



Episode #1 Transcript

Do You Have to Write Books to be a REAL Writer?

(Introducing The Professional Writer Podcast)

<https://bloggingbistro.com/do-you-have-to-write-books-to-be-a-real-writer-introducing-the-professional-writer-podcast>

I'll never forget the day I met up with a group of fellow writers for lunch immediately following a writers conference. Some of us knew each other slightly, but most of us were being introduced for the first time. We went around the table and told about the type of writing we enjoy doing. When everyone had introduced themselves, one of the writers announced, "Well, everyone here writes ... except Laura."

I faced an internal conundrum. *Do I speak up and risk alienating this person I've just met? Or do I keep my mouth shut?* I'm a processor, so I rarely come up with snappy comebacks in the moment. I need time to think before responding.

So I reluctantly let this person's comment go. But now, years later, I have the chance to respond publicly. True confessions... here's what I felt like saying to the person's comment, "Everyone here writes... except Laura."

My snappy comeback would have been: Actually, I wrote several thousand words last week. And several thousand the week before that. And I'll write several thousand words next week, and every week after that. Plus, I get

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paid several thousand dollars each month for writing those words. How much did you earn on the words you wrote this week?

OK, I know that's snarky and I admit, I have a strong snarky, sarcastic streak.

Thinking back over that conversation, what I think this person intended to say was, "Everyone here writes books, except Laura."

And they would have been correct in saying that. I have written books, but a funny thing happened to me during the book writing and publishing process. I discovered that I love helping writers get the word out about their books much more than I love writing my own books. And I re-discovered my first writing love, which is short-form writing. In other words, article writing. Blog post writing. And really short-form writing – social media content writing.

While my author friends slave away, for 7 months to a year to write and publish their book and maybe earn \$5,000 or \$10,000, my short-form writing nets me a steady income of several thousand dollars per month, every single month, year after year.

One of the reasons I started The Professional Writer podcast is to help dispel myths, one of which is that you have to write books in order to be a REAL writer.

While having a published book can definitely be a boon for your career, book authoring is not the be-all, end-all of writing. There are myriad opportunities for you to write, and if you want, there are opportunities to

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earn a steady income through writing-related careers such as editing, coaching, and consulting.

Wherever you're at in your writing life – whether you're not ready to say, "I'm a writer," or you're preparing to launch a writing-related business, or you're thinking of retooling and re-branding the writing you're currently doing, this podcast is for you.

If you're eager to explore how you can confidently plan, launch, and grow a writing-related business, I know you're going to enjoy The Professional Writer podcast.

I'll guide you through making the mindset shift into professional writer mode. There are two huge components in making that mindset shift from "writing as a hobby" or "writing in my spare time" to "working writer mode" or "writing as a business." One is cultivating a life of writing -- that is, seriously pursuing whatever form of writing you want to do. The other is thinking like an entrepreneur who's starting a business.

We'll explore the gamut of topics related to cultivating a life of writing and starting up and growing a writing-related business. While I'm going to be doing the first few episodes solo while I get my podcasting feet wet, I already have a great lineup guest experts who are eager to join us on a regular basis.

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Here are just a few of the themes we'll be discussing:

We'll address the fears that hold writers back from even admitting they're a writer. Together, we'll work at overcoming those fears and we'll focus on actively making forward progress.

I'll bring on guests who earn money writing in ways you may not have imagined, which I know is going to spark ideas in you or maybe help a latent passion to emerge.

We'll examine the pros and cons of the freelance writing life.

We'll talk about how to set up and manage your writing business, starting with setting goals --including financial goals – and moving on to creating a simple business plan.

We'll work through questions that give entrepreneurial-minded writers headaches, such as:

- “How do I know what to do next? I need to develop a workable strategy and prioritize where to invest my efforts.”
- “How do I set fees for writing-related services, such as editing and consulting?”
- “How do I set healthy boundaries?” That can include setting boundaries with clients, with your editor, and with family members.
- “I'm having trouble using my time productively. What tools will make running my business easier and more efficient?”

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- “How will I know when it’s time to hire help? How can I find reliable people to do the tasks I’m not good at so I can focus on what I AM good at, and how much should I pay them?”
- “How can I diversify my income stream without adding too many things to my plate?”
- “How do I recover when I suspect I’ve ruined my author brand?”

For those of you who are writing books, we’ll explore topics such as:

- “I’ve just started writing a book. When do I need to start preparing for my book launch? What things do I need to do to be prepared, and in what order should I do them?”
- “I’ve finished my manuscript. Now what? Do I need an agent? What about a freelance editor? What kind of editor do I need? How do I work with an editor?”

Most writers I know say they don’t like promoting themselves and they don’t understand marketing. They labor for months, or even years, to write a book, but balk when it comes to getting their book into the hands of the people who need to read it. They view marketing as those icky, smarmy, in-your-face sales messages that *guilt* people into buying your book.

I take a different approach to marketing. To me, marketing begins a long time before you write the first word of your book or your article.

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Because marketing, at its heart, is the art of matching your message to the right person. That means identifying your ideal reader, pinpointing their unmet needs and desires, learning to speak their language, serving them generously, and delighting them by meeting their needs.

- It means educating and informing them.
- It means positioning yourself as a trusted advisor and reliable source.
- It means fostering deep, meaningful, lasting relationships with them.

Marketing is not a one-time deal that you start a few months before your book is published and end a few months after it's published. *Marketing is an ongoing process... something that you do daily throughout the life of your brand.*

I'm really excited about the marketing part of this podcast because marketing is my thing.

Since 2007, I've been helping writers and other entrepreneurs plan, launch, and grow their business. My own business, Blogging Bistro, LLC, started out as a blog consultancy, and later grew into a full-service digital marketing agency.

During the past few months, I've retooled and rebranded my business. The core services my team and I now provide include brand development coaching, designing and developing custom WordPress websites, and content writing and coaching, specifically for web-based content.

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I have a diverse background as a writer and marketer:

I've been a professional freelance writer since the early 1990s, and I've had thousands of magazine, newspaper, trade publication and online articles published.

I've written books, both traditionally published through a royalty publishing house and self-published.

I've worked as a writer in the fields of education, corporate, government, small business, and as a solopreneur.

In addition to writing, I've professionally edited and proofread everything from tech documents to fiction and non-fiction books.

I've also taught writing extensively, both in the public schools, as a high school journalism and English teacher for over a decade, and I now teach writing and marketing to adults at writers conferences.

I've worked with several publishing houses to build websites and manage book launch campaigns on behalf of their authors.

I serve on the board of directors for West Coast Christian Writers, and I'm directing their new online writers conference.

I've created dozens of custom WordPress websites for writers and authors and other entrepreneurs.

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Essentially, I've been in writing-related businesses my entire career.

I love working with solopreneurs and small business owners – they have such inquisitiveness and energy combined with a deep and abiding passion to serve others.

If you follow my blog or subscribe to my email list, you know that I love equipping my readers with practical tips, tutorials, and techniques, and that's exactly what I'll do on The Professional Writer podcast.

The weekly episodes will combine storytelling along with training and equipping. I'll include an action step you can begin taking right now that will help you present yourself professionally.

We'll also have the occasional Word-Nerd Moment, where we'll explore the meaning of an idiom or some other oddity of the English language.

Each weekly episode will be around 20 minutes long. I want you to be able to listen to an entire episode – maybe two, during your commute to work, or when dropping kids off at school or waiting for them at a sports practice, or while you're working out or preparing for your work day or trying to fall asleep at night.

Starting a writing-related business is a learned skill, not a natural-born talent. The Professional Writer Podcast will help you shift into entrepreneurial start-up mode. You're going to learn how to do the basics right. By "the basics," I mean foundational elements you must have in place in order to launch and run a successful writing-related business.

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You're not going to just KNOW the basics, you're going to DO them.

I'll help you move from passive action – where you spend most of your time consuming courses, podcasts and blog posts and free downloads – to massive action – where you translate what you're learning into action.

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