From Novelist to Ghostwriter

***Note: Transcription was provided by Otter, an AI app, and is imperfect.***

**Joshua Kelley**

Hi, my name is Josh Kelly. And I'm gonna be doing this presentation here on ghost writing. Specifically, the title is from novelist to full time ghostwriter. When I had my first book published, which wasn't a novel, but actually a Christian living book was published by harvest house. And my editor at that point was wanted to be very clear, he said, Josh, don't think that just because you have your having a book published means that this is now going to be your career, because I kind of had some hopes that way. And when he said that, of course, I didn't want to believe him. But turns out he was right. And it took a very long path for me to be able to go into B to become a full time author. And that path for me, led through ghostwriting. And I think for a lot of Christian writers, you know, there's a lot of us come to it for different reasons. And you know, we have something we want to say and different goals. But for most writers who want to become full time ghost writers, your best avenue is going to be something aside from actually selling the books that you write. Some people become public speakers and sell their books that way, or some people have some of the mystery going on. But for me, ghostwriting has been that and just a little bit of some caveats. I'm not necessarily there's there's some really long term pro ghost writers out there who have years in the field. I've been doing this for about three years, but I am making a full time living doing it. And as I said, I've had my own one traditionally published book a novel, a novel that I wrote that we'll get to that shortly. And I've, at this point, written ghost written 15 books, I think, yeah, that I'll be done with a 15 by the time you get this. So it's a long process. So that's the first caveat, I won't I'm not trying to be like the biggest expert in the world. But I've walked down this journey. And I'm think I have some stuff I can offer to you. And the other key point is that this is not a three steps to a six figure job, just do this, this and this, without a doubt. Number one's a lot of work. And number two, God has a favorite is that this is something that you can't make happen in the sense that like, you know, if you go get a job and just punch the clock, and you you're going by hours, you're going to make a living, this is much more like commission in a field. It's not necessarily always so certain. So that said a little bit of my story. So I was a pastor for 14 years, first about seven years as an assistant pastor of a very large church, up here in Northwest Washington, Mount Vernon. So I live halfway between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, and then another seven as lead pastor of my own very tiny church. During my time at that church, this gathering was named my church, I wrote this book called radically normal, it basically got to a place where something that I talked about became important enough to me to actually go and do something with it. And but as things happened, well, the church shrunk down to a place that is no longer feasible. We just couldn't even keep our Sunday school teachers and it weren't even enough, same school teacher, so we just had to close it and close it well, and was really interesting. Is that the day I got let's see if I can America Oh, yeah. So our last Sunday there in that church, Sunday, whatever, you know, may whatever and then the following day, I got my artists or my writer, first copy of my book, you know, it's such an exciting event. You know, I got my book, I literally carried around with me all day long. I didn't want to put it down because I was so excited to have have this book. But it was like God was like opening shutting one door very distinctly and I thought he was opening up another one because hurricane my book out that right time, and hence that's why my my editor gave me the suggestion, the warning like you're not probably not gonna be able to make a full time living at this right away. But after that, we well, we didn't know what to do. So my family and I sold our house, packed radars up into a minivan and drove around the country for eight months and saw 40 states two provinces in Tijuana so guys see a lot of the country and then came back and I knew that I didn't want to be pastor anymore. I was pretty burned out. I knew that I want to write. But I also knew I couldn't make a living at it quite yet. And I also knew that I had to pay hate to provide for my family. So I became a bartender. So I was a bartender for seven years at some kind of cool places. Not not like dive bars, but just you know, some really good places and during that time, what I would do is I would go in to my favorite coffee shop right all morning long. Go in bartender at night. then come home and repeat. So I'm going through this process and being a pastor. There's like Pete's parts of being a pastor that really hit me. Well, I really enjoyed. I'm a communicator, I'm speaker, I have another session here, public speaking for writers. And that part was fun, the writing sermons I really enjoyed. But there's so much the job I just wasn't, frankly, wasn't very good at I mean, my, my idea of counseling is, you know, stop being stupid. Read the Proverbs and read to Proverbs, call me in the morning, you know, that's kind of how I was. So I always felt like I wasn't quite being able to do what I need to do as a pastor, it's never felt like I was quite my where I belong, and chances are good, you know that feeling. bartending, I enjoyed it on a level, but I still It wasn't fulfilling in terms of what I wanted to do. But I was writing this novel, I was really enjoying it. And that's kind of what kept me going. Then came 2020, all of a sudden, I'm out of a job. My novels done, I've been trying to sell it, no luck. And now I'm having nothing to do. And the government's paying me not to work. At that point I read, contacted a friend of mine who was also approached by harvest house and he'd had he had some sort of self publishing group. And so I asked him if he still had contacted me a bit prior about doing some ghost writing at the time, I wasn't interested, but I had nothing else to do. So I wrote one chapter for them. And what I discovered was that I was good at it. And it's kind of something that you know, as I talk to the ghost writers one things we always say is that no one grows up thinking I'm gonna be ghost writer might grow up, right? That's never on our list of like ideal professions. It's something we've all stumbled into. So in my case, it was I wrote this one chapter and realize I'm really good at it. And specifically, what it was is the ability to mimic voices. I'm going to get to that in a little bit because I'm pitching this specifically as a how to take your skills as being a novelist. And using those for being ghostwriter salt, so fast. We're on that little bit. But then from there, a buddy of mine who was an author, he offered me a position he had a friend who wanted to publish their book and it needed some editing and the editing actually meant complete rewrite, because it was a mess. And from there, I just God has been gracious I keep on having project after project I've had very little downtime. Actually, I went through a time where like a project ended sooner than I thought I had some downtime and that was gotten a little scary there. But I got some other stuff too, that keep me busy during that time. And so the thing is, for me, for the first time in my life, I feel like I'm in the right ballpark. Writing, ghostwriting doing some coaching, developmental editing this like this is this is the sort of thing I was meant to do. At least a lot closer to than anything else I've ever done. Yet, I had to go through every step to get here. There's a part of me it's like, Well, man, couldn't do this happen sooner. You know, I'm turning 50 this year. Why did so it's 47. Why start ghostwriting? Why? What couldn't have done this earlier? So honestly, no. So many skills that I learned along the way brought me to where I am. And this whole journey has taught me a lot about trusting God in the process. And something I talk a lot about, and I'll probably talk about a little bit later is faith and hustle that there is this sense of faith that God's guiding but then also at the same time hustling really hard to work to get things going. So let's start by also, when I do classes, normally there's a lot of interaction questions and answers. And that's so much of the process. And obviously, this format doesn't allow for that. So I'm going to on my website, find some way to allow you to ask questions. And if I get enough questions, I'll maybe do like a Zoom meeting where we can have a q&a time. So that's going to be on my website. Josh Kelly J Oh sh ke l EY dot ink I NK like the stuff you write with for slash CC WC for cascade Christian writers conference. So I don't have that written down there below as well. Anyways, go check that out. And if you have some questions, I'll be the place to post it. I don't exactly know the format I'm gonna use yet but we'll figure it out. So there we go. That's all that's all my Prelude here. Think quickly about ghost writing. What how do you think it's viewed as you kind of think about conversations and kind of tone of voice people have when they talk about ghostwriting? How do you think about ghosts, right? Does it feel like it's cheating? Do you feel like it's unethical? Do you feel like it's a great endeavor? I was at a Writers Conference not terribly long ago, and I was at the table with a couple of other faculty and one of the main speakers were mentioned those ghostwriter. She just went on this whole thing about this little mini tirade about how it's deceptive, and all these things and it's wrong. And I've just like, I was blindsided, to be honest, I just didn't say much like, Okay, I knew that I didn't feel that way about it. But this is where I'm at and I thought a lot about ghost writing and there's a couple different things going on. First of all

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I I believe that ghostwriting is a great example of the Body of Christ at work, right? That you know, not everyone has a hand, not everyone's a button, not everyone's an eye, we all have our own skills. The clients I work with, many of them are capable writers on their own, on their own, on their own, in their own sphere. But to write a full book, it's something they don't have the time to do don't have noted, they had the ability to do not on the level that they're unable to do it. And I spent, I don't know, 14 1516 years learning how to become a good writer. I've invested a lot of time into this, I've read more books, and you can imagine I've written millions of words and discarded almost that many. These clients of mine have spent that amount of time if not more, doing their own thing, whatever it is that God's called them to do in their own endeavor. Why should they have to? Now they've reached this point in their life where they have these skills, these experiences the storyteller? Why should they go and have to spend 15 years learning how to do that, and then tell their story. It is the body of Christ, here's a skill I have, here's a skill you have, we bring it together. And so really this great collaborative process, and there's, uh, you know, it's okay, that not everyone's a great writer, really is because they're better at other things. And it's also okay, that everyone has the time to write a full book. It's that really is okay. And just kind of like now if I could go back and say something, that gal I probably still wouldn't say it. But I thought more about it. You look at the, the Bible or Paul St. Paul, in particular, at several points, you see him saying something about like, oh, you know, thinking so and so that wrote the book. And we know that from from historical references that it was very common process to have hire professional to actually write things for you. They're called manual aliases. And basically, the parchment is so expensive. You want to write really small in this in this way, so that you get as much packed into one letter as possible. So it's pretty common to hire someone. And we know that Paul employed these because at several points, he thanks them. Then he also at other points, says, See, I'm Mark writing, in my own hand, see what large letters I use, and things like this. But we also know there's other places where he doesn't acknowledge and evaluate us. And that doesn't mean he didn't use one then because again, he wrote in big writing, that was expensive. Chances are he didn't always mention the person. He's using ghost writers in certain extent. And, you know, how much did that manual is? have input on like? The, like the wording and the sort of the style? We don't really no, some scholars, some conservative scholars look at the differences between the pastoral epistles and how different they are in style and vocabulary will say Romans, and they said, maybe it was the the manual, as was different. And that's why there's a different style. I think that's a much better explanation, then more liberal scholars who say, Well, that's because Paul didn't write those other books, and they're actually a late addition. And now I'm getting into textual criticism, not to I'm getting into some rhetorical criticism and stuff that really doesn't, not the topic. The point is, I do believe that there's a place for ghost writers, I believe that it can be a very noble thing and and I have the knowledge that there are books out there that would not be out there, their stories being told, that would not have been told if it weren't for my help by God's grace. And so that's how I feel about and additionally is a way that can make a good living. Excuse me, why justice? I think why it's made it worse. Very much I can kind of see that it's a little bit uneven. It's just trying to increase as I talk, forgive me. So that said, That's ghostwriting. That's why I believe it's important that why I believe it's a very legitimate or there's lots of questions we asked my outs are acknowledgement should be given and is it okay to completely hide things. I'm afraid I made it worse in the process of doing that. Okay. But now let's talk about the skills you need to be a good ghostwriter. And these are, first of all, a couple of skills that if you are a good novelist, or good writer you already have and specifically, to be a good ghost writer, you have to be a great writer, there's no substitute for that there's no other way around that you have to be a great writer so I'm gonna kind of cut from the the assumption that you've written things that have been published that or have been self publishing have done well that people cipher miss your your friends say this is good, but the your writing style is good. That's the first thing you have to be a great writer. Second of all, you have to be able to mimic voices. And this is kind of the hidden thing that being quote, being a novelist gave me is that you know on any given moment, when you're writing a story, you have various voices going on in your head, right. You know, I know how Leah talks I know how Leo's Small Talk. So I know how Davey talks, and I have all these voices in my head. And I'm writing in that style. ghostwriting is like that, except that they're real people. So ones that are just talking in your own head. So that being able to create a unique voice. I mean, when you think what you do as a novelist, you use, you match education, you make sure that your character uses similes that fit their worldview, and that there, you look for a vocabulary and cadence that fits them. When you're ghostwriting, you are trying to capture that voice from your client. Major way I do this is by I record everything, all my all my conversations. And that way I can listen for turns of a phrase, I can listen for specific vocabulary they use, the way they structure their sentences. So like, Well, my current clients is a black pastor. So the way he talks is very different than previous clients who was a an entrepreneur in the med tech space. Both very intelligent men, but speak very differently. So those are some things that and you know, also you get to try to get to know your clients personality, I like to have them take like a Myers Briggs test. So I kind of have a sense of introvert versus extrovert and and kind of how they think, how they, how they present themselves. Another skill that as a great novices are going to have is that you need to be very self disciplined. This is you're working for someone else, you're self employed. So you have to be very discipline, you have to make things happen, and because no one else is going to do. And then finally, I think I feel like most writers are very curious. That's part of the job. Being curious without judgment. Now, that doesn't mean you can't at some point, form a set assessment of judgment of something that someone did, but as you're listening, you don't have judgment use need to be a curious person. And just basically, I'm curious about everything. That's kind of one of the fun things I love about being a ghostwriter is I get to learn about so much I got one client flew me out to Nigeria and Kenya to do research for a book, which was a lot of fun. And for me, that's just like my happy place to learn new stuff. But I remember I was part of attending a seminar at some webinar. Once in in the side chat someone asked, like the presenter, like, what, where do you get your name from? It's a very unique name, or something like it's like kind of usual name for an American dude. And someone else in the chat responded, I was always taught, it's rude to ask people about their names. I saw that like, let's what's the politest way I can first of all, call this not call it this person to say don't shut people down or help the original asker not feel shut down. And also to respond. I just said, yeah, maybe that is a little rude. But you know, as an as a writer, I'm used to being rude because I'm curious. That is part of the job. You know, you can be curious about things. So those are all skills that I kind of assuming you already have the ability to be being good writer, being able to make voices, being disciplined, and then also being curious about judgment. Okay, now, here's the new skills you need to add to that, in order to be a good ghostwriter. I believe from my experience, and now you may not have all these, that's okay. This this may be for you comes as classes, like a chance for you to figure out whether or not ghost writing is either even something you want to do. But here's things you have to be able to do. I believe to be a good ghostwriter. One, you have to have a heart to serve. Your goal is to serve people. This I believe that's true of all writers, but you have to specifically be desiring to serve people that sense that there are books out there that wouldn't be out there without if it weren't for me. My personal mission statement is to bring more God honoring life changing books into the marketplace. That is what I want to do. Some of those books I'll make a living off of because I'll ghost write them or I'll coach for them. Sometimes it'll just be a conversation. I don't make any money off of them. Hopefully, things I say here help you bring more God aren't life changing books into the marketplace, and I'm not gonna receive anything off it other than this is my calling. This is what I get you this is the way I get to serve. And, you know, there's certainly a business side to this, but at the same time, if I can keep on advancing that mission, I feel like I'm doing what God's called me to do. Also to be good ghostwriter, you need to not care about the credit. You have to be okay with not having your name on the book. That is something that it seems like it's easy until you have to actually do it. The gentleman who wrote the prince Henry's

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Harry, Prince Harry, sorry, Prince Harry's memoir, spare he has an article in The New Yorker really good. I would suggest you look it up. Read it. You It is JR Morgenthaler. So I don't remember his exact name. But there's this this fun part where he like, specifically so I don't want to have cover credit on this book. But then he found himself getting irritated when the Princeton mentioned him by name and an interview with this guy, this guy very this reflection of this is kind of this tension that you do hold, but in general, you have to be okay with not receiving the credit for me, I will for me whether or not I get a collaboration credit is a strategic thing I asked myself Is this a situation where by getting on here, I will give the give, it will give me the opportunity to connect with other people or that you know, in some cases, I believe having my name on there will actually benefit the writer, the my client, because they may not have have a written a thing. And so having them someone else join along with them will show that it's better written. You also have to be okay with lack of creative control. This is tough, you know that you'll have to suit your feelings about this stuff should be done. But the end of the day, it is not your book. At the end of the day, it's their choice, what's going to happen. I had one book man, I really enjoyed writing it. I had so much fun writing it. And I got through, finished the first draft sent to the client. And the client said, Yeah, this is really good, but I just had to go a different direction. Hmm, what and so she just, it still is sitting in her hard drive and mind unpublished. And I think it's good material. And of course, the initial question was like, What did I do wrong? But she later hired me to do other stuff. So it's not that I did something wrong. It's just that's what she decided to do. I have no control over that. Another skill you have to have to be a good ghostwriter, I believe is to write fast to be able to work fast. That's tough. But there's there's a quote that I have up on my chalkboard, that's right there that says inspiration is for amateurs, the rest of us just show up and get to work. When you're a full time writer, you can't wait be waiting for the muse. This is now your job. It's your livelihood, you have to make yourself right whether you want to or not. This is actually something I learned from being a pastor. That's very helpful. And that was that you know that being pastor, you're writing a short book or an article every week in the form of a sermon. Every week I would so Monday, I'd gather all my materials Tuesday I start writing. And then my goal was to have it done by Thursday because I take Friday and Saturday off without fail by Tuesday, by the end of Tuesday, I would have my stuff kind of together and just this is garbage. What am I even talking about? Why am I even a pastor, I have no business doing this, this is worthless, I'm so stupid. And then by Thursday, I'd have a sermon. I was like, I can't wait to share this. I'm so excited to talk to my people about this. And the funny thing is, that feeling never went away after seven years of being a lead pastor. So preaching, you know, four times, three to four times a month. So however it may hundreds turns out was I still felt that feeling every Tuesday. But I could laugh at myself and say, Hey, Josh, this is why I do this what you do every time. Now just get back to work, you have to have that ability to push yourself through those walls to those through those dry spells and writer's block, you don't have a choice, you just have to get to work. Along those lines in terms of working fast, one of the key points in my work was when I decided to rent an office, I'm here in a little office just off of the first street downtown Mount Vernon. And it seems like a strange expense to have even when, like sometimes when not getting the business. But if I don't have an office, I can't for me because of just how I function with my ADHD, I would not be able to do this at home, I can't do this in a coffee shop I did for a while I could get some I could work for three hours pretty well. But I can't put in 70 hour days in a coffee shop. So for me, this is an investment I have to make. Fortunately, it's fairly affordable year.

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Next, you have to have excellent people skills. That's it doesn't mean you have to be an extrovert, but you have to be really good with people. Because you are having to convince people to trust you with their lives that you're giving. They're giving something to you and they have to feel like you're trustworthy, they have to connect, you have to feel like there's something there. You have to be great at building rapport. You have to demonstrate that you understand, you have to be great at listening. I think I may have said already but let me say it again. You have been great at listening. Here's one of the things I learned in life. If I'm talking I'm not learning right now, I'm not learning anything. Hopefully you are but I'm not learning a thing. When I'm interviewing there is a tendency because I'm a teacher and because I like to talk to want to kind of put in my thing when you know who hears As soon as this but unless it's actually being part of the conversation I need to do as much showing up as possible. Being able to interview people because cumulate pull more out of them. Being able part of that I heard a listen to someone on a podcast or something for for a webinar about ghostwriting, and someone said that they tell their clients, let me live for you. Which really made me laugh, it's a great way of putting it because the point isn't worth trying to be deceptive. But don't you don't, as a client, I'm trying to encourage them. Don't filter anything out. Don't worry about how this will make you look, don't worry about any of that. Just give it to me. And then that's my job to look at it say what do we need to share? What do we need to not share what can be held back. But you have to give it all to me, it's kind of like a lawyer needs hear everything from his client, or else he can't really help the client. And you also have to be able to push your client through. Now this depends on the genre, of course. But a lot of times you have to push them through to get them to talk about things that they don't necessarily want to talk about takes time to develop that report. But you also have to you have to push them to be more authentic to give you more material. And so this ability to be pushy, yet, yet friendly is huge. Okay, so there is this next, excellent people skills. Additionally, you need to be a professional, not an artiste. I'm wearing a tie I'm wearing if you see any of my other sessions, I will be wearing. Just like, I like Hawaiian shirts, that's why usually we're not white shirt, sorry. Um, anyways, I have other shirts I normally wear. And I don't like wearing a tie, but I'm wearing it today for this session. To make this one point, as it goes right are you are a professional, you have to present yourself as a professional, you have to look the part. So when I meet clients, until I've already known them several times, I'm gonna be wearing a tie to every meeting, to demonstrate I'm a professional. With that, also, it's just it's an entire mindset that you have about being a professional, this is something I'm not an amateur, I'm not somebody doing this for fun, but this is my job. And I'm expecting people to invest a lot of money in me. I mean, my, my working rate is roughly $1 a word. That's no small amount of money. And so I need to do everything I can to demonstrate that I'm a professional I'm trust can be trusted without money. I'm not fly by night organization. At the end, I'm going to talk about some of the tools, I use digital tools, but I pay for the upgraded version of things like Calendly, zoom, and other such things to remove the watermark from it, i There's no if you go to my website, it doesn't say, you know provided by Weebly, it's all going to look more professional and that I'm not going to have be on a meeting with a client who may might have me write a 50,000 word book, and have the zoom call drop out at 40 minutes, because I'm using the free version. So I paid extra for that. So this is a mindset that this professional mindset that you have to be a professional. And that's something I referenced earlier, is this ability to balance hustle and faith that you're working as hard as you can. But yet, you know, God has to make this happen. That I when it comes to trying to find new clients, I'll get to that a little bit more. I will do everything. I will try everything. I put in a ton of work trying to get clients. But at the end of the day, I know God has to make it happen. There's a back when my first book came out. And I was trying to do everything I could to get that book. noticed. I saw in my neighborhood someone lost their cat. I knew they lost her cat because they put up about 200 posters. And I'm not exaggerating at that point. I mean, there's a lot of posters of this cap poster everywhere. Now, those folks could not make their cat come home. The cat could have been dead in a ditch when they put those posters up. But they could put as many posters up as possible to increase the possibility of them getting the cat back. And that's kind of the mentality I have. I'm gonna keep on putting posters up. But I know that whether or not I get the work is gonna be God. So it's it's faith and hustle, faith and hustle. And I just this is I won't say I've mastered this, but it is key to being an entrepreneur, a writer, a ghostwriter. And then finally, the last thing that you need to have, I believe, to be a great ghostwriter is to be a real sense of gratitude. Gratitude that, you know, I'm so lucky to do this. I mean, there's hard days, there's gonna be a lot of work. There's been times I've been very frustrated from clients that I've wanted to, you know, you know, get frustrated, but at the end of the day, I'm being paid to write it That's kind of cool. And so this sense of gratitude, I get to the people I get to talk to the people I get to meet with is cool. And I'm very grateful for it. And that's a mindset that I just think is vital. Okay, so there are some of the tools, some of the skills I think you need to have for being a ghostwriter. Here, now I'm going to go to so the tools of the trade. So I started with some of the schools skills, you've already have this good skills need to develop. And then tools of the trade. A Place to Work is I believe, critical. Different people, you have to know yourself, you know, what you need to do? Do can you make work for you to a corner in your bedroom? Coffee Shop? Again, for me is the office. That's a you have to do some cost analysis, like, you know, what, what's it also where you going to meet people, you know, to have a Zoom meeting at a place where it's not professional, I mean, that's important. The I want to have something as professional when people see me on the Zoom meeting. Another key tool, I believe, is a good website. It doesn't need to be complicated, but it needs to have. So people know how to get ahold of you and look good, good enough that people like they can trust you and give them the information they need. Insurance. This is something I have. I have liability insurance, or basically, it's called errors and omissions, Ianto insurance through the Authors Guild. That's by the way, that's I'm part of the Authors Guild that they have some benefits with involved in ai plus, I like being part of the Authors Guild, because they are the ones representing my interest as an author to Congress. I don't necessarily agree with all their stances on everything. But it's good to have lobbyists who are looking out for you especially like for right in the current. This day. Right now, the stuff I'm getting from the Authors Guild is talking a lot about AI, specifically, the fact that AI is using published materials is trained on public material onto our unpublished materials, copyrighted materials. And it's using that to create material. So what about the people who created the original, you know what, so just Amy's it's good to have an organization that's looking out for you? And among other things, they offer a resource of some good rates on on liability, liability insurance? I mean, when it comes to that quickly, there's a lot of discussion about like, you know, memoirs or whatnot, or can you be sued for, you know, libel, or slander and all these sort of things? And the short answer is, you can be sued by anyone for anything. That's just the way it works. That doesn't mean the boss is gonna be successful. But someone can try to sue you for anything. The the bar for I think, libel, I think, is the ones written maybe slander. And forgive me, I don't remember which terms which the bar for proving slandered will say, libel, the bar for being for successfully suing someone for libel is pretty high. They have to prove that you act in with absolute indifference to the truth. So it's hard to do, it can't happen. But it's hard to do. But that doesn't mean you can't be sued. So I want to know that as I'm and also what I my contracts, assign all my old liability, once it's done, the client has complete liability for it. I write that my contract, that doesn't mean that that someone might not try to come after me. And so for that reason, that's why I've the back, I want to have a lawyer available, there's gonna be a back able to back me up, because I don't want to have to go through the lawsuit, not because I wouldn't win, because I just wanted to have that hassle.

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And, okay, so some other tools. These are apps. There's a lot of great apps out there. These are some of the ones I use. I'll have this list there on the website, zoom. Come on over, I use it. Not so my favorite but it does a job. Toggle. That is a great tool for tracking your time. I tracked the time I spent on everything. Because at once I started doing that I realized how long it took me to do things. I started realizing how badly I was under charging people. And so that's kind of what made me realize, okay, wait, every client I one things I realized is if I had a potential client, roughly, if I'm trying to pursue a client, it's roughly two hours of my time, but an hour of prep an hour of actually meeting with them. When I realized that and thought through how much my time is worth, I got a lot better at weeding out the tire kickers and I'll get to that in just one second year for that. Actually a little bit further down. Otter is a transcription service you know, it's on my phone. I click the button and it records all my conversations and then our conversation and then transcribe some. I'm gonna play with some other tools now that train scription seemed to be getting a little better. The one that comes on the Android phone seems to be really good. Auto is not free, I have to pay. Again, because that one has limits like you can only do so long, I need to look into Google and some other services to see those valuable. There's certainly some other project management software that can be helpful. I've used Trello, I like it. But I don't use it a ton. Calendly. Calendly is one of my big ones. Calendly is basically a great tool for allowing people to book sites with just I send them a link. And people can book a meeting with me, the great thing about Trello and the reason why I pay for the the like, second tier may 3 tier service, is because it can require people to answer questions before like, you know, you what's your email? What's your website? What's the main premise of your idea? And here's the big one. My rate is roughly $1 per word. Can you afford that? I say it a little bit nicer than that. Are my coaching services, my coaching service is $750 a month? Are you able to make that investment? Depends I sent different links depending on whether someone's interested in coaching and ghostwriting, or whatnot, by forcing them to click yes or no. That really weeds out a lot of people who probably just aren't that interested. And that saves me a ton of time. That's that feature alone makes it worth the extra, you know, $5 a month or whatever it is. Query tracker, I use that for keeping track of if I'm ever doing queries, and that's a great source for queries for yourself. For other people. I like it. They have a free version. I personally haven't paid the extra $50 A year or whatever it is, because it's a great program and I want support them. LinkedIn is the My main social network. Now. I'm always never on Facebook. I'm on LinkedIn more, because that's a professional network. And I haven't actually gotten jobs. I've made some good connections from that. Personal Development and then another tool, the trade. There's some great books out there and you should always be developing yourself as both as a writer and as a ghostwriter. Some books that I recommend Cecil Murphey ghost writing the see the Cecil Murphey method, I believe it is, this is I wish I would have gotten this like when I first started. There's just a lot of great material in here. Talk to me is a book about interviewing. This gentleman was a professor of journalism at Point Loma, great stuff on interviewing great story, one of my favorite stories is when he actually peed his pants, when an interview went long. Rather than cut off this interview that he just knew is such a, he, there's such a He's so lucky to get this interview of us like I'm not getting up or anything I'm gonna have. It was That's commitment. Also try and stay current in your field. This is something I try to do is just have various magazines and ezines that I subscribe to that kind of helped me. I subscribe to Christianity today. That's about $6 a year. And that lets me since I'm trying to write in the Christian marketplace, that gives me a good sense of what's going on. And that's a great I read through that all the time. And one of my clients was actually I read an article about this one person really impressed with what they're doing. And so I reached out to them and I ended up doing work for them which is really cool. Jane Friedman's hot sheet. That's another paid service just it's like every other week, just get some great information about the publishing world. I like to know about the publishing world because your clients are going to be asking publishing type questions I tell them that's not my area, you know, I I am not a marketer, all this but I want to at least know kind of how things work. Jane Freedman also if you're not already subscribed to her to her like weekly blog do that and they have seminars, she has seminars all the time, really low cost point usually $25 per seminar and it's great stuff so I just before I recorded this I watched a seminar that she that she offered on structuring your memoir because I do love memoirs. There are no solid stuff in there yeah, I knew a lot of it was there stuff I learned Oh yeah, you better believe it. So things like that. Doing whatever you can you always need to be growing as a writer. writers do Writer's Digest is another one subscribe to Publishers Weekly just kind of be aware of what's going on there. I do their free one I don't do the paid one. Obviously there's a lot more tools but there's just some things have been very helpful to me. Finding work so this is the one that everyone wants to know about. Like how do I get work? It's complicated. And there's no easy sure path forward and again, God has to favor this. I don't I know that's gonna sound like a cop out. But you have to be convinced that God's calling you into this. And there's been several times where I've questioned that, like, we only when I'm getting near the mic, the book I'm just finishing it got a little close for comfort between when, when it was finished and when I got the next contract. And it's like, God, I pretty sure you have me in this, you've been doing a lot of stuff, you've done some amazing stories. But, you know, it can be really hard. And so just that to know God needs to be in it. I don't think you can force this to happen. No, no your specialties what is it that you're good at? What What can you offer, the other people can't What's your background, the better you know, what you can offer them, the better position your guard gonna be, you are going to be in to find people to offer it to. So you know, to build up a writing resume to build Yeah, you should have a writing resume, that sort of stuff you've written the sort of the people you've talked to and get a sense of what are some of the places you can talk to. My next suggestion then is it's best if you can small start small. Again, I was fortunate I was on unemployment. When I got started, I was able to do jobs for next to nothing because the government is paying my salary. But before my time ran out on an employment, I was able to go Barton of contract and say thank you, bye bye, no more filling out these silly reports. And that felt really good. But just trying to find small jobs, help people out to get practice for writing copywriting is one, one possibility. Maybe volunteering for some stuff, here's kind of what my beliefs is, if you can't do what you want to do, at least try to do something adjacent to it, try to find something roughly in that field that either volunteer to make money. So in addition to

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you know, try to work your own networks. So that's why with the writing resume and trying to find out think through all the people you know, and maybe sending out, Hey, this is what I'm going to do, I'd like to practice can I write a chapter for you just try to find ways to, to describe good name for yourself and get some referrals. There's a lot of platforms available for writing. But there's lots of caveats with that. So there's like ones like Upwork, thumbtack Fiverr. These ones, yeah, they're out there and people get work on them. And so the people my ghostwriting Association use that. But most of people who are looking on those platforms are looking for dirt cheap. I was on them for a little while and got off right away, because I just wasn't getting anything about you. Again, I know people who have, but it's not. People don't necessarily have a great sense of the value of your time on those on those websites. So the platform I've had the best luck with is one called Brizzi. R E D S, why they don't have a ton of ghostriders on them, which is one of the things that worked in my favor, and not to have Christian ghostwriters. However, they vet their their professionals a lot more than other places, I had to have five book credits before I could. And that's even one of those being traditionally published. I have five books I've done prior to being invited, brought in, which is tough. And so that's where he tried to jobs for cheaper so that you can start getting those credits, because not all of them happy they can be self published. If they can find them on Amazon that that's usually or even articles, they will accept articles that you've written so that can be another good place to go. But read see and read see, I have a love hate relationship with read. See, I've got some of my biggest clients from them, including one that the one that flew me to Nigeria and Kenya, but they also charge a lot and they're just kind of a pain. Like, anyways, yeah, ghostwriters who use them we have our little annoyances not forced, or it's just annoyances. Then there are simply making cold calls when I call when I reached out to that person featured in that Christianity today. Article, that's a cold call. And I wrote it in a way say, Hey, I know this is a cold call. This may seem kind of creepy, but I read the article. I thought about reaching out to you and then decide no, that's too creepy. I wrote better than this way. You know, I'm just giving you the short version. But then two days later, I still think about it. So I decided to go and reach out to you. And turns out that at that point in her life, she actually was thinking about writing a memoir. Then there are some that you can hire marketing services and specialists. When two thoughts first of all, finding ones that fit your style and fit that are legitimate is tough. And number two, they're expensive. Number three, make sure that you're ready to make use of whatever work you get that you're at the capability level that you can actually go for. I have not had I've done a couple of things that I haven't had great luck with the stuff that I've seen to me was A little bit too spammy. This is something on LinkedIn, we're sending, sending out stuff to just random people. And not random but yes targeted. But still, it was just too spammy. So I ended up not using it, but it's worked for a lot of people.

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So I want to talk briefly this is I don't know how useful this is going to be. But this is the sort of things people have asked about. And that's once you know what my process is like as a ghostwriter. And maybe this will be helpful to you, great, if not great. Every each person is process is different. Furthermore, each client is incredibly different. So when I even try to think like, what's my standard processes, like, on the most recent book on you know, it's like, each time there's, they can be so different. But in general, I will still have it on my mind. So yeah, I had someone reach out to me, I read see, yeah, this this book idea. And I looked into it, and okay, this guy looks interesting. His story's interesting. I'm willing trigged. I'm not sure what's up. So I did some research know this, this guy's legit. So I met with him. As we were having this initial conversation, I went into that meeting, having already read is a LinkedIn a couple articles I found out found out about him. Remember, I said, if I'm actually going to meet with someone, but by time, if I'm going to try to get someone, minimum two hours, I'm investing into them, if not more, I read everything I could about him, I was able to cite some stuff from his history, these kinds of prices, I knew. But then when I met with him, basically said, Okay, I want to hear your story. I wanna hear your book, idea. But first, the most important thing is, what's your purpose and your goal? And this is how I delineate those purposes. What is it that you want the reader to walk away with? You know, these certain terms are interchangeable, but again, this is how I use it. Purpose is like, use your book is someone's read your book, they close it, what is it that you want them to know, to feel to do? What's that? And that usually gets them thinking. And that gives me an idea of what sort of book they're wanting to write. The second question is, what is your goal? What what do you want to achieve for your person yourself? What is your professional goal in this? If they say my goal is to be to be traditionally published and make lots of money, it's like, that's not great client. Because there's, unless there's some, let's have some very compelling stuff going on. And a huge platform, probably not going to happen. I don't need to tell you how difficult it is to be self published, I mean, to be traditionally published, but that can give me a sense of how realistic they are, and also know what sort of thing they're looking for. I've had clients are interested in hiring me potential clients, who want to be like a keynote speaker, and they need to have a good have a book to go with that. And when we talked about that, then now that it becomes, okay, do you want just want to book like something PDF done? Or do you want like a good book? Because if you want just a book that somebody can download, it's okay. There's a lot of people are a lot cheaper than I am. You probably just use AI to create that book. Probably not. But at least you can get something that's like, almost almost digestible. But if you want a good book, a book that will like stick with people, well, then that might be working, well hire me. But these are all the questions I want to find what they're hoping to get to know what how realistic it is, and then whether I can deliver, then the rest of conversation. I'm trying to find out if I'm interested, if I'm intrigued. I had, I had one project when I I wanted to one, it's kind of like, you know how sometimes, you know, back was on high school, there's this girl that her and I got along great. And I wanted for us to be into each other. But she's like, she's another amazing. Another amazing person. She was an amazing person as a good Christian. It's like, it seems like a show of work, but there's just nothing there. And you know, sometimes just nothing's gonna be there. And thank God because she's not the one I'm married, right? I married my wife. But sometimes something just this one particular projects, like I should want to do this, but it just, it's not interesting to me. So I turned down. I'm looking for something intriguing, something that that makes me want to do it. Okay, so then they decide they want to hire me, there's some back and forth. Like, okay, here's my terms. And they kind of come up with this basic contract. And there's different resources for that. My next thing in most cases is I'm gonna fly out and meet with them. I want spend about four minimum four days four or five days with them in their space to some extent, and just hearing them talk recording, you know, I had one I got 45 hours with recordings from um, Because I want to hear more of the story. And sometimes, it's just little side comments that becomes so pivotal, just as the like, Oh, yeah. Blah, blah, blah, whoa, hey, I repeat that, that's really good. And it can become a cornerstone of the book and use the time with someone. One of the podcasts I listen to is called as told to another great resource. And that guy's basically said, you have to listen to lock boring stories, and you have to be willing to hear the same story told multiple times, before they'll trust you with the good stories. Okay, so I'll meet with them. And then hopefully during this, that time, I'll start to get a sense of of the, the outline of the book where we're going to go with it, and be able to present it to them. And so kind of get an arc of where their life is, if it's a memoir. I do memoirs, and business books and Christian leadership, Christian living, those are kind of my main areas, but hopefully get some sort of sense of the of the the outline, have all this information. We've had these conversations. Now I feel like I know them well enough that we can do everything else via zoom. Because you know, almost all my clients have been out of the area. Fly home, I then spend a solid week listening to all of the recordings, creating an outline and kind of find that structure. Now. That's something I'm good at. I've got this. I'm really good. The big picture I ADHD dyslexia means I take in a ton of information. I can remember 45 hours of the interviews well enough to try to try this entire arc and also to see things bring together pieces that my client couldn't. This one gentleman with a 45 hours. At one point I said, so it sounds like your father was a tragic figure. And I just got to see like the realizations like, Oh, gotcha, he was he was and I was able to see things. And frequently, you'll be able to see things in someone's life that they can't see themselves. Again, this is a memoir field, but watch, and you'll be able to bring in things that other people can't bring in. So I take all that time I listened to all the recordings, a lot of times transcriptions are depending especially on how good the quality is, try to get the mic, if you're transcribing, try to get the mic quality as possible. I just bought this something new. And hopefully this works well that these are two little lapel mics. And a little receiver that plugs into my Android phone. And in theory, that should make it a lot easier to record stuff. Because a lot of times the reason why the transcriptions are bad is because the recording isn't as good as it should have been. And I hopefully that's gonna save me a lot of time. But by using that. Then from there, I after listen to all that I create a an outline, a good solid outline. And I basically asked the author, the client to agree to it that like this is basically we're working with if we can't really vary a lot, or else there's going to be some added expenses. Once we agree on that. So kind of an outline chapter markings. Then I write the first one or two chapters, send that to them. See what they think I tell them, I'm not looking fine details I'm looking for does this feel right? Does this fit your voice does this and so the writing process, of course, it's a huge thing. And I'm not gonna tell you how to write because you have to kind of figure that out for yourself. But for me, using the recordings as much as possible to provide the content. But as you will know, the way we talk translating spoken word into written word, it's it is a translation requires work to, to transfer it from one to the other. So there's a great book called dialogue by what's his name? Mickey Robert McKee. That really helped me learn a lot about how to write better dialogue. Sorry, it's off topic. But anyways, that's safe. by you, taking what the what they said, If I ever am struggling with something trying to get something together, I found if I go back to what they said in the order they sent it in. That usually give me good hint. Because hint, because what I'm going through all these outlines, I'm moving pieces around, I keep one copy of all the transcripts all in one spot, according to which day was recorded, which session. And I just leave that in that order. Then I create a new one where I often put take all those pieces and bring them together and organize according to what they outline that created with the client. But sometimes they need to go back and listen to the unsorted one to find out oh wait, they went from this topic to this topic. Oh, okay. i Okay, now understanding what the thought process was. Same as I've written the first couple chapters, send it to them, see if they think you know how it does feel okay. Okay, good. What do we need change. Then just keep on going every like send them roughly every three chapters or so. And keep on going back and forth until the full thing is done. That's my first draft. I'm in my, in my contract, which I'm gonna talk about later, I set up what my editing process is. And one things I say is that

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first draft, as, as you receive each piece, each couple of section of chapters I send you, you're approving the first draft of this book, you can own, that, if you want to make any like paragraph or above changes you have to do now, you can't be adding stuff later. And if so, the cost is gonna go up, and it's gonna be delayed potentially delay quite a bit. I learned that because I had one gentleman add an entire chapter, when we're on the third draft, fortunately, paid me for it. But nonetheless, that was, that was a good lesson. So go through the entire first draft. At this point, they've approved everything at like, paragraph level and above, then I go through a second time for me that sort of print it all out, I'm doing all by hand, once I know the ending, I'm very pleased to rewrite the beginning. And I'm just make all these changes I sent to him again, and I let them know. So there's gonna be one more draft. This draft is four sentence level, if you have any changes you want to be made. But you need to do that now. Because the next draft is just fine details. And you can read the third, the third draft if you want to, but really, it's not. If there's anything crucial that changes between second and third draft, I'm gonna let you know. And so that's up to them. And I use words, Track Changes feature, I'm a big Microsoft Word, person, I was using word backwards loaded on floppy disks. And so I'm my Google guy. That's me, I just know my way around word so much that that's what I was comfortable with. After basically then do the second draft send that to them get approval than third draft against that fine tuning what I do, and this has a lot to do with my dyslexia is that I listened to it, I word has a read aloud feature. And I literally listened to the whole thing. And that allows you catch me to catch some fine details. But also allows me to hear the cadence like if there's two words that are even though they're written differently, they sound Somali, I might change them, it just it gives me a better feel for it. However, so once I get there, I'm done. I've set milestones in terms of having a receipt payment, and so you know, all that stuff happening. But I also in my contract state that I my book will be copied, copy, edit, ready. In other words, I don't deliver a book that is caught fire has the full copy editing, they need to hire someone else for that, because no one should do their own copy editing. That's just that is my belief. Absolutely. Especially this guy, you know, again, with the, the dyslexia, I'm gonna miss things. And if they are producing published, the publisher is gonna provide that anyways. And if they're not Well, the good news is I tell them that copy editors are a lot cheaper than I am, it will serve you you'll pay a lot less to have them do it than to have me do it. So that's basically it. That's kind of my process from start to finish. Some people give me collaboration credit, some don't. But that's kind of all negotiated within the within the contract. Some hard won lessons. See, my time is just wrapped up. So I'm gonna wrap this up hard won lessons, trust your gut about clients. If something feels off, go with it. Clients that ask for deals are usually going to be the biggest pain, the gas for more and more deals. I would prefer not create gateways to save time. Okay, I've already talked about that the whole thing about using a premium questionnaire, I'm very be very upfront about your free fees right at the beginning. Because you don't want them to you don't want to waste their time you don't waste your time. You know, and one way one way I say it, to not actually say numbers is to say yes. So you'd be paying my full time salary for about three months, three or four months. Just by saying that that gives people level of recognition like okay, professional for months. Got it. I cannot afford this, right. Be very clear about the publishing world don't give your clients say false hope. I'm very honest. Like, here's what it takes to be published. It's very hard to do very few people are able to do it. Yeah, they're gonna have an uncovered competition the beginning. Then at the end. Pastors are not big clients most of the time because pastors are used to getting freebies. And they also when you're in the church work and this is speaking as foreign pastor, you get tend to think as everything of everything as God's work, and therefore you shouldn't have to pay for it. So I'm not saying no pastors can be good clients, but just understand that can be a rough clientele. Don't undercut yourself, there a certain part of the Association of ghost writers, as an organization, well, well worth looking into. And when we have our monthly meetings, we encourage you to either charge more, you're worth more than you're charging. And so don't undercut yourself. Because by taking a low paying job, sometimes that can be a really me at the beginning, you may need to but taking a low paying job means you can't think of a higher paying job. And I've had clients where I cannot live on what they paid me. It's that simple. I'm have a CLI recent client, I chose to take less well below my normal rate, because I really didn't believe in the project I just felt I was supposed to. But yeah, I had a dip in savings a little bit without one. But I knew that's what was gonna happen. Let's see. Always have contracts, be very clear about who does what and when research, who's responsible for what the payments, the milestone payments, you know, like that either by date or by, you know, the finishing of this draft, you know, for me first draft. And the first draft is, by the time that you finish the first draft, I'm about at least four fifths of the way through, if not more, so I can't say like, okay, the you know, second half payment comes out at the end of first draft, because I'm almost done. I have more to do like, two thirds of the first draft is where the so okay? Always charged downpayment, I do 25% down payment. So here's my fee, 25% down payment to hold the spot non refundable, because I'm I could potentially be trying away clients because I'm expecting you that money is yours that's hold your spot, if they cancel, don't feel bad about keeping the money, because again, you're potentially betraying my clients to leave it to hold that spot open. And when you realize when you start thinking through, okay, it takes this long, dry book, this doesn't this, okay, there's this period time, I can't really do anything else, that changes I think about about your fees. So I do 25% Down payment 25% of the first at the, this is typical change, everything would be a little different 25% when we actually start if it's going to be if there's a big gap between A and B. And then I do like the other 25%, again, right around two thirds, three quarters of the way through the first draft, and the file payment when I'm done with the acceptance of the copy, read it ready, copy, edit, ready, manuscript NDAs non disclosure is just that you you let them know you're not gonna be public, you won't publicly disclose your, that you work with them. I have some clauses various clauses in my contract that I have nicknamed after people that well there's the one I call it, the duty clause that where I define my editing structure, so that if you're going to try to add a chapter, during the third round, we're gonna you're gonna have to pay for it. And it could potentially end up pushing your your book back for months, because you have another book waiting for the next one wave to finish this one. This is a huge one, I call this the BB contract. And that is that the contract ends at this date, the item and the contract at this date, usually like a year out or six months out,

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providing a good a good a good faith effort to work with you. It will end at this date, because you can have people who just drag things on and on and on. And I had a coaching client that I was just paying three months and two years later, it's still she still had finished, you know, I still on, you know, on a retainer for not retirement, but like we saw work that was supposed to be done. And my rates quadrupled from the time I signed her because she's one of my earliest clients. Think about that story. She actually ended up saying, You know what, I'm not going to ever write this myself. And so she hired me as her ghostwriter ended up my full rate. So that ended up well. But from her I learned to always put kill dates on my contracts. Also, at the end of the client, I say that when the client accepts all responsibility for what is written and that and I release all the rights, that's an important thing for their sake that you have in there that you release the rights. Everything that you write is yours until you sign away to someone else. And so I state that upon their final payment, I will automatically release the rates. So that is everything I have. There's certainly a lot more that can be said. Again, normally I like being able to do some question and answer time, but because of the nature of this, this medium, we can't. So go to that website, the Josh Kelly dot inc. And Ford slash CC WC and I'll have some forum for people to ask questions and my ideal would be to get a bunch Questions, do a zoom meeting for those who are available and recorded. But we'll see how that works. I hope this was helpful to you a lot of fun for me, if you're doing like a hybrid where you're going to be at the conference as well as watch it, and I'd love to meet you feel free to reach out to me on my website. My ability to actually like coaching on ghost writing is gonna be kind of limited, like, like free Conversations is gonna be kind of limited because my, my schedule is pretty full. But you know, a couple quick questions I might be able to answer. And yeah, man Best of luck to you. This, as I said, this is gonna be a great, it can be a great thing. I've enjoyed doing it very much. I'm very grateful for the opportunity. And I just wish you all the best