

EPISODE 107: THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET – WITH CHRIS DUCKER

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: Hello and welcome to the Self Publishing Formula Podcast with James and Mark on this gray and drizzly Friday, but we got the cheery sound of children playing in the distance which we sometimes have about this time if we record because you're next to a nursery, Mark?

Mark Dawson: Yes. They're gambling and frolicking in the meadow.

James Blatch: Gambling?

Mark Dawson: Yeah, well not that kind of gambling.

James Blatch: You've survived moving house, which is well known to be one of the most stressful periods in anyone's life. How did it go?

Mark Dawson: It is stressful but I find throwing money at things makes things less stressful, so we threw quite a lot of money at some removal people and they moved us, they even came in and packed everything up, put it in the back of a truck, and delivered to new rooms in the new house.

It's been pretty good actually, it's been quite straightforward. The only issue now has been finding things in boxes, which is obviously kind of a perennial problem for that, especially given, as we record this, I'm off on

holiday tomorrow, so packing everything for the kids especially is going to be a challenge I think.

Yes, as in a couple of days time I'm hoping to be relaxing on a beach in Tenerife, so the piña colada in one hand and my Kindle in the other probably.

James Blatch: That's a really good way of doing this. So you get through the darkest moments of your move now and the next week it'll all be a distant dream as you're on the beach.

We should say that you write in your office, I think, in Salisbury, don't you? I think for some people who are in a habit and it takes quite a while to get yourself into a place where you work regularly and write regularly, to move house can be quite disruptive I think to that routine. But you're insulated from that to an extent.

Mark Dawson: Well I am, but on the other hand I've got a house to unpack so this is the first day, this is Thursdays we record this, and I've been at the house every day this week, I didn't write last week either, so I haven't written a word for about 10 days now.

James Blatch: You've probably lost it now.

Mark Dawson: Yeah. The moment has passed. That's okay, I'm relaxed.

I've got to the stage with the book I'm writing that it's kind of at the 80,000 word point, so it's kind of long enough now. A little bit of a break from the manuscript can sometimes make it easier to approach it again when you come back, so I'm not too concerned about that.

I won't do any next week. It'll probably be about three weeks without writing, which may be the longest I've been without writing for about six years. I look forward to getting back into the swing of things again.

James Blatch: We've got one parish announcement before we get into today's interview, which is an exciting interview ahead of us. That is that we've rather generously been giving away these SPF mugs, have I got mine? You've got yours, you've got yours, there you go.

Mark Dawson: I've got mine.

James Blatch: To our gold Patreon subscribers. I want to give fair notice, and we hinted at this a little while ago, that we are going to switch to giving pins away, simply, it was costing like \$20 I think, odd, to send a mug to somebody in the States, and economic wise, it was obviously turns out to be an introductory offer.

We'll still hold the mugs around for the very special guests, but the Patreon gold subscribers are going to be getting a pin in the future, which is a rarity and something to be had and be perfect for those international gatherings that we have occasionally so we can identify each other.

We'll bring a few in our pockets on those occasions as well. However, fair notice, so we'll give it another week or so, so it's now the 23rd of February as this goes out, so we'll say at the end of February, so actually not a whole week, you will have the opportunity still to become a gold level Patreon subscriber and you will get a mug.

From March onwards it's going to be a pin and there'll be a qualifying period for that as well, so you've got seven days left to join us on patreon.com/spfpodcast if you want to support the podcast and be the proud owner of an SPF mug. It was the golden age of mugs.

Mark Dawson: It's coming to a close.

James Blatch: Coming to a close. They'll obviously increase in value over time.

Okay, so we're asking about your office because I swear it's slightly unusual in that you do have an office away from the house. I've got an office in my back garden, but a lot of people work in their pajamas on their bed.

A very typical answer actually when I asked people in interviews is where do you write, and people often say, "I write on my bed, just lying there." So we're talking about this army of people who are making money in their pajamas and that's what this man is all about, this is Chris Ducker.

Now he's a Brit, a very proud union jack wearing Brit, actually lives in the Philippines where he's built up a huge business of virtual assistants, but he's much more interested in you as a brand, you as your own company doing your own thing.

He's a huge advocate of this lifestyle, he's a very gregarious character, and he's very enthusiastic for this new economy that's happening, that's taking over the traditional economies and is under the radar, so as far as most politicians, no one else are concerned.

What he's noticed is that self-publishing authors are the single biggest group of youpreneurs, as he calls them, these individuals who build a business around themselves.

He's very interested in our world. He's all over Self Publishing Formula, he wants to know everything about what we're doing, he's very keen on this.

Of course he's published his first book and he's of course self-publishing it. He had a publisher before but he's self-publishing this because he's woken up to all of that of course.

Let's hear from Chris Ducker all the way over in the Philippines. He's actually moving back to the UK very soon to quite close to me here in Cambridgeshire, so hopefully we'll hear and see a lot more from Chris in

the future, but he's a great bloke to listen to, quite motivational. So we'll hear from Chris and then Mark and I will have a chat off the back.

Chris Ducker, welcome back to the Self Publishing Formula Podcast. Now people might not know, because there aren't quite enough union jacks behind you, that you are British.

Chris Ducker: I am.

James Blatch: You need something more.

Chris Ducker: I think that's great that you've picked that up straight away. Well actually a funny thing is, is that I'm sort of, I call myself the self-proclaimed proudest Brit doing business on the internet, right?

That's been my fun little thing for a few years now, but over the years people have actually sent me these union jack things. The teapot that you see over my shoulder here, that was actually sent from somebody in Canada, all the way to the Philippines, with the union jack on it.

James Blatch: Are the Canadians still our subjects though? I can't remember.

Chris Ducker: I believe they are.

James Blatch: I think they are. I remember the Queen's head is still on their stamps.

Chris Ducker: I believe they are.

James Blatch: Okay. Look people will remember you last time and you made a big hit and an impression the first time you came on the podcast.

Chris Ducker: Thank you.

James Blatch: Something interesting has happened since then with you which is that you have published a high profile book, having been traditionally published in the past.

Here's the book, Rise of the Youpreneur. You've decided to self-publish it.

We're going to talk a bit about that, but also really the reason you're on here, Chris, is you can talk to me and people who are writing books, and building their brand, and trying to sell their books to make a career, because that's what you do, right?

You talk to people about turning themselves into a business, into a brand, and that's what this book's all about.

Chris Ducker: It is, and that's exactly what a youpreneur is, it's somebody who builds a business based around them, their personality, obviously their experience, what they can offer other people, and the people themselves that they want to serve, and that's what being a youpreneur is all about.

In the book we talk a lot about becoming future proof and building your own youpreneur ecosystem, of which obviously a book or several books is part of that ecosystem in terms of positioning yourself as an expert, getting your message out there on mass and all that kind of stuff.

I genuinely believe this; this was a pivot that happened for me around 2014 which is when I coined the phrase: Youpreneur.

We didn't open the youpreneur community doors until September 2015, but since the day I did it, I truly believe this is now going to be my life's work going forward.

To put this into clear perspective, I own several businesses. I don't run them myself, I get people to come in and do it for me. I build them up and then I

step away and let them run the business up. Multi seven figure, several different businesses, over 450 employees full-time, but this is the stuff that I love doing more than anything else.

I have never been happier in my almost 15 years as an entrepreneur as I am right now working with youpreneurs.

James Blatch: Let's talk about the book first of all.

This decision to self-publish, where did that come from?

Chris Ducker: Good gosh, now there's a rabbit hole. I mean really, I was your typical rookie, first time author with Virtual Freedom. Although I didn't take the first deal that came my way, I did put a proposal together, I did get an agent, we did shop it around a little bit.

We actually had four offers off of 16 publishers that were contacted, so a very good ratio, if you take into consideration The Four Hour Work Week got turned down 20 odd times before somebody picked it up. Very proud of that fact.

We went ahead and we got a publisher in the United States to publish the book and it came out.

I did not realize at the time that I had fundamentally sold my life away in regards to this book. I'd sold my international rights away, I'd sold my audiobook rights away, ebook, paperback, doing fine.

Audiobook, they pushed, and pushed, and pushed, and pushed right after the book came out saying, "We've got to get an audiobook done, we've got to get it done, we've got to get it done." I was already touring the US keynoting to promote the sales of the book.

They fundamentally made the decision for me to go ahead and hire a voice talent to do the book who was horrifically bad. I mean like extraordinarily terrible at what he was doing.

Obviously, I tried to put this spin on it, "Well, it's a book about delegation and outsourcing so I delegated it."

There were a lot of issues, and by the time that I'd got my international rights back it was too late, the book was too old, it only ever went in the Chinese and Japanese, and really this book should've been in 10 plus languages, easily.

Generally the main reason why I decided to self-publish Rise of the Youpreneur is because I wanted to retain 100% control over the entire process, right the way down from design, to distribution, to who we were going to use for print on demand, to the fact that I can work with private printers to print that beautiful hardcover copy that you've got.

There's so many different reasons why, but mainly because I wanted to retain 100% of the rights and 100% control.

James Blatch: Yeah, so there's a creative argument for that, I completely understand that.

It goes hand in hand with the financial side instead of getting whatever you signed up for, 10% royalties.

Chris Ducker: Clearly. There's clearly a financial hand in it as well. The self-publishing author royalties are way, way tastier than the more traditional ones.

I said it, when I first wrote and launched Virtual Freedom I said that I didn't write the book to get rich. In fact actually my good friend, Chris Brogan,

once told me many, many years ago, "You don't write a book to get rich, you write a book to get busy."

He's 100% right, 100% right. So what it did is it enabled me to grow my personal brand even further, to get paid ridiculous amounts of money for consulting gigs all around the world, literally, and it enabled me to double the revenue of one of my businesses, one of my outsourcing businesses. It did get me busy and it did make me a lot of money, but not necessarily from the book sales itself.

Now, with Rise of the Youpreneur, that's a different ballgame, and we are already being very serious in the way that we're planning to not only launch this, and I'm not sure when this will be going live, I'm assuming it's around launch time, but by the time this comes out, the book is probably going to be out as well.

I'm not doing this for a year or two of sales, I mean this is going to be a book that it could actually fundamentally be my last business how-to manual quite frankly.

We might update it, we might expand on it, that kind of thing in the future, but I do feel like financially this is also going to become quite an important mainstay for revenue on an annual basis as well.

James Blatch: It's a personal book, as you'd expect from you as always talking about putting your brand first, yourself first, and if I remember rightly, you talk about the transition from the old world of business to the new one.

I've kind of done that as well, I've got a video production business which is still going in the background that does feel very, very different from what you and I do now.

Chris Ducker: It's almost like we're getting away with murder aren't we, really, on a daily basis.

James Blatch: Yeah. Well making money in our pajamas is how I like to call the youpreneur, it's just the subtitle I think of this world that we live in.

That was that thing about putting yourself in the background, getting out of the way of the business. Is that the expression I think that it was drummed into you when you started your traditional businesses.

Now, getting in the way of it, you are the businesses, that's kind of fundamentally different.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, that's it. I think I talk about that in the introduction of the book, and it didn't hurt me, the old-fashioned way of building a business, it didn't hurt me. I built several very successful businesses.

I didn't realize that after a certain period of time what was happening was that ... and it became very apparent to me pretty quickly, that whenever I would make a sale, so to speak, people were doing business with me personally way before they were ever doing business with one of my companies, regardless of what company they were getting involved with.

It was that personal brand that was already being built that I didn't really go out to build on purpose, it just unraveled and happened over a period of time.

It was around mid 2012, I had back surgery, I was on my back for a little while recovering, and it really started to get me thinking about, well we've got ... At that point we had probably 200 and something employees, and we're doing almost multi seven figure, what can we do to continue to grow this business, but also remove me from it? I'm getting tired of working these longer hours, et cetera, et cetera.

That was when we really went full blown onto the personal brand element of things, and it did nothing but good things for the old business as well as all the new ones. It just goes to show you, things have changed.

This is the reason why I love the youpreneur business model so much, is that things are going to change again. They will keep changing, it's called evolving.

It doesn't matter whether it's a referendum, or a president, or some other kind of massive economic downturn or whatever, I believe when you build the business of you, as I call it, that you ultimately become future proof, because you are about as in control of your business as you possibly can be. There's no better, there's no better example of the youpreneur business model than an author. There just isn't.

James Blatch: The self-published author sitting at home building their business. Now, we do find, in our community we know that there's a lot of different personality types, but one personality type that does occur fairly often is an introvert in the author community.

I think for some of them, they will look at what you're talking about, and think, "I'm going to struggle with that. I'm going to struggle putting myself first and foremost." You must come across people who have this question all the time.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, all the time. Almost daily.

The fact is that if you really, really don't want to be center stage in your business, then this model is not for you. That simple.

However, I would beg to differ that I believe that there are many, many introverts that are not as introverted as they actually think they are. Particularly people like creatives in some way, shape, or form.

I would class an author as a creative, obviously. Once they get a little bit of notoriety and once they get a few nice eyeballs on their work and things start to spread a little bit for them, and they're being interviewed on some podcasts, and all that kind of stuff, that introvert slowly but surely does start to drip away.

I know that we have a mutual friend with Joanna Penn who classes herself as an introvert, yet she has no problems getting up on stage to teach her craft. That's absolutely fine.

Now I'm not an introvert, I'm an extrovert, I love all the attention, right? But that doesn't mean that I don't have introvert moments from time to time where I do want to be on my own, where I don't want to have anybody around me, where I don't need the eyeballs or the attention.

I think it goes both ways a little bit, but ultimately if you really, really know deep down inside of you that you're not comfortable with the eyes being on you as part of the mainstay in your business, then this is not the model for you. You can carry on hiding behind a pen name or whatever the case may be.

I do believe if you want to build a business properly then you've got to do it in person to a certain degree, and that means you do have to be a little bit center stage.

James Blatch: I guess this speaks more specifically to non-fiction authors who are a group who increasingly we want to make sure we are serving on this podcast, as well as the multitudes of fiction authors that are out there.

You often do hear complaints from non-fiction authors that they have a slightly different task in front of them. Here you are, Chris Ducker, you are a non-fiction author self-publishing your book, so you're a perfect example.

Let's talk a little bit about your approach to this, how are you marketing this book? How are you going to get it out there?

Chris Ducker: At the time of recording this we're in the middle of January, the official launch is February 20. We are not doing a big kind of huge ... That will be the first order calling right there, it's the first 1,000 book bulk buy right there.

James Blatch: I'd love to show it to you because it's my union jack phone, but I can't bring it into shot because-

Chris Ducker: I've got one of them, where's mine? I'm not joking. I actually, I have one, my wife bought it for me in Hong Kong. I'm not actually quite sure where it is. Her majesty could be calling at any time.

James Blatch: There you go.

Chris Ducker: And I don't have the phone next to me.

James Blatch: This is mine.

Chris Ducker: I've got the same one.

James Blatch: You've got the same phone.

Chris Ducker: I've got the same bloody phone. That's great, I love that.

James Blatch: It's even got a little sticker on it from 1920. I know, I've pulled the plug out which is a good thing.

Chris Ducker: Good, good, good.

James Blatch: Sorry, we're helping our friends in the non-fiction sphere.

Chris Ducker: No, it's fine.

Ultimately I'm not going for a great, big, huge pre order campaign like a lot of people do. The book will probably realistically be up a few days before Feb 20 on Amazon.

We've got to make sure everything's working properly obviously. Come Feb 20, that's when all the real action will take place. We're putting in place a pretty good campaign for the first two weeks of the book's life, so that last week of Feb and the first week of March.

I want to make it very clear, we're not going for like a New York Times bestseller thing or anything like that. I truly believe that this book has the legs to sell for years, and years, and years, particularly if we update it, if we expand it at some point in the future.

On the flip side of that however, with that long-term approach to it as a title, the flip side of that is we've got to make a splash, you have to. You only get one chance to launch something, right?

Whether it be a book, or a podcast, or a course, or whatever it is, so we want to make a big splash with it. The one thing that worked very, very well for me with Virtual Freedom was a podcast tour, and so I have leant on a lot of my influencer buddies in the online entrepreneur space and I'm going to be doing a lot of podcast interviews with them.

Now, when I say a lot, probably realistically like 15 or so. I did a lot more than that for Virtual Freedom, and I realized, quite frankly, that with a lot of them I was spinning my wheels, to be frank.

Just really picking and choosing the audiences a little bit more clearer this time, being a little bit more concise.

Then on top of that we have obviously some articles going up on some big name sites, like Entrepreneur, and Inc, and Forbes, and that sort of type of thing, being a non-fiction book.

Then it comes down to obviously the email list, a nice campaign going in on that. My inner circle of the youpreneur community, which is 600 plus strong people who will be more than happy to spread the word about the book and hopefully buy a couple of copies each for their friends and things like that.

I feel pretty confident that we're going to have a good launch, but it's not just about the launch. It's also making sure that we continue to get the word out there after that initial push obviously.

James Blatch: It certainly helps, and particularly if you get some visibility with the launch for the longevity, a bit of chart placement. Let me unpack a couple of those things. You talk about the campaigns, what specifically?

In terms of paid advertising you go for social media advertising? Have you got some older world advertising?

Chris Ducker: No. No old world stuff, but yes, we will have a Facebook campaign in place for everything from our VIP launch list, which we're putting together currently right now.

The target for that is a strong 500 people, and we're already at 100 plus with hardly any effort at all, which is great. That 500 people, they're the people that I'm going to be like, "Buy 10 copies of the book. Buy 10 copies of the book, give it out to all your friends, and help me out."

We have that, so we'll definitely re-target people on Facebook with that. We're going to be doing a certain amount of live video. I'm actually going to be taking people on the journey of the second book a little bit as of the beginning February, and doing a couple of Facebook lives on my page

each week, talking about the different decisions that I made, what I did, how I did it, doing some Q&As and things like that.

Because again, youpreneurs should all be publishing a book. If they're not planning to already they should start planning it. So it's also great learning and training content for my tribe as well, to see how I put it together, why I put it together the way I have, and then obviously how I'm going to market it and get it out there.

We'll be doing a lot of that stuff. No, I mean we're not dropping thousands and thousands of dollars or anything on that side of things, but yes, there's a campaign and a very solid email marketing campaign as well. I'm blessed to have a good list that actually open my emails and will be leaning on that quite heavily as well.

This is why we do all the work, James.

I mean this is why it's been four years since the last book. What do you think I've been doing for four years, twiddling my thumbs? No, I've been grinding away like any good youpreneur should.

James Blatch: Of course this is the heart of what SPF talks about and teaches as well, and it really stands out in this book that the monetization process, if you're watching on video, comes about there in the book, so two-thirds of the way in do you start thinking about how you're going to make money.

I think a lot of people, when they first come into the self-publishing sphere, it takes them a while to understand that this is a long game, that you're building up a loyal audience, you're building up yourself, you're turning your casual observers into fans, and some fans into super fans.

Then down the road, after you've given quite a lot away and built that up, you can start making some money. Don't expect to make money at the end of the first week when you've published.

That's why I think when I read this book, I think the biggest single group of youpreneurs in the world are self-published authors.

Chris Ducker: Without a doubt. Like I said, there is no better embodiment of a youpreneur as a self-published author. There honestly, truly isn't.

Because particularly in the non-fiction space, which is really my focus from a client perspective, is authors are not just authors, they're also consultants, or coaches, or potentially speakers.

They should have online courses, they should have membership communities, they should have mastermind events or high-end coaching, they should do all these things that we talk about inside of that youpreneur ecosystem, which is the heart and soul of that monetization section of the book.

Likewise though, I've been saying to people as I've talked to them, you know what, if you're already done building your business, skip the first 75 pages of the book. Don't waste your time.

I'd love to think everybody's going to read it cover to cover, but the chances are that you don't need to. If you've already got your website up and running properly, if your social media is set up properly and not automated with robots left, right, and center, if you know who you are, what you want to be known for, what your skillset is, if you're self-aware in terms of your strengths and your weaknesses, and you're building on your strengths rather than worrying about the weaknesses.

If you know who your perfect customer is, you don't need to read the first 75 pages of the book, you can skip to the marketing section, and therefore, obviously, onto the monetization section as well.

James Blatch: How far can this transition go do you think, Chris?

You personally know thousands of people who have quit their nine to five and started making money in their pajamas, for want of a better expression.

Clearly not everyone in the world can do this, and there still needs to be factories producing things. I sometimes wonder, because we talk to each other quite a lot, it perhaps exaggerates how many people are thinking about this or doing this.

It does seem to feel to me like a change, a fairly fundamental change in the way the economies are going to be working in the future.

Chris Ducker: You know, the funny thing is is that this is nothing new, this has been going on for quite some time. I mean not decades or anything, but a good five to ten years. This has been an actual, genuine, real, profitable business model.

A lot of the gurus, a lot of the money people and all the rest of it, career pros, they didn't see it. They didn't see it coming. I saw it coming in 2012, I jumped right off and right into it.

I think it will continue to grow, clearly it's going to continue to grow because there's people like you and I that are out there pitching it as a viable option for career opportunity, and money making opportunity, and a whole bunch of other stuff, right?

It'll continue to grow, but you're absolutely right, factories are still going to need to be manned, supermarkets are still going to need stuff put on their

shelves, and chemists are still going to need pharmacists behind the counter.

It is what it is, but I think that things are going to evolve actually very rapidly in the next 10 years in regards to this kind of sphere. I think that ultimately we'll see a little bit of a plateauing after that period of time for a bit.

My daughter is 19, she's studying at university in London right now, business communications and marketing, kind of a focus on marketing.

She was at the youpreneur summit and she said to me after the event, she said, "You know, dad, this is what I want to do. When I'm done and I've got my degree, this is what I want to do. I want to do this."

I'm like, "Well, you know, you're going to have to earn your stripes, you can't just start putting on events." She goes, "I want to do this with you. I want to learn from you and work with you, because clearly you've got it figured out."

Now, do I have it all figured out? No. But I'm happy for my daughter to see me as a little bit of a hero, that's great obviously.

Clearly, as a millennial, you're going to see this more, and more, and more. By golly, I mean if I had all the opportunities that she has today when I was her age, oh my gosh, god knows what I could've done. I've done well, but god knows what I could've done with all that at my fingertips, literally, or my thumb tips, one or the other.

James Blatch: I'll be very interested to know how much of what she's being taught at university in London was resonated when she was at the youpreneur summit.

Or did she stand there thinking, "We're not learning any of this stuff, and yet this is a massive movement"? There is a lag isn't there?

Chris Ducker: Exactly. Yet, I'm happy to pay nine grand a year for it, go figure, right? I mean, I just keep saying, "One and a bit years left, one and a bit. You've one and a bit years left."

I think there's definitely stuff, I mean she has called me up, we've FaceTimed, and we've had many a dinner and lunch and everything over certain things that she would like me to help her with, presentation wise, and helping her with her presentation skills particularly in front of the class.

That is great, because it's peer to peer, it's people to people. That's the way I live and breathe in my world, and so she's learning how to ultimately pitch herself, pitch her ideas, pitch her ideals to people. I love that. I think that's great.

When they're teaching her in a marketing communications degree course how to build a website in Dreamweaver, like I'm shaking my fricking head, James. I'm like, "Dreamweaver? Didn't that die like a decade ago?"

There is a disconnect, there's overlap for sure, but there's a disconnect. Again, these kids, they're so darn in tune with everything because of social, because of that kind of ever connected world that they live in, that I mean I don't fear for her at all.

Even if she wasn't at university I would not be fearing for her at all. Her younger brother and sister, they might not even end up going to university, yet I know, if their heads are screwed on right and they're hard workers, they're going to do just fine.

James Blatch: I feel the same about my children as well. There is a disconnect.

Something happened a couple of weeks ago and you get all this stats on the radio about the economy on so on. Most of it floats by me and I try to

take a long view rather than get involved in the day to day anxieties, but there was one stat when I heard this economic guy on Radio 4 here in the UK talking about it.

He said, "There's a curious thing is that the economy's growing, more people are in employment than ever before, and yet productivity in the UK is down."

They can't explain it. They've been masking it for a while, so the chancellors been able to stand up in the House of Commons in the UK and say, "We've made an adjustment because we think this is a hangover from the recession."

Well the last time he stood up he said, "We're not making that adjustment anymore, we cannot explain why productivity's going down."

I'm thinking, "Do you know what? That just does not resonate with my experience of this country at the moment." I'm looking around thinking, "I'm working harder than I've ever worked before, we're making money, all my friends are working long hours, why is productivity going down?"

I had a little dig into it, and it turns out their measurement of productivity is looking at the GDP of the country divided by output. Well what do they consider output?

You look at what they consider output, it's making rubber ducks in factories in the Midlands. They've literally no idea what I'm doing. I don't figure on their radar.

Chris Ducker: They're out of touch.

James Blatch: Completely.

So no wonder they think productivity's going down, they're measuring the wrong things. They're measuring industry that's 100 years old.

Anyway, I didn't phone in to Radio 4 and rant about it but I thought I'd mention it to you.

Chris Ducker: You bloody should have by the sound of it, that would have been great.

When I'm in the UK, and I'm moving back there in June as you know, after 17 years of being over here in the Philippines and just before Brexit all kicks off, so clearly I'm not worried in any way, shape, or form about that. It's like when I'm back there and I see the small business bus from Natwest floating around, and entrepreneur this, and small business this, clearly the UK has become or is becoming a nation of entrepreneurial types, or is becoming more entrepreneurial over recent years.

I see it as just a massive, massive opportunity, particularly for me as a coach and a mentor, I feel like I'm going to be pretty set as long as I continue to keep the value and the consistency up there.

It's a strange market, the UK particularly, but you're right, they're clearly out of touch. Do we really need to do any research to understand that politicians are out of touch?

James Blatch: No.

Chris Ducker: I don't think we need to worry about that.

James Blatch: The thing is I think they know that as well, I think the savvy politicians have this understanding that they don't quite have a grasp on how things are changing, how quickly they're changing, but they don't know what to do about it.

There is the expression you can give to almost every large corporation, they don't sit there stuck in their old ways because they're ignorant, they sit there stuck in their old ways because they don't know how to change and they don't know to be agile.

Well, that's the beauty of the industry that we're in, and particularly as you say, and this comes across in what you talk about, is that if you've made yourself your business, there's nothing more agile than you, because we evolve naturally anyway.

Chris Ducker: Doesn't matter. Doesn't matter what industry you're in, it doesn't matter who you're serving, what product or service you're selling or marketing, it's actually all of that becomes completely and utterly irrelevant in terms of the potential of your business growth.

Because with you being the very real unique aspect of your business overall, you ultimately future proof yourself, you uncopyable yourself.

There's no real competitors, because people will be doing business with you because you are their favorite, right? That's what I always talk about, because somebody's favorite. If you do that, as your interests kind of morph, and change, and pivot, they will go with you as long as you continue to provide value and show that you give a damn, quite frankly.

I think that that is why this model of youpreneur, as I call it, obviously you can call it what you want, but I'll call it the name that I gave it, I believe that youpreneurial model is the best business model for anybody with any level of experience or passion under their belt going forward.

James Blatch: If you think about it, if you've built it good, as an author, a fiction author, you might be writing romance, or science-fiction, or non-fiction, you've built a good, active list, you're engendering the loyalty in your fans and that's growing, that will survive Brexit, that will survive-

Chris Ducker: Absolutely.

James Blatch: You don't have to worry about who's in the White House, because you've got this thing that proves to you all those changes.

Chris Ducker: Even fiction writers, I am not a fiction writer, I've never written a piece of fiction before, I will never say never, but I have no plans on doing any kind of fiction work currently.

Even fiction authors can monetize their experience as a fiction author, you know what I mean? If you have one or two books under your belt already that have done even remotely okay in terms of sales and distribution, and you're not holding some kind of writers retreat, or workshop, or something along those lines, not only to monetize but also to grow your hardcore kind of raving fan base, if you're not doing that you're leaving a lot more on the table than just money.

You're leaving huge opportunity on the table. We've only got so many years, right? Time is our most valuable commodity, so it's something that we should invest very, very wisely. I think there's just as many opportunities as fiction writers, as there are non-fiction writers.

James Blatch: Just bringing it back to your book and your non-fiction experience, we had an interview a few weeks ago which I've recorded, it's yet to go out, with an Australian guy who wrote a story about his father.

I was talking to him about the marketing difference between fiction and non-fiction, and he said his non-fiction is slightly acute and angled marketing, i.e., every time he appears on the radio, every time he writes an article in a magazine, every time he guest blogs, sales of his books go up.

I think in non-fiction that's how it works, and that's sort of what you said to me earlier. This is not direct marketing this book, it will grow with you organically when you grow your own brand.

I think that might be a difference between fiction and non-fiction marketing.

Chris Ducker: Very possibly, yeah. I mean clearly once you get yourself onto 15 or so decent podcasts within a space, and the host of that podcast is saying, "This is a great book, go and pick it up everybody."

Smart money says you're going to sell a load of copies of your book. I had Lewis Howes do the foreword for Rise of the Youpreneur and Lewis is in a ridiculous upward trajectory right now, he's been on the Ellen show, and he's hanging out with all these big celebrities and all the rest of it.

James Blatch: This is an eight figure man.

Chris Ducker: When I reached out to him, yes we're friends, but when I reached out to him I said, "You are the personal brand entrepreneur personified. People flock to you, not because of your content but because of you, you're magnetic. Then they fall in love with you even more when you help them through struggles or figuring out what business to operate and all that kind of stuff."

So it helps to have that kind of name attached to the book obviously, but clearly if he can do it, anyone can do it. This isn't just for a handsome, six foot three, ex footballers in America, you know what I mean?

Look, I'm a middle-aged, bald guy from London. If I can do it, anyone can do it, you know what I mean? It's not rocket science, it's just about figuring out who you are, what you want to be known for, who you want to help, and sell, and serve, and then going out and doing some great stuff. That simple, really.

James Blatch: That's great, Chris.

If people want a bit more personal help from you, can you explain how your community works and how people can learn from you?

Chris Ducker: Youpreneur community is, it's an important mainstay in my own youpreneur ecosystem, meaning it's predictable income and it's recurring income, whether it be a monthly subscription recurring for some members, or an annual for others.

Obviously we want to continue to grow that, and grow that, and grow that over time. Now, I'm in there once or twice a week tapping away on the keyboard, answering questions, and firing off replies to people's ideas, and problems, and things like that.

Then we do a one hour live mastermind call every single month, which usually goes actually to about an hour and a half or so, where anybody can come on live and grill me in any way, shape, or form about building the personal brand business. That's only one facet of the way that my clients work with me as a mentor and coach.

We recently launched at the end of last year my round table mastermind. I'm a big fan of all things British, King Arthur and all that kind of stuff, so we're going to go with the round table, we're going to use the King Arthur font on the logo, it's going to be great.

We opened the doors and we had over 50 applications within the space of a week. We picked the 12 people that are going to be at the table. I'm now going to be working with those people for an entire year.

It's a year long commitment, it ain't cheap, it's a couple of grand a month, but they get a ridiculous amount of access to me. But they also get a lot of access to everybody else, which is actually the more important aspect here, rather than me quite frankly.

Because they really do get the opportunity to hang out with people that are at the same level that get it, that need the accountability, that are going to be the support.

I think probably the average income of somebody in the round table is around £300,000 a year. Whereas people inside of the youpreneur community, they'll be floating anywhere between mid five figures a year, maybe sometimes a little lower, but sometimes a little higher.

That's generally the two different kind of options from a coaching and a mentorship perspective. Then obviously we do our live events, there's workshops, there's the youpreneur summit, which is now going to become the flagship event every year, so there's all these little things in the ecosystem that we've build up over time, along with some courses, along with some services and all that sort of stuff as well. It's fun. This stuff's fun.

James Blatch: It is fun and you obviously thrive on it. I mean quite labor intensive for you, this model. You set up the older businesses and then stepped back from them, a very Tim Ferriss way of doing things, and reap the benefits of that.

Here, you seem to be building yourself into quite a lot of your income streams.

Chris Ducker: The membership's a good money maker, James. It's only going to continue to grow in terms of the youpreneur community itself. I spend maybe an hour and a half a week inside of the forums and it's a pleasure.

I don't even look at it as work. Half the time I'm sitting there with a bowl of cornflakes doing it, you know what I mean? Then obviously with the round table, they get a couple of hours a month of group mentoring and then we actually meet three times a year in a two day retreat. That's where the real

magic will happen with that particular group, because it's those kind of people.

It might sound like it's super heavy, labor intensive from my perspective, but it's actually really not.

I think that you mentioned Tim Ferriss, the way he got out of the whole, "Well Tim, surely you must be working more than four hours a week?" Well it depends on what you call work. Right? That's how he got out of that.

I don't really look at it, genuinely, I don't really look at it as work. I look at it as doing what I feel genuinely I have been put here to do, and that is to help other people build extremely profitable businesses over a period of time. I like doing it, they're my kind of people, and like I said, I'm very, very happy with it.

There's a lot of stuff that goes on in the background in terms of that ecosystem with services, and courses, and upsells, and affiliates, and all that kind of stuff that we do as well, which is very, very passive and obviously makes me some good income every year as well.

James Blatch: I hope at the end of the 12 months of the round table you have a sword that you can knight people with.

Chris Ducker: It'd be good. I'll tell you, that's good, I like that idea.

That will be maybe a little giveaway for everybody at the end of the year or something, we'll get some made up or something.

James Blatch: Yeah, just check that people can fly with them though.

Chris Ducker: Yeah. Don't leave it in your hand carry whatever you do, right.

James Blatch: Chris, it's been fantastic talking to you, really good luck with the book. I'll dial up in a minute after this and find out exactly when this is going to go out, but hopefully it's about the time of the book launch and we'll watch that with interest.

I think the main reason that we're excited to get you back on is you speak directly to self-published authors who are building a business based around themselves, making money in their pajamas, the ultimate youpreneurs.

I'm absolutely certain that we're going to have a close relationship in the future because these go hand in hand. What you talk about and what we're trying to do go hand in hand.

Chris Ducker: Yeah, that's good stuff. I hope that if people do pick up the book they get lots from it. If they have any questions by the way, very seriously, hit me up on Twitter, @chrisducker.

Whenever you get a reply there, it's always me personally. My team manages a lot of my social media, but on Twitter it is always me replying, so that's the place to get a personal reply if anybody has any kind of questions or whatever.

James Blatch: Just like Donald Trump. As we can tell. It's definitely always him.

Okay. Great, Chris, thank you so much indeed. Good luck with your move back to the UK and I look forward to that pint in Cambridge at some point.

Chris Ducker: Yes mate, I appreciate it.

James Blatch: There you go. I mean when you hear Chris talking you do get quite excited about this new world that wasn't available really to our parents, was it?

Mark Dawson: No. God no, it wasn't available to us until about 10 years ago, so this is still, in the grand scheme of things, relatively recent innovation.

Yeah, he certainly is enthusiastic and I'll tell a little anecdote, when James and my wife Lucy went to the youpreneur conference I did get a text at some point, which was, "There's dancing."

I did have the image of James being called onto stage and with that famous British reserve and having to shed that and possibly items of clothes and surrender to the moment. As far as I know that didn't happen.

James Blatch: No, it didn't happen.

Mark Dawson: For the inevitable SPF conference that is my aim, to get James dancing on stage.

James Blatch: Naked.

No, you can't accuse Chris Ducker of having a classic British reserve, he doesn't have that. The conference he had, which was excellent, and I've got a long list of actions that immediately followed that conference, and I've had two meetings with people I met at the conference subsequently, we're keeping each other honest in our motivation of where we're going and so on.

It was a really good conference but there were moments when people were dancing on stage, when I stood next to your wife saying, "This is not for me, this bit."

Mark Dawson: Yeah, it wouldn't be for me either. There we go. Well you know, horses for courses and all that.

James Blatch: Jo Penn spoke at that conference actually, she spoke very well at it.

There were quite a few, as I say, they did what we do with our podcast, we try to make sure that everyone's worth listening to and there's some take aways, otherwise it's just wasting everyone's time. So every speaker brought something there. There were some famous names, Pat Flynn and so on there.

Mark Dawson: There were takeaways?

James Blatch: There were takeaways. There was takeaways.

Mark Dawson: I wish.

James Blatch: There was beer of course. Okay, if you want to know more about the book, chrisducker.com. We gave the URL in the interview, and as I'm standing here I can't remember exactly what that URL was but I'm sure you heard it. [Chrisducker.com](http://chrisducker.com), I noticed you can get through to a landing page.

As I'm speaking at this second it's a wait list for the book, but I think it's going to be launched about the time this interview goes out. It's exciting.

I enjoy talking to Chris, he's a slightly eccentric character but that's the best of the British are eccentric. I think living abroad when you're British must make you more eccentric and he's become ... There's a lot of union jack wearing goes on with him, although I do have ... In fact we noticed in the interview I have exactly the same telephone, our union jack telephone. I'm a proud Brit too.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, I gather, there's a RAF Roundel in shot behind you.

James Blatch: Yeah, absolutely. Good, okay. Look, Mark, thank you very much indeed for today, you can relax. I hope you enjoy Tenerife next week.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, relaxing hopefully as soon as we're off the plane.

There's the small matter of a four-year-old and a five hour flight that we need to negotiate first of all. Once that's done, we're picked up from the airport, taken to the hotel and I won't be leaving the hotel for a week. So, yes, I will be incommunicado-ish for a few days.

James Blatch: Okay, well you enjoy that.

Don't forget that we have our course that is Stuart Bache's course, which is available at selfpublishingformula.com/design, a detailed instructional course on designing your own course covers. It's from a highly regarded professional in the industry.

If you got the inclination to support us at patreon.com/spfpodcast, you've got a few days left to be in with a mug if you're a gold level subscriber. After that it's going to be a pin.

Thank you very much indeed for listening, there's a mug on the screen now if you're watching on YouTube. Thank you very much indeed, have a great week, we'll speak to you next week, buh-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've enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a review on iTunes. We'll see you next time.