

Episode 147

Tue, 8/30 1:55PM 34:46

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

book, author, readers, reinvent, vibe, blurbs, write, covers, career, automation, genre, sudden, evolve, add, ads, sequences, space, shift, working, leverage

SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews



Carissa Andrews 00:11

The indie author revolution has been around for more than a decade. So we indies continue to push the boundaries of what we're capable of. From getting over initial prejudices to staring down perfectionism and author imposter syndrome. We've become a force to reckon with indie authors now wear more hats than ever as we strive to create a career full of meaning prosperity, and potential. We have juggled the demands and continue to be rebels in the face of adversity. Now, after years of hearing the shelter, hustle and grind, we indies are rebelling again, gone are the days of publishing a book a month until we drop, and in its place, sow the seeds of a better way to rapid release, a way that feels incredible as we build a sustainable, lifelong author career, that not only increases our visibility and royalties, but it's all done with intention and ease. If you're ready to buck the system and become the visionary entrepreneur, I know you're meant to be, you've come to the right place. I'm Carissa Andrews, international best selling indie author, and this is the Author Revolution Podcast. Well, hey there guys. Welcome back to the Author Revolution Podcast. As we're coming into September, and I think I mentioned that maybe last week, I can't remember for sure. But September for me is always kind of returning to home kind of feeling because my birthday is September 3, and it just the whole virgile vibe, gets me into this mindset of reinvention of coming back to my core values of understanding what it is I'm really after of wanting to do the things that I am meant for to be better at what I am trying to be about, you know, all of those things, right? I'm trying to, I guess, look at the way my author career is look at the way author revolution is and decide for myself, like is this working the way I intended. And if it's not, I give myself permission, I guess, to let things go to get rid of the things that are no longer serving me so that I can make more space for the things that light me up for the things that make me feel good about my author, career about author of illusion, about myself in general. And so today, I want to talk about like becoming the Phoenix, what that means for us authors because I think, letting ourselves burn down to the ashes and then resurrecting ourselves. It's such a great metaphor for allowing ourselves to let go of the past, let go of maybe past failures, let go of maybe past disappointments and allowing the new and the fresh, and those really clear eyes of intention to shine through because it's now that we're trying to evolve, it's now that we are embracing our destinies, it's now that we are evolving into the person, the author, the individual that we want to be right. The past really has no bearing, it never does. But sometimes we just really need to symbolically, I guess, burn ourselves to the ground, say the past is over everything that we've

done up until this point is done, and move forward with a new lens, a new set of eyes a new perspective on life. And so I want you to be thinking about, like, is your author career working the way you wanted it or the way you intended when you first started? And if it's not, is there a way for you to just burn it to the ground and become the phoenix rising from the ashes? Are you capable of just like taking a look at everything you've done all the things that you have accomplished, and allowing it to resurrect itself to change to reinvent it? Here's what I'm talking about. I have 10 different tips 10 ways to be the Phoenix author to allow yourself to evolve to become better to level up in new ways that you didn't even really think you could do. Because you're so busy maybe being wrapped up in the momentum of what you're trying to accomplish all the things you're trying to write and you haven't stopped to really think about, like the things that you've already done and how you can resurrect it or how you can reinvent it. Because we authors, we're constantly working. And we're constantly in this motion of doing things right. But at a certain point, you can stop take a look at all you've accomplished. And if it's not working for you, it doesn't necessarily mean none of the things that you've done up until this point are working. It could just mean a reinvention. It could mean Taking a break from doing some new content to really leverage the content you've already created. So let's go over the 10 ways you can reinvent your author career, and really embrace the destiny that is waiting and calling you. Okay? Way number one is reinvent your covers, this is one of the quickest and easiest things. I know maybe some of you are saying it's not quick or easy, but it is one of the quickest ways to be able to shift the vibe of a previous set of content, a previous book, previous series, whatever, and get yourself more traction and more momentum on your books, right? When we first start out covers are more about us as the author like it, it needs to resonate with us in the story that we think we're telling. And it has to have all these different elements to it, right. But as we continue onward, and our career becomes more expansive, we start to understand our genre better, we start to understand the categories that our books in better we start to understand where we want to leverage the stories that we're writing, and how we want them to fit into those categories of those genres. And so all of a sudden, the patterns of the types of book covers becomes more apparent, and the colors become more apparent, the typography becomes more apparent. So even if you're not designing your own covers, which I'm sure some of you are, understanding which designers know how to create covers in the genre that you're trying to leverage is so key. When I was trying to do all the different books that I've done in the past, right, and I was feeling stuck, and I felt like things weren't working. The first thing I would tweak is the covers. So Penn Thomas has gone through one, like the entire series has gone through one full cover redesign. Oracle, on the other hand, I think she's had for four different covers, until I got to the paranormal, women's fiction, fantasy, kind of vibe. It was like there was such a transition between all of those covers, and now she's really doing what I want her to be doing. But it took some time and it took some experimentation. And it took me deliberately thinking about what genre do I want to leverage her in. Now even though she's not technically a midlife paranormal story, she's not a midlife paranormal, main character, she is 2000 years old, I think she kind of qualifies for being, you know, over the teenage realm, right. I wanted to leverage the the vibe of that that older, kind of more mature understanding of the world, I wanted her to have that. And as soon as I did, as soon as I kind of shifted her vibe into that, boom, all of a sudden, the sales picked up, the Patriots picked up, and things started going faster, which was awesome. So think about your covers, think about how can you tweak them into the ways that are going to leverage the genres that you're really trying to get after those readers that you are really trying to call into. Because those readers, they're always looking for new books, but they are very specific about what they're looking for. So if there is a type of book that they're looking for, and your cover doesn't speak to them about being that genre, they're going to completely gloss over you because it's not the right vibe, right. Now, tip number two is rewrite your blurbs. So there are so many ways, like when we're first starting, sometimes we're just, you know, throwing spaghetti at a wall and hoping it

works, right. We're not copywriters, we are authors. And so it's a completely different Muscle Flex than when you're writing your novel. And sometimes again, we're trying to shove all the things into the book blurb. And we're not understanding what sells books, we're not understanding good copy for selling copywriting for selling. But as we get better as we get more mature with our author career, we start to understand what works better, what looks better as a sales copy, we start to get these things kind of more under our belt when it comes to our toolbox. Right? We start to get them they make more sense. And so if it's been a hot minute, since you did your book blurbs, maybe think about rewriting some of them, maybe test out some different types of copy, maybe look at different ways of telling the the hook for your stories, maybe think about how can you use a different character's journey in the book to really amp up the suspense and what's going to happen to the story. There's different ways. I mean, there's a myriad of different ways to be able to do your book blurb. And so it's very important that you kind of play around with it at times if you're not seeing the sales that you wanted, right. The book blurbs I've found are so instrumental in helping readers number one know if it's the right genre right? To know if the story sounds intriguing enough, but it also helps you as an author, if you write them before you start writing your story. It helps you to amp up Some of the suspense, it helps you amp up some of the tension that you need to bring into the book before you even write it. Because if you write your book blurb, and you know, it's saying something like, oh, this like crazy thing is gonna happen. And if they don't do it, everyone's gonna die. Now all of a sudden, you have to write that into the book, right? It becomes something that has to happen. And so sometimes, even before you do your outline, if you write your book blurbs, you can get a little bit more suspense a little bit more crazy with your stories more outlandish, and all of a sudden, things get better. And so maybe think about if this is something that you've never done before, start writing your book blurbs before you start your outline process, so that you can really get into the drama and the suspense and the hooks that you're gonna want to play out in your stories. All right. So tip number three, if you're not getting the sales that you're looking for, and you need to reinvent what's happening, what do you think about picking new keywords and Amazon? Now it goes really hand in hand with the book blurbs as well, because as you're writing new book blurbs, you're going to be using different words, right, you're going to be using different elements in the way that you're telling the story to the reader in a sales type of way. But when you add keywords into the back end of like Amazon or whatever, all of a sudden, the Amazon algorithms have to reindex everything that you've put in there. And so it can give you kind of a Amazon boost. And I think it probably works with drafted digital and other sites as well. But ultimately, the goal really here is to get your books more visible, it's to trigger some organic sales to trigger the platforms to show your books more frequently. And it's a great way to do that in all it took was researching a few more keywords and putting them into the back end of Amazon, right. So if you don't have a platform like publisher rocket, which I highly recommend, it's a great platform that I would do, like my own searches on Amazon, you know, start typing in the search bar, the beginnings of keywords of things that you think your readers are going to be interested in. So like for mine, for example, if I am looking for a psychic mystery, I would probably start writing psychic mystery in the beginning of the search and just see what other things pop up. Because it's not going to be the only thing it could be other book titles, it could be other series names, it could be an author, title, you or another name, you don't know what it's going to bring in until you start kind of playing around with the types of searches you think your readers are going to be hunting for. And all of a sudden in the drop down, you'll have a whole bunch of different things that you can kind of put in there and play with. And it's really, really helpful to just see what others are searching for in order to amp up your own search categories, your own search keywords, and just test it out and see if you get more organic traffic that way. Now, another way to become the Phoenix is we authors, we get into this. I mean, we have so much going on. And so this is understandable. But we get into this rut when it comes to ADS, right? We very many of us,

most of us even will go through these phases where we're creating ads, and then we just kind of let them do their thing. Hopefully, they work hopefully they they do what we're asking them to do. And we get sales from it, right. That's kind of hope and wish and prayer kind of time. But what if you start a process of creating new ads every single month, maybe pick the second Tuesday of the month, where every second Tuesday of the month, that's the day you are going to create new ads, get rid of any of the ads that weren't working as well, you know, look at the A cos on Amazon, for instance. And Nick's anything that has over 200%, you know, Vinit right off the bat. Or maybe you are thinking about wanting to add in a different type of ad or test out those video ads, or just put in a new brand ad and see what happens. Maybe you've got some new books and you need to run some new ads period, whatever it is, I want you to be thinking about adding in a new ad schedule, or adding in a new test ad schedule, or adding in an ad growth strategy where you understand that every single month, you're going to add let's say \$1 to your bid to your daily bid or whatever the case might be. Think about the different ways your ad strategies can come into play and do something that you haven't been doing in order to push past. Think of it kind of like working out right. When you're doing workouts and you want to see growth in your strength or in your flexibility. You have to push yourself further than you were last week in order to see that growth and to continue the growth forward. So if you lifted five pound weights in week one, in week two, you're gonna want to lift eight pound weights in week three, maybe 10 pound weights and week for me Be 12 pound weights. Do you see what I'm saying? So you're always incrementally upgrading what you're doing in order to continue the growth momentum forward. Otherwise, we stagnate and we feel like nothing is working. Well, of course, nothing is changing and growing, because you're not actually pushing it to grow, right? So try some new ads. Okay, so, tip number five, let's talk about your brand identity. Now, this is a great way to be the Phoenix, right, it's a great way to just burn it all down, start fresh and do something over again. So if you don't feel connected to your brand, or if you don't feel like you actually have a cohesive brand, it's time to start thinking about maybe a logo for yourself, or what colors do you want to consistently be showcasing as part of who you are like, what are your favorite colors, it should really symbolizes who you are as an author. And so think about all the different ways that you can include those colors into your branding, maybe you redesign your website and do something completely different with it. Maybe you shift around the way that your newsletter looks, whatever the case is, but I want you to think about your brand identity and how you can just change it all up. Now when I first started out my my colors was I always had purples, because purples was just my thing. But also, I'm a fantasy out there. So purples went really well. Right. So I had purples and blues and a little bit of pinks going on. And then White White was my main thing, like I had this white background because mandamus was all about the snow. And so all of those colors with white really kind of worked for me. But then as I transitioned into more of the wind Haven stuff, and the darker fantasy side, all of a sudden, I started pulling more black since more gray is in the white kind of mixed out a little bit. And so then all of a sudden, it's got kind of like this mystery, darker vibe with the with the purples. However, I'm kind of feeling the inklings of wanting to shift it around. Again, I haven't done it yet, because I've got enough things going on. But at the same time, I'm feeling like this urge to, I don't know, reinvent the way that my brand looks, maybe evolve it just a little bit further and see what happens. But it probably won't happen this year, maybe next year, and we'll see how it goes. But that's a really great way of making a huge splash into the market space into the reader space and really drawing people's eyes. Like if you're, if your brand doesn't have a cohesive look to it. And all of a sudden it does, eyes are going to turn heads are gonna turn they're gonna be looking at what you're doing and why you're doing it. And it's a such a great way to be able to, you know, build a buzz for who you are as an author, because you're now you're excited about your brand. You're excited about how things are looking and how the things are evolving. And it's something else other than your books to be talking about, right? So it's a great way to be able to be the Phoenix has just burned everything

down that you were in the past. And here's who I am now. It's great. Okay, so let's talk about emails. Tip number six is your automation sequences. It's probably been a hot minute since you've added automations to your email list, right? And I know some of you out there are probably going automation sequence. Like, that's the thing, what is that. So in the background of mailer light, or MailChimp, or whatever flow desk, whatever email service provider you're using, you really should have automation sequences for onboarding new readers. So whether they are getting your freebie, you know from book funnel or from story origin, or whether you are just pulling them in from the back end of your books, or however you're pulling them into your email list. You should be giving them an onboarding sequence for sure just to say, Hey, welcome to our email list. Welcome to this crazy thing. And if you've rebranded your author site, make sure you pull that new rebrand through it. But be talking to them about what they're going to experience. Let them know about the books you've already written. Let them know about the books that you have coming down the way, take a look at those automation sequences and see if there's anything that has a broken link or needs to be updated. Have you redesigned your covers, and now all of your automation sequences need to be updated? Believe me, that's happened to me. And it's probably happening right now because it has been a hot minute since I have gone in and I updated my automation sequences. So pretty sure that ones on my list as well. But I haven't added an automation sequence for anyone who's coming in through the accidental Alpha side. So maybe that's something I should add in or Diana's series has grown since I did my automation sequences. What do I want her to be saying Now look, what kind of vibe do I want her to be doing? Like, do I want her to be like, hey, bitches. I don't know. She's got like a snarky attitude. So do I want to do something that just kind of really play As to her attitude, we'll see. But take a closer look at your automation sequences. How can you really help your readers catch the vibe of the stories you're writing and catch the vibe of who you are, as an author, it's so important to continue to let your brand's assets evolve with you so that your readers can see who you are now, instead of who you were in the past. Now, another great way to be the Phoenix and to reinvent yourself is the way that you handle your social media. So this is tip number seven, the way you handle social. Maybe in the past, you hated doing video, maybe in the past, you hate doing social period, maybe in the past, you did all the social and you're getting burnt out. Whatever your social strategy is, right now, take a closer look at it. What do you feel called to do? Do you feel led to do tiktoks? Do you feel led to slow down on your social? Do you feel led to allow ads to be more of the social strategy for you versus the actual posting of the social strategy? Because let's face it, Facebook and Tik Tok and Twitter and all these places, they throttle your views anyway, unless you are using their ad strategies. And so if that's the case, then how do you go about leveraging ads in order to be seen more visually, I know we authors, we have this kind of stigma against spending money just to be seen, because we should be seen anyway for being on this platform. But unfortunately, that's not a world that exists anymore. And so if we're here to see growth, if we're here to see some big new changes, we have to invest in ourselves in our business, because let's face it, being an author is a business, having your books out there selling your books, being the author is a business. And so you have to treat it as such, if you want to see growth, you have to work towards growth, you have to have a growth mindset. And we talked about this in a podcast episode not super long ago. Okay. So tip number eight, I want you to revisit the places that you visit. And what do I mean by that? Now that COVID is not as big of a deal. Thankfully, knock on wood, it's not as crazy. We have a lot more book signing opportunities, we have a lot more conferences, we can attend, we have a lot more ways that we can connect with our community that we haven't been able to do for, you know, a hot minute again, it's just been, it's been a crazy couple of years. And so I want you to be thinking about like, what can your outreach in the real world evolve into what can you do that's different from what you've done in the past? Like, can you attend a conference in Vegas? Intent? I'm going to be there this year. Join me Come on guys. Or can you add in a book signing that you

have never done before? That's a couple of states over? Or can you just go to a book signing that's in town, like I have to book signings that I'm doing that's in town, it's not even a real like, it's not a book book signing, either. It's a craft fair guys, I'm going to two big craft fairs, one that's in the fall. And then one that is like getting close to Christmas time. Because I know that in my community, we have no bookstores like one bookstore, okay, I have to be fair, there's one bookstore, that's amazing. But it doubles as a used bookstore and a metaphysical shop, of all things, right, super cool bookstore. But it doesn't have as many things as like a normal bookstore like Barnes and Noble would have, it's got a very select group of books. And so when people are out shopping for Christmas gifts, or whatever, they tend to go to these big craft fairs, to get unique things for their friends and family for Christmas. And so I go there to share my books and I usually earn quite a bit. But what's great about it is that it built visibility in your own community, or it builds visibility, if you go to some of these bigger book signings in your space, like in the indie author space in the just getting out and being seen space. So think about your strategy, like have you never done book signings before? Have you never really gone out and gone to book conferences before? Maybe now's the time to become that person. Okay, so then Tip number nine, maybe it's time to think about the types of books you write and whether or not you want to shift gears. So for me, it's funny because I have always in the past, written what I wanted to write, I didn't care about writing to market I didn't care about trying to chase trends. I didn't care about trying to be you know, in the the big places, right, because that just wasn't my vibe. I've always been kind of a rebel that way so I would steer clear of it. I think Windhaven was my attempt. Originally at trying to write to market I was gonna write a river As harem Academy, young adult series that was the original original idea behind the whole thing, with the exception of the fact that secret legacy was based off of a dream when I was 14, but we won't go there. Anyway, it was this whole idea that I was going to try out just to be like, you know, I hate reverse harem. But at the same time, I know it's hot. I just don't want to write the sex scenes. So let's do it in way, right. Well, it didn't work out for me, because I don't overly like that genre. I mean, for myself anyway. And so I struggled writing it. And because I struggled writing it, it came across like my main character was a floozy, and it was just, it didn't work out. So I ended up rewriting it, it still wasn't an academy, it still ended up having a lot of the darker themes. In fact, it took a better direction in my mind. But it wasn't until, technically, I guess, accidental alpha that I wrote to market, and I still had to be the rebel in it, where it was like, Okay, I'm gonna write a werewolf series, because that's the writing to market part. But I'm doing it deliberately and intentionally to the midlife crowd. And so I merge those two things. And it has been wildly successful since it published. I mean, beyond my wildest dreams, too, it's just been crazy. So I kind of kicked myself a little bit. So maybe think about the types of books you write, like, is there something that you could write to market is there something where you can allow it to be easy for you, because for me, it's like, I always wanted to do something just a little bit on the edge, I wanted to do my own thing and have it be successful. But honestly, readers are used to liking a certain trope, they're liking a certain genre, they're liking a certain type of book. And we as authors, do better if making a living from our books is important, we do better when we are catering to our readers versus just to our creativity. It is not to say that you can't be creative when writing to market, you absolutely can. But the thing that you have to remember is that this whole thing is all about the readers took me 10 years to realize this, but it's all about the readers, it's about what their expectations are right, they want a certain thing. And it is our job and our duty to give it to them. But we can surprise and delight them with our own interesting twists. So give them what they want, but slip in the parts that they didn't know they needed. That's kind of my goal as of going forward. Now, another way that you can add in different types of books, is by adding in a new pen name. So I've talked about this in the past as well. And it's still on my list of things to be doing. But I'm going to be starting a contemporary pen name. And the reason I want to do it is because I have this really great idea. And I know it fits into a specific type of trope for romance readers. And

I'm like, You know what, I feel like doing this, I feel more called to write this thing. And so I have a series of books that I have planned out that I'm going to be writing. And it's going to be in the contemporary space. It's not magical in any way, shape, or form. But I feel called to do it. And I feel like it's going to be kind of fun. And so that's another way you can reinvent the types of books that you write and see what happens reinvented, you don't know, maybe you're going to end up loving the new pen name and it's going to be even more successful than your original one. It doesn't. The goal here it isn't really about like it has to be this one. And that's it. It's this or something better, right? We want this career to be good, or something better. And if that means shifting, because we take everything we've learned with the first pen name, and really hone our craft for the second pen name, and it does even better. Hell yes, that's awesome. That means we've evolved, that means we've grown and that means we are successfully integrating everything we've learned as authors, right? That's so critical and so important. Okay, so tip number 10. Do something that you have never done before. So what do I mean by that? Okay, there are so many different things like maybe you've never done those book signings, right? Maybe you've never come into that sort of space and gone to a conference, add that into your list, right? Or maybe you've never done promo stacking yet, maybe you need to, like go to BookBub or you need to go to freebook see or bargain Booksy or book doggy or an T and figure out how to promo stack properly, right? Maybe you need to add those ads in because you never run ads on your books. Maybe you've never written a market, maybe you've never had really good covers. All of those things that we've already talked about could be your brand new thing that you've never done before. But if you're reinventing yourself, your job is to do something you have never done before. It's to look at the way that you're handling things and create a new path. Maybe you've never taken space for yourself before. Maybe you have been writing nonstop, since you started, maybe you have never picked up speed and you thought you could only write a single book in a year, maybe you need to learn how to rapid release. Or maybe you just need to learn how to create balance in your life, whatever the thing is that you feel called to add into your career, do that, start to look at it as this is your way of life. It's not just your career, it's your way of life, this is how it gets to work for you. And so as you create your ideal life, as you create your ideal author, career, all of a sudden, everything starts to click into place. All of those things that were previously holding you back and not not helping you move forward and making you feel stuck and making you feel like it wasn't working, it all clicks into place, and you realize that you had all the pieces, it's just that they weren't connecting to the right spaces yet, because you weren't ready. So it's so important just to play around with your career to do things that you haven't done before, to test things out and to just allow yourself to play in the energy of being a successful in the author. Ultimately, I really do believe that if we want to be successful, we have to feel successful. And sometimes in order to feel successful, we have to kind of rearrange the space. Do you remember when you were a kid, maybe I'm the only one that was like this, but I don't think so like when you're in your room, and you're like, you've grown a little bit and you've changed, you've evolved and all sudden you need to like change a room up, like rearrange the furniture, or put up new posters, or like get rid of the Barbie dolls, you know, whatever it was, it's like you it was time you were growing, you needed to shift you needed to change you needed to look and feel different. Well, this is the same thing you're growing, you're changing, you're evolving, allow your author career to do the same, it doesn't have to look the same as it did five years ago, it doesn't have to look the same that it did a year ago, you can shift and evolve and burn it all to the ground and resurrected at any point in time. Because this is your career, you are at the center of it. And everything that you do is still centered around you. So it's so important to allow yourself to become the center focal point of your career. And let your books, your covers your experience with your books play in the energy of who you are becoming, and it's totally okay. Your readers will follow you, your readers will understand your readers are there for the long haul. And just keep reminding yourself of that fact, you are here to delight them to scare the shit out of them.

To make them happy to entice them into feelings they didn't know they had whatever it is that you're trying to evoke from your readers. You're here for that job, and they're here to follow you for it. Okay. Well, my friends, that was my rant for this week, I don't know if it's a rant so much as that's my, my Ode to evolution, I guess that we are here to evolve into more that we are here to become do and have more because all of these things, when they lock into place and click in place. All of a sudden, our careers feel so much more satisfying. And I think we're all here for that satisfaction. We're all here to have a career that just makes us feel really good. And where our books not only make us feel good, but our readers make us feel good because they love what we write. We're here to just really enjoy our life. Enjoy the process of bringing these worlds to life, too. You know what I mean? All right. Well, if you'd like to get the transcript of today's podcast episode, head over to authorrevolution.org/147. And you can download it there. And in the meantime, I hope you enjoy the rest of your week. I hope you have a wonderful last day of August if you're listening to this when the podcast airs, and go forth and start your author revolution.