



THE SALES INFORMER

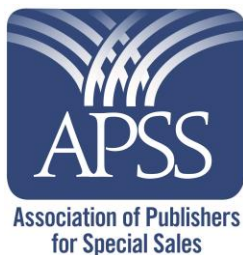
Association of Publishers for Special Sales

**A monthly e-zine dedicated to helping APSS members sell more books
to more buyers, more profitably.**

Volume 5, Issue 2, Number 46 February 2017

Here is your February 2017 issue of *The Sales Informer* ezine. We intend this to help APSS members sell more books to non-bookstore buyers. This newsletter is sent only to paid APSS members. If there were any problems with this delivery, please let me know.

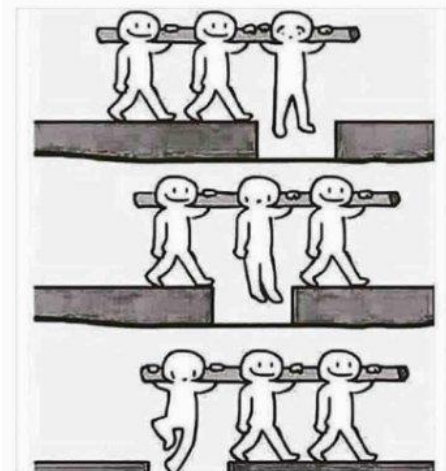
APSS Update from the Executive Director - Brian Jud



Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success." This applies to APSS, too. Our members work together in local chapters to build camaraderie. They network with each other while participating in our conferences and other events. They utilize the Idea Marketplace

to communicate creative marketing techniques that have worked for them. Our Mastermind Groups offer support and feedback for others in the group. APSS members work together for success. Learn more about how APSS can help you, and how you can help your fellow members at www.bookapss.org

If we unite, nobody falls



APSS Tip for Finding Potential Non-Bookstore Buyers

Advertising can generate leads, but it can be expensive. Minimize your advertising expenses and maximize its impact by placing an ad in a niche magazine. In some cases the cost can be zero if, for example, you arrange for a relevant association to use an excerpt from your book in its newsletter in exchange for free advertising space. When considering paid advertising, evaluate each medium on its cost-per-thousand (CPM) and its ability to reach the readers who will be most responsive to your book.

Top Ten List By APSS

Move Out of Your Comfort Zone to Sell More Books

Authors can sell more books more profitably in non-bookstore markets. Why don't they do so? One theory is that they have a marketing comfort zone and do not conduct promotional actions that are outside of that zone. It is not necessarily a bad thing, but only a limiting concept. If you recognize that there is more you can do if you challenge yourself to do more, sales may increase. Here are the **Top Ten Indicators That You Market Only in Your Comfort Zone**.



1. You write or publish books based on your experience, not based on an identified market need
2. You try to sell only through bookstores – chains, indies and online (and maybe to libraries)
3. You do not look for ways to sell through retailers (gift shops, discount stores, supermarkets, etc.) or on a non-returnable way to buyers in corporations, associations, schools and the military
4. You exclusively and repeatedly use one or a limited number of mass-promotional tools (i.e. social networking) instead of niche marketing to reach your target readers
5. You publish books instead of finding out how your target readers want your content delivered, which could be ebooks, audiobooks, personal presentations, keynotes, etc
6. You do not search for new ways to promote your book, either through reading or attending conferences, joining publishers associations or watching webinars on different marketing topics.
7. You do what everybody else does to market their books, and expect to appear different enough that people will buy your book
8. You price your books the same as competitive titles and not based on the value of your content
9. You do not have a good definition of your target readers and a system to identify new buyers
10. You sell your physical books instead of showing prospective buyers how they can solve their problems with your content

APSS Tip for Negotiating Large-Quantity Orders

You may make a powerful and logical case for purchasing a large quantity of your books, and the buyers may still refuse to purchase them. They may have budget constraints or pending personnel changes that limit their choices. Discover where they have some flexibility and revise your proposal accordingly. Bring up non-price issues to create a total package that is more palatable to their circumstances.

APSS Tip for Making Persuasive Sales Presentations

Create value and mutual satisfaction. You cannot go into the presentation with the singular objective of closing the sale. The desired result is to make the campaign using your content a success and get a re-order for long-term recurring revenue. In a non-manipulative process, two or more people meet with the intention of improving the circumstances of each.

Online Publishing Trends You Can't Ignore in 2017

By Angie Fisher



2016 was a fantastic year for digital publishing. But flip the page and it's already 2017. With a new year comes new trends, and we're ecstatic to see what the digital publishing industry has in store for us.

Below we've compiled three major publishing trends of 2017 that will impact digital authors of every kind, with specific takeaways on how you can best leverage them for your benefit.

1) Market share reversing for indies. Author Earnings reports of the past few years have confirmed the steady rise of indie authors in the eBook market. However, if the most recent 2016 report is anything to go by, there's been a change. Small/medium publishers and Amazon Published have all increased their market share at the expense of indie authors. Interestingly enough, this change is not reflected on gross sales figures (shown below). Both indie publishers and the Big 5—the major U.S. trade book publishing companies—experienced a decline in their quarterly earnings.

The report details an increase in Amazon and small publisher market shares during the quarter. While the Big 5 and small/medium publishers reported a marginal 1% increase in market shares respectively, Amazon boasted a significant 4% increase during that same time period. We can reasonably attribute this growth to the lost indie market share migrating to Amazon.

The takeaways: Author Earnings' 2016 report tells us 3 things:

1. The market has entered another period of fluctuation. This is completely normal.
2. It could be indicative of major publishers reassessing their pricing models. If that's the case, then it could mean that lower priced eBooks actually hurt sales for big-name publishers (possibly due to a decrease in perceived quality).
3. Books are no longer required to be published and sold traditionally in order to be enjoyed.

2) Crowding emphasizing the importance of niche. A vast majority of independent magazines, both digital and print, don't have large readerships. But that isn't necessarily a bad (or accidental) thing. Publishers are taking note of an increasingly important trend this year: finding a niche will be just as important as creating a digital magazine. Niche publishers understand that the market is sustained by content output and longevity. As more and more magazines trickle into the market, the competition escalates. And because online retailers and publishing platforms have no limits to their shelf spaces, digital publications can live forever. So how do publishers stay afloat?

They go niche. More publishers are funneling their marketing efforts towards building campaigns that appeal to highly targeted audiences. Since the digital market is so overcrowded that even traditional print publishers are struggling, 2017 is the ideal year for developing effective niche content strategies.

The takeaways:

1. Exponential growth in both site traffic and social sharing occurs when publishers target specific demographics like age and gender. Remember — there's a market for everything.
2. In addition to deeper market penetration and increased social shares, niche publishers are generally better at cultivating loyal readerships than publishers who appeal to many audiences. They also excel at generating more traffic and becoming authoritative figures on their subject matters, as reported by the Design Trust.

Catering to very specific audiences in ways that are relevant to them lets niche publishers deliver more qualified leads to their advertisers. This generates more revenue because advertisers invest in publications that deliver to engaged, targeted audiences.

3) Audiobooks gaining popularity. Are you listening? Good because apparently a lot of other people are as well. We were a bit blindsided by it, but the fact remains that audio is the fastest growing format. Statistics from the Pew Research Center detail a significant increase in audiobook listeners during 2016; nearly 15% of those surveyed were listening to books. Fueling this explosion are technological advances and changes in how/where people listen to content. And when you consider how much time Americans spend in their cars on average (around 17,600 minutes a year), the numbers begin to make sense.

Audiobooks saw a near 500% production increase from 2011 to 2015. Sales have also skyrocketed by as much as 20% from 2014 to 2015 alone. Many publishers predict that audio will trend to new heights in the coming years and cite Amazon's best-selling product of 2016, Alexa, as proof.

The takeaways:

1. Digital publishers are branching out and publishing into other formats (like audio) once their sales are steady. It's a smart move because more formats equal more audiences reached.
2. These publishers dedicate their time to researching specific genres, how well those genres are performing, and if the costs exceed the expected profits. If you follow suit, you'll be able to take advantage of future audio distribution models that will likely emerge from this trend.

Ebook Pricing Tips – How to Assign the Right Value to Your Work

By Tanisha Williams



Self-publishing gives authors complete control over the writing and marketing process of their book. While this feeling of power may bring a sense of peace during the writing phase of your project, your comfort may begin to unravel as you face numerous uncertainties about getting your masterpiece into the hands of the masses. And the first and foremost of marketing strategies to decipher will ultimately lay the foundation for your entire promotional plan – ebook pricing. How much should you charge for your book?

With ebook pricing, the waters are still a bit murky. Even successful indie authors can do little more than guess when it comes to breaking down the intricacies of assigning value to their work. Of course as an indie you can always choose a price and change it as often as you see fit until you hit that sweet spot (where your ebooks are flying off the virtual shelves). But still, where do you begin?

How to Assign the Right Value to Your Work

If the issue of ebook pricing has left you feeling dazed and confused, don't be discouraged. Here are some suggestions on how to make an informed choice when it comes to deciding the best price point for your book.

1. Offer Your Book for Free. At first glance the suggestion of a free book offering may sound strange given the topic of ebook pricing. However, if you "peel the banana back" you'll find that giving your book away can pave the way for collecting a lot of helpful data on the best ebook price points. Simply distribute a questionnaire (to those whom you've graced with a free copy) asking the following: How much money would you pay for this ebook? How would you quantify the value you've received from

the contents of this book? How much have you spent on other books in this same genre? If you can obtain feedback from at least 5 to 10 individuals, you should have a good starting point for pricing your ebook.

2. Set Goals. When determining ebook pricing, you should ask yourself what you want to achieve financially. Some authors hope to recoup all the money they've spent on expenses like editing and cover art in addition to making a hefty profit. Others just want to get their name out there and couldn't care less whether or not they make a dime. For them, the goal is to craft a reputation and then use that notoriety to sell their next book at a premium price. So you should first figure out your financial goals and then set a price that helps you achieve those goals.

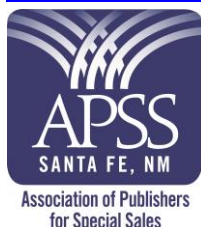
3. Consider the Medium. What medium are you going to use to sell your books? Different mediums tend to bring different ebook pricing considerations to the table. For instance, most major self-publishing companies will take a portion of the money you make on each sale. Amazon typically gives you 70 percent of your profit on each ebook sold as long as it's priced within the range of \$2.99 and \$9.99. Other platforms may not be so generous. Simply put, you must carefully select the medium through which your book will be sold because it will have a drastic impact on your pricing. Logically speaking, a medium that allows you to keep a larger percentage of your profits permits you to sell your book at a lower price. On the contrary, platforms that seize a sizeable portion of your profits leave you with little choice but to hike your prices in order to meet your financial goals.

4. Consider Range Pricing. You do not have to restrict yourself to one price. Regardless of the price you chose at the start, you can always make changes in response to the demand. In my opinion, however, I think it would be better to start off at a low price and move towards increase rather than the other way around. You can set lower prices during the launch of your book to increase sales and notoriety, and then slowly but steadily raise the prices as interest builds. If you start high and later cut your book's price, it can either spark excitement in deal seekers or scream "not worth it" in those looking for value triggers. All in all, range pricing can be the best of both worlds if done correctly.

5. Price More than One Book. If you are struggling to price one book, consider throwing a second book into the mix. Price each book differently, with one book having a significantly lower price than the other. The rationale here is simple: some people will feel compelled to buy the cheaper book because it will appear a lot more attractive. On the other hand, you will find people buying the more expensive one because they think its heftier price tag proves that it is better. Track the number of sales for each book and settle on a price closest to the one with the most sales. This strategy might sound silly, but some it actually works, even if you are dealing with two different editions of the same book.

There is no magic bullet when it comes to ebook pricing. And while it would be a mistake to overprice your book, underpricing or undervaluing your work can be just as critical. The best thing you can do is to run a variety of pricing tests and track your results. Ultimately your final price should provide the perfect cost-benefit for your readers while helping you meet your financial goals.

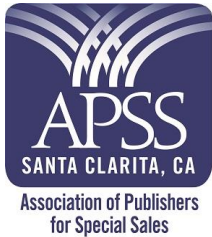
APSS Chapter News



March 2: APSS-Santa Fe will hold its monthly Lunch 'n Learn meeting at the N. Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center; classroom #7 in Albuquerque from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Chapter president Mary Neighbour says, "We will have an exclusive showing of Brian Jud's presentation on the basics of pricing your books for retail and non-retail markets. Members and nonmembers welcome. Come prepared with your questions, pens, and note paper."



March 7: APSS-CT will hold their quarterly in-person meeting. The topic is how to get on and perform on TV and radio shows – and sell more books while you are there. The speaker is Brian Jud. It will be held at the Russell Library, Middletown, CT for 2:00 to 6:00 pm. For more information contact APSS-CT chapter president Dan Blanchard at dan007blanchard@gmail.com or BrianJud@bookapss.org



March 11: APSS-Santa Clarita is sponsoring Book Selling University in Los Angeles. Brian Jud will go through his system for selling books to non-bookstore buyers. Juan Roberts will give the three essentials of an effective book cover, and Janet Squires will demonstrate how to prepare a cover letter for credible book reviewers and the steps of a successful sell sheet. For more information visit <http://tinyurl.com/h6fqj35> or contact Chapter President Willa Robinson at willa@knowledgepowerinc.com or BrianJud@bookapss.org



March 14: Get a 20-minute consultation on your book by two sales pros. APSS will do that for you at 6:00 pm ET. Guy Achtzehn and Brian Jud will give you more ideas for selling your books than you ever imagined. Or, just listen to the consults. Info at www.bookapss.org/OneOnOneConsultMar14.pdf and register at <http://tinyurl.com/gugg5w4>



March 21: APSS-New Jersey is hosting a one-day event during which members can meet one-on-one with Brian Jud. We can discuss book marketing in general and special sales in particular for each member's books. To register for your time contact BrianJud@bookapss.org

Tips for Selling to Non-Bookstore Buyers

By Guy Achtzehn



To find prospecting opportunities that associations offer, search their Web sites and contact membership chairs, staff, directors and other executives about using your book as a fundraiser or a premium to increase membership. Explore https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_industry_trade_groups_in_the_United_States for associations related to your topic, and look for the bookstore manager, program director or meeting planner who might hire you to speak to the association or become its spokesperson. Attend their local chapter meetings to network. A database of more than 85,000 non-profit organizations is accessible at <http://www.directoryofassociations.com/>

For example, if you have a book that would help real-estate agents become better at selling homes you might contact the National Association Of Realtors (www.realtor.com) to speak at their annual conference. Or, you could speak to the 50 state associations (i.e., the Illinois Association Of Realtors; <http://www.illinoisrealtor.org/>) or regional associations (i.e., the Long Island Board Of Realtors; www.mlsliorealtor.com), each needing its own twist on your overall topic. There are many associations related to the real-estate industry that might also want speakers: The American Institute Of Architects (www.aia.org), Houston Association Of Realtors (www.har.com), the National Association Of Mortgage Brokers (www.namb.org), the National Association Of Home Inspectors, Inc.

(www.nahi.org) the National Association of Home Builders (<http://www.nahb.org>) or state associations (i.e., the Texas Association of Builders (<http://www.texasbuilders.org>), or the National Association of Mortgage Brokers (<http://www.namb.org>). If your message were targeted primarily to women, you might seek a speaking event with the National Association of Professional Mortgage Women (<http://www.napmw.org>).

Contact Guy Achtzehn at The Promotional Bookstore, guy@msgpromo.com or (717) 846-3865. Provide your APSS membership number for a 10% discount on promotional items

Are You Solving the Right Problem?

By Brian Jud



Problems are the bane of all businesses, and solving them is a constant battle as publishers fight to succeed. Spurred by a penchant for action, they quickly switch into solution mode and in many cases address the wrong issues. The secret to winning the struggle is not simply solving problems, but first knowing what the real problem is.

For example, a publisher may begin brainstorming with employees by saying, “We have a problem with poor sales. What can we do about it?” A staff wanting to appear enthusiastic and helpful responds with recommendations for solutions. These might include publishing more books, increasing publicity, changing distributors or selling through more bookstores. Unfortunately, low sales are just a symptom of the real problem, and the solutions offered are analogous to re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

What if the premise were reframed by asking the question differently? The publisher could open the creative session by saying, “Why do you think sales are down?” This question focuses the discussion on the cause of the problem, not its symptom, and develops an entirely new cluster of solutions.

Now, a staff wanting to appear more thoughtful and strategic might respond by questioning the definition of their target readers, the ability of matching content correctly with those readers and the lack of expansion into non-bookstore segments. Here are several ways in which a creative brainstorming session can define the problem and kick-start new thinking for solutions that are more accurate and productive.

1. **Question the objective.** Is your objective to increase sales, revenue or profits? Each has a different strategic path to its attainment. For example, changing pricing strategy could lead to lower sales but higher revenue and profits.
2. **Have people describe their understanding of the situation in writing before you meet.** Some participants may be unduly influenced or intimidated by others during the meeting. If they describe their suggestions prior to the meeting, they may be more precise, strategic and original. And after the meeting, ask them to write their understanding of the solution to confirm major points were communicated as intended.
3. **Seek multiple responses.** If the only tool you have is a hammer you will look for everything that needs a pounding. In the same vein, book publishers typically see the solution to sales’ problems as publishing more books. Home in on the real problem by changing the way in which you state the question. Asking, “How can we increase sales (revenue or profits)?” will get responses, but the first few are usually the most conventional. Instead, stimulate numerous replies by rewording the question: “In how many ways can we increase sales (revenue or profits) among corporate buyers?” Then ask the same question about buyers in other segments.

4. **Stimulate thinking with an unexpected question.** Jolt the attendees' thought process so they do not fall into the "group-think" syndrome where people become afraid to offer what others might misconstrue as unrealistic solutions. Let participants know from the start that this will not be the typical session in which only conventional recommendations are delivered. An example, "If you could wave your magic wand, how would you change the way we currently do business?" Or, "If there were no bookstores, how would we generate revenue?"
5. **Use the Five Ws to help describe the real problem.** Continue the opening discussion by asking five questions to help define the problem and direct attention to its solution.
 - **Who is (or could be) buying our books?** This requires a definition of target readers or buyers for each title and segment. Define those who would be interested in buying your books through retailers. Also describe buyers in corporations and associations who could use your content to solve business problems. Follow up by asking, "Who is not buying our books? Why not?"
 - **What sales are down?** – Do you offer content in various formats, such as printed and ebooks? Are sales in both categories below forecast?
 - **Where are sales down?** Track sales by segment to learn if certain ones are dragging down total sales. Analyze sales by demographic, seasonal, geographic and transactional segmentation, as well as segmentation by profit potential.
 - **When are sales down?** Is your content seasonal? If so, how can you increase sales during non-peak periods?
 - **Why are sales down?** There are countless conditions that conspire to reduce sales. Find out if the culprit is incorrect or inadequate targeting, pricing, distribution, content or promotion -- or some combination of these.
6. **Bring in outsiders.** As the saying goes, never ask a barber if you need a haircut. When you bring in people from outside the organization you may get more objective responses. The real value in soliciting others' opinions is their perspective. If chosen properly, they are not experts on your particular circumstances and can challenge the status quo.

Where can you find the outsiders? They could be paid consultants, but that is not always necessary. The Association of Publishers for Special Sales (APSS -- www.bookapss.org) offers a Mastermind Program to its members (www.bookapss.org/MastermindGroup.pdf). In it, publishers meet virtually to help each other solve business problems and increase their firms' potential. APSS also has local chapter meetings where members can interact face to face with colleagues. Or, you can survey customers to discover what they think. (But also survey previous and non-customers to find out why they do not buy.)

7. **Analyze positive exceptions.** Find out what worked in unconventional situations, and why. For example, one of your authors may have exhibited at a craft fair and sold 20 books. Analyze why that occurred to uncover hidden factors whose influence the group may not have considered. A craft fair has a targeted, interested audience. There is direct communication with potential buyers and the author is able to answer questions and ask for the order. And there is no nearby competition from other books. All these factors are present in making large-quantity, non-returnable sales to corporate buyers, and exploiting this new opportunity could increase sales significantly.

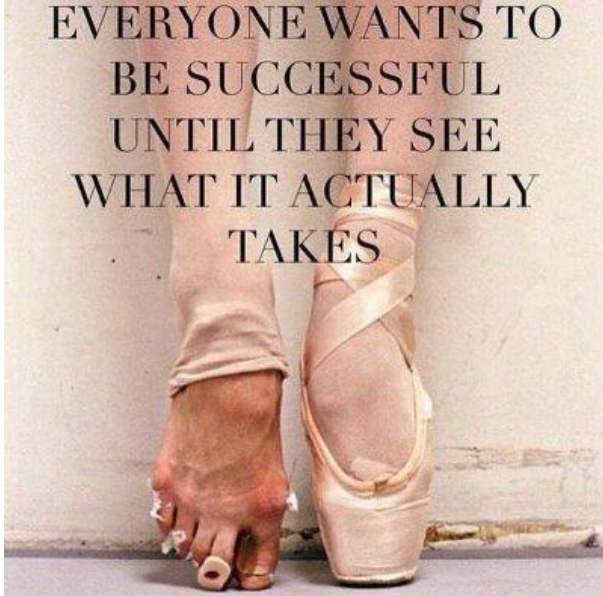
Once the problem is reframed and multiple solutions analyzed, decide which to adopt. Then take action, but with greater confidence that you are implementing a solution to the real problem. And that is more likely to deliver positive results.

Brian Jud is the Executive Director of APSS and the author of *How to Make Real Money Selling Books*. company offers commission-based sales of books to buyers in non-bookstore markets. For more information contact Brian at P. O. Box 715, Avon, CT 06001-0715; (860) 675-1344; Fax (860) 673-7650; brianjud@bookmarketing.com or www.premiumbookcompany.com @bookmarketing on Twitter

What's The Big Idea?

Many independent publishers try to sell their books only through the typical distribution network. Their efforts consist primarily of securing distributors and wholesalers to funnel books to retailers who put them on their shelves. There they stay, nestled among their competitors for a quick and easy comparison of benefits and price. The entire purchasing course of action may take 10 minutes since the purchase risk is low. If the book does not meet expectations it is returned, and eventually makes its way back to the author.

Unaware that this traditional system is totally different from the process for selling books to non-retail, buyers, publishers expect a similarly short selling cycle in the promotional products industry (PPI). But that is not the case. In the PPI, independent sales people sell -- on a commission-only basis -- a wide variety of products as premiums and ad specialties. In order to grow their businesses they must seek a continuous source of new prospects. The sales people learn their prospects' needs, propose solutions, make multiple presentations, negotiate the terms of each sale and service the business once the order is placed. This takes considerable time, if for no other reason than the buyer's risk of making the wrong decision is considerably higher since the purchases are not returnable. Give the process time to work -- a long time. It's a marathon, not a sprint.



Novel Ideas

Tips to Help You Sell More Fiction in Special Markets

Judith Appelbaum – Sensible Solutions

What subjects are important in the book? Does the story feature families, addiction, angels, terrorism, or tourism? By searching in an encyclopedia of associations, in Gale's and Bacon's directories of periodicals, and on the Web, you'll find groups of people already interested in whatever your book is about. Dale Smith's new novel for young readers -- *What the Parrot Told Alice* -- teaches kids about wildlife conservation, so it's a natural for bird enthusiasts and environmental activists. With Deer Creek Publishing's marketing campaign still in its early stages, results so far include a laudatory two-page review in *Bird Talk* that generated orders for 80 books almost immediately; sales of 200 copies at an American Federation of Aviculture Convention, where pet shop owners who figure to become steady customers were among the buyers; a premium deal with the World Parrot Trust; and good leads for premium sales to two major conservation groups.

Upcoming APSS Marketing Webinars

Mar 16: "Business Modeling for Authors," By Jared Kuritz; 6:00pm ET <http://tinyurl.com/zsexvcg>

Mar 23: "Content Marketing for Authors, Publicists, and Publishers," Roger C. Parker; 6 PM ET; <http://tinyurl.com/zqqovsu>

Mar 27: "How to Make a Persuasive Sales Presentation for Large-Quantity Orders," By Brian Jud, 6:00 pm ET; <http://tinyurl.com/zkcvpjg>

Read It And Reap An APSS Recommendation for a Book That Can Help Your Business Succeed

***Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart: Thirty True Things You Need to Know Now,* by Gordon Livingston & Elizabeth Edwards**

Out of a lifetime of experience, Gordon Livingston has extracted thirty bedrock truths: We are what we do. Any relationship is under the control of the person who cares the least. The perfect is the enemy of the good. Only bad things happen quickly. Forgiveness is a form of letting go, but they are not the same thing. The statute of limitations has expired on most of our childhood traumas. Livingston illuminates these and twenty-four others in a series of carefully hewn, perfectly calibrated essays, many of which focus on our closest relationships and the things that we do to impede or, less frequently, enhance them

