

RCC 28: Understanding Your Options for Publishing a Book with Andrea Owen



Full Episode Transcript

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Susan Hyatt

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Welcome to the *Rich Coach Club*, the podcast that teaches you how to build your dream coaching practice and how to significantly increase your income. If you're a coach and you're determined to start making more money, this show is for you. I'm master certified life coach Susan Hyatt, and I'm psyched for you to join me on this journey. You're listening to episode 28, here we go.

I am in the midst of my book tour, so today's episode is so timely. And hey, if you're surprised I'm on a book tour, if you didn't know that I have a book that drops March 5th, check out the link in the show notes. It's called BARE, and it's all about how to love the skin you're in.

But today, we're jamming about not stopping until you get the result that you want. So, many of us, including myself, entertain stopping when it gets hard, when we get frustrated, when things aren't going the way that we thought they would go. But I want to help you stay motivated and inspired until you get what you set out to create.

And today's episode, we're talking about this as it specifically relates to getting published. So, getting a book published is, like, life coaching holy grail, right? Many of you listening probably have in your mind, "Oh, I would love to be a published author." And this was always my goal when I started my blog almost 12 years ago.

I've learned a lot about self-publishing and traditional publishing over the years because BARE is actually my second book. My first book is called *Create Your Own Luck*. I want to help you understand your options when it comes to book writing. You can self-publish, you can score a traditional book publishing deal. And listen, over the years, I've worked with some of the most talented writing coaches and self-help writers that are known today.

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I've soaked in a lot of wisdom and I can't wait to share it with you. And later in this episode, you'll hear me interview the smart, talented, and vivacious Andrea Owen. And we discuss how she landed one of the best literary agent duos in the business. And with two traditional publishing deals under her belt, her best advice, she's going to dish out on how to eventually see your book on the shelves of major book retailers. So, here we go. Let's get started with your Two-Minute Pep-Talk.

Here's your Two-Minute Pep-Talk for the week. And this is the part of the show where I share encouragement and inspiration to get your week started off right. And I try to keep things to 120 seconds or less. Did y'all watch the Oscars? I feel like every episode I'm talking about something I watched on TV. I love me some TV.

But seriously, did you catch it this year? Just like the Grammys, it's usually kind of a snooze fest, but I feel like these awards shows are really upping their game this year. So, Lady Gaga gave an intimate and mind-blowing performance of Shallow with Bradley Cooper. And if you haven't seen it, do yourself a favor and check out the link in the show notes and watch.

I'm just going to issue an advanced warning here; you might get pregnant watching it. It is so hot. I'm like, "Am I pregnant now?" That aside, the real reason I'm bringing this up is not to debate whether or not Gaga and Bradley Cooper are in love in real life. I think they are. People want to argue with me that they were just in character and they have just a lot of artistic love for each other. Y'all blind? Come on now. Watch that episode and let me know what you think.

Anyway, all that aside, Gaga won an Oscar and her acceptance speech, holy smokes, listen to this. I'm going to read a portion of it. She said, "And if you are at home and you're sitting on your couch and you're watching this right now, all I have to say is that this is hard work. I've worked hard for a long time. And it's not about winning, but what it's about is not giving up. If

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you have a dream, fight for it. There's a discipline for passion and it's not about how many times you get rejected or fall down or you're beaten up. It's about how many times you stand up and are brave and you keep on going."

Now, first of all, amazing. The line, "There's a discipline for passion." I will be blogging and podcasting about this for a long time because I think this is something that coaches misunderstand. I think a lot of entrepreneurs get in business for themselves and they think, "I can do whatever I want." But if you're truly passionate about something, there has to be some discipline to it to produce a result.

And so I loved how she talked about, "Listen, this is work, this takes time, it's not about how many times you get rejected, it's how many times you get up." And during my process of securing an agent and securing a book deal, you're going to hear later, when I'm talking with Andrea Owen about this, I received a lot of rejection along the way and there were many times I thought about giving up.

And there were many times I thought, "You know, it would be easier for me right now to just self-publish and not have to deal with this." But I did keep going, and of course, I did finally get an agent and a book deal. But I just so appreciated how Lady Gaga is such a great example of this.

But here's the thing. So here she is accepting this Oscar. And again, she just won some Grammys – I mean, she's so accomplished, but this wasn't always the case. In fact, when she was a freshman at NYU and she was this 18-year-old singing in piano bars, some of her classmates actually started a Facebook group and the Facebook group was called Stefani Germanotta, You Will Never Be Famous.

So, of course, Stefani Germanotta is her real name and it's amusing, right, for us to see Lady Gaga now as this force, as one of the most famous

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people alive. But when she was singing in piano bars and getting rejected, her own classmates were like, “Who does she think she is?”

So, I actually Googled this, and the Facebook group still exists. And there was an article written by a fellow classmate. She writes, “I remember coming across a Facebook group that broke my heart. Its name was something like Stefani Germanotta, You Will Never Be Famous. And the page housed pictures of a pretty Norah Jones-esque young 18-year-old NYU student who sang and played piano at local bars. And the group was peppered with comments sharp as porcupine needles, vilifying the aspiring musician for being an attention whore. Scores of them asked, who does she think she is? I also remember one dude posting a flyer for one of her upcoming gigs at a local village bar and he had clearly stomped on the flyer an outline of his muddy sole struggling to eclipse her name. I couldn’t shake the raw feeling of filth while scrolling down that Facebook page. But I pretty much, and quickly, forgot about that group and that girl.”

And then she later on writes, “Until she was reading New York Magazine and there was a profile on Lady Gaga.” And she’s scanning the piece and the first sentence of the second paragraph said, “Before the meeting, I assumed that someone with a stage name like Lady, her given name is Stefani Joanne Germanotta, was going to be a bit standoffish. Holy shit, I screamed to an empty car; Lady Gaga is Stefani Germanotta? Stefani is Lady Gaga? I was overcome with a dizzying emotional cocktail of stage-mom at a beauty pageant and nerd revenge triumph, but also shame; shame that I never wrote on that group, shame that I never defended the girl with the intense raven eyes, the girl whose brave fliers were stomped on probably somewhere near my dorm.”

And the writer goes on and talks a little bit more, but she closes the article with, “Stefani, thank you. Thank you for always thinking you’re a superstar, for using your cracks to let the light come out more brightly.”

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You guys, okay, so there still exists this Facebook group mocking Lady Gaga. Even Lady Gaga – especially Lady Gaga – has haters, has had people tell her that she’s not or would never make it, including she’s famously quoted as saying, “I had a boyfriend who told me I’d never succeed, never be nominated for a Grammy, never have a hit song, and that he hoped I’d fail. I said to him, someday, when we’re not together, you won’t be able to order a cup of coffee at the fucking deli without hearing or seeing me.”

I love this so much. She was rejected by her classmates, her boyfriend. I know her parents are quoted as saying they thought she was crazy. I myself had an English 101 teacher when I was 18 years old at the University of Georgia who I put on a pedestal. I thought this woman, like, rocked the world.

And I had my first gig for the school college newspaper. I was to attend an event and write a review. And when I wrote the review, I was really nervous about turning it in to my editor and so I had my English 101 teacher read it. And she asked me to stay after class one day and it was covered in red marks. And I remember sitting on this little bench outside of her office and she said, “You know, honey, I just don’t want you to embarrass yourself. Maybe this isn’t for you.”

And I remember thinking, at 18 years old, “Oh wow, here’s this expert who must know better than me.” So, at 18, I wasn’t like Lady Gaga in the sense that I already thought of myself as a superstar. I did the opposite. I caved. I changed my major. I stopped writing until I had a life coaching blog. And all of a sudden, I had a platform and I started writing again.

And so I’m sharing this with you – and I share more of it later in this episode, so that you don’t stop, so that you don’t listen to other people, so that you don’t do what I did and stop writing for 20 years. Be more like Gaga. Pep-talk complete.

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Now we're moving into the part of the show where I love to give shout-outs to you guys; shout-outs to listeners, clients, all the wonderful people in my business community. And today, I want to give a shout-out to Lori Kleiman.

So, Lori left me a very generous five-star review for *Rich Coach Club* and she said, "I love, love, love *Susan Hyatt's Rich Coach Club* podcast. Every episode is loaded with gems to create a successful coaching practice. I'm listening to ever back to back episode and want to make sure I hear every word. I've been working part-time as a coach for the past nine years, and now have the tools to really step it up and make money at what I love to do. Thank you, Susan, for all the goodies."

Thank you, Lori. I love having you as part of *Rich Coach Club*. And hey, if you have something to say about the show, please send an email to my team or post a five-star iTunes review about the show and you might hear your name on a future episode. I love giving shout-outs to people in my community, so holla at me. Thank you for the love and I love you right back.

It's time for our interview. And again, we're speaking with the amazing Andrea Owen. So, Andrea has been my homie online for, I don't know, I think nine years, maybe longer. And she's an author, mentor, and professional certified life coach who helps high-achieving women let go of perfectionism, control, isolation, and choosing courage and confidence instead.

She's helped thousands of women manage their inner critic to create loving connections and their most kick-ass life. As I mentioned before, she's the proud author of two traditionally published books, and her most latest book is called *How to Stop Feeling Like Shit: 14 Habits That Are Holding You Back From Happiness*. It's been translated into 16 languages. And her inaugural book, which I also love, is called *52 Ways to Live a Kick-Ass life*.

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So, what's cool about Andrea is she's not just an amazing two-time published author, and she's not just an amazing coach; she's also a mom. She has two kids, ages 11 and nine, and a husband named Jason, and she also – I love this about her too – is a retired roller derby player having skated under the name Veronica Vain. You've got to know Andrea. Let's get to this interview.

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Susan: Welcome to the podcast, Andrea Owen.

Andrea: Susan Hyatt, I could not be more excited to be here.

Susan: Oh my god, I'm so excited you're here too for so many reasons, one of which, you and I have been friends online forever and ever. I have had the joy of watching you become a bestselling author. You have two books.

Andrea: Well our story of how we met is kind of funny. Can I tell it?

Susan: Yeah, go ahead, say, say.

Andrea: Because it was so long ago. This had to have been around 2008, 2009 maybe, which in the internet world is like 150 years ago, especially in the coaching internet world. So, way before – well, a couple of years before I started Your Kick-Ass Life, I had a cute little blog called Live Your Ideal Life, which I know is so cute and life-coachy. And as I was Googling it, your site came up because back then you were still ideallifedesign.com. And you were the first person I friended on Facebook who wasn't my actual friend. Like, you weren't somebody I went to high school with or anything like that. and I reached out to you and you were so nice to me. And you were like, "Yeah, let's have a Skype date." And so we chatted, and then, as they say, the rest is history. But I think that was in 2008.

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Susan: Yeah, I think you're right, and I think – didn't we Skype and you still lived in California at the time.

Andrea: I still lived in California at the time and had just started – I mean, I hadn't officially even started my business yet, so you were one of the first legit life coaches online that I started following.

Susan: Oh my god, and look at us now.

Andrea: It only took me 11 years to pay you money.

Susan: Hey, I can wait 11 years for a suitcase full of money.

Andrea: Yeah, and it's funny, this is back when your website – I think I told you this before – you had a video of you swinging with one of your clients. So it's been awesome to watch you too, like your trajectory and how you've come into yourself and your evolution as well.

Susan: Oh my god, the B-roll of that video. I remember that video. I went to Bloomington to have Blueline shoot this, like, day in the life kind of video of me. And I fell off the swing. I am the clumsiest person in the world and I wish I still had that B-roll because I would totally play it all the time now. Back then, I was trying to be super professional. I would never have shown anyone.

Andrea: You can tell that it was very much like, look at me, I'm such a life coach, and this is how awesome it is to be with my clients. And now it's hilarious, but back then, it was legit. It was profesh...

Susan: Yes, back then, that's what we did. Now we're like, wearing fuck t-shirts and...

Andrea: Giving each other diarrhea...

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Susan: Exactly. So, Andrea sent me flowers recently. I have the card right in front of me that says, “So grateful for you, excited for this year. You’re the only one that I’m glad gives me diarrhea, smiley face, love Andrea.” And my husband sent me a picture of this because I was out of town and he was like, “Um, this is good, yeah?” I’m like, “Absolutely.”

Andrea: Well, to give it some context for people, it’s a joke that my friend Sarah Dean, who Rachel Rodgers is her coach, whom you’ve had on your podcast. And the joke is just about people challenging you to uplevel, and a really great measure of that is, on a scale of one to diarrhea, how scary and challenging are the assignments that Susan Hyatt’s giving you?

Susan: Well, I am honored. I am honored. Now, we’ve pretty much scared everyone away from signing up for all my future programs. Andrea, you are such an inspiration to me because you are published through a traditional publisher two times over, and I have had the pleasure of watching that happen. I had a book published back in 2011, 2012, through Angela Lauria called Create Your Own Luck. But this time, when I decided to go the traditional publishing route, you were such a wealth of information and inspiration, and I knew I wanted to have you on the podcast because so many coaches in this audience want to become published authors. And the traditional publishing route is not for the faint of heart.

Andrea: No. It’s interesting. Okay, so go on...

Susan: So, I thought it would be interesting because, when I was a brand-new coach, my goal was to become a published author. I’ve always wanted to be a writer like you. I have told stories before on this podcast about how my freshman year English teacher told me not to bother, basically. She didn’t want me to embarrass myself. And I really stopped writing until I became a coach. And then I had a blog and was like, well wait a minute, no one can tell me I can’t write now, I have my own platform, and very quickly, had the goal to write a book, as many coaches do. And there are many

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different ways you can go about it. The traditional publishing route though seems to be so mysterious and you were very helpful to demystify that process for me. And so, if someone out there has the idea, “I want to write a book. I have an amazing message. I love to write...” do you have some measures of readiness in your mind that this is the way to go?

Andrea: Yes. And I actually have a blog post that I wrote that I can pop in the show notes for everyone where I go through a step by step process of probably a lot that I’m going to say here. But I published that a couple of years ago, so I’ll probably have some new information here. I think that the first thing people need to ask themselves is, what is their intention with the book? For some people, it might be that they really just want to have it all in one place and hold that book in their hands. They maybe want it to give to their clients, you know, to have on their book shelf at home, and that’s pretty much their main reason. If that is your main reason, then by all means, go and self-publish.

I’m even going to take a step back from there. And if you are waiting until you are ready to write a book, honey, you’re going to be waiting forever because I used to think, well I don’t have an MFA, I don’t even have any accolades or writing awards. I went to college for exercise physiology, which, you know, I can tell you how the carbon cycle works, but I have no idea. My grammar is terrible. Like, I don’t have any medals or anything like that. And so, if I listened to that voice that told me that, I would have never written a book. I had such imposter complex around it. But for me, it came down to this; I knew that I wanted to write a book ever since I was 11 and was devouring Sweet Valley High books and Baby-Stitter’s Club...

Susan: Yes, me too.

Andrea: I still have mine. I still have mine because they meant so much to me. And that isn’t exactly like literary gold, but I look to Francine Pascal, the author of the Sweet Valley High series as, I’m like, oh my god, she’s an

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author and she does that for a living. Like, she makes money from doing that. That's the best job ever. And it was a dream of mine since I was a child.

And then, when I got into this industry, into the self-help industry, I would read other self-help books and I'm like, I could write that. This person isn't any smarter than I was and I didn't have a PhD or any fancy letters after my name, but I knew I loved to write and I knew that I had something to say. If that is you, then by all means – I'm like waving my hands around over here – write the book. And you can self-publish. There's so many avenues that will support you to be able to do that. That being said, if you are like me and you really truly want the distribution – so what that means is you really truly want your book to be in bookstores all over the United States or beyond, if you want this to be a steppingstone in your career, whether you're a life coach or a consultant, therapist, whatever, then I would really try to get a traditional publishing deal. So I can talk more about that if you want.

Susan: Yeah, and I would agree with that. People have asked me over and over again why I didn't just self-publish, and it's for the distribution, you know. I could have had this book out two years ago, but I really wanted it to reach as many people as possible. And so that is really the bottom line. You can't achieve the level of distribution as a self-published author. You just can't.

Andrea: You can't. And, let's be honest, there is still an element of credibility that goes with being traditionally published because that doesn't happen to everyone. And I can't guarantee that every single person listening right now is going to get a traditional publishing deal. I can give you some numbers about my first book, let's see, 2012 was when I got my book deal. I can tell you about how many fans I had on Facebook and my subscriber levels. It wasn't that high. But there are a lot of smaller publishers out there who are willing to take a chance on a first-time author

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who maybe doesn't have a huge platform. But I will be very honest with you and say that publishers are going to look at your numbers. They want to make sure that if they're going to invest in you, that that book is going to actually sell, that you already have a built-in audience that will buy this book.

Susan: Absolutely, and that was, for me, when I was – and we'll talk about how to get an agent here in a minute – that was the thing I heard over and over and over again, was that my audience is what I would always call small but mighty, you know, an engaged audience. But I didn't have hundreds of thousands of followers, like Marta Beck, Brené Brown, you know, people who – although, I think, before Brené Brown's TED Talk, I'm not sure she had a huge audience either.

Andrea: Funny story, I was part of her audience back in 2009 when she still would comment back on people on her blog.

Susan: Yes?

Andrea: Yeah, she did, and it really was that TED Talk and her second book which sort of catapulted her into fame. And, of course, teaming up with Oprah didn't hurt either.

Susan: That doesn't hurt. And I'm waiting. I'm waiting on the call from Oprah to be on Super Soul Sunday.

Andrea: It's coming.

Susan: It's coming. So yes, agents and publishers are going to want to see and know that you have an engaged built-in audience that are going to purchase your book because they're not going to take out billboards for your book unless you are J.K Rowling or Brené Brown, someone who has a proven track record.

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Andrea: Exactly, and – well I can start and tell you, sort of how to – well, and there's a couple of different avenues we could go. We can talk about when you get a publishing deal and what to expect, or to start with getting an agent. Which way do you want me to start?

Susan: Well, I would love to start with getting an agent, because I think that it's important for people to understand there are certainly cases where someone has gone directly to the publisher somehow, but typically, you have to have an agent.

Andrea: I don't know anyone who's done that, do you?

Susan: I know a couple of people who have done that, but it's been like such an unusual circumstance of how that has happened that when people tell stories like that, I feel like people get the wrong idea that they should just do that, and that's not how it works.

Andrea: Not typically, yeah, I feel like that is more the exception. And so here's kind of like generally how it goes. And people always ask me this question too, how much of the book do I need to write before I write the proposal? So, for non-fiction, which I'm assuming that's probably what your audience would write, like some kind of wellness or self-help book, you need to have at least sample chapters written. That really depends on how long your chapters are. It depends on a lot of things. So you are going to need to at least have an outline, a rough outline, of what you think your book is going to be. You don't have to agonize over it and make sure that it's set in stone. This is what an editor is for. I can't tell you how many conversations I've had with people who are stuck on that. And I'm like, no, no, no, just have at least a rough outline. The question I like to ask people when they're stuck on the topic of their book is, what solution are you wanting to provide people with this book? What do you want the reader to walk away with? How do you want them to feel? How do you want them to think? How do you want them to behave?

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Ask the coaching questions that somebody would ask you when you're talking really about your main message, the problem that you solve for your clients. Same thing with a book. So have that rough outline, have some sample chapters. And then the very first thing that you're going to need to do is write a proposal. That, in and of itself, is a beast. I'm not going to lie.

Susan: Yes, it is.

Andrea: It's a beast. I thought that I was an exception and I could bust that baby out in about a month. It took me about four months, and that really was just with my first proposal. Once I had written one proposal, when it came to write my second book and I needed another one, it was a lot easier. SO I think it is maybe kind of like having a baby; the second time, your uterus is just ready for it. I don't know, but it was easier for me the second time around. But you're going to need a proposal. I can answer questions about that as well. But once you have the proposal, then you can look for a literary agent. The book that I used was – and they have a new one that comes out every year. The one that I have is from 2013. It's obviously outdated. But the book is called *The Guide to Literary Agents*. You can get it on Amazon. It's like a phone book. It's gigantic. So you're going to look for your genre, which is probably self-help, and narrow it down from there. Go to the agent's websites that you like from the book, see if they're even accepting new submissions, and you're going to query them. You're going to write them an email. That email is important. I actually, to be totally transparent with your audience, I hired Debbie Reber. Do you know Debbie Reber?

Susan: I know Debbie Reber, and Debbie Reber is amazing.

Andrea: She is amazing. Put her link in the show notes. I don't know if she's accepting new clients right now, but she is a book writing coach. She's also Martha Beck certified and she helped me with my proposal. Once I had written it, she has this really amazing coaching package where

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she can help you polish it up. She's been published like 18,000 times, something like that, by big names like Simon & Schuster. I'm exaggerating a little bit. But she also – at the end of that process, I was so beat up. I'm like, can I just pay you to write my query email to agents? She was like, sure. So she wrote the best query email. And I will tell your audience that I actually got really lucky with my first book because – maybe I shouldn't say lucky. Maybe it was just my destiny. But I had a publisher reach out to me. And again, it doesn't happen very often. I thought it was a scam. It was like, who are you?

And I forwarded it to Debbie, and I'm like, is this legit? And said, "Yeah, they're actually a legitimate editor from a publisher." However, when I did land my agent, she said, "I'm going to shop your book to other publishers because you could get a better deal. She did that. it was also right around the holidays, and that first publisher, they're not going to leave that offer on the table forever. So we were up against a deadline, and my agent actually said, "I think you should take the deal with that particular publisher." And I can also tell you how I ended up – kind of a funny story – how I ended up with my agent is I spent hours and hours and hours looking at that book that I mentioned, which I do think is really helpful. And at the end of the day, I thought to myself – you'll love this story, Susan – I thought to myself, I want the best of the best. And I Googled, who is Gabrielle Bernstein's literary agent? And, for those of you who don't know, Gabrielle's been published many times. She's a big deal in our industry. And Michelle Martin's name came up. And I queried Michelle Martin. And she said yes, so that's how I got my agent. So don't be afraid to be bold and ask for what you want.

Susan: So awesome. I think that that is absolutely one of the best pieces of advice, is to go through, look at who represented some of your favorite books.

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Andrea: Look in the acknowledgments section of the books where they thank their agents.

Susan: Absolutely. And there's also – I'll put a link in the show notes – I hired Betsy Rapoport, whose information we will also put in the show notes, to help me write my book proposal. And Betsy worked for Random House for like 20 years on the other side of the table. She was the editor getting book proposals. So she's almost like the agent to getting an agent. And she helped me put my book proposal together for the second time because, like you, Andrea, I thought I was going to be the exception to book proposal writing. And I read a couple of different books on how to write and structure a book proposal. I felt like I put together an amazing proposal and was not getting squat from that book proposal. Then I immediately hired Betsy Rapoport, who helped me understand what needed to happen to really write a compelling book proposal.

And she turned me onto a website. It's called like Publisher's Lunch Daily. We'll put the link in the show notes. And you do pay, I want to say it's \$100, but it's a year subscription, and you can search. It has the database of all agents. You could search agents in self-help in health and fitness, or whatever your niche is. And it will show you the agents that are active, the current deals that they have. And I went through that as well as asking people that I know for introductions to their agents. And that was the research that I did, just like the research that you did on who represented Gabrielle Bernstein, really paid off.

Andrea: It does. And I didn't actually know about that website. That's amazing, that sounds better than the method that I used. Mine's very Fred Flintstone.

Susan: Well it worked. Hey, it worked.

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Andrea: Yeah, it did. And I also think that I love and worship editors because I am not a great one. From what I understand, it's two different parts of your brain at work when you are writing the content versus editing. And this is why editors get paid, because they're really good at it. And again, I just want to underscore about don't agonize over it. If you've spent more than like four months on your proposal and you're trying to get it perfect, please consider hiring someone. It is so worth the money that someone who is experienced, and this is their job, to edit and polish and make it great and shiny; do that.

Susan: Absolutely. I mean, I think that another thing – I'm kind of jumping around a little bit – but one of the things that you said to me when I was picking your brain about getting published was, I think I was a little bit deflated because the process was going to take so long. I got a deal, but they were saying, okay – this was whatever it was, January of 2018, and they were like, "Okay, well it will be March 2019 before we release it." And I was like, "Wait, what?" And you were like, "Listen, your book is going to be so much better by the time it goes through that editing process and they do all the things. Like, just do the process, Susan Hyatt." And it was so helpful for me to understand that we were producing the best possible book that I was capable of writing, and that takes some time.

Andrea: Yeah, I mean, you want to be proud of this book baby that you're putting out into the world. And that's people's job to edit it. And I thought you were going to say – I don't remember if I told you this during our conversations. Maybe it wasn't you that I told it to, but often the advice that I give people is, I hate to say it – and this is just my opinion, everybody, but I feel like publishing has moved to a place where – I'm just going to say it – publishers don't really give a shit if you're a great author or not, a great writer or not.

Susan: They don't.

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Andrea: They want to know if your message is compelling enough that they can put together a cohesive interesting book that will sell. And I say that because I don't want people on the other end of this to agonize whether they're a great writer or not. And I think I'm a good writer. I think it's gotten better over the years, but they want to know, like, do you have a voice? Do you have a unique voice and message that is going to be compelling to a certain audience? And that's what editors are for. Editors are going to make you a better writer.

Susan: Yes, absolutely. And I had a great editor on this book. Although, one hilarious thing happened. She emailed me some edits and really wanted to strike every curse word from the book. And she had some sound reasons why. She was just looking out for me. But she didn't really – I don't think she knew enough about my brand to know that it would absolutely be off brand if there were no curse words in the book, so I compromised. I sent her a whole video about how curse words were precious to me. She was like, "I don't think I've ever had an author say that curse words are precious." And I was like, "Well, they fucking are."

Andrea: Yeah, well times have changed. I mean, my second book has a curse word in the title. I mean, technically the first one does too. And when I started – when I launched Your Kickass Life in 2010, I remember sitting in my living room with my best friend, Amy Smith. And we were tossing around different things and I made the suggestion of Your Kickass Life. And I said, "I can't legitimately have the word ass in my business name, can I? And she was like, "Well you can have whatever you want." And, you know, the rest is history.

Susan: Right.

Andrea: You can say bad words. If that's how you talk in real life, then write that way.

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Susan: Yes, absolutely, and I think that it depends so much on your audience. I had an agent who I pitched read my proposal and come back to me with some suggestions, and it was really clear that this was not the agent for me when she was basically telling me that I was going to alienate all the Mormons with curse words. And I was like, well wait, I know Mormons who curse. Number one and number two, like, is that even my target audience? What's wrong with you? Goodbye.

Andrea: That's interesting. I mean, if you want to talk about rejection for a minute, I mean, have a support system in place. Oh my god, the rejection, yeah.

Susan: Yeah, so one thing that really helped me with rejection, because as I mentioned, my first round of pitching agents, everybody passed on me. Some of them had really positive things to say, like, "Wow, I really like what you've written here. I think you're great, but I just signed a deal with somebody who has a similar book or a book with a conflicting message that wouldn't be right for me to represent both." And then other people who were like, you know, "Never write again." And the thing that was really helpful for me was knowing that J.K. Rowling said she could wallpaper her living room with all the rejection letters she received, and just hearing stories from other authors about how many times they were basically kicked in the teeth during the process and kept going.

Andrea: Yeah, oh my gosh, I think what I had to do is – and I think you and I were texting at this time when your agent was just starting to send it out and you were starting to get the rejections. And that is difficult. It was really difficult for me, being somebody who identifies as a highly sensitive person. And what I did is my agent, the way that they do it is they send it out in batches. And this is why you hire an agent, because they have all these connections and they'll pick and choose, okay, I think these publishers would be the best for this particular book. And so she would email me and say, "Okay, I'm going to send your book out to these." And it was a list of

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maybe 10 publishers. And these are big names and I'm freaking out looking at the email and knowing that day that the email is going to land in all these inboxes with my proposal in it. It's sort of like, "Hey, everyone, here's my baby that I just had. Do you like it?" And you're waiting for people to answer you, and it was agonizing. And so what she would do is she would forward me their responses. And I had to ask her to stop doing that because I couldn't handle the rejection. And like you said, some of them were really kind, some of them – I didn't get anybody who was a total jerk face, but some of them were like, "No, we're not going to take a chance on this first-time author. No, we don't think she's compelling enough." And I'm just like, hey, don't you know who I am?

Susan: Right, excuse me...

Andrea: You're going to be regretting that when you see my book on the front tables.

Susan: I know, like that Pretty Woman moment, like, "Big mistake. Big mistake."

Andrea: That's what I had to keep going through. And also ask for what I needed from my agent. And then also tell my friends, you know, sound the horn that these few days, I might need some hand holding from my girlfriends.

Susan: Totally. I remember, I posted a picture on Facebook while I was waiting and it was a picture of me with my blankie over my head, like hiding. I was like, I'm actually not kidding. And then it was just such an interesting period of time because I was so confident that my agent was going to line up a million meetings with me with publishers when I was taking this trip. I was taking a trip to New York for something else and I had rented this really fancy-shmancy loft to film some videos for a different project. And literally, she had no bites whatsoever. And so I'm sitting in

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New York feeling sorry for myself that I have no meetings to go to for this book, so I decided to film a digital product for the book before I even had a book deal, because I was like, “You know what? I’m not going to wait around for these people to choose me. I’m going to choose myself.” And I basically created my own book advance through that digital product. But eventually, of course, people were interested. But that period of time when no one’s interested, there’s a lot of self-coaching that goes on.

Andrea: There is, and I just want to offer one more piece of advice; to trust your agent. I asked my agent, “Have you ever not been able to sell a book?” And she said, “Once in my career, and I tried to sell that book for 18 months and I still to this day think that that book should have sold. I still believe in that project and am in total disbelief that it didn’t sell.” So that made me feel good. It’s that perseverance of keep going, just keep going. It’s going to eventually happen, even if it’s the smallest publisher in all of the land, someone will say yes, someone will pick you.

Susan: They will. And the thing to remember – and trust your agent is a good one because they know the industry, they know the business. And honestly, if you get an agent, I believe you’re going to get a deal because they really won’t waste their time on books and authors that can’t make it.

Andrea: What I have heard from some of my colleagues that get turned down by agents is they say, “I love the message, I love where you’re going with this. I would love to see your numbers go up from your platform before I take you on as a client.” And so that’s what they do. Then the coach will go and spend maybe six months to a year really working on their social media presence, you know, doing webinars and free challenges to get their email subscribers up, building relationships with influencers or whatever you want to call it. I hate that word, influencer, it’s so pretentious to me.

Susan: I know, I don’t like it either.

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Andrea: Anyway, you know what I mean.

Susan: Yep, we all know.

Andrea: Yeah, because that part of your proposal matters. They really hold you to that and this is how publishing is different now than it used to be. But they want to know how, how are you going to work your ass off to sell this book?

Susan: And that, honestly, to me is one of the biggest questions to ask yourself when you start on this process. So like Andrea said at the top of this interview, if you just want to have written, which is, in and of itself, a major accomplishment and you just want to have a book on your shelf, self-publishing is a great route for a lot of people. Answering the question, am I ready to sell this book to my platform, like really work for it, that's the difference, I think. I mean, not that self-publishers don't hustle their butts off to sell their books, I don't mean that. But there's a different layer of responsibility and pressure when you have a deal with a publishing company. Like, you've got to be willing to work.

Andrea: You do, and I think maybe even you said this too – I've always said this – writing the book is the easy part. Selling and marketing that book is really where rubber meets the road and you're going to have to put on your hustle pants.

Susan: Get your hustle panties on, boos, because it's go-time.

Andrea: It is. And I know, as we're recording this, you're about to start your book tour. And I am in total amazement of you because when I did my book tour – I told you this when we were in Savannah, I didn't do anything else. I was like, this is all I'm doing. And I brought my kids with me to various cities, which was really fun. But yeah, you're still building your empire and doing all the things, which I think is so admirable.

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Susan: Well, thank you. And I've had to hire, as you know, extra help because it really is an extra part-time job to do a multi-city book tour and to do all of the things necessary to actually move books, move the needle. So it's like, all the interviews and events and all of those things and it's definitely a major commitment, and I definitely know that I'll be doing this for probably another year or so. So it's a major haul. And I'm delighted to be in the miracle of being a published author and having the opportunity to do that. But there are realities to it that we wanted to make y'all aware of.

Andrea: For sure.

Susan: So, Andrea, I think something else that's really important that you've learned after publishing a couple of books is there's something that you said to me that absolutely with your next book, you're going to make sure that you do. What is it?

Andrea: Well, that's such a great question. And I think that – I know this now because it's a mistake that I made, not once but twice. And I sort of remedied it the second time, but I could have done better. And it's this – and this is whether you self-publish or traditionally publish – have something that your people can buy from you that is the next step for them. Have something ready to go because, I mean, I know your people like to shoot for the stars, like you do. This may just catapult you into stardom and you are going to be the next Rachel Hollis or big famous self-help author out there. So what I have to tell people, you know, the best advice that I have for this is to have something on your website. More specifically, have a page on your website where you are sending people to in your interviews. Any kind of podcast interview that you do, Facebook live, a Facebook post or social media post, where maybe it's like mylifecoachingsight.com/book or /free. Anything like that, and it's some kind of opt-in or even a sales page, that is the next step for them. I mean, there are so many options that you could have.

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Maybe they get sent to an application page to apply to work with you one on one or a group program. But have it make sense to your book. Have it be the next logical step for them to take to get more from you. It breaks my heart that people leave money on the table doing this. I completely flopped doing that with my first book and. And in my second book, I did have a plan and I saw a huge increase in my newsletter subscribers, but I wasn't quite ready. The next step that I had for them to take wasn't perfectly in alignment with my book and so I'm a year later fixing that.

Susan: Yeah, I mean, I think that it's interesting, because with my book, it was a program first, and then it became a book. And so having ways for people to sign up for things happened even before I wrote it. But I have taken that into such consideration after hearing you say it. Like, I want to make sure that the freebies and the offers that I have around the book make sense to then sell things, because you're not making a ton of money off of book sales, you guys. Let' be clear about that. You're not getting rich off of writing books, I promise.

Andrea: It's the things that come after that. So it's the speaking events, it's the program sales, it's the one on one work, that type of stuff. So I'm going to use you for an example, and I have no idea if you did this, but it might be helpful for your people to see an example. What I would recommend for you is to have a page where you're sending people over and over again on your site that's really easy. And you can do this. Most publishers will let you have something. They're probably not going to let you be as gratuitous as you could be if you self-published. But if you traditionally published, at least in the introduction, you could have something like – here's what I did. Go to such and such a page on my website to get book bonuses. That's totally fair. They get those bonuses and then from there, you can create a series of emails that sends them to the thing that you're actually selling. So for you, Susan, it might be people get sent to a page where they have two options, like do you want to become BARE certified, or do you want more BARE? And then they choose, because I know you're promoting both to life

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coaches and the regulars. So they can choose from there. And then you're making money from both of those options.

Susan: Absolutely, 100%. And I think that having a landing page, a nurturing sequence, a way for people to understand, like hey, this author is amazing, how else could I work with her, is so clear. And honestly, that's how I became certified through Martha Beck was I read Finding your Own North Star, went to her website, discovered that she actually trained people to do this thing called life coaching, and then holy crap, I want to do that. So I think that Martha, for sure, had a nice living off of being a published author, but what really made her rich was the things that came after those books, like you said.

Andrea: Exactly, yeah, and every time you do a speaking event, I don't care if it's for moms in your community, you're sending them to this same page. Make it easy for people to pay you. That is the biggest advice at the end of the day. I know because I have made it hard for people to give me suitcases of money, but I don't want that for your listeners. Make it easy for them to pay you.

Susan: Yes, we need all the coin, all of it for everybody. Everybody, I want you getting paid for the amazing work you do in the world. So, Andrea, tell everyone – it's going to be in the show notes, but how can people bet engage with you and how can they purchase your books?

Andrea: My books are at my website, yourkickasslife.com. Just click on the books in the navigation bar. And also, it's on Amazon, bookstores, all of the places where you can buy books. That's another great thing that traditionally published authors can say, "Anywhere you buy books." It's fun. I still get a kick out of being able to say that.

Susan: I know, the other day I said, "Just purchase it through your favorite online retailer right now." And I'm like, how 'bout it, what, what?

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Andrea: Yes, I love it. And then also, if you want to work with me, it's super easy, yourkickasslife.com/apply and we will get you sent in the right direction.

Susan: Oh my god, well, this has been, I know, a life-saver for a lot of budding authors out there. So thank you so much for your time, Andrea. You are a delight. And you know that's my word of the year.

Andrea: I do know, and it's my pleasure helping coaches in this. And like I said, we'll throw some links in the show notes. I have a few articles that I've written about this. All the FAQs that I hear and I just want to leave your people with two things real quick.

Susan: Okay.

Andrea: Thank you for spending your time with me. I'm always so grateful that people choose to spend time listening to us and it's just my honor. And also, if you have a book in you, write it. Please, please, please do us all a favor, do yourself a favor and write that book.

Susan: Yes, we need everybody's work out into the world because you never know who's going to pick that book up and have their lives changed because of your words, so do it.

Andrea: Yes.

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Oh my gosh, that was such a juicy interview. I hope you guys took notes. It was such a great conversation about publishing and you can head over to the show notes if you want to revisit some of the nuggets, some of the truth bombs that Andrea dropped on us. I'm so grateful for her sharing her wisdom.

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But before we wrap up today's episode, y'all know I like to issue a challenge. So I want to challenge you to write. I want to challenge you, even if you don't consider yourself a writer, to commit to writing something tiny, something small. So it could be a Facebook status update where you're sharing with your audience what you really think about something, or a 500-word or less blog.

All you have to do is brainstorm something; something you see on TV. Right, like I wrote this whole podcast episode around Lady Gaga's Oscar acceptance speech. It could be something that you overheard at the deli that enraged you or it could be something that you witnessed at your kid's school that inspired you.

Take something that tugged at your essential self in a strong emotional way and just commit to 30 minutes and write something small; a social media update, a short blog, an email to your list. The world needs your words and your words could heal just one person. Even if it's just one person, isn't it worth it?

Alright, thank you so much listening to Susan Hyatt's *Rich Coach Club*. If you enjoyed today's show, please head over to shyatt.com/rich where you'll find a free worksheet with audio called Three Things You Can Do Right Now to Get More Clients. You can download the worksheet and the audio, print it out, there's a fun checklist for you to check off. Just three things to do. Check, check, checkidy-check.

This worksheet makes finding clients feel so much simpler and not so scary. So head to shyatt.com/rich to get that worksheet. Over there, you're also going to find a free Facebook you can join especially for coaches. Bring your coaching practice and your income to the next level at shyatt.com. See you next week.

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