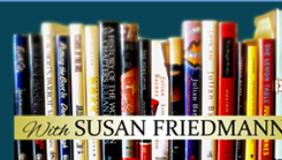


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BOOK MARKETING: How to Make Your eBook a Bestseller Interview with Geoff Affleck

Susan Friedmann: Welcome to Book Marketing Mentors, the weekly podcast where you learn proven strategies, tools, ideas, and tips from the masters. Every week I introduce you to a marketing master who will share their expertise to help you market and sell more books.

Today my special guest is Geoff Affleck, who is a catalyst for self help authors. He creates book launches, online marketing campaigns, and product launches for transformational authors, speakers, and teachers. Geoff is also the number one best selling co-author of five books, including 'Enlightened Best-Seller: Seven Keys to Creating a Successful Self Help Book', and is the creator of the E-book best seller, 'Boot Camp Geoff'.

What a pleasure it is to welcome you to the show, all the way from Vancouver Island. Thank you for being this week's guest expert, and mentor.

Geoff Affleck: Yeah, hi Susan. Thanks for having me. It's great to be here.

Susan Friedmann: Geoff, I know that you and I were only introduced quite recently, but I just have fallen in love with so much of the messages that you put out there, and one in particular I know that you talk about in your best seller, Boot Camp. That is, three blocks that keep authors from getting their self help book done and onto that best seller list. Talk to us about those three blocks, let's talk about those, and then obviously, I hope, you've got a recipe of how to avoid them as well.

Geoff Affleck: Yeah, absolutely. I can cover each one, and then give your readers, or your listeners, a couple of tips for each one. The first one is really the author-centric mindset. I think the best way to illustrate this is with a story about a client of mine. This person was referred to me, and came to me asking if I could help her to launch her book. It was in the spiritual space. I asked her about the title of the book, and she said, "Well, the title's called, 'The Surprising Truth About Consciousness'", a fairly

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spiritual, new age, kind of title. I said, "Oh, that's interesting." I said, "What's the subtitle?" She said, "Oh, there's no subtitle."

I said, "Hmm? Well, what's the book about?" Then she went into this big long explanation about all the experts she'd interviewed, and the research she'd done, and she was obviously really passionate about her stuff. I went back, I said, "What's the subtitle?" "No, it doesn't need one, because everyone's going to want to read this book, because it's so intriguing. 'The Surprising Truth About Consciousness.'" I'm thinking, "Gosh. People won't have a clue what this book is about." I didn't know why they would want to read it.

Then I asked her, "Well, can you share the cover with me?" She sent it over, and I took a look at it. So, picture this, it's like this orange and black color scheme, and it looks like an abstract angel on the cover. Then the lettering was medium size, to small, certainly you couldn't read it if it was an Amazon thumbnail. I asked her, "Well, who designed this cover?" She says, "Oh, I did. I'm an artist, it's one of my paintings." I was a little concerned, and I said, "Has the book been printed?" She says, "Yes, 10,000 copies this week." "Oh dear", I thought. Maybe it was more like, "Oh, crap."

Right away I saw, here's someone whose really author-centric. What I mean by that is that she's putting her own needs first, ahead of the potential readers. She's not really giving a lot of thought to the readers. Just to unpack this a bit, first of all we have a title that's vague, 'The Surprising Truth About Consciousness', but no subtitle to explain what that title is about. That's the typical makeup of a book title, you have the first part is something right brain, a little bit abstract, but then the second part explains what the book is about. It explains the problem that it will solve for the reader. Maybe offer some sort of benefit, or at least promise of an avoidance, or to be rid of a pain point. There was none of that.

Then the cover was just something that she liked, but it didn't really speak to the reader. It was actually somewhat illegible when it was shrunk down to a thumbnail. It was her art, and therefore she lost a lot of marketing opportunity by having a cover that just didn't work. That was before we even got into the content of the book.

There are many things that you can do to avoid having this author-centric, or self-centered, mindset. I think some of them would be probably hinging around this, this point, when you're writing your book,

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before you even write you really want to think about a couple things. One is, who is your ideal reader? We use this term, I'm sure you're familiar with it Susan, an avatar.

Susan Friedmann: Absolutely, yes.

Geoff Affleck: Right.

Susan Friedmann: Everybody should have one, yes.

Geoff Affleck: Yeah, everyone should have one, or a target reader is another way to do it, and in marketing speak you've heard of this term, a target market. Who is your avatar, your target reader? You could define this person in terms of demographics, like how old are they? Are they a man or a woman? Do they have an education level? Where do they live? That kind of thing.

These are important, but more important are their psychographics, what's going on in their mind? What's going on in their life right now? In particular, for a self help book, or a how-to book, we need to understand what are the avatar's frustrations, or pain points? What are the things that are keeping them up at night? What is it that they really don't want to have in their life anymore? Whether that's lose that weight, that could be a really simple example, or they're lonely and they're seeking their soulmate. Or, they feel lost in their life, and feel like they have no purpose. Those sorts of things, or they're unhappy in their job, or they're broke, or they don't feel successful. What are those pain points? Understand that, put that off to the side.

Then the second thing to understand about your avatar is what are their aspirations? What are their goals? What do they want to be? Generally, they're the opposite of the pain points. If you begin your book project with that in mind, understanding, and there's some detailed exercises that I take people through in my E-book best seller, Boot Camp, that helps them to really distill this down. Then, as you're crafting your book title, and your contents, and your cover, everything is geared around that reader-centric model.

All you really have to do is remember this one thing, you have to just keep thinking, from the reader's point of view, they're asking a question, "What's in it for me?" That's where you need to let them know that right from the get-go, in your book cover, and in your title,

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and then in your table of contents. That's probably the best way to frame that reader-centric mindset.

I'll just tell you what happened with that story, with my client, despite what I recommended to her, she wasn't able to change anything on her cover, or her title. She did print her 10,000 books, and we did do the launch. Now, fortunately, she had quite a larger list, a large platform. An author platform, about 60,000 or 70,000 person email list. She was able to do quite well. We sold about 3,000 of those books in the launch, which is quite reasonable, and got to number one of Amazon, and created a campaign where she actually made some money on the backend of the book launch. I don't have time to go into that right now, but it was somewhat successful. I believe there's still 7,000 copies or so, sitting in a warehouse.

My sense is that we could have reached a lot more people with her work, had she known to take the time to have a reader-centric approach at the very beginning of the process.

Susan Friedmann: Excellent, yes. I love that because you're absolutely right. So many times we get wrapped up in the fact that we know what it's about, and we've put our passion, and it's something that's meaningful to us, but that doesn't always translate to the reader automatically.

Geoff Affleck: That's right.

Susan Friedmann: If you explain it a little bit more, and as you rightly said, the how-to book. I often say to people, "Why not use how-to-do X, Y, Z, because that's exactly what people want." They want to know how to do it. Yeah, thank you.

Geoff Affleck: Exactly. Well, and just a related point to that, and this is something I learned from one of my mentors, Marci Shimoff, who was one of the authors on the Chicken Soup for the Soul series, Chicken Soup for the Women's Soul in particular. She explained to me, that she learned this from Jack Canfield, is that when you're writing your book, you need to meet your reader where they are. If you're someone who has a lot of expertise, it's easy to come in with language and terms that they may not understand. Or, if you overcome an issue, you come in at that point, but they're still down low, so it's almost like if you took your hands, and put one high and one low, and then move them together. One would go over the top of the other, you would miss each other.

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Jack talks about building a ramp from where the reader is now, to where you are. That's really what your book needs to do in the beginning, is come down to that readers level, and speak their language, identify with their issues, and then take them up that ramp to where you are in the land of having overcome those issues.

Susan Friedmann: The first block is that overcoming this author-centric mindset, how about a second block? What's that one?

Geoff Affleck: Yeah, I call this one the magnum opus syndrome. This notion came to me when I was reading my daughter, whose seven years old, I was reading her Charlotte's Web for about the fourth time this year. If you know the story, there is a scene toward the end where Charlotte is making her egg sack, where it was her 514 babies in it, and Wilbur the pig says, "What's that nifty little thing you're making?" She says, "Yes, I made this." He says, "Is it a plaything?" She says, "A plaything? I should say not. It's my egg sack, my magnum opus." Wilbur says, "I don't know what a magnum opus is." "That's Latin", she says, "It's my great work. My egg sack is my great work, the finest thing I've ever made."

This is what happens for a lot of writers, is that they have this experience in life. They have these skills and knowledge, and wisdom, and they want to share it with people. They want to create the best possible book, and I applaud that wholeheartedly. Here's the problem, often this desire to create the magnum opus means that the book takes forever to be written. There's writing, and rewriting, and editing, and revisions. Or maybe it just hasn't even come out yet because you're still trying to get it perfect in your head.

As a result, we've got years going by before we have anything published. While I think that's fine, I think there's some things that people could do, that authors could do, to start reaching their readers while they're working on their magnum opus. Not to say, "Don't do it", I'm saying, "What else could you do to reach your readers?" A couple things, one would be to start blogging, and getting your message and building an audience that way.

Another would be an E-book. One of my early mentors, Harv Eker, of Peak Potentials Training, has this great expression called, 'Ready, Fire, Aim', as opposed to ready, aim, fire. With 'Ready, Fire, Aim', you prepare as best you can, and you are pointed in the right direction, and then you just go. Then you correct after you launch. In other words, everything doesn't have to be perfect before you put it out there.

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Starting with an E-book can be a great way for an author to get published, probably get to number one on Amazon in a category, if you know what you're doing, and start to build a readership base. An E-book doesn't have to be very long, it could be 10, 15, 20,000 words. Putting that into perspective, that's 40, 60, 80 pages, compared to a 250 page book.

Someone could put out an E-book within a matter of a few months, instead of maybe a year or two, or three years. Build a readership, and then at the same time be working on their magnum opus, which could be the follow-up to the E-book. Perhaps that eventually might lead to having an agent, and a dream of the big advance with a New York publisher. That would be step three, but rather than starting a step three, or step two, I recommend start with step one, which is a small E-book to get yourself out there while you're working on your magnum opus.

Susan Friedmann: I think the hardest part of that, Geoff, is that fire. It's pulling the trigger, and allowing yourself to let go of whatever it is. Be it an E-book, or a webinar, or anything that you're working on, it's saying, "Oh my goodness, can I get it out there? Is it okay?"

Geoff Affleck: Yeah. Well, I'm not saying put out garbage. You want to have a quality product, but generally someone whose got a magnum opus inside them, to take an aspect of that and create a small book around that. This is what we did with my co-authors with the E-book, 'Enlightened Best-Seller.' We just took our knowledge and created an 11,000 word E-book, and within three months had written, published, and taken that book to number one. That book has been downloaded about four or five-thousand times now, and has quite a number of good reviews on Amazon. It has brought in so many more clients to our business.

Not only did it help people who are looking to become self-help authors, it's helped us grow our business, and provide additional credibility at the same time. There's so many advantages to going this route. I've just seen it work for so many people, and I highly recommend avoiding that magnum opus paralysis, and just getting an E-book out there, a good quality E-book, so that you could start building your author platform.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, and I've seen that with some of my authors as well, is that they've been part of what you call, this anthology of multiple authors coming together. I've had one lady who published a chapter within this

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anthology, and that was the beginning, and that opened the door to so many other opportunities she didn't even know that would open the door to. It was really very exciting.

Geoff Affleck: Yeah.

Susan Friedmann: As you said, it was the first step to her real book, when she got to publish that. Geoff, we've now had the first block, the author-centric mindset, and then being aware of falling into the magnum opus syndrome. How about our third block, what's that one?

Geoff Affleck: Well, I call this one, if you write it, they will come. This was inspired by that great movie of the late 1980's, Field of Dreams with Kevin Costner. If you remember that movie, he hears this voice in his head. One of the things that the voice says, "If you build it, they will come", and his character Ray is inspired to tear up a large portion of his cornfield on his Iowa farm, and build a baseball diamond. Then all these baseball players, who are dead, including his father, end up coming to play ball in his field.

The way I draw this analogy to authors is that often what we see are authors painstakingly writing their magnum opus, or maybe even just an E-book. They've put in these long hours, and they've hired the editor and the cover designer, and the proof reading, and all of that is done. It goes live on Amazon, and maybe into book stores, and you listen, and I don't know if you've heard this expression, all you hear is crickets. Nothing. Nobody buys your book. Maybe your friends and family do, and it pops up a little bit on the ranking on Amazon for a day or two, or maybe a week, and then off it goes back into the ranking of one million plus.

The reason this happens is that the author hasn't taken the time, and made the effort to build their author platform. Their email list, their social media following, their network of partners who will promote their book for them, before they launch the book. It's such an easy trap to fall into because as authors we're so passionate about our work that we just get our head down, and our fingers are typing, and we're not consumed by the project, but writing the book. That's a wonderful thing, but if we neglect to build the author platform at the same time, then this is where this problem happens. It's that we write the book, and unfortunately they don't come.

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The message here is, as an author, you really have two things you need to be working on at the same time. It's a parallel process. The first thing is, you need to be working on your books. The second thing is, you need to be working on building your audience. The reason that 90% or more of books sell fewer than 100 copies is really just for two simple reasons. One, it's a lousy book, which is probably not the main reason. The other one is that there's no audience.

My advice, and this is something I teach. Probably almost half of the content of my seven week E-book best seller, 'Boot Camp', is about the marketing process. Either building the platform before you launch, and then teaching people how to actually promote their book and get it out into the world and find those reader avatars that you're looking for. A lot of authors feel that the publisher should be handling the book promotion for you, but when you're self-publishing, you are the publisher. It's up to you. Even New York Times best selling authors don't have a lot of marketing support from their publishers.

It's really up to you to build your platform, and I would say you're looking to build at least an email list of 500, 1,000, 5,000 would be best, so that you've got someone to market your book to.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, I know now the traditional publishers, they want you to have a marketing platform before they even think of taking you on, isn't that correct?

Geoff Affleck: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, don't even think of it. If you're not able to go to the publisher with a book proposal that includes the ability to sell 5,000 books, it's just not even worth the effort, in my opinion. What publishers are looking for, we're talking about the traditional publishers, the Hay House, or Random House, or Harper Collins and so on, who would potentially pay you an advance of royalties to publish your book. They're not interested in you unless you've got a platform, no matter how wonderful your book is.

That's where you need to be doing a few things, or at least a couple of these things, like writing a blog and adding subscribers to your email list through your blog. Guest blogs is another way of doing this, so writing blog posts for other people's blogs. I have a client who writes for the Huffington Post, and she has developed quite a following because of that. So, you're leveraging someone else's list to build your own.

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If video is something you love to do, you could create and have your own YouTube channel and put out regular videos. It's a very easy, and inexpensive thing to do. Everyone needs to have a website, or at least a webpage, with a free gift. A opt-in page, sometimes we call it an ethical bribe, you know what I'm talking about, right?

Susan Friedmann: Absolutely.

Geoff Affleck: A way for people to join your community in exchange for something of value. There's so many ways that you could build your list, and it's interesting when we go back to that second point about the E-book as an entry point into building your author platform. An E-book can be a fabulous way to build your list, so you can leverage an E-book in so many ways because it is the digital product. You can include links in your book to go to your opt-in page, that go to your blog, that go to your YouTube channel, and so on. That link to other books that you may have published.

I remember when we launched 'Enlightened Best Seller', I did an interview with Christine Kloser, who you may know is fairly popular a person in this author training space. I did this interview with Christine, I gave away our 'Enlightened Best-Seller' E-book as a PDF, as a gift to everyone who listened to that interview. We picked up 3,000 email subscribers in just a matter of one week, in giving that book away. It could be a powerful way to build your platform.

Susan Friedmann: I think this is a great segue into telling our listeners how they can get ahold of you, Geoff, and find out more about this 'Best-Seller Boot Camp' because I'm sure many people's ears have been pricking up about that.

Geoff Affleck: Yeah, thank you. I do have a gift for everyone today. Susan, you'll post that on your page there with a link where people can go?

Susan Friedmann: Absolutely.

Geoff Affleck: The E-book 'Best-Seller Boot Camp' is a program that I've put together to help aspiring self-help authors navigate the three things. That's writing your book, publishing your book on Amazon, and promoting your book so that you can reach the readers that need what you have to offer. It's a seven week, self-paced, online course with live Q&A. So you can message me through the course website, and we also have actually

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a live video phone call on Zoom once a week, where you can call in and ask me anything you like about wherever you're at in the process.

You can learn about that through the link that Susan's going to provide, and what I'd love to do is give you all a taste of the Boot Camp by sharing with you the first module at no charge. Module one, out of the seven modules, it's all about the positioning of your book, and in that module I'll take you through the exercise of creating your avatar in more detail. A few other points that will really help you to set yourself up for success before you even get into the writing part. Susan, thanks for sharing that with your subscribers.

Susan Friedmann: That's very generous. Thank you so much, I know our listeners will be going and checking that out, Geoff, if you would to leave our listeners with a golden nugget. I know you've given us so much great information, just one more little thing closing, what would that be?

Geoff Affleck: Yeah, there are a number of points I've made today that are really important, and I'm torn about which one is my golden nugget. I think the thing that I would come back to would be to consider, if it's your first time writing a book, consider an E-book as your entry point, rather than a printed book. Write 10 to 15,000 word E-book on a specific topic that solves a problem, and publish that within a few months, and that can be your entry point to building your author platform, your list, and greater success down the road.

Susan Friedmann: Fantastic. That's made me think, "That's the way I should start off, with my magnum opus, that's been in the wings for a while." Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom, Geoff, and thank you for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview. I sincerely hope that it sparks some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.