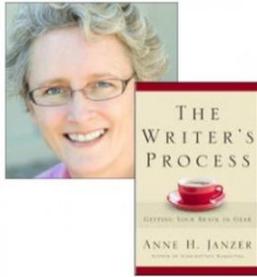




Published & Profitable feature author interview

Anne Janzer's *The Writer's Process*



Interview highlights:

- First versus second books
- Free writing and writing to discover
- Drafting versus writing
- Writing versus publishing
- Finding the time to write and publish
- The independent publisher's mindset

Roger:

This is your host Roger C Parker from *Published and Profitable*.

My guest today is [Anne Janzer](#). Anne is here to discuss her just-published book, [The Writer's Process: Getting Your Brain in Gear](#).

The Writer's Process is Anne's second self-published book. Last year, I interviewed Anne about her first book, [Subscription Marketing: Strategies for Nurturing Customers in a World of Churn](#).

Here's the thing about Anne...

During the last 14 years, I've interviewed over 500 successfully published nonfiction authors. Anne is the first that I've interviewed to write and self-publish two significant books in two years. That's quite a record – a very enviable accomplishment. I asked Anne here to share what she's learned about writing that has allowed her, and can allow you, to become a prolific author and thought leader.

At this point, I'm pleased to introduce Anne Janzer, author of *The Writer's Process*.

Anne: Thank you, Roger. Thanks for having me on. I have a soft spot in my heart for your *Published and Profitable* blog. You were first one to talk with me after I published my first book, *Subscription Marketing*. So it's great to be on again as this one is just going out in the world.

Roger: It's pretty exciting to think of a book as "going out in the world." Before we start, in brief, what is your background, who are your clients, and what services do you provide?

Anne: I've spent my whole career as a professional writer/editor. I've been in marketing but I've always felt that I'm a writer first and marketer second. I live in the Silicon Valley area, so I write for technology companies because that's what we have and that's where my "sweet spot" was. I was comfortable writing/talking about fairly technically complex topics in a way that was relevant to business readers.

A little over a year ago I wrote a book about how marketing is being disrupted by subscriptions, and how marketers need to focus on communicating with customers after the sale. An interesting thing happened in the process of doing that: I found that I *really liked the process of writing the book*; it was an interesting adventure and I wanted to do it again.

So the first book, in a sense, led to the second book. I had always been writing in the brand voice for my clients. I had always been writing short pieces or more substantive papers, perhaps, but nothing along the lines of a book.

This was something *entirely different*; writing in my own voice, my own perspective, and a longer format.

Roger: And, what were some of the lessons you learned writing and self-publishing *Subscription Marketing*? What was the big takeaway?

Anne: It involved a big learning curve. The big take-away is that writing a book is only a part of the process. I've talked to someone – a publishing consultant – who says "you shouldn't say 'self-published,' you should say 'independently published.'" At first I laughed, thinking that's marketing spin. But to some extent it's true.

I've tried to approach self-publishing in a business-like way. My first book was about my profession. So I hired a publishing consultant to guide me through some of the unknown twists and turns. I hired a cover designer. I hired a copyeditor and proofreader. I tried to make sure that I approached the book in a professional way.

In a sense, I'm a small publishing house with one author–me, if you want to look at it that way.

Roger: Were there any surprises or specific ways you benefited the most from *Subscription Marketing*?

Anne: *Subscription Marketing*, the book, was a lot of fun to do. If I had to narrow it down to three key benefits, one was that in the process of doing that marketing it and talking to people connecting me with a whole bunch of really interesting people that enriched my personal and professional life. Roger, you would be one of them. We met through the book. And that's fun.

Second, it gave me a sense of how the process works – a sense that I could do it and that a book is not unachievable.

The third is that it made me really step outside my comfort zone. I started speaking at conferences, or doing podcast interviews – things that were not in my usual sweet spot. And I think that’s a very good thing to have to do in your career – step outside your comfort zone.

Roger: When did you first decide to write a second book?

Anne: It was shortly after the first one was out. I decided, “*Hey, I can do this, and it was fun.*” The process of writing a book was an adventure that helped me grow, and I wanted to repeat that.

But, what I *didn’t know* was what the second book was going to be about! I knew I wanted to write something, but was not sure what it was going to be.

Roger: So, you decided to write a book for all the right reasons, except, of course, the topic.

Anne: The first book I wrote because I felt something needed to be said about this topic, subscription marketing. No one was saying what I thought needed to be said. That’s why I wrote that book.

This book, I set out to write *something that I wanted to read*. That was pretty much my goal. I didn’t know yet what that was going to be.

Over the course of the summer, I did a bit of exploratory writing. Over the fall I did a lot of freewriting on different topics. This is while I was busy doing client work and other writing as well as going to conferences and promoting the first book.

So, my new book was something going on, you might say, in the background of my otherwise engaged life. I continued to explore through freewriting – opening up files and exploring writing different ideas. I did that pretty much through the summer and the first part of the fall.

Around late October, I set on the idea that the next book was going to be on the writing process.

Roger: It sounds like the title came out from what you wanted to write about. You didn’t have to interpret an idea and come up with a title – it sort of came together.

Anne: Titles are not my strong suit. Although that is what I thought the topic was, when it came time to come up with a title, I went through a whole bunch of ideas. Because I thought, I have to do due diligence, and think creatively.

I did some testing with this service called [PickFu](#), where you can do real-time A/B testing of titles or book covers. That's a lot of fun – it's a crowd-sources real-time testing for a very small cost. I tested all sorts of different titles.

You had asked about this, so I opened up the file. I had *Writing Inside-Out*, but there was another book that was a little too close to that. *Writing Fast and Slow. The Writer's Brain. Getting Your Brain in Gear*.

Then, I devoted myself to subtitles. At one point I told myself, "I'm going to write out 100 ideas, a certainly a couple of them will be worthwhile." So I made myself keep writing until I had 100 different ideas for a subtitle.

I ended up basically with what I said the topic was, it took me a long time to settle on that as the title. I'm sure nobody else feels my pain here.

Roger: What kind of research had you done of positioning your book against existing books? It would take years to read every writing book out there. How did you narrow down? Did you specifically write against one of the existing books?

Anne: No. What happened was, I came up with "I want to write about the process." I kept writing and exploring.

I have a personal interest in cognitive science. I love reading cognitive science books. We have a whole bookshelf filled with them. As I was doing research for this, I kept diving back into them. And it became clear that maybe this would be an interesting angle for a book. And this would be a book that I personally would be interested in reading.

So then I thought I'd go look and see, "has anyone else written exactly this book?" Some people have written a few things that were kind of similar, but I thought it was enough of an open field that it was worth it. I would say things a little bit differently than they had, and it's a big world of people who write, so I didn't feel that the space was completely occupied.

Roger: It strikes me that "The Brain of the Writer" has no benefit, but *The Writing Process* implies learning a process.

Anne: Right – learning a process. This is part of the main message or the foundation of the book, is that when you or I think of writing, we think of the act of sitting down, getting our your pencil and the blank sheet of paper, and that sacred moment when the words come. But in fact, the process is much, much longer.

Writing is the *midpoint* of the publication journey. This is something I had worked on and fine-tuned in my professional writing life. When I would take on a new client project, I don't just sit down and start writing. I would schedule a couple days for

just reading a lot of different topics, thinking, doing some freewriting and kicking around ideas.

Then I'd schedule time for outlining it. Then I'd schedule time for writing, but leave in breaks so that when I reached a problem, I could go to the gym, think through the problem and come back to it. Then I'd schedule time for revision.

The whole writing process is of course much larger than just that moment when your pencil is scratching across the paper. ***The time to get a written piece of content from its origins in your brain out into the world has many steps.*** Too often, when we run into trouble, it's because we try to skip the preparation, or the creativity. We try to skip steps that we need to leave time and space for in the process.

Roger: *Time and space.* I think so much harm has been done by that Hemingway quote – it's easy to write – just open up a vein and bleed or something. I think that what you're saying, and the idea, it's such a visual idea – the time of actual writing, if it was shown on a timeline, especially if you're independently publishing, it might be 30% of the total time.

Anne: Exactly. And the work you do *outside of that time you're sitting and drafting* sets you up to be more successful, to be fluid and creative when you're drafting.

If I had to pick a key – I'm skipping ahead – if I had to pick a key giveaway from the book, I think that would be it: you do the work. You have to struggle. You *have to struggle before you're ready to start writing*. For some people that struggle is frustrating.

But if you see it as step one of the process, and it's going to make step four so much happier, then it's not frustrating. It becomes research and priming your brain, or any number of ways you want to frame it. But it becomes much more fun and less frustrating.

This has always been my writing process, which is why, for many years when I was working with clients, I refused to charge them an hourly rate. Because how do you charge a hourly rate when I consider part of the work the time pondering while I'm taking a walk? *For me the process is the whole process*, so I would only charge for a project instead of an hourly rate. If I worked really hard, I could write really fast and effectively and do something wonderful during the drafting phase. It shouldn't cost less for that piece than the piece that I sat down unprepared and hit my head against the wall for a couple hours.

Roger: Do you find much client resistance to this idea?

Anne: I used to occasionally run into. Mostly because it [project-based billing] requires them to have a clear idea of what they want from the writer they're hiring. It

requires them to understand their project. If they don't, maybe that's a red flag anyway for the relationship.

If you're freelance work and someone cannot articulate what they want you to do or why, then maybe they're not at the point they should be hiring a freelance writer.

Roger: One of the things that attracted me the most to *Subscription Marketing* and that you continued in *The Writer's Process* is the size and format – they are different, size is part of the format. These are relatively short books that take you on a journey. They're physical small. Had you thought about making *The Writer's Process* a much larger book?

Anne: I thought about it briefly, because there could be a whole discussion in here about book publishing, which opens up a whole can of worms that's a different set of discussions. I decided that was maybe a subset of the audience for this book, and it would be more useful to the readers to have just this book, just the message, and maybe in the future another one on book publishing. I was thinking about the reader.

You and I both – we've read books, especially nonfiction books, where can tell the author was told they needed 60,000 words, and there's a 30,000 word book there, to which 30,000 words have been added. And I didn't want to do that. I didn't want to make it bigger for the sake of making it bigger.

I thought I could actually reach more people with the messages of this book if it was shorter and, as a result, less expensive.

I'm more interested in getting this in a lot of people's hands, because some of the people who have read it have said they found it really useful and helpful. I'm more interested in getting it in people's hands. In that way, a shorter and less expensive book is the best way to go.

That's a decision that I can make as a self-publisher that I cannot make, necessarily, going through a big publishing house. I would have to make a stronger argument, be a different kind of author to carry weight to do that in a big publishing house.

Roger: There's a joy to a simple book. If you look at a lot of the books that have changed so many things for so many people – for example, Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* is a thin, small book. Carol Dweck's 4 million copy bestseller, *Mindset*, is a thin, small book.

It's not the joy of understatement – it's the joy of having something that physically feels good in your hand and has no fluff.

Anne: No fluff. I ultimately want this to be pleasant to read, yes, but also a useful, utilitarian book that you might go back to when you get stuck or want to look for

some inspiration for how to fine-tune your process. That's more useful in a small format like this.

It's friendly. This book is slightly longer than *Subscription Marketing*, but not a whole lot longer. It's as long as it needed to be.

Roger: It's as long as it needed to be. There are 2 books that fit in here. One is Dieter Rams' *10 Principles of Good Design*. The other is John Maeda's *Laws of Simplicity*. Both remind me of the Young People's Concerts that Leonard Bernstein used to host with the New York Philharmonic. He would discuss music like the second movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

One of the examples he used is the idea of inevitability. When something is perfect, there's an inevitability to it in the sense that every word or every note is the *only one* that could possibly go there. That's sort of the joy of a simple, small book that forces an economy of tone and craftsmanship.

Anne Lamott's book *Bird by Bird* is another relatively short book that will still be influencing authors decades from today.

Where are we, timeline, between the time you decided to write a second book and your choice of a title and position?

Anne: There's not a lot of clear boundaries between the phases.

I spent the summer and the early part of the fall doing what I call freewriting or exploratory writing on a number of different subjects.

In October, it became clear to me that I wanted to write about the writing process. I still wasn't sure what the angle and the slant was, but I did a lot more reading, re-search and writing through November and December.

At that point, I ended up hitting on the specific angle I took with this book – *the cognitive science mash-up and the writing recipe*.

January was pretty much dedicated – still while life going busily on around me – I worked on structuring and outlining and really refining what the book was.

That's also when I looked at what else was in the market.

As the end of January approached, I said "*On February 1, I am going to start drafting and I'm not going to stop until I have a first draft!*"

February through mid-March, I stopped everything else and pretty much concentrated on drafting the book. That was an intense period of drafting.

In March I was closing in on the title – I just saw that’s when the file was dated with my title ideas.

Roger: Drafting – does that include the table of contents and the three parts to the book?

Anne: Yes. By the end of January I had the outline. But, I have to confess that part-way through January, the exact structure of those three parts changed. That seems to be a recurring theme for me. It happened with the first book, too.

I had an outline, I started writing to the outline, and partway through, “*this outline’s not quite right*” and I would have to go back and restructure and rework a bit. That’s what happened with this as well.

My first outline did not end up being entirely the way the book turned out. You don’t really know until you writing.

I am constantly writing for discovery. I learn through writing, and that’s how I figure out what works and what doesn’t, and what’s possible.

Roger: One other thing, which I think is crucial: Had you planned to take some time away from your client work, 3 to 6 months previously, to allow the time to devote to the book? Or were you working at 200% capacity?

Anne: I definitely winnowed back on the client work in the fall. January I was wrapping up some other things, but February, March, there was no client work. I just had to do this.

For me to get a book written, I have to become a little bit obsessive, much to the detriment of everyone around me, because I want to be thinking about it, I want to be pondering the questions or the unsolved things when I’m doing something else. So I didn’t do any client work during that time – I pretty much just stuck to getting the book written. I did clear the decks for that.

Then I gave myself a little break before I started the revision process, which was nearly as long as the drafting process.

Roger: I haven’t seen anything written addressing this idea of committing time away. In order to do this, you had to be convinced that there would be a payoff that was equal or better than the lost income. *How did you reconcile these things in a way that we can apply to our own situations?*

Anne: That’s a hard one. You have to have some faith, and a little courage, to do something like this. Insanity, courage ... however you want to frame it. However, I was willing to pare back my income to do this.

This is something that is rewarding in ways that are not necessarily financial at heart. I was willing to say, *“Let’s pare back and accept this.”*

That brings up the question people frequently ask me: *“Can you make a living doing this?”* The answer is, *“Possibly, but maybe not the same living you’re making doing your consulting gigs.”*

You may be making a different living. Or you may find a way to *piece together a variety of things to make a living, of which writing is a very important part.*

But, I don’t expect to make on book royalties anything to replace the time I would have billed out working for clients. Writing a book to replace income you’re making in other places is probably the wrong reason to write a book.

Roger: When you made these decisions, you must have enjoyed some benefits from *Subscription Marketing* that you were able to quantify or, as you said, turn into a different type of income.

Anne: Yes, I am still doing some client work, but I now have the ability to work with those clients I find most interesting or the people I enjoy the most, to do the work that’s interesting and fun.

All my work is interesting and fun, but you know what I mean – to think carefully about what client work I do.

The first book opened up a lot of possibilities for different kinds of writing work. In fact, I did some work on another book during this time that I would not have done had I not done the first book.

So I think writing and publishing a book opens up a whole new set of what Steven Johnson calls *“the adjacent possible”* – *the new set of possibilities in your life expands when you write and publish a book.* I think that would be true of anybody and everybody. What you do with those possibilities is entirely up to you.

Roger: J Conrad Levison, *Guerilla Marketing*, he always used the term doorways of opportunity.

Anne: That’s the same idea.

Roger: This sounds very strategic.

Anne: I’m glad I gave you that impression. I’m not sure it was. I really wrote it because I wanted to. But we can pretend there’s deep strategy involved.

Roger: When going to the second act, the execution stage: did you write chapters in the order they appeared in the book, or did you bounce around? Did you work on multiple chapters at one time?

Anne: I did of bouncing. You talk, Roger, about blogging a book. I would use a blog to start exploring a topic that was further on in the book – to take a first pass at writing through it and sharing it with the world, while I was working on an earlier chapter. In that sense, I would be exploring something further one while I was still writing the draft of the current. So I kind of worked through in order, but I would bounce around based on where I felt I had something worth exploring or working on.

Roger: It gives you an opportunity – I call it a judgment-free zone—to write without pressure to excel or convert. We all take blogging seriously, but I contribute to a friend’s newsletter because I like the opportunity of trying out topics.

It’s not a critical audience – it’s a very basic, beginning-to-get-interested in it. I really enjoy it. There’s no grading. I’m not going to get an edited draft with four colors of review comments from editors. It’s a good way to try it.

So, you would you call *The Writer’s Process* a blogged book?

Anne: No, this is not a blogged book, but I did use my blog to explore – the blog was one phase beyond freewriting. I would keep a file of freewriting, which is totally non-judgmental, just let the fingers go writing on topics.

My first pass at a topic, I’ll sit and do that to see what connections my brain comes up with and what my pop up into the air while doing that.

The *blog was the next step*; I’d say to myself, let’s just take *one little thought and idea* from the freewriting and explore it in a blogpost. Let’s see if people respond, what it feels like to write about, and see what happens.

Some of those blogs I really liked, and I ended up using chunks or paragraphs here and there in the book. But it was more exploratory drafting, if that makes sense.

Roger: Were there any topics that were left out of the blog from this writing? Blog posts that didn’t make the cut?

Anne: Yes, there were posts that fell outside, that didn’t end up fitting the flow or the structure. There are certainly things on the blog that are not in the book, and vice versa. But if you were to read my blog, you might recognize them: “Oh yes, I remember that little snippet, or that analogy.” Now, because the book is coming out, I’m trying to take more things from the book and toss them on the blog because I’ve done all that work and have all this beautifully edited text. So I’ve got to use it.

Roger: What marketing activities were you doing to build reader anticipation while you were in the March/April mode.

Anne: That's the hard part. Probably never enough of them, whatever they were. It was blogging, and I started – say mid or late March, I sent it out to an editor.

One of the great things about hiring an editor is that first, you get wonderful feedback. The other is that for at least a week you really can't do anything with the draft because someone else has it. So, woo-hoo! That's a really great thing when you've been writing so hard.

At that phase, I started reaching out and sharing it with people. My marketing plan, such as it is, for this book launch is really about working with friends, colleagues, influencers, people who are willing to share things they find useful in the book. So I started to reach out to people, getting a few people to read for feedback. You, Roger, provided really valuable feedback at this phase, which was nice – so, bonus! I got an early reader who was thoughtful and had good things to say.

It's hard to put on the marketing hat when you're still in the writing phase.

It's tough. You don't want to let it go if it's not perfect. That's a difficult balance for the self-published author, but something you have to try to start doing. Even when you don't feel ready to start marketing because the book's not done, you actually have to start building those relationships and talking to people about writing blurbs and doing all that stuff. It's a challenge.

Roger: Going back to your idea of income, but a different type of income, are you exploring paid speaking activities.

Anne: Speaking is something that I will think about. Yes. It's not something I'm working on yet, because I'm at the point of this book coming out, I'm working on Amazon right now to move up the publication, and I'm in the process of recording the audiobook. Once I get the publication behind me, I'm willing to explore things beyond the book. The real problem with self-publishing is that you have to wear so many hats that it's hard to manage everything at once.

Roger: Is this your first audiobook?

Anne: No, I did an audiobook of *Subscription Marketing*, which I did prompted by one of the listeners to our original call. I wasn't planning on it, and this gentleman said, "*for business books, I will only listen to them.*"

I thought well, maybe he's not alone!

I did an audiobook of *Subscription Marketing*. That came out maybe late September, and it's done very well. There are some months it sells more than the other two formats put together. I don't know if that's an artifact of it being a business book, and people don't want to spend their reading time on a business book, they'd rather listen in the car – I don't know. I will definitely do an audiobook for this and see if it has the same kind of response.

Roger: Was there a learning curve involved doing the audiobook?

Anne: You betcha. There was in terms of the logistics of recording because I decided I wanted to do my own narration. You can also hire someone to do the narration for you. I used a service called ACX, which is another branch of Amazon to do the audiobook. You can put something out and have people bid on your job, or you can choose to do it yourself.

We chose to do it – I say “we” because my husband is my Chief Recording Engineer. There was some learning curve on our part in terms of figuring out the software, the recording, setting up the environment. People will say, “Yeah, I did it in a weekend.” But to get a high quality recording...

You also don't realize how many planes are in a flight path over your house until you start trying to record a book in your house. That's a learning experience!

Roger: Now, you also have a different skillset to offer clients.

Anne: That's true. This is definitely a learning and growing process – the whole thing.

Roger: Plus you have three streams. One of the things Joe Pulizzi from Content Marketing Institute has said on frequent occasions – people who had bought the book would also purchase the recording, rather than rereading it. So there is a big overlap. Especially regarding the Kindle format. A second read would be nicer as an audio.

How many takes would it take to record a chapter? Would you do a chapter without breaks, or would you do a page and reach for the vodka?

Anne: You do a chapter without breaks. Let me say this – if you're planning on writing an audiobook, think very carefully about using the word subscription too many times. When you say that out loud a lot, you end up tripping over your tongue occasionally. So, only write about things that are easy to pronounce – that's my advice to you.

So occasionally as you are narrating, you will trip up. You'll say the wrong thing. In that case, I would make a beep, leave a pause, and my husband will edit it out so it's not obvious. More problematic are the background, airplane noises that make fuzzes

on the microphones and things. That's another thing we occasionally have to go in and fix. But you do each chapters as a stand-alone file with ACX.

Roger: Would you stand while recording, or sit?

Anne: I've been told – I'm standing and I've heard that's better because your energy is better. I don't know, but I'm standing. We've fashioned a little recording booth in a spare room. So I'm standing in a little dark room reading my book off the backlit Kindle. So now you can picture me doing that, if you ever hear it.

Roger: Let's briefly go through the rush to completion, because I'd like as much time as needed for questions from callers. Completion and book launch: When did you get it back from editing, and what did production entail?

Anne: Production is mostly a matter of timing all the different parts that have to come together. You need to get the professional cover design, which you need for the website, but you need to have the blurbs to complete the cover design, and you need your ISBN. There's a chain of events you have to put together. It's not a terribly big deal.

I think late May I got it back from the proofread – but before I sent it to the proofreader, I had it in layout, because you want the proofreader to look at it in final layout so he finds any issues that are there.

The layout itself didn't take that long because I used a lot of the interior design I'd used for my first book. I like the way it looks, so I changed a few things, but it was a pretty quick turnaround. Then I gave myself a day to do the index. Then sent that off to him.

The production part is mostly then uploading it, then waiting for Createspace to send you the printed proof, so you can look at it, make sure it looks right. Doing the Kindle version from that is pretty easy – a couple hours, if that.

The actual production, if you're using Amazon, is not that hard. It's the coordinating the publication date and the launch. The book launch – that's what makes you tear your hair out. There are all kinds of decisions: deciding what kind of book launch you want to do, how big of a book launch, choosing a strategy, identifying your most important goals, etc... That's still the hardest part of the process for me.

Roger: What were your decisions, other than interviews for marketing?

Anne: I was going along with this idea that you need to have a preorders and collect a lot of orders. Then I realized, I'm not trying to get this book on a bestseller list on week one. That's not my goal for this book, so I can just get it out in the world. Unfortunately, at the time I decided this, I'd already set up a preorder page on Amazon, and there appears to be no going back.

I don't know if you remember the myth of Hercules, who at one point had to battle with the Hydra, which was a many-headed dragon. Amazon's a bit like a hydra for the self-publisher author – a friendly hydra, with lovely customer support, but there's a lot of different heads you're trying to get to do something all at once.

The book is theoretically launching June 28th, and the different heads aren't talking to each other. *[Editing note: the book published later the same day this interview recorded.]*

Roger: For my two cents, I think you have a book with the potential of going mainstream and being trade published. I think what you've done is on the par of the other books that are available – pretty high par books in terms of Stephen King's book, Anne Lamott, Ann Handley. I could see this being bigger than you may expect. History will tell.

Anne: I would love that to happen. My strategy is to put it in as many hands as possible and see what happens. That's my launch strategy in a nutshell.

Roger: Before we open the lines – was this an easier or a harder project than the first book? Did any new challenges emerge? How do you feel about the two experiences?

Anne: What was interesting about this one – in the book itself, I wrote about writing with the growth mindset, which involves acknowledging that you don't know everything, that you have the capacity to grow, and you're going to pursue that capacity.

The Writer's Process was very much a demonstration of that for myself. With *Subscription Marketing*, I knew what I wanted to say and I knew what needed to be said, so I wrote the book. I obviously learned in this process.

For this book, I wasn't sure in the beginning, and I ended up on an exploration that took me to the book. So that made it both, maybe more difficult, but also much more rewarding and a lot of fun. If I were to take one take-away to listeners of the call, it would be to *think about writing with a growth mindset and start writing for yourself before you're sure what it is you're writing about.*

That's how you let loose the different forces in your brain that will guide you to interesting discoveries.

Roger: Nicely put. If anyone has any questions, now would be a time.

Chris: It seems the book is for both nonfiction and writers.

Anne: I set out to write for nonfiction, but the more I read about what fiction writers were saying, what's happening in the brain, it's the same set of issues we're facing.

Chris: It seems like perhaps a nonfiction writer would get the most value.

Anne: Nonfiction is my background

[Skimming through discussion with Chris.]

Joel: Anne, first of all, thanks for a nice call. Very helpful and informative. What made you make a decision to do independent publishing versus trying to get published by Harper Collins?

Anne: My first book I wanted to do independently because 1) I had no big following, I was not an established author in my own right, so I didn't think I'd get attention. But I also wanted to do the book quickly because at the time I felt there was an un-addressed niche no one was talking about, and I had the opportunity to really be the first to be out there shouting about it. I went self-published in that case.

In the process of doing that, I discovered that when it comes to my books I'm a control freak. I actually liked having control over all phases of the project. Were I to work with a publishing house, I'd give up control, in some cases over how long it is and when it comes out. I still have to market it. I found the process was fun and interesting the first time so I decided to do it again, rather than even attempting to find a publisher for this. I thought I'd put it out myself.

Joel: I gather the thing that drove you the first time was speed.

Anne: Yes. Having done it, I thought this isn't so bad, and I am kind of a control freak. If I wanted to expand my distribution – right now, I'm only distributing on Amazon – this book, I might figure out in a few months how to expand that. But I think there are distribution consultants I can work with who would help me figure that out.

Roger: With a trade publisher, you would barely have had the first – if you submitted the proposal in January, you wouldn't have heard any interest, even if they were interested. You'd be at least a year off. The loss of control, even if you have contractual control, in the real world.

Joel, you may remember, I was promised by a fairly large publisher that I would have approval of the cover. They waited until a week before it went to the printer to share their cover. After I fainted and was revived – because it was so psychedelically off-topic, it was unbelievable – they said, “Well, if you're going to be like that we're going to have to schedule it's publication and it will be another two months.”

As an author, you really don't have the control. It was not a pleasant situation.

Roger: I love the idea that it changes the way you make a living, not the same type of living. Thank you for sharing this. So many write a book—just any book--for the

sake of saying they're a published author. I appreciate the deeper, mindset-driven, perspective you've provided.

Conclusion: Thank you, Anne Janzer, for the details and insights you've provided during this interview.

For those who want to learn more about *The Writer's Process* and *Subscription Marketing*, plus explore her blog and other visit <http://www.AnneJanzer.com>.

If you sign-up for her email newsletter, you'll also gain access to additional online resources.

This is Roger C. Parker signing off for [*Published and Profitable*](#).

You're invited to download or listen to the recording of this interview, plus our original *Subscription Marketing* interview at <http://www.spreaker.com/user/rcpcom>.

You'll also find dozens of additional interview recordings with leading authors and content marketers.