

PODCAST 77: SECRETS FROM SEVENTY NOVELS – WITH AUTHOR TRACY COOPER-POSEY

Speaker 1: 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 me, James Blatch and that mug over there, Mark Dawson. I've got the mug. The first time I've had the mug. I actually don't have a mug, this is your mug.

Mark Dawson: It is my mug.

James Blatch: But thank you very much. You're actually not drunk from it.

Mark Dawson: No, I'm waiting for John to come fill it up.

James Blatch: Yeah. Lazy, isn't he?

Mark Dawson: Very, yes.

James Blatch: Okay. If you're watching on YouTube, you know what we're talking about. We have a Self-publishing Formula mug. It has the words "Mark Dawson" in very large letters on it, and I've studied it. It doesn't appear to say "James Blatch" or "John Dyer" anywhere on it.

Mark Dawson: Underneath.

James Blatch: Yeah, yeah. On the inside, it gets some coffee poured on it, which is about right.

We're not selling them, are we? They're gonna be our special gift to people who come on.

Mark Dawson: I think we are going to sell them, but they'll be at cost. So we're not going to make any money if people ... We actually put a post in the Facebook community, and quite a lot, at least 30 people, said that they'd like one, which I thought was flattering, and a bit strange. But, yeah. They'll be available.

James Blatch: Well, I want one.

Mark Dawson: You have to buy one like everyone else.

James Blatch: Yeah, apparently.

Mark Dawson: We'll post again when that's available, if people want to have our lovely mugs.

James Blatch: We're giving one or two away every month randomly to people who sign up and become subscribers to the podcast on [patreon.com](https://patreon.com/spfpodcast). [Patreon.com/spfpodcast](https://patreon.com/spfpodcast), if you want to help support the podcast in the coming year, and become a part of the executive production team. You can be an executive producer. Because basically, on a Hollywood film, when it says "executive producer", it's the person with the money.

Mark Dawson: That's right. Yep.

James Blatch: Generally. Talking of Hollywood, any news? Any updates from you?

Mark Dawson: Nothing I can announce, but certainly things are going in the right direction.

It'll be an interesting blog post or podcast episode when this all comes to a conclusion one way or the other. But there was a very, very, very well known Hollywood producer, probably the best known Hollywood producer, was actually holding the project up.

He's moved out of the way now, which means that things can go forward. So, yeah. It's still going on, so we'll see. We're reasonably confident that we'll at least get to a stage where the option is signed, and a script is written. Probably over the summer. And then it'll be pitched out to studios for a pilot to be made in the new year, I guess.

James Blatch: And this is a T.V. series, isn't it?

Mark Dawson: It's a T.V. series, yeah.

James Blatch: For Isabella Rose?

Mark Dawson: For Beatrix Rose.

James Blatch: For Beatrix Rose.

Mark Dawson: It's her daughter. But she'll be involved, as well.

James Blatch: But she's the 13 year old?

Mark Dawson: She is. Well, 15, 16 year old. Yeah.

James Blatch: I can completely see why Hollywood would be interested in that. It's a big market, isn't it?

Mark Dawson: Absolutely.

James Blatch: So, yes. Well, good luck with that. In fact, by the time this goes out, maybe there will be more news.

Mark Dawson: Possibly.

James Blatch: So keep an eye on the Facebook groups. And if you're not a member of our Facebook groups, you can always search for Self Publishing Formula on Facebook. And I think it is, from memory, Facebook.com/secretgroup. Is that right?

Mark Dawson: Yeah, could be right. Forward slash secretgroup.

James Blatch: Forward slash secretgroup. But if you just search for Self Publishing Formula, SPF, on Facebook, you will find us, and you can join up there. Okay.

We have an author interview for you today. Her name is Tracey Cooper Posey. She's a prolific author, written knocking on 60 books in her life. She was traditionally published.

She went indie in 2011 with that sort of first trench. Has not looked back. She's award winning. Really interesting characters. She's an Australian, from Western Australian, actually. From Perth, where they're all slightly nutty, and she married a wrestler. Lives in Edmonton, Canada. And a really good interview. So let's hear from Tracey.

Tracy, we've had some prolific authors on our time, but I don't think I've spent as long scrolling back through people's back catalog than you. Give us a brief history of your writing, which I guess goes back to the 90's. Tracey C.P: I was first published in 1999 after flogging my work for quite a while. I got picked up by two legacy publishers. A small publisher in Manatoga and another one that was one of the first online publishers ever, Hard Shell Word Factory.

And since then, I have been publishing fairly steadily, and I had a full-time day job, right up until the end of 2015. So it was a bit spotty, here and

there. Got a bit tough. And I think, tomorrow, as we're recording this, my 79th book comes out. So I've managed to squeeze a few in here and there.

James Blatch: 79?

Tracey C.P.: Yes. And if I stay on track, on schedule for this year, I should get 26 more titles out.

James Blatch: That's incredible. We'll talk about productivity in a bit, and your work ethic. Let's talk a little bit about the publishing side of things. First of all, genre. You write quite a few things. Romance, fantasy, science fiction.

Tracey C.P.: Primarily romance for the longest time. I market to romance. But I do a lot of sub-genres within the romance field, because it's huge. In 2017, I will be going in to what they call "straight science fiction". So no romance. It will be marketed in the science fiction genres.

James Blatch: We've had Susan Grant on recently, who writes science fiction with romance mixed in, and she's primarily writing women, but has a few male writers. And I think she found the science fiction aspect healthy for that part of the audience.

Is that the same with you? Are you aimed at men or women?

Tracey C.P.: I actually split the genres up. I know Susan a little bit. We are on the Science Fiction Romance Brigade together, and she's appearing on my site next month. And she markets to the romance readership, which is primarily female.

So romance has this new genre that they're calling science fiction romance, which is supposed to be 50% science fiction, 50% romance. If you get into market ...

It's very difficult to market it, because a lot of romance readers are resistant to the science fiction aspect. If you try to market to straight science fiction readers, they are sometimes resistant to the romance aspect. So it's a fairly tight line to walk.

However, despite all the statistics out there, it's fairly clear that the readership for straight science fiction is 50% female. So if you get 50% female in straight science fiction, plus the male readers of science fiction who are not resistant to romance, you end up with a fairly big audience. It comes down to the style of book that you're writing. If you feel that the readers in science fiction would welcome that sort of story, then that's where you market it. Otherwise, you need to move into the romance genre. Very long answer, sorry.

James Blatch: No, no. That was good.

And it's interesting, 50/50, male/female splitting straight science fiction.
Tracey C.P.: Yes. There's been a lot of chat on the blogs and news sites for a couple of years now, particularly with the sad puppies and the Hugoness that has been running for the last few years.

The perception is, is that science fiction is supposed to be a male genre, which is absolute nonsense. I mean, it started with a female author, Mary Shelley, who wrote Frankenstein. And there have been very strong female authors in the genre for the longest time.

And what we're finding, as people do surveys and statistic grunts and stuff like that, is that there's just as many female readers, which is great, because I've been reading science fiction for years and years and years. So it's gonna be great to actually get into it.

James Blatch: Excellent. Well, I love my science fiction, so I'll be looking out for those. Also, backing up, more people like Shawn Coyne and others say

that if you're looking around at genres, that women generally are the voracious consumers of books.

So first and foremost, look at them if you want to do this commercially, and then the boys will follow.

Tracey C.P.: I think most took their surveys that have been done seem to establish the fact that women are the voracious readers. Some romancers are stunning readers. They read two or three books a day. I honestly don't know where they figure it in in the day. But they read that many books. It's part of the function why, the romance genre in particular, is very, very price sensitive, whereas not so much in the other genres.

James Blatch: Yeah. It has to be, if you're gonna read three a day. Tracey, I can tell from your antipathy and twang, that you come from down under. I say antipathy, of course, antipathy to Britain is Australian. But you're in Canada now. Just explain where you come from.

Tracey C.P.: Originally from Perth, West Australia, which is on the west coast for those who are looking at the map. Was there for the longest time, and in 1995, met a guy on what would become the internet. It was still just chat groups and stuff like that at that stage.

And a year later, I moved to Canada, and I've been here ever since. So my husband is Canadian, and as of December last year, I'm now Canadian/Australian.

James Blatch: And I think I read somewhere that your husband, who met in the early days of the internet, was a wrestler?

Tracey C.P.: Yes. Yes, he was a professional wrestler. He went by the name of Mr. Intensity. If you do a search on Google, you can actually find some of his matches still online.

He actually was one of the lucky ones. He got out of the business without any serious injuries or anything like that. He just has creaky joints. Yes, he was a professional wrestler.

James Blatch: Well, I'll let you into a secret. Mark Dawson is a huge wrestling fan, so he probably knows Mr. Intensity. I'll find out after the interview. Okay. Let's move on to your writings, because I think that's the big thing that people would like to understand from you, is how you write so many books a year.

What is your approach to writing?

Tracey C.P.: Basically, butt in chair. I think there's a lot of argument out there that you can write faster.

I did experiment with Dragon Dictation Software. And it was total disaster. And I don't particularly write ... I don't type fast. I type about 80 to 90 words a minute. Slow when I'm actually writing, because you just ... You work things out as you go. But I spend to type.

At the moment, now that I'm writing full time, I start at 6:30 in the morning, I finish writing clean manuscripts first at noon, and in the afternoon I do all the administration and the production and all the other stuff that goes along with indie publishing.

When I was working full time, I was writing on the bus, on the way to work, on the way home from work. I was writing at lunch time, in the board room. Everyone got very used to me being closed up in the board room and ignoring them.

I wrote wherever I could, and I still managed to get a fair number of books out then, too. And I think my production at the moment of first draft manuscript, just about 1,300 words an hour. So it ends up just being a

matter of math. If you can do 1,300 words an hour, you multiply that by how many hours you can do, that adds up.

I think last year, writing full time, I came in just under one million words. And that's just books. I'm not counting blog posts or anything like that. So, yeah. It's a function of keeping your butt in the chair and keeping writing. The trick is getting into the chair. That's what I think a lot of people have problems. The excuses and the procrastination and the tricks your mind can play on you are just astounding.

The number of things that can derail you and stop you from getting to the chair and actually writing, you have to keep working on those, too. After that, it's really ... You just keep yourself in the chair.

It's sort of like taking off in a car. You start off very slow, first gear, you're cranking along, the engine's cold, it's not very good. But if you can just hang in there ... I think around about the 20 minute mark, you kick up a gear. By 30, 40 minutes, you're into the story, and nothing's gonna stop you. And that's if you cans just hang in there that long, it all goes from there.

James Blatch: I've got a few questions about that.

So funny enough, I have been thinking about it for a while. And today, I've actually just placed an order for the Dragon Dictation Software. But we'll see I get on.

One of my thinkings about it was that I spend a lot of time going over my projects going back over stuff I've written, constantly refining, and thinking maybe I need things to be a bit different earlier on and going back there, and not moving forward with the book.

I'm hoping with dictation, because I'll be standing up away from the machine, just moving forward for a bit. And then, at the correct point, go back over what I've done, rather than constantly doing, going backwards. Tracey C.P.: It's a trick that you have to learn. I wrote two articles about dictation software that appeared on Night Owl reviews site in their magazine.

One of them was when I was writing, I did a full book doing dictation. And then there was a second article after the book, after I had discovered it was a complete disaster. For me, it was a complete disaster.

One of the things is, because I have written so many books, when I'm writing, I have got to the point where I don't even notice that I'm backing up and deleting and changing things as I go along. My brain is working a sentence or so ahead of me. But I'm still reviewing what's on the screen. Because typing is invisible to me, I'm looking at the screen, and the story comes out on the screen. So I don't really see what I'm doing with my fingers. I don't think about it.

So for me, who is so well established in my habits for writing, dictation was just awful. It didn't work for me. I got the hang of it at the end of actually the physical dictating. And yes, you can't go back, you've got to keep going forward. In that respect, it's great.

But my writing voice is completely different to the way I speak, and that was the other thing. Was that I sent the manuscript off nice and clean, it had no mistakes in it.

But my editor sent it back, and just went, "Oh, whoa. This is not you. I don't know what's happened, but this is just terrible." And I went through it after she did, and it took five days to clean it up.

I had really bad habits in there. I said “but” all the time. I think there was 600 “buts” in the manuscript I had to go through and get rid of. And just really bad habits.

So the two articles I wrote for Night Owl Romance reviews, basically, I think, for new writers, those that have not established their habits on a keyboard, I think dictation is the best thing that they could get used to.

I love the speed. I was getting 6,000, 7,000 words an hour. It was just magical. If I could keep that up on the keyboard, I would be a happy camper.

For me, it was a bit of a relief to go back to a keyboard, because I no longer had to think about it. I could just go back to writing stories.

For you, who are at the beginning of your actual writing career, you may find it very useful, particularly if you can get the hang of it.

James Blatch: Yeah. We’ll see. When I’ve written stuff in the past from my T.V. career, when you write reports and so on, I tend to walk around, I think. And it comes out that way. I find it more difficult when I’m planted down. So we’ll see.

But you sit down, you get into your zone. I’m interested also physically, because it’s not the best thing in the world, sitting down typing. You’re doing five and a half, six hours every day in a fairly confined position. Do you not suffer at all from that?

Tracey C.P.: Well, I do use a kitchen chair, because I find that the executive chairs that you get for an office are too low, and that means that my forearms are in an incorrect position. They talk about your forearms should be horizontal with the keyboard and stuff like that.

My typing teacher in high school used to tap our backs if they were touching the chair. So I learned to sit ... And it's very automatic. I just sit up straight, as you are right now.

James Blatch: Self consciously, now.

Tracey C.P.: It's very automatic to me to sit like that, as soon as I start typing. So I'm lucky in that regard.

The other trick I have is I drink a lot of water, which means that I'm forced to take breaks every 30 to 40 minutes, or so. I've got to go to the bathroom. So, I've also got used to it.

I think it's training just like anything else. For a lot of people that are writing with a day job, you take the writing where you can, and you crack some margins every day, like I was on the bus.

And then it's short bursts. But when you get into full time, I think you work up to it.

James Blatch: Yeah. And you don't use any physical tricks, like a standing desk or do you listen to music? Things like that. What else do you use?

Tracey C.P.: I did try the standing desk one for a while. I think it has some very positive effects, but one of the things that I found was because I wasn't used to it, my feet were hurting all the time.

When I became aware of the fact, that I was avoiding writing, because it was an uncomfortable experience. And I thought, "That's it." I got rid of the standing desk.

I went back to sitting and making sure I get up and move on a regular basis. I do listen to music. I use Google Play. I have thousands of soundtracks.

I have a playlist for each book that I build up that has the mood and the tone and evokes the emotions that match the book. And I use that for each book. So, yeah. Google Play is my friend.

James Blatch: Excellent. Get some John Williams music playing in the background to ... in your science fiction stuff. Well, that's great. I'm full of admiration and I think at the heart of it is your dedication and your work ethic.

Tracey C.P.: And also, I just like writing. I think it's one of the keys. If you don't like the process, if you don't love writing, if you don't love story telling, but you want to write a lot of books for whatever reason, then you have to find a way to enjoy it, or you're just going to be fighting your own instincts all the time. But I love writing. I love stories.

In fact, if you look at one of my books, the logo that I've developed for myself is "Stories Rule". And they do.

I get a kick out of writing a book, plotting a book, and thinking, "How am I going to make this fabulous for the reader?" And I love putting little Easter eggs in and just writing a really good story.

The book that's being released tomorrow, for example, as I was writing it, I was having fun, because I was imagining how much of an emotional ride the reader's gonna get out of it, because it's book five and the end of a series.

So there was a lot of stories wrapping up. I could do some fun things with that, because it was the last book in the series, and I did. And the reviews are coming back sounding pretty good. It sounds like I'm getting exactly where I wanted to get them emotionally.

So you've got to enjoy that process. If you don't enjoy it, it's just that much harder.

And I think self discipline. That's what I was saying, too, is if you can just sit down, get into the chair, and stay there for a bit, it takes on it's own life after that. So that really helps, too.

James Blatch: Let's talk about publishing. You were traditionally published for the first part of your career, going back over to the late 90's. And at that time, were you working a job, as well?

Tracey C.P.: There was a small patch where I lost my day job for about six months to a year, and I had a severance checks cut back. I did try to write full time for that period of time.

And at that time, I was doing pure Legacy, and with all the inherent problems that come with Legacy, including the stunted checks. I ended up having to go back to work.

So basically, I've been writing with a day job right up until the end of 2015, which is when I quit. And the only reason I got to quit was because of indie publishing, and that made the difference.

James Blatch: That's amazing. So you had a traditionally published career that spanned how long?

Tracey C.P.: 35 books, and I think my first indie title was March 2011, at which point I went, "What am I doing in traditional? This is stupid!"

Indie publishing was made for me. It was quite an eye-opener, because of the control. Control freak. And also, because primarily the control and the money, but that took a while to come in.

I also had every day job that I ever had, completely trained me for aspects of indie publishing. I worked with the world's biggest printer. So I got to know page layouts and how books were printed.

I worked as a magazine editor, so I had the editing skills and could clean up my manuscript pretty well. Because of magazine work, I was used to working with digital artists and cover designers and things like that. So everything that I had done in my day job life trained me for indie publishing.

As soon as I got the first book out, it was like, "This is ridiculous." And I started working all my traditionally published books back, getting the copyright back.

James Blatch: How easy was that?

Tracey C.P.: In 2011, at that stage, I was purely publishing. And they actually had out clauses in their contracts. They were very draconian, and it involved having to track, me personally tracking all my sales across a year, and waiting until a book dropped down to 100 units for the year. It was a three year process. I stopped marketing them. I stopped talking about them. I took them off my site. I didn't tell anyone about them. And I had to just suck up the poor sales for all that time, until I could ask for the books back.

James Blatch: That appears to be reverse marketing.

Tracey C.P.: Oh, yes. Yeah. And it's a very slow process, and you have to be very patient. But as it turned out, I got out of the situation just before it got very nasty.

It was sheer coincidence I happened to get out, because I had done one title as an indie, and just went, "Whoa." Why would anyone go traditional anymore? So, yeah. Very lucky in that regard.

James Blatch: And you've got the control that you wanted, and you're finally being financially rewarded for all those hours you're putting in in the seat.

Tracey C.P.: Yes. Yes. It's great. And last year was my big experiment, a year to see how it would go in time. We paid all the bills.

So this year, we're ramping up. I'm trying to get more titles out. I am trying to bring the income level up so that my husband can quit his day job, as well.

He's currently helping me the promotion and advertising and things like that. So if we can raise the monthly income up enough, then he'll be able to join me full time, as well.

James Blatch: He's not still wrestling, right?

Tracey C.P.: He's not still wrestling, no. He's doing a very boring day job.

James Blatch: What are you doing marketing wise?

Tracey C.P.: Well, we try everything. In fact, we've learned about Self Publishing Formula through Mark Dawson, who does the Facebook advertising course, which we did. I say "we", collectively, but Mark is the one that actually does that course.

We've done all sorts of things. I think that the big one that made the huge difference for us was, we set up the newsletter promptly, which I had played around with in the past, and I was sort of doing a little thing. But we really got serious about bringing the numbers up on the newsletter, and that made the difference. That turned the corner for us.

I think we started in March 2015. By December, I quit. And that's how big, how much of a difference it made, was getting that newsletter up and running.

I always write in series. So the first book in the series is free. The second book, if they sign up for the newsletter is also free. Otherwise, they can go through the rest of the series.

I spend a lot of time with my website making sure that the channels are in place. So once a reader gets invested in a series, then they get walked through book after book after book. I keep working in series, I will continue to do so, because they work extremely well.

We do advertise the free books and the first book in a series. We don't tend to do the others so much, because they're not the draw. The draw is getting them into that first book. So that is what we focus on.

James Blatch: Because then, when you say, you talked about getting the newsletter sorted out, you had a list to start off with? Or was that the point of which you started building a list?

Tracey C.P.: I had, I think, maybe 800 people. I hadn't focused on it, because when you're in Legacy Publishing, they really don't push newsletters.

It was all, you had to have a social network, you had to have a social platform. You had to be out visibly promoting the book. But none of those ways work.

I don't think they work particularly well for Legacy. They certainly don't work for indie, because the big issue for indie is discoverability. And I find that with indie, you're better off giving the reader a chance to ... Well, as long as you're out there where they can find you, give them a chance to sample your work.

I think of this as a consumer, myself. If I can find out if they're any good before I commit money, then I'm more happy spending the money on a new brand, if it's new to me.

So that's how I work with readers and my books. I try to give them a good chance to get to know my work, and then they're more happy about spending money on the titles later on in the series.

James Blatch: Investing in their time way of doing it. And I'm guessing, probably, the nature of your books, you have good relationship with your readers. A lot of backwards and forwards?

Tracey C.P.: Yes. It's huge. I developed a street team. It would have been about a year ago, now. We have a secret group on Facebook. I chat with them by email. They're all very good friends.

Although, that's something we don't tell Amazon. So they stop deleting reviews or anything like that, which is why the group is secret.

We all chat on Facebook a lot, and I get to know them. I also get a huge amount of feedback. It's quite bizarre. I have a blog, I get no comments on it. I can put a post out there, and it's like crickets chirping.

But if I put a newsletter out, I'll get inundated with emails coming back, talking about reacting to whatever I put in the newsletter.

I'll get a little bit chatty in the newsletter, and I'll give them gossip. And everyone, all my readers, know who Mark is. They've all seen him in his wrestling tights. Yeah. So it's sort of a community, and I've deliberately tried to build it that way, right from the get go.

Jeff Goins, a long, long time ago, had a book out there about building your tribe, which I had at the time, and it's no longer available. But the general philosophy is a good one.

And I think that the biggest influx in that regard for me was Kevin Kelly, when he brought out his 1,000 true fans. And it was 2007 he brought that out, and he seems to have been a visionary, because that's how it's working out for everyone in the indie publishing field, is they're building up their readership.

James Blatch: Yeah. And that was incredible, because that's really just before the main revolution.

And realizing now, a thousand core fans, that's a fantastic base for an indie career.

Tracey C.P.: Yes, it is. And it does work. And this is one of the really interesting things. And this why I think he is a visionary, because he is right. He was right, all the way down the line.

I'm not a name. I've never been on a major best seller list. Nobody would recognize me, unless they've actually read my work.

And I'm not an outlier. I haven't gone off like the Adam Crofts of the world, and sold millions just off a few Facebook ads, and things like that. I've never had a breakout book.

All I do is put my books out there, write the best I can, entertain my readers. And because of the indie publishing platform, which lets me talk directly to readers, and with my newsletter, I have a career. I get to write full time just going what I love. They pay me for this. This is fabulous.

And all of that is because I have a tribe. I have my readers who are very loyal. And they support me. And that's great.

I consider myself kind of mid-list indie author, if there is such a thing. I'm not out there, I'm not on peaking or anything like that. I'm just rolling along, doing my stories, and everyone enjoys them, and I get to do it for a living.

James Blatch: Well, your peak's ahead of you.

Tracey C.P.: Oh, that would be nice.

James Blatch: You're gonna peak.

Tracey C.P.: Nobody really knows what's in the future, and that's the thing, too.

Particularly with indie publishing, this is the great thing about indie publishing, is that you can move along at a level that pays a few bills or all your bills or makes a living for you.

I'm not rolling around in cash, or anything like that. But I get to do it full time for a living, and that's great. But if a book does break, all the other books, all 75 or 80 of them, or however many out I have out at that stage, they're all gonna rise at the same time.

But in the meantime, it doesn't have to be that way. It's not like I have to sell thousands of books in the first 30 days, like you do with traditional publishing. I can just put a book out there, get on with the next one.

James Blatch: Do you meet your fans?

Tracey C.P.: Well, there's not huge numbers of fans in Edmond, Alberta, for a start. Most of my fans seem to be down in the states.

I have quite a large readership in Australia. I also have a very large one in Britain. But going anywhere is horribly expensive travel wise, and with Mark tied down with his day job at the moment, we have to pick our locations. But we are planning on going to England, maybe next year, for the London Book Fair.

James Blatch: In 2018?

Tracey C.P.: 2018, yeah. So we may end up meeting up. I'll talk to my street team, who are in Britain. And I have quite a few street team members in Britain, and see if we can set something up there.

So the intention is we'll travel, and we'll just catch up with fans where we go. It may be at a convention, maybe not. But we'll get there.

James Blatch: One or two authors have taken this a bit further, haven't they, with having kind of weekends where everyone's invited down.

Tracey C.P.: Yeah. Kevin J. Anderson, apparently, he is the street team king. His street teams have conventions. If he goes to a convention himself, they've got everything set up for him.

His street teams are just to die for, I think. They have the ultimate level. They're a good thing to strive for.

But I haven't got nearly as many street team members as what Kevin J. Anderson has. So at the moment, we're still getting to know each other and figuring things out.

Most weeks, we're still thing to figure out what Amazon wants with reviews, because they're changing constantly. We'll get there. I think Kevin J. Anderson is a great example of what you can do with street teams. But also, when you're an indie publisher, you've got a time factor date, too. You can't do everything. If you were to do everything everyone says is a really great idea, you'd never write anything. And for me, writing the books is the priority. So in time.

James Blatch: Well, writing clearly is what you do well. You've got a fantastic catalog of books. I'm excited about the next couple of years for your science fiction and now that you're getting your teeth properly into the indie marketing, I'm feeling big things are ahead.

Tracey C.P.: Well, thank you. That would be nice. But even if the big things don't happen, I've still got a very nice career. Thank you very much. I do love doing what I'm doing. So it's great.

James Blatch: I describe everybody from Western Australia as being slightly nutty, which might be an exaggeration. But I think if you know Australia well, you realize there is something slightly different about the people in the west coast.

Mark Dawson: Well, I've never been there, but I know we've got lots of students who are from Australia, and lots of listeners are Australian, and I get lots of people asking me for Australian times when we do webinars and things like that. And I always get those wrong. So you've probably alienated a good number of our audience, there.

James Blatch: But I haven't, really, because everyone on the east coast is sitting there, going, "Yeah, they are a bit weird on the west." And everyone on the west going, "Yeah, fair enough. Some are strange out here." It's very, it's a little bit more rural.

If you look at Australia, its population is a bit unbalanced. There's some on the coastal regions and mainly in the east. But yeah, it's pioneering, cowboy country on the west. They have those mines with remote controlled blasting the size of small planets.

I'm obsessed with Western Australia. Let's go there one day. We must actually go to Australia. I think at some point, in the SPF future, should be a trip to New Zealand, Australia. We got a real fan base out there, and people are ... would be very keen for us to go at some point. But it's not like nipping down the shops, is it?

Mark Dawson: No, it's a 24 hour flight from where we are. We'll do it one day. My wife's sister lives in Australia, so we've been talking for a while about taking the kids over there. So maybe it's something we could do at the same time.

James Blatch: One of the issues with that with the kids, is you want them to be old enough to remember it, don't you? So perhaps a little bit older than they are now?

Mark Dawson: Yes. And also a 24 hour flight with a five year old and three year old sounds like a nightmare.

James Blatch: Do you think from first class you'd hear them, though?

Mark Dawson: I might.

James Blatch: If they're in economy.

Mark Dawson: I could put my headphones on, and we'd be great. We'd let them roam free.

James Blatch: Anyway. I hope you found that inspirational. Not the chat about the airline flying, but Tracey, who is prolific, is the right word for her. Her character really knuckles down. Produces stuff that she loves writing, and I think that comes across.

Mark Dawson: Yes. And I hope you got some inspiration in finishing your own novel. 55 novels from her.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Mark Dawson: A few years, and you've been working on this one for a good couple of years now.

James Blatch: I know.

Mark Dawson: You're just lazy. Let's be honest.

James Blatch: Where do I even find the time?

Mark Dawson: I don't know. It's a disgrace.

James Blatch: Anyway, thanks for that pep talk. And on that note, that's it for this week. We're gonna have another author interview next week with Mel Sherratt.

And the week after that, we go back to marketing, some really good value stuff on the marketing front. But we know that the author interviews go down very well. I like to hear them, because they motivate me, and they kind of block out the noise I just heard from Mark.

Mark Dawson: Thank you.

James Blatch: That's in my head again. Or did you actually say that? And so, yeah. Do join us next Friday. And between now and then, have a great week, knuckling down and writing. Bye-bye.

Speaker 1: 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 enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a review on iTunes. We'll see you next time.