Jeff Goins: Alright so we're gonna roll now. Okay let me bump that up just a little bit. Okay well Diana welcome to the show. It is great to have you.

Diana Glyer: Thank you so much. It's really a delight to be here.

Jeff Goins: I was looking at the Amazon page of your most recent book Bandersnatch, which I loved.

Diana Glyer: Thank you.

Jeff Goins: I was reading this review from Michael Ward, who was the co-editor of CS Lewis. It says this. I would agree with this, and I think this is a great place for us to begin. No one knows more than Diana Glyer about the internal workings of the Inklings. He goes on to say in Bandersnatch, she shows us how they inspired, encouraged, refined, and opposed one another in the course of producing some of the greatest literature in the last 100 years. Who are the Inklings?

This is a group of people that I thanks to you have become much more fascinated with recently. Who are these people and why are they important to us today and to really the history of literature?

Diana Glyer: Great well the Inklings are a group of writers that met regularly. The group included CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien, two names that are pretty familiar to folks.

Jeff Goins: Sure heard of them, yeah.

Diana Glyer: But it was a group of 19 men and they got together once or twice a week for about 17 years and in those meetings, there was a special kind of magic that happened. They read their works in progress to one another and they stayed up late into the night, giving each other critiques. Some of those critiques were very kind and supportive and encouraging and some of them were just brutal. It is in this forge of friendship and engagement that some of the great works that we love were created.

We think of the Lord of the Rings, what a genius book that is, and that to realize that every single chapter of that was read aloud to the group of writers, who not only critiqued the chapter that they had just heard, but then engaged in conversation and reflection what should happen next, where is the story going and this whole thing unfolded within the group setting. The Inklings are the group of authors in Oxford in the 1930s and the 1940s, getting together in the evenings, not that different I guess from what a college students do, talking about what they were working on and then supporting, helping, and encouraging and challenging each other in the midst of it.

Jeff Goins: I think one of these you've done, which has been pretty cool to watch and experience, is you've brought attention to the fact that these writers whom for decades everybody kind of knew that they knew each other and even spent together, but they didn't know that they necessarily influenced one another. You tell a story that I love early on in your academic studies, where this is what people were telling you
that yes the Inklings knew each other, CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien knew each other. These eventually famous authors from the 20th Century knew each other, but we have no idea of ascertaining whether or not they influenced each other at all or their work.

You just mentioned that they definitely did and so I wonder if you could share a little bit more about that or some of the discoveries that you made in studying the Inklings for years and what exactly were you told going into that study to begin with?

Diana Glyer: That's a great question. I love that question because it really does point back to a change in the way we think about these authors. When they were first written about primarily in a book by a guy named Humphrey Carpenter, there was a lot of denial of influence that Inklings themselves said we didn't really have that much influence on each other. Then there's that famous statement when someone wrote to CS Lewis and asked did any of you guys have any influence on Tolkien, and Lewis basically just laughed and said no one ever influenced Tolkien. You might as well influence a Bandersnatch.

Bandersnatch is an ordinary mythical creature invented by Lewis Carroll and appears in among other places in the Alice in Wonderland story. No one ever influenced Tolkien. You might as well influence a Bandersnatch he said. That sounds like it is kind of a last word on this whole issue of influence. It was taken at face value for decades, but when I was in high school and I read that for the first time, there was something about that that just didn't seem right to me, because how could these guys interact, talk with each other, go over works in progress and rough drafts of their work together and to have that happen in conversation, so they're not to be influenced.

I was really puzzled by that and decided that what I really wanted to do is to get to the bottom of it. Was to figure out what do they say in these meetings and then what difference did that make in the work that they were doing. I realized that that approach to the Inklings was a little different than what had been happening before. In earlier studies of the group, people tried to look for influence by taking their books and putting them side by side and comparing them and looking for similarities. You would say something like well there's wars in the Chronicles of Narnia and there's wars in The Lord of the Rings, and so therefore they might be then influenced.

That's the influence of similarity. That is an interesting way to look at influence and a lot of literary critics consider it that way. What that is saying for me was not looking so much at the product. That is looking at the end books that they had done but looking at the process and trying to figure out where in the process of these conversations did a critique or a suggestion or a question completely change the direction that the work was taking. It was looking at their writing process, the questions that they asked each other, the opinions that they offered, the inspiration that they got from one another that really kind of opened up this whole topic and you look at influence.
Are we looking for imitation? Or influence something much bigger than that? I think that influence really has to do with something that changes the direction that a project takes. A suggestion that an inkling made to another inkling that changed the direction of it, is where we really find the power of influence. One of the great examples of that I'd say again has to do with the Lord of the Rings. Tolkien was influenced. Well one of the stories that shows us how profoundly influenced he was, has to do with his work on the Lord of the Rings.

When he started that book, he really didn't have in mind a sequel to the Hobbit. He wrote the Hobbit. It was very well received. People loved that book understandably and the publisher asked them to write another Hobbit. He titled his new book and he titled it The New Hobbit.

Jeff Goins: Pretty original.

Diana Glyer: Yeah. He wrote a few chapters of it and then he had lunch with CS Lewis. He sat with Lewis and he said I'm writing this new book because the publisher asked me to but I'm bored to death. I can't even stand it. I don't know what to do. I think I'm done. Except there's a few chapters of the book right. Lewis says to him, he says, Tolkien the problem is that Hobbits are only interesting when they're in un-Hobbit like situations. Tolkien is speaking about this. Hobbits are only interesting when they're in un-Hobbit like situations or you talk about the very opening chapters of the Lord of the Rings, what you have?

You have Hobbits, you have fireworks, you have birthday parties. All those kind of Hobbity stuff but until they get outside of their comfort zone, until they get outside into the danger and adventure of a larger quest, the story doesn't have any traction. That comment from Lewis that changes the whole direction of the Lord of the Rings. Tolkien was home that night. We have wonderful evidence of this because they kept their letters, and we have evidence in their diaries and we look at their manuscripts and their multiple drafts.

Here's what happens that night. Tolkien goes home. After the kids are in bed, he goes to his garage where he has got a desk set up and he is thinking about what Lewis tells him at night, Hobbits are only interesting when they're in un-Hobbit like situations. He rewrites the section he has been working on, and this is the place in the story where the Black Riders first enter the story. The whole room just takes off from there, becomes much darker, much longer, much richer, and what I love about that is Tolkien's own description.

He says the story has taken on a life of its own. Because of one lunch with a buddy, the story where Tolkien was basically done and directionless, one comment opens up the vista and gives us what we now know as this long and wonderful rich, epic story The Lord of the Rings. I think that's a pretty strong evidence of influence. How about you?

Jeff Goins: Yeah absolutely and so well told. I love that, that story. I was thinking I read about this and after I read both of your books, The Company They Keep and Bandersnatch, but the The Company They Keep is the more
academic but I love both of them. They've got advantages to both of them but what I love telling people is, did you know, correct me if I'm wrong about this Diana, did you know Bilbo's name originally was Bingo.

Diana Glyer: Bingo, that's great.

Jeff Goins: People are like what?

Diana Glyer: Bingo what's his name, yeah absolutely.

Jeff Goins: Was it Bingo, Odo, and Frodo and something, were the names of the Hobbits. I was like well thinking and hopefully CS Lewis had some bearing on that, but it is actually like super interesting, because I don't think Bingo had the same connotation then, than it does now. What would we think of when we think of Bingo today had he not changed that but yeah I love that. That's a great story and I guess if these letters and journals existed before, before you made these discoveries and wrote these books, why were people subscribing to this idea that they didn't influence each other?

Was it just that quote from Lewis? Why do you think people believe that they were kind of creating these great works of literature in isolation instead of collaborating with one another?

Diana Glyer: I think that there's a pervasiveness, the solitary genius right? Some of this is kind of created by Hollywood because tortured geniuses are more interesting to make movies about than plain, healthy, productive individuals who get up every day and write their 500 words. If you're a Hollywood executive, you're gonna make movies about those few exceptions that are tortured and isolated and living this dangerous lifestyle, but the average vendor doesn't experience they're writing a life in that way. As you know, a lot of it is if you just stood up and you do that day's work, you get up in that day and you do that day's work, that's the great secret.

Doing that day's work even if isolated, as we tend to think, so this method of the solitary genius before I guess has its roots I guess in the romantic movement and the idea of genius is something that comes as kind of bolt from the blue. You sit alone, you get caught by the spirit of the news and then you write seriously from start to finish a work that's perfectly formed, that's a really nice story. That's not how writing generally takes place. Writing generally takes place because people work on it in a slow and steady and methodical way.

In the process of that, they involve other people. They involve other people for encouragement because the life of an artist, any kind of artist, any kind of creator is, fraught with discouragement, even people who will just kind of believe in it and you can't believe it in yourself. You need people to correct your path. You need people who come along and say well that's good, but it is not quite right or as Lewis and Tolkien were together, one of the things that Tolkien tells us is that Lewis would read something that Tolkien had written, and then he'd look at Tolkien and he'd stay, Better Tollers, you can do better.
Then Tolkien would take it home and he would work harder. He would hone his craft. He would try to rise to the expectations of his immediate readers. The more that I studied this and I looked at writers groups and creative people of all different kinds, visual artists and filmmakers and musicians, I find that great work, a great art so often emerges from individuals who are in community who talk with others, who share their work, who throw out a draft, get feedback on it, refine it, revise it. You think about how musicians do that right.

They're working on a song, they play it, they gauge the audience response. They tweak it a little bit. They give it another go with a different show. They get a different response. Writers do that too. It's just not generally as public as what musicians do. This mix of the solitary genius, this idea that genius is something that is first of all tortured and second is very isolated or individual pervades in our culture. I think that's really unfortunate because it robs writers and other creatives of the possibility of writing the way that writing or creating normally takes place, which is in community which is the sensitivity toward audience, which is part of ongoing conversations.

I think that that's why it took so long for somebody to discover the extent, the full extent of influence among the influences. I think that part of it too and I'd love hear your thoughts on this a little bit is that we tend to be a little suspicious of people, who are influenced like it is a sign that they're maybe not smart enough, that they're not talented enough to do it on their own so they're forced to rely on someone else's help. I remember giving a talk once and showing the wonderful way that CS Lewis and his wife Joy Davidman worked together in the creation of the novel Till We Have Faces.

They talked about chapters together and Lewis wrote them and Joy critiqued them and on it went. After I gave that talk, a woman stood up in the audience and she was livid and she said CS Lewis was a genius. He did not need any help from a girl.

Jeff Goins: Oh my god jeez, what a sexist lady.

Diana Glyer: I was just stunned that that reaction, I think that's the general attitude that we have, that if you're really, really good you don't need help. I think of it as help. I think of it as, let me put it this way. I think that writing like other creative acts are transactional. That is the glory of being a creator is that we make something, we write a book, we paint a painting. We write a song and play it. Then its received by somebody who hears it or who reads what we've done, and it is that transaction, that interaction between the creator and the one who receives it, the reader maybe.

It is that interaction where things really get exciting. Where they come alive. We can do this podcast and this is great. We talk with each other, things arise from our conversation but the glory of an experience like this is when people will listen to it and then they comment on it and then lift off of it and add their own insight it. It is that transactional nature of the creative process, where things will really get exciting.
Jeff Goins: I agree and it’s fascinating that that woman thought like in order to be a genius, you can’t get help from other people.

Diana Glyer: Yeah right.

Jeff Goins: Maybe that’s just like, you can be a genius and still be influenced. I think many geniuses were. They were borrowing from their influences and then building on that body of work.

Diana Glyer: That’s right. The raw material for all the years of creative work that we do is stuff that’s already out there. If we’re wise particularly here’s a big thing for me. This is kind of my Aha for the year. As I’ve been thinking about my own creative work is realizing that I need to build a life that’s creative where the creativity is sustainable. When you think about work that’s sustainable, I don’t want to be a flash in the pan. I don’t want to do work for year or two and then be gone. I want to do good work year after year.

I want to do better work next year than I did last year and in order to do that I need to think about what makes my creative life sustainable? One of the things that I think is absolutely essential is community, is having other people who are supporting me, asking good questions, holding me accountable, praying for me, helping me to find my path, helping me to make good decisions. You talk so much and so wisely I think that interacting with people who are good at what we’re interested in and learning from them, not just their the facts that they gather, but the process that they’re engaged in.

We need to do a lot more as creatives to help each other especially if we’re going to make lives more significant. Not just work as significant.

Jeff Goins: Yeah and I totally agree. I think in another conversation you and I had, you told me that you’re part of a writers group is that right?

Diana Glyer: Yeah it is. I have a couple of different groups. One of the things when I talk about the Inklings, people get excited but they think that that means they have to form a critique group. That is a group that gets together specifically to read works in progress and critique it or somehow be text centered as they’re getting together. I think every writer needs a group. I actually think every innovator needs a group or possibly more than one group. The idea that I think they need to think about is, what kind of group do you need?

I have a group that gets together twice a month with other creatives. They’re people who do all kinds of different work from painting to music to writing dissertations to writing fiction or non-fiction, lot of different creative work that we do. We get together to basically encourage each other to problem solve and to pray. This group has been meeting, I’ve been meeting them for more than 15 years. I couldn’t do what I do if I didn’t have them, but we never ever in that group read drafts out loud. That’s not what we’re about, but we’re about an ongoing network of support for the creative works that each other doing.
There are different kinds of groups. One of the things I found very helpful is to do project groups or ad hoc groups and when I was working on Bandersnatch, I had a group of, everyone got together every week during the composing of that book. We had dinner and then we sat around the living room and we read chunks out loud to each other. We derived some of the pre ideas and edited the text together, but that was a temporary group that we met for 14 months and then the group is done. That kind of ad hoc or project oriented group I think can be a really powerful idea how do we gather people together for the purpose of the single project, not forever, not input continuously but to work together to get a project done.

Then another person in the group has a project and then we kind of go over there and we kind of help them as whatever kind of help or support they may need. If you think about different forms of groups, not just critic groups but problem solving groups, you talk about mastermind groups which I think is growing, just sitting together, comparing notes, problem solving and helping each other. I think mentoring groups. Really, really valuable, we need to think about how we're passing along what we're learning to others.

Thinking about having a group more than one group, CS Lewis was a member of more than one group so was Tolkien and thinking about how these various ways of gathering and connecting can help to energize the work that we do.

Jeff Goins:

I love that and this is one of the things that I really loved about Bandersnatch was the practical elements of it. Helping readers, who are writers and creatives and people who want to grow in their own craft in community, giving them practical steps to form those own groups, one of the things that I hear Diana. I don’t know if you encounter this but I hear people going that's great that CS Lewis and JRR Tolkien and who else? Owen Barfield and there is a large group as you mentioned, those are the two probably most famous examples that people think of, but there's a whole group of men that knew each other.

That’s great that they've just able to influence each other in all the geniuses or it is great that you live in New York City or Nashville or LA or wherever but I don't have those kinds of opportunities. There isn't anybody in my town that I can meet with in a group like that. I am wondering that you think about that sort of thing. I don’t know if you hear that. I hear that occasionally as you mentioned, I'm a big fan of getting into peer based groups where you can grow together, not trying to grow it alone, but I hear that and people go yeah I'm not around a bunch of right people.

I'm the only person in my town who thinks like this or who has aspirations of doing something beyond whatever were doing in the smaller town in the Midwest or whatever. How do you respond to that?

Diana Glyer:

I would kick you back to the start of the Inklings. Again I think that we are mesmerized by the end of the story and we forget the beginning of the story, so we think that Lewis and Tolkien and Williams and all these geniuses are like poof, got together in a great dynamic group, but that's
not what happened. What happened is that Lewis and Tolkien were part of a group called The Coalbiters, which was a group of Oxford intellectuals, who got together to translate Icelandic sagas from old Norse to English.

Jeff Goins:  Pretty standard stuff is what you're saying. I did that at a bar last night.

Diana Glyer:  Yeah I have the old Norse ...

Jeff Goins:  It is a little rusty but it is ...

Diana Glyer:  It is a little rusty, yeah me too. They were part of this group called the Coalbiters and completely academic group, very, very, focused, and perhaps somewhat esoteric, but what they discovered is hanging out in this group that they really resonated with each other. They're really like each other. Even though they were very, very different kinds of personalities. As the group disbanded, they decided hey how about we just start getting together for lunch one day a week and just hang out? And so they did. That's how the Inklings had started into a grand, heroic, amazing group.

It started out with two dusty professors simply saying I learn from you. I like hanging out with you. You're good for my mind. How about we just start having lunch once a week and just talk about what we're doing. That group of two is I think the secret of how great groups get started. Call that a diad. Two people who start to make a commitment to get together and just start to peek into each other's life. They get together and they start talking and it was a couple of years after that that the group we know as the Inklings grew out of those lunch meetings.

What happened was after they got to know one and other better, Tolkien decided to take a risk and a lot of what I tell people that some point somebody's got to take a risk to take it to the next level. Somebody's got to make the scary phone call or somebody's got to make the scary connection or somebody's got to take the risk in sharing a scary impossible outrageous idea and seeing whether or not it flies. Tolkien took the risk of sharing a poem he had been working on and it's a poem called The Lay of Leithian which tells the story of Beren and Lúthien, an elf and a human who fall in love.

It is a wonderful poem. Not very well known. It deserves to be though, but he decides he's been working on this poem. He's gonna share with Lewis. Lewis reads it. Lewis loves it but Lewis also has a critique of it. It was that kind of exchange that kicks off a new direction for these two men. Lewis starts bringing his poetry to these lunch meetings and so they go from just conversation to critique and then they start inviting people slowly, Warren Lewis joins them. RE Haggard joins them and little by little the group grows.

It grows slowly over time, but the heart of it is two guys who at that point neither one had written anything of significance. I've argued in Bandersnatch and elsewhere that I don't think they wouldn't have wrote anything of significance, if they hadn't had the support and the challenge and the expectation of one another. I tell people that you can
start small. Don’t think about starting some great critique group of big movement. Just find one other person who feels like they might be a resonator. Who feels like they might be sitting on the same path as you’re and just make it a habit to get together more often.

We have a lot of advantages nowadays with internet and emails and texting. I know the number of writing groups and writers groups that after they make these connections, they do a lot of their readings so to speak on online forums or texting forums, putting stuff up on Google drive to critique, but then they get together from time to time, perhaps as part of an annual conference or an annual get together to keep the personal connection going. There’s lots of options but I would say the one thing is start small. The Inklings started small and they grew from just two people who enjoyed each other’s company.

Jeff Goins: Yeah that’s great. You recommended a book to me that talks a lot about that. The Powers of Two by Joshua Wolf Shenk.

Diana Glyer: I love that book.

Jeff Goins: He talks about that sort of the smallest unit of community is two people and its a great book talking about famous examples of creative people throughout history who influenced each other and often what you find is, almost always he says you find pairs of people Lewis and Tolkien, Lenin and McCartney on and on. It is fascinating stuff. I’m curious and I guess this is maybe a little bit conjecture, but nobody knows the Inklings better than you do. I read the stuff and its aspirational for me and so I love making it more human and going look this took years.

It started out casual and became more formal and it really wasn’t probably as formal as we thought. I read your accounts of the records of the meetings, where they kind of come in late and they’re just dudes, hanging out, not to take away the specialty of it, but as you said without this community, you sent so far as to say these men would not have created some of the most memorable works of literature of the 20th Century at least in the way that they did. We would’ve had Bingo the Hobbit.

Diana Glyer: Right.

Jeff Goins: What was it about the Inklings that made that group so special if you had to say and why does this group still matter to us today or why should it matter?

Diana Glyer: I think that what made the group special was for the different members. Different writers or different creators, different innovators need different things. Some people just need encouragement. I used the word resonator, which is one of my favorite words to think about what a group like the Inklings that a resonator is some ... Well resonating means to vibrate at the same frequency. If you think about, I’m not a musician but a friend of mine explained to me once that if you look at a piano, the piano strings apparently don’t make very much noise, they’re not very loud.
So the body of the piano picks up that note and resonates it. It seems the violin if I understand right. A violin string by itself doesn't make a very loud noise but the body of the violin takes that tone and starts to vibrate at the same frequency and that's what we hear when we hear a guitar or a violin or piano, we hear the resonation. What some people they're just resonators. People who say fundamentally I get it, I get what you're trying to do. I think it is really important for a lot of people but there's other things that we need.

We need praise what we do. Richard Styne said when you write a book you need someone to say yes to it. It's very, very difficult to sustain a creative vision if you don't have anybody who says yes to the work and the nature of the work. We need role models. We need people to correct this when we got off base, but I think one of the things that we need more than anything else I would say is probably, the word that is often used is accountability, but I like the word expectation.

What the Inklings found in each other, they found advice, they found encouragement, they found resonators, but I think what they found that really, really made things happen was expectation that every Thursday at 9 o'clock in the evening, CS Lewis was gonna look around that room and say well has nobody got anything to read us? I think that knowing that every Thursday without fail there would be people who would be sitting in their seats waiting to see what new thing you had done that week changed everything.

It wasn't accountability in the sense but I don't know, when I think about the word accountability I think about some of these where slap your knuckles when you don't get the work done. It is not like that but the idea that there's somebody reading and when you show up, they're glad to see you. When you got something new they're eager to lean in to what it is that you're up to. I think that's what is the necessary ingredient that makes ideas grow, that makes them grow into something great because we all kind of need that. Otherwise, it gets lonely and we run out of gas.

I think we just don't have what it takes to sustain it. When the Inklings met week after week and they knew there was always gonna be somebody there for them. Somebody eager to see what they're up to. I have studied the Inklings now for, I don't know, going on 40 years. I have no specific evidence for this, but here's my theory. Tolkien was a notorious procrastinator. I don't know if you can relate to that.

Jeff Goins: I have no idea what that's like. I don't know what you're talking about.

Diana Glyer: [Inaudible 00:35:45] when you got a deadline.

Jeff Goins: I was talking to my wife today and I was telling her about this new big idea I had and then I was like I'm really worried about this and she started rolling her eyes. I go what's going on. She goes look you are so, this is great but this is just predictable and in six months you're gonna be telling me something else and I'm gonna be rolling my eyes and you said this I said so. I said what you're telling me is that I'm consistent in my inconsistency. She goes yeah, it is pretty predictable.
Yeah I know a little bit about that inconsistency, procrastination, a little.

Diana Glyer: Yeah, Tolkien was same as you. If you've been paying attention over the last 20 years, new Tolkien books keep getting released, but mostly they're good starts that never got finished or they're things that he sort of drafted but never really felt comfortable enough with. I didn't consider them good enough and so he didn't send them out there, but now I'm really grateful to the Tolkien Estate that these works are becoming available for us to read. That's a little exciting but here's my theory based on no evidence that I can find, my theory is that 92% of the Lord of the Rings was written on Wednesday night, because Tolkien knew on Thursday he's gonna to be looking in CS Lewis' face and Lewis was gonna say last week you said, you'll tell what was going to happen next in the story. What did you write?

It is that expectation. There's a ferocious aspect to it, but there's also compassionate expectation that says you had this great idea. You told me about this project. You said you were gonna try this. How is that going for you? Knowing that other people are out there, I think makes all the difference. It makes the difference in creative work, but how did she found it makes the difference in this sort of the simple things. Every now and then I embark on my goals to be a more faithful at my running practice. Get out and run few miles.

I do much better when I have someone running with me. I am much more likely to want to hit this news button and instead of lacing up my shoes, if I know that I was going to be standing out there waiting for me to meet her and we're gonna tackle those hills together. It is the idea that companionship actualizes mere ideas and then actual things come forth, projects are born in that process of that happy expectation of those people around us.

Jeff Goins: That's so great. You're absolutely right. I every January make a decision that I'm gonna run half a marathon or marathon and run that national half marathon three years now.

Diana Glyer: Good for you.

Jeff Goins: About half way through I go, I'm gonna make another decision to ask for a refund. This year I'm running with a couple of guys and so I think I actually started this and I regret starting this. I started the trend, the habit of us checking in weekly. We text each other and we text each other our mileage and our pace. I ran today and here's my mileage and here's my pace. I regret it in a tongue and cheek way because I'm like if I don't run this week, A, they're gonna ask me about it and B, come race day I'm not gonna be able to keep up.

I love what you call that. I put these two monikers together that you label that you gave this, which was ferocious compassion. That's what friends do for each other. I had a friend recently tell me you don't know what you want. I was like how dare you. You don't know what you want in your career. You want this and you want this and you can't have both. You have to choose. I was like how dare you? Of course I do. I have a
I know where I want to have. I have a plan. He's like okay what do you want?

I was like well I don’t know. It was a painful conversation because it made me face some my own flippancy. It made me face some things that fears that I had. I was like wow, if I'm being honest, I’m not just pursuing this. It really was more writing projects because what if I do that at the cost of these other things and I fail and it would be just easier to not try. That's so great. I love that. This has been great Diana. You opened up the, there's this quote from Flannery O'Connor, that you referenced as the epigraphy for The Company They Keep, which I love it, I love this.

It's a little bit long but I want to read it here because I think its so great. It encapsulates what we've been talking about here which is this belief that we tell ourselves about creative geniuses, like they're special. They don't need other people's help. As you said and I love this, it's a story that we tell ourselves that can actually hold us back I think. How many more potential geniuses would be out there if we would let go of this myth that you have to do it all on your own.

Diana Glyer: That's right.

Jeff Goins: Here’s the quote that you referenced, which I’d never heard before. This is from Flannery O’Connor,. There is one myth about writers that I have always felt was particularly pernicious and untruthful. The myth of the lonely writer. The myth that writing is a lonely occupation, involving much suffering because, supposedly, the writer exists in a state of sensitivity which cuts him off, or raises him above, or casts him below the community around him. This is a common cliche, a hangover probably from the romantic period and the idea of the artist as Sufferer and Rebel.

I suppose there have been enough genuinely lonely suffering novelists to make this seem a reasonable myth, but there is every reason to suppose that such cases are the result of less admirable qualities in these writers, qualities which have nothing to do with the vocation of writing itself. Unless the writer has gone utterly out of his mind, his aim is still communication, and communication suggests talking inside community. I love that. What does that mean to you personally and practically as a creative person?

Diana Glyer: What that means to me is that, I am free to feast upon all the things that I need as a creative to keep my ideals alive and to feast on friends, on fellowship, on companions, on good advice, on great books, on important role models. These are the things I crave and that I need in order to continue to do the work that I do. She nails it. There’s something very freeing about that realization that I don’t have to be on this hard journey alone.

That there are others whether I’m listening to a podcast or reading a great book or learning about in this example like Lewis and Tolkien and the Inklings or just sitting down for coffee or making a phone call to somebody because I’m discouraged, I just need someone to sort of pick
me up and dust me off and throw me back into the race. We're freed up to do this and we're encouraged I think by the cult like that to be very, very daring and creative in the way that we surround ourselves with the kind of support that makes our creative lives strive.

Jeff Goins: I love that. Diana I thank you for your work and thank you for your friendship and thank you for this new book, Bandersnatch. I loved it and I know lot of people are loving it. It's helping debunk this myth that being creative and being in community are not diametrically oppose at all but actually quite closely related. Thank you again for your time.

Diana Glyer: Thank you Jeff. It's always a pleasure to talk with you.

Jeff Goins: Alright that's a wrap.

Diana Glyer: Great.

Jeff Goins: Thank you that was great. You're very well spoken.

Diana Glyer: Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity honestly. I really, really appreciate it and thank you for your kind words about the book and really just your encouragement. You've picked me up and dusted me off at a point where I felt very, very discouraged because the launch was at such …