

**Author Platform Rocket
-Podcast Transcription-**



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Voiceover: Welcome to Author Platform Rocket, the highly acclaimed source for actionable business, marketing, and mindset strategy for authors delivered in 20 minutes or less, most of the time. In other words, this is how you sell more books while building a bigger fan base the right way. Here's your host and author, marketing veteran, Jonny Andrews.

Jonny: All right, folks. Here we are again, Author Platform Rocket in the interview series, where I sent out a crazy email out to the authors, I said, "Hey, who's **got** a good story?" Today, we are going to cover two topics, two topics that I like very much that I have spoken about before, but I love to hear other people's takes on these because it's always unique and fresh.

The first one is going to be looking into that dark and seedy underbelly of life known as imposter syndrome. The second piece is going to be how not to panic when the sky appears to be falling. These were her words, not mine, and I chose them because they were better than what I was going to say. That might have something to do with the fact that she's an author. She's put out 15 books. They're ridiculously well-reviewed. She's doing very well in this. My guest today is Patricia D. Eddy. How are you doing?

Patricia: I am very, very good. How are you?

Jonny: Well, everything seems to be going nicely, at least so far. I could derail it at any moment. Prepare yourself.

Patricia: Of course. That is life, after all.

Jonny: Totally. Let's dive into the fun stuff. Give folks your background, like who are you, how did you get into this, the juicy bits.

Patricia: I've always been a writer. I can remember sitting at my parents' kitchen counter when I was barely able to reach the typewriter and yes, it was a typewriter, and typing out little short stories of one or two pages. I did this on a regular basis. If my parents didn't know where I was, I was either in my room making up stories in my head or I was at the typewriter.

I didn't really do anything with that until many years later. I actually started out as a technical writer, and a friend of mine was writing a book and she had to bail. She had a conflict of interest basically with another contract she was working on and asked me if I wanted to take over the book, so I did and I published five or six technical books on Microsoft products.

From there, I remembered how much I like to write fiction, and so then I just started and didn't finish anything for a very long time, in part because I have a very severe case of ADHD that I didn't know about at the time, but I finally finished my first book in 2012. Once I finished one and figured out, "Oh, this is what it feels like to finish. I really like this feeling," I really didn't stop much after that.

Jonny: Very nice.

Patricia: That's how I ended up here.

Jonny: I love it. When I was reading in your response and stuff like that, you were talking about how you had to take a hard look at why you were writing. The way you phrased it was to figure out the character arc of your own story. You were saying that you were hardcore suffering from this imposter syndrome up until recently. Talk a little bit about that, because that was just a very interesting viewpoint.

Patricia: Well, I think a lot of times as writers, well, obviously we're influenced by everything around us. We're influenced by the people in our lives. We're influenced by the books we read. A lot of times, we sit down and we're sitting at our computer and we're going, "Okay, I have this story in my head. Maybe I know the beginning. Maybe I know a little bit of the ending, but I don't know anything in the middle, but yeah, yeah, it'll be fine. I'll wing it." We get through it, and it just doesn't feel right.

For me especially, my books, finishing a book, it didn't feel ... Well, the reason I didn't finish a book for so many years was that I needed to understand what inside me was driving me to create these stories. In other words, I would look at other people's books, like Nora Roberts and her alter ego, JD Robb, and Laurell K. Hamilton, and who else did I read? Lindsay Buroker was actually the first indie author that I ever read. I would look at their stuff and I would go, "This moved me. There's a purpose to this," and I was missing

some of that purpose. Until I took a hard look at, "Okay, well, if I were going to write the story of my life, what would I want the arc to be?"

Part of what happens sometimes with women and ADHD is that we don't access our emotions really well. We tend to shove them down because we have to get things done. I had to really stop that for a short amount of time, and I don't rest well. I don't take time off. It was a very difficult thing for me to do, but I had to figure out, "Okay, well, why do I want this particular story to be dark? Why do I want to torture this character, or why I do want to make this character happy?" I had to look at what in my own life I wanted to fix or change or embrace. Doing that really helped me create better and more authentic characters.

From the reading that I've done and talking to other readers and other authors, that's really one of the keys to being able to type the end and go, "This is good," is being authentic to your characters. If you do that and you create fictional people that your readers want to be friends with and want to know because they have the whole range of emotions that human beings do, then you've done your job. Once I learned how to do that, it became easier to do my job, not that it made me more confident, but it definitely made it easier.

Jonny: I got you. That's when you started feeling like maybe you were getting to be at the same level as these other folks.

Patricia: Or at least I had earned my right to approach the table, so to speak. I would never put one of my books next to a JD Robb book. Whether or not they're equal, that's not me. I wouldn't go up to Nora Roberts and say, "Hey, would you read my book and potentially review it?" Even though I would love to, but I'm an introvert and have painful social anxiety, so that would never happen, but I at least feel because I can write good characters and authentic characters that if somebody else wanted to do that for me, it would not be this, "Oh my god, she's going to hate it. She's going to absolutely hate it." There wouldn't be that fear. Maybe someday I'll be brave enough to do that.

Jonny: Awesome. I like the fact that you are equating your own character arc with your ability to put out good writing. I've actually never heard anybody say it quite like that.

Patricia: Yeah. I think if you don't know yourself, it is very hard to understand other people. The process of learning who you are as a person, you yourself, helps you understand who other people are, both fictional other people and real other people in your life.

Jonny: That's fantastic. I'm super curious, do you have steps that you use for this or do you muscle through it? How do you go about doing that?

Patricia: I wish I had steps. I had to muscle through it in some very, very painful ways that included some friendships going away at one point and me having to take a really hard look at, "Okay, well, what happened there and was it me, was it them?" Turns out it was just a little bit of everything, but really examining a lot of past relationships and trying to

see, "Okay, well, what could I have done differently, or could I have done anything differently?" In some cases, the answer is yes. Some cases, it's no.

I spend a lot of time in my own head, as I think many writers do, but I had to in some cases, one my books, Love Libations, actually ended up being my story. I didn't realize I was writing myself until I was about halfway through the book, and that really forced me to confront some things that I wasn't happy about myself. There were some things about myself that I wasn't happy with. Doing that was I think a really key part of the process. That helped me figure out, "Okay, well, pretty much every character I've ever written has had a little bit of me in them."

I'm a very analytical person outside of my writing, so I could take that and I could look at the characters that I had written over the years and go, "Okay, well, this piece of this character is me," and, "This piece of this character is me," and, "Okay. Well, what does that say about myself?" That definitely helped, but there were also a lot of just bad days and a lot of just self-introspection to go along with that.

Jonny: I get it. It sounds like it was quite the journey to get through all that. Very impressive.

Patricia: Yeah. I'm a very different person today than I was 10 years ago.

Jonny: Awesome. I'm assuming that you're pretty happy you went through this, even though it sounds like it was kind of tough.

Patricia: Oh, yes, yes. I can look at myself now and say, "Okay. Well, even if I fail at this one thing or this other thing or I am not exactly where I want to be, I'm happy with what I have done to try and get there." Everybody wants a New York Times bestseller and be able to live off of their writing, and no, I cannot do that at this point, but I am confident that I have done the right things to position myself in the right way and that personally and in my personal relationships, I have really taken some good strides to strengthening them and being authentic and honest and I still have a way to go because we always grow. When you stop growing, I think you stop living. I think I've come a long way and I'm really happy with where I am.

Jonny: Awesome. That is absolutely fantastic. We were chatting before this thing got started. You had brought up some interesting things about your take on the industry, what you think of changes. I liked how you framed it, because it was the whole, "Don't panic," kind of thing, which immediately made me think of Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. Yeah, I want you to definitely go off if you will on the things that change, the panic that you see. I see the same stuff. It's so crazy, folks just absolutely wiggling out about every single thing possible. Just give me your take on all of that.

Patricia: Well, no matter what, as a self-published author or even a traditionally published author, this crosses platforms, we play in other people's sandboxes. Amazon is the biggest sandbox right now that there is, and likely they will probably be the biggest for a very, very long time, but even if someone else pops up, even if iBooks really steps up or

Kobo just really goes like Gang Busters or by some miracle, Nook comes back from the almost dead, we're still playing in other people's sandboxes.

When that happens, they get to make the rules. I don't like all the rules. I'll be perfectly honest. There's plenty of things about Amazon policies that I do not agree with, and I've seen Amazon and their policies, and other sites too. This is not limited to Amazon, but I've seen policies that have hurt authors, and it's terrible.

I wish, for example, that Amazon would be a lot more transparent when they accuse people, say, of having fraudulent page reads. I've known people who've gotten that email and they do not have fraudulent page reads, or at least they have not done anything to garner them, but Amazon punishes them. I think really I would love to have a lot more clarity surrounding policies and procedures and when things are changed and all of that.

That's my ideal world, but we don't live in an ideal world. We have to figure out, I think the phrase I used is when the sky is falling, you have to figure out how to build a better umbrella to protect yourself. That's going to be different for every person. For some people, it means going wide. That's fantastic. I think anybody who wants to go wide should go for it. I have been wide several times. Right now I'm exclusive, but in the month, I'm actually going to take one of my series and go wide again.

We are always going to have these moments of panic. Amazon is going to change something. Kobo is going to change something. iBooks is going to disappear or become huge, whatever it is. These things are always going to happen, and in order to deal with them, if we don't find a way as authors to put things in perspective a little bit, we're just going to be going from one moment of panic to the next to the next.

Things like having a good sized back list, having a good sized mailing list, having good relationships with your readers, things like that can help protect you a little bit when the sandbox changes, shifts size and shape and color, and all of a sudden up is down and down is up. Even when something happens, we need to approach it with some degree of, I don't know, rationality is not the right word, but some degree of calm.

Just talking about one of the things that just came up recently was the whole Amazon not allowing arc reviews, or unverified reviews. That actually happened as I was packing to leave for the airport, and I had just sent out arc reviews, arc copies to a bunch of people the day before. They were trying to leave reviews and I was packing for the airport and I'm getting emails like crazy and readers are panicking and I'm seeing authors panicking all over Facebook.

Okay, let's take a step back. Take a deep breath. All right. Well, let's contact Amazon. You can't contact Amazon in a panic. Amazon is a company based on algorithms. One of my superpowers I like to think is that I can generally stay calm in a panicking situation. I'm the person that you want calling 911 when you slice your finger off because I'm not going to panic. I'm going to deal with it. I'm going to handle it. I spent probably a good two hours trying to talk people down, like, "No, okay. No, you can't post reviews right

now. Let's figure out what's going on. Let's write a calm letter to KDP support. Let's ask the question. Let's see if we can get some clarity, and then let's breathe."

A lot of times, I think that's what we need to do is we need to take that step back and breathe and go, "Okay, how do we fix this? What might they be doing? What can I say to ask the questions? What sort of clarity can I ask for, and what can I expect?" Amazon is never going to tell us how their algorithms work, their proprietary algorithms. I don't necessarily blame them, even though I really want to know, so let's figure out what questions we can ask them and go on from there.

Jonny: I absolutely love that. That is so important. I've been in this for a minute, been on the receiving end of panic before, which is always interesting. I think that one of the things that I do pride myself on is having a very similar outlook to you. It's interesting watching people around you panic, and then they suddenly, I've had it happen where they'll get angry at me because I'm not.

Patricia: Right.

Jonny: I'm like, "Well, that's okay. You can absolutely have that response. That is a complete choice, but we're going to work the problem now and focus on the solution."

I really like what you're talking about, because I think that it's a reaction that I feel the vast majority of this industry suffers from is to hear something that is changing or to hear that something is happening to another author and then immediately project just overwhelming amounts of fear onto themselves. For example, authors were burning down their entire business because of the GDPR kind of thing.

The amusing part about this was after it went into effect, they found out that their own website wasn't compliant. I don't think I could've laughed harder when I read that article. It was amazing. I'm like, "Folks, chill out." I think steps are involved in this, which you broke down a little bit. Definitely take a moment, chill out, breathe, and then take a step back and say, okay, let's look at the big picture and realize in almost every situation, there are some, but in almost every situation, especially in situations that are industry related, it's probably not happening directly to you. It's not because you did something normally.

You take a little bit of solace in that, that you might've just gotten caught up in a wave. If that happens, then like you said with the reviews, pause a moment and say, "What can we do and how can we reach out?" One thing I liked is that you said that you didn't write a panicked email to KDP because I don't think those will ever go over well.

Patricia: No.

Jonny: That's not a good thing at all.

Patricia: No. I've worked customer service before and customer support, and that agent, they don't necessarily know what's going on anyway. They don't know anymore than we do.

Being angry and being upset and being rude to them and being panicky to them is not a good way to get a good response.

Jonny: Absolutely.

Patricia: A lot of times it's just really take that single step back and, okay, let's wait a day. Let's even just wait an hour. Write your email, and then put it away. Don't send it. Put it away for a couple hours and come back to it and make sure that it's everything that you want to say.

Jonny: I like that. If you want to invent something that will probably save a lot of people's, let's call it social lives, it would probably behoove you to invent a mood ring app that is able to read when you're in that and actually block you from engaging on social media. Just throwing that out there for anybody who's interested. That would be a little heart monitor that's like, "Oh wow, that's a stress level that we do not want in the newsfeed. We're just going to go ahead and turn it off for now."

Patricia: Right.

Jonny: Until you can be calm and just breathe and that's very cool. I definitely appreciate where you're coming from on this just because I've seen, as you have, seen the opposite. One thing to keep in mind, folks listening at home, is that if you are reacting under this kind of circumstance, you are not your best self. You're probably closer to your worst self, and you are going to exacerbate the problem, sometimes like 10X what it actually is.

It's in everybody's best interest, especially yours, to go through this. Figure out how to achieve your moment of zen for a minute and then, I like what you said, if you're going to write it, put in drafts or put in a drawer, whatever it is, but don't post it. Don't post it. Never like that. Exercise. Walk outside, that kind of stuff, and just getting a moment of perspective.

The other thing is, and this might sound strange, is get out of the author groups because when you surround yourself with people who are reacting in that way, I can't even think of a good analogy. "Writer, here, you help me."

Patricia: Well, so there's this line from Men in Black, very old movie, that a person is smart. People are dumb, stupid, instinctual creatures. I forget the exact quote. I actually saw it just the other day, but I can't remember what it is.

Jonny: Totally remember that.

Patricia: A person is smart, but you get people in a group and they feed off of one another, and that can be a very good thing in many cases, but it can also occasionally be a bad thing. I work in technology for my day job and so I've been around the internet for a very, very long time. The one thing I can absolutely tell you about the internet with 100% certainty is that anytime you have something that is newsworthy, whether it is Amazon changing

the rules or an author breaking all sorts of records or the latest legal filing framework scandal-

Jonny: Oh, the [crosstalk 00:19:23] thing? Oh, hilarious.

Patricia: [crosstalk 00:19:25] forever. Anytime you have something like that, you have to realize that probably only about 10% of what is actually posted on the internet is true. The rest of it is people reacting. It is people posting secondhand information and we all know what the game of telephone is like. Secondhand information can sometimes be very accurate. It can sometimes be very not accurate, and so when you see people posting all these panicky things, just realize that yes, likely some of them are 100% accurate and you could bet your life on the truth of them.

You don't always know. You don't necessarily even know by the person. You could have a person you trust implicitly who is still accidentally without even knowing it posting something that is second or third hand that isn't exactly accurate. You have too many people reacting to something that isn't 100% accurate, and all of a sudden, things can blow up.

That's another reason to take a step back for a day, or even a few hours, and just say, "Okay, can I confirm this particular report from multiple sources? I can? Okay, great, then I can bet some money on it." If you can't, maybe file it away as, "Okay, maybe this is correct. Maybe it's not." Look at it that way, because really, anybody can throw anything up on the internet these days. Just be careful of reacting too quickly to things that you have not been able to verify.

Jonny: I love it. Awesome. I think this is probably some of the best info, and realize also that the minute something stops, something else will start. There's always going to be a reason to panic, and that's what's great about the world we live in. You can always freak out about something inappropriately. It's a wonderful thing.

Patricia: Yes, yes.

Jonny: Awesome. Well, Patricia, thank you so much for coming on. This was absolutely fantastic. Why don't you tell everybody where they can find more of your stuff and go buy everything you've ever written?

Patricia: Okay. Well, my website is PatriciaDEddy.com, Eddy with two Ds, so E-D-D-Y. You can find me on Facebook at Patricia D. Eddy. All of my books are on Amazon. Some of them will be on other retailers soon, but right now I'm exclusive to Amazon. Everything's in Kindle Unlimited. My Twitter and Instagram are also both PatriciaDEddy. It should be pretty easy to find me. Yeah, I love talking with readers, so see me on Facebook and check out my books and hopefully you enjoy them. I write basically all forms of romance, other than historical.

Jonny: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for coming on.

Patricia: All right. Thank you.

Jonny: All right. That does it for another round of AuthorPlatformRocket.com. Remember, we're here to help you with your business marketing and mindset, so if you have a question, want us to cover a topic or interview a special guest, just shoot over an email to show@authorplatformrocket.com.

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