



*[Welcome to the Writers' Rough Draft Podcast, where I climb behind the glamorous book launch world of successful writers and entrepreneurs and into the mind of folks like you who are just getting their start. Equal parts witty writing information and unabashed content curiosity—with a healthy dose of laughter thrown in—my conversations with these pros shares some of the trials, tips, and techniques that others have used to help you build your writing and content and establish you as a leader in your field.]*

*[I'm your host, Elisa Doucette, and I'm here to talk about all that and have some fun with Lise Cartwright today. You can find the links, episodes, and transcript of our chat on the website at [CraftYourContent.com/episode12](http://CraftYourContent.com/episode12).]*

**Elisa:** Lise Cartwright is a writer and social media consultant who thrives on developing the magic of relationships through her brand's words. She works with small businesses who want to share their story with the world, but don't know how to say it. She's a busy businesswoman with her finger in my pies, including crafting her own posts for her blog on Medium and creating content for her website, Outsourced Freelancing Success, where helps new freelancers make the jump to entrepreneurial mindset and navigate the jigsaw puzzle of clients and projects and deadlines.

Somehow, while doing all that, in just three months' time, she's not only written but published three bestselling eBooks on Amazon, including volume one in an upcoming series of *Blueprints* to help folks hustle on the side to create the lifestyle and freedom they seek.

Thank you so much for taking the time chat with me today, Lise. Is there anything I missed out there?

**Lise:** No, you got everything. I'm impressed!

**Elisa:** We have a very thorough research department here at the show.

**Lise:** Yup. That's me.

**Elisa:** And you are coming to us a little under the weather at recovering from strep throat. So I just want to say thank you so much for being on.

**Lise:** That's okay. No problem.

**Elisa:** And if you need to take any pauses to grab a drink of water or anything, I think we'll all understand.

**Lise:** Thank you.

**Elisa:** So, getting back to the beginning of that whole introduction, I love how, in so much if your work, you really talk about this kind of attachment to the idea of magic—finding magic in the world, and magic in business, and magic in language. How long you have had that kind of love of magic?

**Lise:** It started when I lived in Toronto. I would have been in my late twenties. And while I was there, I went to the School of Practical Philosophy just to do something completely different. And I've never studied philosophy at all, so I had no idea what I was getting myself into. But I liked the idea of taking something like that and making it practically work in your everyday life. And one of the very first things that they talk to you about is looking around the world that you're in, just your everyday life, and finding magic on what you see.

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So I remember coming out of one of those classes, jumping on the subway, walking down into the subway tunnel and, you know, looking at this track that is dusty and disgusting. And there's like a little rat running along the train tracks. And I was like, "How do I see magic in that?" So that's really where it started. And it's a choice.

I mean, that's what they're teaching you—is that you, make the choice to see what you wanna see or see beyond what is just right in front of you. So, I started doing that. And I've been writing since I was in my early teens. I've always had a diary and stuff like that. And so, it was a natural progression for me to start turning that magic and putting it into words. So that's kind of how that whole magic thing sort of really started, was through the School of Practical Philosophy.

**Elisa:** And a rat in the subway?

**Lise:** Yeah. And a rat in the subway.

**Elisa:** Did the rat make it? I imagine that is the burning question on a lot of people's minds right now.

**Lise:** Yes, it did. Got in between the tracks before the train arrived.

**Elisa:** That's a smart rat. That's a magical, smart rat.

**Lise:** Exactly.

**Elisa:** So, after you have studied kind of all of these magic and philosophy at school, you weren't making a living at that time as a fulltime writer, correct?

**Lise:** No. That was just completely a random thing that I did while I was in Toronto. It was just completely outside of anything else. So it wasn't until I came back. I moved to Australia after Toronto. I'm originally from New Zealand but moved to Australia. I was working as a fulltime administrator. I guess that's the easiest word to encompass what I did—which was pretty much everything. As any administrator who is listening to this would know, you pretty much do everything. I've always done sort of "executive assistant, secretarial, administrator" type jobs. So that's what I fell back into when I moved back to Australia.

**Elisa:** So you get back to Australia after this time spent in Toronto. Is it in Australia that you kind of started to get more serious about this writing vocation?

**Lise:** Yes. It was probably not even specifically writing. It was more just looking for something else outside of a normal job. I knew that I didn't wanna stay doing what I was doing. I wanted to do something online. I had no idea what it was going to look like. So I spent five years in Australia before we moved back to New Zealand this year. And three years ago is when I made the sort of decision to move out of my job and into freelance writing—after spending probably a good two and a half years researching.

**Elisa:** I was going to say, you have a very extensive kind of understanding and knowledge of being someone who is working full time job because girls got to have shoes and eat.

**Lise:** Yup. But shoes more so than eating.

**Elisa:** Exactly. There'll always be Ramen. There will not always be Jimmy Choos.

**Commented [KM1]:** "Making" or "make"?



**Lise:** Exactly.

**Elisa:** As someone who has been doing this kind of... you side hustled for quite bit of time beginning to write and take on clients.

**Lise:** Yeah, I did. I started hustling for about ten months. So I was working full time and working my side hustle, basically. I wanted to make sure I have a little bit of money, or at least a couple of clients, before I left my job. But when I did eventually leave my job, I didn't have more than a month's worth of savings. I wanted to hit the ground running. So I didn't wanna have too much of a buffer. I work better under pressure. So by doing that, it just made me hustle more. And I literally have not looked back.

And some stuff did happen when I did that. So I quit my job. I gave them a good two months' notice, because I've been with them for about three years. And I had a really good relationship with my boss. When I handed her my resignation, she cried. Mainly because she knew it was going to be probably a little bit more difficult for her, more so than anything.

And you know, one of the reasons why I decided to leave was because after having a pretty frank conversation with her, she basically said that I would not go any further than where I was because I was really good at what I did. And I was like, "I don't know what to say..."

**Elisa:** "Thank you for telling me I'm so good, I have no opportunity for advancement."

**Lise:** That's exactly right. And I was like, "Screw that." So I quit my job two months later. My then—sorry, my now husband was made "redundant." Or as what you guys call it, "laid off" from his job.

**Elisa:** I thought you're saying he was made redundant in your life. And I was like, "Wow, that's harsh. You were saying such nice things about him before we started recording." That was in case he's listening.

**Lise:** Yeah, no. That's exactly right. Oops. So he was laid off from his job. So, one of the really cool things about being able to give up my job was that, whilst I didn't meet a massive buffer, we also had his income coming in—until we didn't. Then I was like, "What to do?" And you know, probably for about five seconds did I think maybe I should get a job, and then I realized, no. I'm not doing it. I'm not going back.

So we survived on my income for 18 months because he had to go back and finish his Uni degree. He's in the construction industry and there just wasn't any jobs in Australia at the time. The GFC (Global Financial Crisis) had hit, so he's sort of a casualty of that. And it wasn't a great time for him.

But for me, I was like, "Wow, now I'm really in a position where I have to really hustle to get work and find clients and do all that sort of stuff." And it was probably the best thing that could happen. Not for him, but it really pushed me to sort of step outside of my comfort zone and just keep reaching for me.

**Elisa:** There seems to be a lot of debate and talk over who's a real entrepreneur, and who's a real small business owner, and who's a real freelancer. And I don't know that I necessarily am a big fan of putting labels like that on what people do. But you are someone who has managed to build out a business and a brand for yourself that is more than just doing constant client work.

**Lise:** Yeah. I'm starting to branch out into helping people along that journey. Because that's what I've found. I joined Location Rebel. That's how I got all the knowledge that I have, is from Location Rebel and

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Sean Ogle. Love him to death. Definitely without him (I've said it to him time and again), without Location Rebel, I never would have been able to make that step. But once you get to that point where you're out there and you are freelancing, other stuff comes up, like, "How do I manage that? And what do I do if this happens, and that, and that?"

What you quickly realize is that there aren't as many people like you in your immediate vicinity. And I've found that even more so moving to New Zealand. There was nobody in my immediate in Auckland City that is doing what I'm doing. So it can be a little isolating if you don't have the right connections and people to talk to and all that sort of stuff. So when I started experiencing that sort of stuff, that's when I went, "You know what, I really like to help people." So that's why I started my blog. So that I could help just go through the things that I've been through and share that sort of information.

**Elisa:** I speak to a lot of business owners who think of people who are building a business around writing, and look at us and say that, "Well, it's easy for that person to be writing as many blog posts as they have, or doing as much content as they are doing or anything, because that's all they do is write."

**Lise:** No. That is so not true. If that's all did it, I would be easy. I would have stuff done in half a day.

**Elisa:** That's the true "four-hour work" right there. And I don't know about you, but as a writer, I'm still desperately... Actually, I don't know that I really want the 4 Hour Workweek, but the idea is nice.

**Lise:** It's very nice. I bought this book called *The Productive Person*. It's got a whole bunch of different schedules that you can set up. And I chose the mind and body refresh, which focuses on a three-hour action block in the morning, a three hour-mind and body refresh in the middle of the day (which is where you just unplug and do what you want), and then you have a three-hour action block in the afternoon. And I love it.

I don't know why I couldn't have thought of that myself, but I didn't. And I work really well with the schedule. So for me, it was like, "I will just schedule all this stuff on this action block and this action block." And then everything else moves around them. And if I made more action blocks, then I just schedule an action block at night. And it just made complete sense because that's one of the downsides of working from home, is having the work/life balance, where you don't wanna be working too much. Because when you start working from home, you are doing stuff that you enjoy doing. Like, you don't leave your job to come and start doing something that you don't like doing.

**Elisa:** Hopefully.

**Lise:** Hopefully. Or if you are doing that, don't do it for too long. Move on to something else.

**Elisa:** Right. Go back and get a job or find something else.

**Lise:** Because it won't last very long. It can be a real danger. And my husband and I have had these, where he's like, "I feel like you're always working. I can tell if you're on your iPad doing something." He says things like that. And I'm like, "No. I'm just looking at Facebook."

**Elisa:** "This is extremely intensive work. I do social media. I need to know these things."

**Lise:** That's exactly right. So, no. Not just writing. Definitely not. There's lots of other things. Like social media management is a whole, you know, an extension of writing that takes a completely different brain capacity to do. You've got to come up with images. You've got to be really short and snappy with what

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you're saying. And then there's just running a business and emailing clients, making phone calls, making sure you're keeping track of your expenses and your income. And then, if you have anybody working for you. If you've got any writers or anything like that, managing their deadlines. So it's not just writing in any way, shape, or form.

**Elisa:** I love listening to other people's stories of their routines. I'm a big studier of routines and daily schedules. And I am now so excited, because that's the exact routine that I've created for myself. And I had no idea that it was brilliant enough to be in a book somewhere. I just thought that it was—that I don't really have an attention span for more than like, three or hours. Then I get fidgety and need to go do something else.

**Lise:** Well, you know what, it's like—why work from home? If you can't choose the hours that you wanna work?

**Elisa:** Absolutely.

**Lise:** That's what I thought. So, I mean, my husband doesn't like it because he's like, "It's all right for you. You get to work at home." And I'm like, "Yeah, but I'm working. It's—I'm not *not* working. It's just I'm more strategic with the time that I work in. I guess it's different." You know what, if I think back to my fulltime job, I could, with my hand on my heart, have quite easily had gone home at mid-day every day because I could easily have done my job in that amount of time. But I was paid to work eight hours a day, so I stayed at work eight hours a day.

**Elisa:** Absolutely. And then, like you said, maybe got like five to six hours of actual productive work done. Then spend a lot of time at water coolers and people's desks, and reading very important things.

**Lise:** Exactly. That's exactly right. When you're working for somebody else, your mindset is completely different, so your productivity is not the same. When I'm working on my own business, the productivity levels are like triple, if not, like, one hundred percent more than what I would have done in my day job.

**Elisa:** With all this productivity and everything, it is really hard to be productive when you are making your schedule at home, and not really having to answer to anyone, other than occasionally, you know, a checkbook or a client or something like that. How do you find time? You write and create an extremely prolific amount of content. I'm kind of in awe of it.

**Lise:** So I use a couple of different tools like for my blog, I use CoSchedule. Prior to that, I really struggled to keep on top of writing blog posts for my blog. And just so everybody knows, it is me writing on the blog. I do not outsource it. It's totally me. It's totally my voice.

So I use CoSchedule, although probably in the last month, I've really struggled even to keep up with that because I'm writing so many books. It's a bit of a balancing act, so I've just had to kind of schedule things a bit more and add another action block in at night, so that I can still keep on top of that schedule.

So I use CoSchedule. I use Todoist. Love Todoist. So I have my MacBook here and then I have my iPad beside me that has my Todoist list up, and then I just go through and check stuff off that I need to do that day.

**Elisa:** I love Todoist because I love exactly what you just said—checking things off of a list. It gives me such as sense, like a weird thrill, of accomplishment.

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**Lise:** Completely agree. I love it. When something is red, I'm like "Ahh!" That's the first thing I have to do that day. So yeah, I love that. And then the other app that I use every single day is called Focus@Will. And I use it on my iPhone. So I'm a bit of an Apple lover. So Focus@Will is an app that allows you to set a time limit and it will play whatever music you choose it. I have a selection. I alternate between classical and, I don't know, like movie tunes or something like that.

And when that's going, that's when I'm writing. That keeps me completely focused because I can be quite easily distracted. I might look out of my office and go, "Oh, the washing needs doing," or something random like that. And my husband also knows that if the app is going, that he's not to disturb me. Like if he comes home from work at night, and I'm still working and that's on, he's like, "Okay, can't disturb her until that's finished."

And I love it because it allows you to—I normally stick to 60-minute blocks of writing work. And it tracks it all for me. So it tells me how productive I've been. Because at the end of that, it also asks you, "During that time, did you do something else?" So you say you are 75% productive or you were completely focused. It's really, really good. I've been using it for twelve months now. And without a doubt, if I don't have that playing, I find it really hard to just be completely focused.

**Elisa:** I've heard so many good things about Focus@Will, but I just thought that it was the site that played music. And I was like, "Dude, I have Spotify." I actually, similarly—although I don't have that productive tracking (which is super intriguing)—but have a Spotify playlist. They are broken into chunks, coincidentally in the exact same genres: big, sweeping movie themes and classical music to write to.

**Lise:** I love music. And I have Spotify as well, but if I'm playing Spotify and I'm playing my songs, I'll start singing them. So it completely takes me off track, so I can't use that. If I'm playing music without words for starters—and then classical, anything like that—just completely blocks out any noise, just anything that might distract me. Whereas my husband, he has to have actual music blaring in his ears, that in his head, he's like tapping away to and stuff like that. But if have something that's playing that I know the lyrics to or something like that, yeah, I'm totally breaking out in the party.

**Elisa:** That music was just made to break out into parties. No one can help that.

**Lise:** Exactly.

**Elisa:** You how have a bunch of these... you mentioned these Kindle books or these Amazon books, and you've kind of really started getting into the space very quickly.

**Lise:** Yes, I have. I've been studying for probably a good six months. I knew like, for me, writing comes naturally and comes easily. So I was like, I wanted to take it a step further. And I'm looking to move away from having a majority of clients. I wanna just work with one or two, and then the rest be dedicated to books because I wanna do more of the stuff that I wanna do and not necessarily have loads and loads of clients.

So I started looking into Steve Scott. He's fantastic. He's been doing this for two and a half years and making a squillion dollars. And I thought, "Well, if I can get anywhere near what he's doing, then I would be completely wrecked." And the way that he's done it is: he has, in his first year, he published



something like twenty books. To keep up with that pace, you're literally having to publish one or two books a month. So, wouldn't recommend it if you are not a writer, for sure.

So, yeah, the first two books I did were completely out of my genre, and not something I was initially looking to do, but I started a course called The Bestselling Book System, run by Tyler Wagner, Chandler, and James. They are fantastic. And they just walk you through how to write a book. And the whole process right through the publishing on Kindle, in a three-month process. So by that stage, I've done all the research once... I worked with their step-by-step processes, so I just went through that.

I was the first to publish the first book with that program. And then like, literally two weeks later, I published the second book because it wasn't too much of a stretch to do both. They kind of covered the same information. I just changed the work outs. So one is focused at women, and one is focused at men. So that was those two.

And then I've just published the third book, which is *Side Hustle Blueprint*. Again, that one was really easy for me to write because it's really just about what I did to start to switch from my day job and move into doing this fulltime. I'm recognizing that some people find that really scary, so that's why I thought: well, doing a side hustle and making \$1000 extra a month is a little bit more achievable than making that massive jump to working fulltime as a freelancer.

**Elisa:** Absolutely. It's a very nice kind of segue to getting yourself on out of that nine-to-five where you don't want to be, and getting yourself into running your own show.

**Lise:** Yeah. And I think people, once they start to see that they can make money—it just opens your eyes. And you just go, "Wow, if I can just kind of keep doing this." So you know, I've had those three books that—so it's been what, two months since they were published, two and a half months—and I was having a chat with Chandler this morning and I was just saying to him, "Guess what, I just hit that 2K mark!" So I'm like, "All I need is like ten or twenty more books." And really, it's pretty good.

**Elisa:** It will do for a nice side hustling, you know, five figures a month just from books on Amazon. Amazon is notorious for some of their comments. Sometimes they have the funny comments, sometimes they have the productive comments. But sometimes, there can be some pretty troll-y people on Amazon. And I would specially imagine in the two genres you've looked at so far, how did you get past kind of that initial mindset fear of posting up somewhere, where people would then be just basically going on a site to review and rip you apart, either kindly or not so much?

**Lise:** To me, I know that I'm definitely a person that doesn't care what other people think. So that definitely helps. I'm fairly thick-skinned. But also, I mean that the content that I was writing was what people were looking for, and that I was writing it from a genuine place. So, all three books are not written with the sole intent of making money—they are written to help people. So as long as your intent comes from a good place, I don't feel that you should have anything to worry about.

And if people do put something up... and I've had a couple of people leave me, like, a one star review, all the others are five star reviews, so they kind of balances it out. I mean, haters are going to hate. That's just the way it is. And some people are just negative. When you actually read what they say, it's really a stupid thing. Like, "I didn't find this book helpful." Well, that's cool. It's not going to fit everybody. Don't

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buy it. You can ask for a refund or get it via Kindle Unlimited or Prime, and you get it for free so you didn't pay anything. That's kind of how I approach it.

So I always do a mental check when I'm writing a book and just go, "Is this actually going to serve a purpose?" And if it's not, then it just gets stuck on: I've got a pile of ideas that need more work, for that whole purpose. I think, then, that if you approach it from... And it can be scary. I know a lot of people had talked to me and said that, "Wow, I can't believe that you're writing books." And I'm just like a bull. I just do it, and worry about the consequences later and deal with it as it happens. Because if I worry too much or focus too much on that stuff, nothing... you know, you just don't do anything. So I'm always prepared to take a risk and see what happens.

**Elisa:** Speaking of bulls, kind of the "bull mindset" and just going straight in, and devil may care with what may happen afterwards, I'm actually going to move us on to a fun little game I like to play with folks that is super easy. Over the next two minutes, I'm going to ask you a series of either/or questions, and I want you to answer with the first thing that pops into your mind. We'll try to get through as many as we can and get a little sneak peek into the secret thoughts of your writer's mind. Feeling ready?

**Lise:** Good.

**Elisa:** All right. Let's go. Pen or pencil?

**Lise:** Pen.

**Elisa:** Mac or PC?

**Lise:** Mac.

**Elisa:** Coffee or tea?

**Lise:** Chai latte.

**Elisa:** Night or morning?

**Lise:** Morning?

**Elisa:** Good writing or correct writing?

**Lise:** Good writing.

**Elisa:** Noise or silence?

**Lise:** Noise.

**Elisa:** Lefty or righty?

**Lise:** Righty.

**Elisa:** Weird or typical?

**Lise:** Weird.

**Elisa:** School or no school?

**Lise:** No school.





**Elisa:** Outside or inside?

**Lise:** Inside.

**Elisa:** Clean or messy?

**Lise:** Clean-ish.

**Elisa:** Teacher or student?

**Lise:** Teacher.

**Elisa:** Town or city?

**Lise:** Town.

**Elisa:** Trains or planes?

**Lise:** Planes.

**Elisa:** Skiing or surfing?

**Lise:** Surfing.

**Elisa:** Fantasy or reality?

**Lise:** Fantasy.

**Elisa:** Love or money?

**Lise:** Love.

**Elisa:** Introvert or extrovert?

**Lise:** Extrovert.

**Elisa:** Good content or good marketing?

**Lise:** Good content.

**Elisa:** Smile or game face?

**Lise:** Smile.

**Elisa:** Call or text?

**Lise:** Text.

**Elisa:** Money or fame?

**Lise:** Money.

**Elisa:** Older than you are now, or younger than you are now?

**Lise:** Younger.

**Elisa:** Think before you talk or talk before you think?



**Lise:** Talk before I think.

**Elisa:** Have a dragon or be a dragon?

**Lise:** Be a dragon.

**Elisa:** Bestselling book or million-dollar business?

**Lise:** Bestselling book.

**Elisa:** What is one site that you are loving right now?

**Lise:** ElisabethIrgens.com/. And she does these amazing sketch notes.

**Elisa:** Oh, I love sketch notes.

**Lise:** I can't draw for peanuts, but I really love what she's done. So she, like, stayed up in my computer for a while.

**Elisa:** By that buzzer, that's obviously time we got off. I follow personally a bunch of sketch noters. I'll have to send you some links so that you can build out your sketch notes tablature.

**Lise:** Love it. Those were great questions.

**Elisa:** I feel that it's very important. I don't think that enough people spend enough time really contemplating whether they want to have a dragon or be a dragon.

**Lise:** I agree.

**Elisa:** And it's interesting too—of course I get to cheat because I know everyone's answers, but listening to the way that different people answer different things gives you a kind of nice peek into the way that they might think.

**Lise:** I'm pretty sure I'm a dead giveaway.

**Elisa:** Well, thank you again for taking the time to join me today. Where can folks find your writing, books, and business?

**Lise:** So I live at [outsourcefreelancingsuccess.com](http://outsourcefreelancingsuccess.com), and all of my author-sort-of-related stuff is at [lisecartwright.com](http://lisecartwright.com). And all my books are on Amazon.

**Elisa:** Great. And do you have any parting thoughts? Any kind of writer-ly business wisdom that you think folks need to have in their ears this week as they go forth?

**Lise:** Yeah. I think it's just don't think too much. If you are looking to start doing something, if you're looking to start writing, if you're looking to start a business, just do it. Don't over think it too much, and you'll be fine. There's no harm in trying.

**Elisa:** So true. Well, thank you very much.

**Lise:** No problem.

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**[Outtake]**

**Elisa:** “I am a strong person. I'm not a delicate flower. I only spent four hours crying about your rejection. It's fine.”

**Lise:** Exactly. “Oh, my god.”