

# Michelle Loufman's Interview of Edward Allen Karr

Excerpts from Michelle's interview, titled,  
**"Magic, Free Will, Mayhem, and One Big Imagination:  
An Interview with Fiction Author, Edward Allen Karr"**

Michelle Loufman, a storytelling strategist and photographer, conducted an interview with author Edward Allen Karr in January of 2022. More info on Michelle and her work can be found at the end of this article.

**Michelle: Tell us more about your process as a writer. Where do you get your inspiration?**

**Edward:** Some of the inspiration for what I write comes from life experiences, but much of it comes from pushing reality aside and letting imagination out to roam as it wishes. Sometimes, there's a logical constraint to what can or cannot happen next. Other times, things can take a sharp detour that even I didn't see coming. And there are times (this might be an odd thing to admit) when I commit to a title long before I know too many details about the story.

The more I understand the characters, the more I can step away (but still keep my hands on the keyboard and coffee mug) and let them write the story. My job is mostly to listen and write down *their* story.

**Michelle: What are some of the emotional highs and lows you face as a writer or in publishing your works?**

**Edward:** The publishing is straightforward, so let's get that out of the way first. It's complicated when starting out, as there are lots of formatting issues, peculiarities of the different retail platforms, etc. There's also editing, proofreading, legal issues such as copyrights too. All in all, that's a set of knowledge that probably anyone can learn, although much hair might have been ripped out by then . . .

A related function is marketing. Just as there are millions of books being published, there are probably just as many marketing efforts going on. What works? Someday, I'll let you know . . .

Now, for the highs and lows:

High #1: "I'm actually writing a novel! Wow!"

High #2: "I actually finished a novel! Wow!"

Low #1: "Um, okay, the world doesn't seem to care. I thought it was a big deal, but the world says it's really not? Wow . . ."

High #3: "You know what? I'm starting Book Two. Wow, it's going to be good!"

High #4: "I finished my SECOND book! Wow!"

Low #2: "Oh, okay. Hey, world, where are you? Wow . . ."

And so it goes, possibly ending in literary success, possibly ending with a personal vow to never write again, or, where I'm at, which is: darn it, I like writing, I'll keep producing, building up that library, and *when* success comes knocking, it'll be, "About time, World! I've been busy and have a whole bunch of books for you!"

**Michelle: What are 2-3 things you've learned about yourself during your journey as an author?**

**Edward:** 1) I've learned that I write best when I have no expectations of getting anything else done in my life. That's a difficult state to maintain, though. Still, I can go for long periods where I'm functional in my day-to-day life, but really, I'm mostly somewhere in a world that doesn't exist, talking to the characters there, trying to find out what their lives are all about, and asking them, "Hey, you guys, what if this happens? What then?"

2) I've learned that I refuse to let go of the notion that it's possible to write something that absolutely everyone would like. No choosing of a genre, no tried and true plot lines, no targeting a specific market niche, etc. Just something so well-written and revealing of truths fundamental to us all that the entire world stops to read it and says, "Oh, you know, that's actually pretty good."

3) I've learned that writing, especially how I do it (with no feedback from anyone—just writing and publishing), is a proverbial baring of the soul. Anyone can fairly say, "Oh, you thought *that* was funny (or exciting or sad or dramatic)?" Yeah, well, I must have because I wrote it.

**Michelle: What inspired you to write? Have you always enjoyed writing?**

**Edward:** I'd never focused in any serious way on writing until May of 2018. School assignments, even emails, provided opportunities to attempt to craft interesting and well-formed sentences and paragraphs, but it wasn't until recently that it occurred to me to try writing a novel.

A performance by the Cleveland Ballet, "Alice," was the spark that got me going. In particular, the two dancers that portrayed Alice and the Queen of Hearts really awakened a passion in my soul and taught me a truth that I wished I'd seen earlier but probably could not: they'd devoted their lives to their art, likely ignoring more practical and financially rewarding goals, and they generously shared their talents with the world. I enjoyed the entire show, though I'd believed that I couldn't possibly ever appreciate a ballet. But I sat stunned in the audience, with my heart pounding, and dangerously close to allowing a tear to escape.

When had I even come close to creating anything beautiful for the world as had those two angelic dancers? Could I? Even if I tried?

**Michelle: What advice would you give to others who have a desire to publish their own works?**

**Edward:** This question implies that they're already writing, and to that, I say, "Good! Keep writing!" It's first and foremost about them expressing themselves and striving to produce something compelling. They should stay grounded in that reminder, never forgetting that the creating itself is the first level of success, and that can be enough. Fame and fortune can also be good, I suppose, but their actions, the actual creating, can be the goal. Should a singer stop singing if trapped alone on an island somewhere? I would hope not!

After that, having a thick skin could only help. Putting their work out in the world invites all possible criticism and maybe something worse: indifference! And even if they've created a work that's perfect in every way, it will, without divine intervention (it seems), wither away unnoticed in a world flooded with books. I recently read that over a million new books are being published every year. And in this modern world of self-publishing and digital content, there's no reason for any of those books to *ever* go away. The pile only grows wider and deeper every day . . .

**Michelle: What's your hope or vision for the future? What are you dreaming will come to fruition in your creative world?**

**Edward:** By now, you've probably determined that money is not at all the highest measure of success for me. In a way, it kind of is a realistic indicator, though, because it says something about the popularity of one's writing. But it's very clear to me that hearing from readers that they loved what I'd written, that it did, in fact, touch their hearts and imaginations in some way, is the highest goal.

When I write, I'm in the scene, visualizing it as if it's real, or at least seeing it as if in a film. So, of course, I can easily imagine any or all of my books making it into some kind of film or series. I'm sure that that's hardly unique—most authors probably feel that way.

And again, even if any of this led to "Hollywood" types of endeavors, one of the biggest rewards would be seeing my work taken that far and appreciated by many.

**Michelle: What is something you wish other people knew about you? Are you stereotyped or do you feel like there's something the world needs to understand about you or your craft?**

**Edward:** Reading my books is a bigger window into my soul than anything I could say in this or any other conversation. There are many activities in life that are group efforts, even though it seems to be a sole performance. Like a pop singer. Think of how many folks are working on that image, others writing the music and lyrics, the marketers studying what's hot and what's not, etc.

Now, think of a solitary writer, sitting in a quiet house, day after day, putting carefully chosen word after word, trying to grasp more clearly a feeling seen lurking out on the periphery, then pursuing it and pouncing on it, packaging it up in prose, and delivering it to just that one scene, in just one chapter, in just one book. Then, repeat. Many, *many* times.

Also, consider that the large majority of books (I have no data, but this is my impression) go through a thorough editing process, where advice is given/taken for content, story line, character development . . . all of it. Many authors, I believe, also have taken either college-level courses in writing, or they have at least attended seminars and workshops. Well, I've done none of that, and I'm foolish enough to write, polish it up as well as I can, and that's it—I hit "publish." What the reader reads came directly from me and me alone. Love it? Hate it? It's all on me.

**Michelle Loufman** is a storytelling strategist creating multi-media content to help mission-minded business owners and artists better connect with their audiences and ultimately motivate them toward an emotion, a sale, or a donation. She does this through photography, brand story coaching, and by writing human interest stories that challenge stereotypical social narratives. Her mission is to create a relational understanding for more effective communication.