Building a Successful Career

1) The current success of The Correspondent by Virginia Evans speaks to so many of this presentation's themes.
   --Displaying tenacity over the long term and believing in dream and having hope.
   --Dealing with disappointment.
   --Securing a good editor.
   --Achieving strong sales by old-fashioned word of mouth.

Outcome? Since publication earlier this year, The Correspondent has sold over 250K and has now been picked up by 20 overseas publishers.

2) How do you define success and envision your writing career? Means something different to everyone.
   --Sense of achievement in finally writing a full-length work and finding your passion.
   --Securing an agent.
   --Securing a book deal.
   --Strong sales. But what is the benchmark?
   --Great reviews.
   --Next book deal.
   --Bestseller list.
   --Overcoming imposter syndrome.
   --Able to support yourself/family on income from advances/royalties/film deals etc.
   --Still loving being a writer.

3) What qualities help in this profession?
   --Able to accept and act on feedback and critiques.
   --Resilience.
   --Determination/perseverance.
   --Realistic.
   --Knowledgeable about the market.
   --Having a long-term perspective.
   --Dedication and a strong work ethic.
   --Valuing relationships.
   --Transparent.

4) What should you consider in choosing an agent?
   --Make sure you are aligned on goals and what you hope to achieve.
   --The agent is responsive and transparent.

--You feel comfortable communicating with the agent, and they respond in timely manner.
--You can trust them.
--The client agreement seems reasonable and you understand the terms.
--The agency is established and reputable.
--Their agency has ability to secure film co-agents and overseas co-agents.
--The agent will stay with you during the career highs and lows.

5) What goes on in the submission process?
--Matchmaking to find the right batch of editors for the submission.
--Knowledge of the market.
--Honing the pitch.
--Providing current and strong comp titles.
--Recognizing that the process can sometimes take a year, sometimes a day.
--Understanding what the offering publisher brings to the table.

6) What should you be aware of in studying a negotiated contract agreement?
--What do pre-empts and auctions even mean.
--Terms to consider in contract deals—e.g. how many books, what is the advance, option clause, non-compete, morality clause etc.

7) What happens when you hit a roadblock and how do you rebuild?
--When to consider a pseudonym.
--Switch publishers.
--Switch genres.

Remember to celebrate the small wins along the way.