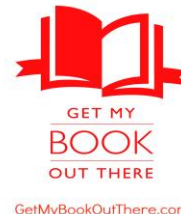


Get My Book Out There Podcast #18 How To Get & Stay Organized



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 bestsellers list and making the USA Today bestsellers list 19 times and counting. 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:

We're going to talk to you today about organization. It's not quite as bad as it seems, because a lot of people will just roll their eyes or just go, "No, don't want to know about it." We're going to share with you the good, the bad and the ugly about getting organized.

For those of you who are looking, you can tell that Susan loves the topic. You could say that we're opposites in this particular topic.

S.E. Smith:

We're definitely the odd couple.

Narelle Todd:

So what I want to share with you today is my number one thing for staying organized. But before we get there, I did want to talk about organizing styles. Now, we probably should do this in another podcast to go into it in-depth, but I just want to let people know who like to have their things out and visible, that it's okay.

S.E. Smith:

I'm using both of my hands because I am definitely one of those.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

© Copyright 2021 Successful Living Pty Ltd - Reproduction of this document in any way shape or form both online and offline is strictly prohibited. You are NOT entitled to resell, reproduce or share this document or any version you make of it, and any breach of this will be enforced by the law. This document is for your personal use only.

Narelle Todd:

I remember back when I used to work in a company, and company policy was clear desk policy, so that meant that your desk had to look spic-and-span and had to always be "presentable" at the end of each day. Many organizations that I worked in have had that kind of policy, but what it does is really recognize just one way to get organized, which is for some people they like to not see things. So to them, being organized is having clear spaces, and nothing out except maybe a few bits and pieces. You've probably seen that sort of thing in show homes, where they just have a few pieces out here and there but nothing else. That's what it's often been in corporate life, everything away, whereas what that actually does is it doesn't recognize people whose preferences is to have things in sight.

So, for people who like to have things in sight, as the name suggests, it simply means that they like to have their things visible because then that way they don't have to worry about not losing something, or they can't see it. It creates a real stress and a tension for them when they can't see their things. So you can see how, if you're somebody who likes to have your stuff in sight, you might like to pile things, you might like to put things in different groups or have everything out. If you're one of those people and you're working in an environment where they say, "That's wrong, you have to have a clear desk," you can just imagine the tension that that causes to someone each time.

So just letting you all know, if you are somebody who likes to have their things visible, you like to have it in sight where you can see it, it's okay. Claim it, that's how you do things. So the very first thing I would suggest to you, in being organized, is to do what comes naturally to you rather than some person who made up a rule a bazillion years ago that we have to have this clear space. What do they know?

S.E. Smith:

It reminds me so much when I was in the classroom, and they always expect everybody ... If you're teaching math, for example, and you're teaching a math concept and they think, "Well, everyone should get it." But, some people are more visual and some are more tactile. You have those that could listen and pick up what you're saying, then you have the others that have to actually draw it out. That was one of the things I used to say, "When in doubt, draw it out." It's understanding that not everybody learns the same way, and not everybody organizes the same way.

It's funny, because there is that motto that, "Everything has a place, and everything in its place." Well, your idea of a place and my idea of a place may be different, but we still come to the same end results. Where mine tends to be a little more chaotic looking, that would be stressful to you. You're nice and neat, everything is nice and clear. That, to me, I walk in and I'm thinking, "Oh my God, how could she ever find everything?"

Narelle Todd:

My particular style is out of sight. So I like to have things, they're organized and in piles, but they're out of sight so they're in a cupboard. You, you like to have your things, you like to pile, but you do it in sight so it's visible.

S.E. Smith:

Yes.

Narelle Todd:

So people would walk into your office and go, "Oh my gosh, she's the most disorganized person I've ever seen," when that's not the case at all. It's simply that's how you like to be organized.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

S.E. Smith:

It's that thought, that somebody would come in and they say, "Where is this?" And, I could go right to it.

Narelle Todd:

Yes.

S.E. Smith:

I don't have to look for it. Of course, it drives everyone else nuts but I have my own organizational skill.

Narelle Todd:

That's it about being organized, is it always comes back to what is the actual definition of that. It's can you find what you need when you need it, and if you can then you're organized, it doesn't matter what it looks like.

S.E. Smith:

No.

Narelle Todd:

But, everyone out there whose been struggling, trying to adopt a system that is just not you, my advice to you today is to stop. Just go with what is your natural style, the way you like to do things. Set it up for yourself, for your business, and then you don't have to stress about where things are. Where have I put this, or wherever, you know where it is. If it's in a big pile, it doesn't matter, you know it's in the pile. You just go straight to the pile and you have a look.

S.E. Smith:

Okay, so let's give them three quick tips to help give them an organizational style that works with someone who's very, very organized and someone who is a chaotic organizer like myself.

Narelle Todd:

Okay.

S.E. Smith:

Let's see if we can come up with three tips that we can share with everyone so that it doesn't matter which side of the screen you're on, in this example, where we could fit in and we can mesh.

Narelle Todd:

So what I'm going to do is share with you my simple technique for being organized, and this can work for anyone no matter what your style is. The beauty about it is that it's very visual for those who like visual, and it's also something that you can put away at the end of a day for those who don't like to have clutter out, it works.

A couple things that you're going to need. For those of you who are looking on video, you're going to be able to see it, firstly. I will do my best to explain the process for those who are listening in. What I want you to do is get it could be a piece of board, a sheet of paper, something, a whiteboard even, chalkboard. And then, I want you to divide it into three equal columns. You're going to then label one "to do". The middle one you're going to label "in progress". And, the third one you're going to label "done". All you need to do is grab your sticky notes,

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

good old Post-It notes. I even have some shapes, because every now and then I like to break out, do exciting things. And, write down all the things that you have to do, all the things that are on your mind.

You may use some kind of electronic system for your to dos and that's fine. So keep using that, you don't have to move over to this system. This can either be a system of its own or it can be complimentary to whatever you're using now. You can use it for a combination of personal and work, or just personal, just work, that's up to you.

So, get your sticky notes, write down all the things that are in your mind, that are going through your mind. "Oh, I can't forget, I can't forget. I have to remember, I have to remember." Write it all down on separate, individual sticky notes. You may well come up with a whole bunch of these little things.

And then, what I want you to do ... For those of you who can see I'm going to show you my board now. Can you see that?

S.E. Smith:

Oh, it's nice and pretty. And, I like the fact that you used three different shapes for each one.

Narelle Todd:

Yes.

S.E. Smith:

At the top. So her to do actually goes to the circle that says in progress, which goes to the star which is perfect for your done.

Narelle Todd:

Yes, absolutely. You can see that I have a lot of things in my to do at the moment. So the sticky notes in there, this really is just doing a brain dump of anything. It could be a good idea that I don't want to forget about or lose, something I have to do, something that hasn't been captured on an electronic system, which I also use with my team. This isn't necessarily everything I have to do, but this gets it out of my mind and just helps me remember things that are coming. On here, is an app that I want to do but the app itself isn't actually ready until April, so I've just put it on here to remember so that I can then factor that into my workflow when it comes time to work out what I'm doing in April.

S.E. Smith:

You know what I love about it? Is me, being the type of organizer that I am, it's very visual. That caters to my chaotic, have to see it, be there right in front of me type of organization.

Narelle Todd:

Absolutely. For you who like to see things, you can just have this sit on your desk, or up on a wall, somewhere just close where you can move your things across and get to it, and add to it as well.

In our second column, in the in progress, these are things that are in progress, so I've started work on but haven't been finished. We don't want to lose track of these ones, it's important to know what's happening. It could be that I'm waiting on information from someone, or it could be just that it's not the right time, we can't launch it yet, or any number of things. That would go into the in progress.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

And then, over here in the done section. In done, we literally ... We would start in the to do, it would potentially either go from to do into progress, or straight across into done if I get it finished. So done is really where we capture everything that we have completed. The beauty with this is it reinforces how much you actually do get done in a day, in a week, in a month. So it's a really good, positive reinforcement and a way to feel confident that you're actually getting something done. Particularly on those days when it feels you've spent your eight hours and you haven't seemed to achieved anything at the end of the day. Your done column, I like to leave these up for a little bit simply as a way just to reinforce how much I have actually achieved. Yeah, because I think that's important.

S.E. Smith:

It's a positive reinforcement that you are accomplishing something every single day. I know sometimes for me, I'll be sitting here and then it'll be, "What have I done all day?" When I really start to go through and tick it off, there's a lot. But I often forget all of the things that I did do, so I get frustrated which builds up the stress because I feel like I haven't achieved everything I should.

One of the things that people often tease me about is they're like, "You're always doing so much," and yet I don't feel like I am. But having this system will help me recognize that yeah, maybe taking that hour off in the evening is not such a bad thing, and I deserve it because I have accomplished so much.

Narelle Todd:

Yes, it does stop you from beating yourself up around expectations. The other good thing that it does is you can put up here jobs that might be quite big ones, or even ones that are just teeny tiny. What I've found with this is it's a great way to ... I call it my procrastinators. When I don't want to do something, I go looking for other ways to procrastinate. It used to be that I would spend some time on YouTube, watching YouTube videos. That's not the best use of my time, at all. But, what I have found is since I've been putting things in my to do section, there's ones on there that may take 15 minutes or half an hour, they're really great when you just need that mental shift and a break, or a procrastinator. You just get those things, you go do them, you've given yourself that brain space and you've done something different. And, you've also then managed to check off another item on your to do list, that you've also fulfilled that need just to focus on something else so that you can give your brain a rest.

S.E. Smith:

It's spring here, so one of the things I've been doing is checking the bird feeders. It's making sure that the birds are happy, which makes me happy. And, I feel like I've accomplished at least something during the day, if the birds are fed.

Narelle Todd:

And see, with this system you could easily put bird feeder in your to do every day, and then move it across to done at the end of the day.

S.E. Smith:

At night, so I don't have to do it in the morning.

Narelle Todd:

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

It's all about coming up with ways to help you feel the success that you are, which is what having the done column does, it allows you to see what you have actually done. It's also a good practical way of seeing if you are actually doing anything. You may need to have a chat with yourself on some days, or some weeks, if you haven't actually done any of your to dos. But, it's an objectifiable way of being able to say, "Yeah, I've slacked off this week. I need to give myself a kick up the pants." And that's important, too, because sometimes we do need to actually have a look and talk to ourselves about our productivity.

S.E. Smith:

But, it's also nice when you see how much that you've done that it's all right to say, "You know what? I did slack off, and I needed that. I needed that mind," because your mind is a muscle, and when you use it, and use it, and use it, and use it ... Or as one thing I saw, it's like a battery. You're using that battery over, and over, and over and even the rechargeable ones need to be put up for a little while so that they can recharge. If you don't give yourself that chance to recharge, then you'll get frustrated. But, by having the stuff in the to do list and realizing that okay, maybe my batteries are not ready for this right now, but I can handle this, this one, and this one. And then, you can move it to the in progress or to the done, because you did finally focus on something that gave your batteries time to recharge while still being able to get something done.

Narelle Todd:

Yes.

S.E. Smith:

What's another tip that you would give?

Narelle Todd:

I always say get out of your own way.

S.E. Smith:

Tell us about tip number two, that you would recommend. I have a suggestion for tip number two. So being the more chaotic type person, my organization, which is why I've got this beautiful background hiding everything, which I really should turn off so that you can see that I do clean on occasion.

So what happened was on Saturday it finally got to the point where I had the screen up, I had the boxes everywhere, I had the light soles set up, and I had a cup of hot tea without the lid on, on my desk, and everything falls over. The screen fell over, and everything else. All I could imagine was all of my electronics getting doused in hot tea and going sssss. So of course, that led to okay, no way, when I realized that I was saved by some fate out there that's an electronic fairy saying, "No, no, no, no, no, we're not going to destroy this." My office literally looked like it had just thrown up, all over itself.

I started moving stuff out, and I went through and I reorganized. It really helps, for someone that's chaotic as I am, I would put on my to do list every X number of months to go through and look at stuff again, because I'm the type of person that doesn't like to get rid of things. I'm always thinking, "I could use that." Or, "It's such a good thing, I don't want to throw it away." I always come back to that one thing where you put it in piles. The things that you've used that you know you're going to use, the things that you haven't used that you really don't want to get rid of, and then the other things that you just know you'll never use, that you just need to get rid of.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

So, I start with the I know I'm going to not use this any longer, get rid of it, and then get it out of the way. And then, from there I'm able to start going through and then say, "Do I really need the stuff that I might use one day?" Going through there, I start cleaning that out. I'm amazed at how the stuff moves to the next column, very similar to what your organizational skill is.

So, I do this, over, and over, and over, throughout the period of the day. And now, my office is nice and neat. I have everything where I've gone through, so I know what's in what boxes, and I've labeled them. I know where I've got all my series of books at, I've got my office supply things. Is my desk spotless? It never will be, I know that. But, I have room to walk, I'm not tripping over everything and it's helped relieve the stress because I also relieve some of the congestion that had built up over a period of time, that I tend to keep pushing off. Saying, "Oh, I'll do that tomorrow, because I'm working on this."

Add into that organizational calendar, if you're someone especially like me that has a hard time letting go of things, time to reorganize, time to clean up. Go through those columns and say, "Do I need this? Yes. Do I might need this? Possibly. Do I need this? No, this is old stuff that I'm never going to use again." And, get rid of it. Yes, you're going to be exhausted by the time you get done because you've let it build up so much, but you also feel less stressed when you walk in and you feel that everything's nice and neat.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah.

S.E. Smith:

Don't beat yourself up too much. Tip number two, take the time, whether you're a very, very organized person, but especially if you're someone like me who's more chaotically organized, and go through and ask yourself some tough questions and get rid of some of the stuff. What you can, give away. But, clean up and clean out.

Narelle Todd:

Absolutely. I think that's really important. And it plays very well, also, into the third tip that I have for everyone. That is that being organized comes in three different ways. It's we're organized time wise. Space, so by space I mean our surroundings, what that looks like. And then, the third one is energy, and that's what I just want to tap onto that one at the moment, is around our energy.

You may find that you are better at being organized at certain times of the day. A bit like if you're a morning person or a night owl, that sort of thing. Work with that energy. Same with when you are setting your calendar for doing really important jobs, or hard jobs, or jobs where you have to focus. What time of the day is the time when your energy is at its strongest? And then, put those things into your calendar, around that time, because your energy is strong and high, so you're really going to be able to tackle that to do with a great deal of vigor and you can really go for it. Whereas, if you try and do it when you're tired, the potential is you're not going to complete it.

S.E. Smith:

You tend to give up, yes.

Narelle Todd:

Yes, yes. Yeah, it's so hard, and you hate doing it so you probably put it off or procrastinate. It's not going to get finished. So also think of being organized in regards to time, space and energy. What's your energy? When are you the most powerful energy wise? You might want to do, say, a writing sprint. Do that when you're high

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

energy. Don't do that when you're at your low point, definitely, because it's not necessarily going to be that successful.

Everything that you do, you just need to factor in those three things. So what's the best time for me to do something? Is my energy at a good point, and is my surroundings conducive to that? Once again, you could have piles everywhere, but if that's your shtick then that's great. I'm not saying you have to change that because other people's expectations of this clear desk policy, which is just the stupidest thing ever.

To finish up, just to bring it back full circle, being organized is about being able to find what you want when you want, and it's also about using just simple systems. So the idea that I showed you with the to do, in progress and done, really simple. You don't have to write out things you didn't get done yesterday, you don't have to rewrite them out onto a calendar for today. Whose got time to do that? They're on a sticky note, so you just move it as you need to, into the different sections, you don't have to rewrite. You can reuse if you need to.

S.E. Smith:

You can actually reuse them.

Narelle Todd:

Yes.

S.E. Smith:

And, that would be like one, with me cleaning my office, I know I need to do that every couple of months because of the fact that it does build up because I get distracted. Once I get it done, then I can move it back to the to do list and know it's going to be something that's needing to be done again. But, it's that reminder that, "You know what? Now's the time."

Narelle Todd:

Yes. So you're on something like that, on a recurring item, you could easily say, "Clean office," and then at the bottom, have three, seven, 11 and you just cross off. So March, you cross off March when that's done. And then it comes back in, so you know the next time around is in July, but it's there on your note, you don't have to think about it. You've freed your brain about, "Oh, when did I last clean my office?" You don't have to worry about that because you've already captured it on your note. That's a good way for recurring tasks.

S.E. Smith:

I like that.

Narelle Todd:

Yeah. So be mindful about who you are, accept who you are and the way that you like to do things. If you can find what you need when you need it, you're organized. How it looks in being organized is going to be very different for everyone, so embrace that difference and be okay with the diversity of organizing styles. And whatever else, remember time, space and energy. So when you've really got something tough that you have to get done, bring all those three things, be optimum in all three, and you will power through whatever it is that you have to get done at that time.

S.E. Smith:

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

I think this is going to be one of my favorite podcasts that we've done because it's just something that I needed, personally, because of the style of organization that I do. Enlightening to learn a new tip but to also say, "I'm okay because I know my organization works for me."

Narelle Todd:

Yes. When I worked in human resources and learning and development, I saw over and over again, where good people were being told they were doing it wrong because of how their desk looked. I just remember one boss that I worked with, her work output was phenomenal. And I just remember this consultant coming in and telling her that she wasn't doing enough. I was just flabbergasted, and it was because this lady, she was a piler. She had piles on her desk, but she knew where everything was in that pile. Her secretary knew where everything was, because they'd worked out their system. And then this person came in and went, "No, you need a clear desk." My boss literally had to clear her desk at the end of every day, in order to fit in with what a productive and efficient executive looked like.

S.E. Smith:

You know what I would have done? One of two things. I would have stashed everything under the desk and then just pulled it out each day. Or, I really liked what one of my partner teachers did. Whenever we would have, basically, the security come through or whatever, and they would make sure, the Fire Marshall, it wasn't piled up too high close to the ceiling, she would just take a blanket and throw it over it. Can't see it, it's just a blanket there! It doesn't matter that it's four feet high, it's just a blanket.

Narelle Todd:

I like that. So accept your style, at the end of the day, that's what it comes down to. Accept your organizing style and work with it, it doesn't matter if it doesn't work for anyone else. If it works for you and your organized, then more power to you, that's what it's about.

S.E. Smith:

Thank you so much for this week's podcast because, like I said, I really, really needed it. I hope everyone out there enjoys it as much, and takes it to heart and realizes you can do this.

Narelle Todd:

Absolutely. I'm going to drop in our show notes an image of that board so that you can see it, as well as some instructions, if you need those, just to bump that out for you. So have a look for those in our notes, as well.

S.E. Smith:

Excellent. Thank you everybody, and I hope you guys have a wonderful week.

Narelle Todd:

Hey, thanks for joining us today. We 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).

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).

© Copyright 2021 Successful Living Pty Ltd - Reproduction of this document in any way shape or form both online and offline is strictly prohibited. You are NOT entitled to resell, reproduce or share this document or any version you make of it, and any breach of this will be enforced by the law. This document is for your personal use only.

Make this year a book selling year with my clear step-by-step plan to market your books and build a strong business foundation... without stressing over time, money, or sales! Download my guide [HERE](#).