably write in a year. Is it 2? 4? 12?

By now, you know that I operate on a 4-book a year model because that's what works for me while I have other job responsibilities. But I think even if I didn't... I still want to have a life outside of writing. I still want to see my kids and go on family outings. I want to spend time with my husband... I need to see the outside of my friggin house... and the real world.

So, whatever that number is, you need to pick it and stick with it until you get to, say, 25 books. Until that point, put blinders on to what you think you should be making in terms of income from your books. Instead, focus on the foundation and learning everything you can about building your author career so it's as stable as possible.

I've said it before, but it's worth re-mentioning... our books are evergreen. The majority of us will not make huge numbers on our launches. Instead, it will all come from the way we leverage our backlist. And we can do that over and over and over.

No, that's not to say you ignore your launches... just that you need to shift your focus that a launch has to earn x,y,z. Even a poorly launched book can go on to do great things. I've seen it time and time again.

So here we are... We're edging near the end of the first month of 2021... Whether you've got your plan in place or you need to sit down and think it through, I want you to really look at the way you're approaching your author career. Are you being realistic with what you want to have happen? Or are you letting sensationalism get in the way?

If your eye is only set on the prize of monetary compensation, then I challenge you to adjust the lens a bit. If you want to make a full-time income with your writing,



I want you to shift your mindset away from a certain dollar amount right now, to that goal number of 25 books in your backlist. Can you do that for me?

I'm pretty sure that if you've made it this far into the episode, you probably needed to hear this. Here's something else you need to hear. No matter where you are on your author journey, you are right where you're meant to be. Maybe not where you want to be, but where you're meant to be. I truly believe that.

The universe holds us back for various reasons, but I think many times, it's because there's something even greater meant for you in the future. But you can't skip ahead. You have to trust the process.

All right, soapbox officially exited. Now, don't forget, I'm hosting my final masterclass on Building a Successful Indie Author Career this coming Wednesday January 20th. If you're ready to build your solid foundation, you definitely don't want to miss this masterclass. Join at authorrevolution.org/masterclass and get signed up.

If you'd like to download the transcript from this episode, head over to today's show notes at authorrevolution.org/64. I'll also include a link to the masterclass if you'd like to get in on that, too.

All right my writerly friend, that's a wrap for this week. I wish you all the successes as we continue through this year.

Now, go forth and start your author revolution.



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