

Daniel Hall Presents



Episode 133

**What First-Time Authors Do Wrong and How
to Avoid the Traps
with Fred Stuvek**

Hello! Welcome to the RealFastResults.com podcast! We have a very special treat for you. Fred Stuvek is the special guest for this episode. Fred has a very diverse background, and he has achieved great success in many areas of his life. His wisdom can help you immensely, if you choose to apply it.

Stuvek was born in West Virginia, raised in Pennsylvania, and he was actually inducted into the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame for his achievements in football, basketball, baseball, and track. He attended the United States Naval Academy, and there, he received three letters as the quarterback of the Midshipmen. After his service in the Navy, serving as a naval officer, he transitioned into the business world, where he held senior leadership positions in both private and public companies, domestically and internationally.

The key successes Fred has had include international medical imaging startups, which led to a very successful IPO (initial public offering) and forming private medical services groups that were subsequently sold. So, from the playing field, to the war room, to the boardroom, Fred has proven his leadership throughout his accomplishments. Additionally, Fred is the author of a book titled, [*It Starts with You*](#), which teaches fundamental principles in management and leadership. Please welcome Fred to the show...

Promise: How to Avoid the Traps of First Time Authors

Thank you for having me. I look forward to a very lively discussion, and hopefully, this interview will prove valuable to all of you. **Life is about decisions. The life you are living is the life that you've created, and it's based upon the decisions that you have made and the habits that you have formed.** You aren't a victim of circumstances, and you aren't powerless.

You should not wait for success to happen because, if you do, it's going to be a very long wait. You have to take the initiative, seize control, create opportunities, and make something happen. There is something that you can do to release the potential that's within you, but it's up to you. This is a process that takes time, and it requires a plan, along with the commitment and discipline to follow through. However, to do this, there are two things that you have to do. **You have to develop the mindset and habits for success, since how you think and how you act define you as a person.**

So, you have to have a plan, with goals, and have the willingness and ability to follow through. That is the basic premise of my book, [It Starts with You](#). It comprehensively and specifically instructs you on what you need to do in order to develop the mindset and habits for success.

Overcoming Mistakes in Publishing

The first thing that I did was research what first-time authors do wrong. That's why you watch game films, to look at the mistakes you made, not the good plays. You learn from making mistakes.

Based on my research, there were a number of areas:

- 1) You have to have a good cover, a professional cover.
- 2) You have to have a good title.
- 3) You have to have a good tagline, a professional layout, and the content has to be good. You have to be able to differentiate the book, and then you have to put it, again, in a professional format and work with someone to help you to promote the book.

I don't know how many books there are on Amazon. I believe there are probably over 30 million. Maybe that's low, or maybe that's high, but there are a lot of books out there. **So, if no one knows about your book, how are you going to get the word out?** So, I started getting into social media, and I embraced it. I also started working with a company that specializes in helping first-time authors to market their books and get the word out.

How Did You Make Sure That Your Cover Was Stellar?

I engaged the services of a company called [1106 Design](#), and I had indicated to them what I wanted. I told them what the book was about, and I worked with [Amy Collins](#) on that. We talked about the

mindset and habits for success, and I wanted something that symbolized getting through things. In other words, sometimes life is confusing, and there's a maze of things that you need to do. So, you need to go straight through things, and you also need to get your mind right. That's how I ended up with what I think is a very nice cover.

The top of the cover shows a maze, and the maze is gray. Then, there's an orange line that goes straight through the maze, from the bottom, through the middle, and straight to the top. This exemplifies the fact that you can get through the maze, and you can get your mind right, but it starts with you. We then went into the color scheme, and we wanted something that was pleasing and that would be an eye catcher. I think we came up with a nice cover. It's available on Amazon, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, and just about anywhere. [So, be sure to go take a look.](#)

Unfortunately, people really do judge a book by its cover. We all do that. So, if you want to properly represent your book, and put the best face on the hard work that you did, to make sure that your book gets seen in the best light, you must spend some money on a beautiful cover. It's what carries you and what carries your book. If you screw that up, it doesn't matter how good your book is, it will not sell. Or, at least, it will not sell nearly as well as it could. Once your friends and relatives have been exhausted, the sales channels are gone. Really, no one else cares unless you make them care, or unless you create desire for your book.

Do You Have Any Advice on Creating a Great Title?

Your title has to be one which gets people's attention. The title of this book, initially, was going to be "Fragments," and now I think this is a lame title. It was going to be pieces of advice that you could put together to create this mosaic of success. It sounded kind of right at the time, but I'm glad I didn't go with that title, at least for what I'm trying to do.

I worked with a group on this, and we noticed throughout the book that I would always say, "It starts with you." So, that's how we came up with the title, *It Starts with You*. The subtitle is, "Turn Your Goals into Success". I think this all came out pretty nicely. Another aspect of having a great title is that you want it to nail down the essence of your book very, very quickly. Also, if you don't have a clear benefit stated, people lose interest, and they're gone.

What Other Publishing Advice Would You Offer?

I think another thing that's important is that you need to have a good product. This needs to be, not only laid out by a professional organization or service, but it has to be edited properly. You know, my goal was to put out an error-free, mistake-free, book with now syntax problems, or dangling participles, or anything like that. So, I had it edited twice. I had it edited by an editor, locally, in Knoxville, Tennessee. Once he was done, I sent it out to Arizona and had it edited one more time.

Now, that extended the process by a couple of months, but you know, releasing a book is like sending an angry email, meaning that once you hit “send,” it’s gone. Well, once you release a book, and it’s out there, and people see the mistakes, that’s a death nail. I’ve read the book several times, so if anyone finds a typo, I’ll give them a free book.

Can You Tell Me More About Your Secrets to Success?

In my opinion, it’s all about initiative and accountability. You’ve probably heard the saying, “You have to believe in yourself in order to be successful,” but have you ever seen a plan that addresses a full range of issues? I mean, you don’t just go out there and pick one or two quarries. Success is not one-dimensional. It entails a number of issues that must all converge. You need to be aware of what those issues are since the absence, or weakness, in one area can spill over to other areas.

I wanted to create something that was like a “life coach in print,” so to speak. I wanted my book to tell people what was important, why it is important, and how you do something about it, but to do that, it starts with you. Okay? You have to take the initiative. You are accountable. It’s up to you and no one else. You can be anything that you want to be, but you have to have the belief, the right mindset, you need to have a plan, you need to have the discipline to follow through, and you need to have the perseverance to get through some diverse times, but if you can do that, you’re going to get there, eventually.

So, that’s what I wanted to do. If you look at the reviews on Amazon, I have about three dozen right now, and they are all pretty good. I did not pay people to write them, by the way. A few people referred to it as a “life coach in print,” or an “instruction manual,” and it’s actually going to be taught at one of the leading business schools in 2020. It will be on the West Coast, and there will be an announcement coming out over the next year on that. I’ll be on the staff out there. They liked the book so much that they are going to incorporate it into their curriculum. I think that, in and of itself, is validation of the approach that I’ve put out in this book.

Did You Do Anything to Facilitate Your Book Being Offered as Curriculum?

Of course, I did. Like I said, it’s not just going to happen. You have a network. You have an email list. You have connections on LinkedIn. I’ve sent out hundreds, if not thousands, of emails and messages to people, saying, “I think this would work,” or, “I’d like to try this.” You know, a few got back to me. If you talk to 100 people, one or two are going to really get it, and what you are saying is going to resonate with them. That’s what gets it going.

So, then you have one small step. It’s one small success story, and then, you know what happens? You get another one after that, and then you get another one after that. But book publishing is not a sprint; it’s a marathon. It’s going to take time. That’s one thing I’ve realized. You don’t just put that book out

there and expect to have all of these sales right away. It takes time, and part of the process is getting the word out.

Are You Saying That This is a Numbers Game?

Exactly. We are all in sales. I'm selling my book. I'm promoting it. You are selling your books, or your podcast, or whatever the case may be. It's a contact game, and you can't give up when you hear "no". Eventually, something is going to break through. You know, they say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Well, once you get that one break, and you get into this area or that area, others will follow. Of that, I am sure. That was one of the reasons why I was trying to get the educational thing going, and I'm very pleased that it's going to happen.

I'm going to use that success to parlay into other schools, and not only that, but I'm going to use that as an example of why companies and corporations should use this book as a training document. You may have been to sales meetings before. It's great. You sit there, and the speaker comes in. He might talk for 30 or 40 minutes, and there's all this hype and excitement, and then you leave. What do you do after that? Well, that's not life.

Life isn't hype. Life is being able to consistently do something on a regular basis, in an excellent manner, and in a professional manner, day in and day out so that you can be something that you believe in. That's how you are going to be successful, and that's what we need to focus on. That's what I'm focusing on.

It's also your network. It's the people that you know, and you also have to expand your network. Before this, I was kind of a ghost on social media. I used to chide people that were on Facebook and ask them how many friends they had. But, as Darwin said, it's not the strong who survive, but those who adapt. Well, I've adapted. I've embraced social media, and I'm only a keystroke away.

I can be reached on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram. I'm on Facebook, and you know, I've been on LinkedIn for a while. I just got on Facebook about two weeks ago, and I'm pleased to announce that I'm up to 30 friends now. I'm feeling pretty good about that right now.

Can You Tell Me About How You've Approached Marketing?

I signed up with a marketing company called [New Shelves](#), up in Rochester, New York, and they've done an outstanding job. They know what venues and what platforms are available to get your book out there and get it noticed. Now, having said that, it has to meet the criteria. For example, have you ever heard of a service called [BookBub](#)? It's a service that helps readers to discover books. I was picked for BookBub, and that's going to happen later this month, which is good.

There's also this thing called [Robin Reads](#), which promotes Kindle books. I had never heard of it before. I was told one day that I got picked for a BookBub promotion and a Robin Reads promotion, and from what I understand, that's a pretty big deal. I don't know, but they said that it was. Up until then, I

hadn't heard of either one of these services. The people that I was working with knew about them. So, if I had not worked with them, I would have never known to approach these people about promoting my book.

That's why you need to associate with people that know the business. For example, I've played a lot of sports. So, if you have a question about football, basketball, baseball, or track, you can ask me. If you have a question about something medical or about setting up a business, you can ask me. Now, writing a book, or writing a book for the first time, you shouldn't have asked me 12 months ago, but you can ask me now, and I can tell you a little bit about what I've learned.

I would urge any first-time authors out there to engage the services of a professional entity to help them with the process. One of the things that first-time authors should avoid is the dreaded, "What if?" Let's say that they launch their book, and they find their mistakes. Well, sales have flatlined after their friends and relatives have purchased their book, and then they look back a couple of years later and say, "Wow, I wonder how that would have gone if I had worked with an organization that could help me to get the word out and create awareness of my book?"

If you're going to take the time to write a book... From start to finish, it's going to take you about a year. I thought, at first, it was going to take me 6-8 months. It took me a little bit longer, but that's also because I used two editors. If you are going to invest your time, then invest in yourself and the book, if you believe in it.

Final Tips

I think that I'm very different than a lot of other self-help authors out there. I would guess that it would be difficult to find someone that has such an extensive and intense sports background, a military background, which includes time at a service academy, and experience in private and public companies, internationally and domestically. Also, having experience with IPO, and then later, buying companies and selling them, or starting them up and selling them. I think that entire range of experience is very unique. What I've found is that there are principles and attributes that apply to any endeavor. That's what's in my book.

I mean, people are going to look at my cover, and they are going to look at the synopsis of the book, and then they are going to ask, "Well, who wrote this? What's this person about?" If that doesn't catch their eye, chances are they won't buy the book. So, there has to be something to differentiate you, as an author, from other authors. I think, for instance, my approach may resonate with someone that has a background in sports as well. The same may be true for someone with a military background. Someone with a business background might be the first to say, "This makes sense." I think, what you are doing is touching a lot of different cylinders, there, and hopefully, the engine is going to run pretty fast.

Connecting with Fred

I'm on various social media platforms, but probably the best way is through my website. It's a website I set up for the book, [ItStartsWithYou.Net](#). The website tells you a little about the book, and there's a short bio of "yours truly". There, you will also find links to various avenues of getting in contact with me. You can click on whichever link you choose, depending on what type of social media platform you prefer. Just reach out and contact me, and I'll get back to you straight away.

Resources

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