

**Dotsie Bregel,
Founder and CEO of
The National Association of Baby Boomer Women
(NABBW)**



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Presents

Building Your Brand by Writing a Book

With

Sheri McConnell

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Building Your Brand by Writing a Book
With
Sheri McConnell

Dotsie: Hello and welcome to the call. The format for the call is simply that I will interview our guest, **Sheri McConnell**, who will be the first guest in our series, ***Writing in the Middle Years, for Profit or Fun***. When we are finished with the interview, we'll open up the lines for questions.

For those of you who don't know me, I am **Dotsie Bregel**, and I am the founder of the ***National Association of Baby Boomer Women*** which can be found at www.NABBW.com and also www.boomerwomenspeak.com and they are the number one sites on major search engines for baby boomer women. I'm passionate about educating and empowering my generation of women. Since launching www.boomerwomenspeak.com over five years ago, I've been connecting, encouraging and supporting boomer women on a daily basis. I really feel like I have my finger on the pulse of this spirited generation and I dedicate a great portion of my time to creating opportunities that inspire women to explore their passions and live them to the fullest. My prayer is to embrace all women and provide them with the means to soar.

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If you are not a member of the [NABBW](http://www.NABBW.com), the fee to join is typically \$75.00 but if you are on the call today as a guest of Sheri's, we would be happy to send you a link to join for \$60.00 and you can email me for that link at dots@nabbw.com.

This teleseminar is one of our many archived in our ***Members Only*** section at www.nabbw.com. All of our past teleseminars, and there's about, almost 50 now, are free when you join us, and you can either listen to them, or print them and read them at your convenience when you are away from the computer. I would just like to get started because we really try to have very beneficial, very jammed-packed teleseminars with great information that can help you make the changes you need to change. Sheri, are you there?

Sheri: Yes I am.

Dotsie: Okay, I'm going to just tell you a little bit about Sheri, and then we're going to jump in with our topic for today. Sheri McConnell is the president and founder of two global organizations. Her organizations are the ***National***

Association of Women Writers, www.naww.org and also the International **Association of Web Entrepreneurs**, www.aweconnect.com. She teaches women writers and entrepreneurs how to discover, create, and profit from their intellectual knowledge. She's also the owner of two high-level product and consulting companies. One is, "Create Your Group," and the other one is, "My Millionaire Friends." For more information on each of these companies, you can download her full-color company catalogue at www.sherimccconnell.com. She lives in San Antonio, Texas with her husband, and their four children, a weenie dog, and two cats. Well hello Sheri and again, welcome to the call. How are you today?

Sheri: I'm doing wonderful, and thank you so much. That's a very active house with that lineup, huh?

Dotsie: Sure! For those of you who have entered the call late, Sheri is excited because she is celebrating a week without her children; they are at the grandparents. She's getting all kinds of things accomplished this week.

Sheri: Yeah, I hear that they're being angels but I know that is a fib. <laughter>

Dotsie: <laughter> Okay, for some of you on the call, you're interested in building your brand, you're interested in maintaining your reputation, the area of expertise in your chosen field, and so Sheri is here to tell us how we can do that by authoring a book, and getting that published. So Sheri if you want to just start—is there anything you want to tell us before we jump into these questions? Anything new and different? Any offer or anything you want to talk about?

Sheri: Well first of all, I mean, I've got some personal stories different from any time anyone may have heard me talk about this topic before, just about, you know, I'm always, as an owner and a CEO of my company, my job is to book talented people and bring them to my members. And one of the ways that I do this is always finding these people via books that they've had out into the world. Sometimes books that were published ten years ago. I had a lady on for journaling earlier this year and that book was out quiet a long time ago. So it is amazing the long-term leverage that you'll have from a book that you put out into the world and we'll kind of get into that. And recently, I just put a book out, a couple of weeks ago, we built a huge promotion around it. Sold a lot of books that day. Just from that book promotion, people who see me on their radar over the years, because of the amount of experts and partnerships we had on that page, they saw me in a new way, that day. They saw the power of my brand that day, because of all of the partners I had partnered with to put that book out to the world. There is a lot of success even behind the scenes that you don't really see from that book promotion.

People approaching me and having me on radio shows and doing podcasts; all because of the brand that we were very conscious that we were putting out and

was part of our strategy. So often I am asked the question which way should I publish and all these lovely things at the National Association of Women Writers, I really do have to have a conversation with that person, or speak with that person one-on-one, because I really have to get into their head and learn what their goal is with each of these books. But what I find with business people right away is they are doing these books to build brands, and that works particularly well with non-fiction, of course. And that's the particular topic that I'm here to talk about today is how these books can be a leverage in so many different ways for decades to constantly build your brand, and bring more leads into your business, into your marketing funnel, which increases your bottom line.

Dotsie: Okay and I might add here that Sheri has done a teleseminar with us before, and it was about making this decision on which way is the best way for you, personally, to get published. So if you are a member of the association, that is archived on the Member Benefits page. You might be interested in hearing that too because that was an excellent teleseminar, and a lot of people get caught up in deciding how to publish, and she really walked you through it, talked about your personality type, what your purpose was for writing the book, and you know, what you wanted to get from it. So if you're interested, you might want to listen to that, too. But let's get on with talking about building your brand by writing a book. And Sheri, can this, at all, entertain fiction, also?

Sheri: You know, I mean you can certainly build a following. I think it is a little bit different, you know, once you get a fiction book out there, and people love that, you can do a series of fiction books and for people writing fiction, publishers who want to publish their fiction, usually want to know that you have a series inside you ready to come out, because that is more profitable for them down the road. But definitely the way that I'm presenting this today does focus on non-fiction.

Dotsie: Okay. Well I just wanted to point that out before we got started. Tell us a little bit about the importance of writing your book to enhance your brand.

Sheri: Definitely. Well it does a number of things. First of all, it lets your clients, or your future customers, or these people you want to get to know and make connections with, it let's them get a taste of who you are, your services, what makes you tick, what makes you unique, and it lets them do that at a very low price point. So for instance, the book we just published, "***Smart Women Create Membership-Based Businesses,***" hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people purchased that book who were not comfortable with starting the relationship with me by purchasing the program, which is a fifteen-hundred dollar program, for obvious reasons. But they were completely comfortable with risking eighteen dollars of their money to begin that relationship with me. So it lets lots and lots of new leads; that book will end up converting thousands, and thousands, and thousands of dollars of revenue in the upcoming year because we were able to start a relationship. So it lets them taste who you are, or what you are about at a very low price point, and that is excellent for getting people

into your marketing funnel. Now at any point if you want me to explain what a marketing funnel is, or anything like that, I can do that, but I'm just going to kind of move quick, because there is a lot of information to cover.

Secondly, it position you as an expert too, so it helps you stand out and compete against the competition. I've had a number of people approach me from this book that they had seen my name many, many times, but they now understood how I stand out, what I'm the expert of, and so they were able—when you do the work for the people out there in that you're building a brand and you get really strategic with what your brand stands for, it makes it easy for them to think of you as that person that does that, and that's really what you are doing when you're building a brand.

Thirdly, it can be used as a sales tool. If you first just create your group in the past, what this book is doing is marketing people to purchase that program. So it is pretty much a full, entire book where you get to get to know me at a great depth, you know, a lot longer than a teleseminar because you're reading an entire book, and so it really builds that relationship very strong for a person going to buy that program. So it definitely is a sales tool. I've even seen people take a non-fiction book, there's a lot in the industry now, where they'll put free passes or coupons in that book to help sell them to, for instance, a large teleseminar they're doing. T Harv Ecker does this, Mark Victor Hansen does this, Robert D. Allen does this. And so they're definitely, in that sense those books, like *One-Minute Millionaire*, it's definitely a sales tool that's really just helps in selling them to these large events, and other services and products they have. So in that way, these books start the relationship and begin to educate new leads, new consumers about the brands that they have.

Dotsie: Okay can you speak a little bit to people who might not have those products, and this book really is, you know, their first venture into this.

Sheri: Definitely.

Dotsie: Yeah, just a little bit about that because I think some of the people on the call might not have the bigger programs that it's an introduction to, but it's still really important. So can you talk a little bit about that?

Sheri: What I would have that person do, if that person was you today, I would have you meet with someone, because what you're doing when you put that first book out there to the world, even if it is traditional publishing or self-publishing, you are beginning a business. So you really need to get some business coaching you need before you put that book out into the world and before you begin to plan that book; especially if you're doing this as self-publishing you need to invest in a professional who will do long-term strategy with you. Because of the way that we did long-term strategy in birthing this book, and brining my latest book into the world, it's going to bring in over six figures within the next year, just from a book.

So it is very crucial that you invest and realize that this is a business, whether it is your first book and don't have any other products, you can create other products and other services from scratch in doing a simple couple sessions with a coach or a consultant. Here's the key. You don't want to miss the chance to have that kind of information in your book so that you can bring all of those leads back to your Web site. Because customers will do whatever you tell them to do next.

Dotsie: Right. And it also introduces you into the world of speaking about your topics, doing teleseminars about your topic; it just launches many other things if the book is the first thing.

Sheri: Right, right, and so I would actually have people map out a strategy of products and services, get the book out into the world, and then you can be working on the products and services while the printers are doing their thing. And you can start out with a very minimal set of a product, another product, the book, another service, your marketing funnel, your product and service funnel can be very minimal in startup; you can have just four things. And most people can get that done in a six-month period. If they're treating it like a business.

Dotsie: Right and so it is all a mindset. How about we talk a little bit about the keys to getting started in just authoring this book; like you know, what are some of the things we need to do if we're thinking about it, and thinking about it, and just really haven't begun the process.

Sheri: Definitely. Well what I do over at the NAWW, is exactly what we help with there and it is supporting people in different ways. People come to us either to write, to publish, or to market the book they already have. And what's really crucial in helping them accomplish one of those three goals is support and resources, accountability, and then the ability to promote. So finding support groups like the NAWW, finding that accountability, getting a writing partner, getting a coach, getting a consultant, to give you homework and show up for you each week so that you get these things done. Accountability for me has always been what helped my businesses move forward. So accountability for me was creating a company where people were expecting me to deliver my writing to them. That was my accountability. I said every year we're going to have a new book; so every year, I had to come up with a new book. So those are kind of the accountability pieces, and I still do that myself today. You know this year I said I would have a book out in June and come March, April, I had to start to clear the calendar to make sure I was going to reach that June goal. So you'll get better and better at creating your own accountability, but definitely in the beginning years, I had to have people hold me accountability.

Dotsie: Sure, and that can be done whether you have money to invest or not. Tell us some ways that if you have money to invest you can do it, you know, with the coaching, and if you don't have that money, another way to do it is with a friend, etc.

Sheri: There are definitely writing coaches—what I’ve come to see in all the years that I’ve been doing this, is that people will, if they invested money in it, they’ll get it done better than if it is a friend because they don’t want to lose their money; they value money. And people may say they don’t have the money and 20% of the time that may be the case, but most of the time if people want the goal they have the money, they just have to pull it from somewhere else. So it just depends on whether they want these other things in life more than they want to reach this goal. You can certainly do this if you have enough drive, but it really comes down to you get what you pay for, and if you’re not paying for some of the advice that you really need, you’re going to make lots of mistakes along the way that are going to cost you more than if you had just invested in it. So I feel really strongly that most people, 85% of the people can find the money to reach these goals they’re just—I’ve coached women for a long time and really what happens is women just aren’t grown up with the mindset of leveraging and men come out of the womb and know how to leverage their mothers right away. Women are the ones being leveraged in our society, and so women really just don’t really have the mindset around money that helps them grow their businesses and especially put a book out into the world that is competitive, that can get them the results they can get if they’d just do it the right way.

So I really work with women all the time on getting them to change their mindsets around investing in themselves, and investing in their businesses for the long term, and to do things that are quite honestly uncomfortable to get there, which means putting more money than they ever thought they could into part of their businesses, or into their book, because that is what is going to get them the results they tell me they want. They’re amazed at how much it cost to get a good cover design for a book. But the covers sell the book. So there’s just some pieces that it’s okay, and what I always tell my clients when I’m working with them, *I honor where you are at this time; let me tell you how you are going to have to start thinking whenever you’re ready for these things to happen that you’re telling me that you want.*

Dotsie: Right. And actually, you know, coaching is becoming so huge, especially with the Internet. You can find coaches for anything. And really what they do is they cut your learning curve tremendously, because you’re being coached by someone who has been there and done what you’ve done, and sometimes taken many years to get the expertise that they have. And then in addition, you know, they really hold you accountable. So it is definitely something worthwhile and something worth looking into. Anything else about the keys to getting started?

Sheri: Let’s see. There are a couple of tricks that I like to do. First of all, if you’re just wanting to trick yourself into getting this work done, if you’re having a hard time getting it to be priority in your life, the other way is doing interviews. Those are great jump starts for me. For instance, remember when I put “*Create Your*

Group” together and it was two manuals? I can’t believe I ever wrote that much straight through. And the way that I got jump started to write two full manuals of information, was I started with all of the interviews. And I think you were one of the first interviews I did.

Dotsie: Yes, I remember that. Sure.

Sheri: And your interview was the next day and I still hadn’t written the questions. But it ended up being my table of contents for the entire program. So what I can tell you is that by scheduling interviews for non-fiction, it is a great way to start doing that research, and what happens from those interviews is you get so much energy, you’ll be able to move forward in a project a lot faster, so it is a great trick. Because from those interviews, I turned around and took the questions I asked you and formed the *Table of Contents* and then, I was off and running; I just had to get it done. Actually, from that I also did a sales page and sold like fourteen of those before I ever even wrote the product. So that’s another way you can get really motivated is you can sell. You know that’s a \$1500.00 program, so I was definitely motivated to get it done when I told everybody I would have it done. Doing presales, or doing—depends if you go traditional, obviously you’re not going to have some of those options. Lots of ways to make sure that you have accountability, or to trick yourself into getting things done. Those are the keys.

Dotsie: Very good. And you know what, the next question is—actually I know you’re going to sum it up, but if you are really interested in this piece of publishing, this is where I recommend that other teleseminar that I’ve done with Sheri, because this has to do with the options for publishing. Do you want to do e-publishing, vanity publishing, self-publishing, collaborative publishing, traditional publishing, etc. There are so many options today just because of technology. And do you want to tell us a little bit about those options and you know, why it is important to seriously consider before you get into your project?

Sheri: What I’ll do because we have so much other stuff to put on, and we’ve done this before, is I’ll point out we have that 30-page handout over at www.naww.org, and it’s free, and they can grab that, and it does go into all of that detail. And then one thing I would say to everybody, they all ought to take away from this section is that, I don’t believe people can make a wrong choice. I believe that which ever way you go in publishing, there are pros and cons of each, and you’re going to reassess the experience and you’re going to probably want to do the other one no matter which way you go. So I have lots of partners and members who’ve gone traditional that go self-publishing later on, and I have lots of people who went self-publishing who go traditional. Have different financial models, and at different points in time, you’re going to actually want to do different financial model. I’ve gone to a small, traditional publisher to handle all of my publishing now which is very different than I was in the early years. NAWW was considered a self-publisher. So over time, your strategy with your business

will change. So it's really just education and personal choice at different periods in time.

Dotsie: And doesn't a lot of it have to do with your own personality, too though, and how much control you need over your work, and how much control you are willing to give up?

Sheri: Instead of the word personality, which is totally true too, it has to do with your mindsets. Your mindsets drive your success at anything you do. And what I mean by that is all those little bullet points you just said; what you're willing to give up, your ability to build a team, your ability to be able to invest in quality and see the long term. There are a lot of mindsets that we fight that are in our close network like our family. And sometimes we are trying to work on our own mindsets really, really hard, but we are surrounded by people who are so far behind us. So that can be a very big struggle for lots of people. I help them build boundaries around themselves while the other people are catching up, if that makes sense.

Dotsie: It does. It does, because people have to realize that it's okay to make changes before other people do within their network. And a lot of times, the professional networks are really who you can look to for guidance and stuff, and try to follow them instead of some of the old thoughts about family. If you were raised in a family that said oh gosh, I have to get everything on sale, you shouldn't pay for this, and then when you go to get help like this you think, okay, shouldn't really pay for this, I'm going to try and get this as cheap as I can, and really that's not always the way to go. So you can go to www.naww.org and what is the title of this 30-page download they can get Sheri, just so they know.

Sheri: It's the publishing primary so it's the only freebie you can get right there on the sidebar. It's on every page.

Dotsie: Okay. That's great. And that will help you make a decision about which way you should go in this point and time in your life, and in your career, profession. Okay, let's talk about, because this is huge, because we review books for our members at the [National Association of Baby Boomer Women](http://www.naww.org), we post them in our newsletters and we also post them, of course, on our sites and then they stay on the site as long as you are a member of the association. And because we do that, I correspond with a lot of women writers. A lot of members of the association happen to be writers, and they're joining to network with other members to promote their books, etc. One of the things that authors don't always comprehend, and really grasp when they write a book is that writing a book is one thing, marketing a book is another. I know you can share some simple strategies on book marketing that can help them, those on the call, attract like ideal clients, and receive a return on their investment. So can you talk about that a little bit?

Sheri: Definitely. So first of all, packaging and communications is so important. First and foremost, start your Web site. Build a Web site around this with that Web site. I personally love blog sites. What Web sites let you do is start to build a community around that particular book. They give you plenty of space, especially blog sites, to grow and to adapt that Web site should you begin to have many books. It's great if you can plan a strategy ahead of time, at least a year. So you're going to need to embrace technology, invest in yourself, and the new mindset is marketing is what you're in business doing now. You're not a book writer, you're not a writer at all, you're not a publisher, you're not all these things that you previously thought of yourself; you are now a marketer. And in the first few years, you are a marketer, get this, 85% of the time. That freaks people out and they are uncomfortable with it. If you want the results that people communicate to me that they want, that is the way business works. Always has, always will. So that is a key mindset.

Those are some of the pieces that those mindsets kind of have to be installed before you can go and do all of these tasks. These tasks are the packaging, the Web site, the building of the list. The list is crucial, the list is key, the list is what I call "everybody's golden egg," because it is the way you start the relationship and then everything you do from the point of that subscriber becoming your subscriber, is building on that relationship. And so you always want to be focused on your list, not on selling the books, not on selling anything. You just focus on getting them on your list. An example of that is when I said we have this free, 30-page primer on the publishing industry as it stands today. It's great for people to read if they don't know which way they want to go. It has questionnaires in there. And it is an excellent way to start to build a list for anybody new who needs that information.

Some of the other key ways you're going to start to market your book is speaking. Online marketing campaigns work so well; especially if you saw something like what I did four weeks ago at www.smartwomenbooks.com. What you won't see on the Web site if you go there today is that the original Web site, for the day we launched the book and promoted it, had about 30 people who gave free bonuses if you purchased that book, that day. What that was is that it was an amazing call to action for people if they were even thinking of getting the book, they were going to go ahead and get it that day because they got all of those bonuses that day. The call to action was that it ended at the end of the day. Still a great book for an eighteen dollar price level.

And so it really gets a jump start for that promotion, gets a lot of other things happening, and it's a great way to launch a book. Those are typically known as the Amazon Campaigns because most of the time, people link those over to Amazon and have people purchase there. So speaking, doing that consistently while you are building your list. I use speaking as a list-builder also, when I'm going to conferences, I'm not there to sell although that definitely happens a lot now because people see me usually before they get to the conference. But in the

early years, when no one knew who I was, I was just building my list. I was just getting out there and the more I got out there, the more people started to know that the NAWW existed, which is how I marketed my books was through my business, and so that would be the next point.

Start something bigger that your book is a part of because it is a supply and demand of books in the world at this given point and time over the last decade, because technology allows so many people to get their book out there in the world. That wasn't the way it was fifteen years ago. We have a lot more supply to choose from when we purchase a book. So I knew right away when I went out into this industry that was just beginning to get onto the Internet, that I could struggle, and that I could do it the same way everybody else was doing it, or I could do it a little bit different. So I packaged all of my books in a business model that not everybody was doing. So for instance, you could start a company or an organization and make your books be part of that. That's a big thinking. I call that a *Big Thinking Business Model*. And if you're interested in that, you can go to www.createyourgroup.com and read about it there.

There's so many different strategies and ways that I'm talking about here. What that comes back to, again...is the packaging. And so your packaging is so, so important. It usually takes people who have been doing this for a while to brainstorm with you, and really help you develop some packaging around how this book is going to be placed in your overall vision of what you want to do in the world, what your passion is. Usually when someone is writing a book, they have an idea that they want to do a workshop series. Or they want to get out and meet with certain people, or they have a vision, there's other things in them that are going to come out. And so that is what I'm talking about; pulling the whole package and the whole strategy together.

The other way to really use online and offline and tie that together, is long-term content sharing through products and services. So for instance, you can do email series, a telecourse, or teleseminars. And these different vehicles will direct people back to your Web site and eventually, they will buy the book because you are building a long-term relationship with them. For instance, we have a *Quote of the Day* over at the NAWW. And at the end of every quote every single day, those people give me permission to come and visit them every day and say hi, we exist. At the end of every quote, we have a little link that says, you know, it help sells membership benefits at NAWW, and in that member benefits is a book. So there are lots of different ways to packaging it, and it just really goes back to packaging, and how you are walking your customer through your system of what you are doing at your Web site.

Dotsie: Wow. That's a lot. You know Sheri, let me ask you this. What do you recommend for women writers who are launching a Web site as far as a domain name? Because I know a lot of people differ on this. Some people go with the title of the book, other people go with the author's name, and I've always

encouraged women to use their name, as opposed to the title, because if it is the first book, you don't want to have to keep creating more Web sites. However, I know some people do that. What do you recommend?

Sheri: It depends on where you are at with your company and/or companies. So what will happen is first of all, you're going to have to redo whatever Web site you do every two years. Technology changes so fast that in two years, you would be completely outdated. So what I tell people is don't get stuck on anything that you do. It doesn't have to be perfect when it gets out there because before you can get it perfect, it has to change anyway. So be willing to just get things going. You always want to buy your name. What that will end up being down the road as you do more and more things in the world, is that it will be like your headquarters.

Dotsie: Right. So for those people who might not understand what you said about, "buy your domain," do you want to explain that?

Sheri: Okay and then I'll go back to that in a second. The other piece is that I also buy the name of the book for the marketing campaigns themselves. Because what I couldn't do, for instance, as you get more books in you or more workshops, more anything, you can't target them on your homepage of your main company because that's an overview of everything you're doing. So you really do have to go buy these additional URLs. I have hundreds and hundreds of them for different things that we've done, different things that we continuously do. And the reason that you have to keep doing that is because each project is very, very focused. So we had to buy *Smart Women Book* for that promotion and that's just a one-page URL and it doesn't go to a Web site. It's just that page.

Dotsie: Right.

Sheri: And it's very targeted because it actually talks to you when you read it. You know what you're going to. You buy other URLs for other reasons. For what I told you earlier about going and downloading that report, I can also send you to www.nawwfreereport.com. See how it's much easier for you to get there by going to www.nawwfreereport.com? When you get there, you only have one choice, you can't mess up, the consumer can't get confused. So it is much better for me to send you there than to send you over to the Web site for list-building reasons. So each of these pages has a strategy. The way that we buy our URLs and the way most people buy them, is we just use www.godaddy.com. It's really, really cheap, and then you can keep all of your URLs in one place. So I don't buy them through our host, our Web site host which gets kind of technical, because we want to be able to manage them in one place. So we keep them separate; we keep them all at www.godaddy.com.

www.godaddy.com is great because you can point whatever URL you buy to a page on your Web site which will usually have a long name, because as you add

pages to your blog or your Web site, the names get forward slashes and all these lovely names in them. And so you really want to keep the forward slashes out of a URL when you are marketing, because the longer it gets, and the more you add to it, it increases the chances that people will never type it right, or find you, or remember it.

Dotsie: Right. And with all of these different URLs, different domain names, you can link them within all of your sites. So that's just another thing that you have to remember; that once you start building your list, you can use—like you probably use your blog page, but you have links to lots of other, to a lot of your other sites from that blog page, right?

Sheri: Yes, I have five blogs.

Dotsie: So I just want people to understand that you can connect them. Like at www.boomerwomenspeak.com we have a link to our sister site, www.nabbw.com and that www.nabbw.com, we have a link to www.boomerwomenspeak.com.

Sheri: You want them to cross over to everything you're doing.

Dotsie: Well, what about—this is a good one—how do you get your book written, yet manage your busy professional and personal life? Now for some people, maybe they don't have a busy professional or personal life and it's not a problem. But for many people who are writing non-fiction, and doing it for business purposes, they're working fulltime, and then they are trying to squeeze in writing a book. So do you want to give us some ideas on how to go about that?

Sheri: I can...I can. And I think I am an authority on this because I have children ranging from ages 2 to 13, and there are four of them, and I'm running four companies. When I say that though, I have a team of people that I delegate a lot too. So I spend about five hours a day working. So it doesn't sound as bad when I tell you how much time I'm spending. But what I can tell you is there is a lot—by the time I get through with all of the kids stuff and the five hours of work, I'm exhausted a lot of days because the kids have so much that I have to do with them. And the way I'm able to do this and still get these big, huge projects out that have huge payoffs for me personally, and professionally is—I do a number of things. So first of all I steal time; days, hours, and minutes. And the way that I do that is I set boundaries with the family. That's gotten much, much easier after those beginning years. What I had to do to get to those goals—you know, you'll have a phase of time where you feel like you just want that goal, you want that goal, like getting a book written, and you just can't make it happen. Not with the current state where your life is. You have to get kind of really strict. You have to develop a discipline. So for me what it was, was communicating with that support system that I have, what I needed for them to do so that I could steal time, steal a weekend away; which is huge when you have four kids; it's huge for a lot of

people—and lock myself away so I could focused just on that goal. For me, that’s what worked. For a lot of people, they just don’t see that they can do that.

One reason I think it works really well with writing is because I believe your brilliance has to be paid attention to, and when you stop and start, you stop that energy flow of brilliant ideas coming in, you stop that energy flow of one thought leading to the next thought. I don’t think starting and stopping is effective, but some people have been just doing that so long they just really feel that way works. So what I would encourage you to do is be open to both methods, and trying them both, but really trying them and giving them that time. So what I do in my world is two or three times a year, I get a three-day weekend, lock myself away in a hotel, use the food service, take the laptop, and I get most of these books written in that period of time. I come back; I have to do like three more sessions of editing over the next few weeks; we have to go over the book cover design and a bunch of other pieces. So the whole project can definitely take a couple of months, but none of the project can happen if you don’t get your stuff written first. You have to get those first drafts on paper. It’s not like I go there and it’s really easy. My back is aching because you’re writing for three days straight, you know? So I take bubble baths, you know, and I reward myself with sushi and stuff. So that’s what I’ve learned really works for me.

So be experimental in playing around with what works. You’re going to need a support system, you’re going to need child care, you’re going to need the house cleaner. I had to be coached to hire my first house cleaner. I had this huge mindset hang up that if I hired a house cleaner, my kids would grow up spoiled, you know? Because we all come from different mindsets and that was the mindset that I was in. And I had to get over that because as we had more children, it was just too unrealistic to think I was going to be able to keep up with all of this myself. Something was going to have to give.

So get your support system, steal your time. Another thing that works is scheduling it in. Like if you are a consultant, or a person who offers services in exchange for money, schedule your writing time in like it is a client appointment. All my writing projects are all blocked out in Outlook so that I don’t schedule people in, I don’t schedule a twenty-minute meeting here with someone who wants to talk with me, and partner with me. If people have to wait two weeks to meet with me, that’s typically what will happen, because I set time scheduled in for projects that has to be done. So blocking out time on your calendar; I love Outlook for this because inherently, you’re not going to get everything done every day, especially in startup. And so what can be really good is the drag and drop feature. It saves you loads of time. You can actually click on things in Outlook and put notes in there. So it’s just a great tool to manage your life, and your businesses, and save you lots of time. Just a little side note.

Dotsie: Yeah, Sheri uses Outlook Express to do that. And you know, I just want to recommend a book called “Time to Write” and it’s by Kelly Stone. It’s a new

book. Actually, I think we're reviewing it in our newsletter this month. She is a member of the association, and she wrote this really good book about finding time to write. A lot of her book is based on interviews that she held with very successful writers, and she incorporates their ideas on how they find time to write on a busy schedule. It's called "Time to Write" by Kelly Stone.

Sheri: And I love that because what she's going to do is give different ideas. The perfect book! People need that book because different things are going to work for different people based on their lifestyle. They may not—they may be a single mom, they may not have the option of a husband to watch the kids for them.

Dotsie: Right, exactly; now is she a member of your association? Do you know?

Sheri: Oh, I can't remember.

Dotsie: Well, I'm going to have to make sure she is, if she isn't, and tell her that you would also recommend that book.

Sheri: I miss the old days because I actually knew everybody by name in the early years, and now we're so big I definitely can't do that anymore.

Dotsie: Right. Right. We're coming towards the end and hopefully, we'll be able to take a couple of questions, but what about some tips that will help you get started authoring your book in the next 30 days?

Sheri: I love this question because I think when you have energy from something you are doing you should get started right away, get something on paper. So number one, I always tell people they need to seek the knowledge, they need to get that expert advice just to get started—just to get some accountability which is number two; you need accountability. Find a group or structured program that has some deadlines set around getting something done. And then number three, be ruthless with time, and set those boundaries. Editors and mastermind coaching can be really, really amazing for polishing, but before you can get to them, you have to get something on the page.

Dotsie: And you know Sheri, there's a woman in the forum community at www.boomerwomenspeak.com who recently started a writing group. It's something she always wanted to do. She is tickled because she just said, you know what, we just encouraged, "just do it." She put this thing in the local newspaper, she found this place for everybody to meet, and sure enough, plenty of people showed up. They had to close the group, and she is now doing something she always wanted to do. She's being held accountable for her writing; they're sharing their writing; they're editing one another's work. And had she just never taken that initiative, she'd still be back like oh gosh, one of these days.

So I always encourage women to do something bold; and Prill Boyle is a woman who's written a nice book about women at midlife and kind of reinvention. And she encourages women to do something bold each day. I just think that is very empowering. So it's not just, you know, something that you've done before and you just want to do it again, it's something out of the ordinary bold that you've been wanting to do, and you just need to do to take your life in a different direction. It is incredibly empowering.

And then you find out that you can do this, and it just encourages you to continue to take more bold steps. That is what you have to do to get a book published; you just have to be bold in many areas. I mean, you have to be bold in saying "no" to your family and friends, I can't do this; I have this time scheduled, and you have to protect your time. And you really have to, some writers say, put your butt in the chair and just do it. So any other tips before we take questions on how to get this started, and how to follow through and end up with a book?

Sheri: You know I would want to sum up just saying that anything that you want in this world, each and every one of you—I could meet you face-to-face and I know this is true—anything that you want in the world, that creation starts from within you. And you have the ability right now to put that creation out into the world. You were actually made for that, at a very organic level. You were made to create and every talent, and thing, and word, and thought that comes in to you, was meant to be out into the world and shared. So I just really empower you to go through the process, to go through the ups and downs, to go through the journey of getting that to happen. Everything we've discussed today was kind of technical like investing in your business, and all this other stuff. Kind of put that aside and really dig into what you've got to get out into the world. Whatever happens in that process, it's going to be a learning journey, and you're going to be so grateful that you did it. Even the scary pieces. And what will happen is like you said, energy will beget energy, and it will get easier and easier to get further along than before.

Dotsie: Absolutely and you know, it makes me think of my friend who was in her forties and always wanted to run a marathon. And darn if she didn't train and run in it this past year. And that sense of accomplishment was tremendous for her. And it was like, "Oh gosh, if I can run a marathon, what else can I do?" So just like you say, the energy continues to flow, and really we just need to be encouraged and feel empowered to continue on these journey's and continue to make a difference for the good of others which I think is what it is all about. Does anyone have a question? So if anyone has a question, now is the time to ask. Sometimes it takes a minute or two for people to ask.

Sheri: While they're doing that, I just wanted to point out that if anyone did decide that they wanted to plug in to the benefits over at the NAWW for some of that support, you know, if you already have a book, we let all of our members

promote on our blog. We're number two on Google for women writers. I wanted to make sure they knew where the discount was if that's alright?

Dotsie: Oh, sure. Good right ahead.

Sheri: Okay, the normal dues for the NAWW for a year, for twelve months, is \$127.00, and if you use this discount link, it saves you \$27.00. So it is at www.sm-save.com. And that's different from our Web site. We do a bunch of savings with a number of companies that I own so you'll actually be taken to the headquarters there. You'll also get that if you want to do a survey. If you just go to the NAWW, and right there in the sidebar you'll see, "Take Our Survey," and you can get the link and save that way, too. So either place. It just depends. Sometimes people don't want to do a survey to get the discount. So if you want to share your thoughts and answer those questions in the survey, you can do it that way, too.

Dotsie: Okay Sheri, you want to give that first address again, that's probably for "Sheri McConnell," right?

Sheri: Right. www.sm-save.com. It's another example of a URL that I was telling you about.

Dotsie: Okay, right. I don't know that anybody has any questions; I think it was very thorough and I'm really happy to share this audio link with women who weren't on the call and then also, we transcribe our teleseminars so they can also be printed and read away from your computer. And so, I'm sure that women will be tuning in and doing that as soon as we share the link with our readers in the upcoming member updates. So I just want to thank you so much for being on the call. Thank you for all of that information, jammed packed within the hour. And unless you have anything else to say, I think we're going to just say thanks again and enjoy your time.

Sheri: And thank you so much for everything you do. I always love connecting with you, and I can't wait to do it again, soon.

Dotsie: Okay, sounds great. Thanks Sheri, good-bye.