

# Episode 161

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

author, list, usa today, books, feels, usa, bestsellers list, today, indies, usa today bestselling, sell, usa today bestseller, point, happen, bestsellers, longtime editor, rj, indie authors, readers, continue

## SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews

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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 impostor 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, that potential, we have juggled the demands and continue to be rebels in the face of adversity. Now, after years of hearing the shouts 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, welcome back to another episode of the Author Revolution Podcast. Oh, my friends, we got some news to talk about this week. Holy cow. Whatever I had originally planned on talking about just kind of went out the window all of a sudden when I was on Facebook this morning, and happened to see a post that said, Oh, man, I am so upset that the USA Today bestsellers list is being defunct. I was like, what? Wait a minute. What? So I did a little poking around. And I think we better have a conversation about this because it's really an interesting one. I don't know it's really fascinating to me to kind of mentally play over the ramifications of this. So according to publishers lunch, they had this huge blaring headline USA Today bestsellers list on hiatus after longtime editor is laid off. Holy cow say what? So as it turns out, Mary Cadden, the editor, the longtime editor of the USA Today bestsellers list, who has been doing this for 15 of the 29 years that the USA Today bestsellers list has been in like the world she has been producing it since 2007. She was laid off at the beginning of December. So that means that the USA Today bestsellers list, they never put out any information about the sales that went through until December 4. So like the December 8 List never happened. So Mary actually posted a tweet on December 8 That said sad to say that after 26 years at USA Today I am among gannets layoffs. I am so proud of my work at USA Today, especially covering books and the USA Today best sellers list. I wish the best for my colleagues who are leaving and those who remain. Wow. Like what in the world is going on over at USA Today. So in addition to that, not only did she tweet that, but following her departure, the the paper really hasn't issued a whole lot of information

at the top of the page, where it talks about the USA Today bestsellers list. It says as the end of the year approaches USA Today best selling books list is on hiatus, we look forward to sharing an update in 2023. Holy mother of God. Like what I can't even imagine how some of us in the authors are feeling right now. So for those of you who are listening at that time and happen to like, pick that week, oh my gosh, I am so sorry for you. I can't imagine what that felt like to just all of a sudden have it be like nevermind, this is not even a thing anymore, or at least as of right now. It's not even a thing. And basically, we don't even know if they're gonna continue doing it. We don't know if they're just on hiatus for the month and they're coming back in January. We literally have no idea what's happening. There have been rumblings on Tiktok from other authors who say that they've contacted the new editor and that they do plan on bringing it back in January. But that's all hearsay at this point. And now in the author's all over Facebook and Twitter are having a freakout over it and some of them are very much thinking like hey, man, what are we going to do? because now the exposure that we have, or all the money that we've put into these lists or all the stuff, this is like a huge problem. But interestingly enough, RJ Blain, who is a USA Today best selling author, my friend, she actually had an interesting comment about this, she said, I saw the news that the lovely lady who has been compiling USA Today's bestsellers list has been laid off. And that no list was released this week as a result, and love the list, it was a pat on the back in a very difficult industry, but it's not going to actually help her in the author's no list really helps you sell books outside the New York Times. And even then that list is a minor boost. These lists are really just a pat on the back for a job well done. They do not sell your books, you get the list as a reward for selling books, you must sell books to get on the list. Yes, you actually punctuated it just like that. So she was basically saying that you're not using the list to get exposure. While that does help after the fact you have some recognition, you're able to say USA Today bestselling author. But she has a point in these aren't actually going to be heard because the USA Today, bestsellers list doesn't sell your books. It just pats you on the back for a job well done. So all that effort, all that hard work, all of the list aiming stuff that we do, during that process of trying to get onto the list. It's all about selling the books at the end of the day, or at least it should be, it should all be about getting more money in your pocket and getting more readers while you're at it. Like that should be the goal. But I think a lot of indie authors, especially I know myself was included, I wanted that title, like I wanted the letters just to say I sold a lot of books in a certain period of time, and I was able to get on that list. But if the list doesn't exist anymore, does being a USA Today Best Selling Author even have clout, is it even a big deal? Like, like, are we having an identity crisis, it kind of feels like it. Now, we aren't going to really know the ramifications fully of what this is going to look like until after we kind of get through this first couple of weeks, first couple of months, I'm not even sure. Once USA Today describes what 2023 is going to look like or describes what they're going to do with the best sellers list, then I guess maybe we'll be able to see a little bit more the direction of how this is going to play out. Maybe they're looking at this as if it's something that AI can do. Maybe they're going okay, well, we're basing our list off of actual trackable sales. And so why do we need a person to be able to do this? And so therefore, we are going to let a computer generated AI find it for us, right? It could be that, or it could be that they're just gonna go you know what, let's get rid of it, because it doesn't really gain us anything. Or who knows, there's a lot of different reasons why they might be doing this. And it's all speculation up until this point, which is kind of fun, right? In my personal opinion, it's kind of fun. For all the authors who are out there and doom and gloom in it. You know, it's, it's easy for me to say as someone who lists Amed, and didn't quite hit the list, because Yeh COVID happened right in the middle of my listing. So I totally feel for those of you who are listening, or were going to listing him or had like a listing in motion, and then things went sideways. I totally, I'm 100% feeling for you. But I do think that this is teaching us a valuable lesson, I think RJ is point that a list really isn't the be all end all. It's a pat on the back, it's helping us know the direction in which we're trying to actually go, right, we're trying to get to this beautiful place

that is being a full time wonderfully supported, prosperous author, right. And so our goal should always first and foremost be producing quality work and getting that quality work into the hands of other people. So I think this is a valuable moment, a moment where we can ask ourselves the question of what is it we really stand for? What is it we really want when it comes to list aiming when it comes to having that pat on the back? And is this something that we can actually do for ourselves? Can we as indie authors, be okay, knowing that we are good enough? Can we be okay? Putting money into our work and getting it seen in a huge, big way like you would do with a list name. And still putting all that energy and effort into it knowing that it's not going to necessarily come about as a list name on your name. So it's not going to eventually become that USA Today. Bestselling author, boom, you know, but in addition, it opens this philosophical question of like, what is the value then, of even having that be on your books? Is it like a nostalgia thing? At this point? Is it going to become a thing of the past? Where everyone kind of takes it off of their books? Is it going to become a thing where you're like, you know, this was a huge badge of honor way back in the day, you know, back in my day when we had this list ame thing called the USA Today, you know, what its gonna look like for us? I don't know, I'm, I'm in a kind of a philosophical mood right now. Can you tell? For me, it just, it feels as though there's some tides turning when it comes to the publishing era. And I think this is just one more kind of drop in a sea of many where big media is falling big media is struggling to have readership because of all the micro content that's out there being produced by people who are highly talented, who are getting recognition for the things that they're saying and doing. And they're not necessarily working for a high powered newspaper that's been around since the Dark Ages. I mean, I'm not really not really the Dark Ages. You know what I'm saying? But you know what I mean? It's like, I love when things get turned up. I love when there's change in the air. Even if that change feels at first, like, holy shit, what is this, I was just like, slammed by something I didn't even see coming. In my life. Anytime. Something like that has happened. Anytime there's been like this big, huge upheaval, there's always something better on the other side of it. Even if, during the midst of it, even if in the middle of it, it feels as though like shits going to shit. Even when it feels like it's all falling apart. There's actually a lot of elements that are falling into place. And so as we go forward, I want you to really be thinking about that, like, if you're on the spectrum of Oh, my God, we are going to like, what are we going to do the USA Today bestsellers list isn't going to exist anymore? Oh, relax, know that, like RJ said, and I have to keep going back to what she said. Because it resonated in my soul. It was like, yes, RJ, you are on it. She was saying, Look, guys, the only thing that the USA Today bestsellers list is good for is social proof. In essence, it's just saying, hey, look, you sold a lot of freaking books, and you did a good job. And that's powerful. Yes, there's a message being sent there and that one little sentence. But at the same time, you have to sell the books, you have to do the work in order to get to that point. And you can still continue to do that work, you can still continue to believe that your books are willing to be sold, that you can get new readers that you can earn a good living, that the advertising dollars that you put into your books is going to pay off that your platform, your author platform is worthy of all the things that you're doing. It's all good. It's all coming together for you in your favor. And so what can you do for yourself to make it feel like you're doing a good job for you anyway, even if the USA Today bestsellers list never comes back? And we as indie authors can never get on the New York Times bestsellers list because it's curated and they hate Indies. I'm not that's not my words. It's just the impression people have right then if that were true, what can you do in order to feel valued? What can you what metrics can you lean on? To know that things are good? Like you can say things like you know, 5 million page reads read woohoo, you know, like you can use all sorts of different metrics on your advertising plans. You don't have to just say USA Today bestseller. I know many USA Today bestselling authors who have sold way less books than I have, but they happen to be in the right place at the right time with the right boxset and so it's not always about having quality books and having this platform that is really valuable. It's

sometimes about just being smart and having this like wonderful opportunity presented in front of you because it's something you wanted. And manifestation comes in so many forms and so when you have like a desire like maybe it's a flippin desire to become a USA Today bestselling author, and you have no resistance to it. You could hypothetically call it to you very quickly. I apparently was not one of those people because I had a lot of interest in it for me like I was really like I want this thing to happen. And whether it was with the box that I was with or whether it was with my personal when I list Amed with secret legacy. There was so much drama Matt matched up with it at that time and I didn't recognize it in 2020 but when I wanted to have this list, aim go really well and I wanted the Windhaven books to do incredible and I wanted to hit the USA Today bestsellers list. I still made plenty of them. mistakes. Number one was picking 2020 for the thing to happen, right? Like that was like the worst timing ever. Really what I'm trying to say at the end of the day is Hold tight. Number one, don't jump to any conclusions when it comes to to the USA Today bestsellers list just add, it has to play itself out. And it will like it depending on the public outcry, or what authors are saying and what readers are saying and what their subscribers are saying that's going to dictate whether or not the USA Today bestsellers list is going to resume or if it's going to actually fold. But even if it does, you're going to be okay. Even if it does, and we have no list that we can lean on to create the social validation and the social proof that's very quickly and easily identifiable to readers, we can still make money, we can still earn huge, I am still earning a lot of money on my books without ever having hit the USA Today bestseller list. Because I've put my energy and effort into learning how to market my books. I've been learning how to do my ads, I've been learning how to leverage my PA and do Tiktoks and all of the things right. So that is our job as indie authors. Our job is not to worry about this external source that really doesn't play a role in selling your books necessarily. And especially not long term, you know, you might have this brief little blip of a moment where the list aim or being on the list is going to help you be seen. Well what happens when you fall off, because it happens, it's going to happen to everyone eventually, like clean Hoover is not going to have the number one spot on all of these like spots right now forever, she will eventually give way to someone else. So I guess what I'm trying to say is that we're going to be okay. I want you to be supported, to feel supported to support yourself, to know that whatever efforts you do and put into your author career, they are the things that matter, your readers matter, the sales that you are able to bring to the equation matter. They're going to add up, they're gonna keep growing. And eventually you're gonna hit to that point where a list really isn't going to matter because you're earning what you wanted to earn in the first place. Okay, hang tight. You've caught this. It's okay. All right. All right. If you'd like to grab today's transcript to the podcast episode that you're listening to right here, you can always head over to [authorrevolution.org/161](http://authorrevolution.org/161). And you can download it there. And I will make sure that I include all of the show notes for today's talk. So I will include links when it comes to Mary's tweet to the publishers lunch article, all of the things so that you can kind of get a good grasp on what was going on. And if RJ Blain's post is actually open to the public which I believe it is. I will make sure I link to that as well. Alright guys, just know that you've got this now that this is not a big deal. And that we indie authors are hardy stock, my friend we can make magic happen and move mountains whenever however we see fit. All right. Go forth and start your author revolution.