"My husband looked at me that night and said, "twenty-four hours, you have twenty-four hours to feel sorry for yourself, tomorrow tell me what your new career is going to be."
So, I did, I told him writing." ~Danielle Norman

Before becoming a romance writer, I was a body double for Heidi Klum and a backup singer for Adele. Now, I spend my days trying to play keep away from Theo James who won't stop calling me and asking me out.
And all of this happens before I wake up and face reality where in fact I'm a 50 something mom with grown kids, I've been married longer than Theo's been alive, and I now get my kicks riding a Harley.
As far as my body, I thank, Ben & Jerry's for that as well as gravity. And I could never be Adele's backup since I never stop saying the F-word long enough actually to sing.
My books are about kickass women with even better shoes and the men that try to tame them (silly silly men). Source: DanielleNorman.com

Danielle Norman, a Children's Book author and Romance novelist discloses a bit of background regarding how her personal life path forced a change of careers. And how that has turned out to be a worthwhile curveball. We are so honored that she would share her stories, her wisdom, some of her writing experiences, her most beloved writing resources, and her humorous outlook on life with us in this candid interview. Her answers to our questions are sure to be an encouragement and inspiration to authors in every stage of their writing career.
Now for our exclusive interview with Danielle Norman.

THE REAL AUTHOR

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about your daily work space or what type of environment you prefer to work in?
I'm spoiled, there I said it. Actually, I have a stand-alone writing office that my husband had built for me mid 2017. I call it the duchess suite because let's be honest, who wants to be a queen or a princess? They have rules and stricture. But duchesses they're always into trouble…just read any historical romance.
Anyway, back to my office, it is my own writing retreat, about 650 soft and I go into each morning just like most people go to their other jobs.

Q: What is something that motivates and/or inspires you as an author?
Readers, having people tell me that they loved a book or a particular part of a book. I love hearing about what they were doing when they got to a particularly funny part and laughed out loud. The more I hear the more I want to do and give back. It fuels me.

Q: What is something that frustrates and/or challenges you as an author?
Everyone is a writer and everyone thinks Wikipedia is the place for all answers. I come from nonfiction writing before romance so I take fact checking pretty serious. Not to mention I was born and still live in Orlando and I'm Greek, not like my great-grandparents came over from Greece but like my mother was 100% full Greek, I went to Greek school, was raised in a big fat Greek family (I have nineteen first cousins). I laugh when someone will leave me a review and say that, "no Greek would ever say"… or, "the author clearly knows nothing about Greek culture, her last name is Norman." My favorite though is, "according to google translate…"

I've also gotten comments like, the author needs to learn how to ride a motorcycle before she talks about them (BTW- I ride a Harley Sportster

every single day, it is banana yellow). I also get comments like, cops can't do what she wrote any person knows that… People forget that there are different laws in different cities, states, and countries. In NYC traffic cops don't carry guns in Orlando every cop carries a gun.

Q: Can you describe a little bit about what your daily writing schedule entails?

My daily schedule is pretty routine, I'm a creature of habit. First thing that you should know is that I'm an early riser when I say early I mean I'm up by five a.m. every morning. I get ready and then head into my office. I write for a little while then I'll check email and social media then I resume my writing. I'm usually at my goal word count by noon or one o'clock. I'll then do emails and social media again, work on takeovers, maybe work on things for my next release, or plan and plot my next book. But by 8pm I'm in bed with a book and relaxing.

THE REAL STORY

Q: Q: When did you begin writing? Was it something you loved from the beginning?

Some people who hear my story think it is sad but I don't, it is just me. Let me start by saying that I have the world's greatest husband. We've been married thirty-three years. But the man knows me and knows that I can be dormant.

I was a veterinarian and loved my job. When I was twenty-nine I was diagnosed with breast cancer and had to have a radical bilateral mastectomy. I was diagnosed again just after I turned forty but this time it had metastasized through my lungs. It was bad, I was bad. They began by removing lymph nodes and muscle in my left arm. The first thing I was told was that I would no longer be able to carry anything over about a pound nor have total control of my left arm…ohh I'm left handed. Have you ever seen a wiggling wagging puppy? Yeah, they require much more than a pound of arm strength. It was a career ending sentence for me not to mention all of the surgeries, the chemo, the years to battle.

My husband looked at me that night and said, "twenty-four hours, you have twenty-four hours to feel sorry for yourself, tomorrow tell me what your new career is going to be."

So, I did, I told him writing but I thought children's writing. Within three weeks he had me at a writing conference and I was taking classes. Everyone told me that it would take five years to break into the business and I was fine with that because I planned on being around even longer. And with kids writing, Indie isn't such a viable option since you can't get into the schools and that is where kids learn about books now-a-days. For the next six months, I read everything that I could get my hands on about writing children's books, nonfiction to be precise. I found a story that I wanted to write and luckily landed a fabulous agent that I cherish.

Then one afternoon about two month later (just eight month after beginning this journey, here I am wearing a wig, probably smelling all of chemical chemo garbage, wearing fake eyelashes, and painted on eyebrows) I was at a conference and a man sat next to me for lunch people kept coming by and telling them about their stories. Finally, he looked at me and said, "aren't you going to pitch your story?" And I said, "I'll wait." Then I smiled real big because if anyone knows me, I'm a joker and so the guy assumed that I was joking and I said, "cause once you hear it, you won't want to hear anyone else's." He laughed. Well lunch ended and I forgot to pitch my story, all he'd gotten from me was my name and the name of my agent.

I get a call from my agent that next week wanting to know what did I do now, she was used to me causing trouble. It seems the man was Justin Chanda, VP of Simon & Schuster kids and he'd called her for my latest books and offered me my first multi-book contract.

My journey in kids was fabulous and I loved it but times change and so do we as writers. I was encouraged by several author friends to try romance since I loved reading it. My first romance came out in November of 2017.

Q: Would you say writing for you is work?
Of course, it is work. I love my job but it is still work. You ca'tn just sit on your bum and expect things to happen. I have to work it every day.

Q: How much creative control to you have over your book covers and layout? Meaning, are these things you create yourself, have someone else do with your creative input or do you hand it over and let someone you trust handle it completely?
My husband designs my covers so I have a lot of say :-) He has to sleep with me so a happy wife is a happy life.

Q: What technology, websites, software, apps, etc. could you not live without?

Bookbrush- OMG- my teasers, my takeovers, my ads, my fun stuff
Scrivener- I write in this.
Evernote- I organize via this.
Dragon Dictate- I actually transcribe the rough draft of my book
Postcron- Love it for social media and takeover parties in groups.
Autocrit- It is my grammar checker plus so much more. It checks for adverbs, common and overused words, you name it.

Q: Do real life experiences and people influence your storylines? If so, how do you manage potential libel issues?
Yes. I base a lot of mine on real life mostly my real life but I have pulled ideas from news headlines. One, I focus very much on never bad mouthing a company. I may share a bad experience if it something that truly happened to me but I will never bad mouth the company. If I'm using a real business name then it is only in a good and positive light.

Q: As a Romance Novelist, do you ever switch gears and write in other genres? If so, which ones and why?

I also write children's but under a different name. Since my children's books are in every school library, I keep the two names totally separate.

THE REAL STATS

Q: How do you define success for yourself as an author?
Still loving what I do. As long as I love it then I'm succeeding. When you feel like you are hitting your goals, your making rank and bank then you are happy and as such you love your job. As long as I love my job then I'm obviously successful.

Q: What is your most successful publishing platform? Why?
Wow, I'm pretty split between Apple and Amazon. I'm a firm believer that you don't put all your eggs in one basket.

Q: What career stats keep you going as a writer? My husband handles all of my stats and marketing. I have no clue how much I'm making or where I'm advertising, bless him.

MORE REAL STATS—

- **How many readers do you have on your email list?** *7500 but I have a 90% open rate.*
- **What is the largest number of books you've sold in one day?** *Close to 2500*
- **What is the next milestone you are shooting for in book sales?** **Hit a list*.
- **How much do you spend a month on advertising?** **It's a variable, I'm a firm 25% girl.*
- **How many books do you sell in the first week of launching a new release?** *So far, the most was close to 4000 but I have high hopes for my January release.*

JUST FOR KICKS

Q: What is your favorite ink pen?
Staedtler triplus fineliner, I have them everywhere.

Q: Dog or cat?
Former vet, so let's be more specific- Cavalier King Charles Spaniel.

Q: What drink and/or snacks do you most often have near you as you write? *Vodka, lots and lots of vodka.*

Q: Library or bookstore?
Bookstore.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Q: What is the best way for our readers to connect with you?
All of my links are on my website at www.daniellenorman.com.

Or you can actually get my app for your phone or tablet and be notified of specials. http://app.daniellenorman.com

Finally, my reader group is a blast: facebook.com/groups/ironorchids

***I asked Danielle for clarification on "hit a list" and "a firm 25% girl".**
Hit a list- USA Today, NYT, etc. one of the lists that name top authors and books.

25% meaning that I never exceed 25% of my profits for ads. I budget. But it is always 25% and I plan ahead for known crappy months.