

EPISODE 88: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE REVISION PROCESS – WITH JOAN DEMPSEY

Announcer: 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 Blatch: Hello and welcome to the Self Publishing Formula podcast with James Blatch and Mark Dawson speaking to you from the United Kingdom's premier recording studio in a garden somewhere in Cambridgeshire.

I mentioned a couple of weeks ago that it's a little bit echo-y before we get all my soft furnishings in 'cause obviously I'm going to get a sofa bed in my office and a beer fridge and possibly a football table.

Mark Dawson: Hmm that'd be nice.

James Blatch: Yeah. There might be space. I've got a strange little alcove down behind where John Dyer is sitting, away to my left, which could be ... I could get a camera in there.

I could basically come into this room and then just not reappear in my house, but as long as I keep funneling money into the account I presume they'll be okay in the house.

We have a vast audience, some of whom simply write books, others of whom write books and have other businesses and are quite entrepreneurial in terms of the way they work from home and do stuff. This is becoming quite a thing.

The people who built this office, and if you watch the YouTube channel you can see a little bit of it, are absolutely flat out in the UK. I had to wait three months for this to even start and they're working, the guys who are building it, told me that they are offered overtime every weekend.

There's a real sense of people picking up this whole idea in the digital age you can start businesses online, you can work from home and, of course, for authors this is perfect.

Although I've got like an awesome shed, and this is an awesome shed to work in, I had shed envy when we interviewed Joan. She's got a really lovely working space and if you go to her website, Joan Dempsey's website, if you Google her you'll see some pictures of it. It is a really lovely space.

What we spoke to Joan about was about the revision process.

How important then, Mark, for the successful best-selling author that you are, how important is the revision process?

Mark Dawson: It is extremely important. As soon as you finish the book, at least you think you've finished the first draft of the book, then, well for me anyway, it goes through a fairly extended process of editors.

Sometimes developmental, certainly copy and proofreading and then through my beta team, my advanced readers.

By the time it's gone through that process it can take six weeks to two months sometimes. The book is often very different and always improved on the state it was in when I sent it out to them.

It is incredibly important just to take it from your own desk and to other people and some of those being professional, qualified people, to look at it and make suggestions for changes is very important to get the quality up.

James Blatch: Yeah. It's scary as well about process.

Mark Dawson: No it isn't.

James Blatch: Well, it is for those of us who aren't used to it.

I'm sure the very first time you wrote a book and handed it to somebody else you were scared.

Mark Dawson: Nope. Nope. I don't think I was scared. Probably what I sent out to agents ... Was I scared? This was an awfully long time ago so I can't really remember, but I don't think I was ever scared.

You feel very vulnerable, I suppose, just because it's something that you're going to get someone criticizing potentially something that you've spent an awful lot of time on and no one likes to get bad criticism.

I don't think I was scared. It was something that I knew was essential so there's no two ways about it. You have to do it if you want to get out a really polished and professional book.

James Blatch: It absolutely is essential and Joan's very good on the psychology of it as well as the practicality since she has an online course to support her teachings, which I've had a look at and can tell you is excellent.

She has a very, very strong community to help you through this process and I think even if you've been through it a few times this will improve the way that you go through that very important stage.

Let's hear from Joan and we'll have a chat afterwards.

Joan, why don't you start off by telling us a little bit about yourself.

Joan Dempsey: I have been a writer for many, many years. I help serious creative writers master the craft of revision and I do that through teaching online courses and working one-on-one with writers.

I've worked with hundreds and hundreds of writers over the past years. My debut novel is coming out in October so I'm pretty excited about that.

James Blatch: I know you love books so people who are watching on the YouTube channel will know that you are surrounded by a wonderful array of books. There's no finer sight, is there, in someone's house? Also, proudly on the shelf there is a Mark Dawson mug.

Joan Dempsey: Absolutely. Absolutely. I was very happy to get that and I usually drink out of it but I thought I would display it today.

James Blatch: Yeah. Looks great.

Joan I want to talk to you about revision and also about confidence, I think, in people's writing.

As always, I will hog part of this for myself, it seems to work for other people who are in a similar position to me as well, writing their first novel and having some of those doubts and difficulties with letting the script go at some point as well.

But first, just tell me a little bit more about your writing, your journey to where you are today in terms of your authorship.

Joan Dempsey: Sure. I started seriously writing the year 2000. I took my first real writing workshop at GrubStreet Writers in Boston and I just fell in love at that point.

In the first class, the first assignment, a character magically appeared to me and demanded that I put him on the page and I thought: Oh wow it's true, this really does happen.

Prior to that I was a big reader and I'd taken some writing stuff but not a lot and I always heard writers talk about how the characters kind of had a life of their own and I always thought that seemed a little silly.

But it happened and it was so magical and I just completely fell in love so really since 2000 I have done everything possible to make my life center on the craft of writing.

I have a Master of Fine Arts from Antioch University in Los Angeles and I have a number of stories and articles that have been published over time and really I have just been working away since the year 2000 to get a book out there and to the world, which is happening.

The book that's being published is actually my second novel. The first novel is sitting on a shelf. At the time I was trying to sell it I was told that it was much too quiet and much too literary and after hearing that enough times I decided to just continue on with the novel that's coming out in October because at that point I was totally into it.

I actually deliberately set out to write a literary page-turner. I'm very attracted to literary fiction but I'm also attracted to fast-paced, compelling reads so I decided to work to make that happen.

James Blatch: The feedback you were getting on that novel, were you going through a traditional publishing house or a freelance editor who you had contracted?

Joan Dempsey: I was trying to decide between going the traditional route and the self-publishing route. I spent about 14 months trying to find an agent. I had a lot of very near-misses with agents, but after about 14

months I got impatient and really wanted to get the novel out into the world so I decided not to go the self-publishing route and I've gone somewhere in the middle so I am actually working with a hybrid press called She Writes Press. They publish women's work and it's been an amazing experience.

One of the benefits is that I have a lot more control over the product itself and a lot of input into how my novel is presented to the world. She Writes Press also has traditional publishing, traditional distribution, so they can get the book out into bookstores and libraries in the same way that a traditional publisher can, which is something that with self-publishing is a lot harder to do.

I have complete control over selling online, like a self-publisher, which I absolutely love. I work for myself and have been for years so I love being able to do everything myself, but I also have the power of a sales team through Ingram Publisher Services, which is the distribution group that She Writes Press uses.

In a lot of ways it's the best of both worlds. I'm really happy with how that's going, it's really been a blast.

James Blatch: Is it IngramSpark?

Joan Dempsey: It is not IngramSpark, and the names often get confused. It is Ingram Publisher Services.

What they do is they give services to publishers so they don't go directly to the author like IngramSpark does. They work with the publishers as a distributor, much like any of the other big distributors who work with traditional publishers.

It's sort of a unique thing that She Writes Press has. They have the reputation of being as good as a traditional publisher so they're not really a

vanity press and they're not traditional, they're somewhere in between, so it's really pretty terrific.

James Blatch: Joan, let's go on to the meat of this interview, which is about revising. I mean, gosh, when people first think, "I'm going to write a novel ..." I don't think anyone thinks about this stage, which is such a dominant part of writing a novel, in my case rewriting it, probably my second full re-write of my first novel, and even the revision process that goes after.

Honestly, no one prepares you for this stage, do they?

Joan Dempsey: No, they don't.

It's interesting because when I decided that I wanted to work for myself and be an online entrepreneur, I really was looking at the writing world that was out there and seeing what's available, what are people already doing well and where is there a gap.

After checking it out for a while I realized that I love revision. I'm one of those writers who, I actually don't like the first draft as well and I know that there are a lot of people who love that, you know, getting it down on the page and then after that it becomes a really daunting process.

I'm just the opposite because I love digging in and really taking a look at what's on the page, studying it, seeing what's there, what I put on the page and what I didn't put on the page and then really reworking it.

When I saw that I decided: I think my niche is going to be in revision.

The other piece is that because I've worked with so many writers over so many years I have learned that self-doubt is one of the biggest problems, or I shouldn't say one of the biggest, it's the biggest problem that writers face and they often face it when they begin to revise.

Especially because I feel like we're in this trend right now where getting down that first draft is something that everybody thinks has to be done really fast and start to finish. Certainly people that do NaNoWriMo, that's their whole goal, write a novel in 50 days and then they get to the end of that 50 days and, yay they've gotten their 50,000 words and then they're not sure what to do about it.

I felt very strongly that I had something to offer writers around how do you approach your revision. One of the simple things is that people don't know where to begin because here you've got this massive piece of work and it's really overwhelming to think about rewriting it.

If you don't know where to begin, then it can overwhelm you and you can just stop and not do it. I spend a fair amount of time helping people understand where they can begin, which in a nutshell is wherever it works for you to get into the work and we can talk more about that if you like.

I'm curious, for you James, you said you're in rewriting process. Is that something that you have faced or is that not an issue that you're dealing with?

James Blatch: I did write quickly. I did do NaNoWriMo actually when I started off and then slowed down a little bit after that to finish the book, then wrote really quickly and, having finished the book, sat on it for a few years and not done anything.

Now the notes come back from the editor and some of the things are fairly fundamental in terms of character development and some ideas about the way the story's going to work, which we talked through, which were probably better than the ways I originally had so I'm effectively rewriting it again.

I'd say feeling lost might not be the right expression but feeling daunted, having this mountain, not feeling you're making anything like the progress

ou made when you first writing when, of course, you go from zero to the end of that first draft. I think I'm feeling overwhelmed and also there is self-doubt as well, without question.

Joan Dempsey: I think it is a daunting prospect, there's no question about that.

I am actually somebody who revises as I go so I've never had that thrill of like, I finished the first draft, because by the time my first draft is done is more like a 12th draft because I just keep going back and tweaking, and there are a lot of folks who do that as well.

Interesting, a lot of people who do that think they're doing it wrong, so I'm able to help them understand that you can actually go slowly, because as you point out if you do a very fast first draft and you write a huge amount of words on a page and you write a novel, which is amazing that you can do that quickly, then when you go to revise you really have to switch gears and that slowing down can be very difficult.

You mentioned character and that the person you're working with was giving you suggestions about character. One place that people will start is with character because so much springs from that, but a lot of people find even that daunting.

If you have a character who is not fully developed, it's a really massive task to retool that person. Starting there is not a bad thing if you're into it and you want to get there, but you can also start out in a smaller way.

One of the things that people think is that there's a right way to go into a revision like this and there really isn't.

Some people will be too daunted by the big picture, the characters and structure or the story itself and that will paralyze them so they can get into the work. When that happens I suggest, well start with something small.

Maybe you know that your dialog needs to be cleaned up, maybe you use a lot of extraneous words. Go through and just start doing that and that will at least get you back into the work.

I'm a real believer in whatever it is that gets you into the work is what you should be doing. So often we have all these rules in our head and they don't have to be there.

The important thing is to figure out what works best for you. In your case, James, if your character thing is working, then that's perfect. Yeah.

James Blatch: That's certainly something that I have done recently, which is to just abandon one of the chapters I was rewriting and just move onto another one and leave it unfinished.

We do work in isolation. We don't have somebody like you, normally, sitting next to me saying, "Oh, that's fine. Do that."

You sit there thinking: I've failed a bit here so I'll slack off somewhere else and do something else. Actually the hidden benefits were quite interesting because when you do write down the line a little bit it actually helps inform back where you should be going, which is maybe why you got to that stop point, so that was immediately apparent to me.

I like that. That's good advice and practical advice of get on with what you feel you can get on with and you can make progress with. The big picture can be daunting so it's like a jigsaw.

Do the little bits at a time and don't worry about the bigger picture at this stage.

Joan Dempsey: I think it's always good to worry about the bigger picture, but again I think chunking things out is what's important. One of the things

that I teach, I have a class called Revise Your Writing: Where to Begin and in that online course I talk about choosing the way that works best for you.

One of the things that we do in that class is we put together a long checklist of all of the pieces essentially, all of the moving parts of what it takes to write a book, whether it's a novel or a memoir, et cetera.

Having that checklist basically is a guide for you to say: I need to check every one of these things.

I personally am somebody who likes to go where my energy is on any given day so if I look at that checklist and I think: Oh, character is too much or the plot is too much today, but I could knock off reading through all the dialogue in each chapter, I think I'm going to start there.

Once you've done that, that's off your checklist. So that's something to think about is: What are all the pieces? If you can note down, especially if you're working with an editor and they say, "Okay these are the 10 things that you really need to work on ...", put those down on a checklist and then make sure that you're hitting each one of those things as you go.

I don't know if that helps, but I think it's important, again, to chunk things and that way you won't get overwhelmed because you can sit down in a day and do one thing as opposed to the 40 things that are on the checklist that need to be done.

James Blatch: The problem with the 40 things on the checklist is that certainly I often find I just put off starting on it because you don't really know where to start.

I'm busy enough in my life to know that there's a hundred things that need to be done at any one time so I work much quicker personally, and I know I'm hogging this interview, but I'm sure this will apply to other people listening.

I work much more quickly on the book when I have a clear idea of what it is I'm sitting down to do. When I've sketched out a scene I can sit there and write it quickly.

But when I don't really know what scene's going to follow because I'm feeling at that overwhelmed stage I don't do it, I don't work.

Joan Dempsey: Interesting. It sounds like you're the kind of writer who likes to have a bit of a roadmap and aren't writing to discover what's going to happen next, is that right?

James Blatch: I've done the writing to discover what's going to happen next and that more or less was okay.

But in terms of making it work better, this is the bit where making a better book, which I think comes onto another subject of letting it go at some point as well and how much revision you actually should do want a book.

Joan Dempsey: Well, you know that's a great question and I think it really depends on the writer and what you're trying to accomplish.

I'm often really surprised at the number of writers, and I think Mark is one of them who can crank out a lot of books fairly quickly and there are a lot of people out there who can write a book very quickly and get it out into the world.

With writers who that's their goal and that's what they want to do, then I think the letting go process happens a little more easily because the goal is to get it out to readers who are hungry and waiting for that book.

Other writers who are going to take their time ... My novel that is coming out this year took seven years and that was two and a half of research and then just writing in the margins of my day job, so that took an awful lot of

time and I was very certain that I wanted it to be the best I could possibly write.

What I usually tell people is, first off find out what they're doing. I think the important thing is that once you get to a point where you think: I couldn't possibly do any better.

I've gotten all this feedback from people, I've taken it into account, I've revised as best I can and I read it and I think I have done the best I can possibly do on this piece. That's the point at which I feel like it's good to let it go.

Some people might disagree with that and say: You know, it's okay, it's good. My readers will like it. I'm going to get it out there.

I feel like as long as you're showing it to other people, particularly a professional who can give you some really good feedback on what you're doing well and you revise it from there, then great.

There is an awful lot of stuff out there, as we know, that isn't that great and I always feel bad for people. A lot of people will come to me and they say: You know, I self-published a book about a year ago. It's not doing very well and I'm taking another look at it. I get it and it's really in very, very rough draft form. **People often don't understand how much work it's going to take to do that revision.**

James Blatch: That's very helpful. I think Mark summed it up the other week on the podcast by saying, "When you get to the point where you're just moving the commas around, it's time to let the book go."

What I'm interested in, I think what we're interested in Joan is how you've got an online course, we'll give the details out in a moment for that, but you talk a lot about do what works for you, if you feel this is going to work for you.

There's a quick analogy I'm going to give here is I do a little bit of work in cricket, which effectively is posh baseball so people understand.

In the old days, when I was at school you were taught how to play cricket and you were taught how to stand, how to hold the bat, how to play your strokes, whereas today the coaches look at kids, work out how they're comfortable in what they're doing, and it's the same in baseball.

I don't believe they teach the techniques as rigorously as they used to, they look at how individuals play and they work on them. This works for you, it won't work for anybody else but it works for you.

I kind of feel that's what you're saying here as well. If this is going to work for you, if that's the pace you're happy at, go ahead and do that.

How then, do you teach in a single online course what ultimately is going to be a bespoke system for individuals?

Joan Dempsey: Yeah, it's a great question and I love the sports analogy, that's great too.

There are couple of things that I was thinking of as you were talking. Certainly in baseball and cricket there are rules of the game and there are certain things that you have to do in the game and you need to learn those foundational basic things of the game and how to play it before you can start working with a coach who says: Hey, I see that you are doing X, Y, Z and that works for you. Let's play on that.

You also have the coach who will say: Hey, that's working for you but you could be much better if you tweaked this, that or the other thing. I think all of that is in play.

As far as how I teach the online courses so that it's individualized, it really is in the design of the curriculum. I have a background in how adults learn best and so much of that is meeting the learner where they are, finding out what experience they bring to the table and then working with them to their best strengths.

Now, of course, the online course is kind of a one to many, it's me and lots of people taking the courses. I designed the curriculum in such a way that I have people working on their own stuff. The lessons themselves are designed so that people have to try out different things and then make a decision about what works best for them.

I'm also responding to people who are saying: Hey, I thought it was supposed to be done this way ... and so I do a lot of dispelling myths about the rules of writing.

Certainly there are rules of grammar and all of that stuff we need to know, but beyond that as far as the process of writing, there really aren't any rules. I just essentially help facilitate a process for each student so that they can figure out for themselves what works best.

One of the beautiful things about that is that because each person goes through that process themselves and they have to discover their own strengths and their own preferences, it ends up cementing in their mind what's going to work best for them so it helps give them permission to be themselves and focus on their strengths and it also gives them an avenue of discovery to figure out who they are and how they're going to work best.

James Blatch: In terms of your general advice, do you have those specific framework rules that you think work best for revision?

From a technical point of view, people writing a Word document or Scrivener, do you suggest they start again or do they go back on a blank sheet and then copy and paste and revise or do they go through

their existing text? These are all things I've had to work out by myself and I guess you're going to tell me is whatever works for you.

Joan Dempsey: No, whatever works for you but there are some practical things as well. I basically share with people what I do, which is I work in Word and I work in a journal and I basically work with that Word document and make revisions as I go and any time I do a major thing I save it and move on to a new version of it.

I don't have much experience with Scrivener. I know a lot of people who use it and swear by it. I typically don't advise people or try to change their technical way of doing a revision unless it's really getting in their way.

For instance, if somebody decides: Oh, Scrivener is the thing I should be using and they start using Scrivener and they get bogged down and it's too unwieldy for them and they don't take the time to learn it, then that is getting in the way.

If somebody wants to use Scrivener and they take the time to learn it and they use all the great tools that are there to be used then that's going to support their work.

Really it is a matter of figuring out what works best for you. As long as something is really not getting in your way and stopping you, I say just stick with what's working.

James Blatch: The other point I suppose which is quite fundamental to how you go through the revision process in terms of getting your book into a better place for readers is to read it from a detached point of view, read it from an editor's point of view or ultimately a reader's point of view.

Which is a really easy thing to say but I think when it's your baby that you know inside out intimately and have a relationship with is actually quite a difficult thing to do.

Joan Dempsey: It is very difficult and that's actually another course that I teach which is called **Revise with Confidence: See Your Writing Like an Editor.**

Really what that does is it gives you a bunch of different approaches so you can see your work more clearly. One of the things I do is just get people exposed at first to the idea of perspective because you're right, we get locked in on what we know and so we can't see things from a different perspective. We work through some exercises in thinking about, like trying to think like a photographer.

The example that I use is, I've got a photograph of Barack Obama's first inauguration and so there's a photo of him being sworn in and the crowd and all of this stuff.

I ask people to take a look at that and think about all the different perspectives. You could have a shot from way in the back where somebody is, you've got the entire Washington Mall full of people and Obama's at the end. You can get it up close from the perspective of the justice who's swearing him in.

Just to begin thinking about all the different ways we can open our mind to see things differently.

The next part of the course is specific things you can do to get that different perspective. For instance, I'm sure you have readers, and most people do have readers, and that's one of the most valuable things you can do is give your work to somebody else, preferably a skilled writer or a professional editor who can be very honest with you and say: This is what's working and this is what isn't.

That always opens things up. It's always amazing what readers will bring to the table. Another one of my favorite things is reading aloud.

A question for you, James, when you're writing do you read your work out loud to yourself routinely? Is that something you do?

James Blatch: No.

Joan Dempsey: You might want to try it just for kicks. There are a lot of folks for whom this becomes revolutionary.

There really are a couple of things you can do around that. I read aloud to myself constantly when I'm writing. If I finish a sentence and it feels good I'll read it aloud and listen to see if I've got the rhythm right.

It's very quickly apparent where you are going to stumble and places where you stumble is places where there's something that has gone amiss. I think it's really important for people to read aloud to themselves as they go because you can really hear things that you can't see.

The second thing is to get, and this can be really fun and also a little bit scary sometimes, to have somebody else read your work to you. The first time I did this was a dear friend of mine who is a memoirist and we had a little writing retreat that we put together and she read a chapter of my own work to me and it was mind blowing.

I could not believe what I heard from her that I just had not heard from my own voice or from what I saw on the page. Things like where she put inflections and where she put emphasis as she was reading was just very, very interesting to me. I heard a lot of those stumbles that I might not have heard if someone else hadn't written.

The other thing that you can do is you can have an online program, and I'm not remembering the names of them, but there are programs that will basically read your work back to you in a computerized voice so that is very much a just very flat, no inflection whatsoever. What that does is it isolates

the words so you can really hear the words and make sure that the words that you're using are doing the work for you.

There are a number of different ways to hear the work and that's just a fantastic way to get a new perspective on your writing.

James Blatch: That's great Joan, really good tips for getting a little bit of distance between you and the novel.

Talk to us a little bit about the course. I know that one of the things you've got is a sort of free mini course, which you'll give people an introduction to getting some help with the revision process.

Joan Dempsey: Yeah, that's right. That is for the course that's called Revise With Confidence: See Your Writing Like an Editor, which is the one that I was just talking about.

I do a free video series, it's three videos, they're all about 30 minutes long. What I do within that series is really get people to think about ways that they can stop worrying about whether their writing is any good or not.

The reason that I put that together specifically is that a number of years ago, and then followed up just this past year, I did a whole lot of research by reaching out to the writers I know. I've got roughly 10,400 or so people, writers on my mailing list, and I reached out to those folks and asked them: **What's the number one thing that gets in your way of doing your best work?**

I honestly thought at the time that what I was going to hear was: Well, I don't have enough time. At the time when I was looking into that I was thinking, oh I'll do a time management class specifically for writers.

The issue of time was there but it came in a really, really distant second to self-doubt. I was fascinated by what I heard people say. They weren't just

saying self-doubt, they were talking about things like self-loathing and, "I know my work isn't any good ..." or, "I'm really worried that I'm wasting my time, that my writing isn't any good so why am I doing this in the first place?" I just heard that over and over again.

I put together this video series to help people answer that question once and for all: Is your writing really any good and are you wasting your time.

I'll tell you the nutshell version, and there's a lot more that goes around this, but the nutshell version is that when you first start out in your writing, your writing really isn't any good and that's perfectly okay.

I think people think that, well we all know how to write, of course, we learned how to write when we were kids, we all know how to write. Once you get into actually trying to craft a story or an article or an essay you realize: Oh this is a lot harder than I expected it to be, but we're impatient with ourselves and we think we really should be good at it right away.

I think accepting the fact that you really aren't any good as you begin, your writing really isn't that great and you need to work to make it better is really important.

Instead of saying, "I'm so worried my writing isn't any good ...", if you can reframe that to, "I want my writing to be the best it can possibly be. How am I going to get there? What do I need to make that happen?" That really, really helps people.

The other thing within this video series is that I talk about the psychology of why we have that self-doubt in the first place. There are a whole bunch of reasons why we all as human beings doubt ourselves and we worry about whether our writing is any good or anything else that we're doing.

One of the things that we do in order to protect ourselves from that is something called 'self-handicapping'. What that is, is that we basically protect ourselves by getting in our own way.

For instance, if you're a writer and you haven't been running for a long time and then you do write something and it's really lousy, you can say: Well, I haven't been writing very much so it's no big deal. If I applied myself I'd be just fine.

Similarly, if you haven't been writing for a while and you write something that's great, you think: Well, there you go. I'm a good writer and if I applied myself I could be really great. Either way, we're protecting ourselves from that self-doubt. We're trying to make ourselves feel better. Self-handicapping is a psychologically helpful thing that we do, but at the same time it gets in our way of actually doing any work.

The good news is that psychologists say there is always a piece of you that understands that if you applied yourself you could get better at whatever it is that you're trying to do. The good news there is because we know that, we believe that we can be good so if we can get out of our own way and understand that we really can be good if we apply ourselves, then we make a decision to do the work that's necessary.

Once again, instead of, "I'm worried my writing isn't any good ..." saying, "I want my writing to be as good as it can possibly be. What do I need to do to get there?" That really shifts things around so that you can start realizing: I'm learning and I'm growing and that's all good.

The three video series talks a ton about self-doubt, a ton about the psychology of how we get there. Really helps people understand that they're not alone in how they feel and gives them some great tools for taking things to the next level.

All of that is done in the same way that you need to get distance on your own work when you're doing revision. You have to distance on yourself and how you think about yourself as a writer in the same way that you have to get distance on the manuscript in hand so that you can see it more objectively.

There are lots of interesting parallels there between how we think about ourselves and how we think about our writing and the revisions on the page.

James Blatch: That's great Joan, really, really good stuff. We should give the URL, which I think is ReviseWithConfidence.com. Okay, and that's for the free mini course.

After the interview I'll have a chat with Mark and then so if people listen onto the back anno part of the interview of the podcast and we'll see if we can put something together between us to give away for this as well. I'll have a chat with you, Joan, off air. So keep listening because I'm thinking this through as we go.

Joan, it's been fascinating, brilliant. Helpful, hugely helpful. I think this is an area that there are Mark Dawsons in the world who just seem to sit there effortlessly and write novels, but they are the outliers, right?

The rest of us, it becomes a bit of a monster to tackle and we need help, so you've been very helpful.

Joan Dempsey: Great, well thank you. It's really a treat to talk with you James, and I'm hoping that some of what I said helps you personally and certainly helps your listeners and viewers.

James Blatch: I love a great interview. If I say so myself, Mark, we're having a good run of interviews recently, which any apparent editor interview is

standing out to be one of the best we had this year. I think that was a really solid interview.

I really love the way that Joan has made herself a bit of a guru and expert in this area. As I said going into the interview, you can tell listening to Joan it's not just about the practicalities of it, of why you're doing stuff, it's also the psychology of it, helping people.

She did identify some of the hurdles that I was feeling and I'm sure other people do at this stage and starts to address those directly and she's a very empathetic person, so very good I thought.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, it is important. A good editor will not just have a good eye for the revision process but also since there are some similarities to good doctors having good bedside manner when you deliver news so: Yes, Mr. Blatch your book is terminal ... or not, perhaps it's great.

It is a job that involves imparting news that can be very important and could even be quite emotional sometimes for authors. Yeah, it's great that she's got that tone about her.

James Blatch: If you want to take that further you'll be aware already from the interview that Joan has that online course and you can sign up for that. I can tell you from what I've seen I think it's extremely impressive, but take your own view on that and have a look at what she's doing.

At the very least I would join her community and try to soak up some of the knowledge. Thank you very much indeed to Joan Dempsey for her contribution to this podcast.

Don't forget, you can become a VIP listener of the podcast and you can begin with a chance of winning a mug. I almost picked up my NASA mug, obviously we don't send out NASA mugs. Perhaps we could.

This is the North American version of the mug where Mark Dawson's name's in very big letters on the outside. I'm assuming on the European version of the mug that Mark's holding up, if you're watching us on YouTube, it must say James Blatch on that one because it says Mark Dawson on this one.

Mark Dawson: No, no sign of James Blatch.

James Blatch: Okay.

Mark Dawson: Who's James Blatch?

James Blatch: Who is James.

John Dyer: What about me?

Mark Dawson: Yeah, there's a John Dyer mug.

James Blatch: There's a John ... Listen, if my name's not on there your name's not on there. There's only one man in town.

Mark Dawson: Who pays the bills.

James Blatch: Who pays the bills? Who let the dogs out?

On that note we will pick out a couple of names each week to receive SPF mugs. After the initial flood of people who signed up perhaps inevitably it's now more of a trickle so I reckon you have a very good chance, very good chance of receiving a mug if you sign up this week.

Thank you very much indeed for listening. We'll speak to you next week. Have a great week writing and a great week selling. I have to say that carefully because it's really difficult to say. Practice it now if you're in your car or you're jogging. We'll see you next week.

Announcer: You've been listening to the Self Publishing Formula podcast. Visit us at SelfPublishingFormula.com for more information, show notes and links on today's topics. You can also sign up for our free video series on using Facebook ads to grow your mailing list. If you've enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a review on iTunes. We'll see you next time.