

Interview With Ron Nash by Joanna Penn
November, 2008

Joanna: Hi, everyone! I'm Joanna Penn from <http://www.HowToBeAnAuthor.com> and today I'm interviewing Ron Nash.

Ron is the author of, "How to Find Your Dream Job; Even in a Recession," as well as being a master career strategist at The Nash Group, which specializes in helping you find the job of your dreams.

Ron's website is www.thefriendzone.tv. Good morning, Ron! How are you?

Ron: I'm wonderful. Thank you so much.

Joanna: Oh great. Well, let's get into the interview. Tell us a little about yourself, and about your new book.

Ron: Well, my book is called, "How to Find Your Dream Job; Even in a Recession," and the impetus of the book—the reason why I wrote it was—I've been working as a headhunter for the last fifteen years and for those who are not familiar with the term *headhunter*, I interact with companies like Microsoft or Cardinal Health or any company, and I find talent for them.

I had the impression that I wanted to really help more people as the economy started changing and the best way I figured to do that was to write a book. So, hence, I wrote a book.

Joanna: That's great. And did you know the recession was coming? What about that timing?

Ron: You know, I had heard people talking about it. I have friends who are economists, and so forth, and they said things were going to get tight. I didn't really know how severe things were going to happen, and quite frankly I was getting spiritual impressions.

I saw a movie called, "Evan Almighty," and in the movie he built an ark, which was interesting and symbolic to me. So at that particular point in time, I thought, *You know, I've got to write this book and I need to create a different way in order to throw a line at people.* So I didn't realize that it was going to be like it is. So I think that, in some ways, the book was inspired.

Joanna: That's great. So, do you have any training as a writer?

Ron: No, not formally as a writer. It was never anything that I had set off to do when I was growing up. I thought I was going to be a rock star, and, I took one turn.

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Joanna: That's great. And what was your process in writing the book, given that you weren't a trained author or anything like that?

Ron: I have a belief system, and fortunately, thanks to my parents—where I grew up realizing that we have lots of resources, and that we can pretty much do anything we imagine.

And so, when the impression came to do a book, the first thought in my brain was *Okay, how am I going to do this book*, because there was some internal pressure that I had given myself and I needed to do the book fairly quickly.

I had to be resourceful, which is what I am, and I set out to do the book. So I outlined the book first, based on what I thought I was going to write about. That was the first thing. And I didn't worry too much about titles at that point in time.

The second thing I did was I realized that—I'm a very fast typist, however, I think faster than I type and so—typing would have been too slow. So I actually did some research and found some software by a company called dragon <http://www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking/>

Joanna: Sorry, but you broke up there. You were saying that you found some software called Dragon, which I've heard of. And what happens with Dragon?

Ron: It's a speech-to-text software. It converts your speech to text. It types for you.

Joanna: Wow! That's great!

Ron: That's how I got the big pieces of the book done.

Joanna: So how long did it take you? You said it was quite quick.

Ron: From the original impression—and the funny story is that about the second week in February, two weeks before my birthday, I got the instruction to write this book.

So I was actually given the task of having the first draft done two weeks later by my birthday, and to me it seemed a monumental task. Two weeks later I had a very rough, awful, hard-to-read version done, but needless to say, I got the first real draft done within two weeks.

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And then a real, readable draft was done by about mid-May. I had some pretty aggressive goals, so about May 15th I had set another goal to have a version, which is the version that's up on my website right now that's available for reading.

Joanna: Wow! That's amazing!

Ron: Whenever I set my mind to something—I probably spent twenty hours a day doing this, and that's not exaggerating at all. I'm a very mission-driven person.

Joanna: That's brilliant. So, did you do everything yourself for the book? So you said you came up with the rough draft, and you rewrote it. Did you get an editor, or a typesetter?

Ron: Yes, to all of the above.

What I realized of the process, because I had never done it before, is that when you're working with a lot of words and when you're close to an idea that you helped to birth or to facilitate, a lot of times you're too close to it.

So, the first thing I did was to have my wife read it and one of my friends who is an English professor read the book. They gave me questions, and then I had a couple of other people read it.

The latest incarnation of the book, which is the same book except it's the book that I'm going to publish—I have a publisher already and we'll talk about that, I imagine, in a minute. For the version that I'm going to release to the world, I've hired a professional editor to edit the book for me and then I have a professional person doing layout and art for me, as well.

So, I did escalate it to the next level because I wanted the book to be next to the books in Barnes & Noble without any second thoughts in terms of publishing.

Joanna: I think that's great. Okay, let's talk about the publishing then. So you've got a publisher?

Ron: Actually, I was approached by several people.

The world we're living in right now is very interesting. There's a lot of new models. I know a guy named Mark Victor Hansen, and he did the whole "Chicken Soup for the Soul" series, and he's published over 135 books.

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Mark and a lot of people have gone over to a new model, which is a self-publishing model utilizing software and the internet, and that's one of the popular things that's showing up now. And it gives the writers and authors more control, as well as the ability to make more money.

There is a company called <http://www.lulu.com> that won awards with their software and their publishing ability. It's a self-publishing space where they have all the resources you could ever need to publish a book. I use Lulu, which is where I'm going to be releasing my book, and I will be in Barnes & Noble, Amazon—I'll be in over 80 countries by the end of November through the Lulu process.

Joanna: That's great. I use Lulu, as well.

Ron: Okay.

Joanna: That's brilliant. Just on Mark Victor Hansen, I know he has Book Marketing University or something, doesn't he?

Ron: Yes. Definitely.

Joanna: Were you in that program?

Ron: I was not in the program. I was actually invited to attend one of his Mega author events. It was about book writing and authoring, and I was invited to something up in LA just by some of my friends. It was in that book that I really gained a lot of clarity and knew that I was on the right track when I was doing everything that I had done.

It also gave me some real good pointers in terms of thinking about a title, and how titles work, and some of the other nuances to writing a book. But one of the things that I learned was that this self-publishing world is extremely exciting—this is the new world because of the social networking aspect and the internet-based aspect.

Joanna: Yes, there's some great programs for authors, and you know, the whole "new publishing," I think is really kicking off over there.

Ron: Oh, yeah. It's amazing. Once again, Mark and several of his friends started this new company and I can't tell you the name of it, but it follows the Lulu model.

Joanna: Right. Okay. That's great.

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Ron: And I've seen—there's a couple of other incarnations out there where it has the self-publishing model with an agent attached to it. So there's some smaller companies coming up with things that are hybrids of this model.

So, yeah, some interesting things are going on right now.

Joanna: Absolutely. So, with Lulu, the idea is kind of "print on demand," generally. Are you intending to be printing physical books and being in physical book shops?

Ron: Yes, both. All of the above. I truly believe, in terms of being a new author—I've got to tell you, this has afforded me a new education—learning about social networking, marketing, using the internet. I'm extremely savvy in a lot of different ways, but it's been a new education.

So, I do have an e-book. The print-on-demand is beautiful, because it's afforded me to be able to update my book and add new pieces that I think are extremely life-changing without having to go back and print a bunch of books.

So the latest incarnation of my book, for instance, is going to be—I just had a meeting with my layout person and we'll be done with that in two weeks. And so, I'm going to upload my—I'm calling this one my baby. I'm extremely proud of it.

It went from the first version that's up on my site only—it went from 99 pages to 143 pages and I put a lot of love in it. But the print-on-demand capability—there's nothing better than that, because I don't have to go back and throw a bunch of books away.

In addition to that, there are book stores, college book stores, a variety of other book stores where my book will actually physically be as well, so, I truly believe that covering the e-book, the physical book and the print-on-demand, the downloading it and ordering it on-demand—those are all the places that cover all the bases.

Joanna: So do you have a set distributor for the physical books to the book stores?

Ron: No. One of the things—Tony Robbins—I don't know if you're familiar with Tony Robbins?

Joanna: Of course.

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Ron: I've studied Tony's business model for a long time. Tony says to find someone to model, so I've modeled a lot of Tony's work and Mark Victor Hansen—his business model I love.

So, I'm actually erecting a publishing—I'll call it an empire myself, utilizing technology. I created distribution channels because I have a specific target audience, especially based on the audience I've been focusing on for the last fifteen years. I know where the people are and I know where millions of them are, and I know how to reach them.

So going through a distributor to get my books to them is not as equitable as doing it myself. But making it accessible through Lulu in 80 countries certainly gives me the ability to get it to people ordinarily who wouldn't know about me.

Joanna: That's brilliant. So you also have a successful business. Is your book aimed at promoting your business, or is it a venture all of its own?

Ron: It's certainly aimed at promoting my business, and it's also the curriculum for a new business model that I've created. It's funny—I think books have a way of communicating with you. I don't want to get too esoteric there, but books have their own life. They pretty much have their own purpose.

So as I started getting more into it, I started understanding what the book was about. I saw a new business model that wasn't too far from what I've been doing, built it up, and so as a result of that, the book is now a large piece in the curriculum to my new business model.

Joanna: Right. That's brilliant. And do you recommend that businesspeople write a book in their area of expertise? And why would you say that?

Ron: Absolutely. Absolutely. There's a really good book out. I don't know if you've heard of it called, "The 4-Hour Workweek."

Joanna: Yes, I love that book! I love Tim Ferris.

Ron: So one of the things that's said in the book, and I've heard this before but I absolutely stand on it is, if you're in business, number one, you can Google any topic, and you'll come up with millions of pages or at least hundreds of thousands of pages of people doing the same thing.

And in order to be revered as *expert* or a *subject matter expert*, writing a physical book gives you a certain amount of credibility that you cannot get just by saying you're an expert. A book gives you a certain amount of credibility and it speaks on its own.

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Joanna: Absolutely. So let's talk a bit about your website. You've got a great media kit on your website. For people who might not know about that, what goes into a media kit and why do you need one?

Ron: A couple of different reasons, and I will refer back to when I went to the Mark Victor Hansen Mega Publishing event. It was wonderful, because he had a number of people talking, and one of the things that was said in that, and I took copious notes, was to get a media kit.

The media kit is there to anticipate interviews. So, one of the first, important pieces to have is information supporting what it is that you're writing about, for instance, a press release. In my particular business, writing about the economy is a fairly easy thing to do, especially with a number of layoffs and downsizing and rightsizing and everything they're calling it. So, a press release is extremely important in order to substantiate what you're doing. It gives meaning to what your media kit has—the press release.

And then number two, a bio. A bio on the author, bio on who you are and just a little bit of—so that the person interviewing you can have a flavor in terms of who they're going to interact with.

Number three, a photo and preferably a professional photo, a few—goes along with it. Sometimes people use it to print, or for various reasons.

And then number four, you want to have a set of questions prepared that the interviewer can use to choose from if they so choose. They need—television stations are extremely busy when they interview people, so they recommend that you give them pre-framed questions already so that they can choose from those questions. Many times they don't have—they may not read your book in its entirety, but they may read just excerpts from your book, so they'll want to have framed questions that pertain to the subject.

Joanna: That's brilliant. And I see from your website you were on Fox TV and you say you've been on a couple of shows. How did you get on TV and how can authors pitch TV?

Ron: TV is always looking for things to report on, that's number one. But many people don't know that. And there are a number of resources that are out there.

I hired a media consultant, though. I came out of Hollywood, so I've been around film and television for a while, and I happen to know a media consultant and hired an individual in order to book me on some shows, and that was my first exposure.

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But then after that, the second set of interviews I've done happened by virtue of me talking about my book and talking about being on TV.

It's amazing. When you put it out to the universe, things happen.

Joanna: Absolutely. That's great. So you said you got a publicist.

Ron: Yes, that is correct. She calls herself a media consultant, but she's really a publicist. And her job is spent really finding, and pitching people to get them into newspapers, articles, television, anything—shows across the nation.

Joanna: So, just thinking about your model, you deliver training on LinkedIn and also use video. What are some ways that authors can promote their books using Web 2.0, social networking and other online methods?

Ron: You know, that's actually a great question because that ties in certainly to the Lulu model, as well as to the model that I've created on my website.

We live in a different day and age and we are extremely, extremely fortunate to be able to market through social networking. LinkedIn, for instance, I have over 12 million people—there's over 26 million people on LinkedIn altogether. I'm linked three degrees away from about 12 million and growing.

And so, whenever I send out an email blast, it reaches quite a few people, and driving traffic from that way—there's a way to do it. There's an etiquette in reaching out to them vs. just saying, 'Hey, buy my book.' Because that's not what you do. But there's a format doing it, which is why I recommend LinkedIn training, which is available on my website.

Facebook is another great application. Once again, there's training for that. But there's ways to use social networking in order to get the word out and to drive people to your website using one of the Web 2.0 applications.

So I am actually, as of tomorrow, I start my own first radio broadcast on their radio station called <http://www.realcoachingradio.com>, and I'm going to be interviewing people. It's a social networking-based radio station that has—you know it's webcam meets chat meets traditional radio, and it's broadcast internationally, so it's looking for authors to interview, like yourself...

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But interestingly enough, there are a number of people in channels that are always looking for new stories because stories come and go. And so, it's really about being resourceful and finding out where your sweet spot is. Where are the people looking for your kind of story.

Joanna: Great. So you also are using YouTube, as well. Have you found these videos successful in driving traffic?

Ron: Absolutely. Without a doubt. It's interesting because what ends up happening with a video is it ends up going out and doing work for you. So traditionally, there's a number of different areas. When I look at marketing, which is one of the areas that YouTube and LinkedIn, etc., they all fall under the same category as marketing.

But when you release a video, it is its own entity. It's almost like a satellite, launching a satellite. It has its own promotion—obviously, a link back to the website or advertisement advertising whatever it is that you're marketing. I think that YouTube has been extremely great in giving me exposure.

Now, I haven't had anyone come and say, "I want to buy your product," from it, but what I've gotten is a lot of great reviews with people looking at it. And awareness creates—you know, it's another form of marketing.

Ron: And it's free.

Joanna: And did you use a professional to do those videos, or did you just do them yourself?

Ron: I did use a professional to do the videos. Because I charge a lot of money for my services—I want it to look it as neat and polished as possible.

Joanna: Many people write, but fewer people actually get to the point of producing a book. So how can people use the power of intention and some of your other goal-setting tools to make their dream a reality?

Ron: That's a very good question. I think that number one, I talk about many of these things in my book, actually. It's really funny. My book is really not about just finding a job. It's about discovering who you are and the process for doing that.

So the first thing is, you have to have clarity. On my website in the interview I give five small tips—having clarity, knowing your resources, taking massive action, doing something about it and really following through and having someone hold you accountable.

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But if there was one thing I could say, it would be to know what it is. Be clear about what you want to do and then know what your resources are.

That's extremely important, because I think that many people start off with an idea. I've been a proponent of starting many things that I've never finished. But getting clear—once you're clear and then you know what your resources are, it makes it a little bit easier to tackle.

Because I think what happens is that many times we start off with something and then it feels overwhelming, like, *Okay, that's big. I don't think I can do that now. And now that I've overwhelmed myself, I'm not going to follow through.*

So get clear on what it is that you really want to do. Then know what your resources are. And you break it down into digestible chunks. You do a little bit at a time.

It's like writing a book. If you make the commitment to yourself to write five pages per day, and you end up with 100 pages when it's all said and done, or 300 pages or whatever your goal is, or whatever it ended up being, at least you didn't start off with the overwhelming idea that I'm going to write a 300-page book.

You start off by doing a little bit at a time. And I think the real big thing is having a compelling vision. What is your real outcome? What's your purpose for writing the piece? What do you ultimately want to do with it?

And some people say, "Make a lot of money," and quite frankly, I think that money is just a vehicle because I truly believe that these papers with a bunch of dead people on them really don't do anything except create a barter system, so we really look for other experiences in money.

So, what's your real purpose? What's your compelling reason for doing this? And once you're clear on that, once you get clarity, I think that you can actually approach it differently.

So I started off with a compelling vision. My compelling vision still is larger than money. It is—I want to share information that helps to change people's lives and share a lot of the trade secrets that I've learned over the last 15 or 20 years—that if they learn these secrets, they can do them and use them a lifetime. And I want to share that with people.

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Joanna: So I got the impression your book is kind of aimed at corporate America, but it sounds like it could be applied to anybody looking for their dream job.

Ron: Absolutely. It's really funny because my wife ended up going back to work after being home for seven years. And after having children and helping raise the kids—they're at school full-time now—she used some of the techniques out of the book in order to apply to her life.

So, as to the moms that have been out of the workplace—corporate America is my personal focus; however, the book is applicable to anyone. But I'm focusing on corporate America because what I've realized over the last many years is that corporate America is one, big happy dysfunctional family, and many of us spend so much time there that we have lost track of who we are and what our dreams really are.

And I've seen it over and over and over, so my book is really a way of throwing a line out to people in corporate America who think they're trapped.

Joanna: I absolutely agree. That was my target audience as well for my book, "[How to Enjoy Your Job](#)".

Ron: How to enjoy your job. You know, it's interesting, because a lot of people are not in their dream jobs right now. And, I've talked to a number of people about this.

I'm not a proponent of changing just to change. I truly believe you have to have a compelling reason to change, and so, there's one of four areas I cover in my assessment of your job and life in the book.

So number one, why would you want to change? If you spend more time at work than you do at home, then there's a challenge.

Number two, you have to make enough money to sustain yourself.

Number three, you have to have growth. After several years of being somewhere where you're making enough money and you live with people, if you're not growing it eventually becomes a challenge.

And then number four, work-to-life balance. If you're making enough money, you love the people, and you're growing but you're spending more time at work and you're not seeing your family or anyone, usually there's an imbalance, and that usually causes some problems, so, those are the four reasons that I coach people in.

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And I think ultimately, learning how to be happy where you are is the most important thing. Even after you get your dream job. I talk a little bit about it in my book, which is why your piece is so important—is you have to learn how to be happy where you are.

Joanna: Absolutely. So one of the things I liked about your website was your Rule of 23. Can you tell us a bit about that and how that applied to people's writing?

Ron: Certainly. I had the fortune, or misfortune, depending on how you look at it—my dad died at the age of 66, about four-and-a-half years ago. And there was an epiphany in my attempting to understand the circle of life—that was my first parent who had ever passed away.

And so, it was an opportunity for me to internalize it. It took me about a year to figure it out. And at that point, the difference in his passing and my age was 23 years, which hence, I call it the Rule of 23.

And that's a very simple rule. At his age, had I known, in looking back at my life, a young man, that I had 23 years left on the planet, would I have done anything differently?

So I look at myself and I look forward going, *If I knew that I had only 23 years left on the planet, how would I approach my life?* And I pose that to everyone, every time I talk because it made me do a very deep self-analysis and I had to really look at death in a different way because I look at death as part of the fear spectrum. And many of us use the fear spectrum to hold us back in life.

And in the fear spectrum there are two places that fear is used. Fear is a healthy thing or it's an unhealthy thing. It's a wall inside of you that keeps you from going forward, or it's a shark behind you that motivates you to go forward. It's your choice in terms of how you choose to use it.

So the Rule of 23 that I give to people is, if you knew you only had 23 years left before you die, how would you approach life?

Joanna: That's great. In terms of people who want to write a book, I mean, that's a big kick up the bum, I think.

Ron: Without a doubt, and I highly encourage it, because once again, I am—it's funny, but I certainly look at life very differently and it's caused me to take on many other challenges that I ordinarily wouldn't have because I think many of us look at life as though we have a lot of time.

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And that's not the truth. It's an illusion and so, that's why if there's any writers or authors who I can say directly to, right now, what the Rule of 23 is—use that as your guide. Use that as your motivation. Use fear as a big, giant great white shark with bigger teeth than your body right behind you getting ready to take a chunk out of you if you slow down.

Joanna: That's brilliant. So did you enjoy writing the book and have you got another one planned?

Ron: I have to say, yes, absolutely, and realistically, once again, I didn't start off with the intention of being an author. It was something that I felt I had to do. And out of that I have several other projects that are already written that will get my full and undivided attention once I've launched it.

So yes, there's a couple of more in the works, because I've enjoyed the process so much. It's also caused me to look at myself differently, and how I use words. I tend to use a lot of unnecessary words and I didn't know that and realize it until the editing process. So it's helped me look at myself and how I even communicate, even more effectively, so, I'm more conscious of it.

It's also given me—I now know confidently that I have a voice, and I think we all have a voice. I think every, single person has a voice. And when you take time to listen to that voice, you'll hear what that voice is saying.

Joanna: That's brilliant. What else did you learn about being an author in the process? And is there anything you'll do differently next time?

Ron: Now that I have a format for doing this, I think that—there have been a number of things that I've done, for instance, my website, I've changed it a number of times. The book—I've gone through a number of incarnations. I wouldn't change that the first time around because I think it's important to do all the things—all the things that I've done wrong, I think it's important to do that to get the life experience and to get the practical experience.

But I've now built a format and an understanding of how to do what I do, so that now, when I talk to people and coach people in the process of writing a book, I know how to save people time.

So absolutely, I've learned a better process for doing it after having done it.

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Joanna: That's brilliant. All right, Ron, we're coming to the end of our interview.

So how can people get in touch with you, or find out more information?

Ron: Very simply. My website, <http://www.thefriendzone.tv> is where you'll find me.

Joanna: That's brilliant. All right, well thanks ever so much for your time, and it's been a great interview.

Ron: Thank you so much for reaching out to me, and I certainly look forward to chatting with you soon, my friend.

Joanna: Okay. Thank you.



Joanna Penn is an author, speaker and consultant who helps people create their own books.

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