

EPISODE 100: MAKING EVERY SECOND COUNT – WITH KITTY BUCHOLTZ

Speaker 1: Two writers, one just starting out, the other, a bestseller. 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: Yes. Hello and welcome. Happy new year to you. Welcome to 2018 and The Self Publishing Formula Podcast. We've got our very own landmark, haven't we, Mark? Our landmark.

Mark Dawson: We're 100 today. That means we've been doing this for nearly two years.

James Blatch: We've been doing it for nearly two years, 100. I think that's quite an achievement. Week in, week out, and we've had some cracking interviews in that time as well. I should have at least a cricket bat to wave in the air for our century. I haven't got a cricket bat, but I do have a light saber.

Mark Dawson: Oh, dear.

James Blatch: Just acknowledging to the other Jedis that we've made our 100th anniversary.

Mark Dawson: This will be the last episode.

James Blatch: The Last Jedi episode. Yeah. Thank you for saying congratulations to us if you have just said that, if you have just muttered along in your morning jog or your drive listening to us. Thank you for your support over those 100 episodes. It means everything to us.

And we enjoyed in the podcast and we've got into quite a routine now, and I think there is a lot of work that goes on in the podcast. And especially as we film everything, we've improved it, production value over time. But we also have a rhythm and a routine to it, which I think makes it easy.

I try to make it as easy as possible for you, although people have just missed five minutes of you shouting at cables before you.

Mark Dawson: Yes. Yeah, I've lots of cable issues today and then my headphones didn't work because I hadn't plugged them in properly. And so I decided to throw them across the room.

James Blatch: Yeah, but that's it. We're here now and that's just shall we say the first hundred of The Self Publishing Formula podcast and we hope there'll be at least 100 more, maybe centuries more than that.

And well, we often talk about how busy we all are. It's been a very busy time of year. We are recording this, full disclosure, just before Christmas. Christmas day is in, oh I think it's a week today, isn't it?

Mark Dawson: What?

James Blatch: Is it?

Mark Dawson: Is it?

James Blatch: I think it is.

Mark Dawson: Crivens! No, it's a week today. We're recording it on the Monday before Christmas.

James Blatch: Yeah. This would go out beginning of 2018, which is one of the things that we do is to batch a little bit here and there, and this just

means that going into Christmas, everything is done through to the beginning of January so we can actually take a foot off the gas a little bit for that Christmas week, which is very important.

And if you're on the course, just be aware that during Christmas week if you email us in support, you will get an answer. It won't necessarily be five minutes after you've emailed us as it often is the rest of the year. We try and take a little.

Mark Dawson: James will be drunk.

James Blatch: I get drunk on Christmas eve and sober up a couple of days after New Year's day. So that's how that rolls.

Mark Dawson: Just about to say, if we're batching our episodes, you should really change your name.

James Blatch: James Batch.

Mark Dawson: James Batch.

James Blatch: My name is Batch, James Batch, but this is actually a really fantastic cheesy local radio link, isn't it? Because what we're talking about here is time management about the things that you can do.

Mark Dawson: Ah yes. Be professional.

James Blatch: You see what I'm doing there? The things that you can do to make things possible. Who's the big Johnny?

Mark Dawson: John Lee Dumas.

James Blatch: Dumas, who's a big podcast guy and he does a podcast every day. People say to him how can you do a podcast every day and he

batches. He probably does two days a month podcasting. He gets everything done in those two days.

That's one of the tips and tricks that we've taken to try and make sure this happens. You and I are very keen that our podcast remains contemporaneous.

Some podcasts we know are recorded in their entirety many, many weeks ahead of them going out. But we always want to be talking about, at least a couple of weeks, no more, before something going out. That means that we are at least getting together once a week to do this.

So there's a balance to be had in terms of batching, but yeah, we are going to be talking about time management.

Before we do that, I do want to mention actually that I've been on a podcast. I've been on Paul Tigg's podcast. He has a very good interview manner.

Paul's a bit like me in his background in that he was a broadcast professional. He worked in think in the independent sector. I was BBC, but I was happy to talk to him.

Paul Tigg interviewed me about my book writing and I know he's listened to the podcast and he did say, "We listen every week and we often wonder, James, what's happened to your book? You don't mention it very often."

In that podcast is an absolute, what's in all, description of where I am with my book should you want to listen to that. There's been some good feedback on it actually. I shall put the link into the show notes.

If you're on YouTube, it would be on the comments below. If you go onto our website, you'll see the link to that podcast there. Thank you, Paul, for taking an interest in SPF and me. It's good to have you part of the

community and I was very impressed with his interview structure as well. I was thinking listening to him that he has short precise questions, which is how you should do it.

Time management. Is this something that comes naturally to you, Mark or do you follow a methodology?

Mark Dawson: No, not really. I just kind of cram as much as I can I suppose. Getting into the office at 8:30 most mornings and then working through, perhaps taking an hour to go for a walk at lunchtime. Though I didn't today, and just pushing through as much as possible.

So do your writing first and answer emails, you know do SPF stuff, there's a lot going on. And yeah, I could probably do with someone to put a bit of structure in there, cause some days it can feel like you're swimming upstream all the time. There's always something else.

James Blatch: Yeah, well our guest today is Kitty Bucholtz and she's become a bit of an expert in the, specifically for authors, so that's why this interview is so great and why we wanted to do it.

Kitty's put together quite a detailed PDF giving an outlined structure of Approaching Time Management for authors specifically, and you can get that by going to SelfPublishingFormula.com/timemanagement all one word. And in there also is a bonus code to get \$50 off her course, Overshare, I think is \$150, maybe I've got that right?

That's definitely well worth having as well. Let's hear from Kitty, and then Mark and I, if we can find the time, will squeeze a chat in afterwards.

James Blatch: I was just saying to you off air, not something I would have read your name and immediately pronounced it like that, but.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, well what I've heard from an AT&T operator was that, if I was old enough to have watched the original Magnificent Seven, and if I could speak like I lived in Germany, it would be something like Booholtz.

James Blatch: Booholtz okay.

Kitty Bucholtz: But I can't do that.

James Blatch: I've been to a town in German called Bocholt, which probably is similar, so maybe that's where the name comes from originally, but anyway.

Kitty Bucholtz: I think it is.

James Blatch: Kitty I can cope with and we should mention for those people who are watching this on YouTube rather than just listening to that on their jog or morning commute, there is a large, furry, inanimate animal behind you, along with the very familiar post-it notes plotting system going on. It's so.

Kitty Bucholtz: That's right.

James Blatch: And a superhero on your left hand shoulder so, it's a pretty perfect SPF author's environment.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah. Yeah, we've got Wonder Woman, we've got the cuddly bear, and we've got the sticky note outline.

James Blatch: Yeah, I like it.

Kitty Bucholtz: I'm ready to work.

James Blatch: We are. We are ready to go. Okay look, Kitty, we're going to talk about time management, which I know is your specialty, and you've got

a giveaway as well for the audience, and a bit of a discount as well, which we're going to talk about in a bit.

But let's start as we always do, with a bit about you and I know you're somebody who wanted to write, wanted to get going.

You were hawking around the traditional industry and that didn't quite work for you, is that right?

Kitty Bucholtz: It didn't. I just happened to get into it at a time when chick-lit was something I had just pretty much found out about. I read the first couple of chapters of some books and I went, oh my gosh, if there weren't any rules about writing romance, I totally would have done it this way.

I rewrote the first part of what I had been working on, this kind of contemporary, regular romance, I had started some Christian romance also, but so I was working on this contemporary, rewrote the first couple chapters, read it to the two writers I was with on this writer's retreat.

They were rolling on the ground laughing, and one of them said, I am sending that to my agent, and then I had an agent, and it was, wow this is amazing. This is the story you wanna get right?

Four and a half years, and chick-lit had pretty much died about the time that I discovered it, and pretty much all the editors were saying, yeah, we're pretty much not buying that anymore, so why don't you send us something else.

But what was selling a lot at that time, my agent was like, you know send me some hot steamy sex stuff, I can sell that, and I just couldn't get myself to. I'm like ... Can I write something around sex? Can I just mention how great sex is but not actually write slot a and point b and?

James Blatch: So he wanted, he or she wanted full on, sort of erotica books?

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah.

James Blatch: As a tradition in publishing, that surprised me a little bit cause I know that, that has taken off a lot an ebook phenomenon.

It surprised me that traditional industry were after it.

Kitty Bucholtz: Well, it wasn't really erotica, it's just that there are lines of Harlequin, well actually some of them are gone now, but there are a lot of lines that they do still require 2 or 3 sex scenes in a book, and it needs to be more than a paragraph. I was willing to write a paragraph.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Kitty Bucholtz: So it just, it was the wrong time and place, you know? So four and a half years, we tried different things. I just couldn't find something that she liked that, something that she wanted to send out.

Finally, I was just like, I've heard of this Kindle, KDP thing. I'm going to go to the RWA National Conference one more time. I flew out the night after I graduated with my Master's Degree in Creative Writing in Sydney, flew to New York, pitched to everybody, got lots of great responses about that sounds like a great story, it looks like you're a good writer, but we just would have no idea where to sell it, how to sell it. And I thought well, I'm pretty sure I can find people to sell it to.

I took these crazy courses that were in Word, you know online classes from other romance writers who are like, okay you do this in Word, and then you do this, and then you upload it, and if it doesn't work go back and do this other thing in word.

There was no other wonderful software that we have now. And I put out the first, that first chick-lit book in September 2011.

James Blatch: Okay, and that was your self published, uploaded yourself, from Word?

Kitty Bucholtz: That's right.

James Blatch: And how did that go?

Kitty Bucholtz: You know, it was much like most people find. People who knew me were happy to give it a try, but you know, 7 billion people in the world didn't know who I was. So, it took me a really long time to get to the point where I even hit the thousand dollar mark in sales.

James Blatch: And where are you now?

Kitty Bucholtz: Now I am at the point where, okay so, my husband and I move around a lot because he works in the film industry, so he'll have a year job, a 4 month job, whatever. Which is why I'm living out of suitcases right this second, cause we just finished moving back from New Zealand and we're not sure where we're moving next.

James Blatch: You must have a big suitcase for that bear.

Kitty Bucholtz: The bear is new. I don't know what I'm going to do with the bear. I'm not sure there's a box big enough.

James Blatch: He's going to have his own airline seat.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah.

James Blatch: Anyway, I digress.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, it's going to be expensive.

What I've been trying to do is figure out, in the midst of filling out paperwork for Visas and making sure passports are updated, and calling movers and stuff, how am I gonna get my work done?

So when Mark opened his Facebook ads for authors, now Ads For Authors class, I was like okay, I've got to try this because doing nothing, the whole advice about just write more great books, isn't working. I have great books out that have 4 and a half star average reviews so, I'm pretty sure that they're readable, but haven't found the discoverability part yet.

That is the tricky part that's been happening with all the moving. And it's part of why the time management courses that I've been teaching have gotten more and more helpful for other people because I'm not the person who's lived in the same house for the last 20 years, and has the same setup and the same structure to my day.

So, I can help people to figure out, in all these little unique and individual situations. How am I going to get my work done?

James Blatch: Yeah, well that's what we're going to talk about and I think we all know from our own experience that moving house, and these big sort of life events, they do put everything back significantly. They're very difficult to keep normal work going around.

That's an extreme version of it, but all of us, and I speak personally as well, struggle with allocating time to the things that need to be done.

Kitty Bucholtz: Exactly.

James Blatch: I think this is somewhere you can help us, you can help me. It's usually the way I do these podcasts interviews, is I basically just use them for my own benefits and then hopefully someone else will get it.

Kitty Bucholtz: I love it.

James Blatch: Someone will get some benefit as well. So, let's talk about this. First of all, I guess this was a, just a necessity for you.

You had to master that time management?

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, because what was happening is that, I would just keep waiting until we've settled down, and then I'd get 2 or 3 months into a project. Well, I was probably half or 3 quarters of the way through the first draft and flying.

I mean everything in the world was going great for me and then I got a phone call from my husband that he was lying on the pavement. He had just gotten hit by a big semi-truck on his motorcycle. That changes your life. He's okay now. I call him Iron Man because he has a bunch of titanium in his leg but.

James Blatch: Wow.

Kitty Bucholtz: But yeah, any of these things could happen to anybody. Big things, little things, and suddenly you're like, but now I've been derailed and what do I do?

And so what I've found is if you can think of all the things that have derailed you in the past, whether little things like ... Well what's about ready to derail us for the weekend is that we are finally making time to watch Punisher on Netflix all the way through. Big Marvel fans, even though I also love Wonder Woman, my DC girl.

If you can figure out all the things that do normally derail you and come up with a plan for each of them, for how you're going to manage it.

I'm pretty sure that I just heard Joanna Penn say that she took Facebook app off of her phone. She's just not going to use it on her phone anymore. Well, if she had been using it a lot on her phone when she should have been maybe doing something else, she's already freed up more time that she can be doing on the important things in her life.

Anytime that we can figure out a way around, it's sort of like having a fire extinguisher. If there is a fire, you know exactly what to do.

James Blatch: I tell you what's also interesting, just on that point is, how individual all of these are, because I'm pretty certain Mark Dawson is the opposite of Joanna Penn in that he only has social media on his phone. He doesn't have it on his desktop.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah and that's something I'm thinking about.

James Blatch: Yeah, and for me, that's slightly more logical as well because when you're on your desktop, when you can be writing and do more productive things than when you're sitting on a bus or something, when you got your phone you can perhaps do social media.

Obviously for Jo that works differently.

Kitty Bucholtz: Right, right, and she probably has some other different reason for it as well. So, that's exactly right, if you can figure out what are the things that usually get you off track.

It might be, oh my gosh, I was just supposed to be ... I still went but I was teaching a How To Write And Finish A Short Story at an 8th grade class yesterday, and it wasn't until I was 5 minutes from the school that I got a text from the teacher, that she wasn't going to be there. Which kind of threw me into the, wait, wait, but.

And then I just had to focus, okay remember I'm not here for this teacher, I'm here for the kids. You can keep going with what you're supposed to do. But she got derailed because her son had some sort of breathing attack and she was in the ER all night. You know, these things happen.

I was really, really focused on getting someplace fast and I hit a curb, and I flattened my tire and didn't get there at all. These things happen.

So some of them, you can't really do much about except for, you know I have a tendency to have a notebook in my purse in case I'm some place where I'm in a waiting situation, and some apps on my phone that I can do, at least a little bit of sort of important stuff, if I'm in a waiting situation.

But then there are things like, there's an app called Freedom that I think is still available only for Mac users, and it allows you, it's actually got a whole bunch more aspects to it than when I first got it, but it allows you to turn off the internet entirely to your computer. Or just to turn it off for certain websites. And you can turn it off just for like, from 10 to noon, that's your writing time, no internet. So there are things like that if internet things are just things that you cannot keep yourself from doing.

And then you just have to think again, what are the distractions in your life?

Right this second, the window in front of me is looking out the back fence of my friend's house, used to look out over just dirt, and now there's a big subdivision being built and so I have to put on my noise canceling headphones and not be facing the window, because otherwise I'm like, oh what are they doing? Oh that's how you build a house that way, and I just can't focus.

James Blatch: Yeah. It's like when you're subconsciously looking for a reason not to knuckle down and so some work and suddenly, doing the cleaning, getting the vacuum cleaner out, suddenly a pressing priority.

Kitty Bucholtz: That's right.

James Blatch: I can see that on a micro level I guess is the way I'm looking at it. We can do that, we often do do that so we'll think so I'm distracted by sun, let's pull the blind down, the sun's in my eyes, whatever.

But on the macro level, pinpointing why you're not getting stuff done. That's something I struggle with a little bit.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, alright, so again you have to think about your own personality, what it is that you know works for you, and if you're not sure, you know you'll have to try a couple of things until you find that thing that, this works for me.

What I've found, and what a lot of neuroscientists and brain study people say, is that having a list of things in your head isn't as effective as having them written down.

The other thing about having things written down is that, and what I'd like to do if there's time, is I'm going to cover everything that I cover in my class but just in bullet points so that we can get people actually working on their calendar for 2018.

James Blatch: Let's do it.

Kitty Bucholtz: Alright. So this is the way that I look at it.

From an overview standpoint, I think the best thing to do is to do a brain dump of everything on to a piece of paper. A master list of everything, not just writing related but if you've got kids, family events, vacations, all the holidays you know that you'll be off for a day or a week, whatever.

Planning in, when we get to that point you'll have to also keep in mind that you'll have to plan in some sick days, emergency days, you know kids sick days.

You can't plan every single minute of the 365 days of the year cause there's just no room for error, and there's always a little bit of that in life.

Once you've got the master list down, depending on whether or not this is the first thing you've done, the first time you've done it this way, and you have a tendency to have a lot of big goals, you might need to breathe into a paper bag for a minute, because I have a tendency to put so much stuff

James Blatch: Yeah, it's shocking.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, it is shocking, how could you think that you could get all that done? But that is why you're not always getting everything done.

Because you have a whole bunch of plans and they're not, they're not really specifically planned out. You know, we know about the SMART goals. We need to have goals that are:

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time related.

What we're going to do with that master list is we're going to prioritize it and we're going to create some SMART goal aspects to it.

So for instance, maybe you have two kids and one's in soccer and one's in band and so there's going to be some events that you know you need to go to.

And at first you might not really have any idea what dates they might be, but you probably have an idea, probably you know, 10 nights out of the school year per kid. You can write that down to the side or something.

You want to make sure that you've got anything that has to do with, if you do anything having to do with, what am I trying to say? Helping your parents, taking care of your parents, anything like that.

It's a lot of the things that we forget are the reason why we think we have more time than we do. Cause the things that we don't actually plan that time for.

For instance, I'm a big proponent of getting enough sleep, however much is the right amount for you. For my husband it's like 6 and a half, 7 and a half. For me it's definitely 8 and it's gotta be 8.

But then all the other things that you have to do, brush your teeth, take a shower, get dressed, if you're a woman do your hair, put on your makeup, you know? So in that way a woman who does those things has automatically got less hours in a week than a man whose like, I'm in, I'm out, I ran my fingers through my hair, I'm done.

James Blatch: Well something that's the same for both, I've noticed this, is going to the gym. So I'll go do these in the winter, so I'll tend to go to the gym and do a little class, it's 40 minutes, and I think in my stupid little mind, that's 40 minutes.

It's not 40 minutes, because it takes, I'll go out to my bedroom, I'll put on the gym stuff that I wear, I've gotta get there a bit early so I can change into actual shorts and stuff, then you're gonna get back and have a shower, it's an hour and a half.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah. Yes.

James Blatch: I think I can do 40 minutes today, and then the workout and it's suddenly 5 o'clock and I've gotta pick the kids up.

Kitty Bucholtz: But if you were thinking to yourself, alright I need an hour and a half a day, 4 days a week, and then you planned it in, you wouldn't be alarmed by it, you wouldn't be surprised, and you wouldn't feel guilty about, my goodness doing something good for yourself.

Which is why, it's one of those things that we, I don't know why we feel that way but we feel bad about taking time to do something healthy for ourselves. But if it's planned.

James Blatch: Programed to be guilty.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, yeah, I think so. And so what you're going to find is there's going to be a few things that probably need to be moved on to next year's list.

If you're thinking, I need to finish this series, and start the next series and so that's five books, and then you look at all the other things that you have to do.

Now maybe you're single, you live alone, you don't even have a cat, I mean there's not reason to think that you can't get an awful lot more done than somebody who's married, family, whatever. But looking at your own life ...

Just looking at the master list, do you think really you can get all that done?

Maybe we should move some of it to next year's list so, that's the next step, because you want to walk a line between, if you start the year feeling discouraged, you need to give yourself some easy wins, particularly in the beginning.

You need to build your confidence back up. I can do this. And so maybe you're going to have fewer and smaller goals for the first couple of months of the year. If you have already come off of a banner year, you're excited, you can't wait to get going on the next year.

It's interesting, I'm learning that I'm kind of a neuroscience geek, I love all this stuff, I can't learn enough of it. And what seems to be true in general of the human brain, is that if you have a big goal and you reach 90 percent of it, you've actually accomplished more than if you have a smaller achievable goal that maybe you reach 99 or 100 percent of. So, that's an interesting, but you have to think of where you started the year emotionally, since writing is an emotional task.

James Blatch: The sort of context of expectation I guess it is. But I think, just one promo, cause you go along here.

First of all, we should say that you are doing a handout, is that going to contain these bullet points?

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, so what I'm going to do is, because the electronic PDF can be as long as I want it to be, I'm going to have some of these bullet points and then I've got another two pages of additional tips.

James Blatch: Okay. I don't want people to think they've got to necessarily make notes during the interview. You can get the download, and we'll give you the URL at the end of the interview.

Kitty Bucholtz: That's right.

James Blatch: One thing I think is really great about this, straight away, is that you plan to do things like go to your son or your daughter's football or whatever it is at school, rather than feeling it's an intrusion in your life when the time comes.

It's something right from the beginning that's a priority for you because you're only going to get one chance to see your child at that stage of life, doing something. That's a really great way of looking at going to school and watching your child, rather than at the end of a busy day, thinking oh

now I haven't banked for this, I'm going to have to drag myself to school and lose an hour.

A really positive health lifestyle thing I think.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, and there's a couple other things having to do with that. I don't have kids, so these are not necessarily things that I've dealt with personally, but as I teach the class and somebody asks me a question, then I have to think, like what is a good solution to this?

Somebody has asked me a question having to do with their kids and everything, and I said well, depending how old they are, and how much they understand about what you do and how your job is at home, versus maybe the other parent's job is away from home. You can sit down with a family and find out, for this year, what are the top 2 or 3 goals per person.

If Johnny's at an age where he just really wants mom or dad to show up to every single game, and that's his thing, then maybe you're like, okay, I can show up to every single game, but half the games, I need to also work at the same time. I'm going to be paying attention to you but I'm not going to give you my undivided attention.

Or maybe they're older and I'll only go to the home games or I'm going to go, you pick the four most important games, say you're in high school, the four most important games where you're just dying to beat this particular team. Those are the games I'm going to be there, no working.

You can do some kind of give and take with each person, because what's going to happen is, like, in a different example, somebody was saying, my husband's recently retired and I can't get him out of my hair, unless he's doing what he wants to do, he's happy. But if I'm doing what I want to do, he wants to do something else with me.

I said well, okay, try to figure out some of the times where there's a thing that he wants to do, and you agree, he goes and does that and then you get to have that writing time.

And so, instead of saying, well in my case, my husband plays too many hours of video games, in her case I think it was golfing, then I would say okay, on this, on the second and fourth Saturday, you get to play video games all day and I won't say a word. And I get to write all day and you won't come and bother me and ask me to do things with you or for you whatever. And then we'll have dinner and spend the evening together.

You're making plans where everybody gets to chose what they want to do that will make them happy and you're getting more writing done in a way that nobody feels resentful of you taking, what seems to be time away from them because you work at home.

James Blatch: I can hear some people thinking, where's the spontaneity? In this, is there space for this?

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, so that's the thing. If you're going to plan to have a book a month done, I would be hard pressed to help you find some spontaneity in that.

If you want to get two books done this year, and again that was one reason why I said, you know maybe it could be your second and fourth Saturdays or when you do these very specific planned events and the other Saturdays are the, what do we want to do, let's just run off together.

But there is, I definitely think that spontaneous doing things with friends, family, those are some of the things that give you that boost of adrenaline and happy endorphins and stuff. And so, this is a weird way to say it, I think you need to plan to have time for it.

James Blatch: Yeah, some allowance in the system for.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah.

James Blatch: Yeah, okay that makes sense, I can understand that.

I think there is probably a balance here because the idea of having every minute of every day accounted for, for the next 12 months, cause nobody really wants that right?

Kitty Bucholtz: No, no, and even if you tried to do it, it wouldn't work and then you'd just be frustrated.

James Blatch: Yeah, so it's having that flexibility. Good.

How are we getting on through the list?

Kitty Bucholtz: After you've got your big list of all the things you want to do, like how exactly would you write, get three books done this year on a list that has 12 months and 365 days?

Then you can break anything that can be broken down into smaller pieces, particularly so that it will fit into a month, but if you can get it broken down into pieces that fit into a week, then you can know when you're behind or when you're ahead, because ... By the end of February I want to have the first draft of this book done.

By the end of March, I want to have gotten the edits back from my editor, and depending on, let's just say it's a new series, depending on how many edits it is, let's say I want to finish my edits by April 15th, but that means that I'm going to have also needed a book cover by the time I'm done with edits.

Maybe we're thinking about one more set of edits and then proofing, so by the way, I need to plan that I have contacted somebody to start my book

cover, by say February 1st, so that you don't get to the point, this has happened to me, which is why I've figured it out.

If you wait until your book is done to start your cover ...one of my cover designers, she has such a waiting list that, I think right now, she's booking people for June, something like that.

James Blatch: Right.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah.

James Blatch: So you need to be planning.

Kitty Bucholtz: Right. Planning the different steps. But when you break it down into these steps, it becomes much more manageable and you can figure out, yeah I understand, this is the deadline for just this one step.

So let's say that you're like my friend whose son was in the ER all night, and she lost at least a day, and say this was gonna be her big writing day. Well then she just needs to sort of look at:

A. One of the other things I suggest is that you plan in, you know how if you had one of those outside jobs, you might get 12 paid holidays a year and 5 paid sick days a year or something like that, plus vacation days. So I always suggest using that as kind of a guide and giving you some free space.

You can't plan all 365 days. It also gives you the ability of, I think 2 years in a row, I planned a mental health day every month. So as a day for me to go do anything I darn well wanted.

James Blatch: I like that day.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah. Yeah. Sometimes I went to the movies and saw 2 or 3 movies in a row, and sometimes I went hiking, and sometimes I went to lunch with a friend. And those are the things that will keep us from getting exhausted and overwhelmed because we aren't computers.

James Blatch: Yep. I think we should pause on that one second, because I think that's a really important thing for those of us who work for ourselves. **Whether you're an author or in our case, doing this stuff as well, there is a real danger of working all the time.**

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah.

James Blatch: And that's something I definitely suffer from and, I'm really going to take on board, this idea of planning like a day, occasionally, of just not working because I'm not very, I'm really not very good at that at all.

Kitty Bucholtz: Me too.

James Blatch: And whilst I might take myself off to the cinema and the evening with a friend and or occasionally during the day. I am going to see Star Wars next week during the day, but that's like once every 2 years, new Star Wars film comes out.

But I'm pretty certain, I work for myself and all the freedoms you get with that except I probably get less annual leave than somebody who works a 9 to 5 job cause they take their 25 days as you get in the UK, and I don't.

That's a good one and I think that for everyone listening who works for themselves, and that's an important one.

Kitty Bucholtz: And I think it'll help, no matter where you're at in life and how many people are an immediate part of your life. I think that it will help everybody to be happier, and honestly, every time that we're happier, more joyful, more enthusiastic about life, the people around us are

naturally going to feel that pouring back on to them. That just makes everybody happier, which in my mind, makes it an actual important ... Part of life to make sure joy is part of your life.

James Blatch: Absolutely.

Kitty Bucholtz: Okay, so we've broken it down into pieces, now we're just going to figure out which of these pieces belong on which month. You probably have some idea of what month you're going to take the family vacation.

You need to also keep in mind birthdays and anniversaries, which ones are the ones that are going to require more time? If your kids are at that age where they're going to have 25 little kids over, and there's going to be a bouncy castle or a clown, or whatever. We all know that takes way more time and planning than we thought when we started it, the week before the birthday party.

I just did that with my husband's 50th birthday. We went to Disney World. And it took a lot of time and planning and then all that work I wasn't doing in the 2 months beforehand, because I was planning it. And then like you said, planning going to the gym, it's not just 40 minutes. So going away on vacation is not just one week.

James Blatch: That's a very good point.

Kitty Bucholtz: And then also, I think you've been doing a lot of traveling and at different times of the year I do a lot of traveling. When I started realizing, because again you're keeping track of what, not just distractions, but what else is keeping you from writing during time that you had marked out to be writing time?

I found that the amount of time that it took me to get packed up and ready to go on a trip, and then get unpacked and get myself back into normal life

after a trip, was 1 to 2 days on each side, depending on how long the trip was. So I started just putting that on my calendar. If I got some writing done, yay! Bonus!

Then you start, again, now you're thinking about how you can make your mind be more confident and feeling like, it's that, doing for yourself what we say we should do for customers, which is under-promise and over-deliver.

James Blatch: It's back to managing your own expectations of, almost tricking yourself into feeling happy that you've done something.

Kitty Bucholtz: Exactly. And then two other things that I think are hugely important, and one can also be related to being important for tax purposes, I think that everybody should track their accomplishments. However you want to do it.

I actually started using a journal. We're writers so people have a tendency to give us these cool journals and we have a stack, and how am I gonna get through them all? Quite a few years ago now, I took one and I thought, I'm gonna start writing down what I have gotten accomplished because we had been doing all this moving and I felt like I was never getting anything done.

I specifically remember, the year that my husband was in the motorcycle accident, thinking work wise that was the most wasted year ever. And then thankfully I had already been working on this done journal, and I went back all the things that I did accomplish, under the circumstances, it was shocking. I was like, oh well good on me, but if I hadn't written it down, I wouldn't have known that I should be happy and content with the amount that I got done.

And also it will help you to see, sometimes people are like, but I don't know how long it takes me to write a book. I mean you're still in a place where you're trying to figure out how long it takes you to write a book right?

James Blatch: 10 to 20 years I guess.

Kitty Bucholtz: That seems to be average for book one.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Kitty Bucholtz: But every year things change, you get better at some things, you learn new things. When you're keeping track, even a little bit about, it takes me about six months to write a solid first draft, of this kind of book. But it only takes me two months to write a solid first draft of that kind of book. That is good information that you wouldn't have known if you hadn't been tracking it.

Now I'm not sure about in the UK and other places, but in the United States, in that beginning part when you're between zero and now I'm making enough money for it to be a real ... I apologize that sometimes I'm trying to figure out, talking so fast.

James Blatch: To pay the mortgage.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah. When you can pay the mortgage. Yeah.

James Blatch: Or to live off it, yeah.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah that's right. So somewhere in there, you're putting on your taxes, that you have these expenses and you're showing an awful lot of time, lots at the very beginning, and at some point, just to know that the IRS, could come back to you.

If they did audit you, you've got this journal of every single day that you've worked and all the things that you've done on those days. And if all that work that you've written down, is in fact related to the kind of career that

you're in, it's your security blanket from a tax viewpoint. But also I think that the mental sense of accomplishment is the big part.

James Blatch: Yes.

Kitty Bucholtz: And then leading off of that, this is the other thing that too many of my friends have too much of a problem with, so I really want all the listeners to pay attention.

You need to plan your rewards. And you can't wait for publishing a book to be your reward because James, you've been working on yours for a little while, I think it took me 7 or 8 years from the time that I first started writing down the idea to Little Miss Lovesick, to the day it actually showed up on Amazon. I'd written a whole bunch of drafts of that book but nonetheless, that's a long time. And if I had waited 8 years to reward myself, then I'm not really sure how I would have kept on going, cause I'm kind of reward centric.

Look for times when you can say, okay, if I meet my deadlines this week, I get an ice cream, or whatever.

James Blatch: Okay.

Kitty Bucholtz: If I'm able to get ahead of my deadlines for the month, and I have this extra day, we're all going to the amusement park, the whole family. Or whatever it is, that you like and whatever matters to you, and it doesn't necessarily have to be anything that costs money or anything.

But something where, and not just doing it, but say we're doing this because, I just finished the first draft, or I just finished the final draft, or I finally got, I had a goal to get three books out in this series, the third one just came out. This was a big goal for me, you know it took me X amount of months or years to get it done.

And this is the reward because it changes things in your brain, and it helps your brain to understand the things that are important to you, because you're making a note of them, and you're celebrating them, and you're making these positive thoughts and feelings come out of having done this thing.

It actually helps your brain to wire itself in a way where it's like, oh, because your brain ... Just the way it's made for whatever reason, and thank you God, it wants to be happy. And it wants you to be happy. So when you say, I'm happy I did this, then your brain says, oh well we can do more of that. So I really think that this is the important part.

James Blatch: It's a virtuous circle.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, exactly, because then, I mean think of the excitement that happens when you do get some sort of sense of accomplishment and you notice it, and say it, and celebrate it a little bit. And then it kind of makes you go, ah, I just wanna go do more now.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Kitty Bucholtz: So I think that's helpful.

James Blatch: This is great Kitty.

Kitty Bucholtz: Oh good, I'm so glad.

James Blatch: Have you got more of the actual list to go through?

Kitty Bucholtz: You know what. Yeah. It's a month long class. I have probably more information than we can cover today.

James Blatch: Yeah, okay. You've very kindly putting together this PDF, which we'll give out. In fact, let's come up with the, in the time honored fashion of SPF, I make up a URL, which I'll say in an interview.

Kitty Bucholtz: I love it.

James Blatch: And then we have to stick to it cause I've said it. So we're gonna come up with Selfpublishingformular/timemanagement. Okay so all one word, time management. There you go and people will know what that is and you go there and you can get Kitty's PDF.

I want to ask you a little bit about your non-fiction side of things.

How you've developed this expertise and hopefully your, it's part of your business as well, I think you've got an online course, you've got a book?

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, so again with the whole moving an awful lot I was trying to figure out, I love, love, love to teach. I taught at a college doing software classes for a little while, and I found out that the teaching part is actually the only part I love.

James Blatch: Okay.

Kitty Bucholtz: I had to figure out, how can I do this in a way where I can walk away at the end of the day and there are no meetings, and no accreditation boards to come to, and that sort of thing.

I'm moving, I was supposed to speak to this group and now I can't speak to this group because I'm moving to another country or something. And the whole Yahoo group thing had been so popular for a while, and the Romance Writers of America, an awful lot, like I don't know how many but so many chapters of that organization had started doing online classes as

kind of some fundraising for them. To cover just the costs of their meeting room and the different things that they do.

I had been helping people with things and then somebody said will you teach this class for us at RWA and you get half of the proceeds and I'm like, that sounds fun. And the more I taught, the more I liked it. And the more I was getting really good feedback.

But then, after a while, technology changes but not necessarily all the organizations change with it. I wanted to do a lot more than just email lectures and so I decided to start my own website where I could use video, and live video.

In fact, I'm going to do a live video segment of my class for the first time, in January 2018, where in addition to the videos that you're watching and the lectures that you can get printed because everybody learns a different way. Some people with audio, some people with video, some people want to read it, and mark it up, and highlight it.

I'm going to have a four-hour live session online where it's similar to this, we're just dialing into a website on the browser and we go through everything, but we're doing it at the moment. So by the end of that session, you should be well on your way to actually having things marked out on your calendar, so that you can at least get started, even though the class will continue to go on for several weeks after it.

James Blatch: You have this as a paid online course?

Kitty Bucholtz: Yes, yes, I started, again, it was just always one of those things where somebody asks you for information and after a while you've been asked enough, you're like I should do something.

So I had started this workshop called Write Now Workshop, WRITE, Write Now Workshop, in 1998, because I was in a writers group where there were

all these people who knew a ton of stuff. But it was such a great writers group, there's new people coming in all the time, but then they didn't know anything, and so we needed to catch them up. So once a year, I would have all the old people teach all the new people things you know? And then it just kept on going. So I've got Writenowworkshop.com has this time management class on it.

I've done a self publishing class several times, but I haven't been happy with making it as ... The people that I've been reaching out, for the self publishing, or the people who've been reaching out to me, are a little bit scared of technology, and I've been trying to figure out a way to teach it in a way that they can be as comfortable and confident as possible. So I'm redoing that class more and I've taught classes on *7 Ways To Market Without Spending Any Money*.

You know how it is, either you're asking questions of somebody that you think knows the answers or, vice versa. And I just love to teach so, in fact I've been teaching these 8th graders and they're so fun. They're just so enthusiastic.

James Blatch: So how old are 8th graders? For a UK person, like me?

Kitty Bucholtz: So 8th grade is like 13, 12.

James Blatch: Okay.

Kitty Bucholtz: And they're just so on fire. They come up with these ideas about volleyball teams on the moon. I'm like, okay that's awesome.

James Blatch: That is awesome.

Kitty Bucholtz: So I think I'm going to do something like a free class for young people too, just how to get started writing, cause it's just fun. So yeah, that's me, I can't help myself.

James Blatch: Well Kitty, that is you, and it's infectious, and it's been the classic SPF Podcast interview that we always want is one that's entertaining but also, one that people take some value away from, it's been absolutely down the line.

Kitty Bucholtz: I'm so glad.

James Blatch: Cause I knew you would be. I knew you would be. So it's been brilliant and yeah, we've racked up 40-odd minutes very quickly.

Kitty Bucholtz: Oh my goodness. I was trying to talk faster, sorry.

James Blatch: And I don't know if I budgeted for that today in my thing.

Kitty Bucholtz: Well we'll have to cut out all of my jokes.

James Blatch: No we're keeping them in. That was the last point I was going to make really, is I think treating time like you would treat your accounts or you treat another aspect of your life like your bank balance, there's no sensible reason why you would not do that.

And you know, we have a budget, I do the budget SPF and we look at it every month and we see where we are. Why on earth don't we do that with time?

And exactly the way you've laid that out, gives you that ability to do that. Even, if that means that after two months into the year, you know your year is not going to be what you planned it to be, but that's okay, cause you know that. You can make changes, you can manage your expectation.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yes. Yes. Exactly.

James Blatch: Great. Good. Well I feel quite inspired by this Kitty. Thank you very much indeed. That URL again, I should say is Selfpublishingformula.com/timemanagement all one word and I think, have I got this right, you're going to throw in a little sweetener for your online course?

Kitty Bucholtz: I am. You and Mark, and the team have always been so great about giving out so much helpful information that I, and so many people have gotten, that I was trying to figure out how I can do the same so, the class is normally \$150 but I'd like to give anybody who's listening a \$50 off coupon.

We'll put that on the PDF so, just as long as you've got the PDF, there'll be a code or something right on there.

Class starts January 15th, 2018. But if I have too many people, because I like to keep it small so I can help each person individually, I'll just open a second class in February.

James Blatch: Okay. That's superb Kitty, and we really appreciate that. So this is actually unusual for us in the, I'm doing the interview here where it's 14th, 15th of December, I don't know where we are. And it's going out very soon, so in a couple of weeks, so people will get this very quickly. Brilliant. Thank you so much indeed Kitty. Whereabouts are you then? So you're traveling a lot? Where are you now?

Kitty Bucholtz: Thank you. Yeah, so right this second I'm in Southern California, it's near Temecula, which is between Los Angeles and San Diego.

James Blatch: That sounds like a nice part of the world there.

Kitty Bucholtz: Yeah, oh my gosh. Today it's supposed to be like 27 degrees. This is not Christmas weather.

James Blatch: Right. Well it's 3 here so.

Kitty Bucholtz: Right, well and my husband's been interviewing with a company in Sweden, so who knows. Maybe I'll be around your side.

James Blatch: There's been some snow there as well. Okay. Brilliant. Well Kitty, thank you so much indeed, stay in touch with SPF cause it's been great to have you nearby and we'll revisit this at some point in the future so thank you so much indeed for coming on.

Kitty Bucholtz: Thanks so much, James, really appreciate you guys.

James Blatch: Kitty Bucholtz. I don't think I would have guessed Bucholtz.

Mark Dawson: No, no I wouldn't have guessed that either.

James Blatch: But it is. But anyway, there's somebody whose thought long and hard and worked through this grind and she has an infectious enthusiasm for life as well, which is great.

A couple of things really came home to me. One of the things was, I worked 9 to 5 jobs or worked for somebody else up until 2013, when I quit that, and you were a little bit after that. And actually I'm still in an adjustment period to working for myself where you don't get 25 days annual leave and you basically always took that, didn't you? If you had a job and you get 25 days, I think we got more than that at the BBFC, you took every single day and sometimes you tried to sneak 1 or 2 more.

But as we work for ourselves, no one gives us annual leave days, we book a holiday here and there, but actually pretty bad at taking holiday, pretty bad at taking days off and it'd be really interesting to count up how many days we actually do take off. That's something that's definitely worth thinking about. Taking a day off here and there and just cutting work out for 24

hours ... I thought Kitty had a really good way of approaching it. It was, I did take it up with her, it sounded, it's quite methodical and not quite so romantic, and not very spontaneous to plan what I'm going to do, something spontaneous, you're going to plan your spontaneity type thing.

But there's a lot to be said for having some thought going into it in advance, to allow yourself to have that time, rather than this constant feeling in your head that you're running to catch up. Which is probably where you and I are most of the time, to be honest.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, definitely. I do feel that way. Yeah, it's definitely something I could improve on. I think a little bit of structure is a good idea but it's got to be melded with spontaneity as well, which also helps because things come up all the time, in across all business, parts of the business that we run, writing and SPF as well, that require fairly fast adapting to new circumstances. So it is something that, you need to have that ... I think a bit more structure is probably not a bad idea at all.

James Blatch: I think you are somebody who likes the sudden idea and implementation. You thrive on that.

Mark Dawson: Yeah. I do yeah. If I think of something I don't like waiting for weeks to do it, I like to do it immediately and fortunately that's the way we work quite well at that with the SPF side of things, I can come up with something that might sound a bit crazy and then we'll try it. We don't need to ask anybody else. It's nice to be our own boss.

You can be there very quickly and try something else. It could be some sort of advertising or promotion or even writing, you can do that without having to go and get things signed in triplicate by three different bosses who will all disagree. So we have maximum flexibility, but then at the same time, that flexibility needs to be married to a bit of structure as well.

James Blatch: Yeah, what's interesting about that is that I think that we do something naturally that big companies are trying to do now.

There's this friend of my mom's, who works for a big supermarket chain in the UK, is quite senior with them, and he said they're doing this. And I described how we worked. So they're trying to get to the stage where you have an idea, you implement it, but you don't do what you just did, you don't ask 15 people for permission.

And it might not be a fully formed idea and it might not work, but you still do it. You just go ahead and do it, which is how we operate.

Start ups, and the agile companies, and the Facebooks or the rest of it, operate like that. But big companies find it very difficult to do that, and they feel that they are at a disadvantage because of that, in this modern world.

We can do something that they are, they think a bit of witchcraft and they're trying to implement but, and that I guess doesn't lend itself necessarily to time management. And although the way Kitty describes it, you could plan in around that sort of thing as well, so I think it sort of definitely holds with the courses and the PDF is something I think, if you go through, is something you'll be able to implement the bits ... That are gonna work for you.

So just a reminder, you can get that at Selfpublishingformula.com/timemanagement and on that is that discount voucher for \$50 bucks off Kitty's course.

I keep noticing when your hand comes into view, you've got, have you been in a nightclub?

Mark Dawson: Yeah. I went to a concert on Saturday. And it won't come off.

James Blatch: You went to a concert with young people, where you get a stamp on your hand?

Mark Dawson: Yeah, I know. I felt like being back in university again. And this is, I went to see EMF.

James Blatch: That's unbelievable.

Mark Dawson: It was unbelievable. It was a blast from the past. Yeah, so in East London on Saturday night, which was very entertaining. And then on Sunday I had a very nasty delayed reaction hangover. And whilst you were snorting to your tissue.

James Blatch: Yes. I've had man flu.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, well I had a self-inflicted wound, so no sympathy for me. But, yeah it was good.

James Blatch: Well I'm pleased you got out.

Mark Dawson: It doesn't happen often.

James Blatch: No ... You went to somebody else didn't you?

Mark Dawson: I saw Fish, Depeche Mode.

James Blatch: Good. Okay. Thank you Kitty for our interview this week. Welcome to 2018. Thank you for our 100 episodes.

We have selected our book collab person, and we're working in the background on that, so that's gonna come out soon.

But stay part of the Patreon process if you would like to be, stay a Patreon supporter, I should say, if you'd like to be chosen for the next one. And we're looking forward to that in the next few weeks.

I think that's it Mark. Got anything else to say on our 100th episode?

Mark Dawson: No, I would say Happy New Year to everyone. We've had a great, what are you doing?

James Blatch: Well, I was gonna show these, I finally got these pictures. Look. They've arrived.

Mark Dawson: Oh god.

James Blatch: One of our.

Mark Dawson: You look good and I look like a pedophile.

James Blatch: Our listeners did. And yeah, I love Ryan, even though he obviously is a caricature of my nose, which I am aware is not the smallest nose, is exaggerated, but that's okay, it's a caricature. This is hilarious. He actually said that he preferred working on this one because it was more fun for him. Cause I think I described it as a tramp who's found a gun.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, that's pretty good. That's always been pretty good.

James Blatch: Yeah, so we should say thank you. I can't remember his name. It was terrible of me, and I can't decipher the signature at all. I will give a proper shout out, thank you so much indeed for sending it. Mark and I are quietly thrilled about those so thank you very much indeed.

Mark Dawson: Well you are.

James Blatch: I am. Well I'll keep yours then.

Mark Dawson: Don't throw darts at me.

James Blatch: I think the problem with Mark is you're not prepared to confront what you really look like.

Mark Dawson: No, that's very true. Yeah. Thanks for that.

James Blatch: Right, I'm dying. I need to go and dose up on Vitamin C again and we will be back next week with another guest and another episode of the Self Publishing Formula Podcast. Thank you so much for listening. Have a great.

Mark Dawson: Happy New Year.

James Blatch: Yes, Happy New Year. Bye, bye.

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