



SuperFastBusiness presents

Behind The Scenes How To Write A Book

What goes into the making of a book?

Behind The Scenes How To Write A Book

by SuperFastBusiness



Kelly Exeter

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to SuperFastBusiness.com. Today, we go behind the scenes and we're going to find out a little bit more about what goes on when you decide to write a book. And for this episode, I've brought along someone who's very special in my life these days, **Kelly Exeter**. Welcome.

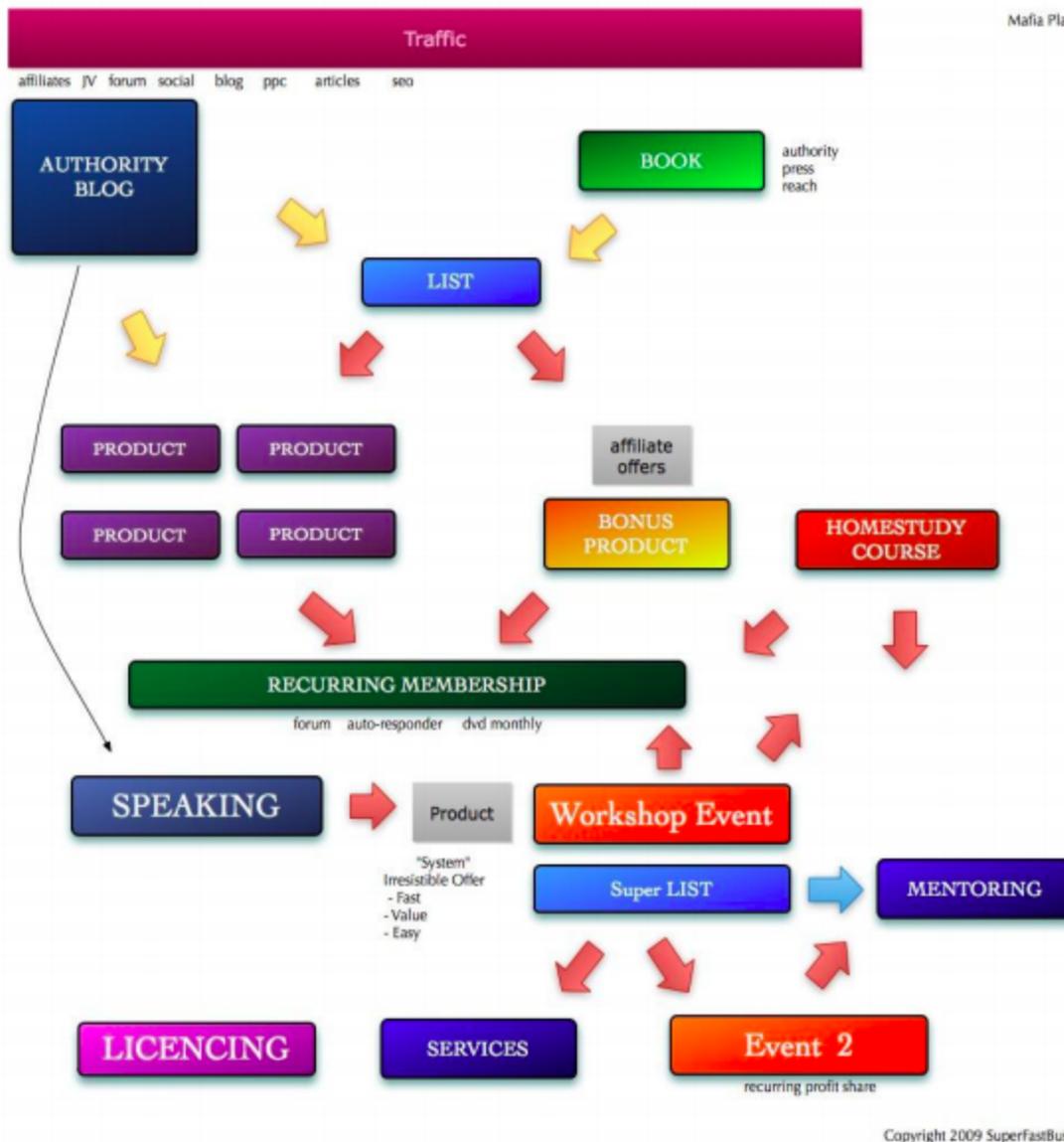
Kelly: Hello, James. Thanks for having me.

James: Kelly, it's no under estimation when I say you've changed my life because of your profound input into helping me catalyze this book that I've been trying to get out of me for a few years now. Actually, probably half a decade. So, a big thank you upfront.

I guess we're going to find out what it is that you've actually done that's helped this happen. And you're really paving the way for me to get a few books out of me down the track. But also, you're helping a lot of people who might read the book and get great results. One of the first people to read a copy of this new book that I just sent off last week is one of my children, who I dedicated the book to. So, we're already making impact. And I just wanted to express my gratitude upfront.

Kelly: Yeah. That's exactly what I saw when I was listening to you on podcast. I heard you present and I thought, how have you not written a book yet? Because the things that you say and preach and the knowledge and experience that you have is so practical and applicable and so helpful to people. So, I just know how fantastic a book is for getting those thoughts and ideas into people's hands. So yeah, it's been exciting and fun working on it with you.

James: If we look to the past, we would see some of the early iterations of my online business plan, which I called at the time a mafia plan. It was a plan that was so irresistible and powerful that you couldn't refuse it.



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The original Mafia Plan James was teaching in 2009

The Mafia Plan

It actually had book on there, and I'm going back a long time now; actually, probably about eight or nine years and some of our listeners will remember the story, but I'll just share it again; is that I had studied and studied and researched and mapped out what I thought would be an ideal plan for my online business. And I was setting about putting all the pieces in place.

It had things like a blog where you put content. You attract people to it. You get their email address. You keep in touch with them and then you make offers of things such as coaching membership, affiliate offers for products and

services that they find they would need that would also be a reward for me. There were classes. So, workshops, live workshops. There were high-end workshops. There was licensing where you license your information and get paid a royalty. There were services that relate to the things that the customers needed. So, all of these things I set about building out, but one of the items was a book, because I still think if you publish a book, you must be an expert. It's still a very influential business card, so to speak.

But I had this plan at home and I'd printed it out and I was showing a visiting American speaker this plan. And when I went to make coffee in my kitchen, I came back and I found he was at my computer and he'd emailed himself the plan to his own computer. And I just couldn't believe it. This guy was such a shifty guy. The more I found out about this guy the more I was angry and concerned that he'd be giving advice to anybody and that his integrity was below the gutter. I just was astounded someone would do this in my own home. So, I decided to publish the mafia plan at my next live event. So, of all the things on that Mafia plan that I've published and implemented, the book was the last bit.

A previous attempt

And I did try about five years ago. I put together a transcript from a training program that I'd more or less authored with the idea to make a book from it. I guess back then I was more into the repurposing concept of it. And I paid someone a considerable sum to help me, who came from a publishing background, a legit publishing company, old school and had left that business to go on her own. But she came up with this intense block. She came and visited, did some interviews, compiled some stuff, came out with a draft, and we had a plan, and it sounded great. We were going to be in airports and stuff and then nothing. Absolutely nothing happened.

For quite some time, and I think it was actually a few years and by the time she'd gotten over that and presented me something, which I think you've seen, it just wasn't, I wasn't in the zone. I wasn't compelled by it and it just lost its interest. I kind of shelved it for a while and in the meantime, I've been interviewing a lot of guests and clients.

I've had people who I've coached, like Chandler Bolt, come and talk about books because he's teaching people **how to publish books**. I've interviewed my friend **John Carlton about the Kindles that he publishes** because he's a prolific writer. He publishes books. I've had friends of mine like **Dean Jackson talking about his little books** that he does really quickly. And **Kevin Rogers has also done those sorts of books**. But I didn't want to do one of those sorts of books. I joked with Dean that I don't want to do a pamphlet. It was kind of how I thought about it. I want a real book, and I think Tim Ferriss says something along those lines. If you're going to do a book, do a book. But I think he puts a swear word in there. And I really wanted to do a proper book.

The talk that got attention

And then the next thing you know, I put together a presentation for a bunch of bloggers to speak at Tropical Think Tank in the Philippines at Chris Ducker's event. And I didn't think too much of it. I do what I always do, is I research the audience. I find out what challenges they're having and I ask the host what would be the most valuable thing that they could learn from me. And I put together my slides and that presentation was something along the lines of Double Your Profit and Halve Your Work Hours in the Next Year. I thought, you know what, I'm going to make it really realistic. Give them a year to do this.

But when I think of bloggers, and no disrespect to bloggers, I thought these people, they do work hard. They're not lazy but sometimes they're not so commercial. They might start with a passion or a hobby and then try and figure out a way to make money from it. It's kind of backwards from the way that I was taught, which is to start with the market with a problem and then find a solution for them and then take that to them. So, I thought maybe they could get some ideas from that because there's this one side of the spectrum where people are absolute workaholics; like hustle, grind. They're doing 19-hour days. They've got black around their eyes. They are lacking sleep. They're probably a heart attack waiting to happen.

And I probably was a workaholic at one stage of my life. I've been there, so I'm saying it with context. I know what it's like to work really, really hard and I know there's a physical limit and there is a price. So that wasn't an option. And then there's the other side of it like the super lazy one that appeals to people's

greed where they're going to buy some automatic cash spitting out machine and sit in their hammock drinking Pina Coladas and do absolutely nothing and everything will just happen by itself. Then they're going to hire a virtual assistant who just magically knows what they're supposed to do. And all of this stuff.

I think there's got to be some middle ground here. There's got to be some practical things that I've studied, researched and implemented and put into practice in real businesses that could apply to this online marketing scenario. So, I got up on the platform there and I started speaking and that's where you were sitting in the audience, Kelly.

Kelly: Yeah, I was. And it was funny because it was one of those things, and I mean this is not just, Tropical Think Tank's probably the best conference I've ever been to and my husband and I have been three times, but it was that first year, we were horrendously, horrendously burnt out. And so, I had been taking notes assiduously from every single person that had spoken, as I do, but just feeling very despondent because I was like, this is great. These are all great ideas, but when am I going to be able to do these things? I'm already burnt out and overworked. I don't have the time to do them.

And so you kind of got up on stage and I had listened to you previously on [FreedomOcean](#), which is that podcast you have recently just finished up with Tim Reid from Small Business Big Marketing. And I had gone over to FreedomOcean from Small Business Big Marketing because I was like, sounds great. These guys are going to teach me how to automate things or do fancy internet marketing that's going to solve all my problems and make life easy and solve all my business worries. And then the stuff that you guys talked about on FreedomOcean, for me, it all went completely over my head and I was like, OK, I can't listen to this podcast anymore. It makes no sense to me.

So, when you kind of stepped up on stage at Tropical Think Tank, I was like thinking, oh here we go. He's going to talk about internet marketing. I'm just going to fill my notebook with more stuff that I don't have time to do. And your talk noticeably lightened the load in the room because I think everybody was feeling a little bit like us. They're overloaded with great ideas that we didn't have time to action.

And you, kind of first of all got up and said, I've been you. But here's what I do now. Here's what my days looks like now. And they don't look like working all day. They look like working kind of when I'm at my peak and I make good money doing it." Because I think that was the other thing is that a lot of people had said, "Oh, we make great money." But what they neglected to talk about was the fact that they were all working 14-hour days or doing like these launches every three months that just used up a huge amount of time and resources.

So, you getting up there and saying that you surfed every day and you worked maybe four hours a day but you still made good money, it was very refreshing. And also, you then kind of laid out a pathway for getting there and a pathway that seemed quite achievable and doable. And you also were saying, "Guys, it's time to take stuff off your plate. I don't want to add stuff to it." So, all of that kind of combined, it got everyone talking at the conference. I think it was a really impactful presentation for everybody because it was something quite different to what we've heard before.

James: You know, that's something that you get to after an evolution process because the very first presentation that I ever did at a conference, which was here in Sydney, by accident actually, funnily enough, because I was a member of an online forum and I remember travelling up to the Gold Coast. Just after I'd quit my job. This would have been 2008. I went up to the Gold Coast and I presented to the members of a forum about traffic and conversions. How's that for a catchy phrase, right? That was my topic – traffic conversions, and I was ahead of my time. And they loved it. They thought it was great.

And then I went back to Sydney, didn't think much of it, and I went to visit a friend of mine who was speaking at an internet marketing event in the city. And my friend Andrew said, "Look, I've got to go back home early. You take my spot." And I said, "What?" He said, "You take my spot. I'll tell the event organizer that you're doing my spot." And I said, "Is he going to be OK with that?" He said, "Yeah. You'll be fine. You know more about this than I do." So, I knew that I had my presentation on my laptop and without any notice I presented this traffic and conversions presentation. And that's the first discovery I had that the general population when they're hearing things about online marketing, it's as if they're listening to aliens talk from those

movies; you know, weird bass sounds and squeals. They just stared at me.

One lady purchased my program and her name was Sally. She's a lovely lady. And she says, "I don't know anything that you just said. I don't understand any of it but you seem very trustworthy." That was kind of a half compliment. It was like you know, she's not buying it because I'm clever or she thinks I could solve her problems. She's buying it because she thinks she can trust me. And that was a real insight but I just went way over the top. I would have done exactly what you said not to do. And that's load people up with ideas and concepts that I was excited about but they had no way of processing.



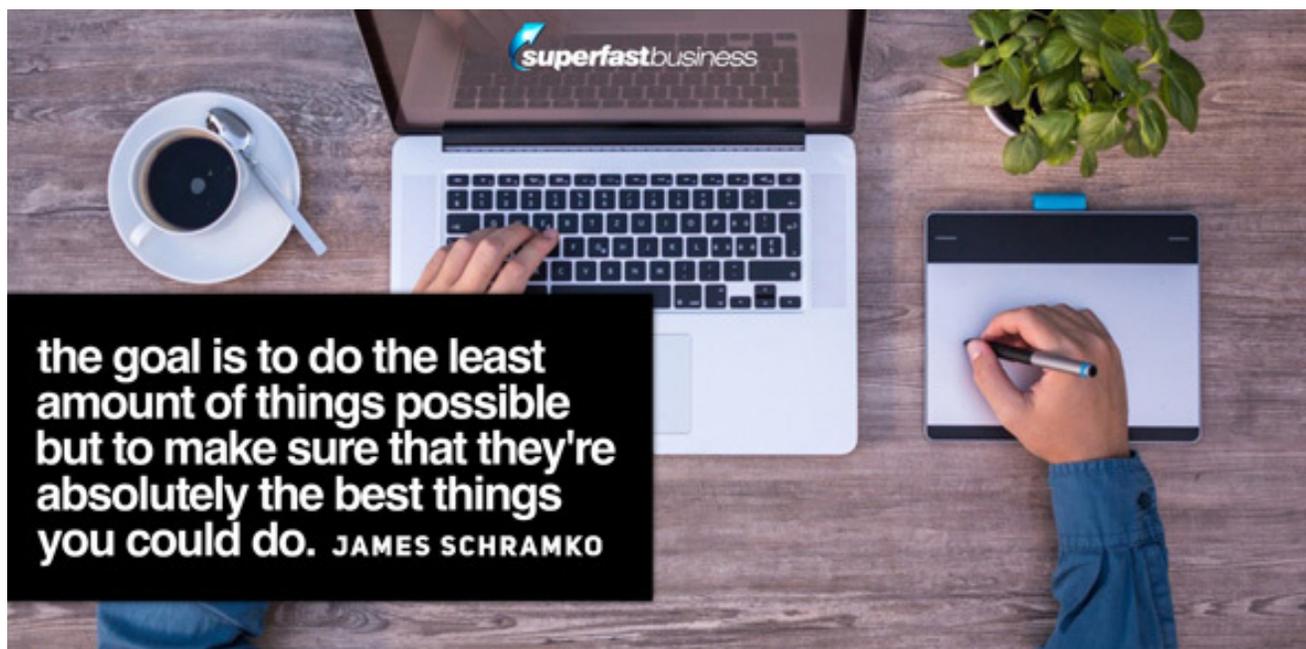
Three steps that are often done wrong

So, over time through my coaching, I've discovered the real secret to getting massive impact is really just removing everything. Just take everything away and just have one thing there. So, that's why that whole presentation that you saw was only three steps. And that's three absolutely critical steps that almost everyone gets wrong. You don't see these things being done well in society, especially like the main one is around self-organization. Most people are hopeless at managing their emails and controlling their social media.

Then there's the business model. Getting that right is critical and as you said, people are getting burnt out with launches or they're prolific and busy. I mean the host of that event, [Chris Ducker](#), is a great example. He's very energetic. He's a born entertainer. He's on social media all the time making a lot of

content. So, if you were following him, if you're part of his audience or tribe, it would be easy to think that's what you need to do, to be running events and having a service business and publishing books. Busy, busy, busy. Now, I know he has massive time off and takes whole days off and spends time with his family. But if you go on social media, you'll see him there a lot, especially Instagram these days. Back then it was Duckerscope, I think. He was an unfortunate early adopter of Periscope, which kind of went off a cliff. But we won't mention that.

I think you attract people who are going to be compelled to engage in your style. So, I've been attracting people who've decided they don't want to do as much stuff. They'd rather have clear objectives, do less things and keep the steps simple and just refine as we go. So, it's taken me years and years of refinement to apply the things that I learnt from normal businesses to the online world. I don't like the phrase internet marketer or internet marketing. I'm pretty specific when I talk about online business or even just business. I think my category is business because I'm adept whether it's online or offline.



But these days, the online side of it definitely offers more leverage and I seem to attract people with online businesses and I'm OK with that. But yes, the goal is to do the least amount of things possible but to make sure that they're absolutely the best things you could do and that they feed a machine that has tremendous leverage.

The other, third, thing was the team side of it. And that's something that I really did bring from offline is hiring, training, systemizing. It's really quite hard to do online if you don't have experience. And the fact is a lot of people just don't have experience if you go from school to university to a job, you probably haven't hired or trained many people by this point. Maybe a couple of trainees. Maybe you were a trainee. You might have had one or two bosses or maybe you've spent your whole time as a small business owner with a very small team and you haven't gone to scale.

So, some business models will require scale, but not all. A business like mine now, I get by with half a dozen people in my team and they're great. But we've had 10 times that and still made it work. So, the concepts have to be adaptable for any business and that's why I think it resonated with the entire audience because it's relevant to every person in the room. And I've made sure from now on that the training that we do, especially even on this podcast, it hits a broad base.

So, the idea for this podcast episode is to offer some insight as to how this book came about and why it wouldn't have happened unless Kelly Exeter came along and sat in that audience. And then I think we should talk about some of the things that happened from that inception point where you said to me, "Why don't you have a book?" And I said, "Well funnily enough Kelly, I did try once. But I just didn't get there."

One of the hardest projects ever

And I have to say it's definitely one of the hardest projects I've ever engaged in because of the resistance that can come up. And it was unexpected for me, because I'm good at getting things done. When I line projects up and I have a clear path, I can demolish them. But there's extra special forces against you with a book, and the ones that surprise me were, I mean aside from the fact that it's not all mapped out and straightforward but it's very personal having to dig through your own stories.

I've had to do a lot of research and fact checking and discussions with my parents and colleagues to fact check and validate and then even when I find out the facts, I have to make decisions on how far do I go with this and what to include or not and where does the story stop being interesting. And so, there's

that aspect is the personal aspect. There's the open-endedness of it. I've literally gone to my garage and unarchived records from the past, old sales achievements and things to remind me. In fact, I'm going to do a whole separate episode on this called "It's A Long Game," because this idea of instant success is probably holding people back. This has been something I've been working on my entire life, really. Everything that I've done today is how we've got to the point where we have enough material and choices to make a good book.

And I think you'll probably mention this Kelly, but we had a lot of stuff to choose from, right? By the time I've done all of my career up to date and then you know, family influences and then the online decade. We had so much to choose from, I think that was one of our biggest challenges, right?

Kelly: Absolutely. I mean the raw material that we got to mine to get to the book was both daunting and exciting. I think the hardest thing with you was that you had 10 years of content basically and then the content went beyond that because you had that knowledge that you gained while you were managing dealerships, but just the content that you had in forms of podcasts mainly, there was so much in there and you're not currently, hopefully by the time this book gets out you will be, but you are currently not known for one thing or one concept. So, the people who've been following you for years, because I went into the forum and said to people like, "What is it about James? What's the concept or what's the overriding theory or thought? What's the thing that keeps you here that he has that no one else has?" And nobody kind of really said the same thing.

What James has that no one else does

A lot of them talked about just kind of concepts that you've talked about in the past like [OwnTheRacecourse](#) is something that's very familiar to people who've been following you for years, but it means nothing to your average Joe. Your no-compromise approach is something that's very familiar to people who have been following you. But again, it's not something that would hook average Joe. And then I was like, well you've worked for this Lunatic Millionaire guy and oh my gosh, the stories that you've got around him are brilliant. They're such good stories.

Maybe there's a book in like the Lunatic Millionaire stories, like 10 things I learned from the Lunatic Millionaire. But again, to even have that book, you have to give context and you don't want to spend a heap of time giving context. You need to be able to hook people straight away.

So, it took a really long time but eventually I came back to that presentation that you gave at Tropical Think Tank and went, hang on a minute, this is something that appeals very widely. It's something that everybody wants. It's a promise that you can make and deliver on. Because I think this is a key, is that people have to be very careful to not make a promise and then fail to deliver. In a book, that's obviously a death knell for any book but you're not only able to deliver on that, like you're actually living it.

Because I think that that's another thing people are very wary of these days. They've all got radars up for people who sell them an idea but then don't actually live that idea themselves. People have been a bit burnt by that. So, that's why I was quite excited when we kind of settled on the whole Work Less Make More thing, that you were living it. There was an evolution that we would be able to show. And I think that that evolution is very important because you were us. You were the person who this book is written for. You know, working these insane, insane hours. And even though you were making reasonable money, like there was no living going on there because you were working so hard.

So, there were just so many pieces of the puzzle that I was like, this book just ticks every box of a book that's going to go well, that's going to resonate with the person reading it, that has wide appeal without being a book for everybody. But it's also the kind of book that someone's going to hand it to another person and go, 'You just have to read this.' Yeah.

But yeah, the raw material, it was crucial because the best part, we left out so much good stuff and I think once you start leaving out really good stuff, you know you've got a really good book.

James: Yeah. It's like the really tough edit. And you did warn me about that. You said look, because we had all these transcriptions of courses, we had the previous book attempt, we had forum posts, blog posts, podcasts. I mean I've done a thousand podcasts, I'm sure. It's just so much stuff.

Kelly: And then I got you to make new recordings.

James: That's right. You asked me questions and said, "Can you please answer these?" I remember sitting next to the Eiffel Tower in my hotel room reading some answers for an hour or two and then having them changed.

Kelly: And then I'd end up using like, you know, maybe two or three lines.

James: Right. Yeah, it's like, most of it has gone. I think maybe my dad was one of the most disappointed. He would have loved to hear more about the family stories and stuff. But I mean the book's not necessarily about him and it's not even all about me. It's about what have I been exposed to that I can share with others. And so, it's almost satisfying in a way when you do discard a lot of that stuff. You know the stuff that's left is the good stuff. And I do think we've probably got potential for other books down the track depending on the reaction we get from this one and what people would like to hear more of. Because you are right that we have to start somewhere. This is really the start.

The things that held James back

I think the thing that held me back from publishing the book was that I wanted to sell some businesses at the high end and really tick that box. And I felt very confident now that I could help someone go from start to finish and be able to cover them all the way with all of the things that they're likely to need along the way there.

So, that was a personal responsibility that I had, to make sure that I was qualified. And I feel that's been achieved. And now I think it'll be really interesting when it goes out into the market to see what people like. And I've often published a new course pretty much every month for years and years within SuperFastBusiness. And sometimes they love the training and it's just wildly successful and other times it's OK. And people like it. Some people love it. But it's not as broadly accepted because it may not speak to everybody.

So, one or two of them have just been crazy popular, like Inbox Relief. Helping people figure out how to get out of that inbox hell where they're spending five hours a day and that's not even a joke. That's legit five hours a day just constantly refreshing their inbox and dealing with what comes in. They're that

out of control. And if it solves that one. So, that can be very liberating for someone. So, we'll see what people resonate with.

So, you got all the starting material. You sent me additional questions. And in the meantime, you had to piece together a sensible outline that you felt would help someone go from start to finish, deliver on the promise of the book, give them enough information but not lock them up into paralysis. How did you do that?

How did Kelly do it?

Kelly: Yeah. Well, I don't know about how other people go about it but to me I feel like a lot of people go, 'Just write the book and then you know you sort out title later. I mean you have a working title and sort out the title later.' But to me, I felt a barrier for me and I did a lot of work for locking it down was trying to write something without knowing what that title was. So, I did start trying to write the book and then I was like, I don't know what the guiding principle of this book is. If I don't know what the guiding principle of this book is, like you've got too much content, I can't pull that together without knowing that guiding principle of the book.

So, we took a step back and went, let's lock down this title first and it took a while and we got there. And then once I had the title of the book, because I had kind of started two or three different introductions, and again, because there was no guiding principle, I didn't know where to go. There were introductions like some start, if you remember, you might not remember, like an early draft of the book. We were kind of taking the tack of how you didn't enjoy school and you weren't particularly great at school. But yet you've become a very successful businessman. I thought that would be a good hook to show all the people out there who aren't great at school that here's where you can go. So, I kind of started going down that path.

And then I just felt there was something stronger and more appealing than that particular hook. So, once we settled on the working title Work Less Make More, then I could sit down with the introduction and go, right, this introduction needs to give some back story because it needs to tell the reader, OK, this guy has made a big promise in the title. Who is he to deliver on this promise and how is he going to do it? And once I knew that, I wouldn't say the

introduction was easy to write, because an introduction is so crucial to the whole book. If people don't read it, then they're not going to get deep into the book. But where we got to in the end, I was quite proud of it because I felt it really showed your evolution through your working life and then through your business-owning life and then through your workaholic life to where you are today. And where you are today is where most people want to get to.

So, it really illustrates that you've walked the path first and now everything that you're going to tell people in the book is not in theory and it's not something that you haven't done already. Like you've done these things and then the people you've coached have done these things. So, there's really strong experience and really great case studies sitting behind everything that you talk about in the book. And I think that's really powerful.

James: Yeah. I liked the case studies because you know, one thing that I think makes this book a little bit special, I mean there are other books out there with similar promises. One that comes to mind would be "The 4-Hour Workweek." But when I read that book, I had four kids and a job and this guy writing the book is this young single guy. And I'm thinking, 'Mate, how hard could it be? Seriously. To get by with no kids, no partner, no commitments?' Like it's not that hard.

Who the book can appeal to

I wanted something that was more real, that bites, that could be relatable to someone who has a family. You know, if you've got a mortgage or you've got kids or you're stuck in a job, I actually wanted this book to be able to help someone who still has a job, even though it's not specifically targeting people who have a job who want to quit their job. That's a whole genre, right? Quit your job. Your job sucks. It's not just targeting people who already have a business. I think it's got, well certainly from the few people who have read the first versions, its appeal to people who have like almost no experience online. That was really refreshing to see that feedback come back. And it also has appeal to employees who are in an online business. And it's definitely appealing to people who already have an online business who own the business. They've got a lot to gain from this book too. So, it's been a bit tricky, I suppose, to have a general book for a general audience. But it's a starting

point.



Giving weekends back

Kelly: Yeah, that's right. And I think, I mean the thing that you and I came at the book from ever so slightly different spots because you're like, 'Everyone can be making, having six figure months and work the hours that I do', which is kind of four hours a day-ish. And I said to you, "Don't discount the value of simply giving people their weekends back or their evenings back," because I guess I remember that when Ant and I were, every evening, the kids would go to bed and then we would be back on our laptops until nine thirty and then we'd go to bed and not sleep well because we just been on our laptops till nine thirty or ten o'clock.

Or weekends where we were a tag team. Like one person would take the kids to the park while the other person stayed home and worked on their laptop and then come back and swap places. So, even if we didn't make any extra money but got our evenings and our weekends back, like there was such huge value in that and so that's where I like where we got to with the book in that people like us, Ant and I where we were three, four years ago. It's going to help those people kind of immediately, like when we saw you speak at the conference and then we sat down with you for 10 minutes at a mastermind, just those two interactions kind of gave us our weekends and nights back and that was ridiculously valuable, especially to our kids.

But then we were then able to go on and do more of the things that you told us to do. And then those started adding to our bottom line. So, it's almost like a two-pronged approach. It's like, OK. Let's get your life back first. You don't have to make more money. Let's just give you time to relax and recharge and exercise and eat well and sleep well. Those things are hugely valuable in themselves. And then once you've got those under control, alright, now let's start adding actively to your bottom line and doing things smarter and having better business models and start working your way up to making more money. And I think the book does that really well.

James: Yeah. And I think during the process of putting it together, I mean you came up with an outline and an introduction and the chapters and there were the questions and the answers and the drafts. And there was a lot of my words and your words blending together and then getting reorganized. I read half the book on the way to the Maldives and scribbled a lot of notes and then sat on it and then read the other half when I was in the Philippines. And then I went chapter by chapter and it took about two hours per chapter to rewrite or retype over the final render; not the final final final, because there were still editing and proofing after that. But there was a lot of, it was like my words and then some of your words and then my words again and then some editing and then some proofing.

A lot of people have had a go at this, but I feel like even some of the little subtle things that I insisted on pushing my agenda with or making a point about, I think even some of those were fun little sort of tune-ups that must have made you think, 'Gosh. Why is he obsessing about this one point?' Like an example would be where I resist strongly this Monday-to-Friday-nine-to-five-weekends-off way of life. Like it's just ingrained into me to fight it.

So, I'm cautious about complying with that society way of thinking when I'm putting together a book. I want to be contrarian. I mean it is a sort of counter-intuitive way that I think about things because I have questioned a lot of these things. Did you find during the tune-up phase that some of the things I was pushing on were curious?

The refining process

Kelly: No, I didn't find them curious. I found them interesting and then the

tricky bit for me was ensuring that the book honored how you feel and the way that you think while also ensuring that we're meeting the reader where they are. So, if we went straight into – forget the nine to five, forget having weekends. Just work when you have the energy. I thought if we went straight into that people would go, 'Come on mate. That's just not realistic for me.' A little bit how you felt about Tim Ferriss's "The 4-Hour Workweek."

James: Yeah, you might get a disconnection.

Kelly: Yeah. I just wanted to make sure I could honor your idea and how you felt about that specific thing. I knew you felt very strongly about it, but still meet the reader where they are and I feel I did that.

James: Oh, I think so.

Kelly: Were you happy with it?

People tend to normalize

James: I got some validation about that too when I think my youngest son was having a read and he queried, I think one of the numbers I'd put just seemed too big for him to comprehend. I was talking like, I don't know, \$100,000 a month or something in one of my exercises. And he's like, "\$100,000 a month?" And I just had to really adjust and think, you know, like you can get used to that number after 10 years. But for someone who's not yet making that in a year that probably does seem like a lot and maybe hard to comprehend. And I say that without any air of arrogance. I learned this at Mercedes-Benz, that you normalize.

People used to say, "Oh, it must be great. You get to drive around a new Mercedes-Benz." But you actually get really, really used to it. It feels so normal to you. My last car that I had before the current car was an AMG C63 507 edition. It was 507 horsepower. And to me it just felt so normal. But to any rev head, it's like a hot rod. It's like this petrol-guzzling beast of a V8. But you get so used to it, it's like a second skin. It is so easy and normal, so you do normalize. So, I've definitely been operating in an environment, especially with my customers, who do big numbers.

My average customer in [SilverCircle](#) is making more than a million dollars a year. So, \$100,000 a month is just a normal sort of a number. And then you realize, I've seen some survey results where in the online marketing space, I think some like, single-digit percentages actually make even \$10,000 dollars a year. There's a massive failure rate. And then I see some of those blogger sites where they talk about income and stuff. And I think, how do they even afford to live from their ads or whatever? So, that was a good thing is you got to get into the zone of the customer first before I take them to the next place. But I do still feel passionate that \$100,000 a month is definitely within reach of a significant portion of people who are not currently getting that.

And for everyone who is doing that, I'm sure there's several people who could just activate just even a couple of ideas and at least get the cost of their book back within the first week. Very quickly. So, there's almost no risk at all that they wouldn't get something from it because it's an easy read. And I think that's your magic, Kelly – is you've taken all this stuff. It's like taking, if all my content was an instrument and you've somehow turned it into a beautiful concert. So, I'm very appreciative of that. I think it's a real skill.

But there's been a lot of steps to this process. Aside from processing all this, you actually printed out the whole very first version and sent me a few copies with specific instructions. Do you want to talk about that?

A solid first draft

Kelly: Yeah. So that first draft, it was a very solid first draft. I had done a lot of rewrites. I'd kind of completely rewritten a couple of chapters to get to that first draft. A lot of times, first drafts can be a bit very first drafty. But that was a solid one. So, I wanted it printed, because I don't like people reading online when they read a book. I want it in their hands. And then I said to you, I knew it was going to be quite difficult for you, but I said to you, "You've got to read this not as James Schramko but as the reader, as someone who is overworked and underpaid or still in a job or stressed out and strung out. You've got to read this from their point of view and see if anything jars." And I think probably I was asking too much of you because I think you found that difficult as well.

James: It's hard because I do process things on multiple levels at the same time.

Kelly: Yeah.

James: Even if I go to a coffee shop I'm thinking from the point of view of the customer, I'm thinking about it from the point of view of the coffee shop owner and then I'm thinking about it from the point of view of the other customers. I think this is just from working in a showroom. You're always processing multiple layers because it's a skill that's hard to learn but can be learned. And when you've got it, you don't really switch it off. It's no real benefit. So, it was hard to do that, but I did write a filter for myself because I like filters. I wrote here, would this be appropriate for my son? Is it interesting? Is it actionable? Are there examples? Is it simple English?

I actually worked pretty hard on the words to make them the most easy-to-read English possible. And I was even thinking about my team members, if they would be able to read it without having to work too hard on translation. For people who it's not even their first language.

Kelly: And I think that it is an interesting thing because you're either excited to get into your hands because I was like, I wondered if it would be exciting for you to see kind of all your thoughts and ideas, all your best thoughts and ideas over kind of 10 or 20 years summed up in a book, but then I also knew you would kind of be reading it going, 'Well, this is not interesting to me.'

James: That's the thing that surprised me the most. There was so much resistance from me to picking up the document because it was kind of boring for me. It was like there was not a single new story in that whole book for me because I'd heard it. I was already there. It's like watching a movie 100 times. At some point you're thinking, I know what's going to happen next. OK. Yep. I remember that. Aha. Aha. Yeah. It's like you hear people say after they've watched a good movie, or like Game of Thrones or something. Or in your case, it might be Suits. They wish they could lose their memory so they could watch it all over again. It would have been nice. But it is almost impossible for me to read that book as a first-time reader.

But yeah. So, you went to that effort. You shipped me the book, I scribbled the

hell out of it. I'm holding it here. There are so many notes in this book. And from there, we cut an entire chapter out and redid it because it just wasn't working. And then there was another whole chapter that we decided to keep separate and that was mostly because it's the highest chance of it becoming dated. So, one of the filters that we had was we want this to be more or less evergreen.

Kelly: Yes.

The story behind the cover

James: And then there's still a lot of stuff after that, isn't there? You've been doing things like proofing and line editing and typesetting and the cover. Oh my god, the cover.

Kelly: Oh, the cover.

James: You made me take all these photos. You didn't like my old photos. I tried a couple of new ones and you said, "You've got to hire a photographer. So, the photographer, we got Malcolm out here who's a lovely photographer, local to me as well.

The timing, it's so bizarre how that worked. I actually went on a surf trip with Malcolm two years ago and just a month or so ago, his partner called me up and said, "I'm going out with Malcolm and I'd like some coaching please." So, I started coaching his partner, who is fantastic. And then I said to his partner, I need to ask Malcolm if he'd take some pictures. He said sure. And now we're all going on the Maldives again next year.

Kelly: Do you want to hear something even freakier, is that Malcolm used to be a professional triathlete and I used to be a semi-professional triathlete and we actually found out that you know 10 years ago or something about, there's a race that he won and I was over there in Foster doing the same race. I then lived in Perth and I was over in New South Wales doing the same race. It was just like, 'Whoa! This is freaky.' Because I was like, I knew I recognized your name. I just couldn't place it because it was so out of context. So that was weird.

James: Well, it was meant to be. I think we were all happy with the cover.

Kelly: Yeah. And it's probably worth talking about the cover because as I said to you, the cover is huge because books do get judged on their covers. People do pick up books based on their covers and it has to be right. You did have a lot of resistance around that cover. We were using this old photo of you, which was fine, but you don't look like that anymore. You're a lot fitter and healthier-looking now than you were when this photo was taken. So, yes. I did have to push quite hard, but I'm glad we did because once we got it, and there was so much tweaking of backgrounds, and would we have waves? Would we have surfing? Would we have this and that? And in the end, we went with something quite simple. Collaborating with Greg Merrilees and his Studio1 Design team and it was so fun collaborating with them. And then once we got the cover finalized, it was like, yes!

James: Greg is pretty much my brand ambassador approval design guideline Ninja. The thing that I love about Greg is that when we update something, he will then start the round of upgrades everywhere. He'll send me a new SilverCircle home page. It's so important to have someone looking after your brand. I agree with you, people buy the cover. And it's important in what I do, where I guess I'm almost reluctantly becoming a little more well-known, which is really the point of the book. I think that's what you said in the beginning. People just don't know I exist.

Kelly: I think that's what I said to you. I said, "You're kind of the smartest guy I know that nobody else knows." Like I feel like I should be able to say the name James Schramko to people and have them nod and go, 'Oh yeah. I know who he is.'

James: I had an Uber driver recognize me the other day.

Kelly: Oh, did you?

James: Yeah. That was crazy.

Kelly: Well, hopefully after the book comes out.

James: We're like halfway there. He goes, 'By the way, I actually know you.'

That was kind of weird. So that's funny. I mean people know me around my suburb.

Kelly: Yeah. I think it's worth the highlight for you. A large part of the book, like one of the very first conversations I had with you is like, why do you want to write a book? Why do you want to have a book out there? And there's so many different reasons to have a book out there. But in the end, we decided that this book was going to be a branding book. Like say, kind of introduce you and make you a name. So, that's why of all the cover treatments we could have done, we could have done some beautiful typography with the cover title. But in the end, we went, no James, you have to be on the cover because the point of this book is to brand you.

James: Yeah. And it's the core way that I'm helping people with my coaching these days and also, the businesses who I'm involved with silently behind the scenes, they're really buying my advice and my help in their business. I think that that was something that we could all agree on. Although we have made some choices. We're not doing the free plus shipping book upgrade stuff or the Kickstarter, buy 100 copies and get a signed t-shirt. I've never really liked those. So, I guess this is a choice that might cost me money. However, it really doesn't sit with me well – the free plus shipping. It seems a little disingenuous. I don't know why people would want 100 copies of the book and a signed t-shirt. It seems like it would be all about me making a lot of sales and getting a top listing.

I'm OK if it's not the number one New York Times best seller. I'd let go of a lot of that ego stuff. I would be happy if it helps people and they like it and it's popular because it's a good book. That's really my objective, is to put a good book out there and that's where you have helped me immeasurably. It's something I would not have been able to do by myself in any reasonable time frame because there's so many steps and it is challenging to work on your own stuff. Easy for me to work on other people's businesses. It's easy for me to tell them to get a book. I'm telling people all the time, just ask Kelly to help you on your book. And hopefully they will, because you're good at this. I think you definitely have a great process and system. And hopefully, some of this process is interesting for people to see what obstacles they might face, what are some of the steps that are involved and how long does it take. We've been

at this for a while now, haven't we?

Editing revelations

Kelly: Yeah. It's 18 months since I first sent you that email saying, "How come you haven't written a book yet?" And I guess these last few months have been the most intense because as you said, you got that first draft from me and then you had to go through and make your own notes on that first draft. And then from there, once you'd made those, I know you had a few beta readers as well just to pick up on a few things. And then you had to go through each chapter and Jamesify anything that wasn't quite right.

James: And I was doing that off my notes and my two readers' notes. The two readers were great. One of them was really quite new to the whole field and he was asking me questions. He was actually involved in discussions where he didn't really understand what we were talking about. And I said, "Are you a reader? Would you read a book?" And he said yes. So, I gave him the book and a day or two later, he'd read the book and it was like those movies where aliens come from another planet and watch TV for 24 hours a day for a week and then suddenly they know how to speak English. He was like, he was now participating in the conversation. And it all made sense. And I was really excited about that. And he since then actually resigned from a job. Well, he's put in notice. He's swinging from one vine to another, is the metaphor I would use. I'm so excited for him. I actually got a message from him today. He wants to catch up. Have a chat, which is encouraging. He's on a mission. And I'm helping him inside my membership as well.

Kelly: Yeah. I loved hearing that from you, because I thought you gave it to someone who had been around for a while and you gave it to him who had zero business experience online. And like you said, he just didn't speak that language. So, to hear that the book suddenly made him fluent is really, really exciting.

James: The one who had been around for a while, he had great feedback as well, which was things like he'd circle a part and go, this – this could be a whole chapter. This part here is very important. So, when I was re-editing, I actually expanded parts. You noticed that there were bits where I put extra points or really drilled it home. Or he'd put questions like why, or how, or give me an

example. Why is this important? So, he didn't let me off the hook with a half explanation.

Kelly: Yeah. A lot of people find the editing process really horrible, but I found it so fun because you made your edits and then I went over your edits and cleaned up your edits.

James: See what I desecrated. Like OK, what's he done now?

Kelly: But also, they were illuminating because they showed me, like the little tiny, it's the subtleties and the subtleties are so important. So, your edits gave me subtleties, which then showed me where I either needed to go in to tidy up a few other areas to get those subtleties in there.

James: It's like I'm giving you the clue. OK, well this is the bit that's really important here, Kelly. Like this is the one I want to emphasize. Because only I would know some of these things after speaking to so many people. It's the hot spots where every person has the same challenge. When I hear those ones, that's where I have to nail the delivery on it.

Kelly: And you'd think that I also had to know some of the transcripts from years ago were informing the content of the book. And you'd since shifted your thinking on those things. So, that was interesting to me as well, to see where you had made subtleties in your thinking. And then those subtleties had to be carried through in certain areas.

James: Exactly. It was amazing how much of my original stuff is still exactly the same. That was one thing I thought was quite confidence-enabling. And then there were other things where I've just learnt more information since, where I've evolved my thinking because I've been exposed to more research, where I may have started with something and then discovered through either experience or research and going deeper into something that there's actually a whole hidden door to that. And there's a few examples where people are just dead wrong and they perpetuate myths over and over again. And there were several things in there where I pretty much wrote the exact opposite. Like you and I had an exact opposite phrase. Those were the most interesting ones, because I have to also consider that you're going down your path as well. And I had to try and eliminate your bias and my bias and the reader's

bias and try and get to the neutral part. The truth, you know, as I would say.

Kelly: Yeah. The truth as close as you can. And I found that part of the process quite fun and really, really interesting. And then from there, so you made your edits and I made some more edits. And then it went to the line editor. And he went through and sharpened up every single line and takes long lines and makes them shorter and then it comes back from him and then I go through it again to check his edits and see what he's done. And then from there then it goes to the proof reader. So, it's so many parts of the editing process and then you know, you've had people reading it. I've had a few people reading it and people have made suggestions. And the thing is, we could keep going forever.

James: It's like software, you know? You'll always come up with new user features they want. And then a lot of the suggestions, I don't even like the suggestions, like I wouldn't change it because they're only obviously doing it from their selfish point of view. It's hard for them to know our target market as well as we do if they're looking at it from their point of view. So, there are a lot of suggestions.

Kelly: And you have to be so careful about it. I think if three people say the same thing, like three people highlighted one phrase and said, should you use analysis paralysis here instead? And I'm like, well three people have mentioned this – maybe. But for the most part, people are asking for things to be inserted or expanded on and it's just that person.

James: Yeah. They never saw how much you cut.

Kelly: Yeah.

James: Dad, you don't understand. She'll get rid of 75 percent of this. Like I don't think my reader knows who Paul Keating is, but I appreciate the suggestion.

Kelly: And in the end, like even now, every time I go to the book with fresh eyes, I go, 'Oh, it would be good to put a story here. Or it would be good to expand.' And then we have to go, you know what, you have to set a publication date and you also have to set a point in the sand where you know what, this book as it stands is going to help a lot of people. I feel very strongly

that people are going to read this book and then they're going to hand it to someone else and go, 'You have to read this.' And to me, if I had that confidence in the book then it's ready to get out there. It's ready to ship. And yes, we can keep tweaking and finessing it forever but at some point, you have to....

James: Well, I've definitely reached the point where I'm just, sign it off and send it. I'm done. I'm not a perfectionist and I don't have that ultimate niggle that every single thing has to be lined up, all the ducks have to be... I'm happy to let it out early and then adjust, because I know you can update Kindles fairly easily and I know that a lot of the initial sales will be via Kindle. And I'm sure that my audience will tell me everything that's wrong with it in the first thousand copies. So, we won't take long to get feedback. Like everything else I've ever produced, people will tell you fairly soon. Like, 'Oh by the way, you've got "the" twice on this line,' or whatever. OK. So, I'm looking forward for the adjustments. So, if you're listening to this and you do get a copy of the book and you have a suggestion, I'm not saying I will dismiss it. I'm saying just send it through by all means. I appreciate it. You can basically become part of our editing team.

Kelly: This is the fun bit now. It's fun and so scary. I don't know about you, but I've been through the process of like this is amazing, oh my god, this is actually crap. It's terrible to back it. I think this is a really, really good book. But now, the proof is going to be in.

James: Well, I'm totally in the phase of whatever happens, happens now. If no one is interested in it and it doesn't sell well then, I feel good because I've done that discipline of putting out a book and it was hard. And if people love it and it's great then I'll be excited as well because that would have been the goal, is to make something worthwhile.

Kelly: Yeah. You don't write a book and think it doesn't matter.



At the end of the day, it's legacy

James: You don't dedicate it to your children saying you know, I hope you enjoy this load of crap. It's like, I really use them as the filter because they've been my longest students and project in a way, like coming on more than two decades in two cases, where I want to be able to say, "Look, if you've ever wondered what I actually do or how it all worked when you were a kid, here's some stories." So, my 17-year-old was really enjoying some of the stories when I worked in the dealership because he's just landed himself a job and he's really interested in – wow, maybe we've got some things in common and I've already been through what he's going through and all this sort of stuff. It's a great legacy to have.

Kelly: Yeah, and that's the beauty of it. At the end of the day, it's legacy. I know that's maybe an ego thing but I do think you can't underestimate the power of, like these are your ideas and now they've kind of been made immortal. Like, I don't want you dying tomorrow, but if you died tomorrow, there is something left in the world that will keep helping people way beyond your lifetime. And I think that's super exciting.

James: I wonder if that's almost the opposite of ego. It's really not for me or about me. It's like gosh, all those things I've stored and record-kept and paid attention to. It's nice to have been able to collect them all up and I've thrown out a lot of stuff since I've written this book. It's like, files and boxes, because I was keeping them for writing a book. I've thought about writing a book for

really a couple of decades. When I kept my sales reports and stuff I thought, this will be handy for a book one day. I just had a feeling that we would get to this point, but it's released to me more than anything. So, I'm happy to let it go out there and just see what happens.

Kelly: And that's removed a lot of blocks. Now the next one will be much, much easier.

James: If you're up for it, Kelly. I don't know.

Kelly: I'm totally up for it. I know it is going to be as well. It's not going to be the one we thought it was going to be.

James: I must be a difficult customer because I'm so independent in my life with the least amount of compromise. I don't really have bosses. And I do cut my own schedule. So, you've pretty much had the most control over me of anyone of any recent period. And I know I can still be difficult to wrangle, but I usually, I'm a good doer when I get on to it.

Kelly: You get there in the end. We'd get there in the end. It's been fun.

James: I never flake. And of course, life goes on. It's when you're not working all the time, you've got plenty of other things that can come into your life like swell patterns and travel and you know, family things and stuff. So, it's really been an amazing journey. I've learnt a hell of a lot. I really wanted to share some of this sort of behind the scenes. Hopefully, it's helpful. At this stage, the easiest way to find out about the book if you're listening to this, no matter

when it's out; if it's not out or if it's already published, just go to SuperFastBusiness.com/book and we'll have links there or details on how you can find out about the book. There are no tricky things happening there. We just want you to find the book easily.

And Kelly, if someone's listening to this and they're an expert, author, speaker or they're just doing their family tree and they want to get a book out there and they'd like help, where can they get your help?

Kelly: Yes. They can find me at levelupyourwriting.com, which ironically is a name that many people in the SuperFastBusiness community loathe, but

that's where I am and that's what I feel I help people do and I look forward to helping anyone who's listening to this podcast do the same.

James: That's it. And also, you could reply to any email I send you and I'll happily forward it to Kelly's private email address and make a connection. So, there you go. By the way, if you've got questions about this podcast or the book process, please ask them where you see this podcast episode and I'll ask Kelly. And if we need to come back and sort of expand on some of this, then we can do that as well. This is episode 560 and it's called Behind The Scenes How to Write a Book. And Kelly, thank you so much for sharing.

Kelly: A pleasure. Thank you so much for having me, James.



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