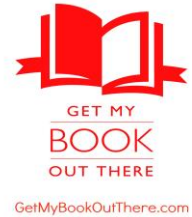


Get My Book Out There Podcast #2 Dealing with Negative Feedback and Reviews



Narelle Todd:

I'm Narelle Todd.

S.E. Smith:

And I'm S.E. Susan Smith.

Narelle Todd:

We are the self-publishing author and marketing duo that has sold over two million books, but we didn't start out knowing how to sell books. Fast forward past many failed promotions and a lot of lessons learned, you'll see how we went from self-publishing newbies to hitting the New York Times Best Sellers list, and making the USA Today Best Sellers list 19 times and counting.

Narelle Todd:

We created the Get My Book Out There Podcast to give you simple, yet effective marketing strategies to increase readership and book sales, so you know what to do, when to do it, and how to do it, as well as some tips for staying mentally and physically well.

S.E. Smith:

Let's get started.

Narelle Todd:

Feedback's necessary, but it also can be quite challenging when you've just say put out a new book or with a course I was doing, that I released recently, you put this thing out that you've put your heart and soul into, and then people start to leave comments that sometimes aren't favorable. So, what we wanted to talk about today was how do we deal with feedback? The good, the bad, and the ugly. Because it's certainly a part of every creative's life.

S.E. Smith:

As you can imagine, we're going to share the good, the bad, the ugly, but not necessarily always the silent.

Narelle Todd:

No.

S.E. Smith:

We may have to bleep that one out. But part of dealing with feedback is knowing when to have that sense of humor to go with it.

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Narelle Todd:

Yes. What's your first tip?

S.E. Smith:

My first tip, these are some that I've learned basically 8-10 years, is don't take it personal. That has been one of the biggest challenges that I have faced, is not to take the feedback that I get personal. It's not against me.

Narelle Todd:

Yes, definitely. My granddad used to say that a broken clock is always right twice a day. People say don't take it personal, I always used to think, "Well, how do I not take it personal? Of course it's personal. This is my thing." And that's where you have to be able to disengage from your book or your whatever the creative process is that you've delivered, is not who you are. It's something that you've created, but it's not you. So, when people are making comment, they're not making comment about you. It's just about something else. You need to be able to disengage from that sense of it's a part of you, where it is a book, or it is a course, or it is a service, but at the same time it's not you.

S.E. Smith:

Well, and you also have to realize that not everyone . What you do, what you write, what you present is not for everyone. And I think that's what's disappointing as a creative, because I want everyone to enjoy what I've written. I did this to bring joy into the world, to give someone an escape for a little while, to take them on fantastic journeys, but the journey that I want to take them on may not be the same type of journey that they want to go on, or maybe not even at that time.

S.E. Smith:

The comments that I got was really interesting, is I had a reader once, she gave me three stars. And then two years later she came back and she said, "Oh, my God." She says, "I don't know where my head was at." She said, "I re-read all of your books and I went back in and I redid all of my reviews" because she said, "I went to put a review in and I realized I'd already put one in there, and I gave you three stars" and she said, "Obviously there was something wrong with me at that time, because these are all five star books."

S.E. Smith:

At that time, in that place, she was not in the mood to read the kind of books that I was writing. But three years later, she was. That's something else that you have to also consider, is maybe just taking a step back, not only are we taking a step back, but revisit something. I can't tell you the number of books that I started to read. An example would be One Series. I started that book at least a dozen times over the course of the year, never made it past the first chapter.

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Finally forced myself to get through that chapter, I totally absorbed the rest of the books in the series, but it took me a year to finally get through that first chapter.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah, and it's also important to me where your reader avatar then comes into play. Because if you're very clear about who your ideal reader is and who you're writing for, then when people make comments and say it's about a science fiction romance story of yours, and they say, "I don't actually like science fiction romance," and they give you a bad review, it's like, well, they're not my ideal reader anyway, so you give them the weight that deserves. It's important to keep that in mind, as well, that you're not for everybody and everybody's not for you, and that's okay.

S.E. Smith:

Well, and the second thing that I've learned is definitely don't engage. Yes, if you're on a platform other than where they would leave a review, you can have a conversation. But if somebody, especially if they leave you a negative review, if you they leave you a positive one you want to say thank you. If they leave you a negative one, start with thank you and stop there. Because engaging is never a good plan. It's just going to go downhill from there. And another thing I learned is that there are trolls out there, that's something that my son, youngest son, told me about. And something he said, "Oh mom, just don't worry about that. Whatever you do, don't engage."

Narelle Todd:

Yes. A recent comment I received, which at the time smarted, but then it was like, "Well, you just have to let it go." An ad, and I was wanting to attract female entrepreneurs, and I had put female entrepreneurs, and a comment was made that that was sexist. You lost me at the word "female" but they ended their comment then with honey bun. It's just like the hairs on your back stand up, and you go, "My gosh, you don't call a stranger honey bun. Not appropriate." And it was like, almost, you're ready to get on there and fire back and you go, "No, this is not appropriate."

S.E. Smith:

That's when you step away from the keyboard. So, the third thing that I learned is to take the feedback that I do get, whether it's positive or negative, and grow from it. There's certain negative comments of course that you'll just automatically discard but you know that they're not done, and they're not creative criticism. But if they are done from the heart with creative criticism to help you grow as a person, then I take it to heart and I actually follow through. I do more research or I'll catch myself as I'm writing, and I'll make sure that I ... I say, "Wait a minute. They said I used this word way too much. I need to be conscious of the fact that I tend to use this word, so let me change it up a little bit."

Narelle Todd:

Yes. Exactly. Not all negative feedback is negative. You can use it to improve what you're doing, and I think that's the approach you need to go into feedback with. Is this right? Is it appropriate? What can I take out of it to actually improve?

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S.E. Smith:

And not be afraid to look at some of the negative stuff, you know? Like, that's where you're going to have to say, "Don't take it personal and don't engage" but learn from it. The fourth thing which has been a huge help for me is knowing my personal limits. I know on certain days, I just can't handle negative. So, I stay away from it. I know how much I can handle before I'm ready to go crawl underneath the pillow, and if it's really a bad day, go crawl underneath the bed. There's just certain things that I had to become more aware of and reflect on myself, what can I handle and what are my limits? And then say it's okay. I've reached my limit, I'm done. I'm not going to beat myself up because of it.

Narelle Todd:

Absolutely.

S.E. Smith:

The fifth thing I would say would be celebrate yourself. This is something that I've learned from you. Over the years, you have drug me out from underneath those covers, underneath that bed, hiding in the closet, you know? That, "I'm never going to write again" or, "I can't deal with this anymore" type thing. And you've shown me how I can celebrate what I'm doing.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah. Often what we find is we may get one negative comment for every say 99 positive ones that we get, but we focus, and I think it's just a natural thing that we focus on that one, and it becomes, "Oh, my gosh, they've said these things and how dare they" or, "I'm a terrible writer."

S.E. Smith:

"My baby's ugly."

Narelle Todd:

Meanwhile 99 people have said, "No, we love your baby." If it was the other one and 99 people were saying, "This is really bad," then obviously there is an issue, but we focus on that one negative instead of celebrating the 99 positives. If you're reading reviews and you see that one, make sure you go and read at least seven positives, just to balance it out. Because that's just how powerful one negative comment can be.

S.E. Smith:

And it's a good thing to learn, is leave on the positive, don't leave on the negative one. Leave on the positive one, and also recognize in yourself, if you're saying something negative, that impact has on other people. Where if you say something positive, how much more they grow from that. Those are our five tips for today, in dealing with feedback is one, don't take it personal, two, don't engage, three, learn from the feedback, whether it's positive or negative, but it's positive, creative criticism to help you grow. Number four is know your limits, your personal limits, and stick to them. And five, celebrate yourself. I think that is the biggest thing and it's positive. That's what you want to leave on.

Narelle Todd:

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So we'll leave on that positive note. Go and celebrate your creativity and how wonderful you are and the gift that you're giving to the world by sharing whatever your creativity is.

Narelle Todd:

Hey, thanks for joining us today. You know we've got way more information we want to share with you to increase your book sales, so please come and join me at [Facebook.com/getmybookoutthere](https://www.facebook.com/getmybookoutthere).

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