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President's Voice

By Lisa Hughey



It's been a rough few years and I think we all feel pretty isolated. Being able to exchange ideas and learn from each other helps us stay relevant and fresh. While I'm looking forward to the conference (months from now), I love the fact that we have so many different platforms to connect with other writers. I know that adding another app can feel daunting, but if you are missing live interaction consider adding the [Clubhouse](#) app to your writer toolkit.

NINC had our inaugural Clubhouse room February 15. If you are unfamiliar with Clubhouse, it's an audio-only platform (you can only sign up for, and use, Clubhouse on your phone) where you can exchange information with other NINC members in real time. It's a chance to gather at the Tiki Bar virtually.

The NINC Tiki Bar Club is meeting for one hour on Tuesday afternoons at 2 p.m. EST (11 a.m. PST). It is an opportunity to discuss the publishing industry with your NINC peers (only NINC members allowed). Come join us!

I mentioned last month that after a hiatus I've gotten back in a writing groove. I find that reading articles on craft or listening to podcasts or watching Masterclass helps me dive back into a creative state. We all get caught up in the other *stuff* that takes time away from our writing. If you are having trouble accessing your creativity, consider going into the *Nink* archives and reading, or re-reading, the articles on the workshops from our last conference. If you prefer listening, find a podcast on writing, or attend an online mini-conference. The good news is that we have limitless options available these days. Happy writing!

And, of course, what everyone has been waiting for—**Conference registration opens March 16 at 10 a.m. EST**. Check out the update from Tawdra Kandle, our Conference Programming Chair. Hope to see you at the Tiki Bar (either virtual or in person) soon!

Lisa Hughey
2022 NINC President
president@ninc.com

USA Today bestselling author [Lisa Hughey](#) writes about strong heroines who are perfectly capable of rescuing themselves and the heroes who love both their strength and their vulnerability. She pens romances of all types—suspense, paranormal, and contemporary—but at their heart, her books celebrate the power of love. She lives in Cape Ann, Massachusetts, with her fabulously supportive husband, two out of three awesome mostly grown kids, and one somewhat grumpy cat.

About NINC

NINC is committed to welcoming a diverse and inclusive membership to our organization and serving all members. No author will ever be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual beliefs if any, ability, nationality or age. It is NINC's desire and goal to make sure that every author member feels welcomed and accepted and heard.

About *Nink*

Nink's goal is to provide our readers with high-quality articles that offer critical business advice, marketing how-tos, advanced craft coaching, or strategy to continue building a career, all geared to established authors. All members should feel confident that *Nink* provides something for them. We welcome pitches and submissions from all members; [propose an article](#) or submit a [letter to the editor](#).

NINC Member Benefits

Don't forget to sign up for the [email loop](#), [critique/brainstorming group](#), [traditionally published group](#), and the members-only [Facebook group](#) if you haven't already. The [Pro Services Directory](#), member [discount page](#), and [sample letters](#) are also great resources.

Missing a newsletter? Past issues can be found [here](#).

Accessing the NINC Website

Not sure how to log in to the NINC website? Visit the login page here: <https://ninc.com/membership-overview/login-to-ninc/>

NINC has a Clubhouse Room

Join our conversations on the social audio app

By Celeste Barclay



NINC now has an official [Clubhouse](#) with a room every Tuesday at 11 a.m. PST/ 1 p.m. CST/ 2 p.m. EST. It's called the NINC Virtual Tiki Bar. How fitting!

This is a closed group strictly for NINC members only (not industry vendors). As a close-knit author community, our goal is to create a space where we can talk about authorship topics in real time. We will alternate between craft and business topics for an hour each week. These may include topics such as current trends on retail platforms, increasing diversity in your storytelling, branding, and opportunities to get advice on improving parts of your writing. Bring your expertise and your questions, so we can share insights and gain support. We intend to have one Tuesday a month dedicated to an industry expert where we can learn more about the tools at our disposal and ask questions.

Are you unfamiliar with Clubhouse? It's an audio-only platform with "clubhouses" that host rooms with various topics and purposes. There are no images or cameras involved. You can join using Apple or Android by downloading the Clubhouse phone app in your store. Setting up an account only takes a few steps, then you're ready to go.

You can apply to join our NINC Virtual Tiki Bar here: <https://bit.ly/jointikibar>

If you have any trouble or room topic suggestions, email me at preselect@ninc.com or back channel me on Clubhouse @celestebarcly.

We hope to see you there!

Celeste Barclay, a nom de plume, lives near the Southern California coast with her husband and sons. Growing up in the Midwest, Celeste enjoyed spending as much time in and on the water as she could. Now she lives near the beach. She's an avid swimmer, a hopeful future surfer, and a former rower. Before becoming a full-time author, Celeste was a social studies and English teacher. She holds degrees in International Affairs (BA), Teaching Secondary Social Science (MAT), and Political Management (MPS). She channels that knowledge into creating rich historical romances that bring the steam.



The big day is almost upon us: **registration** for the NINC 2022 Conference: Work Smarter is scheduled to open on **Wednesday, March 16 at 10 a.m. EST.**

Members and their assistants may register by going to our [website](#), logging in and completing the form on the conference page. Registrants must then pay the conference registration fee of \$495. Please remember that your registration is not complete until your fee is paid.

Assistant registration is limited to 10% of the overall attendee space, and once those spots are filled, assistant registration will be closed.

Look for an email with more details on registration later this month.

The first eight Featured Guest Speakers were recently announced by the Programming Committee. We're thrilled to share that our speaker slate this year will include

- Melanie Harlow
- Elana Johnson
- Monica Leonelle
- Janet Margot
- Nora Phoenix
- Carol Van Den Hende
- Susan May Warren
- Jasinda Wilder

The preliminary basic schedule for the conference weekend will soon be available on the website. Stay tuned for more updates and speaker announcements!

Tawdra Kandle is the USA Today bestselling author of over 100 romances that span genres from contemporary through paranormal. Her engaging and realistic characters bring readers back again and again to devour the steamy love stories she spins. She lives in central Florida with a husband, a mischievous pup, and too many cats.

Is a Short Story Strategy Right for Your 2022 Marketing Plan?

By Kelly McClymer



Are you using short stories in your author marketing strategy to help you find and keep your readers? 2022 may be the year to add the humble short story to your marketing plan.

Novelists like the room to tell a good, multi-faceted story, and that usually ends up being somewhere between 45,000 and 145,000 words. Their readers want the longer works. Adding in the time to write a short story, or two, or six may seem like too much time for too little return at first glance.

Writing short stories between novels is not new. Ray Bradbury, Marion Zimmer Bradley, George RR Martin, and countless other literary, science fiction, fantasy, and mystery authors began writing short stories for magazines and continued publishing them between novels.

However, in the last 10 years or so, independent authors have been able to prove how effective it can be to use the short story strategically to:

- bring in new readers to their series or stand-alone books
- grow their mailing list
- manage retailer algorithms which favor frequent new releases

Short stories to boost sales

The first goal of any marketing plan is to bring in new readers and grow sales. While a short story is priced less than a novel (anywhere from \$0.99 to \$2.99), it is also a less risky entry point for most readers in terms of time and money. Over time, once you have four to six short stories, they can be bundled and sold in a collection.

For [Lorraine Bartlett](#), who writes the popular Booktown and Victoria Square mystery series for Berkley, as well as her own independent mystery series, her Life in Victoria Square short stories “sell around 35 copies (total) each month and make (again on average) \$15 a month. It’s not a lot, but after five years I’m firmly in the black (after paying for covers). If only Amazon

would pay 70% like Apple and Nook, the picture would look a lot brighter. It's made me reconsider a 99-cent story. For just a few thousand words more, I can sell them for \$1.49 or \$2.99."

For [Chris Keniston](#), independent author of several popular romance series, including the Aloha series, Farraday Country, and the Honeymoon series, her short Surf's Up Flirts series was born when she realized she was not going to make the deadline for her Aloha series. She quickly wrote the first Flirt to give her readers something to buy, and continued doing so every time she found a gap in her publishing schedule. At tax time, Chris was astonished to see that her Flirts had kept her bottom line strong. When she looked at her sales data, Chris says, "I could see one story sell, and then all the others would sell."

For [Kathy Lynn Emerson](#), author of the (among many others) Face Down historical mystery series, publishing short stories, independently and in mystery magazines like *Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery*, has allowed her to broaden her readership, get paid to initially publish the story, and then independently publish the stories after rights revert back to her.

Short stories to grow and engage the mailing list

The second goal of any marketing plan is to build a reader mailing list that allows you to communicate directly with your readers without the ups and downs of social media. One of the best ways to get readers onto your list is to give them a free read. Giving away a short story is a great way to give away a free read without having to give away an entire novel.

[Trudi Jaye](#), author of several fantasy series, including Demon Hunter in Hiding, Dark Carnival, and Dragon Rising, uses short prequels to each of her fantasy series to give readers a taste of her characters and the challenges her heroines are about to face. Rather than worry about direct sales of the prequels, Jaye's strategy includes using BookFunnel to give away those prequel stories to build her list.

As a twist on her list-building strategy, Jaye recently started serializing the short stories right in the emails she sends to her list. Jaye admits, "I was curious whether my readers would care, as I was already offering them the stories for free download." To her delight, she has discovered serializing the stories inside the emails actually has increased her open rate and reader engagement.

Bartlett does strategic free giveaways to her list from time to time, often to boost an upcoming or new release, although she does not give her list all her stories for free, as she has over 20 short stories and prefers to package them into collections and sell them along with her other full-length novels.

While the data can't ever say for sure that the readers who read the short stories go on to buy the series, there is correlating evidence from Jaye, Keniston, Bartlett, and other authors that when a new short story is available, sales to the series tick up.

Short stories to boost the dreaded algorithm

Another reason for using a short story actually comes in the form of an algorithm. Discussions about Amazon's algorithms are famously shared among authors, independent and not so independent. The other retailers have their own similar methods to decide which books

to recommend to readers or not. There is a 30-day cliff, a 60-day cliff and a 90-day cliff. As such, many independent authors feel unsure about going more than three months between releases. But life happens.

When Keniston had life interfere with her every-three-months-or-bust publishing plan for her Aloha series, one reason (besides keeping her readers happy) she published her first Flirt was that dreaded algorithm that punishes authors who don't release regularly. The consummate marketing strategist, Chris designed her very short (under 5,000 words) stories to introduce the characters in the Aloha series in an intriguing way, while also giving the story couple (not one of the heroes of her Aloha series novels) a happily-for-now ending. Chris calls them "meet cutes" and credits them with keeping her bottom line secure when she had to publish less often than she wanted.

Should you add a short story strategy to your 2022?

The short story strategy is working well for many authors. It works best for authors who aren't publishing a novel every two to three months, or who are going to miss a deadline due to life or production interference. For marketing purposes, you want to:

- Intrigue readers about the first novel in your series in some way—often a setting (as Keniston does with her Flirts by having them set at a bar frequented by the novel characters), and sometimes with the characters (as Jaye does by writing a prequel that catches the reader up in the conflict her heroine will face).
- Always have an invitation to the first in the series right after the story ends.
- Give readers a chance to see your entire book list, either on your website or in clickable format.

How much time does it take?

For a traditionally published author, you usually must get permission from your publisher to publish a short story in your series. This means you will need more lead time to put a short story strategy in place than an independent author who controls her intellectual property rights.

Short stories need to be edited, and they need good covers, so they still require some lead time to plan and place into the schedule. How much will depend on you and your reader's needs.

Keniston takes about a week to write her short (5,000 words) stories, while Jaye (15,000 words) and Bartlett (2,000–9,000) take more like two to three weeks or longer to write theirs.

Just in case you are one of those novelists who cannot write short, you can follow the example of [Shirley Hailstock](#), bestselling author of romantic suspense. She has used this strategy in a group with two other authors to create the Blythe Cove mystery series of collected short stories. Shirley freely admits she does not know how to write short. Her shortest short story tends to be 20,000 words. However, she finds the shorts easier to write quickly, as there are no complicated subplots to weave in and around.

If you're feeling like a short story strategy may be a fit for you in 2022 Keniston has one final piece of advice to anyone wanting to emulate her: keep it short and tie it in to a main character in your series. You want to leave your reader looking for your novel-length books

after they finished a short story and are looking for something else, whether they buy the short story, receive it for free in order to get on your mailing list, or are reading it serialized inside your mailing list.

Kelly McClymer is a USA Today bestselling author of historical romance, mystery, and YA fantasy. She dreams of a day when someone invents an easy way to get our books into the right readers' hands. Until then, she talks to smart authors, smart marketers, and publishing industry thought leaders to find out current best practices to catch the attention of the reader.

Selecting a Plot Structure that Works for You

By Troy Lambert



Plot structures are not new. Everything from Greek tragedies to Shakespearean plays have been written in three- or four-act structures and their timing measured in beats. There are a ton of books and videos on the topic. Vonnegut shared his now famous “Shape of Stories” lecture. Bradbury, Harlan, Orson Scott Card, Kevin J. Anderson, and many others willingly share their own favorites and advice.

Think of a few books that may come to mind immediately: *Save the Cat* by Blake Snyder and *Save the Cat Writes a Novel* by Jessica Brody, *Million Dollar Outlines* by Dave Farland, *Story Engineering* by Larry Brooks, and seemingly countless others. Every one of them shares a plot structure formula designed to help with story pacing, finding and fixing plot holes (or avoiding them in the first place), and meeting reader expectations.

Of all the plot structures out there, each with a corresponding book and following, how do you find and choose the one that works best for your stories? Here are some things to consider.

What are plot structures?

First, we should look at the basics. What is a plot structure? In its simplest form, it’s a road map for a story. Every story must have a few key things: a beginning, middle, and end. To be compelling, there must be interesting people in an interesting place doing interesting things. Plot structure often goes by different names like plot templates or story structures.

In other words, character, setting, and plot. Plot is made up of conflict: usually a main one that defines the overall theme of the book and several smaller ones. Done well, each conflict will raise the stakes for the characters and entice the reader to want to know how things turn out in the end.

Plot structures simply outline the order and the timing of these events. Most have been developed over time through the study of the most memorable stories. We’ve given those parts of stories names like “the inciting incident,” “the midpoint,” and “the climax.”

Sometimes these formulas feel a bit more like math than writing, and there are plenty of writers out there who don't refer to them at all. They are "pantsers" or "discovery writers" who write with no outline. Most have an innate sense of story though and arguably write to a plot or story structure they hold in their heads.

Luckily, plot structures at their core are pretty simple, and they all have some things in common.

What do all plot structures have in common?

While you will encounter those who believe that whatever plot structure they adhere to is "the best" and should be used by all writers, those of us who have studied plot understand that most story structures have several similar elements, and the rest comes down to what works best for each individual writer.

When you break these plot templates down to their base elements, they all share:

- An initial hook of some sort that gets the reader interested.
- An inciting incident, one that really kicks off the plot, adventure, or journey.
- One or more try / fail incidents where the main character thinks they have the solution to the overall conflict in the book, but they fail. Usually, they learn something from these failures.
- A dark night of the soul, which is the point where the main character is at their lowest, and the primary conflict seems impossible to solve.
- A climax or resolution where the primary conflict of the story is solved or resolved, at least for now.
- Sometimes a denouement, or the aftermath beyond the climax.

The dark night of the soul usually happens at around the middle of the story and can be called the midpoint as well. Stories are often divided into three or four acts, although a four-act structure is really just a three-act structure with act two split down the middle.

And that's about it. Certainly, there are some finer points in each structure, but the essential pattern, much like Vonnegut states, is simple: It's an ordinary day, something goes wrong, things get worse for a while until they are the worst they can get, something else happens, they get better. The end.

So why are there so many plot structures and books about them?

What's the difference between some common plot structures?

Most differences in plot structures and templates really come down to a few simple things:

- How detailed the plot structure is. Many, including *Save the Cat*, have been divided into as many as 40 different scenes or plot points.
- The arrangement of those events into either three or four acts. Although a small difference, for some writers it is key to their storytelling.
- The genre of the story being written. A common structure, the Hero's Journey, is more suited for fantasy type stories with plot points like "approaching the innermost cave" and "seizing the sword." While they can be adapted (like my own *Sleuth's Journey*, a

version of the Hero's Journey adapted for mysteries) to other genres, they lend themselves more easily toward a certain type of story.

- An author's personal writing style and way of thinking. For example, *Take off Your Pants* is a plot structure (and book) designed for discovery writers that has very minimal structure and a looser format than many other templates.

So now that we know many of these plot structures are the same, and we know why they might be different, how do you choose the right one for you?

What are three steps to figure out what plot structure is right for me?

There is no one best plot structure for every story, and inevitably most writers say, "I start with this plot template, and then..." There's always an "and then" that personalizes a plot structure to the author's style, thinking, and the story itself.

That means deciding on the right plot structure for you is even easier, because almost certainly no single one will be a perfect fit. You will add your own "and then" to any plot structure you choose. So when you are looking at different books and structures, ask yourself these three key questions.

1. How detailed is too detailed for me?

Some plot structures are very detailed, and many writers feel it hampers their creativity. To figure out if a structure is too detailed for you, take the "Big Idea" of your book and start dividing it into parts: the three acts first, then chapters and scenes. When you get to the point where you (or your muse) feel uncomfortable, stop.

Many writers find that around 12-20 plot points or scenes are enough. Those outline points serve as writing prompts as you create your story, and therefore can be very helpful at keeping you on track. But too much outline leaves your muse little room to roam, and anything that makes you want to stop writing or not write at all is no solution.

2. What genre do you write?

This may sound like an obvious question, but each genre has its own tropes and even jargon. A plot structure might be fabulous, but you can't use something that doesn't resonate with you. There are exceptions of course. I've used the Romancing the Beat plot structure for a thriller, but only after changing some of the plot points significantly.

It's a lot of work to adapt a template. Instead, choose a plot structure that is proven to work well in your genre. To find out what those are, talk to your peers and find out what they use. You'll often find reviews of various books and plot structures through a simple Google search for "plot structure for [insert your genre here]."

3. Which plot structure resonates with me?

This one is a bit tougher to answer because it is so subjective. For instance, if you have been to nearly any large writer's conference, you will meet people who swear by one or more writing instructor's methods. You're going to have to do some research, read, or watch videos to see

what plot structure style makes you the most comfortable while still working with your stories and your genre. Fortunately, there is a lot of information out there. From romance to thrillers, from cozy mysteries to military sci-fi, there's likely a plot structure someone has created (or adapted) specifically for this kind of fiction.

You'll find your answer when something just feels right. The good news is that even as you evolve as a writer, the plot structure you use might as well. This isn't a permanent decision. You can change your mind whenever you want.

Finally

Plot structure is as subjective as musical taste. One person's idea of something good might be something you can't tolerate. But all plot structures have some common elements that most often happen in a similar order. The differences are often subjective, and almost any template can be modified to meet your needs.

So, if you're looking for a definitive answer, I'm going to sound like an IT guy answering any question on Friday at 4 o'clock: it depends. But if you start with a clear understanding of what plot structure is, and ask yourself a few key questions, you're sure to find your solution.

Troy Lambert is an author, editor, freelance writer, and the education lead for Plottr. He's written over two dozen novels, loads of short stories and novellas, and spoken at writers' conferences all around the country. He lives, works, and plays in Boise, Idaho, with his wife and two very talented dogs who are often asked to assist with writing blog posts and book blurbs.

Productivity: Part Three

Dealing with lofty goals and burnout

By Michele Dunaway



Of the 99 NINC members responding to the productivity survey in 2021, 77.9% said they set writing goals. However, according to [the University of Scranton](#), 92% of people fail to reach their goals. Yet, as writers with careers and livelihoods depending on our productivity and book sales, achieving our income and productivity goals matters.

What can we do when our goals get too lofty, besides setting smaller goals? How can writers avoid stress and burnout, if that's even possible?

Strategy One: Set SMART goals

"I think every writer has to hit a wall at some point and realize that they can't keep up an insane schedule," [Jordan Summers](#) said. "You also have to ask yourself, "What am I trying to accomplish?"

To avoid that wall, writers have to know specifically what they want. At the conference I heard many goals of, "I want to hit six figures with my writing."

Yet, in its Nov. 15 "[State of Indie Authorship in 2021](#)," Written Word Media (WWM) reported that 45% of indie authors are making between \$0-99 per month, 30% earn more than \$1,000 per month, and fewer than 10% made more than \$10,000 per month. WWM also reported that 78% of authors do their own marketing to build their book income, and 55% of indie authors surveyed have a day job unrelated to writing, or someone in their household does. Even if not 100% indie, authors are wearing many hats: creativity, marketing manager, schedule keeper, and team supervisor.

One way to manage running a creative business and avoid burnout is to set SMART goals. St. Louis University's Robert Rubin has said, "SMART goals have come to mean different things, but in a nutshell they are:

- Specific (simple, sensible, significant).
- Measurable (meaningful, motivating).
- Achievable (agreed, attainable).
- Relevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
- Time bound (time-based, time limited, time / cost limited, timely, time-sensitive)."

Thus, if you made \$5,000 a month with KDP for your last release, a SMART goal could be "In the first two months of release for XXX, I want to have \$10,000 in KDP sales." Another SMART goal could be "I want to write four 60,000-word novels in 2022."

One way to set yourself up for success is by being realistic with deadlines or making sure the goal is achievable.

"If I have trouble hitting a goal, it's obviously too ambitious and I scale it down. When I do stretch goals, I set a time limit on them, usually two weeks, and I evaluate at the end whether or not they are working for me," [V.J. Chambers](#) said.

"I think there's a lot of 'just write more' advice floating out there that can lead to burnout. We can't set goals based on our best days, or NaNo every month, etc.," [Diana Peterfreund](#) said.

(More about SMART goals can be found [here](#) and in the "Channeling Your Inner Superhero Through Goal Setting and Introspection" article in the January 2019 issue of *Nink*.)

Strategy Two: Work with accountability partners

An Association for Training and Development study showed that making a conscious decision raises your chances of success 10-25%, and having a clear plan increases your chances to 50%. But when you commit that goal to someone else, that success goes up to 65%. It jumps to 95% if you get together to discuss your progress.

[Tanya Agler](#) works with two accountability partners. "There are times I have to give myself a little grace and realize Monday is the start of the new week," Agler said. "My friends want a career out of writing so they pace themselves. Having a few writers I can talk to is really important. One of my friends even told me she saw signs of burnout with me, and we talked about my needing a two-week break. Sometimes talking to those closest around you is important."

[Maryann Jordan](#) relies on a small group of "true friends" who are all authors and their weekly video chat. "We understand the need for breaks. I read during down time so I can recharge my 'batteries' and avoid burnout."

More on using accountability partners can be found [here](#).

Strategy Three: Build time off into your work schedule

[The Hartford](#) reported that 61% of American workers are experiencing burnout at work. Writers are no different. Another way to avoid this is by taking time off. Many writers in the productivity survey said they'd take at least a weekend off between projects while others said they took a week or two.

This means actually focusing on other important things besides the job. Be offline. Be present on the vacation. That means no writing. Period.

[Susan Kiernan-Lewis](#) takes two weeks off after writing each of the five, 85,000-word books she does a year. “I try to get out of town for at least a few days to clear the cobwebs. I also try not to go near my computer, so knitting or painting is a palate cleanser for me,” Kiernan-Lewis said.

If you can’t fathom that, then perhaps try to plot out your year as you would your books.

[Cat Johnson](#) plans the releases for the year and plots out the daily word count necessary to achieve those goals. “I build in time for conventions, travel, family time, sick days, writer’s block, edits, marketing and promotion, all the other stuff that needs doing,” Johnson said.

Strategy Three: Refill the well

One common thread in the productivity survey was how writers stressed the importance of refilling the well. Unlike a vacation, that can be done daily.

1. *Separate your brain functions.* Authors must move between their creative right brain and their business-acumen left brain. “I’m making a point of working purely on creating in the morning, marketing and related in the afternoon, and playing with a new project and writing just for fun in the evening,” [MJ Frederick](#) said.
2. *Alternate your days.* “I alternate writing days and admin days to keep each activity ‘fresh,’” [Mindy Klasky](#) said. “I take weekends and holidays, including vacation days, which are planned for and entirely work-free.”
3. *Mix up your projects.* “To avoid burnout, I mix up projects by genre, length, writing vs. audio... and I try to focus first on the fun,” [M.L. Buchman](#) said.
4. *Exercise daily.* [The Mayo Clinic](#) says, “Physical activity stimulates various brain chemicals that may leave you feeling happier, more relaxed and less anxious.”
5. *Do something writing adjacent.* “If the words aren’t there, and you’ve really tried, do something else,” [Caroline Linden](#) said. “Maybe spend some time with your research books or update your website or set up the next newsletter, or maybe something completely not writing but still creative like gardening or walking the dog in a new park. Give your brain a chance to relax and often the next day or week or month is 1,000% easier in writing.”
6. *Do something fun.* [Sylvie Kurtz](#) takes a walk or knits or reads. “As for burnout,” Kurtz said, “I’ve been there, done that. I now limit my writing time. I try not to focus on the outcome during the practice. I try to enjoy the process.”

Strategy Four: Be yourself

Just as your books are unique, so are you and your career. Creativity coach and author [Denise Agnew](#) provided some final thoughts on managing lofty goals and burnout.

“I think the problem is in having goals that mimic what other people are doing and don’t make us happy,” Agnew said. “If a writer can determine what genuinely makes them happy, rather than imagining that if they do it like someone else they’ll be fulfilled, that’s the ticket.”

Final note: As to strategies members use to help them, members mentioned [Sarra Cannon's HB90](#), [the Chunky Method](#), [the Pomodoro Technique](#), and [Becca Syme's "Question the Premise."](#)

[Michele Dunaway](#) writes contemporary romance, teaches full-time high school English and journalism, and meets herself coming and going.

Social Media Mistakes

By Kristan Higgins



Marketing via social media can be an author’s full-time, unpaid job. Our publishers expect that we’ll do it well, consistently, in our author voice, making readers feel such a bond with us that of *course* they’ll buy our books, preferably by preorder or within the first week it’s out. A good portion of any marketing plan is based on the author doing more and more, and it can be exhausting.

To have a consistent, popular online presence takes a keen sense of what resonates with readers. We’re constantly promoting our books, but also constantly fighting to be seen in the vast ocean of online content. We know the challenges—engaging posts, new content, timing, staying on brand, being relevant, expressing our opinions intelligently, speaking out when we feel we should, standing up for our beliefs as humans at the risk of alienating those who don’t share those beliefs. All this while selling books.

This is not the job we signed up for. We want to write books, not market them. The reality, however, is that our participation in marketing our books consistently and well is part of our job.

We all know this. So what are the mistakes that some of us make?

Ignore your pages

If you have a Facebook page, a Twitter account, TikTok, Instagram, Pinterest, whatever the next new platform will be—keep it active, or delete it. A neglected account is worse than no account. It’s discouraging to readers when they reach out to you via social media and you never answer. One of my publicists said, “If you can’t do it well, don’t do it at all.” A rule of thumb is to stick to what’s comfortable for you, and what seems to pay off. Many of us link our various platforms when possible, so that, for example, Facebook posts show up on Instagram, too.

Expect social media to sell books

The time we invest in promoting our books, the number of followers we have, does not necessarily mean we'll hit a bestseller list. Readers follow you for entertainment. You hope that this will also encourage them to buy your book, but it doesn't always work like that. I know an author with more than 100,000 followers on Facebook, and when her book failed to hit the *New York Times* bestseller list, she was furious. All that time, all that humor, all that energy sunk into her page, and for what?

Just because you have one million followers doesn't mean each one of them will buy your book—ever. Our readers owe us nothing.

Remember that while spending your time creating content. Balance the time and effort put into social media posts, videos, interviews, etc.

Force yourself to be on platforms that make you anxious or unhappy

Most of us will never be TikTok stars or Instagram influencers. If being in front of the camera gives you hives, don't do it (or save the anxiety for *Good Morning America*, when it would really count). Your job is to write books. Some of the most popular authors in fiction do not have much of an online presence. If you have a traditional publisher, their reach is much greater than yours, and not because of social media but rather their sales teams, marketing and advertising departments, their connections. Even so, only word of mouth—readers—make you a bestselling author. Not your clever Instagram story.

Spend *all* your time on social media

Social media is the black hole of the internet. Whether you're trying to find something to post or reading other people's comments, that's time you don't get back. Time that you didn't use writing your book. Learn to limit the amount of time you spend on social media so you can get your job done. If you spend hours a day on social media, ask yourself if A) it makes you feel better, and B) helps you get your work done.

Throw yourself down the rabbit hole

There are some things we need or want to research, read and look at, and then there's procrastination. Be aware of the difference.

Nag

We all know the authors whose message is simply "Buy my book, buy my book, buy my backlist, buy my book." Don't be that author. Social media is just that—social.

Most of my posts announcing a new book is out have a lower engagement rate, especially if I post a link. Even a link in the comment section gets noticed by the mysterious algorithms and keeps exposure low. This is deliberate. These platforms want us to pay for exposure. I can ask friends and readers to share the post, but even so, it's not as popular as the cartoon about the pleasure of cleaning out the lint filter on my dryer. That one was shared 419 times. One of my books on sale for \$1.99? Seven comments, four shares.

That's discouraging, but also an important reminder that our followers are there to be entertained, to engage with us, and not necessarily to buy books on the day we want them to.

Be impersonal

If you *only* post cartoons of cleaning the lint filter, or links to your latest book, or news of a price drop, there's a certain *meh* quality to your engagement. One author I follow has *hundreds of thousands* of followers because she posts awesome cartoons. I looked her up on Amazon and discovered she doesn't sell a lot of books.

Contrast that with Kennedy Ryan, who recently blew up the internet by standing under a giant ad for her book in Times Square. People love Kennedy. She's a genuine, kind, sparkling person. She invited us to share her joy, and she's authentic. Did it sell books? I don't know. But it certainly gave us the warm fuzzies to see this great moment in her career, and the reader engagement was enormous.

Ignore copyright laws

Speaking of those little cartoons... Be aware of the law on copyright infringement by posting work that's not yours. There's fair use, and there's infringement. Do you know the difference? Me neither, and the answer depends on which lawyers you ask. Regardless, we should all be aware that if we profit off of someone else's work, we can easily be sued by the original artist. Tread carefully.

Self praise

NO: *I go out of my way to help others because I believe in helping others.*

Sanctimony is generally unpleasant, because it implies a moral superiority. No one likes that. But maybe you really do believe that. Give us an example instead. Did you shovel your elderly neighbor's driveway?

YES: *Me, shoveling the neighbor's walk and being a saint. Took me 10 minutes, and I didn't have to watch Mr. Smithers die of a heart attack. Don't forget to check on your elders in this dreadful weather, folks!*

This way, you show them a little of yourself; you acknowledge that you're doing a good deed with humor; and you make a public service announcement. Humility and grace go a long way. Be the person who lifts up others, rather than turns the attention back to themselves.

Brag/humble brag

Bragging is tacky. *Wow! I sold 10,000,000 books this week! And they told me it couldn't be done. Guess I showed them!*

There's nothing wrong with singing out your accomplishments, but try to do it with gratitude and a personal touch. *Thank you, readers, for putting my book on the USA TODAY list! I'm so happy and grateful! My dog and I are dancing around the apartment!*

Better, right?

There is nothing wrong with being proud of yourself. Just be aware that if you post pictures of the Maserati you bought yourself, you'll alienate some readers who will think (and say), "I can barely afford groceries this month." Some things are meant just for your friends, not your readership.

Then there's humble bragging—when you try to deflect from your bragging by qualifying it in some way. *Just embarrassed myself by not knowing I was drinking Dom Perignon on Emirates Airlines. Flying first class is wasted on me. #winedummy*

Again, you don't have to post everything. Consider the fact that most people will never fly first class and won't relate to your oopsy.

Lie

This one seems obvious, but—don't lie. If you say you sold 30,000 copies of your book in a single day in Korea, people can check that. The authors who post about their ginormous deals, the fact that they put their six kids through college on this week's sales, or that Emma Stone may play the lead in your adaptation, it's hard to believe. Don't make people suspect you of lying by stretching the truth or exaggerating your success.

Using social media when you really need a therapist

I refer to vaguebooking and twining—posting something sad or angry without being specific in order to provoke a response of sympathy and caring.

I hate when people choose to be cruel.

You think someone is your friend, and then you find there's a knife sticking out of your back.

It's possible you may need to instead call a dedicated hotline or see a therapist. Call 911 if you think you're a danger to yourself or others. If it's not quite *that* bad, you might just need your friends. Call them. Email them. Ask them out for a drink. But this kind of attention-seeking behavior on a public forum is not professional.

On the other hand, it's absolutely okay to engage people in a conversation about a topic or tell them about something sad in your life.

Instead of "*Crying buckets right now,*" try "*So hard to have to say goodbye to my dear doggy today. He gave us 11 years of happiness.*"

However, maybe, like so many of us, you suffer from some kind of mental health issue. If you want to share that, go right ahead. Author Alyssa Day has been very open about sharing her struggles with depression, and in doing so she invites a compassionate conversation about the subject. Thousands of readers have related to her posts, which are honest and kind and humanizing.

Be unkind

The past few years have made us all a little meaner. It's tough in a polarized nation. Maybe you feel everyone who voted differently from you is...(insert negative description here). Maybe you really hated Famous Author's last book.

It's probably not a good idea to say that (though, full disclosure, I have questioned people's judgment on matters related to science). Recognize that in doing so, you will alienate someone.

Maybe you don't care at this point. But you might also ask yourself, "Does my voice need to be added to this conversation, or am I just venting?" Ask, "Is there a kinder way of making my point?" The internet is forever. That post could come back to haunt you.

Thinking your personal page is separate from your author page

It's not. Your editor knows your real name. Most of your writer friends do, too. Readers who try hard enough will figure it out. It may well be out there publicly.

Put your foot in it

If you make a mistake on social media, take responsibility for it. Own it. We all stumble. We all need to learn more and try harder to be better. It's the human condition.

A couple of years ago, I posted something that someone pointed out was appropriated from some Native American cultures. I apologized. I didn't realize my mistake, having never thought too deeply about where the term came from (white privilege on full display). But when we know better, we do better.

And finally...

In closing, remember that people follow you because it's easy. They think you're entertaining. That's a gift. Use it wisely. Entertain. Connect. Be genuine. Then get off the internet and write your books.

Kristan Higgins is the New York Times, USA TODAY and international bestselling author of 21 novels. Her books have sold millions of copies worldwide and have been translated into dozens of languages. She is the mother of two lovely grown children, the wife of a heroic firefighter and the owner of a very sweet dog.

Smart Marketing for Savvy Authors

By Tawdra Kandle



Last summer, the Nink team surveyed the membership about possible topics for a new regular column in the newsletter. The overwhelming response was that our readers want to hear more about ... marketing! So for the next twelve months, we'll do a deep dive into an examination of how we can most efficiently and effectively raise the visibility of our books. Each quarter, we'll focus on a different subtopic of marketing. We're kicking off the year by examining marketing where you are, discussing how to maximize ideas on a limited budget (January), how and when to make a push for leveling up (February), and marketing time optimization (March).

When it comes to general book marketing, the top two concerns noted most often by authors are how much money should we be spending on promotion and how much time should we be committing to the pursuit of increased visibility. Even those of us who have an unlimited budget to toss at advertising, paid newsletter promo, and special ad placement can struggle with determining how many hours we should dedicate to marketing and PR, particularly when that side of the job might threaten to infringe on our writing time.

Ask a room full of authors how they organize their promotion and marketing time, and you'll probably wind up with dozens of answers. Some will advise that writing should always be done first thing in the morning, before any other work-related chores, while others might suggest that scheduling promo—especially tasks like social media posts, blog publishing or newsletters—is the way to go. While there's no one right answer, finding the necessary balance is possible—with a little bit of strategic attention paid to making the most of your marketing time.

[Nora Phoenix](#), the bestselling author of steamy gay romance, spends about twelve hours a week on marketing, in addition to the three hours that her personal assistant works to promote her books. Her main focus during that time is on social media, paying particular attention to Facebook and Instagram, as well as on her weekly newsletter to readers.

“I spend an hour or two every Sunday evening to plan the marketing for the entire week,” Phoenix says. “I make a schedule of what I want to post on each social medium per day, write the texts for those posts, find pictures, and collect all the links. That all goes into a Google Doc so that the rest of the week, we (my personal assistant and I) can just copy / paste from there.”

Phoenix uses her promo time not only to push her new and upcoming releases; she also chooses to market her older books and her audio offerings.

“I try to highlight one backlist book and one backlist audiobook each week, usually on Thursdays,” she explains before adding a little bonus advice for backlist boosting. “But my biggest push to boost my backlist comes from writing books with storylines or characters that connect to backlist books. That does take some deliberate planning and plotting, but it’s very much worth it.”

It’s not unusual for authors to shift their promotional priorities over the years as income and success open doors to hire help or as they discover more effective ways to spend their working hours. The strategies we employ earlier in our careers have to evolve to meet our changing needs.

Notes [Maryann Jordan](#), *USA Today* bestselling author of hot military romance, “My marketing has changed greatly over the past eight years that I’ve been publishing. I used to spend almost five hours per week (spread out so that I wouldn’t end up in Facebook jail) posting teasers to different reader groups. I would also contact as many blogs as possible to get the word out about a book. Those days are gone.”

She adds, “I am now in a position to hire others to do the bulk of my marketing for me, but I still spend about ten hours per week on marketing (averaging one hour per weekday and then a few hours each on Saturday and Sunday).”

“My marketing for Facebook includes posting in my very active reader group, boosting posts for my pre-order books from my author page, and Facebook ads,” Jordan continues. “Obviously, the big difference is that I now pay for marketing (ads) whereas it used to be that it was mostly just my time. I have Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok and have no doubt I’ll jump on the next thing that comes along, but the bulk of my time and effort is with Facebook since that seems to be where my demographic of readers finds out about my books and interacts with me. My website is worth the money spent on it, and my newsletter is my lifeline to readers in case Facebook decides to pull the plug on what we are using it for. I used to use SocialPilot (there are many other tools out there like this) to set up and schedule posts that would go out to Facebook and the other social media accounts. Anything to save time!”

Whether you love the marketing side of authorship as I do—it’s like a game!—or you’re frustrated by the constantly shifting landscape of what works and what doesn’t, it’s easy to let all of the non-writing work overwhelm your schedule. How much time should you give to setting up a promo plan, plotting and designing posts, writing newsletters, and scheduling author cross-promo? When is it too much, or conversely, not enough? How do we find balance between creating and promoting?

“Every week day, I schedule my social media posts first thing in the morning (if possible), and the rest of the day, I only briefly check in between writing sprints until I’ve hit my word goals,” Phoenix shares. “After that, I spend some time catching up and responding. I also create

a release bible for each new release where I prepare promo texts, links, excerpts, etc., ahead of time so that in release week, I can copy/paste. My newsletter goes out every Saturday morning, and that takes about forty-five minutes to create every Friday. So I'd say my strategy is to prepare ahead so it doesn't interrupt my writing the rest of the week. I barely run ads, so checking the few Amazon ads that I run is maybe fifteen to twenty minutes every Monday morning."

"For an author who feels overwhelmed, I would decide when you write the best (morning, evening, etc.) and put marketing at another time," Jordan says. "Writing the next book is key to keeping your name out there for readers! My readers know another book is around the corner and that is my best marketing tool. We all want our backlist to keep moving, but it is the next book coming out that keeps us relevant. So, for me, I have little time for marketing because I am almost always writing (I release ten full-length novels a year, although I hope to slow down after this year).

"I also set daily word count goals (I look at my calendar and adjust the writing based on what else is going on that day) and try to reach that first before I move into marketing."

"Set boundaries for yourself, maybe literally in the form of timers and social media blockers if necessary," suggests Phoenix. "I think 25% or so of your time should be dedicated to marketing, so calculate how many hours that is for you and allocate that time to the most effective marketing medium for you."

When is the best time of day to focus on the nitty-gritty of PR and promo? It's a matter of choice, depending on each of our own lifestyles and body clocks. Some of us are night owls, and others are early birds; that can affect when we do our best writing, and thus when we should plan to tackle other aspects of our business life.

"For me, marketing is best in the evening because I am fresher in the mornings for writing," says Jordan. "But this would be individualized for each author. In the later afternoon or evenings, I will sit with my laptop while watching TV with my husband. I can make teasers and videos, check the graphics coming in from others, post to Facebook, check my ads, share in groups."

"Writing should almost always be your priority, so save your most productive times (for example, the mornings if you're a morning person like me) for that," advises Phoenix. "Marketing requires fewer brain cells and can be done when you're a little less bright and shiny!"

Tawdra Kandle is the USA Today bestselling author of over 100 romances that span genres from contemporary through paranormal. Her engaging and realistic characters bring readers back again and again to devour the steamy love stories she spins. She lives in central Florida with a husband, a mischievous pup, and too many cats.

The Mad Scribbler

The Spirit of the Thing

By Laura Resnick



“A colorful and creative future lies in welcoming and supporting authors from all backgrounds—and then letting them use their voices to tell whatever kinds of stories they want.”

—Kat Rosenfeld, journalist & novelist, 2019

A few years before he died, my dad gave me a copy of a book he loved, *Old Jews Telling Jokes* by Sam Hoffman and Eric Spiegelman. Pop was disappointed not to have known about it before publication, since he’d have liked to be one of the old Jews included in it.

I later learned the book is based on a [web series](#) of videos. The project began with Sam Hoffman filming his dad and some of his dad’s friends and cousins telling jokes and funny stories they knew from their families and communities.

“The rules would be simple,” Hoffman later [wrote](#), describing the origins of this project. “Every joke teller had to be at least sixty years old and ‘Jewish.’ The age thing I would be strict about, the Jewish thing would be in spirit.”

What began as a whimsical homemade project has since expanded to an online library of more than 500 filmed jokes, a book, and an audiobook. Mainstream media and numerous blogs have featured *Old Jews Telling Jokes*, and the creators have traveled to other cities and states to film more contributors.

Being a member of a subculture can—and usually does—richly inform the stories one tells about that subculture, just as the ordinary people telling stories in Hoffman’s videos convey Jewish-American culture and experience in such an intimate and familiar way.

But not being a member of a subculture isn’t a barrier to writing about it, because you can learn about it, appreciate it, research it, and/or be very close to it. As Hoffman noted in his rules, storytellers in his project could be Jewish “in spirit.”

That's the perspective from which I view topics of #OwnVoices, diversity, inclusion, and identity in our industry.

In a March 2021 *Nink* article ("Walk a Mile in My Voice: #OwnVoices Explained"), NINC DEI committee member Patricia Burroughs explained that the #OwnVoices hashtag was developed to give marginalized authors "a presence from which to be heard, empowered, and to find each other and support each other." An #OwnVoices book is one in which the author shares a marginalized identity with the protagonist.

[We Need Diverse Books](#), a grassroots non-profit organization dedicated to diversity in children's publishing, has defined *marginalized* as including (but not limited to) people who are: LGBTQIA, Native, people of color, gender diverse, people with disabilities, and members of ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities.

A couple of articles on the blog of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA) discuss problematic and stereotypical [portrayals](#) of another marginalized group, neurodiverse people, as well as [describing](#) the practical hurdles that neurodiverse people face in dealing with traditional publishing practices.

"When publishers give ND people a chance to be seen, it also validates those least seen within society," author Matthew Broberg-Moffitt concluded at the end of the second blog. "It allows ND readers and writers to pick up a book and see a bit of themselves reflected back at them, to know that they are valued, to know that someone out there in the human ecology is waiting for them to share their story and light."

In other words, representation matters—to everyone.

In her *Nink* article, Burroughs specified that #OwnVoices doesn't exist to pressure or police anyone. Marginalized authors shouldn't be "required" or "expected" to write about marginalized characters, nor do they have any obligation to "out" themselves if they write books about protagonists whose marginalized identity they share. Every writer is entitled to decide on their own level of personal privacy or exposure. You also don't have to belong to a marginalized group to write about a character who does.

"Writers who aren't part of a marginalized community may have strong empathy for the marginalized character they're writing about," Burroughs wrote. "They may do intense research, read firsthand accounts. Such an author may be the parent to a child who is marginalized like their protagonist. They may have witnessed the pain, the frustrations, the celebrations. They may have fought alongside their child."

That's not an #OwnVoices book, but it can still be an excellent one.

However, since its origin, the uplifting goal of #OwnVoices has been interpreted and appropriated in various ways, some of them well outside any original intention for the hashtag. As a result, some of its early supporters, such as We Need Diverse Books, have abandoned the phrase—while reaffirming support for marginalized authors.

To give one example of where original intention and actual usage started diverging, some writers, agents, and editors in Young Adult fiction developed a position that marginalized characters should *only* be portrayed by #OwnVoices authors.

In a 2019 [article](#), culture writer Kat Rosenfeld quoted YA social media activist and sensitivity reader Kosovo Jackson: “Stories about the civil rights movement should be written by Black people. Stories of suffrage should be written by women. Ergo, stories about boys during horrific and life-changing times, like the AIDS epidemic, should be written by gay men. Why is this so hard to get?”

Quite a few writers, agents, and editors have shared that opinion. Rosenfeld wrote that the increasingly common and intense focus in YA on “authenticity,” on writers’ shared identity with their protagonists, had “become the source of awkward and inappropriate conversations between young writers and their editors and agents. ‘I had an agent actually ask whether I had a history of mental illness,’ says [a] YA author, who recently sold her debut novel to one of the big-five traditional publishers. With #OwnVoices extending to everything from medical conditions to sexual orientations, authors describe feeling compelled to either reveal private information in order to assert their right to tell a given story, or abandon the material entirely.”

And there have indeed been writers pressured to abandon their material, such as Amelie Wen Zhao, who pulled her first novel from publication in the wake of accusations that it mishandled racial issues. Another writer told Rosenfeld that he was leaving YA because of pressure he felt “to write a specific kind of diversity to appeal to the checklist of white gatekeepers.” The article quotes an aspiring author and member of the LGBTQ+ community: “According to the principles espoused by this movement, to have my story be appreciated, I’ll need to make myself unsafe. I’d have to sell myself to sell a book.”

“The impact of this movement on the landscape of YA,” Rosenfeld wrote, “has turned increasingly toxic, leading to callouts, controversy, and cancelled books—often for the underrepresented authors it was supposed to help.”

In fact, Kosovo Jackson, quoted above, wound up pulling his first novel, *A Place For Wolves*, from the publishing schedule after it became the target of the sort of criticism he had championed against other people’s novels. Jackson was Black and gay, like his protagonist, but since he had not lived through the same Balkan war his protagonist was living through, the book was attacked pre-publication for being insufficiently #OwnVoices.

“On the fantasy front,” Black YA novelist Sarah Raughley wrote last year in [Quill & Quire](#), “publishers seeking work from writers of African backgrounds only wanted to see Afrocentric fantasy novels that perfectly encapsulated the writer’s African culture, which they must be 100% connected with and knowledgeable about. The writing had to possess what white publishers viewed as authentic Blackness.”

She asserted that the original intent of #OwnVoices was hijacked “to produce corporate identities the publishing industry expected authors to inhabit.” Meanwhile, she wrote, “certain white, cishet [cisgender and heterosexual], able-bodied authors misused and abused #OwnVoices because they believed it would help their publishing chances to pretend to be marginalized.” Raughley concluded, “It’s a mess.”

And so We Need Diverse Books officially [announced](#) a few months ago: “WNDB will no longer use the term #OwnVoices to refer to children’s literature or its authors and we have

removed mentions of #OwnVoices from previously published blog posts... The hashtag was never intended to be used in a broader capacity, but it has since expanded in its use to become a 'catch all' marketing term by the publishing industry. Using #OwnVoices in this capacity raises issues due to the vagueness of the term, which has then been used to place diverse creators in uncomfortable and potentially unsafe situations."

This is not to say that *no one* uses #OwnVoices anymore, but this organization which embraced and promoted the phrase to encourage diversity and positive change in publishing now thinks the spirit of the thing has been so subverted that it's time to stop using it.

The incident that drew my attention to the subject of #OwnVoices shows just how far off course the phrase has been dragged. Last month, Alyssa Shotwell, writing for *The Mary Sue*, riffed on a display table at Barnes & Noble with a big sign promoting the featured titles as #OwnVoices books. They included: the memoir of Hunter Biden, son of President Biden; a biography of William and Harry, the sons of Prince Charles; a memoir by the son of TV/film star Rosanne Barr.

Shotwell [wrote](#), "The idea [of #OwnVoices] is to uplift those marginalized due to their race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, nationality, religion, and more, because the publishing industry and booksellers often pour resources into those outside of these communities to tell their stories. At no point was it ever a term to describe nonfiction autobiographies and memoirs in general, especially those unrelated to marginalization in any way." She added, "This misuse is emblematic of the phrase becoming more and more diluted over time, after publishers and chain stores got hold of it."

The B&N table display, which evinces a misunderstanding of #OwnVoices as "biography and autobiography," was probably the work of an underpaid and unappreciated retail employee given too many tasks and too little information. (Disclosure: I worked for B&N one Christmas season many years ago.)

So, yeah, when a hashtag meant to help uplift marginalized voices—to promote diversity and bring positive attention to marginalized authors—becomes so "diluted" that it's used to promote the stories of British princes and the offspring of American presidents and celebrities... Well, that's a situation that an old Jew might call truly *fercockt* (Yiddish for: f**ked up).

We can all do better. We should do better. We must do better.

[Laura Resnick's urban fantasy series features Esther Diamond, a Jewish actress who gets involved in supernatural misadventures.](#)

NINC Member Discounts

By Emilie Richards



We've all been there. Cyberspace sounding the siren's call when you should be writing? Apps slyly winking to grab your attention? You might need a little Freedom.

The Freedom app is flexible and built for your convenience. Want to go cold turkey? You can block the entire internet with the click of one button. Or if you're not quite ready for that, schedule a Freedom session and only block the websites and apps you find most distracting. You can even choose from a pre-set list to guide you. With Freedom's help you can control your social media, email, shopping, chat, videos and games. You can focus on what really matters to you. You can even lock in a session to keep temptation at bay.

[Freedom](#) generously offers Novelists, Inc., members a discount of 40% off a Yearly or Forever subscription! Give it a try. You'll find our discount code under [Member Benefits](#) on our website.



Emilie Richards is the author of over 80 novels which have been published in more than 21 countries and 16 languages. Emilie has won the RITA from Romance Writers of America and multiple awards from RT Book Reviews, including one for career achievement. She regularly appears on bestseller lists, and ten of her books have been made into television movies in Germany. Emilie lives in Sarasota, Florida, with her husband in the winter and Chautauqua, New York, in summer.

Membership Benefits

Need industry intel, software, or legal help? We've got you covered.

Are you taking advantage of all your member benefits?

As a NINC member, your benefits include industry discounts, newsletter and website articles, professional services directory, networking opportunities, and more.

We've compiled all of these—which you can also find on our website—into this list as a helpful reminder.

Networking (these groups are for NINC members only):

- Email list for all Novelists, Inc. Members: <https://groups.io/g/NINCLINK>
- NINC Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/NovelistsInc/>
- Follow NINC on Twitter: https://twitter.com/Novelists_Inc
- NINC on [Clubhouse](#): Novelists Inc Virtual Tiki Bar
- Critique/brainstorming group: <https://groups.io/g/NINKcritique>
- Traditionally published authors: <https://groups.io/g/NINCTradPubbedAuthors>
- SF/F & speculative fiction writers: <https://groups.io/g/NINCswordsandrayguns>
- Authors of thriller/crime/suspense: <https://groups.io/g/NINC suspense-thriller-crime/>
- Discuss creating book covers: <https://groups.io/g/NINCcovercreators/>

Conference:

Conference information: <https://ninc.com/conferences/about-the-ninc-conference/>

Newsletter

- Propose an article: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/propose-an-article/>
- Submit a letter to the editor: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/submit-letter-to-editor/>
- Newsletter archives: <https://ninc.com/newsletter/news-archive/>

Website (You must be logged in to access these services.)

- Legal Fund: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/legal-fund/>
- Pro Services Directory: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/pro-services-directory/>
- Sample Letters: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/sample-letters/>
- Articles & Links: <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/articles-and-links/>
- Welcome Packet: <https://ninc.com/>—> Members Only —> Welcome Packet

Member discounts

NINC members are eligible for certain professional discounts. A complete listing of these can be found at <https://ninc.com/member-benefits/member-freebies-discounts/> along with other member discounts.

Volunteer

One of the greatest benefits of NINC is the opportunity to volunteer your talents to benefit other members—which pays incredible and unexpected dividends in networking and knowledge. Learn more about volunteer opportunities here: <https://ninc.com/members-only/open-positions/>

Open positions include:

- Social Media Committee
- Tweet Team
- Recruiting New Members
- Anything!



Founded in 1989

NINC Statement of Principle

Novelists, Inc., in acknowledgment of the crucial creative contributions novelists make to society, asserts the right of novelists to be treated with dignity and in good faith; to be recognized as the sole owners of their literary creations; to be fairly compensated for their creations when other entities are profiting from those creations; and to be accorded the respect and support of the society they serve.

NINC is committed to welcoming a diverse and inclusive membership to our organization and serving all members. No author will ever be discriminated against on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, religious/spiritual beliefs if any, ability, nationality or age. It is NINC's desire and goal to make sure that every author member feels welcomed and accepted and heard.

Founders

- Rebecca Brandewyne
- Janice Young Brooks
- Jasmine Cresswell
- Maggie Osborne
- Marianne Shock

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If you have questions regarding Novelists, Inc., please contact a member of the Board of Directors.

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- Treasurer: Timothy Cerepaka
- Newsletter Editor: Harper St. George
- Advisory Council Representative: Steven Womack

Advisory Council

- Lou Aronica
- Brenda Hiatt Barber
- Linda Barlow
- Jean Brashear
- Janice Young Brooks
- Laura Parker Castoro

- Meredith Efken
- Donna Fletcher
- Kay Hooper
- Tawdra Kandle
- Barbara Keiler
- Julie Leto
- Pat McLaughlin
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- Julie Ortolon
- Diana Peterfreund
- Pat Rice
- Erica Ridley
- Marianne Shock
- Wayne Stinnett
- Vicki Lewis Thompson
- Victoria Thompson
- Steven Womack

2022 Committees

Complete committee member listings are available on the website. Many committee positions are open and looking for new volunteers.

- Central Coordinator: Terese Ramin
 - Assistant Coordinator: Mica Stone
- 2022 Conference Committee
 - Conference Director: Mel Jolly
 - Assistant Conf. Director & Programming Chair: Tawdra Kandle
 - Assistant Prog. Chair: Hallee Bridgeman
 - NINC After Dark Coordinator: Tamsin Ley
 - Hotel Liaison: Karen Fox
 - Assistant Hotel Liaison: Tegan Maher
 - Conference Registrar: Pam McCutcheon
 - Assistant Registrar: Stephanie Julian
 - Sponsorship Chair: Sarah Woodbury
 - Assistant Sponsorship Chair: Dylann Crush
 - Traditional Publishing Liaison: Victoria Thompson
 - App Coordinator & Graphic Design: Laura Hayden
- Authors Coalition Representative: Laura Phillips
- Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee
 - Chair: Celeste Barclay
 - Misti Boehm
 - Pooks Burroughs
 - Malorie Cooper
 - Lynn Emery
 - Pamela Kelley
 - Ellis Leigh

- Hildie McQueen
- Alison Perry
- Harper St. George
- Samantha Silver
- Social Media Committee
 - Chair: Violet Howe
 - Sylvia McDaniel
- Membership Committee
 - Boyd Craven
 - Sarah Woodbury
- *Nink* Newsletter
 - Editor: Harper St. George
 - Acquisitions Editor: Trish Milburn
 - Copy Editor: Cynthia Moyer
 - Production Manager: Laura Resnick
- Nominating Committee
 - Chair: Wayne Stinnett
 - Tanya Anne Crosby
 - Katherine Garbera
 - Pamela M. Kelley
 - Kathryn Le Veque
 - Kristine Smith
 - Wayne Stinnett
- Discounts Program: Emilie Richards

Central Coordinator

Novelists, Inc. c/o Terese Ramin

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Address changes may be made on the website.

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