

Title: Knowing Your Audience, and Other Lessons From the Road

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Hook: Publicity is knowing what you can't control and learning to live with it.

Focus Keyword: Publicity

Excerpt: <p>It's easy to publish a book and feel like your work is through, pat yourself on the back and say it's been a job well done. We put an incredible amount of time, effort, sweat, and tears into each and every one of our titles, so by the time of their release it's only natural to feel as though we're seeing one of our babies go off to college and check in every once in a while. But in reality, that's just when it's life begins.</p>

<p>In November, <cite>Sleeping in My Jeans</cite> had an incredible release. We blew through our initial print run and had to scramble to get another in the printers and on the shelves, and our release party was a hit—we packed the house and raised a nice amount of money and donations for Food for Families. It was a beautiful send-off, exactly what we had hoped for.</p>

<p>It's easy to publish a book and feel like your work is through, pat yourself on the back and say it's been a job well done. We put an incredible amount of time, effort, sweat, and tears into each and every one of our titles, so by the time of their release it's only natural to feel as though we're seeing one of our babies go off to college and check in every once in a while. But in reality, that's just when its life begins. You can have an incredible release and a bold presence, but if it's left unnurtured no one will remember it. And what's your most powerful tool of exposure? Your book. That means continuing to get it into the hands of readers, influencers, and reviewers. It means setting up interviews, radio spots, and, of course, readings.</p>

<p>So, we put our noses back to the ground and dug deep to build a robust book tour to continue ramping up exposure for our title and get the book into the hands of our readers. One hundred emails and a whopping thirteen stops on the calendar later, we had ourselves a book tour. And by January, Connie was off and running around Washington with some big name

stops— Third Place Books in Seattle, Orca Books in Olympia, Bellevue Library, and The Neverending Bookshop in Edmunds, just to name a few.</p>

<p>When I spoke with the Bellevue Library, they were initially unsure, as a typical book event for them doesn't draw more than a few people. But when Connie arrived, she not only walked into a packed room, but a room full of young readers, which allowed them all to dive into a deep and meaningful discussion about the overarching social issues in Mattie's story. But that high quickly faded by the time we arrived at our next stops. Without giving it all away, their attendance could've been stronger.</p>

<p>What were we missing? What had we done wrong? Turns out, you can give it all you've got—publicize it, create posters, neverending social media content—but at the end of the day, there are so many elements that are outside of your control. We can do our best to publicize it, but we can't control people's thoughts and actions. And the hardest part is knowing that you can't control it and learning to live with that. But more importantly, it's about knowing your audience, and the audience for <cite>Sleeping in My Jeans</cite> are the kids who need to hear this story the most/ They might not always have the resources or be able to find their way to a hip, uptown Seattle bookstore—they're more like Mattie, trying to find their way through the thick of it and stay afloat, and if they're lucky they've got a school or their local library to go to.</p>

<p>Taking our mission to heart we reached out to everyone we knew and didn't know in the Eugene area, with the only bite coming from the Eugene Library. We had all hoped for a bigger splash. After all, the book is set in Eugene, what Eugene bookstore wouldn't love that? But in speaking to the teen librarian, she revealed that she wanted Connie to come in and speak with their 15 Night Youth council, a council made up of kids from diverse backgrounds, many of which have experienced homelessness, including a few middle schoolers. This was our audience. Knowing that these kids might not have the resources to buy the book, we sent them 15 advanced readers copies because that was the right thing to do. And it's important to remember that it's not always about the money, about the sales, it's about getting a book in the hands of a child and seeing the difference in their eyes.</p>

<p>Even when things don't go as you plan, and they almost never do, never stop reaching out. Keep posting on social media, keep sending out copies of the book and advanced readers copies to reviewers. Don't forget about your audience. It's easy to post to social media and call it a day, but there's a good chance those readers aren't following us on those platforms. But by reaching out to schools and libraries across the Pacific Northwest, we had a real chance of

reaching those readers directly, to reach out to the kids who needed to hear Mattie's voice the most, to feel like there was someone in a book they could finally relate to.</p>

<p>So, in an effort to keep this conversation out there, here are Connie's remaining book tour dates. Be sure to join her when and where you can!</p>

<p>Date	Where	Time</p>
<p>February 4th	<a href= "https://kboo.fm/program/evening-news">KBOO Radio	5:30 PM</p>
<p>February 6th	<a href= "https://www.facebook.com/events/356545198260141/">The Book Bin (Corvallis)</a>	6:30 PM</p>
<p>February 16th	<a href= "https://www.facebook.com/events/2189143184475725/">Chaparral Books (Portland)</a>	1 PM</p>
<p>March 8th	<a href= "http://bookbin.com/category/author-readings/">The Book Bin (Salem)</a>	7 PM</p>
<p>March 16th	<a href= "https://www.roundaboutbookshop.com/event/young-adult-fiction-festival">Roundabout Books (Bend, OR)</a>	7 PM</p>