

Episode 154

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SPEAKERS

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Carissa Andrews 00:12

The indie author revolution has been around for more than a decade. But 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've doubled the demands and continue to be rebels in the face of adversity. Now, after years of hearing the shout of 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 my writerly friend. Welcome to another episode of the Author Revolution Podcast. And here we are right smack dab in the middle of Preptober. So because it's going so fast, and because NaNoWriMo is not coming at us like a freight train, I thought I'd put together a more comprehensive list of the things that I feel indie authors should have in their like survival kit for NaNoWriMo. It needs to be in their arsenal in order to do a really good job keeping their headspace intact. And having a fun time during NaNoWriMo. Because let's face it, guys, it's it's a crazy task to take on. And if you're not mentally prepared for it, it can steamroll you, you could get partway through the first week and decide holy cow, I can't keep up with this craziness, right? All because you didn't have a little bit of foresight to get your survival kit in place before this started. So if there is anything that you listen to when it comes to NaNoWriMo, I hope it is this podcast episode. Alright, so we're gonna go over 15 of my must haves whenever I'm taking on NaNoWriMo or if I'm doing my six week writing sprint, because this my friend is going to save your ass. Okay. All right. None of these are in any particular order. It was just as they were occurring to me while I was making the list. So let's just start right in, right. Okay, so number one, obviously, you gotta have your NaNoWriMo plan, AKA your outline. Now, I don't care if it is a skeletal outline. I don't care if it's a chapter by chapter synopsis, outline, I don't even care if it's literally just a small three sentence thing that gives you a really clear picture of what your story is going to be about. Okay? It can be a completely high level concept, but you need to have some sort of insight, I guess into what it is you're going to be writing because if you don't, and you sit down

to write your thing, you have your fingers on the keyboard, they're going to hover there and you're not going to know how to start it, you're not going to know what to say you're not going to know where you're going. And maybe you like that sort of, you know, vibe, that's fine. I am not one of those people, I like to at least have some sort of direction to start him. I like a little bit of that mystery, but not so much that I'm like, Okay, I have literally zero idea. So if you want to make sure you hit 50,000 words this month, definitely have some semblance of your plan. Okay. Now, number two, I really highly recommend having a voice memo recorder on your phone because it has a voice recorder on it too. at the ready at all times. And here's why. Now when I am really in content creation mode, or I'm in my story mode, and I'm really in the flow of the story, insights and new cool things come to me all the time, not just when I'm sitting down to write so if I'm driving, you know, to go pick up my daughter from rehearsal, and some crazy cool idea pops into my head. I don't just keep you know, thinking that thought holding on to it hoping that I can remember by the time I get home because let's face it, as soon as a teenage girl gets in your car and starts yakking there is like no more thoughts and they all fill your brain okay. So I have to have my voicemail that I can flip up real quick and just leave the memo. I can like brain dump that thought that cool idea onto my phone with zero worries that I'm going to forget about it because at least I know where it's at. Right I can go recall it at any time. I'm okay. So number three, I want you to have a musical playlist. There are so many of us who thrive with music in the background while writing and a lot of it has to do with our neuro divergence that we most authors actually have. So if you are one of those people who have ADHD or any other kind of neuro divergence that really like all the outside noises, all the things, get crazy, have a playlist, because when you have music, whether it has voices, or whether it's just instrumental, the patterns in the music actually soothe our brains, right? It keeps all the outside weird, crazy noise that doesn't really have a pattern like kids screaming, or asking for things. Maybe that's just my house. It keeps all that stuff kind of at bay and allows you to focus on the words that you're really wanting to get out. Right. So and if you know me, too, when I'm playing my playlist, I also have another app called binaural that I listened to over the top of it. And what it does is it overlays a binaural beat that kind of just goes in the background and helps me to focus even better. So if you are someone that likes the binaural beats and things like that, definitely check out binaural as well. Okay, so tool number four. Obviously, you need to have Scrivener or some other writing app, it could be you know, word it could be Google Doc, it could be Atticus, it could even be vellum, if you wanted to write inside vellum, I can't say that's my favorite place to write. But it could be done right. So make sure you have something where you can write. Now the reason I like Scrivener still, even after all these years, is the the versatility for myself and how I can use the app. Now I've been using it a long time and I get how it works. It just makes more sense in my brain than to try to use a Google Doc, for instance, even though I could do it from my phone. It just, it doesn't have the same I don't know, organization, I guess. So make sure you have your writing application ready to go. It doesn't matter what it is, just make sure you know which one works best for you and have it at the ready. Okay, number five, tool number five is Forest app or some other shiny object deterrent. Okay, so forest is a really cool app, because it allows you to like, put in a certain amount of time for this, like non phone time, right, you're not going to use your phone, you're not going to check your social media, you're not going to whatever. So if you're going to do a writing sprint, you can set up forest and what it does is it plants a tree. And this is both literally and virtually, which is really kind of cool. So if you want to, you know have like a little bit of a, I don't know, empathetic vibe going when it comes to leaving your phone the heck alone, open up the forest app and watch the tree grow with however long you set your sprint for, it could be 15 minutes, it could be an hour and 15 minutes. It can be four hours if you really wanted to. But it's a really cool app. And I have fun planting different trees and doing different sprints to be able to create my forest. So it's a fun little app. It's just for fun, but I would say during NaNoWriMo we need all the fun we can get right? Okay, tool number six scaffold. Now

whenever I get stuck, I do this before I start writing as well. But if I get stuck, I will scaffold out my problem meaning I will mindmap so I will bring up in scalpel. It's another product owned by the makers of Scrivener, so Literature and Latte on this product. And what I do then is I start brain dumping all the things that I know about the problem that I'm I'm struggling with, you know, if I write myself into a corner, which doesn't really happen super tired anymore, but it used to, I would then kind of just throw out all the different things that are on my mind all the things that are kind of in the way of getting to the result I want in the story. So when I do that, and you put everything out onto the page with a mind map, you can see things more clearly. So if you have the ability for Snapple, it's a fairly inexpensive product, I think it's like \$17.99 or something, you just get that and you can mindmap and have a digital copy of the thing that never gets lost. Or you can just old school it with a pen and paper and just mindmap out what it is that you're trying to accomplish. And see if you can piece apart where the problems are right or if you're trying to like, understand a character better, or whatever it is, Mind Mapping is such a great way to be able to do this. Alright, tool number seven, I want you to make sure you go in advance and figure out where your local right ends are. So that helps you to like if you are a joiner for instance, if you're someone who wants to do the NaNoWriMo in person and you want to engage with people who are local, local authors, local writers, and have that camaraderie going throughout the month of November. Definitely figure out where the right ends are. And you can do this by searching on Google like local writings for XYZ zip code, or you can go into NaNoWriMo site and search out the different in person writing is to figure out where you want to go. And you can do this multiple times throughout the month. And so if you are one of the people who need to have some sort of encouragement or bring more fun to this process, I definitely, definitely recommend doing a local writing. A lot of the municipal liaisons will actually have kickoff parties, and things like that. So look into at least those ones, if nothing else. Okay, so number eight, your online writing plan, there are tons of ways to be able to do online write ins during NaNoWriMo, as well. So if you're not much of a joiner in person, but you kind of like the idea of having the vibe of other writers writing at the same time you are and want to hop on like a zoom call or whatever. You can also do that now you can search them, you know, by doing a Discord server, you know, and checking out other people we're doing right ends during NaNoWriMo. You could check out Twitter, there's a lot of people who are doing online readings on Twitter. And of course, there are a bunch of them on NaNoWriMo site as well. Okay, so speaking of NaNoWriMo sites, deal number nine is making sure you have your NaNoWriMo account. See I told you this was in no particular order, right. So NaNoWriMo account, you need to have that in order to really get the full benefit of all the things that are going on. Plus you get to, you know, list the book out that you're tracking, or that you're writing for this month, you get to have friends on NaNoWriMo. And you can see where they're at versus where you're at and have conversations on their site, you get the option to purchase cool merch and do fun things. It's just, it's a good site to be on. Plus, like I said, you get to track all of your words throughout NaNoWriMo. And it just it's fun to see a girl on the chart, right? Okay, so, tool number 10, your ideal writing time figured out? Meaning before you start now, if you don't have like a writing schedule already in place, you need to figure out what that timeframe is for you. Like, is it before work in the morning? Is it on your lunch break? Is it after work? Or is it right before bedtime? Are you going to do multiple Sprint's throughout the day? Because you can't do one big long one? Like how are you going to do your ideal reading time based off of your current schedule as it is right now. For me, it used to be in the morning because I worked during the day and evenings and nights are like pretty much a no go for me I am not present. In the middle of the afternoon. I'm like checked out now. So for me morning was better, I used to get up at five o'clock in the morning, do all of my writing during that timeframe. And then I would go to work and do all the things and my day was done and I had my words in right. It's kind of a nice feeling to have that done. But these days now that I work more from home and I can kind of revamp my schedule, the way I feel i want it, I do a lot more reading in the

afternoons. So like I will have lunch and do a couple of work related tests and then go straight into writing around 132 o'clock. And so then I'll write for a couple of hours. And typically I can get my 2000 words in in about two, two and a half hours. And that feels really good to me right now. So that's my schedule. That's where I know, my ideal writing time typically will be okay. But if I can't, if something else is coming up, if there's a an appointment, or goodness knows what else, then I will, you know, switch it to a different timeframe. And just know that I can do that, that I will look at those things in advance. And just make adjustments accordingly. So figure out what your ideal writing time is going to be and have it planned before you even start Nano. Alright, number 11. I think you need a door hanger. If you write in a place like you know, an office, a bedroom or someplace that has a door. Get like one of those little door hangers that say sure I'm writing or you know what, maybe I'll even design one so that you guys can just download it and like, tape it up and then use it like printed out and put it on your door. Just something to let your family your friends, your kids, your spouse, whoever know that. Okay, I'm writing right now. And yeah. Because sometimes, especially if this is the first time we're now knowing they don't quite understand, right? They don't quite get what it is that we're trying to accomplish. And sometimes they don't think writing is that big of a deal. But it is it's hard work. And every time someone interrupts your train of thought it takes 21 minutes to get that train back on track. 21 minutes, guys, that's a long time. So you don't want to be interrupted every five seconds because you'll get nowhere fast. That's not what you want to have a door hanger or have some sort of plan in place to keep the distractions at a minimum. Okay, number 12 a motivational reward plan. So what do I mean by that? I think one of the things I was not very good at and still struggle sometimes is keeping myself motivated throughout a process, right? I don't reward myself enough. And I think that's something I'm trying to change and trying to work more towards, because it keeps me happy, right. So have a plan where like, if you get to 10,000 words, you're gonna go get a massage or a movie, if you get to 50,000 words, take like a week off or a night off of like doing anything book related. Or you could do things like you know, go get some Reiki done, or do your hair in a crazy way, or go to the salon and have it cut or dyed or something, you know, do something that feels good throughout the month that keeps you engaged, that keeps you excited, and keeps you wanting to do more. All right, so number 13. Tool number 13 is writing snacks. Have a plan in place, because I don't know about you. But whenever I'm sitting down to write, I inevitably am going to go, Oh my gosh, I'm starving, because it's another distraction, right. And something that I can get up, I can go do something else, I can wander away for a little bit. But then of course, takes another 21 minutes to get back into play. So have some writing snacks ready to go. Like think about what it is, it's going to keep your brain going well, so don't, if you can help it don't do a bunch of candy, I guess, do something that's going to keep you feeling good and keep you feeling full and satisfied. But not, you know, bring your brain down too much, right? So have some writing snacks at the ready. Then tool number 14 is water, water water. Yes, I'm going to talk about it again, I know we talked about this in Episode 152. But we're gonna talk about it again, because water is super important to making sure that your body and your brain is working at optimal levels. So if you want to make sure that you're writing in a way, that's not going to give you a plot hole the size of Manhattan, then you need to make sure that your brain is being taken care of right. It's a it's your friend, it is your ally it is the thing that is writing this book and translating the cool images and thoughts that you're having onto words on the page. Right. So water is super important. Now, what they recommend in many places, but in Beachbody for example, because I'm a Beachbody person is to have like divide your body weight in half. And that's how many ounces you should have. So if you are, you know, let's say 150 pounds, divided in half, that's 75 ounces of water, you should be drinking every single day in order to keep your cells and your brain hydrated. That's a lot of water, my friend that has a lot of water. So are you drinking that much. And if not, make sure you have a like a jug or a water thing next to you that is easy to fill and just drink a bunch of water during nano because you're going to

need it. And then last but not least, is my personal favorite. Because I have five kids in this house. You need some great noise cancelling headphones or earbuds or air pods or whatever it goes in your ear that can connect you to that playlist that you've already created. And cancel out the noise of everything and everyone else when and if you need it. Because let's face it, if you have open ears, you're going to hear everything around you, you're going to hear that the kids asking for juice, you're going to hear the other kid no other room beatboxing and went on the phone listening to YouTube and went upstairs listening to God knows what else a husband drilling in the backyard, who knows what it is, there's lots of things going on. And if you want to drown it all out, and just be in the flow of your writing, those great noise cancelling headphones are a must. And maybe if you don't have great noise cancelling headphones, maybe that's one of the things that you have early on in your motivational reward plan that you don't you're going to buy for yourself, okay, because you need that's like a writing staple. It is like one of the most important things in my life if my air pods went out, oh my gosh, that's the first thing I'm going to be replacing because I just I love them so much. I love them so much. And it's funny because I had noise cancelling headphones for a very long time. Because when my children were younger, having the visual of those big, gigantic, you know, headphones on your head, it's actually a visual cue for them to know, don't be interrupting me right now. But now that they're a little bit older, they pretty much know if I'm sitting at my computer, don't start talking to me, because I'm probably doing something important. They'll either knock and then wait for me to acknowledge them or they'll go to their dad. Yeah, so it's it's fine. But if you are like me, and you need to drown out some noise get either the headphones that are visual helps a lot with little kids, or just get the earbuds that do the same thing and they're fantastic. All right, my friends, and that is my Uber 15 must have a survival kit for NaNoWriMo. Hopefully this was helpful to you. Like I said, for me, it's all of these things are things that I think about in advance before I even start NaNoWriMo or Before I even start my six week writing sprint, like I do in rapid release roadmap, granted some of the things like NaNoWriMo accounts and the you know, finding the local and online writings, they're not as important because I am doing it on my own when I'm doing the six week writing sprints, but when you have nano at your, you know, available at your fingertips, make use of it, because the motivation that you will get from the people who are in it with you, whether they're local or online, is incredible, it cannot be replicated, and I highly, highly recommend it. Alright, so if you would like to get the transcript to this podcast episode, make sure you head over to authorrevolution.org/154. And you can download it there. Plus, if there are any programs, or links or things that I can include that are based off of this list, I will make sure to put it in the podcast notes so that you can get those as well. So like if you want to really quickly and easily go out to figure out how to outline for instance, I can put my course on that or if you want you know, Scrivener or scalpel or the forest app or binaural whatever, I will make sure that there are links available so that you can just check them out in one easy, quick place. So again, that's authorrevolution.org/154. Now, next week, I am super excited because we have a NaNoWriMo municipal liaison who's coming on the show to talk about what they do and why it's so important to get involved in a big way with Nano. All right. Until then, do your thing. Get some words in gets a plan down, figure out your must have survival kit list based off of what I've given you here today. And then go forth and start your author revolution.