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## UPCOMING MEETING:

### PRINT ON DEMAND OPTIONS FOR PUBLISHERS

7PM, TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015

The introduction of print on demand technology set off the publishing revolution. Now there are many options for publishers who want to use this technology to print and distribute their books. Evaluating these options can be a challenge. In this teleseminar we'll look at the three main providers of print on demand services: Amazon's CreateSpace and Ingram's Lightning Source and Spark.

Whether you're already using print on demand, just thinking about it, or convinced it's not for you, you won't want to miss award-winning book designer and blogger Joel Friedlander's presentation.

## ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Joel Friedlander ([@JFBookman](#)) is an award-winning book designer, a blogger, the author of *A Self-Publisher's Companion: Expert Advice for Authors Who Want to Publish* and the recently published *The Self-Publisher's Ultimate Resource Guide*. He writes [TheBookDesigner.com](#), a popular blog on book design, book marketing and the future of the book.

## LEARN HOW TO SELL YOUR E-BOOKS TO LIBRARIES

Libraries are constantly looking for quality material for their collections, from both long-established and new publishers. Publishers, especially small- and mid-sized publishers, want to sell to libraries, but often do not know how to begin this relationship.

Amigos Library Services is hosting a free webinar to help answer publishers' questions about creating partnerships with libraries. An academic, a public, and a school librarian will each discuss what tools they use to find materials, the best ways for publishers to get their attention, and what they look for in metadata you provide.

### The Library-Publisher Connection: How It Starts

10am–11am (PST),  
Friday, March 6, 2015

[Register online](#). For more information, call 800-843-8482 or e-mail [learning@amigos.org](mailto:learning@amigos.org).

To find out more about getting your e-books into libraries, read "Selling Your E-Books to Libraries" on page 2.

## PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION OF LOS ANGELES (PALA)

<<http://www.pa-la.org>>

**President:** Gary Young ([artsy12@earthlink.net](mailto:artsy12@earthlink.net))

**Vice-President:** Sharon Goldinger ([pplspeak@att.net](mailto:pplspeak@att.net))

**Secretary:** Robin Quinn ([quinnrobin@aol.com](mailto:quinnrobin@aol.com))

**Treasurer:** David Evans ([teddytravelerbear@earthlink.net](mailto:teddytravelerbear@earthlink.net))

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/PublishersAssociationofLosAngeles](https://www.facebook.com/PublishersAssociationofLosAngeles)

**Twitter:** [@PALAPUB](https://twitter.com/PALAPUB)

## MEMBER NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

### STUFFOLOGY 101 REVIEWED IN PW

Congrats to PALA member Brenda Avadian! Her new book, *Stuffology 101: Get Your Mind Out of the Clutter* (cowritten with Eric M. Riddle), was recently reviewed in *Publishers Weekly*.

According to the review, “Anyone suffering from CHAOS (can’t have anybody over syndrome) may find this guide a step in the right direction.” Check out the [full review](#) online.

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### PARTNER/ SUCCESSOR WANTED

Les Boston is looking for a partner/successor for his small publishing company, [Stone and Scott](#).

Information available at [Friday@StoneandScott.com](mailto:Friday@StoneandScott.com) or 818-904-9088. Being close to San Fernando Valley (Los Angeles) would be advantageous.

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### TIME TO BRAG

Have you received a major award lately? Been interviewed on NPR? Planning a big event your fellow PALA members should know about?

We’d love to share your big news with the group. E-mail Sharon Goldinger, [pplspeak@att.net](mailto:pplspeak@att.net), to get your announcement in the next PALA newsletter.

### SELLING YOUR E-BOOKS TO LIBRARIES

When Sharon Goldinger attended the [PubWest Conference](#) in February, she came across two organizations that are both avidly looking for small publishers to connect with libraries: Amigos Library Services’ [Amigos eShelf](#) and Califa Library Group’s [Enki Library](#) e-book platform.

“I see no reason not to talk with these organizations, even if you have a distributor,” Sharon said. “Connect with them. You usually have to give them a discount, but I encourage you to look into their services to get your e-books into the hands of more readers through libraries.”

Califa (a not-for-profit membership cooperative) negotiates directly with publishers to provide e-books to libraries. The Enki platform hosts e-books and lends them using DRM. For more information, contact Heather Teysko, [hteysko@califa.org](mailto:hteysko@califa.org).

Amigos eShelf was created to enhance the collections of libraries in the Southwest. They represent 750 libraries and use Adobe Content Server and DRM best practices. Contact Christine Peterson, 800-843-8482, ext. 2891, [peter-son@amigos.org](mailto:peter-son@amigos.org), or attend their free webinar (details on page 1) to learn more.

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### PALA LISTSERV

Don’t want to wait until the next members’ only brainstorming session to ask your pressing questions about publishing? Use the PALA Listserv—a private group that lets PALA members and guests ask questions and share news, resources, and information. It’s a great way to access the vast knowledge and experience shared by our diverse group.

[Sign up](#) online. If you’re not already registered with Yahoo, you’ll need to do that first (it’s free). Then search for PALA (don’t forget the hyphen). Follow the instructions for joining the list.

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### JOIN IBPA AND SAVE

As a PALA member, you’re eligible for a \$30 credit toward renewing your membership in or joining IBPA, making dual membership a great value. If you’re already member of both, remember to take the \$30 credit when you renew.

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### ATTEND PUB UNIVERSITY 2015

The next [IBPA Publishing University](#) will be April 10–11, 2015, at the Sheraton Austin Hotel, Austin, Texas.

The Independent Book Publishers Association’s (IBPA’s) 27th Annual Publishing University is a networking and educational event focused specifically on issues important to indie publishers and self-published authors.

All the PALA board members as well as many PALA members have attended Publishing University during the past 26 years. It is a great opportunity to learn—definitely worth your time and investment.

Click [here](#) to register. If you have any questions about PubU, feel free to contact any of the board members.



## PALA WEBSITE REDESIGN

If you haven't checked out the new [members-only page](#) of PALA's revamped website, you really should. The new site is more user friendly, and bursting with useful information—from transcripts of past meetings to upcoming events you won't want to miss.

If you have any questions or suggestions, feel free to contact Sharon Goldinger, [pplspeak@att.net](mailto:pplspeak@att.net).



### MEETING TRANSCRIPT: NOVEMBER 12, 2013

## “DEMYSTIFYING SUBSIDIARY RIGHTS” CYNTHIA FRANK

Good evening, everybody. We are going to be starting our program, “Demystifying Subsidiary and Foreign Rights,” with our fantastic speaker, Cynthia Frank, who has wonderful credentials.

I hope everyone read the PALA notice. I'm not going to read the whole thing, but Cynthia has more than 25 years of experience in writing, publishing, and teaching. She's the president of Cypress House, a family-owned full-service book production company, as well as QED Press, a royalty house that has won many national and international awards and grants.

And I think that's a wonderful way to introduce her. She has lots of experience. She's spoken at a lot of conferences. Cynthia and I have known each other for many, many years. I want to personally thank her for helping us out here tonight and teaching us. I'm going to let you take it away, Cynthia!

Welcome one and all! I'm looking forward to working with all of you on this. There are so many subsidiary rights out there, and translation rights are just one piece of the puzzle.

So, when you have an intellectual property—a book, a collection of short stories—that's all your intellectual property. For the purposes of this presentation, I will assume that you own all of your own intellectual property and that you are the authors, the owners.

So, you can license rights to various entities for all kinds of things. It might be—I publish a line, *How to Fold Paper Airplanes*, and we have licensed the instructions for individual planes, for collections published in England. We have licensed the instructions for individual planes for inclusion in toy kits that are sold as part of gift items for Barnes & Noble. You can license an excerpt from a book. We worked recently with a hymn-odist, and he writes modern words to old hymn tunes, and we helped him license a collection of translations into Chinese that was published in a large Chinese Christian hymnal.

There are other kinds of premium sales and subsidiary rights that you can do, even going from paperback to hardcover. We've got two books in process right now where we published the paperbacks originally, and then a gift book company has licensed the rights, and they're doing hardcover for their very specialty gift markets. A lot of those will actually be sold in Hallmark and Barnes & Noble and places like that. And then there are specifically translation rights.

The way that I suggest that we start is that we assess what your intellectual property is. Do you have just a single title, or perhaps you're a novelist, and you have a whole series of murder mysteries. Then you have a number of other possibilities in terms of licensing right? Is your material fiction or nonfiction? Have you won awards? What kinds of sales history do you have?

And if your book is just starting out or you haven't sold as many copies as you imagine the foreign rights people would be interested in, do not despair. We have licensed Korean translation rights on a couple of books at the very beginning of their life, before they even got any real reviews or had any solid sales. The translation companies did beautiful jobs on that. So what they're interested in is what helps them do their job the best. What satisfies their reading public. What can make your project alluring to a publisher or a scout or an agent is reviews, recommendations from authors or publishers in that country, the potential for awards.

There's a lot of different ways that you can talk about your book to these agents, scouts, and publishers. And I should probably define those terms.

So, we might have a publisher in Seoul, Korea, and they might be interested in counseling books geared at teenagers, and maybe building on self-esteem. So, they might not have the budget or time or staffing to travel outside the country and, say, come to New York for BEA or go to Germany for Frankfurt. So, they might hire a scout who might be hunting down titles in that genre and other genres for a number of different publishers in Seoul.

Then there are also agencies, and the agencies might be working with a number of different publishers, and they know that publisher's whole list, and they will be working most often with the complete workload, both buying and selling rights. My own company, we have both bought and sold rights. I'm always on the lookout for another good *How to Fold Paper Airplanes*, and I don't care what country it started in, but it's hard to find really, really good material.

So, as you are looking at your book, you can also do some research as to what countries you think your material would be most alluring to. Your book might deal with specific religious issues that might make it a good sell in some coun-

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*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 3)*

tries but not so much in other countries. The same with political issues. Humor is always difficult.

One of my favorite translations that we negotiated rights on was our book, *Dancing Naked in Fuzzy Red Slippers* by Carmen Rutlen, and I did not expect a Korean publisher to fall in love with this book, but they did. They did one of the most beautiful physical books that I’ve ever seen, and it has sold quite well in Korea. When I first got the pitch from them, I wasn’t sure how it was going to work out because I didn’t fully understand how humor might travel, and her book is a woman-oriented book about getting older, getting divorced, dating, getting older children. All kinds of wonderful stuff that is laugh-out-loud funny and has traveled really well from one continent to the next.

As you’re assessing your intellectual property and trying to figure out where you think it might be a good fit, how you’re best going to talk about the book to someone outside of this country or dealing with rights outside of this country, do look at whether you have requested and gotten permission to quote any material within the book.

One of the humanities books that we published had a short speech excerpted from Martin Luther King Jr., from the *I Have a Dream* speech, and the estate of Martin Luther King Jr. is very diligent about permissions, and we paid over \$500 for permission to quote that section in this book. So when we were approached by a foreign agency about translation, one of the first things that I let them know was that if they wanted to publish that speech in Korean, not only would they be responsible for translating it, they would be responsible for paying the Martin Luther King Jr. estate an additional \$500. What they decided was that they were not going to pay the extra amount, but they worked with our author to write the segue material so that he could talk about the issues brought up in the book, but not have the actual quoted material there.

As you look at your book, do go online and see where else the book is mentioned. It may have already put its foot forward in some venues that you weren’t aware of. This is one of the places where I find Google alerts really helpful. I always do a Google alert for a new title in combination with the author’s name. It helps me track down reviews, potential markets, mentions, and potential other places that the book might have gotten some notoriety that I wouldn’t otherwise know about.

Sharon, did you want to break for some questions? I’d like to know what people are dealing with on their individual titles so we can focus on some of those.

*Q: Cynthia, you talked about scouts versus agents, and you just mentioned agents very quickly. I’m familiar with them, but I’m not familiar with scouts. Could you just say a few more sentences about scouts?*

A: Sure. A scout might work both for publishers and for agencies. So, a scout coming over from the United Kingdom might have contracted to work with a number of UK publishers as well as with some UM-based literary agencies. That way, they can send one point person to Frankfurt or to Book Expo America to look for the kinds of intellectual properties that they have on their wish lists. But that scout isn’t usually the negotiator or the person making the offer. They’re just the discoverer of the book and the connector. They would go back after a show or whatever research they were doing and report to their boss—to the publisher or the agency—and say, “I saw these six murder mysteries when I was in New York, and I think that you should check them out and that they would really give some breadth and depth to your line.”

*Q: Cynthia, how do we go about finding out what countries are looking for certain books or what countries are good for certain subjects?*

A: It’s so subject oriented. One of the folks that you and I know, Sharon, is Sharon Casslin, and one of the books that she was consulting on was a health

issue, a very specific health issue. She and the publisher did some research—and I think they checked the World Health Organization and Save the Children and various other places, even Wikipedia—to see where that particular health issue was showing up geographically.

*Q: What about something like fiction though, like a murder mystery? What would you be looking for?*

A: I would probably look at Amazon in all of the other countries. So, Amazon Germany, Australia; I might do a Google search for Australian best-selling murder mystery authors.

*Q: Okay, so I find a list of them. So what am I looking for? I’m still not getting what I’m looking for.*

A: Sure, sure. So if you’re looking to sell or license the rights for your murder mysteries in Australia, then you want to know who’s publishing those. So you would research who the best-selling authors are and then drill down to who those publishers are and then visit the publishers’ sites. It sometimes takes a little bit of creative research, especially if you have an unusual kind of book. But usually, Google is really helpful. Amazon is really helpful. Bing is really helpful. Looking at best-selling lists.

You know, this gets into our next section, which is discoverability. How do you discover some of the connections, if you’re looking for specific types of agent. You might look at books of that ilk in their acknowledgments and their dedications and their jacket copy, because oftentimes those authors thank their agents or their scouts or their publisher for getting the book into 14 languages.

So, this is just sort of a tickler list that I put in your handout. Some of the e-books are already out, and a couple of the articles that I’ve read recently feature authors really making a diligent effort at making their book known outside of the United States. They were making sure their e-book was being sold, in English, in lots of other countries.

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*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 4)*

And they could do that via Kindle. You can sign up for other countries via Kindle. Germany, Italy, all over the place. What they were doing was adding to their Amazon Author Central page. So, if their e-book is in English, they would write their Amazon Author Central page on that site—say, on Amazon Germany, they would write their Amazon Author Page updates in English.

If they already had a translation that they had control over, then they would get that information translated. So what they’re trying to do is create some visibility. I saw this work particularly well with authors who had a number of books in a series, and they would choose one that they really did this kind of massaging with, and maybe even did a Kindle Select give-away or something on one of their intellectual properties, in order to get some notoriety and some reach out in to the marketplace about their books into some of the other countries. You have to be really patient if you’re going to do that. That’s not going to happen in a few weeks or in a few months.

Something else that I realized a lot of us haven’t really taken a look at: if you’re running your own publishing company, and you’re working with Baker & Taylor, you’re working with Ingram—those companies both have international options. There’s Baker & Taylor International and Ingram International. With Ingram’s digital division, Lightning Source, you can have your book printer in the United Kingdom and you can sell your book directly there.

There’s lots of other options to explore on how to get your book available in other countries. We’re looking at doing this with our own series of murder mysteries that’s set at an Abbey, in the United Kingdom. I have, for several years, sold to English bookstores and libraries, but the shipping time and expense has prevented a lot of sales. Now that Lightning Source actually has a print division in the UK, I can have Lightning Source print the books and then have those shipped to the individual stores. So there are oth-

er options for getting the physical book, and information on your book, out into the world.

Other places that you can look for publishers, scouts, and agents are *Literary Marketplace* and *International Literary Marketplace*. I don’t recommend that you buy the book, because it’s close to \$300, but your local library should have a copy on the shelf or should have access to the online information.

There are also various agent associations—[AARonline.org](http://AARonline.org) is a group of agents, so if you are looking for specific agents, you might go there and take a look at their member directory. Agents don’t get paid unless they make the sale, so you have to give them a really lovely, compelling presentation, so they think you’re a good pony to bet on. So they think that your intellectual property can really sell in the markets where they’re going to assist with the licensing and things. It’s the type of pitch that I call planned rejection—you might need to research a half dozen or a dozen agencies and pitch to them one at a time before you find the agent that is the right fit. I’ve seen it be really difficult for authors with a single title to get an agent, just for foreign rights. Oftentimes, they’ll want to handle all of your books, and they’ll want you to have some kind of other track record.

To go back a step, this is where it’s good to look at the acknowledgments pages, the thank yous, the dedications, to look at publishers who are publishing kindred books. If you’re publishing memoirs, and you see that Random House has a whole series of wonderful memoirs, you might go online to Random House UK and see what their submission guidelines are over there. You can submit direct.

This has happened with a couple of the authors that we’re working with. They’re published in this country, they didn’t have their own specific agent, but they had products that they felt would do really well in England. And so they went to Random House UK and worked their way through the website and via e-mail

and phone, and then closed the deal at one of the BEAs. It certainly can take some legwork.

Also, in the handout, there’s information on the Alliance of Independent Authors. They have some wonderful articles online. They’re based in the UK.

Some of the big book shows are great. Book Expo America. There’s always an international rights center. I’ve had a table in the international rights center at the BEA for the last seven or eight years. It’s gotten a little bit pricey, and they are cutting down on the list of who they will accept. They really want you to be there, working with other people about licensing rights, buying and selling rights, not just buying the space on the table so you have a place to rest or a less expensive place to display your books. But there are great connections that you can find there, and if you sign up early, you can have access to the e-mails and the addresses and all of the contact information about all of the other agents and scouts and publishers who are there.

Then there’s also Frankfurt, which happens in October in Germany, and there are different agencies who go and display books there. Independent Book Publishers Association (IBPA) is one, Combined Book Exhibit is another. IBPA will do more, as far as individual attention and negotiations. Combined Book Exhibit is more of a passive display, but they will connect you with interested publishers, agents, and scouts.

And there are also other places that are more pay to play—you sign up with them, and they put the book into a catalog, do various mailings, set up appointments. You usually pay either a flat fee or a per-hour fee with some kind of a cap on it. There are some agents who will take a look at a property and say, “Yes, I really think I can work with this,” and they’ll sign a contract with you. Then they will display the book and work on the rights at specific shows. Some of those shows will continue on beyond that.

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*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 5)*

Other places to research would be [PublishersMarketplace.com](http://PublishersMarketplace.com). They have a lovely search engine, and you can research both agents and publishers. Pubmatch, which I haven’t really worked with—I think they’re about \$80 a year—and if you join the Alliance of Independent Authors, I think you get a big discount there, it comes down to about \$10 per year—and you can get into various databases and get information.

There are lots of international book shows. There’s children’s shows, there’s business shows, there’s shows that are based in London, Guadalajara, Bologna, Beijing. You can look those up online and see what the general profile is. Each of you is going to have a different budget.

I put the US Department of Commerce contact information for Northern California in your handout. There’s also one in Southern California. If you go to [export.gov](http://export.gov), you will find a listing of all of the local and regional offices, and they have been really helpful to our consulting clients. If I get approached by a company that I’ve not heard of before—we were recently contacted by someone in Bulgaria—I check them out with the Department of Commerce. They could tell me, “Oh yeah, these people, they’ve been on our list for a long time. They’ve shown up at various meetings. They’ve licensed a number of rights for American published books, and they might be good to go.”

Also, the folks at IBPA. I’ve vetted publishing companies I haven’t heard of before with them, and Bob Erdmann is the elder statesman of a lot of rights negotiations. It turns out to be a very nice community of people. I don’t feel that same sense of competition that you might in other fields. When we’re working with books, we’re all about literacy and community and access, and we all want the right people to get the right books into their hands. So, why don’t we open it up for questions, because I would imagine there are people who have very specific books and projects that we might be able to explore.

*Q: On the list of URLs that you listed, there are some you didn’t go over, like Global Book Rights, could you talk about that? When you say connecting sellers and buyers, do you mean literally? Is it some place that you list your book and people will come to find you, or you’re looking at publishers and agents there? Can you talk about one or two of those?*

A: Sure, Global Book Rights. In fact, she had just e-mailed me right before we did this presentation, and she wrote, “We are a foreign rights agency marketing translation rights worldwide. We charge a 20% commission if we make a sale for you. When we get an offer, we let you know, and you make the final decision whether you will accept it. We’ll then write the contract for you, select the advance and the royalties.”

*Q: Wow, that’s terrific. You haven’t used them, you just know of them?*

A: Right, I was doing some research for this presentation, and their name kept coming up, but I’ve not specifically used them. It’s more of a listing than a recommendation, but they sound like they have a good solid model, from what I saw.

*Q: Okay, and maybe Book & Rights. What about them?*

A: That was on a list given to me by one of the publishers I work with. You know, I don’t know enough about them.

*Q: Would you say getting references or something, checking them out a little bit further before—*

A: Yeah, I did vet them on a couple of sites that I generally vet companies on, and nothing bad came up on them.

*Q: I read that if you use a foreign rights agent and you sold a bunch of books overseas, it would really help your book sales here, so I got a foreign agent, and then they told me that you needed to have a big-selling book here before the foreign market picked your book up, so now I’m kind of confused.*

A: Welcome to publishing, unfortunately! I have not—how should I say this? I have seen everything work.

Barry Eisler, who worked for many years with Penguin Putnam—he does the thrillers, the John Rain thrillers, a half-American half-Japanese assassin who specializes in killing people and making it look like it was all by natural causes—he published his first book in Japan and then sold the rights to the English original in the United States to Penguin Putnam. Now, his books are regularly translated into 11, 15, 20 different languages, but he started off as a complete unknown in this country. I think he got Penguin to take a look because he had sold well in the Japanese edition.

But I’ve also seen books get licensed in other languages without having a specific sales track record. I mean, if you’re dealing with the super big guys, like Random House, that may be more true. I deal with a lot of pretty niche books—I mean, Christian hymnodists—and we did a humanities book called *Who We Are*, which is basically a Western Civ course, and who would have thought that a Korean publisher would give us \$3,000 as an advance for it and do a beautiful, two-color interior edition.

So, I’ve just seen it work all ways, and I would say: don’t be discouraged, and just be creative and diligent in your presentations—and professional. One of the things that I learned in dealing with some of the agents, publishers, and agencies was to slow down my American speediness and be more formal in my e-mails and in my phone conversations.

If you’re going to have a meeting with someone from a culture with which you’re not necessarily familiar, I’d recommend doing some online research. If you’re meeting with someone from Japan or China, when you hand over your business card, you do it with two hands, as a presentation. If you’re accepting their business card, you accept it with two hands, almost as a gift. It can be very formal, but if they see that you’re really

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*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 6)*

paying attention and matching them, you can create some wonderful rapport.

Sometimes we come off a little roughshod as Americans, so whatever presentation you do, even if it’s just an e-mail, be very careful with it and proofread it. I would say simple, declarative sentences. Stay away from the subjunctive, try not to get too complex, because you don’t necessarily know how excellent their English is. You don’t want to make any assumptions. We’re dealing with legal language, and we don’t want anything to go astray.

So, as you are figuring out what to send first—say you have researched three companies, or three agencies that you want to go after. Oftentimes they will have websites, so you will have visited them.

I would suggest that you start with an alphabet that you can understand, rather than getting into Cyrillic and Korean and Urdu. You can check out what kinds of books they have already licensed and what they are interested in. For some of the online translators, you can get basic information from them, and some of them will just make you laugh out loud at how silly and strange they have turned the language.

When I first send out an e-mail invitation, if I’ve not developed any kind of relationship with them before, I don’t send any attachments. I might have a link. If I include information from my sell sheet or my tip sheet, I do in that in-line, in the body of the e-mail. I make sure I have a compelling description. I talk about US sales, if they’re strong. I talk in detail about the author biography if there’s a specific connection to that country. I mention other rights licensed, if there are any.

But really focus on the meat of the book and the selection of reviews. Oddly enough, they do want to know what your trim size and your page count is. They want to know about the physicality of the book. And if you think about this

a little bit more, it’s because they’re going to be footing the bill for everything. They’re going to be paying for the translation, the editing of the translation, the typesetting, the cover design, the print projections, the marketing, and the distribution.

So, if your novel is 900 pages, that’s going to be daunting to most foreign publishers’ budgets. But if it’s 288 pages, then that just becomes much more feasible to them. Just remember that they are footing the bill for everything here.

After you’ve done your pitches, if they request that you send them a copy of the book, you can certainly send a hard copy of the book. We’ve found that—I think it’s called Global Priority, and it’s a flat rate if the book will fit into an envelope, and it will get there in a reasonable time and not cost an absolute fortune.

More and more, people are accepting PDFs. We usually watermark the PDF, not as a security issue, but just as a reminder to them that we are professionals, and we’re dealing with an intellectual property. If someone wants to steal it, they’ll just scan it from the physical book and steal it anyway, and that’s why we vet companies from the get-go.

We experimented with locked PDFs that had passwords, and we just got e-mails back saying, “We’d really just rather have a physical copy of the book. We don’t want to mess with this.” And that’s probably because, if we send it to an agency, they’re probably sharing it with a couple of different agents, who are sharing it with six or seven different publishers each, and then the password stuff just gets to be a little bit too unwieldy.

Make sure that whatever you send them has really clear contact information. If any of you have dealt with international mailings or shipments, you know that it can be a little daunting to look at a German address or an address that’s going to Nairobi or something—is that the street or the town? Is that the zip code? What order is that in? Make sure that what you give them is very clear as well.

And then, you might get an offer. I basically cut and pasted (after I removed the name of the players involved) one of the offers that we received for one of our own books. This was an agency that sent this to us. We were able to get the price up, I think, to \$2,800 on the advance, because they also wanted the cover art, and we happened to own the cover art.

In many cases, you will not own your own cover art, you will have licensed it from someone or from an agency, or you’ve hired a designer or a design firm, and they’ve done that kind of licensing, or the rights remain with them. So make sure you’re only negotiating on something that you actually have control over.

So I used this Korean author as an example of all the line items that you would see. So you have the name of the publisher, the title of the book, the author, where they are, how many copies they think they’ll print in the first run, the US dollar conversion of the estimated retail price, what they’re proposing in USD for the advance, how the royalty rate would be figured, since the advance is an advance against royalties. And this one has a step-up, so after ten thousand copies sold, the royalties move from 6% to 7%.

The term—seven years from the date of the agreement. Most of the foreign rights contracts that I’ve dealt with have been five years. Very occasionally, three, and some sevens. Publication deadline—18 months. That is how long the publisher has to produce their edition from the signing of the contract.

Then the next line is the agent fee, which comes out of the advance and royalties, and then there are the withholding taxes. You have to make sure you understand that that’s coming out of the \$2,000 or the \$2,800.

And then, if you accept those terms, then they will provide you with a contract. Every once in a while, we are asked to write the contract. Just don’t be surprised. There are so many things that go on in this area of negotiations.

*(continued on page 8)*

*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 7)*

Every once in a while, you will receive a contract that’s written in another language, and that’s time to ask them for a bilingual contract and to hook up with someone who speaks the language. There are a lot of translators in the country. You might be able to find one at your local college or university. You want someone who is fluent enough in the business language that they’re not going to run astray. Someone from the American Literary Translators Association is not necessarily going to be the right person for the job. You want to make sure that you understand exactly what’s going on.

Now, if there’s a term in their offer that you just find unacceptable, bear in mind that this is just an offer, and it can be the beginning of a conversation. For instance, you may have received three other offers from that same country, and that’s where you can start negotiating and say, “Gee, Eric, I’ve received an offer for \$2,900 and XYZ percentage, and I’d really like to work with you, but can you better the offer? Either give me better royalty rates, or fewer years in the terms of the agreement, or pay extra for the illustrations that we’re including?”

There are lots of things that you can say, and don’t be afraid to negotiate. If they say no, then you get to decide what you want to do.

So, when you’re looking at the offer, you should also take a look at who that company is. Look at them on the web, check them out with IBPA, see what information you can find. The only companies that I have basically said no to are most often in mainland China and one in Bulgaria, which is no longer in business anyway.

But there’s so much going on in China now, with people getting ripped off for their rights, that I just figured it wasn’t worth it. If you feel comfortable with the offer but you’ve not done this before, I would encourage you to consult an intellectual property rights attorney. I don’t mean your brother-in-law who sells real

estate or your sister-in-law who does divorces, property tax issues, or employment law, but someone who is an intellectual property attorney.

We’re fortunate, in California, that we have an organization called California Lawyers for the Arts. We joined them years ago, and I think back then it cost \$35. I think it costs \$50 now. You interview for a few minutes about what kind of IP attorney you need, and then they match you up with one, and you get a half-hour consultation with them for the price of supporting the organization. Then you can proceed with that attorney—that’s how I found the IP attorney I’ve been working with for the past 25 years. So, California Attorneys for the Arts—I fully recommend them. Although there are attorneys online that I have had good experiences with, or our clients have—Jonathan Kirsch is a lovely man.

For other kinds of resources on things legal, I recommend the books from Nolo Press at [nolo.com](http://nolo.com).

It can be daunting if you’ve not dealt much with contracts, and there are a few body parts that we want to make sure that each contract has. We want it delineated as to who the participants are, what is the intellectual property that we’re describing, what are all the licensing details, how are they calculating the royalties, how often do they pay. Usually, when you get into the body of a contract, it’ll say, “We pay once a year” or “We pay twice a year, and once a year we send you a full accounting.” How will the money be received? Sometimes they give you a choice, and they say, “Okay, give us the direct deposit information,” and you have to be comfortable enough to be giving someone banking information. Or you ask them to cut you a check.

You want to make sure that there’s some kind of schedule for the translation. You don’t want to be strung out for years and years on this. I always request a certain number of author copies as well. I want these on my shelf.

We licensed a Korean translation of one of our teenage mentoring books, and the author is an avid golf player, and this was during the time when there were those young Korean girls who were just acing it out on the golf course. So we got extra sample copies in Korean when that edition came out, and he went to one of the big tournaments and did, basically, a whole press performance presenting these five young women golfers with this mentoring book in their own language. And he got some lovely, lovely press in Korea for doing that.

There are all kinds of ways you can think about that.

Bear in mind that some government agencies and the agent themselves will charge their own percentage. If you’re working with an agent, like maybe if you have a contract with Writers House in NYC, as you look at that contract, they will be taking a different percentage for each of the subsidiary rights that they work on. There will be some things in their standard contract on the percentage that they take on translation rights.

You want to know exactly when the contract begins and ends. I’ve seen that be missed in a number of contracts, and it’s just an omission. It’s not like anyone’s trying to sneak anything past, I think they just maybe have different protocols, because any time I’ve noticed it and called them on it, it’s just simply been instated in there.

You want to know how often you get a report. You can even ask for a sample report. And you want to make sure that the contract delineates how the contract can be terminated and how you are to notify each other. And then there’s the choice of law. What body of law will apply to any legal dispute between the parties? Is it going to be California law? Is it the law of South Korea? It’s my understanding—and I’m not an attorney—that that choice of law does not at all determine the venue for where a suit might be taking place. But that’s getting over my head.

*(continued on page 9)*



*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 8)*

But here are your basic body parts: who is it, what is it, what are the details, how do you get paid, how often do you get paid, how long does it last, how do you get out of it. And I must say that I’ve been really surprised at how many American contracts—we did several contracts with quality paperback book clubs—that were missing significant portions of what I consider to be elements of a contract that have to be there. And they just put them back in, but I would have thought that their boilerplate would have been a little bit stronger than that.

*Q: These, then, are exclusive, correct, to a country? You have one per country?*

A: Yes.

*Q: In terms of the agencies, this is what I’ve always heard, that agents take 20%. So when you’ve got here, agency, and this is an example, 10% . . .*

A: Yeah, that was the Korean agency. If you had an American agent on your side, then you would be looking at 30%.

*Q: Okay, plus the 11% for the taxes.*

A: Right.

*Q: One of my clients recently had their books represented at Frankfurt, at a show, and he got back from them: “Okay, these people stopped by the booth and were interested in your book.” They expressed an interest. We have a sell sheet for them. You say no attachments in an e-mail invitation. Now, this is not an invitation, it’s a follow-up, so are attachments okay then?*

A: Well, it’s your first contact with them. So I generally ask for permission. A couple of the companies we were attempting to communicate with in Europe had corporate security that was such that it stripped all attachments from e-mails. So you just want to check.

*Q: In terms of—you said reviews—he’s gotten good reviews. One of them is Library Journal. Do they know that? Will they be impressed?*

A: I think so. That’s been my experience, yes.

*Q: You talked about the elements of a standard contract, and you said when does the agreement begin and end. Is that the same as your sample contract where it says “seven years from date of agreement”?*

A: The sample that I included in your handout is a sample offer, not a contract. So it’s just the barebones: here’s what we’re proposing. Then we followed up with some other negotiations about money and artwork and things like that, and once we were in agreement on the terms, then they generated the actual contract. It was when each party had signed that contract that the clock started.

*Q: And that’s what that refers to at the bottom? When does the agreement begin and end—you said that usually it’s five years?*

A: That’s been my experience, yeah.

*Q: I met and talked to a woman from China who’s an editor of a magazine. I have a diet book, and they’re very interested in what Americans are doing in health. I heard from someone else that in China, someone took their book and just copied it and made it a bestseller and they didn’t even know, and just found out by accident. Do you have to be careful in dealing with publishers in China?*

A: Yes. In most cases, we don’t, for that very reason.

*Q: They do have a reputation—and I’ve heard that too—of “stealing more than any place else.” But I’ve heard about that in other countries too. One of my colleagues who worked on a book from a big house, I think it was Random House—there was an Australian version that they found that was not authorized and they shut them down.*

A: Yeah. We had a well-known and usually reputable UK company take 22 short stories that we had paid for the translation from Portuguese. This is a Nobel Prize-nominated author from Portugal, and he chose our translator as his design-

ated translator for all of his work, and we did the first American translation of his work.

Then, later, she hooked up with this much bigger company in England to translate all of the short stories, and they just snagged our first 22, and we had to sic our agency on them. She went to the London Book Fair and went toe-to-toe with them in the display, and we got remuneration for the translator and the author and for us, and an apology.

Writers House, we were working with one of the agents there, Michele Rubin—she did an absolutely brilliant job. That’s one reason it can be marvelous to work with an agent, because they have developed relationships with these people. This particular company knew that Michele wouldn’t be pushing anything their way or negotiating with them again, unless they toed the line and made good on their mistake.

*Q: In the rights that you have negotiated, what percentage of the time do you find that when you want to make sure that the details are included in the contract, the person on the other side will look at you and say, “We don’t deal with that many details”? I’ve sold rights in years past, and I do find that Korean books are some of the most beautifully produced books, but I’ve encountered this as well, where you get into the nitty-gritty details, like you’re talking about, and typically they just don’t encounter people who deal at that kind of detailed level.*

A: You know, every once and a while that comes up, and then I have to decide how important it is to me and how much I trust them and what the intellectual property is. If it’s something really basic that I think has to be in every contract, then I just say, “Well, I guess we can’t work together.”

I’ve had people follow me from the table, basically, after I’ve said no, that I won’t do X, that doesn’t work for me. Then I get up to leave, and I’ve had them say, “Well, maybe we can work something

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*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 9)*

else out.” And I’ve also had them say, “Well, okay.” But, you know, if they don’t want to acquiesce to something that I think is really important, I really don’t want to work with them, because it can only turn to disaster, I think. I don’t want to be chasing them for money or anything.

*Q: I prefer working with agents because I feel that they have more money than I as a sole publisher do.*

A: Right, right. It can just be hard for someone starting out as a self-publisher or a single-title author to get the attention of an agent. The agent really needs to absolutely fall head over heels in love with the book, and a lot of them are so beleaguered. They want someone who has a whole series of health and healing books, or a whole series of books on teenagers and bullying or whatever it is, because it gives them more to work with and more flexibility. It puts the responsibility on us as individual authors and self-publishers to really create a compelling presentation and proposal.

*Q: Of the contracts that you’ve done, how many of them have not worked out, in terms of they didn’t pay you like they said they would, you chased them and you still didn’t get your money, or whatever bad experience.*

A: None. I’ve been very fortunate—oh no, I have to take that back. There was one Russian one that didn’t turn out. The Russian one—I have three years of Russian in high school and two in college, and so they sent me a contract in Russian, and I started poking at it, with two dictionaries in hand, and I was able to tell that there was something amiss. They weren’t fixing it. Then, they kept knocking down what the amount was that they were going to pay, and it just got to the point of no return, as far as I was concerned.

*Q: But you didn’t sign that contract?*

A: No.

*Q: So in terms of something you’ve signed, you haven’t had a problem?*

A: No, not yet!

How many of you have e-books out? Do a lot of you, or most of you?

*No. Working on it! Being converted now.*

Great. Great. I hope you do all the platforms. You know, not just Kindle, but Nooks and Kobo.

*Yes, Sharon made sure we were trained in the possibilities of that at the last PALA meeting. This young presenter—Book Baby—you know, he just gave us a presentation and made sure we had all the info available about platforms.*

Yeah, a lot of what we do is work with people on setting up their own direct accounts with those companies, because I like to see the money go direct into the author’s pocket and not have six or seven other people taking a cut.

*Book Baby doesn’t take a cut, if I remember. They do a one-time fee and then . . .*

Right. I think, of the companies that do that, I think they have one of the better models.

*Q: I’d be happy to talk about my book, unless someone else would like to go. The newest book that I have coming out, early next year, is called Stuffology 101: Get Your Mind Out of the Clutter. It’s a niche in a highly crowded marketplace, in that it offers fun and flexible approaches to help people take care of what they define as clutter. Rather than me coming into your space and saying, “This is a cluttered mess; you need to take care of it,” you need to define it for yourself.*

Interesting. One of my favorite authors that I’ve worked with for many many years is Liz Franklin, who wrote *How to Get Organized without Resorting to Arson*. She spent a long time on that title. She has an approach where she talks about different personality types and what works for each of us.

It may be a crowded market in some ways, but I think your approach is really important. There are those of us for whom the “you can only have one thing on your desk” approach is just not going to work. And so, I think that can be refreshing. I think you have a good title. It sounds like you’ve developed a good little tagline and elevator speech. I would bet that there’s a lot of different ways—not just for translation rights, but I would bet that there’s other places where you could do licensing of subsidiary rights, maybe excerpts.

One of our authors that we worked with who has her own press is Mari Frank, and she’s an attorney who specializes in identify theft prevention and recovery. And one of the things that she licensed was an excerpt from her book, it was a little booklet, and I think she sold 50,000 of them to Fellowes, which made shredding machines.

I would say, maybe take a look at your book, which I have not seen at all, but if there are any products that you recommend, or approaches that you recommend, anywhere from Rubbermaid to Tupperware to highlighters to Post-it notes or whatever, maybe pitch an excerpt to one of those companies, that they could package with a kit.

*Q: I have a book, The Food Is My Friend Diet, it’s an easy way to lose weight. It’s a lifestyle, not a diet. I thought that I could pitch it to foreign countries first, but that doesn’t seem to be happening.*

And what’s preventing you?

*I thought the foreign agent was going to do that, but no, it didn’t happen.*

So you’re working with an agency that has a foreign rights department? When he took the book to Frankfurt, he didn’t get enough interest? He didn’t get any offers or anything?

*He doesn’t go to Frankfurt anymore because he said that he wasn’t getting that many offers, so it wasn’t worth it.*

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*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 10)*

So how long is your contract with him?

*I think probably October or November, it’s over.*

So October or November of this year? Now you can freelance it some.

*Q: I was going to say, this is a perfect opportunity to ask—do you take on folks like PALA? Individual publishers?*

A: We do. We have an international rights catalog that has independent authors and titles in it. I have a list of about 200–300 agents, scouts, and publishers from all over that world that I’ve developed over the years. So, we include a book in the catalog and send out the e-mail blast, and I meet with people at BEA, and basically we work with these folks and these properties all year long.

If anyone wants to let me know, maybe just send me a link to your book or your site or where it’s for sale on Powell’s or Amazon or wherever, and I can take a look and see if it would be a good fit. And then we have a varying number of services. It starts at \$150 and goes up to about \$450, depending on what people want. I’m not an agent, so if we get an offer, then you are the signatory, and the money all goes to you. You are in charge of these negotiations.

*Q: But you don’t take a 20% fee or whatever?*

A: No. not at all. I’m a hired gun. Or if someone wants to just brainstorm with me. You know, the *Food is My Friend Diet Book*—I’d have to take a look at it to see, but there may be other subsidiary rights that you might want to take a look at.

There’s Bristol Park in New York, and they take books from paperback into hardback for their gift line, and it sounds like that’s a title that might work for them. They’re a publisher-packager. The most recent contract we did with them was a \$2,500 advance for a book of quo-

tations that we had published in paperback, and we’d done two volumes, and they’re putting two volumes into one and making a gift edition that will come out next spring.

There are other companies like that. Mud Puddle does kits, if anyone has things that are good for toys. There’s also Jo Fagan, she runs a company very similar to Bristol Park. The thing with those kinds of subsidiary rights is that they creep along very slowly. Things go to committee, and they poke along and you follow up with -mail. I think it’s probably the slowest part of the American publishing world.

*Q: Because there’s no particular rush for it. It’s not a do-or-die thing that you need to do this second, right?*

A: Right. It’s not like back in the day when we were working on the OJ Simpson books, and there were eleven new ones coming out every week. There was one publishing company, Dove, they were releasing a new one about every month. But diet and health books, I think there’s a lot of possibilities and depending on what your approach is—are you more farm to table or what’s your approach for your book?

*No, it’s just about healthy eating and moderation.*

Healthy eating and moderation. So it’s a little bit like a therapeutic kind of thing?

*It is. I deal a lot with emotional eating.*

That may well be something that you want to have at some of the specialty shows. What we’ve done with some of our health and healing books is we do what we call an “association sale.”

We have a book on dealing with chronic illness, and the Lupus Foundation and the Parkinson’s Foundation and the Children’s Foundation are all on our association list, so any member of that organization can phone our 800 number and get a 25% discount off the book. The association can promote the book

in their newsletter. They buy the book by the case from us on a nonreturnable basis. So there might be some interesting venues for you on special sales, depending on how your book profiles for certain groups. We found association book exhibits here in the United States, for specialty shows, to be really really nice to work with.

*Q: I am not ready yet, but I might be. The project is going a little slower than expected. Can I send you an e-mail in a couple of months and tell you what I’m looking for and at that point in time, I’d pay for your consulting for a half hour, on the phone or something like that.*

A: Absolutely. That’s one of my favorite things to do. That kind of brainstorming. I like to have the materials ahead of time, so I can spend some time with it, so that when we get together on the phone, we can be as active as possible.

*Q: And we could probably have a conference call with the rest of my team then?*

A: Sure. And what genre are you writing in?

*It’s really women’s self-empowerment, but sort of raunchy.*

I love it already! Raunchy self-empowerment.

*Yeah, I’m getting a lot of attention in the right places, and it’s kind of exciting. It really is. I can’t wait until we’re ready to move forward.*

Sound like fun! With the right title and subtitle . . .

*It should be hot, in more ways than one!*

That’s what we saw with our humor book, *Dancing Naked in Fuzzy Red Slippers*. We sold more than 50,000 in hardcover. And the author is just amazing, just absolutely astonishing. I’ve been nagging her for five years for the sequel.

*This is going to be a trilogy.*

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*“Demystifying” (cont’d from page 11)*

Perfect. Make sure you plan out time to write.

*I’m not doing the writing. I’m really the business manager in the whole project. Plus, bringing other talents of mine to the table, but I have the business expertise and marketing.*

*Q: I have two questions. One is about hypnosis: The Hypnosis Treatment Option: Proven Solutions for Pain, Insomnia, Stress, and Obesity, and Other Common Health Problems. You think that has potential in an international market?*

A: It does. One of the first things I would look at—if I remember right, I think there’s an international hypnosis symposium.

*Q: Okay, I’ll connect with you offline about that. The other question is about twins. The Same but Different: How Twins Can Live, Love, and Learn to Be Individuals. It’s for adult twins, not kids.*

A: My question would be: how big is that market?

*Q: There are like five million in the US. It’s small; it’s very niche. It’s not huge by any means, but she’s a published author. She’s got another book that came out, I think it was from St. Martin’s, and then she’s got this one that’s coming out. She’s known internationally. She just got back from New Zealand, speaking to a twins group. So, I’m not saying it’s huge by any means.*

A: So she was just in New Zealand? I mean, there are rights there, a slightly different kind of English. And if she’s self-published, she could certainly look at Lightning Source and having the books printed there and sold there. But that would take a little bit of research. We’re actually working with an Australian publisher who has her books for the US market printed here and then shipped to us and then we sell them to Amazon for her. So there are like 47 different ways of dealing with this.

*Alright, then maybe I’ll be in touch with you for that, for those couple of books.*

Great. And there definitely is an international hypnotherapy conference, [hypnotistexaminers.org](http://hypnotistexaminers.org). And there’s an international hypnosis federation, and an international board of hypnotherapy. I bet if you went to any one of those sites and looked up their shows, their conferences, and pulled a list of exhibitors, you’d probably find a publisher or two that might be appropriate.

*Q: Cynthia, what is the best way for people to contact you?*

A: Oh, [cynthia@cypresshouse.com](mailto:cynthia@cypresshouse.com). And it’s on the handout.

*Q: E-mail is a better way for you, rather than phone?*

A: Yeah, usually if you phone, you’ll need to set up a time to talk with me. And so e-mail, that way I can get back to you, and then I have control over my schedule and we can set something up.



## MEETING TRANSCRIPT: FEBRUARY 19, 2014

### “BLOGGING” TAMMY BLECK

I want to introduce our speaker for tonight—Tammy Bleck. And we’re very happy to have her. She’s been an entrepreneur since 1976, and she has more than six start-ups. She’s a seasoned professional in the field of monetizing social media, blogs, and networking venues to build businesses and to generate income.

She’s an established authority on how blogs and social media can build your business, create your brand, and find your tribe. She’s toured, spoken, and counseled and conducted many workshops over the past 30 years.

In addition to being a notable speaker, she’s an accomplished writer, columnist, *Huffington Post* and *Jewish Journal* contributor, ghostwriter, blogger, and author of the book *Single Past 50: Now What?* and the award-winning blog *Witty Woman Writing*.

She is the recipient of a certificate of commendation from the mayor of Los Angeles for her work in educating the public, and Tammy has dedicated herself to sharing what she knows to help small businesses, entrepreneurs, writers, authors, publishers, bloggers, and speakers use what they have to build a successful income-producing company, which is hard to do. You can enjoy her weekly blog at [wittywomanwriting.com/blog](http://wittywomanwriting.com/blog). She’ll tell you more about that. So, now, please press your hands together repeatedly!

All right, well, I am all those things that Gary mentioned. And life is good because of all of that. I’d also like to share with you that, although I did have five successful start-ups in my life—I’m an entrepreneurial serial company-starter-upper—I did have one that wasn’t so successful. There were six—five that went great, one not so much. And interestingly enough, I learned more from the failure than I did from the successes. I know that now.

But this is what I wanted to share with you: as wonderful as things are now—it’s great to be a correspondent for the *Jewish Journal* and a writer for the *Huffington Post* and to have an award-winning blog—I have also been broke and unemployed, lost a home in foreclosure, and gone bankrupt. Life isn’t easy for any of us, and it really is all about picking up and starting over, which is easier said than done.

But that’s a little bit about what tonight is—because blogging is new to many people. I haven’t been doing it for more than three and a half years. Many people have been blogging more than I have or longer than I have. But not many of them have achieved what I’ve achieved.

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 12)*

I got a lot of advice about how to enter into blogging and what it would do for my career, and all of it was wrong. It was bad advice. People were asking for money to teach you how to do it—big money, by the way! Not \$100—\$800 or \$900. “Let me give you the key to blogging.” There wasn’t a key. It was helping them pay their mortgage, basically.

I want to share with you some statistics that really matter and that will help you understand why you’re here and why it’s important that you’re here. In 1999, there were 23 blogs. Today there are over 50 million. Now, before you get intimidated by that number—oh my gosh, 50 million, how am I ever going to make a difference!—65 percent of those blogs have been untouched for a year. People get discouraged. They don’t know how to do it. And that’s a shame because once you learn how to do it, you’re going to say, “Wow, that was so much easier than I thought!”

My career—my writing career—has really taken off since I figured out how to blog. When I tell you that it’s taken off, I didn’t earn six figures last year. But I came very close. And I write for a living. So that will tell you something about the power of the blog. I don’t know everything, but I know an awful lot. I know what not to do, and I know what to do. And I will share with you what I know.

I also want to share some other fabulous statistics. Some 330 million people view at least one blog a day—25 billion pages are viewed every month. And 79 percent of companies use blogs to sell their product, get the word out, and engage the client—including Fortune 500 companies.

About 60 percent of bloggers are men, and 40 percent are women. What? I thought they were all women!

Half a million comments are left every day on blogs. Bloggers are now the new market influencers. Have you heard that term? It’s kind of a new term, but I want to tell you what that means when we get into it.

I’m going to share a quote with you: “If you want to stake a serious claim to display your passion, blogging is the avenue of today. Self-expression is the new intellectual entertainment.”—Arianna Huffington, who then turned around and sold her blog for over \$330 million!

Blogging has come a long way in a short time, and it is far from being obsolete. I started my encore career when I was 50. That was 10 years ago. I wanted to be a writer when I grew up. I had never taken any writing classes; I just thought I knew what I was doing. And it turns out, I was pretty close.

I still have never taken any writing classes, but my book is doing very well. I figured if Julia Child could begin a career at 50, I had a shot. I can’t cook a thing, but writing was my deal. I divorced at 50, my child was off to college, and I was left with a dog and cat to feed with no income, so it was a tough time.

And I thought, “I can just write books and work in my pajamas and just rake in all this money!” What I really found out is that the most prestigious occupation for me in the world—a writer—is also the least paid. And it was very sad. So since I banked on this as my encore career, I had to figure out a way to make money. And I’m talking about money to pay my mortgage and my car and my utilities and send my kid to college kind of money. And that’s exactly what I did. And blogging had a lot to do with it.

A blog is a sharing of an opinion, a skill, a talent. And it’s doing so on the web. It’s a conversation. It’s interactive. I really had a hard time understanding that. So I’m going to blog? And how will I make money from that? Well, I don’t make money from the blog. But the blog gets me money. And we’re going to talk about that.

What kind of companies will benefit from a blog? Every single kind—real estate, beauty, finance. There isn’t a company around that isn’t going to benefit from a blog, but I think the avenue that benefits the most from a blog is writers.

It’s a forum for you to write on whatever different topics you can, and you can sell them. I’m going to tell you how it works.

When you’re starting a blog, what do you need to do? You need to start with your domain name. So you go to your domain name, and you purchase it. And it should always be a *.com*, not a *.net*, not a *.org*. It should always be a *.com*. The statistics show us that’s what works to get people to go to you. And you need to have a web host—GoDaddy, HostGator, there are lots of them. They’re usually \$10 to \$12 a month.

The next thing you need is your CMS, your content management system. That sounds so complicated, and it’s not. Does everyone know what WordPress is? Or Blogger? Everyone asks me, “Which do you prefer—WordPress or Blogger?”

The most successful bloggers, the heavy-duty bloggers, always use WordPress. They have the best free plug-ins. I like free. I’m a big fan of free. And I’m also a big fan of easy. I’m not the most computer-literate person you’ll ever meet, but I was able to learn it and work with it, and I can go into my dashboard and post posts and change things around. It’s pretty darn easy.

*Q: Could you comment on Weebly? I have WordPress, and someone told me that Weebly is free and you can have 10 domain names.*

*A: I would say that WordPress is free also, and it is consistent. All these new companies pop up and offer you the world, and that’s awesome, but then they don’t stick around all the time. I want my content management to be like my man. I want to depend on it. I want to know that it’s going to be there tomorrow. The women are nodding their heads, and the guys are going, “What?”*

So let’s talk about the things that every blogger should be doing. First of all—the first one to me is so obvious, but so many bloggers don’t do it, and that is your avatar. Your avatar is your picture.

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 13)*

My avatar is on my blog, my LinkedIn, my Facebook, my Twitter. It is on everything I do.

Your avatar doesn’t have to be your face. It could be your company logo. It could be anything that is consistent. It also needs to be professional. The biggest mistake writers make is that we’re writers so we don’t think that we need to get a real headshot done. But you do because you’re in business, and you would like people to pay you money.

The big mistake that most people make is this: I’m going to use you as an example because you’re right here—she’s got this great headshot, but I can also see the arm of her boyfriend around her, but she’s cropped him out. I see that as unprofessional. And I’m not going to take her too seriously. So that’s the biggest mistake that most people make.

Of course, as writers, we know that content is king. No matter what you do, if you write it, but it’s not great, you’re probably not going to fare well.

Post consistently. How often should you post? There are people who are of the mind that you should post once a day. I’m not one of those people. I post once a week. That’s all.

*Q: I have a newsletter and put it out once a month. It’s short. Can’t you become annoying?*

A: Can’t you become annoying? It depends if your writing is annoying. If you can remain interesting and fresh and offer content that people want to know—usually bloggers who blog once a month are bloggers who are very well established, with over 10,000 followers, who can go and look for them.

Once you’re out of somebody’s mind—out of sight, out of mind. The most successful bloggers blog once a week. There are bloggers who blog once a day, but it’s usually two sentences. I don’t know if you can call that a blog. It’s more like a little sound bite, one or two paragraphs.

The term *newsletter* has completely gone out of business. We don’t even use it anymore. The term *blog* has taken its place. The blog is contemporary and fresh, and people comment on it. And you want to get comments on it. You want to exchange ideas. You want to interact with people. If you’ve ever gone to the *Huffington Post*—visit me if you’re there—you see people commenting on the posts all the time. It’s a community. That’s what you want if you’re in business—a community, people who will pass on and say, “Did you read *Witty Woman Writing* today? Oh my god, what news she has!” and they go there. That’s how you develop clientele.

You need to post consistently. That doesn’t just mean once a week. It means the same day of the week, and it means the same time of the day. That is the biggest, most important thing about the delivery of your blog.

My blog goes out every Wednesday between 9 and 10 in the morning. I did try, during the holidays, to go to every two weeks because I was doing so much writing for everyone else. I lost a lot of people. I did a little experiment and thought, “Oh wow, I’ve got a few thousand people following me, so if I lose a hundred or two—” but I don’t want to lose one. I want them to look forward to my posts, and I want to hear from them.

I’ve developed friendships and relationships that, by the way, have served me very well. I was invited to Katie Couric’s show because of my blog. Nobody knows who I am. I live in Thousand Oaks, for crying out loud! When you get comments, you respond to them. That’s a huge deal, especially when you’re starting out.

I write for the *Huffington Post*. I write columns that sometimes get 200 or 300 comments. I can’t respond to that many comments. But I have an understanding with the *Huffington Post* that I respond to 40 percent of them because they want me to engage. Engage, engage, engage—that’s what you’re doing.

You also install CommentLuv. If you’re a blogger and you write a post on my blog, CommentLuv will pick up your last blog and advertise it on my blog post automatically. Why do I want that? Because I’m inviting bloggers and giving them the initiative to come and comment on mine. And when I comment on yours, I look for CommentLuv. And if I’ve got to leave 15 different comments on 15 different blogs, it’s the ones that don’t have CommentLuv that I don’t go to.

*Q: How do you know if it has CommentLuv?*

A: It says it on the very bottom when you go to the comments. You can use my blog as an example. When you go to the bottom and enter your comment and e-mail address, it’ll say CommentLuv. And automatically, in the magic of WordPress, the title of the very last blog post that you did pops up with a hot link at the end of your comment. If you put a comment on my blog, I will get your link and go to your blog and put a comment on yours because it’s the right thing to do. And that’s how you build an audience.

When I first started writing for the *Huffington Post*, I wrote a very fun—I thought it was fun—whimsical blog about how men are babies when they’re sick, and women are not, and we’re so much better because of it, and men just think they’re dying when they catch a cold. It was just a whimsical fun little thing. The *Huffington Post* loved it. I don’t think it was more than 450 words at most. Overnight, it got 350 comments. Overnight.

I would say about 340 of them were hate mail. And when we started reading it the next day, I was mortified. It was mean stuff. It was awful. You can still go to the *Huffington Post* and type my name in the top bar—“This Is a Sexist Post”—that was the name of it. Come on, can we have a little fun? I thought for sure. Some of these comments were vile.

I called my boss at the *Huffington Post* and I said, “Oh my god, I’m so sorry,

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please don’t fire me!” and she said, “What are you talking about? Isn’t it fabulous!” I said, “Fabulous?” and she said, “They hate you!” I was astounded.

First, I was relieved because she didn’t hate me. And she said, “We need you to do more of that!” And that’s how I found out something very interesting that I’d never known. The *Huffington Post* actually has people who write in as detractors because you’re not getting enough controversy. And she said, “We’ll never have to use detractors for you!”

So if there’s controversy, why is that a bad thing? It brings your SEO up because people are clicking on it to tell you what an idiot you are. So let the hate mail fly!

*Q: I have friends who have their blogs and have an Internet thing with lots of participation, and these people come in and start talking about petty aspects of the argument, and it’s hard for them not to be petty back again.*

A: Sometimes those people are instigators.

*Q: Yes, but when I read this, I just think I’m glad I’m not doing that—*

A: You have to have a thick skin. I learned that with the *Huffington Post*. On my blog I can handle it on my own, but I also don’t have the audience the *Huffington Post* has. And she says, “Look, we have a lot of trolls.” I never knew that term—people who troll the *Huffington Post* and tell you what a complete idiot you are. They can’t wait to do it.

So you have to have a thick skin. I also recommend that every blogger install a CAPTCHA for subscribers. You know when you subscribe where you have those scribbled letters that you have to mimic or click to know you’re not a spammer? It really will help to eliminate your spam or cut it down substantially. It’s called a challenge response, to keep the bots out. Bots are so clever these days. And there are different kinds. Some ask you to answer this question:

4+2=? just so that they know you’re human.

Also, make sure that you install a spam filter, for obvious reasons. There are so many spammers out there now. And I don’t know if you’ve witnessed this, but some of the messages you get from spammers sound real. It’s only because they miss a word or two that they’re a little bit off. But it’s really hard to detect.

I would also recommend that every time you blog, you tag your blogs. What is a tag? A tag is a keyword. For example, I wrote a blog titled “What Would You Do for Money?” What are my keywords? *Money, profit, business, wealth, poverty*—I put all those tag words in, so if anyone going to Google is looking for those subjects, my blog will pop up.

*Q: How many tag words do you add?*

A: As many as you want. They’re free. There is no ethical amount. I see people who use only five or six, I see people who consistently use 20 or 30. It depends on the blog. I don’t think I ever use less than a dozen. I’m not that creative. I go through my blog posts and see that I mentioned puppies in there, so I add *puppies*. I mentioned Christmas, so I add *Christmas*. Pretty much anything that appears in my blog—I want to catch anybody. It’s kind of like a fishing net. It’s so easy to do. There’s a place there on WordPress for your tags. If you forget to do it, you can always go back to your dashboard to put them in. It’s super important for bloggers so people can find you.

Also, promote your blog shamelessly. Have your blog address on the bottom of your e-mail signature. Have it on your business card. Have it on Twitter. Have it on LinkedIn. Have it on Facebook. You have to have it on everything. People can’t find you otherwise—unless you’re rich and famous, but who needs them when you’re rich and famous?

The biggest mistakes that every blogger makes? This should probably be no surprise: don’t be a one-trick pony.

There was a delightful woman whom I was helping with her blog. She was a cancer survivor, and she wanted to blog about it, which I thought was awesome. The problem was that after she stopped blogging about surviving cancer, she didn’t have anything to blog about. And frankly, after the fourth blog, I got a little sick of it.

So you have to have other avenues to talk about. How about surviving cancer and the people you met along the way? Or the treatments you did? Or what you’re doing now? Or what you didn’t know before? Or that you divorced your husband because he was a louse and he left you during cancer treatment?

How about that as a story? There are all kinds of things. My original blog was *Single Past 50*. I ended up changing it to *Witty Woman Writing*. You know why? I wanted men to read my blog. So be careful about what you name your blog because you don’t want it to pigeonhole you. And *Single Past 50* did exactly that.

I thought I should get a niche. That’s what all the bloggers told me. Find your niche. Find a title that fits your niche. The problem was that my niche boxed me in so much that I couldn’t get out of it. So before I built up too many followers, I changed my blog name. And before I changed the name, I put up a blog post telling all of my followers, “Out with the old and in with the new. I’m wittier—*Witty Woman Writing*.” And only then did I start to get real interest. Because no one’s interested in reading *Single Past 50* unless you are—single past 50. That’s a lesson well learned.

Another big mistake that bloggers make is that they don’t edit their own posts. It never ceases to amaze me, especially with writers—I think it’s our confidence. “Oh it’s just a blog; I could do this with my eyes closed!” Edit it. I’m not talking about grammatical. I’m talking about content. I edit my blog probably three or four times. I usually start out with about 700 or 800 words, and it usually comes

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 15)*

down to about 450. If I don’t need it, it goes out. Get used to doing that.

Your blog needs to have share buttons for Twitter, for Facebook, for LinkedIn, for Google+. I have a share button for everything. You can click it and go to StumbleUpon and Reddit and all these things. You want people to share your blog because you get clicks every time they do. People have said, “Can I hire you to boost my SEO ranking?” No. How about you just start posting smartly, and you will have your ranking raised. It’s really that easy. You need to provide share buttons on your blog, on every page.

And here’s something I’d recommend. Go to my blog and see what I’ve done. You can see where I have Facebook. You can click it and share my post on your Facebook or your Twitter or your LinkedIn. If you have to do more than click it, chances are you won’t do it. And I want you to do it because (a) it’s free and (b) it helps me.

I will tell you, I’m not a huge fan of social media. At least, I don’t love it. But I *am* a huge fan because it is free and it has really done wonders for me, and I’m going to tell you how. I posted on my little blog—I was trying to build my readership. I think I had a couple hundred people on it, mostly friends or relatives who were doing me a favor, I’m sure.

And I wanted to get real people. I kept tweeting my blog with the URL. One night I went to bed, woke up, and had 200 or 300 more subscribers to my blog. I said, “Something happened, that’s got to be a mistake.” It wasn’t a mistake.

A very large Twitterer picked it up and retweeted it. And then another retweeted it. And another retweeted it. They picked it up and liked what they read. It didn’t go viral, but it was close. And I got hundreds of people for that. I also got a couple of famous people, who then hired me for other things.

I remember saying, “I respect this. This is a power I haven’t tapped into.” And

then I made the mistake of going to my 26-year-old daughter and saying, “Will you teach me Twitter?” Never do that. So I taught myself, and I now have over 6,000 followers—quality followers. And I follow 4,000 or 5,000 people—quality people. When I put stuff out there, it gets redirected to great places—often, not always. But that was a lesson I learned.

Also, on your blog, don’t get too personal. This is a big mistake. If you read my blog, you know that I’m single. You know that I have a bossy dog. You know that I was fortunate enough to find love again. I have an ex-husband that I’m happy that karma will visit any day. You know that about me.

But you don’t know much else. I don’t get too personal, and I don’t express political opinions because I don’t want to offend anyone. I do express them on the *Huffington Post*. I get a lot of hate mail there, and they love me for that.

Do not use profanity. There are a lot of people who think they can get away with it, and there are some people who do. *The Bloggers* gets away with it. The f-word is used at least four or five times in each blog post that she posts. And she’s got 10,000 followers, and that’s awesome.

But for the most part, it offends. It’s a little bit like when you’re writing a book. If it needs to be there, put it there, but if it doesn’t, don’t do it gratuitously.

People don’t link to sites. We all think, as bloggers, that if I link to their site, it’s going to take them away from my site. That’s not true. Whenever I write—I did a blog post a few months ago about Hearst Castle. It wasn’t a paid post. But I linked it to Hearst Castle.

Any time I talk about a place, I link to that. Google loves me for it. My SEO ranking loves me for it. Google me—Tammy Bleck. I have the first two pages. And all the links that I post are in there. I want Google to love me. You want Google to love you. Google’s going to take over the world, right? Which is

why I use Google+. I’m not a huge fan, the jury is still out for me, but I post all my blogs there because as soon as I do, it goes straight to the Google search engine. Like, in five minutes.

When I post on LinkedIn, or I post on the *Huffington Post*, in about three days, my blog post shows up on Google. I take my URL and go to LinkedIn and say, “Check this out,” from yours truly. Google+, same thing. And I really don’t use Google+ for anything else, other than that kind of dumping ground because it gives me that kind of recognition instantly.

*Q: Could you explain that again, please? You post a blog on Google+ rather than on the Huffington Post or rather than on your own blog?*

*A: I actually write my blog on my own blog. That’s where it always starts. It starts on my own blog. What is your topic?*

*Discipline without stress.*

Boy, I could use that. Okay, discipline without stress. So I’m going to write a blog post about discipline without stress on my blog. Then I’m going to copy that URL on the bottom, go to my LinkedIn page, and say, “Ever wonder how to have discipline without stress? Check this out!” and I paste the URL. And it automatically puts in the picture and a live link. And I do the same thing on Google+, on Facebook, and on Twitter. That’s all I do. It does it all for me.

*Q: At the very bottom of your blog, you go to Google+?*

*A: No, Google+ is a completely different thing. Do you have a LinkedIn account?*

*Yes, but I never use it.*

Okay, your Google+ is exactly like your LinkedIn account. So leave your blog and go to your Google+ account, where it has your picture and your Google+ feed, and write a comment in your feed.

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 16)*

In that comment, have the URL to your blog, and it’s going to pop up.

Okay, more mistakes. Which is worse? That you don’t promote your blog enough, or that you promote it ad nauseam?

I have my accounts on LinkedIn and Twitter, right? You have all these accounts, and the last thing you want to do is be that guy who’s there saying, “Read my blog. It’s about dogs. It’s awesome,” and seven hours later, “Did you read my blog? It’s about dogs. And did I say it was awesome?” The next day, or two days later, because I posted every week, “I hope you caught my blog on dogs.” I’m probably going to delete you. I’m going to stop following you. I don’t want that.

People who promote too much or people who don’t promote at all—those are big mistakes. You need to promote your blog on your social media. And if you don’t have social media, you should have at least two. And we’re going to talk about how you do that as well.

Inconsistent postings are a big mistake for bloggers. Don’t post on Monday and then next week on Friday and then skip the next two weeks—because I’ve lost interest and I can’t keep track and you’re no longer a family member to me. I’m a family member who pops into your mailbox every Wednesday morning. If you have time, stop by for a cup of coffee and let’s have a chat. If you don’t, delete me and I’ll catch you next time. But I’m going to be there every Wednesday morning. That’s what you want. That’s what you need.

Also—this is amazing to me—32 percent of bloggers don’t have a subscription. They don’t have an area for people to subscribe to their blog. Do you not want people to read you? Thirty-two percent is a fairly big percent. You need a subscriber button or an area where it says, “Subscribe via e-mail.” I don’t need to look for it. I can’t look for it. Eye-catching tells you it should be in the right-hand corner of your blog. Why?

Because studies show that’s where the eye goes. It also wouldn’t hurt to have it in a vibrant color, if you’re so inclined. Also, people won’t spend more than six seconds on your blog if it’s too complicated, too busy, or too overwhelming.

Why is finding your tribe important to you? What is your tribe? It’s your backbone—people of like mind.

My tribe is witty women and witty men. Before, my tribe was single women past 50. That was tiny. How do you find your tribe? And why would you want to know? You want to find blogs that are similar to yours in nature—whether you’re a baker or a stress-management person or a doctor—so that you can see what they’re writing. It helps you be creative. You can leave comments on their blogs, and they’ll come and leave comments on yours.

And how do you do that? Well, you’ll find in this handout I gave you places to find a blog directory. All of these places are places you can find your tribe. You can go there and type “women” and then all these things come down—women and health, women and families—and then you pick one, and all these blogs show up. Mechanics or pets or health or cancer—that’s how you can find your tribe.

That’s where you should start. You should start and you should engage. Pick five blogs and engage them. Read them, leave a comment. Never leave a comment until you have your avatar. You need an avatar.

*Q: Do you evaluate or categorize your comments, in terms of those that resonate with your consciousness? That you find are right on the message of your blog, and you want to show some appreciation at the least and also maintain this person on an ongoing basis? Do you have any methods to do that?*

A: It’s in my head. First of all, I never leave a comment unanswered, ever, no matter what it is. I answer every comment. And you should, too. I know it can be overwhelming. It is. But the rule

of thumb is the *HuffPost* rule. If you can answer 40 percent of your comments, you’re doing great. That’s all I answer for *HuffPost* because I can’t answer their 200 or 300 comments a week, in addition. In the comments section in a lot of blogs, people start commenting to each other. “Well, I agree with Jane. That guy was a total wack. You should never have to indulge that.” They start talking to each other, and they’re not even paying attention to me, which is fine.

*Q: But you’ve got two calibers—those that are off the wall and those that are on your same path. So that 40 percent that you comment upon, how do you approach that?*

A: I will often tackle the hostile ones. I always do. I’m not afraid.

*Q: And what is the result?*

A: Many of them will come back a second time. And I only comment once on them. I never go back. It’s not a dialogue.

*Q: You know instinctively you don’t have anything in common?*

A: No, I don’t. But I also don’t want to be portrayed as that person who thinks that unless you think like me, I’m not interested in you. I like controversy.

So finding your tribe is important. I would go to the blog directories and play around with that. If you have a blog or you want to start a blog, how many pages should that be on the web? The minimum is three. You should have an About page—I want to know about you. You should have a Blog page, and you should have a Contact page, in case I want to hire you for something or call you or e-mail you. That’s the minimum. That’s what I started out with.

Now I have an About page, a Coaching page, a Blog page, a Book page. I sell my book there—why not? People come there. But that’s the minimum that you should have. And WordPress offers that, really super easy.

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 17)*

Let’s talk making money with your blog. Affiliate programs—have we all heard of that? So here’s the real skinny on affiliate programs because I got really excited when I heard about this, and I thought, “This is going to be awesome.” What I didn’t know is that out of a thousand views, generally 1 percent of people will click on an affiliate click. And when they click on it, I can make anywhere from 1 to about 10 cents a click. I can’t even buy a cup of coffee with that. So my excitement level went up, and when the statistics came in, it wasn’t great.

Sponsors—I actually got a sponsor for my blog about a year and a half ago. It was Dove—the Dove soap bars. Dove liked my content and said, “We’d like to pay you \$500 to have a little advertisement on your blog.” And I immediately thought, “If I could get five of those, that would be awesome!” and I said, “I’d love to have you. I love Dove. I even use your soap in real life.” So that was awesome. That lasted about two months.

Then I wrote a blog post that was titled “Lipstick Isn’t Just for Lesbians.” The blog post was about how the purchase of lipstick is an indicator of the economy. Remember how they used to say that hen sizes would indicate the economy? There was a new study that said that the purchase of lipstick would tell you how the economy was going. And I’d always heard the phrase *lipstick lesbians*, so I titled the post “Lipstick Isn’t Just for Lesbians.” I thought it was very witty. They didn’t! I actually got a phone call—not an e-mail, but a phone call. “We need you to remove that post. We cannot be affiliated with that kind of verbiage.” “Did you read the post?” That was beside the point.

I was still upset about that, and I didn’t want to lose Dove, but it’s my blog. It’s the only place in the world where I can get what I want and do what I want and no one is the boss of me. And so I let them go. Thank you, no thank you.

*Q: How do you get sponsors? Do they find you or do you find them?*

A: That’s a very good question. You have to have good numbers. By good numbers, I mean that you’ll never get a sponsor if less than 1,500 people subscribe to your blog. And you’ll need to show them that demographic page. I have a lot of verbiage. I was showing up on a lot of social media, and that’s what they check, so they came to me.

*Q: I love your story. On the one hand, sponsors are attractive because they provide money, but on the other hand, they also compromise creativity.*

A: Hugely. And I’m not going to sit up here and say I can’t be bought. I can be bought—but not for \$500 a month. If they were going to pay me \$50,000 a month, I’d say, “Let’s take that out!”

There are ways you can find sponsors. That would be LinkedIn and Facebook, and there are different groups that you would join there that specialize in financial assistance or that kind of thing. There are a lot of groups that will come out to do that. But if I’d kept Dove as my sponsor, I would never be on the *Huffington Post*. I would never be in the *Jewish Journal*.

*Q: Why’s that?*

A: I got those venues because I dare to go out of the box—because I talk about and write about things that people want to comment on that make them uncomfortable sometimes. And that’s not that sponsor. So the price was too much to pay. Clearly, sponsors and affiliates is not the way.

Let’s talk about leverage because that’s where I really hit the gold mine. My blog has done amazing things for me. It’s gotten my foot in the door for magazine articles and ghostwriting gigs. Ghostwriting is about 40 percent of my business. And there’s a ghostwriting gig that I took that was in the \$15,000 range. And I got it because of my blogs. Because when you’re a ghostwriter, you can’t really tell them who your client was. But you can tell them, “You want to see how I write? Let me send you this post. You can check

me out. I have credentials. If you like what you see, let’s talk.”

It’s a resume that’s active and fresh and new every week. And it’s on all different subjects. I wrote a blog called “View from a (non)Jew,” because I am a non-Jew. And the rabbi at Temple Sinai asked me if I’m sure. And I pitched that to the *Jewish Journal*. Now the *Jewish Journal* doesn’t pay more than \$250 per article, and that had to work up from \$100. So I’m not going to make a lot of money writing for the *Jewish Journal*, but when I tell you I write for the *Jewish Journal*, I make a lot of money. People hire me because I write for the *Jewish Journal*. So I will write those \$250 pieces for them. I’ll also meet some celebrities along the way. This was my first *Jewish Journal* article, and my article was on the cover. It looked like I made \$1,000. I made \$250.

*Q: What was it called?*

A: It was called “To Know Her Is to Love Her.” I did the article on Carol Connors, who is a wonderful singer-songwriter. She cowrote the theme song from *Rocky*. When I pitched the article to the *Jewish Journal*, they didn’t take it. So I went to Temple Sinai. They loved it! They asked if I’d come and share it with the congregation, and I said yes I would. I said, “Am I allowed to go on the altar?” They said, “It’s a bema, and yes you can.”

And there were three people in the audience who hired me for speaking—\$1,800 speaking gigs, from my blog. You get the picture? I wrote a blog called “Man vs. Dog.” I’m a dog lover. And I read a funny thing on Facebook that said, “If you really want to know if your man loves you, lock him in the trunk of your car along with your dog, and in 15 minutes, open the trunk and see who’s happy to see you. That’ll tell you who your best friend is.” I thought that was funny.

So I wrote “Man vs. Dog.” Who do you choose? I chose the dog, and I told a real poignant story about when my dog was sick, and she was dying, and I went home and told my fiancé that she was

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 18)*

my best friend, and he said, “I thought that I was your best friend.” And I said, “That’s where you would be wrong.” It got a lot of hits, and *Dog World* loved it and published it. But they also asked me to judge their dog show. And I could sell books at the back of the room. Okay, I thought, that’s awesome. That’s great. So we’re out there doing that, and I brought two boxes of 75 books. I even said to Steven, “I want to take only one box. If I’m lucky, I’ll sell half of them.” I sold all of them—because of my blog.

I also wrote an article called “Goodbye, So Long.” It was about how our good-byes formulate our lives. Say goodbye to my daughter going to college. Say goodbye to my father as he lay in the casket. Say goodbye to my marriage. And *Woman’s Day* picked it up.

So you know what I can get when I can say to you, “I’ve been published in—”? They don’t even read my stuff anymore because it holds so much clout. It’s all from my blog! There’s no shortage of online print magazines. None. And you know what the real secret is? Social media.

It was very, very hard for me. I am not a social media animal. But that event with Twitter really taught me. And here’s what I learned. When I went to pitch my idea—I wanted to be a speaker at the women’s conference in Long Beach. I really wanted that. And when I went there and was interviewed, one of the first questions they asked me was, “How many Twitter followers do you have?” “I’m sorry, what?” “How many Facebook fans do you have? How many LinkedIn people are you connected with?” The numbers were very low because I didn’t engage it. “I’m sorry, we don’t take you seriously. You’re not a serious marketer. You’re not a serious businessperson.”

So when I went home, I learned how to use that stinking Twitter, and now I can talk in 140 characters or less. I can do all of that now. And I have been hired by companies like Cottonelle and Ted Shoes

to write corporate blogs. And how did they hire me? They looked at my blog! You ever heard of a little thing called the Red Hat Society? My blog got that gig! I don’t have to go out and beat the drum any more. My blog does that for me, and your blog should be doing that for you, whatever it is that you’re selling.

I want to give you some stats that are super important. LinkedIn—that’s the most important place you can be. As a writer, you need to be on LinkedIn. You need to join it now! It has 238 million users, business-to-business and business-to-consumer—238 million! People are there to do business.

So pay attention to what you write. I never write a blog post that I don’t put on LinkedIn. I have groups of writers that I’m involved with on LinkedIn. Any time I run into a problem, I’m there. It’s all free! There are a ton of writers on there, and they’re wicked smart. And they really help. And I help when I can, when someone asks me something.

Two new members join LinkedIn every second, and 61 percent of small-business users use LinkedIn primarily for their networking opportunities. Why aren’t you there? You need an avatar on LinkedIn, you need a summary on LinkedIn. Visit my LinkedIn page and see how it’s done because that LinkedIn page makes me money, and it’s free.

*Q: Do you have the upgrade?*

A: I do not have the upgrade. I had the upgrade for about four months because I thought it was a good idea. It’s like \$25 a month. I wasn’t getting anything for it. I learned how to do it without, and I just thought that I didn’t need it. And I don’t.

*Q: But how does it make money for you?*

A: I get speaking gigs from it. For example, I posted on LinkedIn that I was presenting here for PALA: “Very excited to present for PALA tomorrow night in Los Angeles. Very prestigious group!” I got a private message, “What are you speaking on?” “Blogging.” “I’m so-and-so with

Keller Williams, and I’d like to hire you to teach our realtors how to blog.”

*Q: How did Keller Williams see your post?*

A: It goes in my feed, and I have over a thousand connections on LinkedIn. Some of them are realtors. I don’t connect with everyone on LinkedIn. I don’t do it on Facebook or Twitter, either. For example, if you try to connect with me on LinkedIn—but you don’t have a picture or a frame of mind written, where you’re from and what you do—because I’m a ghostwriter, I will really look it over before I decline you because there are CEOs out there who want their story written.

*Q: I’m not getting very much mileage out of LinkedIn.*

A: You’re not getting any mileage out of LinkedIn? I would start posting in groups that you value, and you will get people coming to you and asking you questions or maybe seeing what you can be helpful in. You need to engage these people. It’s not enough to just connect.

*Q: To what extent is it really important to do that before the event? I was on television three days ago. Is it too late to post that?*

A: It’s never too late to post that. My intent wasn’t necessarily to fill seats, but I did leave a live link to the PALA page, where they can sign up and pay. I did that on my Twitter, on my LinkedIn, on my Facebook. But the intent is to give a profile of yourself to these people so every time they see your smiling mug they think, “She’s doing something. She’s talking somewhere. She was here talking to people, she was a keynote, now she’s at PALA.” Every time I’m somewhere, even if it’s after the fact, I often will post a picture and say, “What a great group act!” Why? Because she gets around! This is a woman who really does something! I bet you’re doing stuff too; you’re just not posting it.

*People are attracted to shakers and movers.*

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 19)*

People are attracted to shakers and movers!

*Q: LinkedIn—you said you need an avatar and what else?*

A: A nice summary. Your summary, by the way, should be first person. Don’t say that Tammy is this and Tammy is that. I’m Tammy, and they want to hear my voice!

*LinkedIn will take you through all the things they offer to develop your profile.*

And you’re writers. You can be better than most.

*Q: Suppose you have diverse interests and you belong to five, six, seven different groups of people that you’re actually interested in dealing with. When you post something, does it go to all those groups?*

A: Yes, it does—isn’t that awesome? It is awesome. And it’s also free. And that’s why it’s important to link in to people.

Now, I think Twitter is the most powerful tool. You’ve been seeing this in the news. You’ll see the Olympics. It’s on Twitter. You’ll see countries being brought up and senators being brought down. It’s on Twitter. Twitter is happening now. It’s current. Over 35 percent of companies that see a complaint about their company on Twitter will respond to it in 24 hours.

I had a client say, “I’m having such a problem, Domino’s Pizza did this and this and this.” And I said, “Let me help you out!” and I tweeted it. #dominospizza, @dominospizza. She literally called me on the phone and left a message—it was a blocked call and I don’t answer blocked calls—“I just want to thank you because they made this good.” Twitter!

I was talking to Al Roker the other day on Twitter. He retweeted me because he made some comments and I was responding to them. When am I going to get the opportunity to do that? Twitter!

It’s very powerful, and I love that the fastest-growing demographic is 55–64. I love that.

Some 70 percent of Fortune 500 companies use Twitter. That’s awesome. And 500 million users and 50 percent of tech companies acquire clients through Twitter. Does Arab Spring mean anything to you? Twitter. Twitter fills seats for me when I go places. And those seats cost money.

Facebook. That’s the behemoth. Everyone has Facebook. Does everyone have Twitter? How about LinkedIn? Out of those three, LinkedIn is the most important for you to be on, bar none. The groups are the most intellectual; they’re very progressive. If you’re going to pick only one, pick LinkedIn. If you’re going to pick two, pick LinkedIn and Twitter.

I’m really strong on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. I have a fan page for Facebook, and I have a personal page. I have 3,500 people on my personal page and 1,600 on my fan page. So when I go to the convention, and they ask how many people I have, I say almost 20,000 followers!

*Q: Where would you place Google+?*

A: I follow and respect Google+, but I think the jury is still out on how it’s going to function and work. It’s not user friendly, but I will post everything on Google+ because it goes directly to Google. It gets you visibility. That’s the only reason I do it. I don’t understand the whole circle thing. I’m in like a thousand circles. I don’t know what it does for me. I’m working it out. I do know what LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook do for me. And before I was using them, which was three years ago, my income was one-fifth what it is now. That’s no lie, and it’s all free! So I spent some time working on my profile on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook. Do you know what my moniker is? I’m a HuffPost author, writer, speaker, and overall sassy girl.

*Q: How do newsletters fit in?*

A: How do they fit in? The newsletters don’t fit in anymore. Your blog fits in because your blog is fresh. What is the subject of your newsletter? Is it your business?

*Q: Yes, I’m a fiction writer, and I talk about the arts—it’s short and sometimes it’s about some famous person or some famous thing. It’s only a page long. I just started four months ago, and I’m getting terrific response to it.*

A: Is it interactive? Can people leave comments?

*They can click on the “Hear from you” button.*

Okay, change that setting so you can receive comments. Keep the same thing. But it should be interactive. You need to have a comments section. By the way, another mistake that bloggers make is that they don’t post pictures with their blogs. And you should always buy your pictures. Don’t steal your pictures. You want to be provocative enough. You’re going to develop friendships—real friendships. I’ve actually developed relationships that have gotten me jobs at places that pay very big money, and they’ve never met me.

*Q: If I have a newsletter or a blog on Constant Contact, how do I use my website and have a blog there?*

A: Is it the same one?

*No.*

Okay, then I would just use your blog on WordPress and forget Constant Contact because you’re paying for it every month. You can use FeedBurner. It’s a free dispenser for your blog.

*Q: How does that work?*

A: You can go on there and Google it. You can Google “How do I get my WordPress blog out there?” and it will give you

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*“Blogging” (cont’d from page 20)*

options. FeedBurner is really great. It’s free, and you can schedule when your blog gets released. My blog gets released on Wednesdays at 9 a.m. Automatically.

If you subscribe to my blog, you’re going to go to *Witty Woman Writing*, and on the right-hand corner it will say “Subscribe to this blog,” and it’s a FeedBurner. It’s going to give you some letters to mimic, and then it’s going to send you an e-mail saying, “Did you subscribe to *Witty Woman Writing*?” Because we want to make sure you’re not a spammer. And you’ll have to click the link in that e-mail to say that you did, and it’s all automatic after that. You’re going to get my blog every Wednesday, from now on until you unsubscribe. It’s only that first initial time that you have to click on that to validate it.

*Q: In terms of distribution, do you think that there’s a specific day that works best?*

A: Yes, that’s a very good question. Here are the two things to remember: never do it on a Monday and never do it on a Friday. And don’t do it in the evening. There are some bloggers who will tell you that Tuesday is the hottest day. Some will say Thursdays are the hottest day. For me, Tuesday and Wednesday are the hottest days. I’ve played around with it. On Thursdays, people are already thinking about the weekend. I also run into a lot of holidays on Thursdays. Or if Monday is a holiday, then Thursday is like a Friday, and no one is paying attention. If you want someone to read 400 or 500 words and then take the time to comment, Friday morning probably isn’t the best time to do it.

If you’re not on Facebook, you should really reconsider that. And the greatest, largest, fastest social media right now are videos. Video blogs—vlogs. Why? Because every phone’s got a videocamera. YouTube accounts are free—I love free! It used to be when I started a business, I’d have to go out and rent some space, find a year lease, get some office furniture, get a phone installed, get a

phone book and put my ad in the phone book—remember the Yellow Pages? Am I the only one here who’s that old? There used to be all of that!

Now I have a website and a cell phone and I’m good to go! Why wouldn’t you do it? And why wouldn’t you hook into Twitter and LinkedIn and Facebook? I don’t care if you’re intimidated. Get un-intimidated because this service is here for you, free. I didn’t make six figures last year, but I came very close, and I’m a writer! And if I can do it, when I had never blogged before three and a half years ago, and I never did Twitter before three years ago, why can’t you? Because we are destined to be only that which we’re determined to be.

*Q: When did you get your connection with the Huffington Post?*

A: I don’t think it was a year ago.

*Q: They contacted you?*

A: They did. How awesome is that? I got the call from a lady from the *Huffington Post*, “We liked your piece on—.” And that was awesome. I’ve written several pieces for them specifically that don’t appear on my blog.

*Q: That’s an ongoing relationship?*

A: Yes, it is an ongoing relationship. They have asked for two blog pieces a month, and they would like four. But I’m writing blogs for corporations, I’m consulting people like you. I can’t do that much. Part of my life is being a writer, in my encore career. I’m 60 years old! I want to do what I want. I get to do what I want. I get to choose my clients. So I will write for the *Huffington Post* because I respect it and I like it and it brings me money—and because you want to hire me just because I work for them!

*Q: They don’t pay you?*

A: They do pay me.

*Q: What do they pay you?*

A: Not very much. But that’s okay because I’d do it for free. That’s okay because the name pulls a lot.

*Q: I’m a therapist, and I have a book out. I have Facebook, I have LinkedIn. All of that is set and working. I am passionately interested in sustainability. I have a Facebook page and a Twitter page and even a website, and I’m just finding my way. I don’t have something like a private practice that you can come to or anything like a book—*

A: You should be busy building and promoting your blog on social media platforms that matter. If you spend four to six months doing that, probably less, you will have a viable audience and probably income. I spend 15 minutes a day on social media—maybe. That isn’t much time. But when I was building my Twitter, I spent every night with a laptop in my lap for about two hours, building Twitter—every single night for three weeks. That’s Okay because now I do it all on my phone—with a free app. I took a picture at CSUN of my audience of about 200 people. I said, “Smile!” and posted it on Twitter. And so I did that with Facebook and I did that with LinkedIn.

You have to put in the time. Yes, it’s annoying and aggravating, but it’s not costing you a dime. And it can pay you huge dividends. So instead of investing in other things, like expensive classes or tutors or mentors (except for me—invest in me!), I would sit down and build my social media platform. Make March a Twitter month for you to get established on that. Take it to bed with you three or four nights a week.

FeedBurner is a delivery system that gives you counts on who’s opened your mail. My open rate is 57 percent. I thought that was pretty poor, but 57 percent is evidently very good. I host webinars, Troubleshooting Tuesdays, once a month. I only take about 15 people at a time. It’s \$20 for the hour, and we get on and we troubleshoot. If you’re interested in that, you can give me your e-mail address. I’m also a blogging coach. You can

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go to my website and look that up. With the information you have here today, you can do this.

*Q: Imagine for a moment that your blog is a car that you acquired to travel. How important is knowing where you want to go, to being a successful blogger—in other words, the mission, the purpose?*

A: It’s everything. It’s absolutely everything. And you need to work that out. But the bottom line is, even when you haven’t worked that out yet, you’re still going to need to build your media platform. You may as well be doing that, so when you figure it out and the light bulb goes on—that’s what I need to do!—you now have 2,000 Twitter people you can start engaging with. You know, people say to me, “I’ve just finished my book, now I want to develop my social media.” Well, you’re about six months too late! But that doesn’t mean you shouldn’t do it. You should.

It’s like planning to have the baby, and you have the baby, and you say, “Now we need to go out and buy the crib and the stroller.” It doesn’t work. It will work, eventually, but you’re going to be on the slow uptake.

*To me, blogging, as well as social media, is a way for me to get into my skin, to be my quintessential self and not to be afraid of people.*

Spoken like a writer. To me, my blogging is—I would say—a fair amount of that. But I also want to make money. And I’m not ashamed of it. I was telling people who were saying that you can’t make a lot of money as a writer, “Why not? Why can’t I? Just because I’m not James Patterson or Stephen King? There must be some way I can make a living doing it.” “Well, there isn’t. If you’re going to be true to yourself, there isn’t. Writers are introspective. They share points of view and change the world.” I want to do all that and make money!

*I’m personally caught between a rock and a hard place on that subject. Because for*

*44 years, I’ve been periodically remarkably successful, but for me to try to write in order to make money, I feel like the money will corrupt the integrity of my writing.*

And there’s something to be said for that. I agree with you, and I’m going to share something with you—when I started writing pieces for the Huffington Post that I thought they wanted me to write, they sucked. The posts were getting 15 comments. It didn’t feel right. So I said, forget this stuff. You know what really happened? This kid cut me off at the gas place and flipped the bird at me because I was next in line and he cut in front of me. That’s what I’m going to write about. It’s also about writing about the human condition, about aging. I’m not invisible. Okay, I may be 60. You think you can flip me off? You think I’m going to take that? You picked the wrong day. That’s what you write about.

It’s emotional, so I’m staying true to myself. It’s also marketable. Unless you can live off the land—I cannot—it has to be marketable. I just paid off my daughter’s college education; I now have a new car. It’s always something. You have everything that you need to be a successful blogger. If you can’t implement it, I’m right here. But I’m betting that you can because this is pretty foolproof. This is what I wish someone had told me. And I’m telling you. And it’s free. This is how you make it happen.

*Q: Do you write e-zine articles?*

A: Yes, e-zine articles. You don’t get paid for those, but it’s a nice piece to be focused and showcased. I have had several. I wrote for Hub, way back in the day when I used to write for newspapers. But every newspaper I used to write for went out of business—I don’t know what that says about me!

I want to thank you all for coming tonight. I hope we did not disappoint—I hope we gave you a lot of good content. I would love to have you follow me on my blog. I would love to have you follow me on LinkedIn and Twitter, and I will help you and retweet you. That’s a promise!

## RECORDINGS OF PAST MEETINGS

If you missed a meeting or need to hear the information again, we have recorded each of our meetings in MP3 format.

If you would like to receive a copy via e-mail, please contact Gary Young ([artsy12@earthlink.net](mailto:artsy12@earthlink.net)) with the subject line: PALA RECORDING.

Please indicate which *date* AND *program* in your e-mail. He will get back to you with the simple procedure.



## PALA OFFICERS AND BOARD

Your PALA officers and chairs are

President: Gary Young, [artsy12@earthlink.net](mailto:artsy12@earthlink.net)

Vice President/Membership Chair:  
Sharon Goldinger, [pplspeak@att.net](mailto:pplspeak@att.net),  
949-581-6190

Secretary: Robin Quinn, [quinnrobin@aol.com](mailto:quinnrobin@aol.com)

Treasurer: David Evans,  
[teddytravelerbear@earthlink.net](mailto:teddytravelerbear@earthlink.net)