

## **PODCAST 41: WHY ARE YOU WRITING? WITH AUTHOR AND SELF PUBLISHING COACH ELIZABETH LYON**

**James:** Hello and welcome to podcast number 41 from the Self Publishing Formula.

Speaker 2: Two writers, one just starting out, the other a best seller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson and their amazing guests as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James: Mark it's been a long haul for us getting Self Publishing 101, our second course going, but it is live and ready and people are signing up.

Mark: It's been good fun. We're already pleased with how it's turned out and the early response has been really encouraging.

James: Yeah it has. We've had our beta team out there, they're the ones who've had a look at it. Obviously we're recording this just before the actual launch moment so we can't tell you how many people have signed up yet but we know from the interest that we've had that there's a bit of queue of people waiting to get in.

We should say that in the same way that we do with Facebook Ads for Authors, there's only three of us in SPF full time. We have some fantastic helpers around but we can't take on 10,000 students. We can take on a few hundred. A couple hundred we did with the Facebook Ads course so when we get to a certain point we'll just close the door but there'll be another chance perhaps next year for people to sign up to 101.

I've done two interviews this morning with Kerry Gardner and Andrew Turpin who are both on our beta team. Just spoke to them in a very honest

way about what they thought of the course, who they thought it was pitched for, what worked, what didn't. I have to say because I'm like you I've had head down in the course, it's quite difficult to really take a proper step back and look at it but it's been incredibly positive hearing from them, very detailed feedback.

Andrew is at the beginning of his career, the course is perfectly suited for him. Kerry's quite advanced now, she really made a breakthrough with your Facebook Ads course Mark, but what she said was, "I really wish this course had been available to me when I started. It would have saved me thousands." She wasted a bit of money on other courses which didn't work. That's all been very positive anyway.

If you're interested in 101 you can go to [selfpublishingformula.com](https://selfpublishingformula.com). You'll see straight away where to go to sign up for this limited period while it's open and taking students on.

Now what are we going to talk about today? What we are going to talk about, mindset. It's a very, very important part of being a writer. We've got a fantastic interviewee coming up in a moment called Liz Lyons who is very good, very eloquent and very targeted on asking you the question on why are you writing? What are you writing for?

She says when you get those questions right, there's a great bit in the interview where she talks about the fact that it's not just that it's going to help you business-wise, it's going to help your soul to understand what it is you do and why you're doing something.

We perhaps don't talk about mindset enough Mark because it's not just about technical details, about a website and stuff, is it?

Mark: No, no, there's accouterments James the main, a bit of French there for today, yeah, the main reason is because for me anyway I can't stop writing. I said this actually to my wife when I was struggling to sell any

books, is I'd continue to write even if there was no prospect ever selling another copy of my book to anybody, just because that's, if you asked me what I am I would say, "I'm a writer." That's what I love to do.

I think that's really important and that is often something that comes through in the writing as well. If you've got an enthusiasm for writing it's usually fairly obvious when you read the writing. The contrary is if you're forcing yourself to write, as I did once with a book that I was writing for what I thought was the zeitgeist, or write into the market. If the enthusiasm isn't there then the book tends to be soulless. That's something I think is very important to bear in mind, that this should be a passion. Unfortunately we can get paid for it too but it's important to keep things in the right perspective.

James: Okay, look let's hear from Liz. It's a really fascinating and absorbing interview, and then we'll be back afterwards.

Elizabeth: My name is Elizabeth Lyons. I am an author and I'm also a writing and publishing coach. I've been writing my whole life really, but I have been publishing since 2003. I'm presently working on my fourth and fifth books.

James: Okay. You've got a site called Publish a Profitable Book. You've got a great presence on Facebook, you're very active, you're very dynamic, very lively.

Elizabeth: Thank you.

James: I learned loads as somebody who's writing a book. It's a great community to be a part of.

I want to really get your thoughts and your focus on the area that I know is a hot topic for you, which is people having a focus and a meaning to what they're doing when they write, because it's kind of important, right?

Elizabeth: It's very important, in my opinion anyway. I call it the, "what is your why," component of writing a book. What I found, and I know this because I made a mistake here, so much of what we know in whatever area that we work in is because we really messed it up somewhere along the line ourselves and then had this ah-ah moment where we thought, "Oh my gosh, if only I had known this." This was definitely one of those areas for me.

When I talk to other authors, they come to me and they say, "Elizabeth how do I write a book? How do I publish a book? How do I find my readers? How do I make a million dollars? How do I hit the best-seller list?" All these sorts of things, and my first question is always, "Why do you want to write a book?" Then inevitably there's a fear on their end that there's going to be a right or a wrong answer.

What I try to really instill in writers is that there is no right or wrong answer, other than an answer that is not authentic to who you are and your purpose in this space. Authors do better, and that can mean financially but it means peace in their soul, when they know why they are writing the book that they're writing when they're honest with themselves about that first and foremost.

James: There's a good correlation here, also Jo Penn, I think she comes up with that same question for people. She said to me when I started writing, she said, "What is your idea of success?"

Elizabeth: Bingo. That is a critical question. When I do the, "what is your why," workshop with people that's what we talk about, is, "What is your definition of success?"

Because what people have to realize is that when you put out a book, when you launch anything entrepreneurial, you start a business, you do anything, people will ask you, "Was it successful?" What they mean inherently is, "Did you make money?"

But the challenge there is that that is not everyone's definition of success. For many people just getting their words on paper and holding their book in their hands in published form is all they need, and that's okay.

James: We should also say, because we're in Britain and we tend to be over here slightly more not embarrassed but we're not as entrepreneurial, as overtly entrepreneurial often as Americans so we should also say for the British audience, it's also okay to say, "Do you know why I'm writing? I'm writing to make money."

Elizabeth: Oh my goodness, I'm so glad you said that because actually that is a huge challenge, at least with the writers I speak with. I know that culturally perhaps there's more of an entrepreneurial bent here in the States but more often than not writers feel embarrassed or uncomfortable saying, "I want to make money sharing my message and inspiring others and doing what I love and loving what I do."

I don't know if it's society as a whole, I don't know what it is but we feel like we're not supposed to make money doing what we love. Our job is supposed to be something that is painful. I tell people, "Look, if you want to make money being a writer you need to own that within yourself first and foremost because that is going to change the direction in which you go when you publish." It's going to change your marketing strategy, all of it.

James: It might even change your genre.

Elizabeth: Absolutely.

James: In fact last week I was with Charlotte Bird, who's an author based in California. When she set out to write she looked around and found the genre that sold. Now she didn't read romance novels before that point, she's now turning in five figures a month having written three romance books.

She unashamedly chose that genre because it was going to be more likely to be commercially successful in her view.

Elizabeth: Absolutely. I see that a lot too, which is that writers have two sides of them. They have the creative side and they have the business side. On the creative side perhaps they like writing, I don't know, westerns or who knows what, but they need to make a living and they want to make a living writing.

Therefore on the professional side perhaps they are journalists or they write for a magazine in a journalistic fashion, or they start writing romance or thrillers or whatever it is. Where those niches are clamoring for new and exciting material.

James: Okay, so you've got this philosophy, this mindset you believe that you need to start off with, which is to define your success goals, your criteria and why you're writing. As you've said it's okay for whatever it is. It might be the tradition ... That answer questions that you're struggling with like, "Should I be traditionally published?" Again, what's your idea of success and does that fit in?

If we focus down a little bit for self published authors, which obviously is our particular area, in terms of people who are going to write because they want to quit their nine to five. They want to live at home and want to be in a writer's life.

Can you take this on then in terms of mindset, the correct process and mindset that people should be following?

Elizabeth: Sure. First I want to say that I am not opposed to any publishing approach. I've learned over the last year, year and half, since launching Publish a Profitable Book, that it's important for me to make it clear that I'm not opposed to traditional publishing, it's just a completely different

paradigm. I think that when writers go into the writing industry they are in many cases mistaken about that process works.

Once they become clear about how the different components of that process works, if that is a good fit for them then please by all means go down that road. In terms of self-publishing you really have to, in my experience, become very entrepreneurial about it.

You have to be willing and able to look at it as a project where your book is a component of the project but that's not all of it. Once your book is out and in your hands, you have got to have a plan to get that book out not to the world at large but to the people who are going to be interested in it and going to become your readers and your followers longer term, because what you're looking to build is a group of people who anticipate everything you do after that book.

I personally am very big on building genuine relationships with customers. I'm not just out selling. Most of the people with whom I associate in the entrepreneurial space are the same way. We're not just out, "Here buy this book, have a great day, see you later." We're building something with people and it takes time, it takes patience, there's a lot of pivoting, there's a lot of regrouping. It's important to know that going into it so as not to get discouraged.

James: You're not just talking about, "Be prepared to do some marketing in the afternoon," you're talking about, "Be prepared for what your life's going to look like when this business is running successfully."

It's not going to look like somebody who gets up, writes and then goes for a walk and then writes the next day. You're buying into the whole thing.

Elizabeth: I think so. One of the benefits to being entrepreneurial in a way, in any way, is that you sort of do get to dictate your own lifestyle. You can say, "I'm going to get up, I'm going to write, I'm going to go for a walk, I'm

going to go shopping, I'm going to go have coffee. Maybe I'll come back and write, maybe I won't." Maybe that will work and maybe it won't. Again it all depends on what you're going for. Are you looking to make an extra \$100 a month or are you looking to make six figures a year, and what does that require?

Yes, there are these overnight success stories that you share about where someone wrote a book and had no idea that it would go to the moon and back several times as quickly as it did, but more often than not in the beginning it does require that you make it a very significant of your daily and weekly schedule.

James: Yeah, more than just writing.

Elizabeth: Much more than just writing.

James: You talked a little bit about not being opposed to traditional publishing at the beginning. I think it's about time we stop talking very direct terms about self-publishing and traditional publishing because basically you are going to publish a book. You're going to publish a book, how are you going to choose to publish a book? Now you can employ a firm.

Elizabeth: That's correct.

James: Employ a firm who are going to take a cut and they are going to do load of stuff for you. They might not do everything for you or all the things you want but it might be the right thing for you. You're going to get some stuff that way or you're going to employ just a few services like editor and book covers and stuff and you can do some other stuff yourself. You're still publishing the book, right? It's not one or the other until I suppose you get the hint of a legal contract that may make it one or the other.



It's time the traditional publishing industry started to move away from that and started to open themselves up to the idea of authors choosing them as an option alongside self-publishing.

Elizabeth: I love that you said that James because it's so true. The paradigms are starting to move closer and closer to one another. I think, I love Elizabeth West says this brilliantly, she says, "I'm a single author publishing house." That's how she describes herself, because still the term self-published has a stigma associated with it that you're just running to the copy shop and binding with spiral coils.

But it still has that stigma and on the flip side people think, "Well if you are traditionally published with a big house then that means that you are good, successful, making a lot of money, touring."

What they don't necessarily realize is that in many cases there are so many things that go with both of those paradigms that people are unaware of. It's about educating yourself and knowing how these processes really work, but I completely agree, you're running a business, you're a publishing house.

James: It can be quite a scary prospect for people, particularly authors. There's a range of personality types obviously who write books but there are some personality types you see more often. People can be a little bit insular and under-confident and not necessarily feel they are entrepreneurial.

What's your help and suggestion for people who feel under-confident about running a business?

Elizabeth: I'm one of them. I feel completely comfortable addressing that. Writers are artists, right? No matter how you slice it, if you are writing in a business manner and you are one of the people who says, "I see this niche".

Let's say I'm choosing a particular niche because I know it is lucrative and therefore I'm going to write and it's purely business, in all likelihood if that's your approach you don't have an emotional connection to what you're writing. It's purely business.

If we remove that, if you're writing a memoir, if you're writing non-fiction, which is predominantly what I coach writers on, is memoir and non-fiction, you are writing about a story or a message that is very personal to you. We have two issues. One is what I just said, you have an emotional connection and you have the potential to put your work out there and have someone say it's awful, and that can take people down for hours or days or weeks. The other side of it is that many of us are ... I'm a complete introvert to be honest. I love to be social for a period of time but I'm the girl who's standing around the perimeter of a room full of people. I'm not the person who's in the middle, that takes a lot of effort for me.

There's a bridge between thinking entrepreneurially and acting entrepreneurially, which is putting yourself out into the public and saying, "I have this product. It's basically about me," or in some way, shape or form, "that I wrote contributed to me," whatever it is. "I'm asking you to give me money in exchange for it." That is wildly uncomfortable for so many of us. One of the biggest people I follow in this area, her name is Marie Forleo. She teaches business building, predominantly for women but I know there are a lot of men who follow her as well. She does a lot of great speaking about how you're actually doing people a disservice by not getting yourself into a mindset where you believe that you have something to offer. There's a difference between selling and building a relationship. The relationship sells your product without you having to put it in people's face.

James: I want to talk about non-fiction in a minute because that's obviously a big area for you Liz, but you're talking about the relationship, you mentioned it earlier as well, we're operating chiefly in the digital space and ideally you're going to be talking about thousands of potential customers.

Can you define a little bit more about what you mean by building a relationship that will sell your product?

Elizabeth: You can think about the 2:00am infomercials which are completely impersonal, for some reason they seem to work a lot of the time because they're still doing them, but we've also all experienced the situation where someone clearly just wants to sell us something and walk away. It doesn't feel good, right?

In this digital space where many times if I had my way as a coach, as a writer, as a whatever, I would go out and have coffee with everyone of my customers or readers or people or tribe or whatever, because I love that, but that's not feasible. We have to use what's available to us.

What's available to us are things like Facebook Live and the 60 second snippets on Instagram. I don't really understand where Periscope is going or is, I haven't personally used that to a great degree, but whether it's YouTube, we have to use what we can to build a connection with potential readers and current readers. It has to be genuine.

Even through emails putting your own personality, whatever that is, into your emails is critical. I hear from writers all the time who say, "I can't do a book about X because it's been done a thousand times." My response to that is, "If it's been done a thousand times there's a huge market for it first of all. Second of all, what is unique about you?"

When you're the 1001st person to do it, what is unique about your approach? Are you kind of, "I'm very sarcastic and I don't take anything super seriously and I'm pretty transparent about my journey and things," that's my approach. Even if you sit down and you think right now about authors where every time they have a book come out you are ordering it, why is that?

More often than not it's not just because they're a great writer, sometimes it is, sometimes it is, but sometimes, many times, it's because you feel like

that writer has made themselves vulnerable to you and you identify with them and you think, "This is one of my people. He or she gets me." Because he or she was where I am, I know that with their guidance I can get to where they are. It's just about being authentic. When you meet someone who you've been following online for 10 minutes or 10 years, in my opinion there should be no surprises. They should be in person exactly what you've come to expect.

James: That's great. We know this works because I see fellow authors and Mark's a great advocate of this and he's a great proponent of it actually in the way that he talks to his audience and follow his social media to see how that works, and it does work.

I'm really interested also in, because nothing's new, there's nothing new under the sun, right, the old expression. This is not a brand new idea, in fact in business terms I'm trying to relate it to how businesses operated for eons and I'm not sure if it's the same as brand loyalty, that feeling that I choose British Airways to fly because it flies the British flag and I feel brand loyal to it.

I probably overlook some of its misgivings and I probably give it a chance when things sink a little bit and don't work as well. I wonder if it's partly that, you're building that loyalty with people, that relationship and it's probably in some ways, everyone thinks, "It's so difficult to do everything." You know what? I think it's probably easier when you're a person and you're selling something to somebody sitting there behind a corporation trying to make people feel soft and warm about a corporation.

You've got an opportunity as you say, an unparalleled opportunity now with social media to build a connection with people.

Elizabeth: There's nothing more difficult than trying to be what you think everybody wants you to be in order to connect, because you're not going to connect with everybody. There's the saying, "Not everyone's going to like you, you're not pizza, you're not Nutella, you're not ice cream," whatever the analogy is.

The best thing that we can all do is just be who we are and then make room for the people who are supposed to be part of our tribe to show up, instead of going, "What do they want? Let me try to turn myself into that." Purchasing is an emotional decision so even if it's brand loyalty, I often say to people, "When you need to order shoes online where do you go?" They'll say, "I go to Zappos." Or, "When you want to order a book online where do you go?" "I go to Amazon."

There's a strategy that's on the part of the business and that sounds as though it's a sterile kind of yuck thing but it's not, everything's so fleeting, there's always a new author coming in right behind you. There's always a new something coming in. Staying in touch with in a genuine way your people is how you build genuine relations, the same way you build genuine relationships with your friends and your family.

James: We want to build relationships.

Elizabeth: Yeah.

James: You're tuning into human nature, we want to build, we want to operate in an area that feels familiar and comfortable with us. I guess getting over that initial bit, which we can talk about in a moment when you come onto how you've marketed your non-fiction but the initial bit might be the most difficult bit and then nurturing as long as you work at it is something that will reap rewards.

You're very good at that, you have a very warm relationship and quite active relationship with your followers I've noticed. How much of that have you learned from marketing hard products such as your non-fiction books? What I'm talking about is you're coaching techniques that you use. I guess all of that has come from your own experience. Non-fiction's been more your choice, you've been open about it, that you're more comfortable writing non-fiction, you enjoy writing non-fiction rather than fiction.

Elizabeth: I do.

James: Okay, let's start with that. Let's talk about why non-fiction for you.

Elizabeth: Oh gosh, I don't know. I think I write the way I talk. I have a certain perspective about my life, which is just that it's crazy and chaotic and beautiful and all of this, so I love writing about it.

Fiction is challenging for me because I think that's where I go into a different part of myself. I've been working on a novel for 15 years. I don't know what's happening there. I think maybe I need some coaching myself on that one. I just enjoy the non-fiction.

I think to answer your previous question about the connection and building relationships with people, when I did my first book, which was called Ready Or Not Here We Come and it was a guide to the first year with twins, it was because I had just had twins. I'd been writing my whole life, I just had twins and I went, as an expectant mother of twins I went to the bookstore because this was pre-Amazon. I literally purchased every book there was. I think there were nine. I bought them all because I thought, "Oh my gosh." Every one of them left me feeling like my life was over. They were not funny, it left me in tears. The business side of me, the creative side of me came together and I thought, "There's a place for a book that has strategies but also is lighthearted and funny and inspiring and empowering and motivating," so that's what I wrote.

Now when I did that I had some real fears that by being honest about some of the challenges that went on in my home, that people would be critical, and sometimes they were but more often than not they would write me and say, "It's like you're in my living room." There's this sense of identifying with your readers and your readers identifying with you, and you letting them know that, "Look, I'm just like a normal person."

That's one of the things I've come to absolutely love about Mark, is that when you watch his Facebook Lives where he's going through the income reports and the stuff for Facebook Ads, he's just sitting there at his

computer in his house and sometimes he has to move to a different room because the WiFi's down. There's not this façade of, "Okay, I can't be where you are because you're in a penthouse in Fiji." Does that make sense? It's like, just be a real ... We're all just real people.

James: Yeah. Yeah and it's funny because I straddle two industries really, we have a video production company that works largely for large corporations. On the one hand, I suppose they would never do most of the things that we do, that they wouldn't appear unshaven at home in their office.

On the other hand they're desperate to get a piece of this action, which they don't really understand, which is kind of 2.0 way of operating which is filling out with entrepreneurs and successful people who are driving digital business. They look and sound very different and they want some of that but struggle to get there.

I think you're right and I think it goes back to what we talked about before. It's friendly, it's sincere and it's accessible and that makes people like you and I want to do business with you and I want to buy your products ultimately. If they don't want to that's all right as well.

Elizabeth: You have to be okay with that.

James: You have to be and that's probably what the corporates can't get, they want to win every time and be cutthroat about it but actually you're going to be successful when you relax about that and think, "My book is clearly not going to suit everyone."

We put ourselves out there and every author will be told from time to time by somebody who they didn't ask to tell them that their books aren't what they want, and they're usually rude about it. You've got to live with that, right?

Elizabeth: You have to be able to live with it. For first time authors specifically that is a real, real challenge because you get all this together and you get so excited and you get people following you.

Especially writers who in this day and age of digital stuff we have blog posts that go viral, we have Facebook Live videos that go viral and all the sudden it thrusts the person into this world that they thought they always wanted but now that they're in it and one out of every 10 people is saying, "You stink at what you do," they're not prepared.

Very rarely does anyone have the opportunity to gradually step up a plateau with their business and with their self confidence and then step up in both way, and on and on. One comes before the other in most cases. In most cases the business will pick up maybe before the writer is really comfortable with criticism.

Here's the thing, not everyone's going to like your book, not everyone's going to like your cover, not everyone's going to like your title and not everyone's going to like you. In some cases I find it interesting that when we have nine people who say, "Oh my gosh, I love, love, love your work," and then we have one who says, "I think you're an idiot," we inevitably focus on the one person who said something unkind, rather than the nine who love you.

James: Why is that? That's such a human thing.

Elizabeth: I don't know.

James: I want to scream. My author friends who post a negative comment and I think, "What about the 500 positive comments on there?" Why is that?

Elizabeth: I know. I don't know that. We need to bring in a psychologist or something.



James: Yeah.

Elizabeth: I do it, we all do it. It's definitely a very human thing. I think that the solution to it has to do with retraining.

When it happens you have to consciously go, "First of all, who cares?" I don't even know that I need to know why I'm doing it. The point is stop doing it. Put your efforts toward the nine people, if the one person has a, I don't know, a viable, valuable constructive piece of criticism, that's cool. I may do something with it, I may not. I may respond, I may not.

But what I find interesting is when you look at the Facebook pages, whether they're writers or a celebrity, anything where they have a large following and they'll post something and they'll get a thousand comments. 997 of those comments are extremely kind and supportive, and then you get the three who just want to take the person down.

The person whose page it is will actually respond in a defensive manner to the three people but not respond to any of the 997. I think, "What are you doing? What is going on?" I think it's because we feel that need to defend ourselves. We feel personally attacked. We feel criticized. We want to be able to say, "No, no, no, no. I didn't mean that." But what we have to remember is that most of those people wake up in the morning ... Hurt people hurt people.

James: I wonder also there's a human instinct in quite a lot of us which is to not really believe praise but to believe criticism as well.

Elizabeth: You just said it. We all need therapy or something.

James: Yeah, accepting praise is quite difficult.

Elizabeth: It sure is. These are the same people who feel uncomfortable selling their stuff because we're introverted, we are humble, there's a sense of humility. You want to be proud of what you've done but you don't ever want to be arrogant about it.

There really is, that's a huge, huge, huge struggle for writers, regardless of the publishing paradigm under which they go out into the world because if you're doing it yourself then all of that marketing, et cetera, is on you. If you're doing it with someone else, then the expectation is on you to get out there.

James: We should say that this is a tougher environment probably for authors. It's an unparalleled opportunity but it's also a tougher environment than when I was a kid, I'm trying to think of what I was reading. People like Douglas Adams and Stephen King and James Herbert and so on, some people have taken the effort to write to them but I'm going to guess that people who really didn't like their books wouldn't really make that much of an effort to write to them about. Whereas today it's very easy just to drop a comment in on social media.

You're going to have exposure to stuff that the previous generation of authors maybe only had it through professional critics.

Elizabeth: That's a brilliant point. It was also harder to send praise back then. The only way that those authors got praise is because they hit the best seller list or they were asked to speak at an event and were paid a large sum of money to do so.

Now everything is a bit of a double-edged sword. Whereas the social media allows us to connect with our readers and to get out there and to speak our mind and to get a message out quickly to everybody, it also allows other people to get to us quickly.

It's important to have boundaries. It's important to have a strong sense of self. As I tell people it's very important to have a strong inner circle. I have people in my world where if I've written something or I posted something that's a little bit off and they came to me, if they came to me and said, "Liz, I'm not sure that that's really ... I know you real well, that's not really in line with who you are." I would really think about it.

If you're not in that circle it's not that I don't hear you, I'm not trying to ignore you, but if all you have to bring to my world is to say, "I don't like you and your books are terrible," by all means go find another ... I've got nothing for you.

James: You're quite right. In fact, as I get older I'm more like that. I think when I was younger I gave people time to criticise me, or friendships that weren't really friendship. Whereas, as I get older I'm frankly a lot less patient, and every now and again just cull negative influences in my life that come through social media and so on.

Got that too from Jo Penn as well, she does that. She thinks, "You know I don't really want to hear it." You can take positive actions to make sure that you're hearing more positive thoughts around you. The same way that people can get you through social media, there are also ways of blocking that, which you didn't use to be able to do in the real world.

Elizabeth: Correct. It's not even a fine line, it's a pretty thick line to when you just say, "You're ... No."

James: Okay, in our last few minutes Liz I want to talk a little bit about you and your sites then. I know that you've got quite a few very author-centric offerings.

You've recently done some stuff on writing a book. Was it The 75 Days? Have I got that right?

Elizabeth: Yes, Write Your Book In 75 Days.

James: Talk to me a little bit about the type of practical tips and practical advice that you've been giving out and what's working for people at the moment.

Elizabeth: The two biggest parts of Write Your Book In 75 Days that are really being well received are the, "what is your why," section and helping people really clarify first and foremost what their why is, why they're doing it, their definition of success, et cetera.

Then also, secondarily understanding their reader's why, because when you're writing non-fiction or a memoir more often than not you're providing a solution to a problem. You're letting people know that you've been there as well, et cetera. You need to, at least depending upon what your why is, you maybe need to think differently about your readers' why when you're writing.

Then the second component is actually outlining, getting their book outlined. We have this tendency to think, "I want to write a book," and we start thinking about, "How am I going to sell it to all these people?" We haven't even written the first word. It's so important, it feels unmanageable and it feels very overwhelming to people.

When we can take it a step at a time and ask some probing questions to help people identify their high level topics, without having to worry about, "Is this going to be an actual chapter title? Is this even going to make it into the final manuscript?"

But just, "Right now today when you think about writing this book," and when I've been thinking about writing this book for the last five, 10 years because in many cases that's what's been going on, "these are the things about which I want to write." Helping to unearth some of the stories and the tips and the pieces of wisdom that people have wanted to share with other but over the years have either gotten buried or the Post-it notes have blown away.

Now when they can focus, really focus and get those down, the writing of it comes so much more easily. Suddenly you realize that the whole concept is so much more bark than bite.

James: I suppose you're talking about starting with three things. Which is, what you want to get out of the whole project, what your definition of success is. An understanding of what people want out of it, and then with the content.

All three of those have got to match together, you've got to look at your content even if it's sketchy at this point, even if you're just putting stuff in the bucket to start off with.

You've got to look at what's going to work with those other two aims.

Elizabeth: Absolutely. When you don't do that what happens is you get to the end and you have a book in your hand and that's great, but then you have a disconnect because the book you've written isn't in line with your goals and the purpose of the book. That's when people start to feel schizophrenic because they feel like they're wearing two different hats and they're just running on a treadmill.

James: That's a good little triangle then, isn't it? To think about at the beginning of each project that you do and how you approach it. It's been brilliant Liz. Let's get a little plug for your Facebook site, which is Publish A Profitable Book. I think you're on Twitter @PublishAProfitableBook. Is that right?

Elizabeth: Twitter I'm actually @elizabethlyons, but everything else is Publish A Profitable Book.

James: Okay. There's loads of resources there. It's a bit like us, you can get loads of stuff just being a part of the community. You're part of our community and we're in yours. That's really good.

We've got some good takeaways from this today but I think the number one we started and finished with is defining your idea of success, what you call the why with a question mark, before you do anything. That's our

takeaway, right? It's one bit of paper takeaway. If you can't answer it go back and start that bit again.

Elizabeth: Yeah. Take some time, you will be very glad in the end that you did. It's well, well worth it.

James: Liz, she's a bit of a fan of yours Mark, which is always pleasing for you to hear I guess. I thought that was absolutely fantastic. To be honest, when I started the interview I wasn't 100% what exactly sure what it was that we were going to talk about but it turned out to be 40 minutes of golden stuff really.

Mark: Yeah, fantastic. It's always nice to hear nice things but to hear some more nice things as people start to dig into the bits and bobs we've got coming up down the track in the next few months.

James: We're fascinated to hear how people are going to get on with the 101 course. You can always email us at any time of day or night. You can email us at [podcast@selfpublishingformula.com](mailto:podcast@selfpublishingformula.com). If you need to know anything about the courses or the free materials or the Facebook groups, just go to [selfpublishingformula.com](http://selfpublishingformula.com) and you should find all the answers there.

Look, thank you so much indeed, particularly for bearing with us while we were really heads down and busy putting a course together. We have a little bit of respite now and can really focus. We've got some really good guests coming.

We just lined up somebody, in fact I think we're going to have our first musical guest I've been lining up this morning. I've been trying to persuade him to bring his guitar along for the interview, which should be a good one. I think particularly for people who don't write romance novels or any of those big genres, who are writing non-fiction, that's going to be a very, very interesting interview and maybe a guitar lesson. That's it. Good. I would say

you can go off and rest but we're still at that point, 48 hours from where we are now.

Mark: In 10 minutes time I'm doing a live Facebook Live session. I'm going to do some whiteboard teaching about sales funnels. That will be interesting. Then there's emails to write, web copy to check, sales pages to check, and then finally team SPF heading down to London, or up to London, tomorrow for a swanky meal out with our respective better halves. I'm looking forward to that. It will be quite nice to finally lay our hair down, what hair I've got left.

James: It's been a very busy 12 months. It's been a very successful 12 months for us as well so we're going to go into London and celebrate that with our, as you say with our wives in tow, but we're working as well because I'm packing my car this afternoon with cameras and lighting and sound. We're going to work into Dorchester Hotel tomorrow and hopefully not raise any suspicions about what we're going to filming in the hotel bedrooms.

Mark: I'm not filming that James, it's not happening.

James: We're not filming that. Okay. On that note, thank you so much indeed for listening, we will speak to you again next week. Thanks to our guest Liz Lyons I should say. Bye.

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