Supercharge Your Presence: Self-Publishing: How to Get Started  
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Hello and welcome! I'm Peggy Mihelich, associate director of member content

here at APA. Today's webinar is titled, Supercharge Your Presence: Self-

Publishing: How to get Started. This presentation will cover the following

topics. The benefits and the potential risks of self publishing. How to choose

between self-publishing traditional publishing and other routes like

blogging or YouTube. How self-publishing works and how to get started. Some

important points before we get going. The views expressed in this presentation are

those of the presenter and may not reflect the views or policies of the

American Psychological Association. Next this program does not offer CE, however

we will email everyone watching live today a certificate of attendance. During

our time together you will be on mute. You can communicate to us using the

questions box located in your webinar control panel. We have handouts for you

to download. You can access them in the handouts box also located in the webinar

control panel. These can be downloaded at any time during the presentation. If you

have trouble downloading them don't worry. We'll e-mail you the handouts

along with the recording in a few weeks. Have a question for our

presenter? Type them in using the questions box located in your webinar

control panel. Daniel Wendler is the author of Improve

Your Social Skills, Level Up Your Social Life and Clicking with Clients. He's a

doctoral student in clinical psychology at George Fox University and a doctoral

intern at the University of Houston with expected doctorate completion in August

of 2019. Wendler is also the founder of marketingfortherapists.org where he

uses his insights from his previous career in online marketing to help

psychologists reach their goals online. Daniel is excited to share his

self-publishing insights with you today. Welcome!

[Daniel Wendler] Hello, hello thanks for inviting me here. Let me turn on my webcam just briefly so you can all see my happy face that I'm excited to be a part of this.

I'm not gonna leave the the webcam on for the whole presentation because we've

heard that sometimes that can cause technical glitches but just wanted you

to know that I'm a real person and they haven't trained AI to give these

presentations at least not yet! Let me jump right in so thank you so

much for sharing that. I also wanted to give just a

little bit of perspective on my expertise and why it makes sense to

listen to me specifically about self-publishing. Self-publishing is something

that I've been doing for quite a long time. My first book was self-published

way back in 2014 and since that time I've sold a lot of copies. This

is my sales data from just the last 30 days. As you can see I've sold almost 500 books in the last

30 days -- it's a little bit higher than average because I had a really big spike

there in the middle. I still don't know what was going on for whatever reason

everybody was buying my books that day! This is a pretty

reasonable amount of book sales and that's been pretty consistent for the

past couple years. For me, self-publishing has been really

impactful in my life. It's provided some good extra income and I think more

importantly, it's a lot of me to make a really significant impact on the world.

l get emails from readers all around the world who have said, hey I

read your book it really impacted me. Here's how I applied the things

that you wrote and here's how it helped me. I'm really passionate about

this and I want other people to also put books out there in the world and help

make a difference. So, here's what we're going to talk about

today. I want us to first start by considering, why to do

self-publishing versus traditional publishing because there's a lot of

different options for publishing your book. I also want to talk about

what if you shouldn't publish a book at all. What if there's some other

way of making an impact. I want to talk about the risks and opportunities that

are involved in self-publishing specifically because you want to sort of

have informed consent and be aware of what you're getting into.

I want to focus on Amazon self-publishing options because that's

generally the direction that I recommend that people go in and so I want to sort

of orient you to what's going on there. And then finally I want to give you some

tools for really getting started with the

process because I think a lot of folks can come to these kind of webinars and

they can be excited but then they say okay well what do i what do I actually

do to start making forward momentum and they can they don't know and then you

know nothing really changes. That's what I want to end us on. Because

there's so much to cover on this topic this presentation is really going to be

more of a opportunity for you to reflect on what is the right path for you, more

so than actually telling you-- all right, here's how to do all 100 steps on that

path. So, will have some how-to baked into

this, but we're going to get more into the specifics of how do

you set up an author page and how do you sell your books and how do you

write your book and things like that in our in our future webinars and also

there's some information on that and they handout. But this should hopefully

give you a sense of if this is a road that you want to go down or not. So, why

write a book in the first place? I mean since you're tuning in you're probably

at least somewhat curious about that idea. Here's a couple of things that

I think are really important to consider. The first thing is that writing a book

allows you to make a really wide impact on the world. Again, I've had readers from

all over the world email me and say, hey I've read your book and it impacted me

in this way. And these are readers that I never would have had the

chance to meet otherwise. And for you, you undoubtedly make a big impact in your

daily life whether that is in your clinical practice or research or

teaching or whatever else that you do but that's that's limited. You're only

able to meet with so many people on a given day. Whereas if you write a book it

can just sit there and it can just sell copies and then more and more people are

impacted without you doing any additional work! Also, you get to refine

your ideas. If you sit down and you actually figure out how to explain a

particular topic well enough for it to go in a book, then the next time that you

have to explain that topic to a client or to your class or even try to apply it

in your own life, you're gonna understand it better. It also gives you a lot of

credibility. People say, oh you have a book! Well you must be an expert and that

helps you with all sorts of things. And it gives you extra income and

opportunity -- at least potentially. It is possible to lose money

on self-publishing and we'll talk about that a little bit later.

But it's also possible to earn money on self-publishing or to let your book be

the doorway that opens the door to a speaking engagement or sometimes even a

new job opportunity. If you've shown up to our webinar on

public speaking, you'll notice that a lot of these topics are pretty similar and

that's because the benefits are pretty similar in both cases and also

because I think that if you are speaking doing writing also is a good compliment

for that advice versa. So, it used to be that if you wanted to write a book you

had to go the traditional publisher route -- which is where you find a

publisher who will handle the book for you. You find an agent who will talk to you

on the behalf of the publisher and that's what you do. Nowadays

self-publishing is a lot more viable but traditional publishing is

still the right choice for a lot of people. Self-publishing has some big

drawbacks. There's less credibility -- anybody can self-publish and so if

somebody realizes that you've self-published they might be like, are

you really an expert or did you just put this book up there? It's also narrower

distribution. Even if you go with Amazon which has the widest distribution

options you're still only going to be distributed on Amazon platforms. If you

want to show up in the airport book store if you want to show up in your

local book store, if you want to be available as a textbook for professors

to buy -- through those channels, self-publishing

probably doesn't work for that. And then also you're totally on your own.

Amazon has helped guides -- you can go and look online for advice that people

have given but for the most part the buck stops with you and it is possible

to hire your own help but you don't actually know is that help can be good

is it not going to be helpful. I had a friend who hired somebody to help

themself publish a book and the person took a lot of money and really

didn't deliver anything of quality. That's the thing that you have to

navigate if you go the self-publishing route. With traditional publishing conversely

you have great credibility it's about the highest

credibility that you can have from a book. You also have the widest

distribution possible and you have an expert team that is going to be there to

help you edit your book. help you design your cover, help you with all the

strategy that goes into the book. For some people traditional publishing

really is the right path. But there's a lot of benefits of self-publishing.

I think one of the big ones is that self-publishing gives you full

control and ownership. If I decide that I want to change out a chapter in

one of my books, I can just do that -- even after the book is published. I decided I

want to update something in the book, I can just go and upload a new

manuscript to Amazon and within 24 hours its new on the site. I don't have to ask

for permission for anybody I can just do it. And if later on I decide I want to

take my books down or I want to give them to a new publisher or I want to do

something else, I don't have any legal responsibility to not do that. Whereas if

I go with a traditional publisher, they ultimately get veto power over the book

and a lot of times you have a contract with them that says that they maintain

ownership of the book for as long as they want it. So, even if I

may be sign a publishing deal that's not very good for me because I'm just

getting started and then later on I get really big and I want to try to

renegotiate for a better deal, they'll they'll say no -- we already

own your book and so we're gonna continue to publish it under our more

restrictive rules. If you ever look at Brene Brown's books her very first book

she published with a small publishing house and it's still just through that

small publishing house because they're very happy that they can keep

publishing her books probably for a lot lower rates than she could command right

now. Also with self-publishing you get a higher royalty if you self-publish again

on Amazon if you self publish an e-book you get about two thirds of the revenue

and then if you publish a paperback book you get about one third of the revenue.

Whereas if you publish a traditional book you would maybe get just maybe

ten percent or a dollar per copy or something very low. Also, there's

no barriers to entry so if you decide okay I want to go and publish

a book you can do that. There's there's a blog post that I read where a guy

decided to see just how easy it was to get on a book on Amazon and so he made a

one page book and he published it in ten minutes! And it was live on the site

within like an hour! Obviously, you want to put more than ten

minutes into your book but you can just go and do it it's very easy

whereas with traditional publishing you have to convince an agent to like you

the agent has to convince a publisher like you -- there's a lot more hoops to

jump through. So, if you do decide to go the traditional publishing route

and what I would say is you have to have a platform first. I am only

self-published but I did look into traditional publishing and what I found

when I talked to agents is that they said the main thing is really not the

quality of the idea of your book or anything like that it's really about the

platform that you have because they want a sense that you're gonna

bring some readers to the book kind of built in. So, if you have a big mailing

list, if you've been on Oprah, if you've had a TED talk, if you

are a professor at a prestigious university -- these are all things that

that they feel like they can then sell you in addition to just selling the book.

If you're kind of a nobody, even if you're a nobody with a great

idea, it's gonna be a lot harder to convince them. You also have to find an

agent -- it's almost impossible to get the traditional publishing houses to pay

attention to you if you don't have an agent. So you need to find what's

called a literary agent and the main way to do is just go and

google and search for them. But what I suggest is that you find some books that

you you like, that you respect, that are kind of similar to what you would want

to do and then you look in the front matter of the book or the

acknowledgments and a lot of times the agent might be mentioned on the

copyright page or in the acknowledgement page they'll say, and thank you to my

agent so-and-so for your help in the book and then you can know you know who

to search for. And finally this is a complicated process.

Agents are really picky about how they want you to query them. They're really

picky about what your idea should include. It's a long process

finding the right agent is difficult. I ended up even though I was not

able to move forward with an agent I put in 10 or so hours

into the process of searching and I think that's kind of what you would

expect. Expect that that's gonna take some time if you go

that route. It's also worth considering that there's other ways to make an

impact and build credibility and things like that without producing a

book. You could start a YouTube channel you could do blogging. You could do

public speaking. All of these have the benefits of low barriers to

entry and they might fit your style better. If you took a

video class back in your undergrad days and you feel really comfortable in front

of a camera, or the idea of waiting for people to read your work

until you finish the whole thing --

you don't like that but you like the idea of being able to hit publish and

then they read it right away -- blogging could be good for you. So I

would say consider other options don't just say that all right if I want

to make an impact if I want to go to a platform it has to be self-publishing.

But self-publishing is what this webinar is about so that's what we're gonna

focus on. One more thing about he risks of self-publishing. I also

I like this excerpt -- photographs of ethics that I

could use and I found this one of a guy just getting hit in the face by ethics.

Sometimes that's the way that it feels you're just sort of walking along and

oops you get blindsided by an ethical issue. That's not what you want to have

happen to you with with self-publishing you want to make sure that you stay

above board and so there's a couple of things to keep aware of.

The first is client confidentiality. There are other books that are written

by therapists where they say okay I talk about case examples but I've gotten

written permission from my clients and I change personal details and so it's okay

for me to talk about my clients. They certainly do that they get

published and they get away with it. But I think that you do want to be really

careful with that because it is possible that you might unknowingly put pressure

on a client to give you that permission. Maybe your client doesn't really want

their story to appear in the book but they also don't want to disappoint you.

Then they say yes and then maybe later on they say oh I really don't like

how you wrote about me. They file a complaint with the board -- that's just a

bad thing to do. I think that this is less of a risk with traditional

publishing because you have access to their legal team and other folks to help

support you. But if you're self-publishing I would be really

cautious about including client stories in your in your work. I would say that

maybe the safest option is to do sort of compilations of clients

where none of your clients could look at a particular story and recognize

themselves in it but you're still drawing from your your insights. Also,

similarly you could run into problems with self promotions if you

promote your book to your clients. Somebody comes into your therapy room

they're vulnerable and you say hey what would help you is my

book then you're kind of pressuring them to give you some money even if that's

not maybe the way it feels to you. And that again can can land you into hot

water. And then finally you want to be careful about writing within the

bounds of your competence. If you decide to

say, you know what, I'm gonna write a great book about nutritional supplements

that help with anxiety because I found some that really helped me and

blah blah blah...that's really writing outside the bounds of your

competence most likely because you're trained to do mental health work

you're not trained to to you know talk about nutrition and things of

that nature. That can get you into hot water as welI. I would say

make sure that what you are writing on is something that is well within your

professional wheelhouse and if you venture a little bit outside

your bounds of competency in your book really make sure that you mentioned that

and say like hey this is not based on my clinical training this is just

my own experience take with a grain of salt, things of that nature.

The one last risk that you gotta be aware of before you decide

to dip your toe into self-publishing is the financial investment that's involved

in it. There's two main investments that you have to spend

and then there's other things that you may or may not choose to spend. Your

book is going to need a cover and it's going to need a manuscript that is

prepared so that it is formatted correctly for whatever self-publishing

system you choose which is again probably going to be Amazon. A cover

costs anywhere between fifty to five hundred dollars sometimes even more

depending on where you go. The fifty dollar covers usually are pre-made covers

so somebody just made a lot of covers and then you buy whatever one you want

they slap your title on it and there you go. There might be another book in the

Amazon store that has the exact same cover as you, it's not

personalized to your book so it's not very good but you're also only paying

$50. That can be a good option if you are just testing the waters and you

want to minimize your investment and then maybe later on you can update it with a

better cover. $500 is more what you'd spend for a professional

cover design, made from scratch. As far as

manuscript preparation, you can prepare your manuscript yourself but you have to

be willing to put in a lot of time in order to do so because there's a

lot of really finicky rules -- it's just like putting your dissertation

together but on steroids. There's a lot of really finicky rules that Amazon wants

you follow and how you format the word documents so it shows up correctly. My

first book I made the manuscript myself. I probably put

easily twelve hours or more into it, and then every time after that I just

decided to pay a professional $200 - $300 because my time is worth more

than that. I'll have some suggestions for where you can go to find most of

these folks at the end of our talk. If you decide to hire a professional editor,

that amount can can really vary. You could hire somebody you know. You could

just find a smart English student at your local university

just to do some proofreading. They're probably gonna charge a very low rate.

You could find somebody who's a really expert editor and who's worked on

prestigious problems and they might be charging you $400 an hour.

That can really vary. Then your marketing budget also is going to vary.

It is possible to market your books for free but you might also want to

consider that it can be helpful to maybe buy some ads or do some other things to

help promote your book because it's no good to put all the work in you're

writing a new book and it just sits there nobody finds out about it. You

want to anticipate that you're going to spend something on that.

These are the upfront costs that you're going to pay

but what are the odds that you're going to make money on this? Well, if you sell

your book for about five dollars as an e-book and twelve dollars as a paperback --

which is around where I sell most of my books, that seems like a pretty good

sweet spot, you're gonna earn about $3.50 per sale at least on Amazon.

It depends on various factors but this is a good

rule of thumb. That means that you have sell about 200

copies and then you'll break even -- assuming that you spent maybe

four hundred dollars on your cover and three hundred dollars on your manuscript.

Two hundred copies doesn't seem like that much but a lot of self-published

authors never even sell ten copies. Their book just goes on the store and it's never

discovered -- nobody ever finds it. There's a risk

that you you will never get your money back if you choose to invest in this. But

I think if you have a reasonable strategy for how you could get just 200

sales, whether that is from speaking engagements, whether that is from some

kind of online marketing, whether that's because you're gonna run advertising

campaign and again we'll talk about these options more in our next talk.

If you have a reasonable strategy -- 200 copies doesn't seem too

far off then there's a decent chance that you'll at least break even and then

every copy that you sell after that is just passive income. So, let's say that

you do decide all right this sounds good these costs feel reasonable I can

handle the ethical risks and I am going to self publish a book. What are your

options for doing so? I think that there's three options. You could

just give your book away on your website, you could go through Amazon or

you could do other platforms. As you can see by my little image that I found, a

website giveaways sort of okay. Amazon is I think the best option and other

platforms I really don't recommend and I'll explain all that in a second.

Let's say you want to just give your book away on your website you don't want

to go through any third party you just offer it totally yourself. There's three

different ways that you can do that. First you give it

no strings attached anybody can go on your site and they just click a

button and they download a PDF. Or maybe you just post it on your site as

big website page -- that's kind of what I do like if you go to marketingfortherapists.org

you can see that I have a lot of content -- you just go on the

site and you read it just like any other website or any other webpage and this is

a really great strategy for building search engine optimization because if

you give away a really good free resource and it's really easy for people

access then the search engines like that people are more likely to link to it and

so this is a really helpful strategy. It also allows you to reach the most

people because there's no barrier -- you can also put it behind a

email collection. You can say hey I'll give you my free book but you have to

give me your email address. First this can be a good way to build up a mailing

list that's a part of your marketing strategy but it does

annoy some people because they don't want to give you their email address.

It's also possible to sell your book directly on your website. There's

software that you can plug in to your to your website that will allow you to do

that. I really don't recommend this option because most people if they're

going to buy a book they're gonna want to buy it through Amazon or another

reputable site that they've heard of. But the benefit of doing this is that you

you keep almost all of the money -- usually your payment processing is maybe

three percent and then after that you keep everything rather than keeping

say two-thirds with Amazon.

You also have a little bit more flexibility because Amazon limits the

prices that you can charge for your books. But if you say you know what my

book is so amazing I want to charge $50 you can do that through your own website.

I don't really recommend it I don't think that most people are going

to spend that money, but it is an option I want you to know about it.

There are a couple of different players that you can use to self publish

your own book but I really do recommend that Amazon is the right choice for

almost everybody and the reason for that is because Amazon has really wide

distribution built in when you self-publish on Amazon. You are

immediately available on every Amazon store worldwide. I have people

from India, I people from Britain that are buying my books and I

didn't have to do any additional work to reach those people than I did to reach

people here in the U.S. You also get a higher royalty rate.

Amazon has the flexibility to not make all that much money off of any

individual thing because they've got so many different

businesses and so they're gonna give you a higher royalty rate than many of the

other platforms. It also feels a little bit more legitimate. People are

comfortable buying through Amazon whereas if you're only available on some

website they haven't heard of... do youreally want to put my credit

card information in? Amazon also has the benefit that you can order cheap

copies of your books and have them shipped to you. If you want to sell

the books yourself at a speaking engagement, if you want to just give them

out to your clients, you can do that for a very low cost usually the cost is with

with shipping tax everything included it costs about 4 to 5 dollars per copy to

have a copy of your book shipped to you from Amazon -- which is you know very

affordable. If you do go on Amazon the way that you do that is

through their program called Kindle Direct Publishing. They used to have a

separate program for Kindle and then a separate program for paperback books and

then they just lumped everything under Kendal Direct Publishing. Again this

gives you worldwide distribution with one click and there's no upfront costs

so it doesn't cost anything to enroll you don't have to order a certain

number of books ahead of time because they only do ebooks and print on demand.

If nobody buys your book then they don't print anything it

doesn't cost them anything so it doesn't cost you anything either. The way that

you get started with Kindle it's pretty simple you go to KTP.Amazon.com.

You can log in with your existing Amazon account or if you wanted to you could

create a new one just for this. I don't really think that there's a big benefit

of keeping it separate unless other people also use your Amazon account -- like

if your kid gets on your Amazon account and you don't want them to log in

and mess up your or your book settings or something then maybe you

would make a separate Amazon account just for this. You give them a manuscript

and a cover that's fit to their specifications, you fill out some

information on what you want to charge for the book,

where do I want the book to be distributed and then you fill out the

book information and you fill up the description, the

title, all of that and then you're done.

Once the book is written, getting it into Amazon can be just a ten

minute process and it's very very straightforward and again there's

no cost involved in that. Also Amazon owns ACX.com which I think stands for

the audiobook creation exchange -- something of that nature and this allows

you to get your audiobooks on Audible and the iTunes Store and

places like that. This is a really slick process because it has a built in

way for you to recruit audiobook narrators. You just post a little snippet

from your book and then you say hey people

please audition for this and then people who are audiobook narrators will

audition. You can choose the best one and then you can either choose a royalty

split option -- whatever we earn on this book we split

it 50/50 and then that's a permanent agreement you can't change

that. Or you just pay them outright and usually you pay them per completed hour.

If the audiobook is about two hours long you would pay them a certain amount

per hour for those two hours. Typically speaking

the more that you pay the more likely you are to get a good narrator and

the more credible you are. The more that you've had other books that have

sold that have done well the more that a narrator is going to be willing to do a

royalty split with you -- at least a good a good narrator. Usually what I suggest

is to get your book on the Kindle Store first.

Get a little bit of traction there and then if it seems like there's some

legs behind your book then go and get your audiobook because then it'll either

make sense to say alright I am going to commit to just paying a narrator

outright or my book has enough credibility that a narrator is gonna be

one to do a 50-50 split with me. Because if they record your book and it

doesn't sell anything in the 50/50 split it's just a waste of time for them.

Those are some of the different options for getting your book out there

and again there are other possibilities and I think it is worth

potentially looking into them. I would say some other self-publishing

places have some features that Amazon may not. Or you might just kind of

ethically feel like you would rather support a small business rather

then the big Amazon conglomerate. But honestly I think if you want to reach

the most people, if you want the best game in town, Amazon is the

place to go. That's sort of how to get started, but then let's say you

decided all right I do think that I want to get started on Kindle but

how do I actually start making some steps towards that? Again

Kyler's gonna talk a little bit more about choosing a topic for

your book and staying motivated with the writing process but I

wanted to make sure that today I give you some opportunity to make

headway even today if you wanted to. I think that there's three things

that are small goals that are really good ways of testing the waters and

seeing if this is something that you want to do. The first one is very

simple -- it's just to read related books. What that means is that you go and

you find other books that are on the topic that you might conceivably want to

write about. I would say is read some books

that look pretty good that you think like man, this is gonna be a great

book! And then also read some books that are not that good -- that are just kind of

like the competition -- this is kind of sketchy and the reason

for this is because it's going to give you a really good sense of what people

are doing well and what people are doing not so well and it's going to let you

know what to do and to avoid in your own book.

It's also going to give you a sense of if I have something unique that I can

contribute here. Way back in 2014 the first book that I wrote was about

social skills and so I went on the Amazon store and I started searching for

like social skills friendship conversation things of that nature and I

looked at what was coming up and there was there was a couple of good books

here and there but most of it was really really bad advice

like pickup artists, skeezy guys, or just somebody who had

clearly just slapped together a book to make a dollar and none of it was really

very good. I decided I have something here where I'd be able

to offer something really valuable whereas if I had gone and I looked and

there was a dozen really really excellent, high-quality books all on that

topic, then I might have said, all right either I need to learn from

these books and I need to figure out how to do something that's just as good as

them or maybe I'm gonna try to find a different topic that'll be kind of

unique. But if you start by reading some related books that's going to help lay

the groundwork for your own writing.

The second thing is the Seth Godin writing challenge. Seth Godin

is a marketing guru and really a writing expert. He has one of the most

popular blogs in the world and that's because he writes a blog post every

single day and has been doing that for the past 10 years. He's so

prolific that if you just search for the word Seth in Google I think that his

blog is the first thing that comes up. The guy knows a knows about

writing and he has a suggestion for how to get started with writing and kind of

get past some of the resistance and the hesitation you might have about writing --

it's pretty straightforward. The first thing is that you make a free anonymous

blog and you really don't want to put a lot of effort into this -- I just get

something free on Blogger or WordPress or whatever. You don't have to

build your own website it's all about low barriers to entry. Then commit to

writing 10 -- 500 or more word posts in 30 days. That averages

to about one every three days or two maybe three a week.

That's a pretty rapid pace but it's a way of testing yourself to see

can I keep up this pace and what is this kind of pace like for me because if you

if you can stay diligent with this then probably you're

going to be able to stay diligent in writing an actual book. But if you try to

keep up this pace and it just isn't viable -- you write two posts and then

you leave it alone for a month -- that's a pretty good sign to you that that you're

probably not ready for this or that it's just not a high priority

for you compared to the other things in your life. That's okay. You

got a lot of other good things in your life this one doesn't have to be at the

top of the list. But let's say you do write these 10 posts and I should

certify that these posts could be about anything -- you could just

use it as an excuse to just write. Or you could try to write 10 posts all on a

similar topic if you really do have a solid book idea in mind and you want to

start to make some headway on that. But whatever you do, if you can make the 10

in 30 days then once you've got the 10 posts then get some feedback

on your blog. Find some trusted friends, trusted colleagues, people

that you respect and just sort of ask them to read it and be like hey, what

do you think of this? And because it's anonymous, if you really wanted to

you could say hey, I just stumbled across this blog post what do you think?

Or hey, my friend wrote this. Tell them the truth

afterwards but if you wanted really unbiased feedback you could do that or

you could just say hey, I did this writing challenge and I want to see do I

have something valuable here? Then try to get the best feedback that you

can about if you've got the seed of something that might grow into

something good. I should give you the expectation that when you

first start out your writing is probably not going to be that great because it

takes practice and it takes editing and so you're not looking for somebody to

look at your blog and to say, oh wow this has changed my life, you

are the new Shakespeare hooray! No, you're just looking for somebody to say

like yeah like this this is rough but it's got potential. And you also

want to make that determination for yourself -- think about what the

experience was like for you. Did it feel like pulling teeth every day that you

sat down to write your book/blog? or

was it enjoyable? Did you

find that you were looking forward to the next time that you sat down to write or

did you even write a little bit more than you had to every day because

what you're trying to do in this exercise is

learn more about yourself -- am I the sort of person that really wants to sit down

and write or is it a nice idea but it's not actually congruent with me?

Once you've completed this step then you can make a decision -- you can decide

that this was a good experiment but I'm just gonna leave it alone and then you

go back to your life and just put the book idea on the

back burner or you could decide I'm going to take these posts and I'm going

to use them as the beginning part of a book. You could decide I'm

gonna make my blog public and I'm actually going to start to continue to

build on this or you might decide the actual writing that I did

I'm just gonna delete the blog the blog post that I made we're not very good but

I'm gonna continue to write because I'm finding that the process of writing is

good for me even if my first attempts weren't that good. Your can

respond to this in a lot of different ways. You have total freedom but the

important thing is that this lets you gather information about what's right

for you and then you make a decision about where to go from there. That's

the writing challenge. The next step of that is to write a tiny

book. This picture over here is actually the first book that I put on

Amazon. It's still on there and people still occasionally buy it but it's not

that great. The cover I just like gave a friend $20 to

slap together a cover in Photoshop but what this book did for me

was give me proof of concept -- would

anybody read a book if I happen to put it on Amazon? Is it worth putting in the

time and the effort? Is it worth paying a professional cover designer? Can I even

figure out how to manage the Amazon system? I had a lot of anxiety and so I

really wasn't confident to just completely go gung-ho and so what I did

first is I wrote this little tiny book on how to make conversation and it's

just 20-some pages long. I'm selling it for $0.99 --

making very little money off of each copy but there are also

very low barriers to people to reading it and so what I suggest

if you want to dip your toes in the self-publishing world is to do the exact

same thing -- write a little tiny book -- 20 to 30

pages long, sell it for $0.99 or as

low as you can go. Just so that as many people as possible choose to buy it.

It's not really designed to be a moneymaker but then you also want to put as little

money as possible into it yourself so get a really cheap cover -- maybe even try

to put the manuscript together yourself just as a way to test the waters and

then I would suggest focusing on a single helpful topic because that's

going to make it the most likely that people will pick up on it. If you're

little small book has a really clear value proposition -- somebody looks at

something like oh if I spend you know $0.99 and I read this for 20 minutes,

I'll get a little bit better at making conversation!

Okay! If you're you're like, I have 20 tips for managing anxiety.

30 things you can do to improve your relationship with your

teenager. That's a very easy way for people to start to buy the book.

by really creating these low barriers to entry you can kind of see if

people even with those low barriers to entry are purchasing your book because

maybe you put it out there and nobody buys it at all. That's a pretty

good sign that you're gonna have to revamp your marketing strategy. If you

want somebody to buy your full price book that's maybe a little bit

less focused or whatever. This is again a really excellent way of doing

some experimentation and getting used to the Kindle process and gathering

information that will let you know if this is something that you really want

to invest in and if you're anything like me it's also a great way of reducing

your anxiety and if the whole thing feels overwhelming this feels like a

pretty good place to start. so if you decide all right I'm gonna

start down this road but I really need some some help where do I go to try to

find some resources? There's three folks that I've worked with that I suggest you

start with. I'm not gonna make a full endorsement of them because I

really believe in you do in your own due diligence.

Take these as just a starting place for your research.

But these are all credible people that you could at least if you

find somebody else, you can use this as a comparison point. If you decide that

you want to hire an editor or a writing coach, my colleague and friend

Kyler Shumway who will be presenting later in the week, does a lot of that.

He specializes specifically in helping therapists so he's a really great choice

for that. If you want a manuscript formatter I've used Phillip Gessert at

Gessert Books for a couple of my different books and he does a really

really excellent job -- that's a possible option. For my Improve

Your Social Skills book I hired Damonza to create the cover. They also do

manuscript formatting but I never hired them for that so I can't speak to that.

I think that they did a pretty good design job. That cover certainly

got some sales. They're on the more expensive end as far

as cover designers -- they're like $600 to make a cover for your book but that's

again at least a place to start to see a credible source of cover design. Then

if you're like okay well I'm a reader and I would really like some additional

guidance, there's three books that I think are really helpful -- there's The War

of Art by Steven Pressfield which is really about overcoming your

resistance to sitting down and writing and getting you in that

seat, opening up the word document, actually making some progress. Bird by

Bird by Anne Lamont really sort of talks about the philosophy of writing and

just has a lot of really good wise and inspirational nuggets.

On Writing Well by William Zinsser. On Writing Well is just a really solid book of practical

tips on how do you actually make your writing flow and

sound really good. I read that book as I was

putting together my first book and it really helped me in some specific ways. I

think the biggest one was kind of on the focus on brevity and

not saying something three times if you can say it just once.

You can find all these books on Amazon. I know that we've got a lot of questions that have come in and more that have come in during the live presentation so whatever questions we have, let's jump into them.

[Peggy Mihelich] That was great presentation. Very helpful for those interested in

getting started in the self-publishing world who are very unfamiliar with it. We

have a lot of questions coming in and a lot of them are about picking a topic. How to

pick a topic, how do I know that what I have to say is important and

worth self-publishing?

[Wendler] I think that I will say that if you tune in to Kyler's webinar later in the week

he's gonna speak a little bit more specifically on the idea of finding a

topic and then also the handout has a little bit of information on that as

well but I'll take a crack at it and I'll try to offer some insights that are

not going to be covered in those two things. I think the biggest thing that I

would say is that from your daily life you should hopefully

have some insight into into the sort of things that you have to offer and the

sort of things that resonate with folks. I think that if there is

something that is perfect like personally really impactful for you, like

if you went through an experience that was really challenging or

really meaningful, chances are what you've learned from that is going to be

meaningful for other people as well. Or, if you've gained really deep expertise

in something chances are that it's okay to trust that expertise and to

believe that even though the things that you learned might seem like second

nature to you that other people really do want to hear that. I would start

by asking yourself what are things that are really meaningful for me what are

things that I'm really good at and look for the intersection of those things. I

think that I would also suggest doing a lot of trials and experiments.

It's probably not a good idea to sit down and write a 500 page

book before you know if it's going to be effective or not but that's why you can

do this this tiny blog thing and or the tiny book. Write a couple

of blog posts and share it on your Facebook page -- maybe even ask a couple of

your friends to share it so that you can get some feedback from people that you you don't know personally. Make your tiny book and then just print out 20 copies and give it away to

people. Just ask them for some feedback. I think that those are ways to see

if there's some momentum behind what you're doing or if it really kind

of feels like it's a vanity project for you. And again I would also suggest doing

your own research to see what else is out there -- is there is the need

being met by the resources that already exist? Or if you search for your topic

does it feel like there's really nobody speaking to the specific things that you

would want to offer. I would also say that sometimes people let the topic be a

barrier to them getting started. They say alright I really need to know

the perfect topic before I can sit down and I can start to write. What I

suggest is the writing habit sometimes needs to come first because sometimes

that need to find a perfect topic that will come out as you are writing -- as

you sit down you put your words on the page every day eventually

they start to coalesce around a particular area. But if you never sit

down and do the writing, then that's not going to happen.

so I'd say if you really don't know what topic and none of the other

things are really working for helping you determine that, just give yourself

the you know the 30 day 10 post writing challenge and see what sort of

things you end up writing about.

[Peggy] Ok.

This is something that a lot of us struggle with when it comes to writing.

You touched upon this a little bit with Seth. Any helpful tips

for those of us with procrastination or distractibility tendencies?

[Daniel] I could give the generic things that I think that we would give any client with ADHD and so that might be the place to start to sort of say all right well I was going to

give advice to a client what would I say and then I'll actually do that

because sometimes it can be hard to take our own advice. I think there's two

things that have sort of been specifically helpful for me --

one thing is to kind of determine what is your ideal way of working. For

me what I've actually found even though I suggest like the ten

posts, thirty day, do one post every three days...

What I find is that I work the most effectively when I write in like big

chunks of like multiple hours at a time. If I was going to do the 30 day

challenge, I would probably say I'm gonna write three posts a week

three posts every Saturday and I'm gonna just sit down and do that and then that

for me tends to work a lot better because I usually need a little

bit of time to work through my procrastination. But once I've started,

then I'm really going. It may be that the reason why you struggle with

with distractibility is because you're trying to write in a way that works for

other people it doesn't work for you. Do some experiments -- see

if you work better with short bursts or with long bursts. See if you work better

in the morning or the evening. See if you work better if you have a dedicated

space for writing or if you're among other people. I think that is

going to help quite a bit. I would also say that I've found that

there are some signals that I give myself that sort of say this is

now time to write and that can really help and other authors who've done that

as well. There's a website called Focusatwil.com that says they have music

that helps you focus. I don't know if the science behind it is any

good, but like as a placebo it works for me. If I really feel like

it's time for me to write, I put on Focusatwill, pour myself a drink

and I say I can't start drinking this until I start writing. And the

the combination of like the music and the beverage for me -- that's sort

of what I need to like get into my flow. Experiment with

things like that for you. Are there certain signals or triggers like is

there a food, is there a beverage, is there a music that you could kind of

reserve specifically for when you're writing that can help kind of push you

in that state.

[Peggy] A really interesting approach. I like that!

Some has asked, if you're not proficient at writing but you want to be

published, self-published would you suggest working with a professional

writer or ghostwriter?

[Daniel]

Going back to my ethical thing of talking about the boundaries of competence, this is something that I suggest you take my thoughts on this with a grain of salt because I have never worked with a ghostwriter and so I can't speak to that for certain but I would be

hesitant about that idea and I think the reason for that is because a good

ghostwriter is going to be pretty darn expensive and a bad ghost writer is

not going to be very good. If your goal is you

don't really care about the money, you just want to get your ideas on paper, so

that people can benefit from them, or whatever else, then then maybe it would

make sense. But I would imagine that if you are paying for a ghostwriter to

write the book for you and you want to pay for somebody who's gonna do a good

job it's gonna be very likely very hard for you to ever earn your

money back from that. What I would suggest instead if you're not

a really good writer but you really do want to share your ideas with the world

is to look into some of those other options that I talked about earlier.

Think about could I make youtube videos? Would that be a really

good way of showing my ideas? Could I put together an infographic

and share it on social media where I you know share some some cool concept and I

put it together in visual form? Could I get on a podcast or do some public

speaking? Those things that really fit my strengths much better because I

think that if you're just not a great writer

or it's just not a thing that really appeals to you,

do the 30 day challenge see how that goes but before you invest thousands of

dollars into a ghostwriter I would I would strongly consider trying some

other approach instead.

[Peggy] Someone has asked, could I use a pseudonym to publish?

[Daniel] Yes, when you go on Amazon and you self-publish your book you can just write

whatever you want in the author box.

I'm sure that if you put Sigmund Freud or you said that

you were Oprah or something like that then there might be problems.

But if you choose to write under a pseudonym then you certainly can do

that. The downsides to writing under a pseudonym.

Later on, if you want to write under your real name

that can get complicated because a lot of times people find

find your most recent book then they're gonna want to go back and also

read your your previous books and so on and so forth.

But let's say you wanted to write on a sensitive topic or

you just wanted to write a book of short stories but you didn't want to connect

it to a professional identity or anything of that nature then you could

write under pseudonym no problem.

[Peggy] We have a couple questions about illustrations and photographs/pictures. Do you have any advice on publishing books that have pictures? Can you use a illustrator

through Amazon? Does Amazon have illustrators -- not just for the cover

but for pictures and illustrations within the book?

[Daniel]

That's a good question. Amazon does not provide you with

illustrators but they have the tools for you to upload books that have

illustrations and things like that. I think that they even have the ability

to self-published cookbooks and comic books and things of that nature

that are very visual so the tools are there but if you are going to

publish a book that is image-heavy, that makes the

manuscript a lot more difficult and complex to put together so it renders well.

It needs to be set up in such a

way where if somebody's reading it on their phone or reading on their

Kindle or computer no matter what it all shows up okay.

I think if you did decide to go the

illustrator route or you wanted to include photographs expect to pay your

manuscript designer a lot more because they were going to have to work harder

to put that all together and then make sure that your higher

a really good manuscript designer who has was done work before with books

that have illustrations and

photographs -- things like that. Beyond that I would just say that it's just like

getting illustrations for anything else you just you know find somebody who can

produce them for you or you license them from somewhere absolutely you want to

make sure that you have the rights to any illustration or any photograph that

you're putting in your book. Assuming that you are able to acquire

those, than the only complex thing about putting them Amazon is making sure that

it's formatted correctly in your manuscript.

[Peggy] Speaking of Amazon, one person asked if you

work with Amazon publishing can you still give away free

ebooks on your website?

[Daniel] That's a great question. The answer is

mostly. Amazon has a program that you can enroll in which I'll talk about

a little bit more in my webinar on marketing but they have a program that

you can enroll in called Kindle Select. Basically what it means is

that your book gets a couple of like marketing benefits and people who

have signed up for like Kindle unlimited or things like that can download your

book for free. It helps you market your book but there's some trade-offs

again I'll talk about the pros and cons but it does come with restrictions. If

you have your book available in the Kindle Select program then

you are not allowed to have your book available for free anywhere else on

the web. I think actually or technically you're not even allowed to sell it

anywhere else on the web -- although I at least an eBook format although it could

again they've changed ground some since I've enrolled. If you are rolled in

that program then there would be restrictions on you giving it away for

free. However, if you're not enrolled in that program then Amazon doesn't care.

Your could even sell it on Amazon and give it away for free on your website. What I would suggest just so that your readers don't feel cheated is that if you do give it away for free on

your website and you sell on Amazon make sure that the Amazon version

has something that the free version doesn't -- put in an extra

chapter or two or an appendix that has some extra resources -- something

so that they don't feel cheated.

[Peggy] This person has asked and it's probably maybe a little specific to

them but it could be of interest to others... if for example you're interested

in publishing a book on a study and you've had your participants in that

study sign a release form do you need to go back and get another release form for

having them be in the published book?

[Daniell] I would not know since I'm not a lawyer.

I don't think that I can speak well to that. What I would say is

look at the specific release that you have and see

what kind of rights that hey signed away.

You want to consult with say at a

university the easy option is to talk to your university counsel.

I would be really careful about that because I

think even if the participants did agree to consent to the study and there

was something in the form where it said also they gave away the rights to this

being included in the book, if informed consent is important and

if they didn't really understand that they were agreeing to show up in your

book and then suddenly they appear and then they find the book

on the shelf and they're like what it's talking about the study that I was in!

Even if legally you're protected, ethically

you might have crossed a line.

Consult and get advice on your specific case but those are some of the things

that I would want to be aware of and I you know I think you always want to err

on the side of protecting other individuals -- stay in

the ethical zone!

[Peggy] Yes. Our next question is about self publishing

Is it going to hinder your from getting picked

up by a literary agent if you want to pursue a traditional publishing route? Is

[Daniel] If you are going to traditionally publish a new

book that's like not the book that you self-published, then I don't think that

it has any kind of negative possible effect -- if anything I

think the fact that you have self-published the book and you've sort

of shown that there's an audience for your book and things like that I think

that's going to help you. I think that if you self-published a book and

maybe you sell it for a year and then your sales just sort of really drop off

throughout that year and then you decide to turn around and give that same

book to a traditional publishing house, they might turn up

their eyebrows at that. I think that if your

book is consistently selling well, then that would actually make them more

likely to want to take you on. If you've been successful in

self-publishing again there's this idea of proving your platform so if you can

say, hey I've self-published this book this year and I've sold this many

copies and then now I want to take it to the next level they might then look at

that and say okay you've been successful on your own that gives us

evidence that we can take it further. The nice thing about

self-publishing through Amazon is that you can take things down with the

click of a button and so if if for whatever reason you did talk to a

publishing house and they said okay we'll take you on but we really don't

want your self-published works floating around out there and I mean you can make

the decision if that's worth it to or not but you always have total

flexibility to turn that off.

[Peggy] Those were some really great questions

and there was a bunch that we couldn't get to but unfortunately we're out of time.

Thank you so much for joining us Daniel and thank you to

all our listeners out there for your participation today. APA has partnered

with LegalZoom to offer affordable legal product products and services with

special discount for members. LegalZoom has helped over four million people with

their personal and business legal needs. Their

products include business formations to start and protect your practice as well

as copyrights to protect your published works. You can visit

APAlegalzoom.com to learn more and we've included a special promotional offer in

the handouts box of the webinar control panel with information about registering

copyrights. A recording of this presentation will be emailed to everyone

in three weeks. The recording will include links to the handouts in case

you've had trouble downloading them today. As soon as the webinar has ended a

short survey will appear in your screen. We hope you'll take just a few minutes

to complete the survey and give us feedback on how we did and how we can

improve. Our next self publishing webinar will take place this Thursday May 16th

at 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time. this beginner-level webinar is designed to

help first-time authors get through the nitty gritty of writing their first book.

And on Friday May 17th at 2:00 p.m. Eastern we'll be wrapping up this series

on self-publishing with a discussion on how to market your book. We are sending

you the registration links via chat right now. We thank you for your

attention today and we hope you have a great day!