

Doug Smith: 0:07

Hey, leader, and welcome to another episode of the L3 Leadership Podcast, where we are obsessed with helping you grow to your maximum potential and to maximize the impact of your leadership. My name is Doug Smith and I am your host, and today's episode is brought to you by my friends at Beratung Advisors. We also recorded this episode live from the new returncom studio. If you're new to the podcast, welcome. I'm so glad that you're here and I hope that you enjoy our content and become a subscriber. I know that you can also watch all of our episodes over on our YouTube channel, so make sure you're subscribed there as well. And, as always, if you've been listening to the podcast for a while and it's made an impact on your life, it would mean the world to me if you would leave us a rating and review on Apple Podcasts or Spotify or whatever app you listen to podcast through. That really does help us to grow our audience and reach more leaders, so thank you in advance for that. Well, leader, in today's episode, you're going to hear a personal lesson by me on the lessons that I learned from writing my first book. Yes, that's right, I completed the first draft of my first book. This was a dream that I've had for over 20 years and it finally has been accomplished. Now, obviously, I have to do the hard work of figuring out how to get it edited and how to actually get it published, and those are the next steps that I'm taking. But I have a finished first draft, which is huge for me, and as always, I like to bring you along for the journey and share lessons that I've learned. I know that many of you that I've talked to have wanted to write a book and have struggled with it just like I did for 20 years, and I'm hopeful that the lessons that I share in today's lesson will really fire you up and give you the necessary steps for you to complete your first draft of your first book, and I can't wait till that day happens, and I hope that I play a small part in it by sharing the lessons that I learned. So get excited for that. But before we dive in, just a few announcements. This episode of the L3 Leadership Podcast is sponsored by Beratung Advisors. The financial advisors at Beratung Advisors help educate and empower clients to make informed financial decisions. You can find out how Beratung Advisors can help you develop a customized financial plan for your financial future by visiting their website at BeratungAdvisors.com. That's B-E-R-A-T-U-N-G-Advisors.com. Securities and investment products and services offered through LPL Financial, member of FINRA and SIPC. Beratung Advisors, LPL Financial and L3 Leadership are separate entities. I also want to thank our sponsor, Henne Jewelers. They're a jewel earned by my friend and mentor, John Henne. My wife Laura and I got our engagement and wedding rings through Henne Jewelers and had an incredible experience. And not only do they have great jewelry, but they also invest in people. In fact, for every couple that comes in engaged, they give them a book to help them prepare for marriage, and we just love that. So if you're in need of a good jeweler, check out HenneJewelers.com. And I also want to thank our new sponsor, reitur.com and Leader. Let me just ask you this have you ever had an interest in investing in real estate? Well, now, for as little as \$500, you

can become a commercial real estate investor. Just visit Reiturn.com to learn more. That's R-E-I-T-U-R-N.com. Investing involves risk. Please consult the reiturn offering circular if you're interested in investing. With all that being said, let's dive right in. Here's my lesson on the lessons that I learned in writing my first book. Enjoy, hey, leader, it has been a while since I've done a personal lesson on the podcast, but I couldn't be more excited about today's lesson, and that's because I have exciting news to share with you. And the exciting news is I wrote a book. Yes, that's right, I wrote a book. And this is such huge news because this has been a dream in my heart for over 20 years. Yes, just a few weeks ago, on a Saturday morning, I wrote the last word in the first draft of my book and completed it, and in completion, listen to this my final draft has 224 pages, 77,445 words and 415,424 characters. And let me just be clear I did write a book, but I have not published the book yet, so it's not available. But why I'm doing this lesson is because I know many of you want to write a book. I've talked to many of you for years. I've wanted to write a book, and I always love when I interview someone that has written a book. I love asking them questions about how did they actually write it, how did they get it done, what's the process. And that's my hope today is, if you've ever wanted to write a book, I'm going to share with you the lessons that I've learned in the past year on how I actually completed my first book, and my hope is that it'll provide the inspiration, the motivation and the actual process that you need to write your first book, because I believe everyone should have write at least one book in their lifetime, even if it's just for their family. You have a message that the world and your family needs, and so let's dive right into what I learned in the process of writing my first book. Before I begin with the lessons, though, I want to start with giving you a little bit of context about my journey to get to this point. I already mentioned that it was 20 plus years that I've had this dream in my heart of writing a book, and in those 20 years I probably had five to 10 serious attempts to actually write a book. Where I got started, I made a little bit of progress, but then I would get frustrated. I would get overwhelmed by how enormous the project seemed to me. I had all these questions, and then I would just shut down and basically push it aside and say, well, hey, maybe one day I'll get to it. For years, I've had writing a book as a goal in my mastermind groups, that I've shared publicly with them every single year that I want to write a book, and that was going to be the year I write one. I've been a part of leadership programs where I've also shared publicly that I had a goal that specific here to write one and I didn't, and sharing with friends that I've wanted to write a book. I've had so much encouragement of people telling me Doug, you're called to write you. You know, the world needs your message, the next generation needs this message. Get it out there. And what do I have to show for all of that? Nothing. I had nothing to show for that in over 20 years, which was extremely frustrating and, honestly, it was a little bit discouraging to me and I just thought am I ever going to be able to write a book, or is this just something that I'm not ultimately called to do? Well, obviously I'm sharing with you the news that I wrote it. And so what

changed? What changed? Because the reality is, for 20 years I had that dream to write a book, had nothing to show for it, but then, all of a sudden, within one year, I got the book done and, honestly, in the actual part that I played in it, it only took me two months to write the entire book. So what changed? Let me dive into that. Number one. I read a book by Dan Sullivan in Benjamin Hardy called who, not how. Again, the book is called who, not how and it is a phenomenal book. It's a must read. If you haven't read it yet, go buy it on Amazon right now. But the whole premise of the book is a principle that Dan Sullivan calls who, not how, and he basically said if you find yourself with any goal asking how am I going to do this? Over and over and over again and you're not making any progress, you should stop asking how am I going to do this and instead ask who can help me do this. Stop asking how and start asking who, and it's likely that there's probably a who out there who could help you get what you need to get done with ease, because it's something that they're really really good at. And so after reading that book, I said I've been trying to write a book for 20 years and asking how and how, how, how, how, over and over again. Maybe I need to look for a who. Well, funny enough, I decided to look for a who and I found one relatively quickly. I was scrolling and it was kind of random. I was scrolling on LinkedIn one day and I saw this woman post a photo of a book. And this woman used to intern with us at Light of Life many years ago and she was holding a book, a book by David Green, the founder of Hobby Lobby and I thought, oh, that would be interesting, I'll reach out to her. I wonder if she knows David Green. I would love to interview him for the podcast. So I reached out to her and I said, hey, how do you know David Green? I'd love to interview him. Any chance you could connect us. And she said, oh, I actually Ghost wrote his book for him. And I said what Like? You wrote his book, you do that. And I said you do that for anyone? And we started talking. And then, all of a sudden, we started talking about what it would look like to work together and for her to help me write my first book and Shazam. We decided, hey, let's move forward and working together, and six months later I had my first book, and so deciding to look for a who, instead of asking how, literally expedited the process more than 10x, 100x, and that was absolutely huge. So I just want to encourage you if you've been asking how, whether it's writing a book or some other goal that you have over and over and over again. Maybe you need to stop asking how and start looking for a who. So what did I learn in working with a who? Well, I started working with her names Annika and Annika, if you're listening to this. Thank you, thank you, thank you. I would not have finished this book without you. You are awesome and I loved every minute of working with you, and if any of you are looking for someone to work with, I'd love to connect with Annika. I'll include her contact info in the show notes as well, but in working with her, how we actually work together is one. Up front, we agreed on the length of the book, which I'll talk about in a second. Two. I made it clear to her that she wouldn't have to work from scratch. I'll get to this point later, but I've been creating content for over 20 years, so in a lot of ways, I feel like I had the content necessary to

actually put a book together. I just needed someone to take it and organize it. So that was really helpful in us working together. And then I obviously paid her for her work, and again, that's part of the who. Yes, I invested in that, but had I not made that investment in Antica, I wouldn't have a book today. So you may have to make an investment in yourself and in a who to help you achieve your goal, but I'm here to tell you it was worth every single penny. So how did it play out working with Antica? Well, the first thing is she organized, she outlined and she provided structure for my book, and this was absolutely huge and, looking back, for me personally, this was the biggest thing that I needed. The biggest thing that held me back for 20 years is the way I'm wired. I could not, for the life of me, organize and outline and provide structure that I needed for the book, and so when Antica did that, that changed everything for me, and then Antica actually started writing the book. So we put together an outline and she started writing, and I think she wrote, you know, about 10 to 15 chapters, and then I would go in and actually read it, rewrite it, make suggestions, et cetera. Well, what I ended up finding in the process is one I'm a control freak, and so I unfortunately ended up rewriting most of the book to sound I wanted it to sound more like me. Antica did a phenomenal job. I'm just a weird control freak, but again, in rewriting it, what I found was, again, I just needed someone to provide the structure, the outline and organize all of my thoughts, and Antica did that. So, moving forward, in the future, if I write multiple books, I'm not going to pay someone to actually write a book for me, because I found out that I actually do have the capability of doing that, but I do need someone to help me on the front end put all the structure and everything together. That was absolutely huge, and so that's how I ended up working with Antica. It was so great. And so, again, look for who be willing to invest in a who. That could be just the thing that you need to get over the hump with your goal. So a few other lessons. I learned that I needed to write daily. I needed to write daily and, as many of you know, I'm a John Maxwell fan and I remember hearing John say to people all the time. He said people come up to me all the time and say John, how do I, how can I write a book? And he said I always ask them the same question Well, have you started writing? And he said 99% of the time, their answers no, I haven't started writing. And he said well, chances are, if you haven't started writing, then whatever you want to write will never be written, just start. And then he said he's very quick to encourage them that in the beginning they won't be very good and that's OK, just start writing. And for me, I realized that if I'm ever going to actually make this happen, I actually need to make the commitment to write every day. So for me, what that looked like is I chose five to six am every single day to write, and that was the sacrifice that I made. That's usually the time where I read for an hour. I read books and just spend time with God. And for a season and I heard Mark Batterson talk about this Mark Batterson's a published author. He's published many books. He said if you're an author, there's going to be seasons that are writing seasons in your life and you have to make some changes to your daily routine. And he does the same thing he does not

read during his writing season. So I committed five to six am every day to start writing, and at first it was a little bit challenging. But what was beautiful about it? And this is the way that so many disciplines are is once I started seeing a little momentum and traction. Then it became really, really easy. In fact, by the toward the end of the book I could not wait, like I was waking up at four or four thirty every morning with an anticipation and an excitement to write, because I could not wait to let my feet hit the floor and my fingers hit the keyboard, because I was so excited because I started seeing momentum and for me I had my table of contents and anytime I would finish a chapter I would just put in parentheses next to that chapter Doug dash done and seeing that once it once I saw that happen with one chapter and another chapter and another chapter. That momentum got me so fired up. And now I would say, even though I finished the book, I'm still waking up and writing content every day, which is beautiful, and so that's going to really help me in the future. And this is the same with all daily disciplines. You all know probably, and have heard on the podcast. My favorite quote of all time is from my high school football coach, jim Rankin, who said day to day intensity, week to week consistency builds champions. And that's what I found with writing. It's day to day intensity, waking up and committing to writing every day, week to week consistency. That will ultimately get you a book. And so for me, it took day to day intensity and week to week to consistency for two months and for me to get my book done, but that's what it took. So make a commitment to write every day and let me just say this not everything you write has to be published, right, you could just write to write, you can write in your journal, you could just write on a notepad, but just get in the habit of writing every day. The next lesson and I alluded to this earlier but Creating content consistently matters. And again I mentioned, even though I just started writing my book a few months ago, I've been writing content for over 20 years. I mean, I try to write a social media post five to seven days a week, so I'm creating content almost every day. I do a weekly podcast with personal lessons and so I can take all those podcasts and actually transcribe them and have a ton of content there. When I go speak places or speak in churches, I'm writing lessons. So I'm always writing content and make sure that when you write content, you save it and organize it in a place that you can actually find what you're looking for, and so, when I started working with Annika to write this book, I literally had probably two to 300 files worth of content on the different subjects that I thought would fit into the book, and so being able to take all of that and look through what I've already written made writing a book so much easier, and so I'd really encourage you if you're not in the consistent habit of writing content, find a way to do that. Maybe you're not a pastor and you don't have to write a sermon every week, but find some way that motivates you to create content consistently. It's huge. The next lesson would be keeping your why in front of you matters. Keeping your why in front of you matters. Now, if you wanna write a book, or really if you have any goal, you have to determine why do you actually want that? You know, if you wanna write a book, do you wanna become

famous, do you wanna get rich, or do you just wanna make a difference? And I'm not here to tell you what your goal should be or your why should be, but you need to know your why up front. For me, I had two specific whys that I kept in front of me while writing this book. The first why was my children. I heard Mark Batterson say a long time ago when it comes to writing books. He said everyone should write at least one book, if for nothing else for their children. And for me, as I was writing this book, I just thought when my kids are older I have four kids under seven right now when they're older, if I could sit down and give them a book that I think would help them build a foundation for their life like this would be the book. In fact, without going into details of what my book is completely about, when I was 30 and I did a decade review, god spoke to my heart, not in an audible voice, but just inside, and I just felt like he said Doug, in your 20s I gave you a foundation to build your life on. In your 30s I'm gonna give you something to say, and in your 40s I'm gonna give you the platform to say it. And for me, this book that I wrote, this first book, is the foundation that God gave me in my 20s. And I get invited to coffee a lot of times with young leaders asking me hey, how do I build a great life, how do I turn my life around? And if I were to have coffee with 10,000 of those people like, this is the book that I would give them. This is the book that I would give my children to build a great life. And so that was my why, and I kept that in front of me and I visualized my kids reading this book. I visualized and that's my second point my second why was I wrote it for the person that I used to be. This was huge. I wrote it for the person that I used to be, and so I heard I think it was Rory Vaden say this recently. He said we're most equipped to reach the person that we used to be. I think that is so powerful. And as I wrote this book, I thought what book do I wish I would have had handed to me when I was 17 years old, on my way to becoming a drug addict, on my way to becoming an alcoholic, had no direction in life. What would I wish someone would have gave me to read? And this is the book. So those are the two whys that I had in mind my children, next generation, and the person that I used to be, keeping that in front of me really helped motivate me to keep writing every day. The next lesson is just encouragement matters. This should come as no surprise, but you need to surround yourself with people who are gonna encourage you and that cause you to dream big and go for it. And I had so many friends encourage me along the way. I remember having coffee with Matt Geppert, my friend for the first time, and I didn't even say anything but he said, doug, your call to write, you need to write a book, the next generation needs your book, and he's told me that pretty much in every meeting that we've had since. I had another friend, jenny, who was constantly saying did you start writing yet? Start writing, start writing, the world needs your book. I had another friend, chris Murasca, who literally handed me an envelope and I opened it and had a check made out to me for \$20, saying that I wanna buy the first copy of your book. My wife has been encouraging me daily, having people around you to continually tell you get it out, there's something in you. The world needs what you have. Having that encouragement made an enormous

difference in the journey of getting there. The next thing I would tell you and the lesson that I learned is it was time. It was time and I'd be lying to you if timing didn't play into this. And what's interesting is I've mentioned 20 plus years I've been dreaming of doing this and I remember about 10 years ago I was in a leadership program and one of my mentors, Rick Wellock, was there and I had shared with the group hey, I'm gonna write a book, that's my goal this year. And Rick pulled me aside. He said, Doug, you're already writing your book. So what do you mean? I'm already writing my book. Like I hadn't started writing it yet. He said you're already writing your book. And that's all he said to me and I didn't necessarily understand what he meant at that time. But now, looking back, I do know what he meant. He said you're living out the principles that one day you'll share in the book that's worth actually reading. And what I found is that we live in a world where everyone wants a platform, everyone wants to write a book, everyone so to be a YouTube star, but nobody actually has much to say. And I think if I would have wrote this book at any other time or earlier in my life, I wouldn't have had enough credibility or enough life experience to actually write this book, to make it a meaningful book and to make it a book worth reading. But because I've been living these principles that I'm sharing in this book for the past 20 years. Writing it was easy, and I believe I have something significant to say for the audience that I'm intending to reach through this book. And so timing played a huge part in this, and so I would also encourage you, especially if you're a person of faith, trust God for his timing. You know, it was great. I had a dream for 20 years, but maybe God didn't want me to write a book for 20 years. Maybe there's a specific reason. Now is the time that he wanted me to write this. So, and and I would just say this, when it is time, it was easy and light. Right there, I told you, I tried five or ten times throughout that 20 years of actually starting to write a book, and it just seemed hard, it seemed uphill, but this time, this time when I wrote it, it was easy and light. It doesn't mean it wasn't challenging. It doesn't mean it wasn't hard work it was, but there was something about the timing of it in the piece and the ease of which it came out of my heart that I just feel like sharing. It was time for this book. I thought that was worth sharing with you and and just pray about hey, is it time for you to do whatever's in your heart, whether that's write a book, start a podcast, etc. And if you feel like it's time, then go for it. And the last piece of advice I'd share is, specifically, if you want to write books, is, have a vision for writing multiple books. Have a vision for writing multiple books. I was listening to one of the top literary agents in the world recently on a podcast and she said you know now, when people publish books, publishing a book is basically creating a business in and of itself. And what we're looking for in authors, we're looking for authors who want to write multiple books and and basically create a business of writing books every couple of years and getting them out there. And I've always and again, inspired by John Maxwell, I've wanted to write dozens of books throughout my my lifetime and having that vision made me realize very, very quickly to not get so caught up in being a perfectionist. I just need to get the first book out. Again I

alluded to, or I said it earlier. John Maxwell said in the beginning, you're not very good, but if you never write your first book, you're never gonna get to your second book. If you never write your first book, you're never gonna get to the fourth, fifth book. And Maybe the first book is great and it's awesome, but maybe it's not, even if it's not. Your third or fourth book may be Phenomenal and it may be the very book that God wants to use to reach the world, but if you never write the first book, you're never gonna get to the fourth book. So have a vision for many books. Don't get so caught up in perfectionism world, that you think this book's the only book that you'll ever write. Hey, get it out there. And hey, even if it's the only book you ever write. That's why they also have second editions and third editions. You could always go back and add to it and change it later, but have a vision for multiple books. That'll make it easier for you to get over Worrying about this book being perfect, because it's not gonna be perfect, it's gonna be imperfect, but get it out there. Be willing and courageous enough to ship something into the world that you wrote. And so those are the big things that really helped me write my first draft from my book that I wanted to share with you today. So what's next for me? Well, I'm really gonna be taking time to research and actually pray about what are the next steps for me with this book. Should I go the self publishing route? Should I look for an agent and try to get a traditional publisher and go that route? So that's what's next for me and, as always, once I go through that process any lessons that I learned I'll eventually do another podcast of Saying, hey, lessons that I learned in publishing and editing and getting my book out into the world. And if any of you are listening to this and you are an agent or publishing house or published books and you have any advice for me, I would appreciate you reaching out. You can just email me at Doug Smith at L3 leadershiporg or find me on social media. I'm not very hard to find, but I'd love to talk to you and I would love any advice that you have. So I want to end the the episode by just encouraging you. If you listen to this and you have a dream to write a book, write it. I'm here to tell you. The world needs your message. Your family needs your message. Everyone around you needs the message that God has put in your heart. So just go for it and hopefully today you were encouraged that you can do it and maybe you got a step or two that was practical for you to actually get it done. So that's all I have. I'll talk to you next episode. Go write your book. You can do it. If I can do it, anyone can do it. I promise you. I'll talk to you next episode. Well, leader, thank you so much for listening to my lesson on the lessons that I learned in writing my first book. I hope it added value to you and that you enjoyed it. You can find links to everything that I discussed within the lesson at l3leadershiporg forward slash 390. And, as always, leader, I want to challenge you that if you want to 10X your growth this year, then you need to either launch or join an L3 leadership mastermind group. Mastermind groups are simply groups of six to 12 leaders that meet together on a consistent basis for at least one year in order to help each other grow, hold each other accountable and to do life together. For me personally, mastermind groups have been the greatest source of growth in my life over the last

eight years. So if you're interested in learning more about launching or joining a group, go to 13leadership.org, forward, slash masterminds or email me at dugsmith@13leadership.org. And, as always, I like to end every episode with a quote, and I'll quote Craig Groeschel today, who said this. He said you can have control or you can have growth, but you cannot have both. That's a challenge for all of us leaders. Well, hey, I hope you enjoyed the episode. Know that my wife Lauren, I love you, we believe in you and I say it every episode. But don't quit, keep leading. The world desperately needs your leadership.