

Self-Publishing Authors PODCAST

Cheat Sheet

Crafting Your WHY Statement For Authors

We get it. It's tough being an author.

That's why we think it's vital to know *why* you're putting yourself through all this effort, hard work, and sacrifice. Especially for those times when it all seems too much, and you consider quitting.

It can also help keep you on track, help you make decisions on whether to participate in that group boxed set or switch to that sparkly new genre, and help you know exactly when you've been successful in your career.

Your why statement should also be powerful. It needs to get you at your core and connect with who you are as a person. It's going to be what pulls you through the hard times, so it can't be weak or limp.

Here's our abbreviated guide to finding your why:

- First, just sit down with a piece of paper and write down all the reasons why you want to write or be an author. What do you love about it? What draws you to the written word? Make a big list, or do it as a brainstorm. Ask someone else to help you. Do it by yourself. Whatever. Just write down everything you can think of, get it all out there. The good, the bad and the ugly. It doesn't matter. No one is going to see this list. Be brutally honest with yourself. Fame? Fortune? Annoy your father? To be a literary genius? To have a bit of fun? To be just like your favorite author? Because you can't help yourself? To keep people up all night reading? Put it all down there. Nothing is too small or inconsequential. Nothing is too large.
- Look through the list and cross off anything that only holds a weak connection, the things that aren't as meaningful to you.
- Then look through the list and find the things that you feel most attracted to, the things that speak most powerfully to you. Maybe highlight them, underline them.

Self-Publishing Authors PODCAST

Cheat Sheet

- Remember, this isn't something you have to show other people. Don't write it as if you're Mother-Freaking-Teresa. If you're in it for the fame, claim it. If you want to make loads of money, this is where you write it. Your why statement has to mean something to you, and it has to feel powerful. If you don't care about helping other people, don't include it in your why, because it won't do its job. (But if you want to help others, claim it too!)
- Take your smaller list of why's and make it even smaller. What's really driving you? What speaks to you most powerfully? What drives you? Ask yourself the hard questions, look at what you're really connected to. (Not what you think you should be connected to!)
- Next step, figure out what's behind your why. For example, if you have a why statement that goes something like "I want to be more famous than Nora Roberts" you need to ask yourself why you want that. Go deeper. What is the emotion driving you? What would you achieve if you became more famous than Nora? What would it mean to you? Would it be about being noticed? The fortune? The accolades? Having people love you?
- Dig deep. Find the one biggest reason you want to be a writer. What is really driving you to spend all these late nights and early mornings writing. What will it mean to you, deep down inside when you finally finish your book?
- Final step, write your why statement. Take the one biggest thing that is driving you and create your why statement using everything you've thought about above. Go deep, find the emotion behind it. It might go something like this ...

I want to write novels that pack an emotional punch so that people can experience all the emotions without ever having to leave home. I want to do this because it is how I felt about the books I was reading when I was growing up, and I want to recreate that for other people.

Self-Publishing Authors PODCAST

Cheat Sheet

I want to earn enough money to retire my husband and put all my kids through college. I want to do this because I love my family and it would take a huge amount of stress off all of us.

I want to become more famous than Stephen King. I want to do this because I want to have people recognize me in the mall, and love me and my books as much as people love his books.

I want to write books that keep people up all night reading, even though they know they have to get up early to go to work. I want to do this, because I love the idea of being able to write a book in a world that so completely captures a person, they don't want to leave. That feels powerful.

I want to win awards and be recognized globally as an amazing author. I want to do this because I feel like once I get to that level my writing will be so powerful, it will give something back to the world.

Other Resources:

In his book, **Start with Why**, Simon Sinek suggests that you come up with a sentence that includes the contribution you want to make to the lives of others, and the impact of that contribution over time. The statement goes something like this:

To _____ so that _____.

For example, Simon's why statement is

"To inspire people to do the things that inspire them, so that, together, we can change our world."

It's a great book, you should definitely check it out!

