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**WRITING**  
**TO GET BUSINESS**  
with Pat Iyer



C-SUITE  
Radio

## From Articles to a Book – One Piece at a Time

### Donna Blevins

She's 6'5" tall and a woman who both literally and figuratively stands out. Her height gave her the confidence to succeed in the male-dominated world of real estate, and her intuitive gifts enabled her to become a master player and teacher of poker.

Poker helped her to develop the belief that one's life is created by one's perceptions, a mindset perspective that enabled her to recover her speaking ability three days after having a massive stroke. A few weeks later, when she was waiting to have a heart procedure, staff members, having heard that she was a master poker coach, asked her about it. When she explained her mindset principles and exercises, she influenced not only more than a dozen people but also the doctor who had performed her procedure.

She has published these principles and exercises in *MindShift On Demand: QUICK Life-Changing Tools*, her second published book. Donna, who recognizes that exposure to the Internet and related technology has created a need for information presented in a simple way, plans to create several smaller books on this subject and card decks.

“Keep it simple” and “Keep on repurposing it” are her guiding principles in writing and publishing. These principles can serve any authors who want to get the maximum value from their work.

Join me for this episode of *Writing to Get Business* to discover

- How does extensive experience in writing articles help you write a book?
- What question must you ask yourself when you plan to write an article or book?
- How can your customers' and clients' questions tell you what to put in a book?
- Why must you consider how the modern demand for instant gratification has changed what people want in an informational book?

- Why is “Repurpose” the magic word of publishing?

Patricia: This is Pat Iyer with *Writing to Get Business*. Today, you're going to have an opportunity to hear from Donna Blevins, who I first met in the back of a room in Atlanta when we were both attending a conference. And what struck me was this tall woman who was rolling a hula hoop around her hips. And I remembered hula hoops from when I was a kid, and I was never really good at it. She was entertaining the crowd with her swiveling hips and her hula hoop. Donna has multiple talents, including being a hula hoop player, being a person who's knowledgeable about playing poker, and about mind shift, and the ways that we influence our behavior. Donna, welcome to the show.

Donna: Pat, I am absolutely honored to be here. And I was just so surprised when you had told me that you remember way back when I rolled that hula hoop, and it was an athletic hula hoop that they actually had designed. And thank you so much, because it's in the living room. I will get back into the habit because it's good for the core.

Patricia: Absolutely, it's good for the core. Well, what I'd like to ask you about in our talk today is for you to describe the process that you've achieved in order to complete your first book. And let's start with what is your book about, and why did you write it?

Donna: The book is about mind shifting. It's how to really get in contact with that magnificent biological supercomputer that you come fully equipped with. Our brain has an amazing ability but generally, we are unaware of what we can do with it. And the process involves, I call them code modifiers, that you can download to your subconscious mind to reprogram your subconscious, because that's our driver. And the whole process of mind shifting has to do with rather than being the unwitting passenger in your life, be the active conscious driver.

Patricia: It sounds like you subscribe to the school of being able to determine your fate and being in control of your life.

Donna: I would certainly prefer to have it as my design. And there are lots of things out there that we have no control over. However, we have control over a reality, how we perceive what's going on, how we can even turn a terrible situation into even more than a tolerable situation.

And it's how we frame it, how we look at it. Our life is created by the way we perceive, by our perception. And that's all mindset work.

Patricia: And give our viewer who's watching this on our YouTube channel or listening to us on our audio channels, give that person a sense of your background. Who were you before you wrote this book?

Donna: Well, who was I? I am six feet five inches tall. And that has led me to a lot of different situations. Because I was put, let's see, I was gifted to have this body, because I stood out and it was difficult to hide. And I was an athlete in high school, not because I chose to be, but it's almost like I was shamed to be because I had grown so fast in grade school.

In fifth grade, I grew nine inches. And that's very painful. And going into the sixth grade I was already taller than everybody else and what's funny about it is that the only thing to take off the growing pains was to put me in elevated shoes.

So, the whole process of my physicality has taken me into a lot of different industries. And I've been a marketing consultant, I was in commercial real estate for 20 years, had my own real estate company. I was the management broker for the US Department of Veterans Affairs.

And the reason my physicality had a lot to do with it because it was in professions that most often were male-dominated. And because of the gift of my height, it gave me the strength and confidence. My self-worth didn't come with the confidence, it didn't come with the self-esteem. I had to learn it and had to develop it.

And even modeling, they'd say, "Oh, you're so tall; you should model." And then I'd go look for modeling and they'd go, "I'm sorry, you're too tall." So, in those days, I actually became a convention host because, let's face it, if you're going to invest in a vendor table at a convention, you know, what's the main thing you want to happen at that table?

Patricia: You want traffic, you want people to come and visit you.

Donna: That's exactly right. So, I was a commodity who they hired. Because, let's face it, who was going to stop at what table? I mean, I was in hot

pants and hooker boots and was like six-nine. And I was jovial and fun, and people would stop. So, what I learned from that, I learned about communication and interaction, I learned to read people, I learned to determine when somebody is walking up to me, I could tell you what style they were going, what their personality style.

Eventually, I became a Performax certified consultant. And Performax was the original company that created the DiSC system, the D-I-S-C, the four quadrants of behavior that is the foundation of our psychology today, Carl Jung's four quadrants of behavior. And I loved that, and that became something I used in sales.

And you're asking for the threads, and I'm thinking about it and that, then, morphed into the poker became a natural sequence. It might seem a little odd, but it was, because I was strong in sales, I could read people. Poker is, yes, a card game played by people, but it's, most importantly, a people game played with cards. And what I determined that I could use that skill that I had developed in reading people to help me excel at poker without ever understanding the abstract math side of poker as much as the people side.

Patricia: I served as a ghostwriter for a man for two of his books; he's a body language specialist. And he was a master poker player, and was quite well known in several casinos, until the casinos began recognizing him and encouraging him not to walk in their door, and maybe move along to another casino that might have been further down the block.

Donna: Well, now, for them to do that, it would probably be that he was playing blackjack rather than poker, because they wouldn't ask him to go down the block if he was a really good poker player. But if he was in blackjack, that meant that he was beating them because he knew how to read the cards. Is that correct, he was probably blackjack more than poker?

Patricia: I think so.

Donna: Yeah. And that's the whole concept of it. So, he was escorted out of casinos because of that. But poker, it's interesting, because in poker, you play against other people. The house gets a little bit of like rent, they take a little bit of money out of each pot, and it's like the rent you pay for your table and for the room, and for the dealers. So, the whole

process of poker has been life-changing for me because, in 1996, poker saved my life.

Patricia: And you're going to tell us about that, correct?

Donna: Well, I was just going to ask, I was going to say, "Okay, is that an interesting thing she wants to hear about?" Yes, as a matter of fact, I was brand new to the poker table. And when I say brand new, I mean, I was brand new.

I was in my late forties. We owned a real estate company, as I mentioned before, and I was the management broker for the US Department of Veterans Affairs. And it was a highly stressful situation, because when I took custody of that division, it was five counties in Southwest Florida, I took custody of 257 properties in one day. And by the time, it was in the early nineties at the time, 1996, I was overwhelmed.

And this is one of the things that I want everyone who hears my voice or sees my face know that we get so involved with everything that we're doing, we forget self-care. And we ignore taking care. And putting ourselves first, it's so critical.

I'm in this hand, and only a little while after I started playing. And I'm in the hand, literally, I have cards in front of me. And I start thinking about, "Oh, this contractor I had to deal with today, man, he's just so difficult to work with and he didn't do that job right and he's got to go fix that. I've got to get a hold of, and I've got, oh, tomorrow, I've got, you know, I've got specifications to send out tomorrow for a roof, and then for a flooring." Because the properties had to be brought up to federal habitability standards in order to be able to, for the government to resell homes that they had acquired because of the foreclosure process.

And I'm sitting there, and I'm thinking about all this stuff. And it was as if the poker gods tapped me on the forehead. And I heard a voice in my head. And it was, "There's only one thing that exists, and that's the cards that you have. Past cards are always folded, future cards are never here."

And in that moment, I went to that place of mindfulness. And it was as if, it was almost like, it was like, all my energy came back to my

body and everything else around me just disappeared. The only thing that existed was that table, the only thing that existed is the hand that I'm in. And I went to that point of mindfulness. And I believe, with 100% confidence, that because of poker, I am here with you today. If it hadn't been for poker, I believe I would have died from stress or a heart attack. So, it saved my life.

Patricia: I know, in talking with you earlier in preparation for the show, you mentioned that you were involved in, sounds like, many industries, poker construction. You were also involved in publishing, publishing print magazines. How did that experience involved with publishing print magazines influence your book, when you decided to write your book?

Donna: Having experience and writing has affected my life forever. When you were talking about this book, my first book was in the eighties, before the internet, and it's the same, because there's a part of me that wants to go find it and publish it today, because it had to do with real estate, it was called *Home Prescription, Today's Sure Cure for Selling Homes Fast*". I mean, what could be better than that now? It's like it's time to find the manuscript for that book and republish it.

But the publishing, because of the print magazines, I was Vice President of Advertising in some, Vice President Marketing for others, but I always had a column. I became a writer. I have published over a thousand articles. And doing that gets you into the point of writing. And I would, every time I'd write an article, and those days, the articles had to be a thousand words.

And the intention was, what one thing do I want people to get go away with, to get from this article? That helped me in my writing. So that concept of doing that helped me write easier. And everything led to writing. It's interesting, since I was in the teens, I was actually involved in publishing. My mother would say, "I need to get this newsletter out," for one of her organizations. "Can you help me get it printed?" I guess I was in publishing back in the teens. So, the publishing goes throughout the whole process.

And when I started looking for a publisher 10 years ago, it's like, "I want to be published out in the big world today." And you have to be a different person and have a different platform. Celebrities, you

really have to have a big calling, something that's really notable. Go win eight Olympic medals, and then you can write a book. So, it's, the process taught me just to write it.

And, interestingly enough, *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, they had, like 250 no's before they finally got a yes. I didn't match his, but I sure got a lot of them. And then I decided, with my poker coaching clients, when I would say, "Just shift your mindset." And they'd go, "How do we do that?" And I would go through a process. And they'd finally say, "Would you just write it down?" So that whole process led me to that.

Patricia: Isn't that great? Listen to what your market is telling you, just write it down, Donna, just write it down.

Donna: That's it. That's it. It's just, it's really important to write it down. That's one of the things that I want anyone listening, if you think that you have something that you want to write, listen, write it. It's a lot better getting out there messy than not at all. Get it out there. First time, I don't care if all you get is you get this book and it's like 72 mistakes in it. Excellent. You've got someplace to start. But if it stays in your magnificent biological supercomputer, who else is going to see it? You need to get it out there.

Patricia: I understand, Donna, that you worked with a book coach to help you get through this process. Can you tell us what that collaboration was like?

Donna: I actually took a course in writing a book. And I loved her course. She's what I call a hybrid. She's very pragmatic but she's also got a pretty highly toned woo-woo side. Besides being logical, I mean, literally, she wrote Microsoft code. So, her left brain was truly active. But she's also a simply healed practitioner, which is in the spiritual side.

And when I first got on there, she would do some of her woo-woo stuff and I'd go, "Ah." And then all of a sudden, I went, "Oh." I said, "Okay, there's something to this." My book was ready to publish in 2013, and she was the one that made a suggestion after I thought it was ready.

I had three screens at the time. And I have my desktop and intuitive screens up here. And I have this huge screen, and I had one of the mind shift exercises up on the screen, and I was looking at it. And I stood up from my computer, right here, and I put hands on my hips, you know how you do that and you're going on, "Mm." And I looked at that and I said, "I want something to prove my mind shift exercises work. And I want proof now, and I'm going to cancel that because I'm not requesting that."

Because be careful what you ask for; moments later, I had a massive center left brain stroke. And when I hit the floor, I thought, "Be careful what you ask for." And I was unable to speak except for two words. And that was, "Donna" and "crap." And, fortunately, I was airlifted to the Florida Teaching Hospital.

And all along the way, the healthcare team is saying, "She will never be able to speak fluidly again. It'll take her eight or nine months before she can talk." And I chose to detach and observe and be the witness rather than buying into that disease, which is what my mind shifting exercises are about. It's about detaching and observing, rather than being it, believing it, becoming it. It's something that is counterintuitive for you. It's not healthy for you. And the great news is, doing my mind shifting exercises, I was able to speak fluidly in three days.

Patricia: And I know that there are healthcare professionals who will listen to this who will say, "That's an amazing story." And there are non-healthcare professionals who will also say, "That's an amazing story." I don't know that I've ever seen anyone make that kind of recovery. And I've taken care of a lot of people, as a nurse, who've had strokes.

Donna: Well, the wonderful thing is five weeks after I had the stroke, I had a heart procedure. Because when your heart is out of rhythm, I had an arrhythmia called atrial fibrillation, when the top part of the heart is quivering. And people who have that are five times more probable to have a stroke, especially if they're not on blood thinners, which I wasn't. Because I was so healthy, they said there's no reason to do that.

And it was interesting, because five weeks after I had a heart procedure to help to rectify that, and the day before the heart

procedure, they took me in for a heart cath, when they took a look at my heart to be sure I was okay for the surgery. And it was interesting because it was very early in the morning, and they didn't have a room for me in the hospital yet. And so, they said, "Well, you'll have to wait in recovery."

And that was fine. I didn't care where I was. I was on cloud nine. It was so wonderful. I felt so good having this done. And I would have people come up to me and they'd say, "I heard you're a poker coach. Well, what do you do?" I said, "Well, I'm a poker mindset coach. And it has to do with shifting your mindset."

And they would come over and they'd go, "Well, tell me about that." So, I actually started teaching the nurses and the support staff, in the cath lab, a mind shift exercise called the egg, which is one of the chapters in the book. And it's an amazing way to insulate yourself from the negativity that's around you. And they would come over kind of blue. And when they left, they would feel better, their body language was different.

And I helped 13 people, during eight hours, because I'm going, "I'm on duty;" that was a wonderful place to be. And at five o'clock, the doctor came in, who had done the heart cath, and she came up to me. And she almost had a frown on her face. And she put her hand on my forearm, and she said, "What have you been teaching my people?" And I went, "I've been teaching them the egg." And she said, "Teach me."

And I just got chills, because it was so amazing. I walked her through the process, takes about four minutes to do. And she said, "You have to go talk to the CEO of the hospital, because healthcare teams need this, because we have so much on our plate, and there's so much negative." People come in sick, they bring in their negative energy with them. When you see somebody come in, they have this dark cloud following them, then there's a way that you can insulate yourself from it. So that was a gift that I got because of my stroke and because of my heart procedure.

Patricia: Well, it sounds like that was not your first book; the mindset book was your second book?

Donna: Well, actually, it was my second published book. But I had had all the articles along the way. So, it's my second published book, but the other one was in the eighties so, you know, it exists. But this was the first one that was actually launched out publicly like this one is. The other book was actually in the time of day during the no money down era of real estate.

And I was a speaker, who, remember, I said that one of the things about my physicality gave me the benefit of competing in a male industry. And I was asked to be one of those speakers. And I was the only woman who survived to thrive in that industry. And I had to publish a book and a course. And that was the first book, and it had recordings that went with it. And so, it's interesting, because that was, I guess, course creation is something that is the foundation of what I do as well.

Patricia: And tell us about the additional books that are in your head. And I know that there's got to be more. What's ahead for you in terms of publishing books?

Donna: Well, thank you, because the whole process of having a book that's the regular-sized book, and by the way, you see these little tabs in the book? I read a book every day. It's like, it's wonderful to be able to read a book, and to be the reader rather than the writer and to look at it from a different standpoint. I'll pick a number and go to that page and read it, and it becomes my daily kind of substitute Bible.

So, what I've done is I've realized that we, as human beings, have had our DNA changed by the internet and by smartphones, because we want it, we want it now, and we want something fast.

So, what I'm in the process of doing—there's 12 mind shift exercises in the book. I'm going to take each one of them and turn them into a pocket book, a four-by-six small pocket book under 100 pages. And it's going to be one that you can carry with you and think, “Oh, I really liked that one.” You can have a collection of these because I believe, today, we're all about sampling, about tasting.

So, I'm going to create a smorgasbord, the buffet for people to look at the mind shifting work. And I have other book series that are also in work. So, one of them has to do with course creation. I have been told,

by my coaching clients over the years, that I am the Chief Simplifier, because I like to boil things down to its simplest, because complexity is confusing to me. And I have to figure it out.

And that's the way that I had started teaching people poker, is because they go, "Hey, how did you get where you are?" And I said, "Well, let's see if I can explain that." How do I explain the people part of it? And as a matter of fact, in 90 minutes today, I'm getting on a keystone session with a new poker coaching client. She was actually my first poker coaching client 12 years ago. But she resurfaced this week and said, "Look, I'm competing in a tournament this weekend and I'd really like for you to be my poker coach during that, because it's been so long since I've been at the table."

So that's a blessing for somebody to come back and saying, "Hey, you did really good then, can you do it again?" So, I'm doing, I call it a keystone session, which is the session to set a foundation for working with someone.

As a frustrated author, if you feel stuck on how to start or finish your book, then this message is just for you.

When you are blocked, questioning if the effort is worthwhile, facing writing obstacles, not knowing how to proceed, you feel like you are walking through mud.

And you need to realize, there is a cost to being stalled.

- You are not reaping the benefits of being a published author, and your book is sitting inside you aching to get out.
- You feel like you are being diverted to other projects and priorities.
- Without steadily writing, your unfinished manuscript makes you anxious and frustrated.

If you ignore the project, you just feel worse. When most writers do when faced by the idea of writing a book is to hope for inspiration, that one day you'll wake up and know how to proceed. But for most people, that does not happen.

- You don't have the inspiration to move forward.
- You don't know how to conquer writing obstacles.
- You lose the focus of why you should go through the effort of writing.

**And what happens if you just do nothing?**

If you just keep doing what you've been doing?

- You become one of the 81% of Americans who think they have a book in them but never get the pleasure of finishing it.
- You think, "I wish I had a process to get this manuscript finished. It seems so difficult."
- You keep wondering, "I'd love to know a way I could get this project done."

I've got an answer that works for getting your manuscript started – and finished.

Through writing or editing 49 of my own books, I learned

- the strategies that enabled me to accomplish my writing goals.
- how to get my book written in the most efficient and effective way
- to appreciate the phenomenal rewards that come from being an author

These techniques worked for me, and they will work for you. My system allowed me to accomplish my prolific writing career. When my book coaching clients call me to share their own frustration with writing, I take them through the process I will reveal to you and arm them with the tools to get their books done.

Would you love quick reminders and tips to get your book done? When you order the *Tips for Writing a Powerful Book: How to Get Started* card deck today, you'll get the keys to:

- Overcoming writer's block
- Managing your motivation to keep on track
- Discovering bite-sized tips from an experienced author on how to write your book

It all comes as part of the *Tips for Writing a Powerful Book: How to Get Started* card deck.

Here's what you get:

- 48 cards with gorgeous images
- 9 tips on focusing your book
- 9 tips on smoothing the writing process
- 9 inspirational messages if you hit a writing block
- 9 benefits of publishing cards to help you concentrate on the goal of getting your book done
- 9 tips to stay on track by conquering writing obstacles

It's decision time. You have a choice to make. Do what you've been doing (or worse, do nothing at all). You know where that will lead. Is that really where you want to stay? Stuck and overwhelmed and not getting your book done?

Or you can arm yourself with a resource to keep you focused, motivated, and confidently making progress on your book.

What do you really want for yourself? A sense of accomplishment or frustration?

Here's what to do now.

Go to [mywriting.tips/powerfulbook](http://mywriting.tips/powerfulbook) and click on the button to place your order. You'll receive the deck in the mail. You'll love it.

Patricia: Yes. And then we talked a little bit beforehand, and I'd like you to share with our audience, in the remaining few minutes, the concept of matching a card deck with a book or a series of books. Can you tell me what your plans are along those lines?

Donna: Absolutely, because one of the things I want anyone who's thinking about writing a book, or who has a book, is that when you take your concept, and you really have it fleshed out, repurpose it, and repurpose it again. Because people are different consumers. People like things in their hands. By the way, I actually bought my Kindle book as well, I bought it on Amazon. I wanted it to go in my Kindle library. It's kind of funny, I go there, it says, "You bought that book." And I went, "Okay, fine." So, it's the ability to repurpose. Card decks are phenomenal, because people like cards.

And it's like, some day, I feel like cards, and I pull out, I've got dozens of card decks of people that have to do with thought processes, mindfulness. Wayne Dyer, I have all of his card decks, anything that was published through Hay House; I really like those. They had a sale one year for five bucks a deck. And I said, "Give me all of those."

I used them as gifts. So, I think having your book turned into a card deck is profound. And I want you to understand, it's not a case of writing a lot of stuff on a card, it's about taking something that is a thought, a simple thought that will be able to stimulate someone to do a thought. Some people make card decks that are bullet points. Bullet

journals, when somebody said, “Okay, journal about this,” some people do that. So, it can be used in many different ways. The possibilities are endless, Pat.

Patricia: I think that we could go on for several more hours, Donna, but we won't. You've given us lots to think about, inspiring stories, stories about experiencing a stroke and getting a return of your voice within days, which is probably almost totally unheard of. Using the power of your mind, using the lessons that you have learned, influencing other people, teaching people, you are clearly a natural teacher who wants to share and help other people improve their lives with the techniques that you have learned. How can our listener or our viewer get more information about you, your book, and your services?

Donna: The very simple way is to go to [mindshiftondemand.com](http://mindshiftondemand.com). That's [mindshiftondemand.com](http://mindshiftondemand.com). And right now, you can opt in for a four-minute audio, which is my signature mind shift exercise. Isn't that interesting?

One of the reasons I have it simplified, you know, you go to people's sites, sometimes, and there's all these tabs and you're going, “Where do I go?” It is a simple page. And I have other things that I provide that are also simple pages, but I think it's easy to keep it simple. Just go to that page, opt in for that, and then you'll be on my list. I'll let you know.

If you are a Facebook user, by the way, at 6'5", I'm known as the big girl of poker, it's [facebook.com/biggirlpoker](https://www.facebook.com/biggirlpoker). On YouTube, it's Big Girl Poker. On Twitter, it's Big Girl Poker. On Clubhouse, it's Big Girl Poker. On Instagram, it's Big Girl Poker. So, if you wonder about that, just look for Big Girl Poker, and you'll find me.

Patricia: All right. Thank you, Donna. I appreciate you sharing your time and your insights with our audience today.

Donna: I'm honored, Pat, to be here. I'm here to serve.

Patricia: And thank you to you who's been listening to this program. Please be sure to add a comment on YouTube below this video, give us a thumbs up, give us a thumbs down, give us a comment, and tell a couple of people in your life who are interested in writing nonfiction books or have written nonfiction business books and are looking for

inspiration, and tips, and amazing interviews with people about this channel, *Writing to Get Business*.