

Episode 239

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SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews, Bonnie Dillabough



Carissa Andrews 00:02

Welcome to the Author Revolution Podcast, where change is not just embraced, it's celebrated. I'm Carissa Andrews International Best Selling Author, indie author, coach and your navigator through the ever evolving landscape of authorship. Are you ready to harness the power of your mind and the latest innovations and technology for your writing journey? If you're passionate about manifesting your dreams and pioneering new writing frontiers, then you're in the perfect place. Here we merge the mystical woo of writing with the exciting advancements of the modern world, we dive into the realms of mindset manifestation and the transformative magic that occurs when you believe in the impossible. We also venture into the world of futuristic technologies and strategies, preparing you for the next chapter in your author career. Every week we explore new ways to revolutionize your writing and publishing experience. From AI to breakthrough thinking. This podcast is your gateway to a world where creativity meets innovation. Whether you're planning your first novel, or expanding your literary empire, whether you're a devotee of the pen, or a digital storyteller, this podcast is where your author revolution gains momentum. So join me in this journey to continue growth and transformation. It's time to redefine what it means to be an author in today's dynamic world. This is the Author Revolution Podcast, and your author revolution starts now. Hi, everyone, welcome back to a new episode of the Author Revolution Podcast. It's been a couple of weeks since I've done this guy's I don't even know if I can remember how to do this. No, I'm just kidding. It is like innate. It's ingrained in my brain at this point. Well, after three weeks of vacation, it was almost three weeks anyways, I'm back at it, my brain is starting to engage. And I am here again with a brand new podcast interview with someone who is just absolutely incredible. So I'm bringing on today a guest Her name is Bonnie Dillabough. She is a seven year old Army veteran, a mom of six kids, grandmother, great grandmother, writer and marketer. Now she has spent time as a broadcast television professional, she was a professional clown. And she has also made a living with marketing online for over 20 years. But now she's decided to write books. And she's in the middle while actually toward the end of writing her nine book series, which is called the Dimensional Alliance. And what's really interesting about talking with Bonnie is that not only has she had a very interesting life, she's extremely, extremely proficient at being able to explain the process of writing the process of publishing. Even though she only started publishing five years ago, she didn't get to her dream goal of writing books until she was 65 years old. And she suffered a lot of adversity along the way in order to make all this happen. So

guys, if you want to listen to someone who's truly fascinating, not only we touch on so many topics I kid you not we're going to be talking about things like going through adversity, we're going to be talking about being an eavesdropper, we're going to be talking about her three steps to crafting your novel after you've already finished it. Also, we've talked about and we're going to be touching on things like what makes books different to market, what unique ways you can use bookmarks for instance, when you're out and about, or even how to create a sell sheet for bookstores. Now, guys, there's a whole ton of things that we are going to go into and uncover. Bonnie was a fascinating guest, and I know you're gonna think she is just as fabulous as I do. So without further ado, let's get into it. Well, hi there and Bonnie. Welcome to the author Revolution Podcast. I'm so excited to have you on the show today. Now, before we get started, do you want to tell my audience a little bit about who you are and what you write?

B

Bonnie Dillabough 03:53

Sure. I'm a mom of six, a grandma of 22 and a great grandma of four with one on the way. And I've always wanted to write a book. And when I was 16, I was sure I was going to be famous novelist someday. And then life happened and one thing and another But currently, I am an author of a science fiction fantasy series called The dimensional Alliance. And there are at this moment as we tape there are seven books in the series. There will be eight in May, which will be just before this airs. And I'm planning on finishing the series before the year is out because once I got started, I couldn't stop. But it's a science fiction fantasy series about a young woman who inherits a house a cat and a key from an aunt she's only met twice in her life. Turns out the house has a room in it that couldn't possibly be there. The cat is not a cat. The key doesn't fit any of the locks in her house, but unlocks adventures in the multiverse in teaches her things about herself she never thought was possible. How cool is that? It's a family friendly series. There's no spicy scenes or unfortunate language in my books because I made a vow when I first started writing, that I would never write a book that I couldn't read out loud in front of my grandchildren without embarrassment. So love it. Lots of adventure, lots of cool things going on in these books, and hopefully, also some principles that people will learn through the journey of my characters that will help them navigate some of their quests in life.



Carissa Andrews 05:41

And it's so cool. Now, are you considering this series to be a YA series? Or what do you find?

B

Bonnie Dillabough 05:49

A lot of people categorize it as YA, and I agree that it is totally appropriate for those age groups. But I have fans from age 13 to 83. That's so cool. And I think that it like every book isn't a book for everybody. Sure, right. We all know that we have our favorite genres, and genres that we prefer not to read. Okay. I'm a bookaholic. I read a lot of different genres, and I love to read, but I tend towards science fiction and fantasy, those are my two favorite genres. If you're into intense murder mysteries, this isn't the book series for you. Oh, there are some things that happen. You know, if you're into erotica, or you know, one of the genres that has a lot of violence and things like that, these probably aren't the books for you. But if you like a read that is that hopefully will make you feel encouraged, and still have adventures with these characters, then this might be something you might want to read.



Carissa Andrews 07:06

That's so cool. I love when that that can be the case, too. I think fantasy and science fiction really lets us explore those elements that we're missing in life right now. And, you know, obviously, the world's a little bit crazy and can get a little bit intense at times. And so having that opportunity to envision a world or, you know, have an alternate version of reality differently and be able to have a storytelling that allows you to be encouraged. I think that's, that's one of the most powerful tools we have. It's one of the reasons why I gravitate also, towards that genre, because it's just so there's so many possibilities to explore with it.



Bonnie Dillabough 07:38

Well, and one of the key components of every fantasy novel you've ever read, is the quest, right? And I've incorporated a quest into this, aka, I don't know, Lord of the Rings, my very first major fantasy series that I ever read back in high school. And well, and I read it out of order, because I read this the series first and then I read The Hobbit, which was kind of fun and silly, but it was recommended to me by a friend. He said, Bobby, you should really read this, you would like it. And I'm like, Okay, go check it out at the library, which I did. And I was a library nerd long before there were computer nerds. When somebody would come to the library, the librarian was busy, they come see me see it, where can I find this data? The other thing because I practically had the Dewey Decimal System. That's so cute. Yeah, well, and these days, of course, it's, that's so unnecessary, because you had all these little computer terminals in the various libraries. And like that, although librarians are still awesome sauce. Oh, yeah, libraries are some of my favorite places on the planet that and bookstores. But the idea of a quest is that it takes more than one hero to make it work. Yep. Right. So in a quest, you have a number of people who come together all with different skills, different backgrounds, different levels of commitment, et cetera, in terms of their commitment to the shades of grey as to what is okay to do and what's not okay to do. Yeah. And so you have these people come together, they don't always agree. And, and like that, but they're all focused on one thing, and that's to do something good in their circumstance, whether that's world or, you know, outer space or whatever. And so that quest, you know, it's like Star Trek was based on a quest, right? To boldly go where no man has gone before, or woman in that in that case, too. But your point is, is is I I really love books that have a point. Yes, me too. And so you read any of the classics like the Narnia series, or Lord of the Rings, or Orson Scott Card has some amazing books out there, including Ender's Game, which is very famous, but he's got some other ones that are just amazing. And they all have a point a reason, so that when you get to the end, you can have the satisfaction of saying mission accomplished.



Carissa Andrews 10:31

Yes. Ender's Game is one of my son's favorite books, like he loves He likes to the movie as well. But the book was so well done.



Bonnie Dillabough 10:40

So the book is always better, let's face it. When somebody wants to make a movie out of my series, they seem to actually be a little hesitant, because they seem what some producers and

series, I'm going to actually be a little hesitant, because I've seen what some producers and screenwriters have done to some of my favorite books, although there are some that that are pretty true to the story and the feeling, but I've seen some others that I just shake my head and go, Oh, that's really sad. Right?



Carissa Andrews 11:09

Yeah, I have a couple of those as well.



Bonnie Dillabough 11:12

We're just well, just for one really stark example for me was, I was really excited when they said the Wheel of Time series was going to come out. And I'm a big fan of that series. I've read it several times. Actually, I've lost count of how many times I've read it. But the first by the way the third episode, I was done with it, because it was they were already going completely off the path. And I'm like, you know, that's that's sad. Because Robert Jordan did a beautiful job of tying all these amazing characters together, there were probably about 20 main characters in his books, but you never felt confused about who was what and what they were doing or anything like that. And I really loved his books.



Carissa Andrews 12:01

I worked in a bookstore when Robert Jordan was putting out like, he was still like, I don't know, I think four books in maybe into the Wheel of Time series. I haven't read them myself. So the show is good for what it was like, I actually, I love some of the elements that are in the show. And it makes me want to read the books.



Bonnie Dillabough 12:18

If you've never read the books, then the show is fine. But if you have it just, you know, not like that. Here's the thing. I've often thought about working in a bookstore and rejected that idea, because it's not good or make any money if I did is not good, because I spend on my spin on my paycheck on the next batch of books that came in. But yeah, when Robert Jordan passed away, I was in the middle of book 11. And I'm like, no. But Brandon Sanderson took it over and did a beautiful job of finishing out the series in Robert Jordan's voice, which I was really astounded by. Because later I read Brandon Sanderson books, and they're nothing like Robert Jordan stuff.



Carissa Andrews 13:03

Yeah, it's interesting how authors can take on, you know, another, another author's tone and other authors inflection, how the series is. And sometimes it's the book.



Bonnie Dillabough 13:16

Yeah. And I just didn't feel like when I got into books, 12 and 13. I didn't feel like I'd been betrayed. Good, no, good. I felt like Brandon took the heart of these books. And of course, he'd been a fan of the books before. And you know what? That's That's one thing about writers. Right? We're all workaholics.



Carissa Andrews 13:43

And if you're not, you should be... Uh?



13:44

I saw a post on Quora that says, Do you have to be a reader to write books? And I laugh, because I can't imagine any writer that whose books I love, who wasn't an intense and voracious reader.



Carissa Andrews 14:05

Right? You know, to me, that's just like unfathomable. It's like, how would you even know first of all, why would you even want to write if you're not interested in books? And second of all, like, we subconsciously pull in so much of storytelling, of cadence of plot points. Like, it gets ingrained into our subconscious to the point where it's like, when we learn it, then it's just like, Oh, of course, this makes sense, because I've read it so many times. Now. I see what they were doing. Oh, right.



14:33

And that was one of the first things when I first started writing these books. I went back and reread all of my absolute favorites in the Sci Fi fantasy genre with a new perspective, instead of just reading to enjoy them, which I always do. I read them to say, Why do I love this book so much? Yeah, well What are the elements in this book that pull me on? What are the things about how things are described? And how the plot arcs? You know, go and all of those things because there are plot arcs within plot arcs in every book, as we know, every chapter has its own little mini art. And so how, how did they make me care about those characters so much? And, you know, I have to say, and I've noticed this with other authors as well, that my more recent books are better each time. Oh, yeah, the first one that I published, and even though it's on the same topic, and the characters are the same, and all of that, it still, I find myself improving, as I understand more fully, the Giants, who's on whose shoulders I stand, right as an author.



Carissa Andrews 16:01

Isn't that amazing? Yeah, every book that you write every time you publish, it's like, when you first do that first book, you don't know what you don't know. And so it's like this just discovery process of like, what what is this? Like? How does this get to work for me, and then you start to

refine how it does work for you and how it feels and like, then you start incorporating more of what you're learning. And it's just, it just snowballs from there. So great.



16:23

Well, and the other half of that is now you type the end. Now, what do I do? Yeah, and for me, I had to make a decision. Do I go the traditional publishing route? Or do I independently publish, and I chose to independently published because let's face it, I was old, I published the first book two weeks before my 64th birthday, I didn't have time to wait six years to finally find a publisher and get published. So I took it on thinking to myself, yeah, well, I've been a marketer, most of my life, I know how to market things, I'll sell millions of books, and it's gonna be great. And so. So I managed to make pretty much all the mistakes you can make as an independently published author, starting with publishing on Amazon, don't get me wrong for the right author. Amazon is a great publishing platform. But if you want your books in libraries, or in other bookstores, publishing an Amazon might not be your best choice, or at least only an Amazon. Alright, well, but see, if you publish through platforms such as Ingram Spark, now you get to publish on Amazon, but not be held on to by Amazon and held back by Amazon. And so I had to learn the publishing industry, while I'm writing all these books like crazy, right? I published seven books. So far, it will be eight actually here in May, over a five year period of time. You know, once I got started, it was like eating peanuts. I couldn't stop. That they can allergy. Yeah, I mean, I was just really charged with it and moving forward. And besides, like I said, I'm old. My daughter, when she read the first book, she goes, Okay, Mom, you're not allowed to die until you finish the series.



Carissa Andrews 18:17

You're like, maybe I should drag this out then. Because what?



18:21

I've already got, I've already got another series waiting in the wings. So okay, good. Different, a completely different topic and everything else another. I have a whole list of plotlines that I've been holding on to for years and years and years and years. Yeah. So the the word infinity is in every single one of the titles of my current books series, because I have an infinite number of stories to tell.



Carissa Andrews 18:47

Right? That is so good. So good.



18:50

And here's the cool thing about this. I call it pretending on paper, because I never have to grow up. But I love it. When I was a kid pretending was my favorite thing. And I listened to my grandkids. We live in a multi generational household. And so I hear them playing and stuff and

they're pretending to be this batter the other character in their favorite, whatever. And I'm sitting there going, Yeah, that brings back so many memories. But I can exercise my imagination. And that keeps me young. It keeps me from thinking. I'm at the end of my years. No, no, no, no, I'm starting a whole new adventure. And as long as I get to stay on the planet, somebody joked with me the other day and they said, you know Bonnie, they're going to be wheeling you to the mortuary and you're going to be working on your next plot. No, once and I have to say it is addictive. And it's such good therapy, isn't it? It is yes, you can use and work out your frustrations. You know who that villain actually represents? Right? Right. Give them the same name. Yes. And so you can take take it all out on that, that villain. But you also know the people you admire in your life, and you want to exemplify those things. And you're good guys. Right? Yeah. You also know the quirky ones, you know, the the ones that you kind of go, huh? When, when they're when they're talking or doing things. And those find their way. There's a t shirt I really want to get it says, Warning. I'm an author, you might find yourself in one of my books. Yep. Yep. And, and because it's true. I mean, somebody said, where do you get your characters? Oh, people I've lived with all of my life, people, I've met people I've wanted to meet, you know, all there's there. Potter is around us every minute, right? And so as when your imagination lights up, and you go, okay, so I need a character that's about to do this thing. And you go, Hmm, I remember, fill in the blank name, I won't use one just in case I accidentally. I remember such and such so and so doing so and so thing. But there is one scene in my books that my children recognize automatically. And only one of the names was changed. And it was basically had to do with our cat. Okay, when the kids were growing up, and a confrontation that cat had between the cat and a dog, a Great Dane that lived in the neighborhood and terrorized all the kids. And the cat stood up to the dog. Oh my gosh. And so the scene is in the first book, and my kids are going Mom, we were there when not all the scenes that I have in my books actually happened, right? And caveat, all changes, all names have been changed to protect the innocent. But that being said, I went to a special event this last week, where we were talking to various organizations that help in our community. And one of the guy's name and I'll say his name right out loud here. Because I already told him I was going to do this. His name was nulf.



Carissa Andrews 22:36

Okay, like golf, but with an N?



22:39

NULPH. And I'm like, I love your name. And he's like, no, no, you have to understand, can please can I have permission to use your name in one of my books? And he's like, sure. Okay. Because we're just so unique. And I like the sound of it. And I can already picture a character with certain qualities. Yeah, that that came to me by just the sound of that name. And so, you know, we put you know, I, I like to mentor aspiring authors. And one of the things I tell them is start listening to the conversations around you are sure, yeah. Be it be an eavesdropper in the nicest possible way. Because you will hear and learn speech cadences, you will learn rhythms of conversation back and forth, you will learn what are the kinds of things that people just talk about when they're just hanging out with their friends? Yeah, okay. Because people talk about oh, I struggle with dialogue, I struggle with dialogue, stop writing and start listening. Do that first. You know, the other big thing that I hear aspiring authors struggle with, is writer's block. And almost every single time, I'll ask them this question. So when you're writing, do you edit

While You Write? Are you constantly Oh, I spelled that wrong, or that's a typo, or I should have put a comma there. Or you go back and you read that paragraph and you try to rewrite it? And almost every time the answer is yes, right are the largest, largest things that causes writer's block, because we have two sides of our brain and the side of our brain that we write with. It's not the same side of our brain that we edit with. Yep. And as soon as we start critiquing what we've written before it's finished, all of a sudden, the magic, the muse, whatever you want to call it just disappears right before as JK would say, it just separates. Yes. Right. And so we need as writers to first get it out of our gut, get that story down on paper. Right? Then go back and craft your story. The word edit is a four letter word. I think it's a four letter word for a reason, most people are uncomfortable with it. And it sounds a little bit too much like work. It does sound like working thing, your story is a whole nother thing, just like a cabinet maker makes the rough shell and then goes back and smoothes it and adds detail and carves and adds the just the right knobs and, and, and scrollwork and everything to create a beautiful piece of art. As a storyteller, we need to first of all get the story out of our heart or out of our gut, as the case may be. And then we go back and lovingly, first of all, check for the typos and all that kind of stuff. Fortunately, there are a lot of tools that will help you with that. Secondly, go back and say, now is a story consistent? Have I'm I have two characters, one's name is Bob and one's name is Bert. And I'm constantly switching them when I mean one instead of the other. So I have to go back and correct all the Bob and Bert errors. But also, you know, is there is there an inconsistency someplace where you said one thing over here and said something completely different over here and they don't match? And then go back a third time? And say, Now, flow? Does this feel like something I'd like to read out loud? Yeah, because one of the things I do is I have the word read it to me, while I'm editing. Yeah. So I can feel that and correct things and adjust things. And then I turn it over to a copy editor. If you are independently published or not, this is a vital step. It is an investment. I agree. But like any business investment is unnecessary and, and writing is a business. And so get a good copy editor. And then get it back and do another edit, go through their edits, see if you agree with all of them, because you might not always agree. They might read it slightly different than you do. See, if you agree with all that, then I do a final edit with all of that stuff behind me and just read the book, like I was reading it.



Carissa Andrews 27:44

Like a proofreading.



27:47

Final proofread, but read it with the idea that I'm the reader now. And then I turned over my beta readers, they do some other cool and interesting stuff with it and ask questions and whatnot, then I publish. If that sounds like a lot of work it is. But one of the issues with independently published authors is they type the end and then publish. Oh, yeah, for sure. There's no such thing as a perfect first draft. It's a unicorn, it does not exist. Okay. So, you know, that's, that's my process. But when you hold this thing in your hand, and it has your name on it, and it has your words inside. There is the only thing I can think of that is similar is holding your newborn baby for the first time. Right. And then when you start getting feedback from readers saying, I love your book, I couldn't put it down. It made me happy. It made me think all of those kinds of things.





Carissa Andrews 29:02

That is your job. Yeah. It really is. Oh, my gosh, well, Bonnie in your journey. It has been really interesting because you've faced significant personal challenges, including health battles from from what we had discussed and what I've uncovered about you. You had a life altering adjustment, and you've had to use a wheelchair to becoming obviously this successful author of your series that's about to be a nine book series Total. Do you want to share some of how these adversities helped shape your approach to storytelling and character development? How did that adversity really drive you forward?



29:38

Well, here's the thing. Life is a bumpy road. It just is. But the scenery is worth it. I have to say that I wanted to be an author for the majority of my life. But life happened I went into the military I met my husband, we had said Kids, I've had all kinds of adventures, I've been a professional clown. I did 15 years in broadcast television. And and, and, and, and, okay. And I had a thriving business that got tanked through no fault of my own. And my husband and I actually we're homeless, we ended up with nothing left of all the things we collected in our marriage, but two suitcases in my laptop. Oh, that was it. That was all we had left. What I learned from that is just stuff. And what really counts is the relationships you've created. Because although we were homeless, we weren't on the street. People let us sleep on their couches. And eventually, we were housed and whatnot. Immediately following that, I ended up losing all the toes on my right foot due to gangrene. found out I was diabetic, was finally getting done with that. And then I found out I had breast cancer. I did breast cancer twice. Wow. But here's the thing about that. You learn stuff, you learn how to be compassionate to other people. You learn how the other half lives until I was in a wheelchair. I had no idea what that felt like. I had no idea the roadblocks that are put in the way of people with various physical challenges. Over the years, I've lost close friends who passed to the other side. And lots of other things. This gives me compassion, and identity with my characters. So my characters go through some rough things in my books. It wouldn't be a story without it. And I think that's something that we can focus on as individuals is recognizing there is no story without some conflict, without some challenges, without things that you have no control over that happened in your life. But you get to choose how you're going to deal with that. You know, I've gone through some depression, I've gone through some difficult times. But I have a basically cheerful, optimistic personality. But I've been through stuff that taught me that why not everybody does. Oh, for sure how. And, and so over the course of it'll be 70 years in May. Over the course of 70 years, what I've learned is life is amazing. Human beings are awesome. And we have a tendency not to treasure our experiences as we should. Because everything that happens in our life can teach us something if we allow it to. Yes, yes, you know. And so I don't know what's in my future yet. I've got another series planned after this one. And I'm already having one of the things that happens, I don't know if this happens with you. But I have characters visit me in the middle of the night with, hey, you know what, we should try this. And it's like, you couldn't have done that while I was sitting at the keyboard. Right? But it happens and you get so connected to those characters that they start feeling very real to you. And when they start feeling real to you, it's a lot easier to know what they're going to do next, and how they would handle a given situation. But you can also base it on the things you've been through yourself and with other people.



Carissa Andrews 33:58

I totally agree with that. Yep, absolutely. So I know that there are a lot of people who dream of becoming an author one day and you said that, you know life experiences have you know, for a short time, I'm gonna I'm gonna consider it a short time because you came back around, you know what you're doing now? You're You're embracing your author dumb as it was always meant to be. But do you have any advice for people who are allowing kind of life circumstances to hold them back? Anything that you would offer them?

B

Bonnie Dillabough 34:28

Definitely, well, the two hardest parts about writing a book are starting it and finishing it. Okay, so I'll give you the same advice that I got from Mercedes Lackey. I was fortunate to do an interview with her. She's another one of my favorite authors. And she's a very straightforward individual. She says it like it is but she did an interview with me. We turned off the recording. And then afterwards we just chatted for a bit and this was during the time that I was struggling with the fact that I was going to be in a wheelchair and what was it going to do, because there was all these things I couldn't do anymore and on and on and on. But I very timidly said to her, you know, I've been thinking about writing a book. And she leaned herself up into the camera like this. And she said, so put your butt in the chair and write, I love it. Best advice I've ever gotten. Because that started my journey. I said, Okay. I've sent her copies of my books. So good. Starting is important. Finishing, getting to that the end is important. And then recognizing the value of what you've already done, to the point to where you take the time to craft it, and then publish it. And there are two possibilities. You can go the traditional route, which means find yourself an agent. And the agent does most of the work at that point. And be patient. Right? And then, you know, but you're still gonna have to promote your books. That's just a thing. Or you can be chief cook and bottle washer, by yourself, okay? My grandpa used to say that. And you can publish yourself, and you're still gonna have to promote your books. There are so many wonderful ways to do that. And maybe that's a conversation you and I can have in a future thing about Okay, so we've got all this stuff done now and published, what do I do next? How do I have to help people find my books?



Carissa Andrews 36:47

Well, that was actually a question I had for you were when I was looking things up about you that you had your first website up in 1996, and have been online marketing for over 20 years. So the question I had for you is, how do you think the digital evolution has impacted the way authors currently connect with their audience and market their books today, compared to maybe what you would have done or seen when you first started?

B

Bonnie Dillabough 37:12

Absolutely, well, here's here's the difference. Number one, we can get lazy, with our promotions, and think we can just put up a few things, put up a website and Bada bing, bada, boom, all of a sudden, money's gonna start coming in. That's just not the case. Also, books are different than any other product I have ever marketed in my life. Because one of the key things to having people find your books is creating relationships. That Hey, look at me, I'm an author, I wrote a book by my book. Yeah, no, you need to reach out to your audience, you need to find your audience. And this is, this is actually a basic thing that's always been in marketing and

continues to be part of the digital revolution. Is that you need to put your, your stuff in front of the people who want it. Who already want it. Yeah, yeah. So you need to get your stuff in front of the people who love your genre. Right? And who are maybe interested in you personally, it's, it's a good place to start is with your family and friends, right? But when it comes down to it, you need to find ways to get in front of other people, because I find I sell way more books by talking to somebody directly, then by just putting an ad up someplace, but guesting at places where you can talk about your books, like, in my case, fan conventions, and doing panels, speaking to writers groups, getting engaged with your library, and doing some author talks. And there are people out there right now who are cringing at that, because writers tend to be a little bit introspective, and not, don't tend to necessarily be, quote, people persons, you're going to need to learn. Unless you've got a really big budget, and a great publicist. You're going to need to learn to talk about your books. One of the things that I've found that it's key, my husband, I travel and bus a lot. And this requires a little bit of prep, preparation, but it works really well for me. And now I have a series and if you have a single book, not all of these pieces will work for you, but bear with me. So my husband started this. He's my, he's my publicist, he loves my books. And he talks to everybody about them, and we're on the bus. And he is he will just turn just some random person say do you like to read for fun? That's a leading question. Right? Right. And they'll say yes or no. If they say no, he just changes the topic and keeps talking to them. And you know, that's fine. If they say yes, what kind of books do you like to read? They say sci fi or fantasy, Bada bing, bada boom, he says, Well, my wife wrote about these bookmarks. They have a QR code on the front, which is me, which is me talking about my books, I did a little video about you. And then shows the books that are in series so far. And then on the back is another QR code. Now remember, mine is a series, the first book in my series is free. If you scan this QR code, you can get the first book in the series for free. Well, why do I do that? Because it's a nine book series. If I get them hooked here, I've got them for life. Right? Right. And so this is working very well. For us, we we've made a number of sales with that. It requires some preparation to do it. Sure. But I mean, I'm using the digital universe to do it. But I'm also using face to face and I think you need to have a combination of both things. Getting on a podcast, there's so many different ways that we can create traction for our books. My very first book signing was at a book club. book clubs are great. If you can get your book into a book club, everybody in the book club will buy the book number one. And number two, you can go and do a private book signing for the book club. What are they going to do? They're going to tell their friends. Right, right. And so that was really what launched me was going to a book club. There are book clubs at your local library. Oftentimes, community centers have book clubs. So if you've got a local community center, senior centers, yeah, great. Yeah, seniors have time to read. And so many of them come from the generation that reading was the thing they did. And of course, once again, it depends on your genre and a lot of other things. But bookstores, there's a technique to getting your books into bookstores. It's not I wrote a book, I wrote a book you need on your shelves. And they my first time, that was what I did, I brought my my first book in and Barnes and Noble, and my senator wrote this book and, and they said, Oh, really, so they went to look up the ISBN, they said, Oh, you're published on Amazon, by? Yeah. And, but the next time I went in, I went in with this with a detail sheet, a sell sheet. And it had all the details that it had my ISBN, that was not published on Amazon. And, and then all of a sudden, I had interest because I was showing that I was a professional. Alright, and that's, it takes some practice. And you're not going to split start with your local bookstores. You know, let them know what what's what you've got, and that you're willing to do author talks and that you're willing to do book signings and all those kinds of things and various events that they're engaged in?





Carissa Andrews 43:29

That makes total sense to me for sure. Yeah. I think getting out there is one of the things that a lot like you said, so many authors are introverted, or they're like, timid about doing it. But we found over and over throughout the course of I mean, I've been publishing since 2010. And the more we dig into, you know, publishing as an industry, I've talked with people like Joe Solari. And, you know, we've looked at cumulative advantage of what that means for authors, and it does, it comes down to that relationship aspect, because we are such relationship beings that we need to like, when it comes to story. It's such a personal thing that we want to know it's good, we want to know that the tale that's being told is going to be worth our time, instead of it just being something that's going to waste it, you know.



Bonnie Dillabough 44:17

Yeah. And the other thing about that is, people love being able to say, I read this book. Oh, and I know the author.



Carissa Andrews 44:26

Yeah, there's something really special in that, isn't there?



Bonnie Dillabough 44:29

Right. So cool. Being able to drop a name, right? That feels good to people and every book signing that I go to I have more that are coming that are people coming back. But also every book signing, I go to, I sell more of the first book in the series than any of the other books. Sure. Yeah. Because I get a chance to talk to people who've never heard of my books before, and it's one on one, and I make a big deal of it. I give away bookmarks and I you know, I my husband has made this beautiful opening line for me. Hey, you know, it's obviously they're in a bookstore. So they do like to read, but do they like to read for fun? Yeah, yeah, that's my genre. Um, and a lot of people say no, I just read nonfiction books. Great. Have a great day. Good to be in a bookstore today, isn't it? And we go on. But when we get someone, I tell my little story about the house, the cat in the key? And they go, Oh, sounds good. And when I tell them, it's family friendly. Most of the people I find that are in bookstores are in there with their kids. Oh, sure. Yeah. And so they're, they're loving that. And they go, they get the book, they bring it back, I sign it, you know, easy peasy lemon squeezy. Because there's a connection that's been made. And so when they hear that I'm going to be at the bookstore again, they come back. Yeah, yeah, you know, and so, it still it really does come down to relationships, it comes down to making a difference in in your way, in a community. And there's lots of ways of doing that. And you just kind of have to think about so what kind of events happen in our community, we have art walks and, and various the farmers market and all kinds of stuff. And I don't usually get a booth for those things. Right? What do I do? I walk around and talk to people who are there. Yeah. Right. And I have bookmarks with me. And we have those conversations. And it's amazing how many little notifications I get saying, somebody else got the free book, somebody else got the free book. But also, there are those who say, I don't care about a free book, I'm just gonna buy the whole series. Right? They do, because they're the kind of people

that thrive on series, right? Yeah. So we get both sides of that coin. And so get out. You know, that, yes, your writing and your writing and your writing, and that's good. But get out and talk to the people who those stories are going to benefit.



Carissa Andrews 47:21

I completely agree with that. When I first started, it was definitely harder to think about that because you're like, Oh, it's so scary to get out in front of other people. And, and then they're gonna ask you, what's your book about? I don't know what my books about. You know, you have to get good at that, that pitch of like, what what this story really resonates with? What are the tropes? What are the what are the characters that these people may like, you know, boil it down to, you know, a paragraph?



47:45

Mm hmm. You know, and we in marketing, we call that an elevator pitch. Yeah, right. Something that you could tell somebody from the time you got what started at the top floor and got down to the bottom floor where everybody gets off. Yeah, and the nice thing about an elevator pitch is, if there's more than, you know, you're talking to a certain person, but if there's more than one person in the elevator, they all get to hear it at once, because you got to cap body. That's true. So, but, and that's worked on the bus to, as they're talking to one person about it, we have three or four other people asked for bookmarks. smart, smart. Yeah. But no, you should know, what is the point of your story? Why would anybody want to read it? And if you don't know, go back and read your story.



Carissa Andrews 48:40

Very clear on it. Yeah.



48:42

And say, as a reader, what do I love most about this story? And how can I tell just enough of what the story is about to interest somebody without giving everything away? Right. And so, you know, you have to sort out and that was a process, it didn't happen overnight. Just to be fair, um, you know, I consider myself a professional marketer. But that being said, and, you know, at this point of professional writer, but that doesn't necessarily mean that the first whack at the bush brings you the results. You want that bird in the bush is going to stay there until you hit it just right. Right. Right. And so you need to pay attention to why why are you writing the story in the first place? Because oftentimes, that's a big clue as to why somebody else would enjoy the story, right? I agree. Yes. But I have found that bumps in the road notwithstanding my author journey has been so much fun. Currently, I mentor a group a writers group in Salinas, California. On zoom, because I live in Washington State. Every month, we sit down and we talk about writing. I was recently asked, and here's the point you want to get to, in your writing career, I was recently asked requested by our local Barnes and Noble to come and do a series of writers workshops at the Barnes and Noble, to cool when they start asking you, instead of you approaching them, something's working. Right. Right. So, and they come to

me and say, I understand your books coming out in May, when can you come and do a book signing? So we can order the books in time? Nice. Okay. I've got two bookstores now that do that with me. And I've already got two books, three book signings, actually, slated for May when the book comes out.



Carissa Andrews 50:58

That's so great. Yeah, that is so great.



Bonnie Dillabough 51:01

So, but that didn't happen overnight. anymore than writing the book happened overnight. Seems like every time, my grandkids or my kids, like I said, we live in a multi generational household. They come in, and they see me sitting here playing Candy Crush, or some stupid mindless game. I'm pretty sure they think that's what I do all day. Obviously, don't write themselves.



Carissa Andrews 51:30

Right. And sometimes you just need a brain break.



51:34

And if it's, if it's a mindless game, usually, what am I thinking about? During playing this game? I'm thinking about next steps for my books, whether that's on the marketing side, or on the writing side? And I have to shift hats. You know, yeah. But every once in a while I write a scene and go, Yeah, that's a good one, I could read at an author talk or something like that. Recently, I did one that was just so darn fun, and is gonna just be the kind of spice about three quarters of the way through the current book. And I sat back from that and go, Oh, I can hardly wait to read this out loud to somebody. So I read it to my husband, who is he is my alpha reader. Yeah. And he sits down with me, while I'm having the word read the book to me, while I'm editing, he sits down with me through that whole process, because he can hardly wait for the next episode.



Carissa Andrews 52:37

My husband's like that as well. He likes to read as I'm writing.



52:42

You know, and it's great to have that kind of a support system. Not every author does, unfortunately. But yeah, my husband's my biggest fan. And that, that feels good, you know, to know that he not only is okay with me writing, he encourages it. And he is out there promoting me constantly to people, he never goes anywhere without bookmarks. That is so fun.



Carissa Andrews 53:10

Well, knowing what you do now, do you have a message that you would love to tell your 16 year old self, the one who wanted to be the author and be the writer about what like, what those dreams are going to end up evolving into about writing and maybe even some of the challenges ahead?



53:25

Two things, probably one is be patient with yourself and recognize that a lot of things happen that you don't expect. And it's okay, if you haven't made that goal immediately. And actually three things because there's a corollary to that. And the thing that I tell people is never give up on your dream. Yeah. Okay. And the other thing I would say is pay attention. Yeah, attention to what goes on around you. Pay attention to stories that you hear from people all around you. Their experiences, pay attention to world affairs recognize that we live in a story every day. And when I first wrote this book, and one of my other daughter in laws read the book for the first time. She said, Mom, why didn't you write this book? 30 years ago? I said 30 years ago, I was raising six teenagers.



Carissa Andrews 54:34

Isn't that fun?



54:35

A few things on my plate. And I hadn't had the experiences necessary for me to write these books at this time. That we have people like polini who wrote his first book sitting in his classes when he the teachers thought he was taking notes. He was writing his book and good for him because they're great books. But that's not everybody. And you're not everybody, you're you. Be patient with yourself, and recognize that every experience you have, has potential for building the power and rich richness of your books when you do write them.



Carissa Andrews 55:23

I agree so, so much. That's so good, because I think so many, so many people are so wrapped up in what they think they should have, what they think they should be, how fast they think it should go, that they're missing a lot of what's happening around them. And so then it gets, it's almost like it pushes away the success or the stories because like you just said, you don't you didn't have the life experiences to be able to translate or to get it onto paper the way it needed to be. And the same goes for success. Sometimes we don't have the tools yet to have the success to to be able to maintain the success or whatever it is.



56:07

And so we have to go through some of these challenges or lessons or whatever, these little ob

And so we have to go through some of those challenges or lessons or whatever, those little and moments where you go, Oh, I get it now.



Carissa Andrews 56:12

Right. Right. So many of those. So many of those. Yeah. Oh, my goodness. Well, Bonnie, thank you so much for being a part of the show today. I appreciate your experiences and all that you have to tell us an offer. And obviously to learn more about your books, where can my audience go to find out more about you and obviously get those books.



56:32

Okay, so I'm gonna give your audience the same offer that I have on my books, they can get the first ebook for free by going to TDA-HQ.com. There'll be a little video on there that tells you how to get the books for free. And you just click on it, I do request that you give us the email just simply so I know that you're not a scammer or a spammer. And you can have that first book at no cost. My books are also available on all the usual places, Amazon, Barnes and Noble. And most other places that distribute books, have my books available that you can order, by all means check with your local library, because I am on overdrive and hoopla and pretty much all of the library apps, so you can read my books for free. So the ebook, the free ebooks are available in three formats, the Kindle format, the new book format, and PDF.



Carissa Andrews 57:36

Awesome. Awesome. And do you have a website that they can check out as well?



57:40

Yes, it's dimensionalallianceheadquarters.com.



Carissa Andrews 57:44

What a great URL to go to what the heck, that is so cool. Well, marketer hat was on for that one.



57:52

Yeah, kind of. It's one of those things that over time just starts to come naturally. But yeah, I'm, I'm having fun with it. I'm loving doing it. And readers can by all means reach out to me. There's a there's a place on the website said that's libraries and bookstores, where they can go and they can order the detail sheets to put the books in their collections as well. Awesome.



Carissa Andrews 58:22



Carissa Andrews 58:26

Well, thank you so much, Bonnie, thanks for being part of the show.



58:26

Well, thank you for inviting me. I've had a great time. And I'm looking forward to seeing it. And you know, maybe we can do this again sometime.



Carissa Andrews 58:34

Of course, I would love to have you back. Guys. Wasn't that awesome? You know, when I first started talking with Bonnie, it was so funny, because I'm like, wow, she's a really fascinating lady to talk about her books and everything that she's gone through. But the deeper we got into our conversation, the more humor came out of her the more she she started telling these great stories and really gave some golden nuggets for authors who are looking to do things a little bit differently in the marketing space. I know for me, it even triggered some great ideas that I'm like, You know what, I should do that I should do that, like those bookmarks, right? Having QR codes that go to a video that allow them to then download the free book. I mean, what a great idea. We have local like little craft fairs around the Brainerd Lakes area, which is where I'm at all the time. And I'm always thinking, Well, I don't want to have to spend my entire day there and like, have a booth and do all the things. And when I talked to her and she's like, I don't I don't get a booth. I just have bookmarks and they wander around and talk to people and handle my bookmarks with information. I was like, Oh my God, that's brilliant. Why have I never thought of that? Why have I never thought of that? And I know that you would too. Now again, like the the cell sheets, bringing the cell sheets to bookstores and letting them know that you could do author talks that you could do author signings that here are your books, or your books available through Ingram Spark so that Barnes and Noble can load them up. Did you know that That was a thing. Like, there's all these little tips and tricks that she gave inside this, this golden episode that I was just so I was so amazed by the time we were done, I was like, wow, she is a brilliant lady. So at any rate, I hope that you go over to dimensionalallianceheadquarters.com. And check out Bonnie and her books, I hope that you also go over to our show notes, which is authorrevolution.org/239. I'll have all the links there. But that'll include the link to her special page that gives you the free download and her video and all the good things there as well. Because you obviously don't want to miss that. Let me get started on this first book. It sounds awesome, right? Maybe I'm biased because I love science fiction and fantasy, but it's my jam. And I can't wait to go check it out myself. So there you have it. Bonnie is amazing. I love her. I hope you enjoyed her talk. Also, I want to give you a quick heads up as we head into the end of June. I can't believe guys, it's already like it when you're listening to this. It airs on the 12th of June. And already on Friday of this month, Friday, June 14, I'm going to be hosting a masterclass, it's Quantum Manifestation for authors. If you haven't signed up and gotten in on that, and you're interested in learning how quantum physics interplays with manifestation, you're gonna want to head over to the show notes yet again, because the link will be there. But that's not all. I am in the process of launching a brand new course it's called own voice audiobooks. And we're gonna be doing an AI version as well. Yeah, there's an add on if you want to be able to learn how to use ElevenLabs for your audiobooks. But if you want to check it out, if you want to get involved, head over to the show notes, there's going to be links to do all the things and if you want audiobooks to be your next big thing, which I know you do, because audiobooks are a huge, huge market space for authors. And we need to be more seen more visible in that space. Right? Then you're gonna want to get

involved in that audiobook course as well. So guys, so many good things coming up so many good things, awesome things coming our way. I have some big news, big, big news that I'm gonna be sharing next week, I'm going to be discussing kind of a status update a status report, if you will, of what's been going on in my life since I started meditating every single day. There have been days that have been absolutely insanely phenomenal. And there have been days that work kind of like math. But there have been some big, big things that have come in the middle of it all. So I can't wait to share that with you next week. All right, guys. I hope you have a wonderful rest of your week. I hope this episode has brought you some new and interesting ways to look at your author career. So go forth and start your author revolution.