

# openSAP Invites Thought Leaders, Episode 08 with Charlotte Otter “The Power of Storytelling”

## Transcript

**Charlotte Otter:** Communications is about taking people with you on a journey and in order to take people with you on a journey, you need to persuade them. And the way you persuade people is by appealing to them on a human level.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Welcome to a special openSAP Invites Thought Leaders episode with Charlotte Otter on the power of storytelling. If one thing unites us all throughout the ages, it's surely our fascination with great stories that provide emotional connections and lasting memories. So, whether you're currently reading stories to your children, writing corporate speeches or technical documentation, whether you're an aspiring writer or a book lover and voracious reader, this episode is for you. Listen to Charlotte tell her own inspirational story of how she navigated a successful writing career while raising her family and pursuing her dream of becoming a published author.

I'm your host Elisabeth Riemann. Let me introduce you to Charlotte Otter.

Charlotte Otter is Head of Executive and Employee Communications at SAP. She has extensive experience managing strategic and executive communications across multiple industries. A former journalist, she believes that storytelling can be a powerful tool to drive business results. South African by birth, Charlotte has lived and worked in South Africa, the UK, and in Germany. She's the author of two crime fiction novels. I'll let Charlotte herself tell us more. Let's say hello.

Hello, Charlotte, welcome to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders.

**Charlotte Otter:** Thanks so much, Lizzie, I'm delighted to be here.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** I'm really excited that you're with us here today to talk about the power of storytelling and for you to inspire us with your insights and experiences as Head of Executive and Employee Communications at SAP, as a passionate storyteller,

and as a published author of crime fiction set in your native South Africa. Charlotte, as a book lover myself, I'd like to start our conversation by asking you what were your favorite books or authors to read when you were growing up?

**Charlotte Otter:** Well, I was an obsessive reader as a child, and before I could read, I was always found in a corner with a pile of books trying to teach myself to read. So, it's always difficult as a reader to pick your favorites. But if I think back to my childhood, I was a big Nancy Drew fan, which has some resonance with the kind of books I ended up writing. Huge fan of the Narnia books, which I reread obsessively the same way my kids reread the Harry Potter novels. And, you know, but really anything I could get my hands on. Sometimes books that were too adult for me. But my parents were unable to control the appetite for reading.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** So always had a real voracious appetite for reading and really lovely you to hear your choices as well of books for yourself and for your children, too. And Charlotte, in your personal opinion, what are the key elements that really make a great and compelling story?

**Charlotte Otter:** Well, I think that there is a certain pattern to a story. It needs to have a setting that fascinates us. It needs to have a set up that is appealing. It needs to have characters that are well rounded, that are interesting, that appeal to us on a human level and who maybe we recognize either ourselves or others that we know in those characters. And there needs to be some tension. So there needs to be a story arc is very important because that's the way that we get gripped and pulled into stories. And all of those elements need to be embedded in beautiful writing. So, choices of words, choices of language, and often the language needs to match the stories. So, you know, for example, if you're writing a children's book, you wouldn't write in a long, long, multi syllabic words, long sentences. You would write short descriptive sentences. In crime fiction, for example, the genre that I write in, the sentences also need to be fairly short and you have to not use too many metaphors. The language shouldn't be too overly descriptive and flowery, whereas if you're writing literary fiction, literary fiction tends to be very interior. So, it's about people's thoughts and feelings. And then there's much more space for metaphor for longer sentences and for more interior monologues. So, the elements are very varied and different. And I can assure you that writers' groups,

and I belong to some, obsess over these details together in order to get those story elements right.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Charlotte, as an experienced writer and author yourself, would you consider yourself a born storyteller or is there a particular event, author or novel that inspired you to write?

**Charlotte Otter:** So, my mother tells the story that when I was five years old, I said to her, I want to be an author and it's hard to imagine a five year old even knowing the word author. But apparently that's what I said. And I think it was a passion, you know, from so small that I can barely remember it. But it's a passion that has been with me my whole life.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** That's amazing, and can you remember your mother's response to you when you said to her that you wanted to become an author?

**Charlotte Otter:** Well, later, she told me that she didn't call me Charlotte James for nothing. Two famous writers Charlotte Bronte and Henry James combined in one.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Combined in one, how wonderful, that's brilliant. And can you remember when you first started writing a story then yourself, if we could stay with your childhood just for a moment longer? When did you pick up a pen and put to paper and start writing your first story?

**Charlotte Otter:** Well, English was my favorite subject at school. Reading and English were my favorite subjects, so I always shone in those subjects at school. I don't have a memory of first stories that I wrote myself.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** And Charlotte, how has your passion for writing and reading from an early age really influenced your career choices?

**Charlotte Otter:** So, I knew for sure that I was going to study English Literature at university. However, I also knew for sure that I'm not a born teacher and that I didn't want to teach. So, the most logical step for me was to study journalism. And I had had a very fantastic opportunity in my last year at school to do an internship on my local

newspaper, which then went on to be the newspaper that I characterize in my novels. So, I studied English Literature, had an absolutely fantastic time surrounding myself with books and literature and literary people. And then I went on to do a postgraduate qualification in journalism and took my first job on a newspaper in South Africa.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Mm. And what elements of that job did you really like, what were the highlights?

**Charlotte Otter:** The job was absolutely terrifying. It was the scariest thing I've ever done in my life. So, in South Africa, in those days, you earn your stripes as a journalist on the crime beat. And so, I spent the first year doing crime, which was covering crime, and also as a court reporter, which was interesting, challenging, scary. I moved to Johannesburg, which is a vast city. And I would have to drive myself across the city, find a court, set up there, managed to interview the prosecutor so that I could get the background story from them. It was scary and challenging, but I got to write every day and that was the beauty for me. So, I would go out into the field, do my research, interview people, but come back at 3:00 pm or 4:00 pm in the afternoon and put together my story and submit it. And then the next day I'd be able to see my name, hopefully, you know, my story and my byline in the newspaper the next day. So it was an intensely satisfying job from that perspective.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** But with the darker side to it, I guess as well, and there's no preparing you for those stories that you're exposed to and the ones that you cover, but really lovely to hear that you just had the thrill for storytelling and for writing there as well and for seeing your stories in print the next day.

**Charlotte Otter:** And if I might say something to the darker side, it was it was at a very difficult time in South Africa's history. It was shortly before its transition to democracy. And as we see around the world now, democracy can easily be threatened. And there were all kinds of actors and players trying to destabilize the country shortly before the first democratic election. So, it was a very stressful time just to be a citizen. It was a super exciting time to be a journalist. But I often experienced first-hand things that were very frightening.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Charlotte, you now work as Head of Executive and Employee Communications at SAP. How did you make that transition from a career in crime journalism in South Africa to working in IT in Walldorf, Germany?

**Charlotte Otter:** Yes, so I lasted for about a year or 18 months as a crime and court reporter, and then I moved into PR in South Africa and began working for Anglo American, which was one of South Africa's big mining houses in a PR, in a corporate function. And then after a couple of years, my husband was working for SAP in Joburg, had the opportunity to come to Walldorf for two years. And we were married. We moved together and we've been here ever since. I needed to find a job and I very much wanted to work at SAP that was 1996. It was quite hard to find a job in Heidelberg if you couldn't speak a word of German. But SAP was at that time was hiring English language technical writers. So, my first role at SAP was as a technical writer, which was terrifying in a completely different way from being a crime reporter because I had no background in software. And as a technical writer, you're really the first beta tester of a piece of software, because to be able to document it, you have to be able to test it. So that was another baptism by fire. So I spent three years as a as a technical writer and, and really learned my way around the software, learned how to ask people questions so that I would get the answers that I needed in order to be able to document the software and learned to get over my fear of anything technical.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Mm hmm. That's really good to hear. And I think maybe a background in journalism also helps prepare you to ask those questions to developers. I've done technical writing myself, at SAP, too. And when you're first new to the job, it's very difficult to have the courage sometimes to ask these difficult technical questions and really get the details that you need in order to write the documentation.

**Charlotte Otter:** Yeah, yeah, and what was interesting at the time was that the software cycles were much longer. So, you know, you would I would spend nine months of the year sort of, you know, normally a year's cycle. So, it's been nine months of the kind of testing and trying to learn, learn the pieces of software that I need to document. But you could only start documenting once the developers had released it. And then I would need to do a year's work in three months. It's pretty intense. And I do think that the much tighter software cycles of today are far friendlier to technical writers as well as to developers.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** And if we look at your professional experience today, how do you think communications and storytelling really fit together in the corporate world and at SAP specifically?

**Charlotte Otter:** So I think storytelling is very important for any leader and it's very important in communications because communications is about taking people with you on a journey and in order to take people with you on a journey, you need to persuade them. And the way you persuade people is by appealing to them on a human level. And the way that we do that is with storytelling. You know, the thing about storytelling is that it appeals to a very ancient instinct within us. So, you know, our ancestors would sit around the fireplace and tell each other stories. So equivalent of the family sitting around and watching Netflix together nowadays. But it appeals to us on such a basic human level. We don't even know that we're being appealed to by stories. It's really very much part of our instinct. So, I think that for leaders and especially leaders at SAP now who are trying to lead us towards change in order to take people along on that journey, very, very important to be able to tell stories.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** That's really good to hear. And what are your highlights of your focus with communications at SAP? What are some of the best parts of your job?

**Charlotte Otter:** I've worked with some fantastic executives, and that's been an incredible privilege, so in executive communications, we work with the Board and with the very senior leaders of the company. And it's been an amazing privilege to observe very, very senior leaders at work. And I said to one Board Member when I stopped working for them, I feel like the last year and a half has been, you know, just sitting in on your team meetings has been like an MBA by default. So that's been an amazing opportunity and a huge privilege for me.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** And a relationship of trust, I guess, too.

**Charlotte Otter:** Trust is a huge part of it. Yes.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Charlotte, one thing that I'd like to know is at SAP, how do you coach executives with the skill of storytelling?

**Charlotte Otter:** Yeah, that's so interesting because executives are humans like the rest of us, and there are some executives that we've worked with who are just natural storytellers, it just flows out of them and there's no coaching necessary. And that's as an executive communicator, that's bliss for us to be able to work with somebody who, you know, we might say, remember that story you told me about your mother that would fit in beautifully in this moment, and then they just ran with it. And I've I've seen that happen to incredible effect. Other executives are coachable and they're willing to learn and prepared to learn. And we try to help them find the stories that are theirs, because that is the most important thing. It's you know, there's no point in them telling stories that don't belong to them because we all have, we as audience, we can immediately sense if something is inauthentic. So what we do with the leaders that we work with is that we try to help them find the stories that fit the niche of what they're passionate about, their credibility, so who they are as a leader and their target audience. And once a leader finds their storytelling niche between those three aspects, then they're away. And it sometimes takes a couple of months to work with a leader to try and help them find what that specific niche is. Because some people are so focused on when we say credibility, I mean their actual role. Some people are so focused on their role, they don't have time to be able to explain what their passion is, or they're so focused on their audience that they don't have time to work out what their passion is. But once they are clear on what all three are, that's that is the beautiful moment where they start to be able to tell the stories that are authentic and match them as a human being so that they're able to bring their audiences along with them. And then some folks can't. And what's interesting about the people who struggle with storytelling is that in order to be able to tell stories, you have to be able to be vulnerable, because storytelling is about saying that's a moment where I failed or that's a moment that brings up sad memories for me, or that's a moment where I was challenged. And some people are not comfortable with showing that level of vulnerability. So, we see, we see within that spectrum from the brilliant storytellers to those who can't tell stories. You know, there's a very broad array, but it's a fascinating part of the role and of the job that we do.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** I can imagine so satisfying too to really mentor someone in an executive and really give them the confidence to show themselves as the true person so that we as a customer or listener, as the audience, we really have the authentic emotional connection. Right. We don't just want to see somebody in a suit on the stage

in the bright lights. We really want to hear about their own personal experiences and insights and really have that emotional connection with them. And Charlotte, I think it's interesting because you said you've always been passionate about English literature, storytelling, writing, but you always knew early on you didn't want to become a teacher. So, I think it's interesting that now professionally, you coach and you mentor executives to really have that aha moment when they can really become storytellers. How is that for you?

**Charlotte Otter:** Well, it's interesting you point that out, and I'd never really thought of it that way. I think it's because I, I know in my heart of hearts that being able to tell stories, and they don't have to be brilliantly told, it just needs to be a couple of sentences sometimes, will make people appear more human and more authentic. So, I know in my heart of hearts that it's a successful road to take. And it is exciting that we are able to help people in executive communications to find their storytelling comfort zone. It is exciting and it's a super part of the role.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** That's amazing. I'm a little curious, though, can I ask what specific techniques do you use with executives who are a little bit unsure about showing this human side to their character and really bringing their own story across? How do you help them overcome this initial hurdle and have the confidence to really embrace that?

**Charlotte Otter:** Well, I remind them of stories they've told me, you know, everybody in... Communications is a very time intensive role. And for executives who take the time to do their communications properly, they spend a lot of time with their communicator. So, you have those human connections with people. And I'm able to say to them, remember that story that you told me about that one time when you were at a customer? This is the moment where you can use that story, you know.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** It's really good that you can prompt them with that and give them that encouragement. And do you think in some cases we look at SAP, it's a global company. Many people speak different languages. Obviously, German is a major language that we speak at SAP. How much of an issue do you think this language barrier is when it comes to speaking freely and expressing emotions and telling stories? Do you think that kind of plays into some of the insecurities of executives maybe?



**Charlotte Otter:** I think it can be a challenge, definitely, but I am filled with enormous amounts of respect for German board members and executives who conduct their entire professional careers in their second languages and are still able to tell stories. I have profound respect for that because I know how obsessed I am with about my first language and expressing myself in my first language. And I cannot imagine the leap, the intellectual but also emotional leap that it takes to do that in the second language.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Thank you for sharing those insights with us, Charlotte. I'd like us to turn our conversation now to your life as an author. And I'd like to ask if you could tell us the story about how you became a published author.

**Charlotte Otter:** Yes, I'm delighted to, so you know, after my three years as a technical writer at SAP, my husband and I decided it was time to start a family. And I had we moved to London and I had my first two of my three children in the UK and for two years I was totally dedicated stay-at-home mother. But I am a person with a lot of energy and I realized that it was not enough for me to only be parenting. And I started a blog and it was just at the time in the early 2000s where blogging was becoming very popular. And I had a WordPress blog and it kind of surprised me that my blog got some attention and I was not one of these mommy bloggers with millions of followers, but the things that I wrote evoked something in other people. So, I started to realize that there was something there. I also managed through blogging, I was able to engage with an audience of other writers and aspiring writers, and I was inspired by them. And then we moved back to Germany. I was a stay-at-home mother of three children. And I realized that if I didn't start writing the book that I felt was in me, then I probably never would. So, I began to write, at the same time still maintaining my blog. So, I used the blog to document the process of writing the novel, which was actually really useful because it's helped me go back and sort of understand a little bit more about the writing process. So, the first novel that I wrote is called Balthasar's Gift. It is about a journalist. It's set in Pietermaritzburg, which was my hometown in South Africa, and the theme is around AIDS. I wrote 14 drafts of that book because my goal was not just to write one story and my goal was also not to write one draft, call it a book, and self-publish it. I wanted to be published, so I wanted what I wrote to be recognized by the people who I saw as the gatekeepers of the industry.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Mm hmm.

**Charlotte Otter:** I had some lucky moments along the way. I got some really great feedback from my writers' group. I engaged with a literary agent relatively early on and she and I did various drafts of the novel together. And then as she started to bring potential publishers into the mix, I was able to engage with them and do different versions of the story with them. So, as I say, in the end, 14 drafts of the novel. The delta between the first draft and the draft that was published was an idea and one sentence. That's how much, that's how much hard work went into rewriting it so that it became something that was publishable.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** It's a very long journey. What time scale was that?

**Charlotte Otter:** That was about six years.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Six years.

**Charlotte Otter:** Six years and working in the cracks and corners of parenting three very small children.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** And that feeling when you first saw your published book and you could hold it in your hands. How did that feel?

**Charlotte Otter:** It was an amazing feeling, it was a validation of, of all the work, but I think the most exciting moment for me was, you know, because what you do as a writer is that you apply to agents, so you send cold requests to literary agents. And I was turned down by many. And the most exciting moment for me was when I got a yes from a literary agent saying she wanted to represent me because it was the first indication for me that the story had legs. And my mother says she remembers hearing, hearing me scream.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Wow, that's amazing. Oh, that's so good. So you've actually published two successful crime fiction novels, Charlotte, Balthasar's Gift and Karkloof Blue. Can you tell us about your novels a little bit now and provide a short synopsis before we talk about the writing techniques that you implement there?

**Charlotte Otter:** Yes, of course. So, Balthasar's Gift is set shortly after South Africa's transition to democracy, as I said in my hometown of Pietermaritzburg, the main character is a crime reporter called Maggie Cloete. And unlike me, who was very nervous and anxious crime reporter, Maggie is fierce and not scared by anything. And she comes upon a crime scene and it's very normal for reporters to ask questions and write the story. But she becomes very obsessively involved. And the crime scene is the murder of an AIDS activist and that sets her off on a whole trajectory of discovery. And, you know, I loved Maggie. I became very attached to her and readers loved Maggie. So, it was very clear to me that the second novel needed to continue with the main character of Maggie Cloete. So, in the second book, Karkloof Blue, Maggie returns to Pietermaritzburg after stints in London and Johannesburg. And the setup of Karkloof Blue is that a very well-known ecologist has apparently committed suicide. His wife is convinced it's not a suicide, and Maggie sets out to investigate and gets naturally involved with the crime and ends up discovering who the criminals are and bringing them to justice. So, you know, she's much more than a crime reporter. You know, she is a fierce detective with elements of Nancy Drew, who I loved as a child, but also elements of Lisbeth Salander from The Girl, The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo, which is a book I read as an adult. So, she's curious and she's feisty and she's tough. And she really was a fun character to write.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** It's amazing. It's lovely to hear you talk about Maggie and about all her different characteristics, and there's just so much energy there that's incredible. How do you get these ideas?

**Charlotte Otter:** It's a very hard question to answer, and I think you'll find most novelists respond in the same way. I think, for me, it's about the thing that drags on your soul the most in the moment of writing, so for the first book, Balthasar's Gift, it was so shocking to me that the new South African government in the beautiful new democracy was full of AIDS denialists. So, it was so shocking to me that having achieved democracy, this new government was letting its own people down by not acknowledging the connection between HIV and AIDS. It just seemed to me to be such a letdown after the relatively peaceful transition the country had had. It seemed to me so brutal that people were not recognizing that. And as a result of not recognizing the connection between HIV and AIDS, so many people were dying and it was often the very young,

economically active people who were getting AIDS and dying. And they left this vast amount of AIDS orphans, which to me seems so tragic.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** It's tragic.

**Charlotte Otter:** Yeah. So, I think that it's, it's the thing that you can't let go of the thing that you that you worry over, the thing that strikes against your soul. You have to kind of investigate that and dig deep and find where that's what the what the story is.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** And so, when you wrote Balthasar's Gift, was it a cathartic writing process for you?

**Charlotte Otter:** I think it was in that, um, as a as a South African, it was hard to leave. It's a hard country to leave. So, I think I was very much processing my love for my country.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** That's so lovely to hear both the love for your country and also how it's important to write something that really touches your soul. Charlotte, your protagonist, Maggie, you say she's a really feisty and amazing detective. How did you develop her character and the plot and pace of your novel? What techniques did you implement?

**Charlotte Otter:** One of the things I did with Maggie in parallel to writing the story is that I would write a diary in her voice and that diary didn't make it into the book, but it was my way of getting to know her. You know, I think when you write in first person, especially as a novice writer, there's a challenge of confusing the eye of the writer with the eye of the character. So, I wanted to make sure I knew very much who she was. So that was one technique that I used. I did a lot of rewriting. The writing experts tell you to kill your darlings. And I think, as I mentioned earlier, you know, the delta of one sentence and an idea to a published book shows you how many darlings are killed in 14 drafts.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** True crime fiction.

**Charlotte Otter:** To kill your darlings, you have to have the strength to let go, you have to be able to let go of a beautiful paragraph that might describe a sunset, but it doesn't serve the story. And crime fiction has a very specific formula. And you have to let go of anything that doesn't serve the formula.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** You describe yourself as a feminist crime writer. What does this mean to you exactly?

**Charlotte Otter:** Yes, I read a lot of crime fiction in my early 20s, I didn't read much crime fiction while I was writing my novels and I have since read some. But what drove me crazy was the setup of nearly every crime novel I read was the naked body of a beautiful young woman. And in fact, if you go into any bookshop now and read the first opening pages of most novels, it's either about the disappearance, abuse or murder of young women. And I wanted to write against that trope. So, I wanted to write crime novels that were edgy, that were gripping, that were challenging, but that were not based on the trope of a woman having to be naked and dead.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** It's really great to hear that edgy crime fiction novels really don't have to always center around beautiful dead women. And Charlotte, I'd also really like to say that I think Maggie's a truly gutsy and authentic female protagonist. When we look at the genre of crime fiction in the broader sense. What is it, do you think, that makes it so appealing to us?

**Charlotte Otter:** Crime fiction is appealing because it takes people out of the everyday, you know, a lot of people say, oh, I'm going to get a great crime novel for my holiday. You know, it's very separate from people's lives. Although having said that, when I was marketing Balthasar's Gift and I was working in a bookshop in my hometown in Pietermaritzburg for a day at a writer's table, you know, a man came up to me and he said, What's your book about? And I said, it's about crime fiction. It's about a murder that happened in Pietermaritzburg. And he said, well, no, that's too close for me. No, that's my life. So, you know, not everybody is untouched by crime. Many people are.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Charlotte, for you as a female author, what's your personal view? Do you think that society in general maybe is more critical of female authors?

**Charlotte Otter:** I think that in terms of the way that authors are received, there's still a way to go. I think since I started writing, there's been a great improvement in the reception that female authors get as opposed to male authors. But what we have seen is that, for example, a male writer writes a story about a family and, you know, the interaction of a family. He's writing about the human condition. Whereas if a woman writes a novel about a family and the interactions between a family, she's writing a kitchen sink drama. But I think that publishers and people who are the gatekeepers of the industry are starting to recognize that.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Charlotte, I was fascinated earlier when you told us about the 14 versions you wrote of Balthasar's Gift before you finalized everything for publishing. So as an experienced and dedicated storyteller and writer, what would your advice be to aspiring writers who are listening to this podcast? What should they focus their time and energy on when wanting to turn their own writing dreams into reality?

**Charlotte Otter:** I think that if writing is a passion, you do need to practice, and I think that writing at work is different from creative writing. So, I would say to people, start small. I mean, for me, I described how I started with my blog and I realized that the way that I wrote was getting a response from people who read my words. So, I would say start small, whether it's poetry or short story or a diary, start small. We always recommended as writers to have a regular practice. So daily writing helps, I think for a lot of people who are novices, have a burning passion but don't know how to get started, there's the fear of the empty page and the fear of getting words down. And one of the things that helped me in those moments where I was staring at an empty page is there's a practice called free writing where you get up early in the morning and without thinking, you write in longhand three pages. And even in longhand if you write, these are the most boring words in the world. I can't wait for my breakfast, you just write and write and write through three pages in longhand to break the fear of the empty page. And that helped me. That technique helped me a lot in those moments.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** That's really good practical advice. Thank you. And for all fellow book lovers listening, Charlotte, I'd like to conclude today's episode by asking you, if possible, to share with us three books from your current reading list or all-time favorites.

**Charlotte Otter:** So, I'm currently reading and loving a novel called *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo. She was the winner of the Booker Prize in 2019 and she shared the 2009 Booker Prize with Hilary Mantel, who is my all-time favorite author. And I absolutely adored her Cromwell trilogy, which is, I think the three most brilliant books ever written in the English language. And little-known fact is that when I lived in the UK, I actually lived in the same apartment building as Hilary Mantel. I never met her or saw her. She was clearly too busy writing, but I used to bump into her husband in the parking lot as he was bringing the groceries home from Sainsbury's.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** That's amazing. Did you know when you moved in?

**Charlotte Otter:** Yes, we were told there's a famous writer who has the penthouse suite.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Ok, but it was only some kind of like famous writer, no further kind of indication of who it might be.

**Charlotte Otter:** No, I knew it was her, I knew it was her, but she was clearly a much more dedicated writer than me because she never left the building.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Ok. Charlotte, thank you so much. It's been absolutely amazing to speak to you today about your passion for writing and also for us to learn how we, too, can become better storytellers.

**Charlotte Otter:** Thank you so much it's been delightful.

**Elisabeth Riemann:** Thank you for listening to openSAP Invites Thought Leaders with Charlotte Otter. If you enjoyed this episode, please share, rate, and leave a review and don't miss your next invite. Subscribe now.

[www.sap.com/contactsap](http://www.sap.com/contactsap)

© 2020 SAP SE or an SAP affiliate company. All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or for any purpose without the express permission of SAP SE or an SAP affiliate company.

The information contained herein may be changed without prior notice. Some software products marketed by SAP SE and its distributors contain proprietary software components of other software vendors. National product specifications may vary.

These materials are provided by SAP SE or an SAP affiliate company for informational purposes only, without representation or warranty of any kind, and SAP or its affiliated companies shall not be liable for errors or omissions with respect to the materials. The only warranties for SAP or SAP affiliate company products and services are those that are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services, if any. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty.

In particular, SAP SE or its affiliated companies have no obligation to pursue any course of business outlined in this document or any related presentation, or to develop or release any functionality mentioned therein. This document, or any related presentation, and SAP SE's or its affiliated companies' strategy and possible future developments, products, and/or platform directions and functionality are all subject to change and may be changed by SAP SE or its affiliated companies at any time for any reason without notice. The information in this document is not a commitment, promise, or legal obligation to deliver any material, code, or functionality. All forward-looking statements are subject to various risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially from expectations. Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, and they should not be relied upon in making purchasing decisions.

SAP and other SAP products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of SAP SE (or an SAP affiliate company) in Germany and other countries. All other product and service names mentioned are the trademarks of their respective companies. See [www.sap.com/copyright](http://www.sap.com/copyright) for additional trademark information and notices.