

On Your Terms Podcast Episode 11:
So You Want to Write a Book? Your First Steps to Being an Author

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:09] So, before we start today's episode, just remember that although I am an attorney, I am not your attorney and I am not offering you legal advice in today's episode. This episode and all of my episodes are informational and educational only. It is not a substitute for seeking out your own advice from your own lawyer. And please keep in mind that I can't offer you legal advice. I don't ever offer any legal services, but I think I offer some pretty good information.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:35] One more thing before we get started, also remember that I am based in the United States, so that's what I'll focus on today. With that, let's actually get into it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:00:49] Hey there, and welcome to a brand new episode of On Your Terms. I'm your host, Sam Vander Wielen. I'm an attorney turned entrepreneur who helps online coaches and creatives legally protect and grow their online businesses using my DIY legal templates.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:02] I also just so happen to be in the process of writing my own book. I'm at the beginning stages. I am working on my book proposal. And I haven't shared this too much yet, but I'm so excited to be working on it. It's been quite the adventure. And I've always wanted to write a book, but I held back because I had all kinds of ideas about what I needed to have in place first before I was ever able to write a book, not to mention all the mindset issues and imposter syndrome and all the things that came up thinking like, "Who am I to tell my story? Will anyone care? People have told this story before, it's not interesting. What if no one buys it?" All of the things. If you've thought it, I've probably thought it too. So, you're definitely not alone.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:01:45] But I kind of had this, like, wild series of events earlier this year. I'm not like Super Woo, but I'm open to woo things, and I actually scheduled a chart reading with an astrological therapist, actually, believe it or not, in New York City. And she actually brought up the fact that I was meant to share my story in the form of a

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book and that it was also meant to be published. It wasn't something that was meant to be like writing in a journal and locked up for only me to see. And I thought that was so interesting because I hadn't said anything about it, and that has always been a hope and a dream of mine.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:17] I actually explored the idea years ago, but the person that I spoke to at the time shut it down pretty quickly because I had, like, 800 Instagram followers at the time, and she said, "Forget it," which, by the way, you'll hear about in this episode about whether or not that's actually correct advice. But I buried the idea at that time, and so I hadn't brought it up to this person in my chart reading. But she also said that, not only would I write a book and would it be published, but that I would fall into this process through an organic connection. That it wouldn't be something I'd have to fight for really hard or something like this. And so, I thought that was so interesting.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:02:56] And what do you know? A few days later, I was talking with a friend named Jen Racioppi, and we were talking about her book that she just came out with. And I said, "You know, I really want to write a book. Do you have any recommendation on where to start?" And she said, "Yes. I'll tell you where to start. You need to start by talking with Richelle Fredson." I was like, "Who is Richelle?" And Jen connected me with Richelle and, bada bing, bada boom, Richelle is now my book consultant, my book coach, and we are working on this book proposal together. I'm writing the proposal with Richelle's help. And it has just been an amazing process.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:03:31] But I really wanted to bring you this episode with Richelle today because I wanted to create an episode that I wish that I could have heard before. For the person who has always had this feeling, this intuition that they were meant to write a book, or you just have a genuine interest in writing and telling your story and expressing yourself in that way, but you also really don't know where to start. And you might have heard so many different things like, "You have to self-publish your first book." Or, "If you self-publish, you'll never be able to get published in a traditional

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way again." There are all these things. Even about your social following, you might have heard like, "You have to have a huge following in order to do this."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:10] So, I wanted to bring you the real deal from a trusted, trusted expert and resource, which Richelle most certainly is. So, in this episode, Richelle and I talk a lot about the confusion around writing a book, some of the myths, and we demystify a lot of the things that people think about, what you need to do to write a book, and all of that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:31] We talk about Richelle's experience and how all the different pieces of her career led to her having the book consulting business that she has today. I really love that as an example of seeing how your prior experiences play into what you do now and how nothing is a wasted experience, because I believe in that so strongly. And she tells us what a book coach is and what they really do for you. Like, the different types of book coaches that you can reach out to and who needs one.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:04:58] We also break down the three different types of book publishing, so from self-publishing, to the hybrid model, to traditional publishing, which I knew nothing about and Richelle was so helpful. And she really breaks it down for you so beautifully in this episode.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:12] Also, I think the gold is in the middle of this episode, where she gives us three things that people should do now. If you know that you someday want to write a book or if you're just starting out and you want to write a book, she tells you the three things exactly what you should do. She talks to you about some of the biggest changes and shifts in the book industry, whether you really need a big following, everything in between. I just thought this was such a great episode. It's actually my first guest episode that I've ever recorded. And I was so excited that it was with Richelle because she's just lovely and I know that you're going to love her, too.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:41] So, with that, let's get into this interview with my friend, my book coach, and consultant, Richelle Fredson, all about how to publish a book, how to start writing your first book.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:05:54] And if you like this episode, I would love for you to screenshot and share it by tagging me, @samvanderwielen, and Richelle, @richellefredson, on Instagram. Send me a DM. Send Richelle a DM. Let us know what you thought about this episode. And make sure, if you're not already, follow and subscribe to On Your Terms that you get a notice for every new episode. And if you listen on Apple Podcasts, it would mean the world to me if you rated and reviewed the podcast as well. With that, let's learn how to write your own book.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:26] So, I am so excited to be doing my first guest podcast interview today on On Your Terms. And it's with my friend and my own book coach, Richelle Fredson. I'm so excited that Richelle is here.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:06:38] So, for her formal fancy introduction, Richelle is a book publishing coach and consultant helping aspiring authors with book concept development, book proposals, platform growth, and book launches. She's also the host of her own podcast called Bound & Determined. And at the end, we'll share more about where you can connect and listen. Welcome, Richelle.

Richelle Fredson: [00:06:58] I'm so excited to be here. And I'm honored that I'm your first guest on this podcast.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:03] Yeah. I'm so excited too. Well, it works out for me because I'm so used to talking to you anyway, so it's not that awkward for me. Not yet, but maybe later.

Richelle Fredson: [00:07:13] Very easy.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:14] Yeah. Exactly. So, I am so excited that you're here because I wanted to bring you on today for two reasons. One, I am only taking a very select handful of guests whom I love, and you are one of them. So, it's not going to be a regular thing. And I want to talk with people who do things on their terms, who help other people do things on their terms. You're definitely a person that came to mind when I thought about that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:07:35] But, also, because in my own community, I know that there are so many people who want to write a book. And I think that there's a lot of confusion around it. I know I had my own confusion around it that you helped me break down. But there's also a lot of, like, there's only one way to write a book or there's a right way to write a book. And you have a lot of people on social media being like, "The only way to write a book will ever be self-publishing." Or, "The only good way to write a book is to do traditional publishing." And it feels really overwhelming.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:03] And I also talk a lot on On Your Terms about not focusing so much on social following and getting hung up in vanity metrics. And I think you're really helpful, and you were helpful to me in understanding that writing a book is not only for those people or people with a big following. So, I'm really excited to get into the real deal of book writing with you today.

Richelle Fredson: [00:08:27] I'm excited. I love demystifying publishing because, I think you're right, there's so much information out there and everyone is pushing their own agenda. And I have very little agenda besides just letting people know what their options are, because I think people get very attached to one style of publishing or they think there's only one route. But there are more options available now than ever before. Like, if you want to write a book, you can write a book.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:08:55] Yeah. I'm excited, too, for you to break down what all those different types are, because I remember that was the thing you kind of blew my mind with because I had only been exposed to people who had very specific types of businesses. And they were, like, book coaches who help people to self-publish. And to me, personally, there's nothing wrong with that option, obviously. But, for me, as Richelle knows, that was just not the way I wanted to go. But it was helpful even to understand why and what the pros and cons are. There are cons, too.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:09:24] But I think before we get into all that, it would be so helpful for people to know what you were doing before you started your own book coaching business.

Richelle Fredson: [00:09:32] Yeah. So, I started my career in PR media work at, actually, an agency in Southern California. And I was doing products like WD-40, and McDonald's, and the Sony Vaio laptop launch, and all of these very big things with very big juicy budgets, and just tons of money to spend a lot of fun to do.

Richelle Fredson: [00:09:54] But what happened was I looked around and went, "Oh, my gosh. The people that are sitting in these jobs, they're not me. Like, this isn't actually how I want to live my life." There was a lot of pressure, super high pressure. There wasn't a lot of movement and growth. And I just said, "It's for many people. This is not for me."

Richelle Fredson: [00:10:13] And I sort of accidentally fell into book publishing, which makes my parents laugh to this day, because I was the kid that never finished a book in school. Just forget it. I wanted the cliff notes version of everything. I don't even know if cliff notes is a thing anymore. Did I just age myself?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:29] I don't know. It's probably all online now, I know.

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Richelle Fredson: [00:10:31] It's all online. You have to go by the little yellow-

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:10:33] Just Google it. Yeah, I think you Google it now.

Richelle Fredson: [00:10:35] So, essentially, I started my career in publishing about 18 years ago. And I, again, started on the PR side. It was my comfort zone. I thought I know how to write a pitch. I know how to get people on TV shows. Like, let's stay in my comfort zone in this new industry. And then, over the years, grew through much bigger PR campaigns for books. I had lunch with Oprah in her house.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:02] I would have died, just for the record.

Richelle Fredson: [00:11:05] Delicious gazpacho.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:11:07] Wait. Was this in her Santa Barbara home? The one that I want to live next to one day.

Richelle Fredson: [00:11:12] It's beautiful. Yeah. Exactly right. So, I was booking clients on Super Bowl Sunday, and her old studio show in Chicago, and Dr. Oz, and all the big things. And it was so fun until it wasn't. That's really, again, a high pressure job trying to please a lot of people. It's hard because authors, really, are writing about so many things that are really important to them and really intimate and vulnerable. And so, when you aren't able to always match the industry excitement with their excitement, you know, it's tricky. But it was really rewarding for a long time.

Richelle Fredson: [00:11:48] And my role sort of segued from PR into digital marketing launches at the time that publishing sort of said, "Okay. Social media is this thing now. Email lists are a thing now. How do we meet those standards?" And so, a lot of the PR roles started to transition into digital marketing roles. Like, how can we reach the most people through these somewhat organic channels that authors have created? So, I

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spent a long time doing big digital marketing launches for New York Times Best Selling Authors and first time authors. So, really learning how to communicate that goal differently to two different types of people at different parts of their journey.

Richelle Fredson: [00:12:28] And then, ultimately, began working in acquisitions in tandem with that role. And that was really cool, because now I got to meet with agents and authors, and read many, many book proposals, and help decide what we would buy and publish. So, I got to use all my former hats, from PR and media to digital marketing and social media and all of that, to determine what would be the most marketable buy for the publisher. So, that's what makes my job now so incredibly fun because I get to use all of that former experience to help craft things from the ground up.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:13:04] Yeah. I can see that firsthand, obviously, as a client. And I love how much your background plays into what you do now, because as you have taught me so much about, that nowadays writing your own book, wanting to go the traditional publishing route, it's not this fairytale story that people like myself dreamed of. That, like, my book would just show up in Barnes and Noble and everyone would be celebrating it. And so, there's a lot of legwork on our own end for marketing the book. And so, I can just see how much that would help in what you do and how much realistic advice you bring to the table.

Richelle Fredson: [00:13:39] Thank you. And, really, what everyone should want is a book that sells for a long time. And I think sometimes when we get caught up in publishing a book, it's how do I make this a bestseller right away? How do I sell thousands of copies in my first week? And that's a sort of short sighted way to look at the publishing process. I mean, a book is this concrete thing. We're holding it in our hands. It's not easy to reproduce. You're printing thousands and thousands of copies. And, of course, there's e-books and audiobooks which take a lot of production.

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Richelle Fredson: [00:14:10] So, the goal is always how can I create a book that's going to sell well long term and sell consistently? So, part of that is that marketing lens of how do we get that flash and how do we create something that's sustainable?

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:23] What do you think distinguishes a book that would sell for a long time? What ingredients does a book like that need?

Richelle Fredson: [00:14:31] Yeah. I mean, usually tackling the things that are plaguing everybody all the time.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:14:37] The me too factor. People just being like, "Oh. Me too." Or like, "You're in my mind. You're in my head." I don't know if it's helpful, but when people on your email list or whatever write back and we'll say, "It's like you're in my head." It's always those topics I tried to think about, obviously, that's what's connecting with people.

Richelle Fredson: [00:14:55] Yeah. And it's a lot of the emotional components. So, when I think about sort of flash books that will sell quickly but for a short amount of time, they're things like fad diets or the next great cookbook genre or something like Instant Pot things. They have a great kick at the beginning and then they're going to slow down naturally when the next great thing happens. But when we talk about human emotion and the human experience, that is forever.

Richelle Fredson: [00:15:21] And it's proven to me all the time when I just show up more vulnerably on my social media too. Last night, I did a post about feeling really conflicted as someone who runs a business and is a mom. And my son is sick and I felt guilty for having to move things around my schedule. And my final line was, "We have to remember we're more than the work that we do." And the comments were blowing out with people going, "This was me today. I needed to hear this." And those are the tidbits

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that create a good book. Like, how can you get people jumping in and going, "This is me. I needed this. This sounds exactly like me. I see myself in your book, in your story."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:02] Yeah. That's exactly what I was thinking when you said that. It's like, in every good copywriting course class, whatever that you take, I always think of anything that I write as a mirror for other people - or a mirror, as my dad would say - that they're seeing themselves in it. At the end of the day, let's just be real, when people read stuff, they're thinking the what's in it for me factor.

Richelle Fredson: [00:16:24] Completely.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:16:24] So, I think we all get real excited about telling our stories in a book like, "Oh. I've had the story of my whole life." But the point is it has to be helpful to other people and has to reflect back to to them.

Richelle Fredson: [00:16:35] A hundred percent. But that's like a reflex for me now when I'm talking people through their book process. It's like, "This is so good. I love this story about your life." And how do we show up in the teacher seat? How do we now turn the camera and bring the reader into the fold and help them have that reflection or look at that experience?

Richelle Fredson: [00:16:55] But you're right, when people read story, anecdotal story or personal story, they're often substituting in their own experience into that. So, when people ask me, how much do I need to share in my book, like, how vulnerable do I need to be? How open do I need to be? Only as much as you're comfortable with and only as much as they need to get the point and see themselves in that story. We're all just thinking about ourselves.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:20] It is true. I mean, it's just the way the human psyche works. But I mean, the people who are reading your post last night were probably like,

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"Oh. Thank, God. I'm not alone. I'm not the only person who feels this conflict, and this guilt, and this pull to want to be both a business owner and an entrepreneur and a great mom, and then feeling like you're not doing either that great sometimes because you're being pulled." So, people can really relate to that and people don't want to feel alone, period, end of story.

Richelle Fredson: [00:17:48] That's the whole point of creating a great book, right? Like, let's just know that we're all in this together.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:17:53] Yeah. It's like a hug. I mean, I was an avid reader as a kid, and I felt like the characters in books were my friends. So, that sounds really sad when you say it out loud.

Richelle Fredson: [00:18:05] It's not sad. My husband says that too. Like, he has a few books and he's like, "I'm definitely the Holden Caulfield." He definitely has references.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:18:13] Yeah. I feel like that for sure. So, tell me a little bit about how you went from all these, having lunch with Oprah - which I'm now super jealous about - and to actually starting your own business and you're coaching? And is that what brought you to New York, by the way?

Richelle Fredson: [00:18:28] So, the publishing house brought me to New York, and part of that move was that it was a Southern California based publisher, Hay House. And the company grew large enough to really be competitive with some of these major publishers. We needed a New York presence, so they sent me out here with one other person to start the New York office and really start meeting with agents and talent in person.

Richelle Fredson: [00:18:49] And so, that was very exciting for me. I was the first one in my family to move away. They're all still back in California. You know, I sold my car. It

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was like a whole different lifestyle moving to the big city, and I loved it so much. But, really, the tipping point for starting my business - and this is like the ultimate On Your Terms moment - is I had my son, so I gave birth to Cooper. Before that, just working a lot of hours and managing a lot of campaigns. It was a lot and I loved it and it filled me up, but I was thriving on sort of that chaos a little bit, the go, go, go hustle.

Richelle Fredson: [00:19:30] And then, I had Cooper. And while I was on maternity leave, I was like, "If I could curate a business, or a role, or a position that only tapped into the things I really love about the work that I do, what would it look like?" And about two months into maternity leave, my brain started firing on all cylinders, just ready to be back to doing something. I mean, God bless motherhood, but I was ready to start thinking about something else. And, of course, still sleep deprived and not making a lot of sense.

Richelle Fredson: [00:20:02] But I would just walk to the local coffee shop in Brooklyn, where I was at the time, and just listen to podcasts and take notes and think about could I really create something for myself that feels like it would fill me up, and be an actual lucrative business, and allow me to not miss the moments of my life that I don't want to miss? And I went back to work. And, again, I loved everyone I worked with. It was a great job to have. And I realized very quickly the shoe didn't fit anymore.

Richelle Fredson: [00:20:34] I had this sort of wake up call to what I wanted my life to look like every day as a mom and someone who built a career. And so, the someday when plan became the now plan, and I just leapt into the great unknown. I had very little plan in place before. I was like, "This is what I'm doing, guys. I'm going all in." I want to help the people that don't have the roadmap to getting published.

Richelle Fredson: [00:21:03] Like, I've worked with some of the biggest names in the nonfiction industry, and they're wonderful. They also have huge teams of support. How

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do I help the people that don't know who to look to? And that's really when Purposeful Platforms was born.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:21:18] That's amazing. Yeah, people who still have incredible stories but don't have the same resources, obviously. That's really cool. And had you heard of book coaches before you kind of created this business?

Richelle Fredson: [00:21:32] No. And I have to tell you, I had a real identity crisis with calling myself a coach just because, especially being in the industry that I'm in, people are very quick to use that label. And so, for a long time, I was just kind of framing it as a consultant, a publishing consultant.

Richelle Fredson: [00:21:48] And when I first started the business, I was really focused on helping people understand the benefit of a platform. Because I'd spent so long having to turn down really great books because the platform wasn't there, because that's where the traditional publishing model was, and they still are. They're very focused on the platform. But there were so many great teachers and great writers that weren't getting the attention they needed because they didn't know how to teach online or how to show up online in a way that was effective.

Richelle Fredson: [00:22:17] So, I started really heavily on the platform side. And then, I was like, "I have all of this amazing PR and marketing experience. I know what makes a good book proposal because I was the person on the other side of the table for a long time. How do I take all of that knowledge and develop the idea for these great books?" And so, I just started doing it because I was also really confident in what I knew.

Richelle Fredson: [00:22:42] And so, that's one thing that I've never really been hung up on is like, I know that I have what it takes. It's just about doing it in a way that doesn't burn me out. And so, I had to build a formula that did that.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:22:55] Yeah. But I love how you went into it ahead of time knowing that you wanted to do things on your terms. I mean, a lot of people say they want to start a business because they want freedom and flexibility, but it's kind of a loftier thing. I think, also, when people come from a corporate world and transition into being their own boss, you have a better idea sometimes of exactly what that looks like because you've done the other way. You've given up all the small moments in your life and you've sacrificed, probably, your health, and your wellbeing, and your sleep, and a whole bunch of other stuff at the time.

Richelle Fredson: [00:23:29] I was sick so much when I had a more corporate position. I was sick all the time and I didn't recognize that it was connected to the way that I was treating myself because I was so focused on the next great thing, and climbing the ladder, and just giving so much of myself. And what's interesting is that transition into the new business, there was a period of time where things felt very quiet because I was used to such a juggle, and I had to get comfortable in the moments that were more quiet and not make abrupt decisions. Not take on a client because I felt like I needed the money.

Richelle Fredson: [00:24:02] And, of course, everyone at the beginning of their business does that stuff because you're like, "Oh, my God. I need to pay the bills, so I'm going to take on a client." I learned pretty quickly, about six months in, that if I took a client based on money, it often didn't turn out well. So, I had to get really clear on who the right person was for me, and that was just trial and error at the beginning.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:24:23] For sure. And by the way, if anybody wants to learn more about this topic, I just did a few episodes ago about client warning signs, and bad clients, and who to take on and who not. But I also talk about how, sometimes, it's good to make some of those mistakes in the beginning because you'll stumble through. So, I'll link to that at the bottom.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:24:42] But I was hoping, too, Richelle, you would tell people what is a book coach or a book consultant. Like, what exactly does a book consultant do for people? And who would need one?

Richelle Fredson: [00:24:53] There's all different kinds. So, there's certainly people that coach you through the proposal process and help you write the book and things like that. They're more of editors, I would say, more than book coaches. And then, like you said, there are some people who coach you because they have their own publishing model within their business. And it's only for self-publishing that I have seen. There may be other kinds out there.

Richelle Fredson: [00:25:14] But the way that I work is, essentially, you come to me when you have an idea for a book, or you have a business and you know that that book is going to be a part of your business and part of your offerings. And you're like, I have this coaching practice, or I have this legal business, or I have all these things that I do for entrepreneurs, how do I take what I know and create a tool that brings in business that fills my coaching programs that becomes this entry point for people to discover what I do?

Richelle Fredson: [00:25:45] So, people come to me at, like, the bud of an idea. And usually my consults start with people saying, "I'm not a writer, but I want to write a book." And I tell them that everybody says that. And I help them, essentially, develop the idea. And it's the marriage of what I know and what they know. And, together, that makes a really marketable idea. So, we work through the proposal process. And, oftentimes, I'll do agent introductions and help them through the process.

Richelle Fredson: [00:26:16] And a lot of it is just being that person they can turn to when, number one, they hit those moments of uncertainty. I'm not a substitute for therapy, but there is a lot of sort of therapy conversation happening in the work that we do because it's vulnerable. But helping them navigate all the questions that come up.

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Like, what type of agent do I need? Do I want to go self-hybrid or traditional? And just figuring out a route that's right for them. And so, there's no template to what I do. It's just it's connecting to another human and guiding them from what I know in the industry.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:26:50] Yeah. Yeah. And just to let everyone know, I hired Richelle in that way too. I don't think I said I wasn't a writer. Not that I think I am a writer, but I like to write, so I don't think I said it. But I came to Richelle saying, like, "I have a lot of ideas. I just don't know what direction to go in." And so, you were really helpful not only nailing down that idea.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:27:12] But I think what's been so great about our work together so far and what we're working on the book proposal now is that you've helped me so far to craft something that balances this storytelling. Like, the stories that I did want to get out and do emotionally connect with other people, to here are tips about how to grow your business. Because I didn't want - I don't know - a Gary V. style book or something. I didn't want this like bro marketing or this straight up strategic. I wanted the hybrid. But, I, obviously, first and foremost, wanted to be helpful to other people.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:27:45] So, I guess I wanted to say to anyone who maybe has an idea but is struggling to figure out how that's a marketable idea, it can be really helpful to work with someone like Richelle.

Richelle Fredson: [00:27:55] Thank you. And more often than not, people come to the table and they have ten ideas that they're trying to fit into one book. I'm like, this is a whole series of books, but how do we not overwhelm the reader? And the beautiful thing about integrating a story, is, some people will learn from the tactical tidbits that you give them. And some people will learn because they see themselves in your story. So, having all of that makes a really complete beautiful book. I love the sort of straddling line of prescriptive memoir storytelling and help.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:28:27] Yeah. It is fun. And if anybody does something like what I do in the sense that it's very technical and can be dry and boring, I found that storytelling has broken me out of this cycle of I used to feel frozen about what to write about, because I'm like, "Oh, can I really write another post called what three website policies you need on your website?" That's how I write and so I connect. Even all of my emails to my list about these podcast episodes is all a story that then links to this episode.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:28:58] And so, I just find that it can unlock for some of us who feel like we have to express ourselves in that way. And so, I found the book writing or book proposal writing process really freeing in that way.

Richelle Fredson: [00:29:11] Yeah. Absolutely.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:29:13] I think it would be helpful for you to explain to people what the publishing options are and then like what the differences are between options like self-publishing, traditional publishing, hybrid, all of that.

Richelle Fredson: [00:29:24] So, the three options are what you just said, self-publishing, hybrid, and traditional.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:29:30] You taught me a lot.

Richelle Fredson: [00:29:30] Yeah. You're such a good student. Let's start from sort of the biggest down. So, traditional publishing is what people mostly know about book publishing. It's Simon and Schuster. It's Random House. It's the agent process. So, you would need to create a book proposal and you would need to have a pretty thriving platform. So, your social media is kicked off, you've started building a community - and I don't like to assign a number to that because I have seen books with 5,000 followers get

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a six figure deal. And I've seen people with 200,000 followers get a more modest deal. So, I don't like to give a number.

Richelle Fredson: [00:30:10] It's really about are you showing up and talking about what you want to write this book about? Are you present? Are you showing up publicly to teach or to create conversation in communities? So, you need the proposal. You need that platform to be thriving. And then, you would need an agent.

Richelle Fredson: [00:30:28] So, the first sort of hurdle is getting an agent to represent you, because they're the ones that are going to go and knock on the doors of all the publishers and say, "I have something really great that you should pay attention to." Your agent is like your best friend in this process. It's why I work so closely with agents because, to me, it's an energetic decision in addition to sort of a tactical decision. You want to work with an agent that's going to champion you. And so, it has to be the right fit. So, once you've secured your agent, they will look at your proposal and make any tweaks that they feel it needs.

Richelle Fredson: [00:31:01] And then, you're sort of off to the races. You will start getting some interest from publishers. Your agent sends out your proposal. And you have publisher meetings - and now they're on Zoom. But you, essentially, talk to their editorial team, sometimes their marketing and salespeople, and they will make a decision if it's something they'd like to publish. And then, they offer you an amount of money, and that's called an advance. So, you get paid an advance to write the book.

Richelle Fredson: [00:31:30] For first time authors, it could be \$10,000 to \$250,000 up to \$500,000. I've seen it in every range possible. But, typically, first time author advances are a little bit more modest, unless you have a sizable platform.

Richelle Fredson: [00:31:47] So, that's the traditional publishing process. You, obviously, have internal teams, so you have a marketing team, you have a sales team,

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you have your on staff editors, you have distribution so it's being put in Barnes and Noble and trying to be sold to Target and Costco and all the big box stores. So, it's sort of this all encompassing way to publish.

Richelle Fredson: [00:32:09] The challenge in today's market is that it does skew platform heavy. So, to break through the noise, you either need a really strong proposal that builds the case or you need a really strong platform, preferably both.

Richelle Fredson: [00:32:26] But hybrid publishing, which is the middle ground - so the middle ground between self-publishing and traditional publishing - is a more recent model that's emerged over about five, six years - credibly speaking over the last five, six years - and has basically been formed of people that left traditional publishing because they felt it wasn't an author-centric model.

Richelle Fredson: [00:32:46] So, they wanted to leave the sort of stricter business side of publishing and create a model that put more of the power back in the author's hands. It doesn't require you to sign over your creative rights to your material. You don't need an agent. You need a proposal. But the whole point being that they acquire more based on content, less about platform. Whereas, in traditional publishing, the platform is more of a contender for getting a deal.

Richelle Fredson: [00:33:13] So, hybrid publishing you do not get paid in advance. You pay for the services that you use within the publisher. So, if you want to use their editorial services, there's a price for that. If you want to have them design your cover, if you want them to sell your book and distribute it, there's a price point for all of that. Kind of all in, you could expect about \$15,000 for that. You're also paying for the cost to print the books, which is in there.

Richelle Fredson: [00:33:38] But the highlight being, you earn more of a royalty on each book sold. So, you can earn anywhere from 30 to 85 percent on every book you

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sell. As opposed to traditional publishing, you get on average ten percent. So, there is opportunity to make a little bit more money faster, though you're not getting paid in advance. But you get to be in creative control, which for a lot of my clients, they really want. And you're faster to market.

Richelle Fredson: [00:34:09] So, traditional publishing, there's not a lot of wiggle room on the timeline. You can expect 18 to 24 months from the moment that you sell the book. From the moment you sell the book to the publisher, not counting proposal and all that other stuff. In hybrid publishing, you could expect nine months to a year. So, if you're someone who's like, "I need a book in my business stat," that can be really helpful to look at the hybrid publishing model. And I have a couple of clients that just really love having more of that creative control. And then, beyond hybrid publishing, they're self-publishing and that is the you and you model.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:34:43] So, it's you.

Richelle Fredson: [00:34:44] So, essentially, it's all on you. And I have clients and friends that have self-published and love it and wouldn't do it any other way, but what they learned from book one to book two and book three is that they needed to hire support. So, to make a really professional product, you will need to hire an editor, and a designer, and all of those things because you want it to look substantial and be competitive in the market.

Richelle Fredson: [00:35:10] So, of course, you're making 100 percent of the money, which is awesome. You just need to know that you're going to invest in some support from editorial and design to make sure you get it out there.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:25] Have you ever felt lost about where to begin with the legal side of protecting your online business? Some people say you can just wing it at the beginning and get officially set up later. Not a good idea, by the way. Whether you're

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afraid to even start working with clients because you don't want to do something wrong legally and then get in trouble or your business is growing and you sort of forgot to take care of the legal pieces, I've got you.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:35:48] I don't want you to live in fear of the internet police coming after you and your business, but you do have to do certain things and get certain things in place in order to legally and safely run your business online. As much as it just feels like an unregulated Wild Wild West online, that is very much not the case.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:36:04] As an attorney turned entrepreneur and former corporate litigator, I can assure you that there are rules. There are real steps that everybody who runs or starts an online business needs to take. And you're not behind at all. We can get you set up and following the rules right away. In fact, we can even do it today.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:36:21] I want to teach you the five very simple steps to take to legally protect and grow your online business. You don't need an MBA to be a successful entrepreneur and stay out of legal hot water, but you do need to dot your legal I's and cross your T's in a few key areas that can't be skipped.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:36:36] That's exactly what I'll teach you in my free one hour legal workshop called Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow your Online Business. Just head to mylegalworkshop.com, drop in your email address, pick the time, and I'll send you a link to watch the workshop video whenever you have time.

Richelle Fredson: [00:36:51] This is the best place to begin if you're just getting started legally legitimizing your business, so head on over to mylegalworkshop.com and sign up to watch Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow your Online Business now.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:37:08] That was so helpful. Before working with you, I didn't even know that the hybrid model existed. And I think it's really helpful for people to understand that there are different options. What would you tell someone, though, who has this idea, wants to start a book, is at the beginning of the process, really doesn't know where to go about which one of these little branches to choose? Like, which one is right for the right person?

Richelle Fredson: [00:37:33] Yeah. That's a really great question. I think at the beginning, you don't need to decide. I think the beginning is, what is this book going to be and what is the impact that I want to make? Which is why even my friends who have self-published would tell you the value of doing a book proposal, even if you want to self-publish. Because, as you're experiencing now, the discovery that comes from creating a book proposal and the clarity and defining the mission and all of that is really invaluable.

Richelle Fredson: [00:38:02] So, you want to go through that process and then go, How long do I want to wait to have the book out? Do I want to take the time to build a more substantial platform? Is my business ready to launch this book? There's a lot of personal considerations. But at the beginning it's like, let's just figure out what the book is and feel confident in that so that I can feel empowered to make the right decision on how I want to publish.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:38:28] Yeah. Really give yourself options. And it sounds like one of the most important things to think about ahead of time would be how does this fit into my business, considering everyone who listens to this podcast is an entrepreneur. So, if you're writing this book as a personal project versus is this going to be an entry point to a funnel or is this part of your marketing. And even as you're describing all the different options, I'm thinking how long term this is. Like, how much this is in the long game.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:38:55] So, for somebody like me now who's been in business for, like, five years I was like, "Okay. It doesn't matter to me it takes a couple of years." Like, we're planning for things that are that long term. So, I could see an argument for maybe going more of the hybrid or self-publishing route if you're closer to the beginning of your business need to get your feet under you and start that marketing funnel. As opposed to this being something that you have an audience to sell to already.

Richelle Fredson: [00:39:21] I mean, the truth is your business or your platform are your only customers at the beginning. Which is part of why traditional publishing puts so much emphasis on the platform because they're like, "This lessons are risks." If we know that we can marry our contacts with their contacts, we have a better chance of success. And, obviously, in traditional, you get a certain number of weeks of PR and marketing support, which is awesome. Hybrid is now matching that, too, with some of their services. If you self-publish those are additional investments you're going to make for yourself.

Richelle Fredson: [00:39:56] So, look, for the average business owner or entrepreneur, the number one question you should be asking yourself is, Is this a tool to grow my business? Because you can integrate so much of yourself and your personal experience into this, but the book should be rooted in what your core expertise is.

Richelle Fredson: [00:40:12] And that's something that we've talked about in our work together, especially traditional publishers, they want to know that your first book out of the gate is grounded in what you do. So, you have a better chance if you have a business of your own, or you're starting a non-profit, or any of those things that you want to make sure that the book is an offshoot of what that core expertise is.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:40:35] And I know that so many people think that writing a book, in it of itself, and then selling that book is what makes you rich. I mean, not only through our own work together - I wish you guys could see Richelle laughing - but even

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just in our conversation, it sounded to me like what people should be focusing on instead is how the book will actually be part of the marketing funnel that could make you rich because it leads to the service, the program, the product, whatever that you sell. But the book itself does not make you rich. I feel like you should have this like a big sign somewhere.

Richelle Fredson: [00:41:08] I do. very time I speak in public, I go, "Do not write a book to make money. Launch a course, launch a mastermind, a group program, and a membership, anything." A book is so wonderful for so many reasons. I mean, again, like bringing in clients, growing your business legacy, all of those beautiful things. But it's not a fast moneymaker. There's this beautiful permanence to it, which we talked about earlier, but it really, really is the long game, but it's an incredible tool for opening more doors of opportunity.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:41:38] I always think about Phoebe Lapine who wrote The Wellness Project. And so, she wrote The Wellness Project which chronicled 12 months of her life where she focused on a different wellness aspect each month. And so, it's kind of broken up The Happiness Project. And then, she started a group program called The Wellness Project, so every time people were reading the book, they were then going to her website, opting into her email list. Then, she was emailing out however many times a year to say, "Hey, this group program is opening." And then, people were enrolling in this program. And I was like, "Oh, that's how a book fits into this marketing funnel."

Richelle Fredson: [00:42:12] It's so good. And I use my client, Chrissy King, as an example all the time - and she's so great. And so, she wrote an article for Shape that was around body liberation and her experience in the fitness industry. And she got contacted by a publisher that was like, "Would you write a book?" And it was a great offer. She had no clue. And she would tell the story the same herself. But she had no clue how to make this decision and was this the right decision. And so, she reached out

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to friends who put her in touch with a literary agent who then sent her to me because we know the power of a great book proposal. And so, that book proposal was a significant difference in publisher interest and offers for her. And that's the truth.

Richelle Fredson: [00:43:01] And she's not the only example I have like that. It's like if you're out there in the world doing great work and making waves in your industry, there's probably people already watching you. I have a number of clients who say, "Oh, my gosh. [Torture or Hachette] are following me." Or, "An editor reached out to me." And what I always tell them is like, "Great. Now, write the book proposal." Because it's hard to hit pause for a minute because you want to take that opportunity.

Richelle Fredson: [00:43:30] But doing a great book proposal puts the power back in your hands so you can negotiate for the best deal possible. I had a client who had an offer on the table, a great offer. She called me and I said, "Write the proposal. Write the proposal." She's like, "Are you kidding me? Like, they sent me the contract." And she got three times the offer. She knew she wanted to be with that publisher. It gave you negotiating power, and I'm all about giving authors the power to make those decisions for themselves.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:43:55] Yeah. Because when you have clarity, you can speak so much more confidently about what you're actually bringing to the table. But when it's a lofty idea, it would be really hard. But I feel like if you walk in there with a book proposal, you can actually say to them, "This is exactly what I'm going to talk about. This is how it's going to connect. This is what I'm going to teach people. This is what's unique about it. This is what people are already asking for." I feel like that would be so helpful.

Richelle Fredson: [00:44:17] And social media has just opened up opportunity, too, like in that example of Chrissy sharing the article for Shape. And I have a client who is a sex

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therapist, and she has editors from publishers following her. And it's cool when you don't know who's lurking, like, not in a creepy way.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:44:34] In general, by the way.

Richelle Fredson: [00:44:35] In general. It goes beyond editors.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:44:40] Just learn a lot.

Richelle Fredson: [00:44:42] Lots of great people. But in the best sense, professionals who can help you get your book done. But I think it's a great sort of reminder to be conscious in the way that we're teaching, and sharing, and being consistent about it because you just never know where the opportunities are going to come from.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:45:00] And you actually were so helpful in teaching this golden nugget I want to pass on to other people. Once I had my head around what's the book going to be about, what's the general premise, then you started telling me like, "Make sure that you're actually teaching about those topics, so that if someone goes and looks at 30,000 foot view of your business, do they see some blog posts about this, if you have a podcast, or a YouTube video, or whatever." But making sure that you're actually touching on those things and that they really are my core teaching areas, I guess.

Richelle Fredson: [00:45:30] It's interesting because I think a few years ago, publishers weren't looking so specifically at people's businesses, and now they are. So, the client who went through my book proposal program - and he's got this really killer book idea - we built out the proposal, it's so, so good. And he sent it to a few agents that were all like, "I'm obsessed with you. I love this. I can see the need for this." But there's no place in your business where you can use this as a tool. That's what I mean about that disconnect between what you want to write about and your core expertise.

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Richelle Fredson: [00:46:02] And while it was his core expertise, there was no offering in his business to sell it long term. So, he actually hit pause and said, "I'm going to go build an arm of my business that supports this." And I have no doubt that once that's up and running, publishers will come knocking down the door because it's so good. But publishers want to know that you have a way to sell it for the long haul.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:46:25] And that's probably what has attracted people to their community. I mean, the legal thing that I always compare this to is, don't sell people health coaching and then talk about vacuums, that's what I always say. Like, from a legal perspective, that's not okay because of a whole canned spam act thing. But, also, I think from a marketing perspective, it wouldn't make any sense if I came out now with a self-help book or something. But it's also the end of the road.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:46:53] And I think going back to what we were talking about before, for example, if I sold a self-help book, that would be the end of the revenue road for me just buying the book. And we've now just talked about the fact that books don't make you money. So then, what the heck is the point? Like, the book should be an entry point to the larger thing in your business, at least from my perspective.

Richelle Fredson: [00:47:11] A hundred percent. And by the way, your podcast has got me thinking about the way I respond to people in my DMs. Because I get people who are like, "What agent would you recommend? What do you think about this book idea?" Number one, I can't make any of those decisions without being so immersed in what you do and who you are. But it's interesting because I could see now how any type of response in those situations could be problematic.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:47:34] It can be. We just have no idea what the person on the other end of this question. You know that I'm obsessed with cooking, Richelle loves cooking, too, but I always think about this when chefs will talk about this on social

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media, they'll get asked a question about something about the recipe or changing the recipe. And they're like, "I need to know what altitude you're cooking at. And what kind of oven you have. And whether your oven is even to temperature. Are you cooking on gas? Are you cooking an electric? What are the tools you're using? Are you using cast iron?" There are so many elements.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:48:07] And whenever they talk about that, I'm like, "Yeah. That's exactly what it's like for us." When you get a DM from somebody, whether they're asking about a book or their health or fitness or their money or their career, it's like there are nine million questions that have to be answered, let alone all the legal problems that come up from all of that. So, yes.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:48:27] One of the biggest things that I wanted to ask you, because this is something I really wish I would have heard someone answer back in the day, is, what are three things that someone should do right now if they know that they want to write a book, but they've not taken any steps to do so yet?

Richelle Fredson: [00:48:42] Yeah. Read books.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:48:44] That's the first one.

Richelle Fredson: [00:48:45] It's such a hilariously basic answer, but it's true. I think the more that we read and the more that we consume in our genre, we start to see what we like and what we don't like about certain books. And it helps get the wheels turning about what we want to create. So, that's sort of entry level answer.

Richelle Fredson: [00:49:09] The second is - throwback to the platform - start experimenting. Start dabbling with talking, and teaching, and doing videos, and Instagram Lives, or all the things you want to do around that topic, because there's often a gap between what we want to write and what people actually want from us. And the

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more that we can experiment, and gather that feedback, and use it to create our book ideas, the more power we have to create something our community wants.

Richelle Fredson: [00:49:39] So, there's that, "Okay. If this is what I want to write -" if I want to write about meditation or yoga or how to run a YouTube business, I want to see you out there having some of those conversations and experimenting a little bit.

Richelle Fredson: [00:49:55] And then, three - and this is a tough one because there's a few in my mind - I would say this is something I give my group students as a task before we begin, go on Amazon and not in a snarky way, but start looking at some of the books in your genre. Like, if you know you want to write a prescriptive memoir, you might look at - I don't know - probably 90 percent of the books on your shelf would fall into that category. But if you know you want to write about childhood trauma or loneliness or entrepreneurship, search that category and look at some of the leaders in that space. And then, go beyond that and click on the one and two star reviews.

Richelle Fredson: [00:50:36] And this is what I mean about this is not snarky. This is intel. This is just how we strategize. Rule out the reviews that are like, "This was terrible," or "There was a page missing," or any of those things that doesn't tell me anything. But there are often reviews that say, "This was really great and motivational, but I didn't know what to do once I was inspired." Or, "I felt like the tone was a little bit this or that." There's this intel that we can get.

Richelle Fredson: [00:51:03] And what happens more often than not, especially for my clients, is it energizes them because they go, "Oh, my gosh. I see where I fit in the market now. I see where my voice, and my story, and my formula, or protocol, or whatever I do, my framework, I see how it fits in the market now." And so, it's both research and it helps energize you to get really clear on where you want to go.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:51:28] Yeah. That's super, super helpful. I always think of an ice sculpture that starts out as a rectangle, and you're kind of taking the chainsaw and making the little carvings. And so, one of the books Richelle has behind her is *Maybe You Should Talk to Someone* by Lori Gottlieb, and I remember when I read that and I really liked the book a lot. And then, I remember I read the reviews, and there were so many reviews being like, "I found her tone condescending," or "I found that she was too self-involved."

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:51:57] And I was like, "Wow. That wasn't my takeaway at all." And so, it was interesting for me to say like, "Well, that was the kind of book that I was attracted to. That speaks to me." And so, it just kind of helps me to find my voice, I guess, as a writer.

Richelle Fredson: [00:52:10] Exactly right. And I should preface all of that by saying your book is not going to please everyone or nothing you does.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:52:16] Or anything you do ever.

Richelle Fredson: [00:52:18] So, when it's tonal comments or this vibe or whatever it is, if that's not a match, it's not going to be a match for everybody. But what it can make you conscious of is, how do I want to integrate stories beyond my own? Do I have anecdotal stories, client stories, success stories? How do I want to move beyond myself to create more of a balance in the tone? So, yeah, there's a lot to be discovered, and I don't expect when people go through that exercise that they're going to know how to make sense of everything that they discover.

Richelle Fredson: [00:52:45] But that's where someone like me or a coach will come help you dissect it and go, "Okay. This is what's really valid about what we found here. And these are the things that are just like someone was having a bad day." We can't judge that.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [00:52:56] Yeah. Triggering them for some reason. We call them Lynn at Sam Vander Wielen LLC. Those are Lynns.

Richelle Fredson: [00:53:05] Lynns make it in the book too.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:53:06] Lynn is making it into the book. She's really made quite an impact. Because you have been doing this now for so long, what would you say are some of the biggest changes or shifts that you're experiencing right now in the industry and what you foresee a little foreshadowing of what you see coming in the book publishing industry?

Richelle Fredson: [00:53:25] I mean, I think more than anything, more choice for authors, more routes of publishing. I think for so long, it was traditional or self-publish and there were huge gaps in that. A lot of the books that were being self-published, people weren't getting support or didn't know how they were going to sell it, didn't have a promotional or marketing plan ready to go, there wasn't the prep work. Now, I think there's more options for self-publishing. And, now, we're seeing hybrid publishing, obviously, take a real hold in the market.

Richelle Fredson: [00:53:55] I will say that there are hybrid publishers that do this very well and then there are some, just like any industry, that can feel a little off. So, you know, you're going to want to do your research. And I'm always happy to give a few recommendations of who I've worked with previously and my clients have. Page Two is great if you are writing, especially, for women entrepreneurs or writing personal story primarily for women, they're great health books.

Richelle Fredson: [00:54:21] For any of the listeners that are writing very strong business books or sort of social justice and things like that, there is a great publisher named Amplify. Most people have heard of She Writes, which is great.

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Richelle Fredson: [00:54:33] You just want to do your due diligence. And make sure that if your antenna goes up about anything, that you consult a professional to make sure that you're making a great decision. But just more options, in general. And I think in the traditional publishing space, it's that arm of the business. So, the last few years, it's no surprise to anyone that a platform has been a key part of the process.

Richelle Fredson: [00:54:55] But, now, I've seen people get deals where they have a strong business and maybe they just haven't been showing up on social media. I mean, look at a lot of the therapists, and doctors, and physicians, and things that are getting great publishing deals and great books that have just been in practice for 30 years, they're smart, credentialed, well-known people that are just like, "I'm not going to be on Instagram a lot," and that's okay.

Richelle Fredson: [00:55:18] So, it's like building that credibility in the marketplace will continue to be important, whether it's through social media or within your business. So, just getting that honed in. And I think we're starting to see more diversity in publishing.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:55:35] I was going to ask you, what about representation?

Richelle Fredson: [00:55:37] It makes me so happy that publishers really have opened their eyes to the fact that we need to learn from diverse voices and amplify diverse voices. So, that's really a huge shift.

Richelle Fredson: [00:55:52] Thank God, my friend Bex Borucki started her own publishing company, so we might see more of that, Row House Publishers, where she publishes diverse voices and experiences.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:56:02] Cool. That's awesome.

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Richelle Fredson: [00:56:02] And as a result of not feeling that that existed in traditional publishing. So, now, there's definitely more awareness, which is great. What else? I don't know. You know, the second we get off this interview, I'm going to think of one more thing. But those are the primary things I'm thinking.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:56:16] Those are all pretty good things. Those are all pretty good. I was going to ask you about representation, BIPOC voices. I definitely feel like I see that on the fiction side - I read a lot of fiction. So, I feel like I've gotten more diverse stories. I mean, these stories have always existed. I think the fact that we just don't get to see them very often and they are probably not being given the same opportunities and platforms and exposure. So, I hope that that is getting better. I also hope that the equity, and payouts, and things like that is getting better.

Richelle Fredson: [00:56:45] Yeah. Exactly. Actually, that makes me think of one more thing - two more things, actually. One is that, I think we'll start to see more creative contracts in traditional publishing. Whereas, traditionally, the biggest chunk is the advance and then everything breaks down after that. I think, now, we might start to see if it's a more modest advance sales bonuses and some of those things being more prominent. They're happening already, but it's not as prominent, or sort of rev share models, things like that. So, I think people will start getting more creative with contracts. I mean, I think more equitable contracts as well.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:57:20] Yeah. I hope so, too. Maybe that'll have to be a template in my future. But I'm also, do you all make equitable publishing contracts? I would just love for you to speak quickly a little bit to that person who feels like, "I can't write a book until I have a huge following." I was stuck in that mindset for a long time. And I think, you know, talking about maybe how to balance what you're suggesting to people, which is like, focus on that community. And I know that you're talking more about depth of community versus metrics. But how do you do that while not staying

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there too long and being like, "I can't publish this business," or "I can't even start to work on a proposal because I'm not big enough yet."

Richelle Fredson: [00:58:04] I mean, it's interesting because I think they go hand-in-hand in a way. And, again, I want to throw back to my many clients who have had smaller platforms and still gotten really great deals from major publishers. It's a factor. It's not the end all, be all. So, don't let it stop you from writing the book.

Richelle Fredson: [00:58:22] But I think that the biggest piece of advice at the beginning of the process is to niche down. And I say all the time, a book that's for everybody is a book that's for nobody. And I think when people are starting out, their scope is so wide, that if they just brought the walls in a little bit and got really clear on what aspect of what they do, they want to write about, then it starts to energize how you show up online. And so, you get to then have more confidence in teaching, and being more public facing, and getting really specific in what you do.

Richelle Fredson: [00:58:55] I mean, look, my whole business are book proposals. Do I edit full books? Nope. And people ask me that all the time, I'm like, "I know my lane." And so, that makes me a really strong expert voice. And so, I own that. And so, if you have a very broad lens for what your business is, I would ask you to sort of start shrinking that in to a focal point that's going to help you, not only create a better book idea, but help you show up on your platform in a more effective way.

Sam Vander Wielen: [00:59:24] That's really helpful. Yeah, it's really helpful. My last question for you before we get into, what I'm labeling as, Fun Q&A - we'll see what Richelle thinks later, stay tuned - was about whether it's possible to write a book nowadays on your terms while also still getting it published and actually putting it out into the world?

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Richelle Fredson: [00:59:48] Yes, 100 percent. I mean, that is what's so great about this time in publishing and all the options that we have. And it's not that choosing a route other than traditional publishing is any type of failure. It's you making a decision that fits your life, and your business, and the joy, and the experience you want to have in the process. So, it's much more empowering than it ever has been before.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:00:10] Even now that you're saying that, I'm thinking even the route that you choose to publish the book can be on your terms because that can be to your timeline, the way you want to tell the story, the way you want to control the marketing and publishing of that book. Like, I was always thinking of it from a storytelling perspective and having somebody kind of whittle down or water down your story. But that makes a lot of sense too.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:00:32] All right. Well, that was so helpful. So, I'm going to force you to come back one day so that we can talk about kind of the next phase because you're also, obviously, a marketing PR expert. So, for people who maybe already have self-published, we'll talk about marketing or we'll talk about those people who might be in the book writing phase. But with that, I want to get into our Fun Q&A. I know the answer to some of these already for you, but I'm going to force you to do it anyway. Would you rather read fiction or nonfiction?

Richelle Fredson: [01:01:00] Nonfiction. It's a pretty even balance, like, I'm drawn to nonfiction because a little bit of it is research and, also, I like self-improvement things. I like things to open my eyes. But if I really want to get lost in something, it might be fiction.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:01:14] Well, is there a great non-fiction book you've read lately that you would recommend?

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Richelle Fredson: [01:01:18] Yeah. I mean, I really love Dying to Be a Good Mother. It's nonfiction, part memoir. I really loved Untamed.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:01:25] Oh, yeah. Untamed was really good. Have you read Crying in H Mart yet?

Richelle Fredson: [01:01:30] No.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:01:31] I can't wait to read that. After the post move, I was like, I can't wait to read Crying in H Mart. I'm really excited about that.

Richelle Fredson: [01:01:37] I want to read that. I'm reading Casey Wilson's memoir right now, The Wreckage of My Presence. And it's both hilarious and deep, those are my qualifiers for a great book. Like, can you make me cry, and laugh, and smore, and sob?

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:01:53] At the same time. Yeah, that's a pretty good qualifier. All right. We'll try to link to those below. Okay. Would you rather live at the beach, in the mountains, or at the desert?

Richelle Fredson: [01:02:05] Oh, the beach. I mean, I'm a Southern California girl up until I moved to New York. And I love being near the water. In fact, my apartment in New York is on the water because, just, I need it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:02:17] You need it.

Richelle Fredson: [01:02:17] I need it. Yeah.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:02:19] Come visit, there's a lot of water here.

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Richelle Fredson: [01:02:22] But I love to vacation in the desert. It's funny, I have a friend that lives in, like, Gilbert, Scottsdale, Arizona area. And so, when I'm out there and in the desert, like, there's something so calming about that, just like the spaciousness and the heat.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:02:37] Have you ever done an astrological chart reading with Jen? Did you do one with Jen?

Richelle Fredson: [01:02:41] With Jen? Yeah.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:02:42] Did she tell you you had a lot of water and fire signs?

Richelle Fredson: [01:02:45] I mean, I'm like fire, fire, fire up and down. But I think the balance to that in the day-to-day is the water.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:02:53] Yeah. Because I needed water, but I also needed more earth. But she told one of my friends that being around the desert, if she couldn't live there, then at least going there many times a year was really important to her sign. So, I was wondering whether she told you that.

Richelle Fredson: [01:03:07] I can get very zen in the desert.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:03:09] That's so interesting. All right. Would you rather have coffee or tea?

Richelle Fredson: [01:03:14] Coffee.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:03:14] What's your go to coffee order?

Richelle Fredson: [01:03:18] Right now, it's coconut milk latte iced.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [01:03:20] Do go somewhere near you in New York?

Richelle Fredson: [01:03:23] It's funny, when I'm walking Cooper to school, yes, I will go to either Starbucks or there's a place called Jacks. But I've been ordering a gigantic box of cold brew from La Colombe.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:03:39] Oh, yeah. Philly's own La Colombe.

Richelle Fredson: [01:03:43] It's so good. It's so good. It's like I have the spout coming out of the fridge and so that's most often what I do.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:03:48] That's what you do. And then, you put your own coconut milk in there?

Richelle Fredson: [01:03:50] I do. Yeah.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:03:51] That sounds really good. And always iced?

Richelle Fredson: [01:03:54] In the heat. And then, my winter brew is a little bit more confusing. I do have Lavazza Dark Roast and half Illy medium roast. I do a scoop of each and then in the grounds in my coffee pot. I shake a little cinnamon and stir it into the grounds. I'm telling you you'll never go back.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:04:12] So good. I know. That is so good. I love that too. All right. I know you love to cook, too. So, when you cook, do you clean up as you go or clean up at the end?

Richelle Fredson: [01:04:22] This is a great question. I dump in the sink as I go and then my husband does the dishwasher. That's the marital agreement.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [01:04:32] Richelle does the hybrid option of cleaning.

Richelle Fredson: [01:04:34] My mom is a real cleanup as you go. Like, is loading the dishwasher as she cooks, and I have such admiration for that. I am not that way, but I will dump in the sink.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:04:42] Yeah. I have a friend who her and her husband had to have a talk, and they decided that they had to clean up at least before they sat down to eat. Because they found that if they sat down to eat and then cleaned up after, it was like so miserable and stressful. So, they agreed. I thought that was really smart.

Richelle Fredson: [01:04:57] I would agree with that.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:04:58] Good hybrid option. Would you rather go to a fancy restaurant or hit up the best food trucks?

Richelle Fredson: [01:05:04] Oh, food trucks, like, 99 percent of the time.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:05:08] Do you have a favorite one? Into The Waffles, is it called Dingle?

Richelle Fredson: [01:05:10] Waffles and Dingies or something like that. Yeah, that is good. There's also a grilled cheese one, I want to say it was full of grilled cheese. I love a Hole-In-The-Wall Mexican situation too. Like, really good Mexican food, taco stand.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:05:24] Taco trucks.

Richelle Fredson: [01:05:25] Especially taco stand, yeah.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [01:05:25] That's the California girl in you.

Richelle Fredson: [01:05:26] Yeah. Yeah. If it's my birthday, because I'm such a Leo - you know this - it's going to be a fancy restaurant with, like, 15 people.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:05:38] What's your favorite fancy restaurant you've gone to in New York?

Richelle Fredson: [01:05:41] Oh, gosh. I mean, I love Scarpetta. I loved the Four Seasons before it shifted. I haven't been back since. And my mother-in-law also enjoys the fancy meal. So, often, my meals have been with her, so we do a lot of the Jean-Georges Restaurants and things like that. They always taste better when you're not paying for it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:06:00] You and I have to go. Yeah, it does taste a little sweeter. There's something about that. You and I definitely have to go to something. I'm dying to go to Eleven Madison Park now, especially now that they're plant-based, even though they would do like a custom menu before. But I am mostly vegetarian, so I'm very excited about that.

Richelle Fredson: [01:06:16] Yes. Come and we'll go.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:06:18] I'm down. My American Express gets you a reservation - shoutout to Amex - because they hook you up with the reservation. They're amazing. Okay. Last question because it's you, would you rather read a physical book like paperback or e-book?

Richelle Fredson: [01:06:35] Physical book 100 percent. I don't even know where my Kindle is. I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't connect to the material in the same way.

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Sam Vander Wielen: [01:06:41] No. It's not the same. It's really annoying.

Richelle Fredson: [01:06:43] I can't even do audio books, really. I really like to hold it in my hands.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:06:46] I get super distracted, and it probably doesn't help that the only audio book I ever tried listening to is Rachel Hollis. And, like, 37 seconds in, I was like, "No play, guys. You're gone." So, it's just-

Richelle Fredson: [01:07:00] This is the hard part, like, if the voice doesn't resonate, then it's going to be a miss.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:07:05] I called that one years ago. Not for me. Well, thank you so much, Richelle, for doing this. This was so helpful. Will you tell everybody, not only where to find you, but what you've got coming up and how they could work with you if they love you as much as I love you already?

Richelle Fredson: [01:07:22] Oh, thank you. So, purposefulplatforms.com is the website. You can follow me on Instagram @richellefredson. And the podcast, as you mentioned, is Bound & Determined with Richelle Fredson, where I teach, I interview industry experts, all the things. I have a group coaching program called The Book Proposal Blueprint, and I take people through a ten week program of creating their book proposal from the ground up and helping them navigate the agent process. And I also work with people one-on-one throughout the year. So, if you're curious, just hit me up, and we can talk about it.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:07:57] That's awesome. And it sounds like for anybody who was listening today and probably really had their eyes open to a lot of things that Richelle taught you, it sounds like The Blueprint might be a good fit, if the one-to-one

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isn't right for you at the moment. And you told me earlier that by the time people listen to this episode, you'll be enrolling for the February cohort of that.

Richelle Fredson: [01:08:16] Exactly right. February 8th.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:08:18] Cool. And the best way for them to get into that is to just reach out to you through email/social.

Richelle Fredson: [01:08:24] Purposefulplatforms.com, click on the Group Coaching tab and there's a way to set up a consult.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:08:29] Oh, perfect. Okay. So, we'll make sure we have that link for everybody, and we'll give you all the links to find Richelle, and the podcast, and everything in between. Thank you so much, Richelle, for being my first podcast guest.

Richelle Fredson: [01:08:39] Thank you for having me. This is so fun.

Sam Vander Wielen: [01:08:45] Thanks so much for listening to the On Your Terms podcast. Make sure to follow on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you like to listen to podcasts. You can also check out all of our podcast episodes, show notes, links, and more at samvanderwielen.com/podcast. You can learn more about legally protecting your business and take my free legal workshop, Five Steps to Legally Protect and Grow Your Online Business at samvanderwielen.com. And to stay connected and follow along, follow me on Instagram @samvanderwielen, and send me a DM to say hi.

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