

Book Journeys Author Interview - September 6, 2012

Dr. Angela Lauria with Alka Dalal, author of *Creative Genius, TIPS to Unleash Yours*

“Learning never ends, and it should never stop.” ~Alka Dalal

Angela:

Well, hello, everybody, and welcome to Book Journeys Radio! It is another week, and another opportunity to talk to an author about their journey, going from civilian to author. We talk about this transition as a time of really becoming something new, once you're an author, you can never go back. And, of course, the expertise that you have is - before you're an author, is very important but there is a pivotal transformational moment, and a lot of times I will equate it to becoming a parent, where, once you've done that, changes your perspective, changes how other people see you, how you're treated in the world, and it really is a turning point, and, obviously, at the center of that change is creativity. So, today's guest, Alka Dalal, is a perfect person to help you understand how to negotiate that transition. She is a creativity expert and a trainer. If you want to follow along today, you can go to findyourcreativegenius.com, that's www.findyourcreativegenius.com, and her book is called *Creative Genius, TIPS to Unleash Yours*. So, Alka, thank you so much for being here!

Alka:

Oh, thank you for inviting me!

Angela:

This is exciting! We often get so caught up in what are all the steps to becoming an author that we lose sight of our creative geniuses. So, I just wanna start with - you said, and your book title is, *Creative Genius, TIPS to Unleash Yours*. So, can you give us one, right now, one tip that we can use to really unleash our creative geniuses?

Alka:

Oh, absolutely, I can give you one tip, and I can give you many. Let me give you one tip, which is, be a lifelong learner. When you are a lifelong learner, you can do so much with your own self, your own work, your business life or whatever you are doing, and be very creative. Learning never ends, and it never should stop.

Angela:

I love that, I love that. So, when you decided to write your book, can you talk about your educational process between when you have the idea to write a book and when you are holding your book in your hands? What type of learning, what books did you read, what class of educa - how did you prepare yourself for that journey?

Alka:

Yeah. well, I have been creative all my life, and I was doing my soul-searching. And I've been very active in Internet marketing, I've been teaching Internet marketing, and I've been

hearing all these different seminars, like all these gurus, Tom Antion, Greg ..., I've gone to many, many seminars, and everyone talked about writing a book and writing about your passion, what you are good at, and what you have done. And while I was soul-searching, I realized that I have been creating, all my life, in everything that I did, from raising family to social life to changing careers, and I changed several careers, I went to several colleges, I collected few degrees and everything that I did, I used lots of creative solutions. And, in fact, I monitor it - my creativity - too. So, the idea came about after reading many, many books, and hearing a lot of people that I need to put something together for all people to share and they can go about it very easily, they can learn the techniques even though they don't feel they are creative or creative genius. They can learn simple techniques and they can do wonders in their own life.

Angela:

So, how was the process different than what you thought? It sounds like you are the type of person that really prepared for the journey? So, was there something you wished that you knew before you wrote your book?

Alka:

Well, I wasn't too sure. I was writing many articles, and so I decided I can write a book, and, in fact I'm writing more books. My second book is also on creating entrepreneurship, coming up soon, in six months, and I just put something together. I had started writing, and, instead of writing a big book, I said, let me first ... the tips, and then elaborate on all those tips. So, my first book is about eighty-five pages, and I have all the tips and I have a great book signing, and that's how I publish my book.

Angela:

Excellent. Did you envision your project completed before you started it?

Alka:

Yes, I did. In fact, I worked extremely hard to put everything together and publish it. I had a timeline goal set up and everything, so that - I follow that, and I wanted to publish the book so that it brings me so much more credibility, and it is a great asset to have, and it is so much easier today to write and publish your own book.

Angela:

You said that it is a great asset to have. Can you explain that a little more? What do you mean by that?

Alka:

Yes. Now, after becoming - you know, publishing a book, it is a great asset to my own credentials because I've been interviewed by many, many radio shows in many places. I can talk about it, I can teach people. It has given me so much more credibility, an extra feather in

my cap, so that I can meet people, I can reach to people whom I never thought I could reach. And it has really brought miracles in my life. So it has really added to my cap, all the feathers.

Angela:

So, we talked a minute ago, and I said, did you envision your project completed before you started? You talked about your timelines and the way you kind of organized the process of getting your book done? But I'm wondering if you also envisioned being an author, being able to tell people, "What do you do? I'm an author." Was that a part of what you were envisioning, or was it more about the details?

Alka:

I was visioning to become an author, and I had started writing something. I had started writing many articles and then I envisioned myself to be an author. So, that was a vision of mine, and it did come true.

Angela:

So, what about that vision? 'Cause when you were - what I want to connect this to is, when you were just talking about some of the outcomes of being an author for you, and you even used the term, like, there have been miracles out of becoming an author. And I'm wondering if that's why you did it. Is what's happening in your life, because of being an author, what you imagined would happen?

Alka:

No, I did not imagine that all these miracles would happen. I'll meet wonderful people, I'll touch their lives, I'll make a difference. I really envisioned that I will make a difference in peoples' lives by writing this. But I did not envision lot of other things, like miracles, meeting those wonderful, exciting, famous people, and also them picking up my book and reading it, actually. So, that I didn't envision. And it just started happening, one by one.

Angela:

Interesting. So, one of the things that I spend a lot of time when I'm working with a new author, somebody who wants to write a book but who hasn't really crossed the finish line yet, is the work on visualization, that I'm always looking for some new thing that, if you went back, knowing now what you know about what's awesome about being an author that you know now, are there things that you might recommend to somebody who's trying to finish a book to sort of visualize and to imagine for themselves as an author? Like, for instance, you talk about meeting famous people, or meeting people in your ... or people that have made a difference to you? What are some of those things that other people could imagine that would help motivate them to complete their journey?

Alka:

Yeah. When I went to seminars, I heard about all this, that it can actually happen to people. And, in my first book, since I was new, I had written .. books prior to that, and I did not

envision that, but now, after I take my first book, I experienced, I think, to have a vision and to imagine all these things are very, very important, because now, I'm on my second book and I already am envisioning and having imaginary things, that this is going to happen, or this is going to take place after I publish my second book. And I think it's very important for new authors because that's how they can plan things, that's how they can put those parts, positive parts, in the universe, and when you put positive parts in the universe, it does come back, it does come back. So, I would highly recommend new authors that they should do that, they should envision, they should have some imaginary process in their mind.

Angela:

I love that. And your book - you said that you actually started writing articles, and for some people, maybe they're - a lot of my clients come to me and they're working on a blog. Did you use the articles you had written as material for the book? Or did you write new material?

Alka:

... I had started with teaching Internet marketing, and there's a part of Internet marketing - this book writing came about. And, at that time, for this first book, I did not start writing articles, in that subject. However, after my book, I started really writing more articles on creative genius, creativity, and that is helping me with my second book.

Angela:

I see, okay. So, where did you get the content for your book? Where did you get the - did you write everything new, or have you already developed some of the content for another purpose?

Alka:

No. In fact, I wrote everything new, because this was about my life experiences, what I had done and what had proven, like, all my techniques, my information, knowledge, strategies, all that I used helped me become more creative all the time, so therefore I used all the new material for my first book. For my second book on entrepreneurship, I'm interviewing many famous folks, I interviewed them, I'm writing about them, I'm also writing little bit about my journey and my entrepreneurship, and what people can follow, what creative solutions to become good entrepreneurs.

Angela:

Got it. Okay, so, with this book, it sounds like - and tell me where I'm wrong here - it sounds like you might have taken your knowledge and created some systems that people could apply in their own lives?

Alka:

Yes.

Angela:

Okay, so, this is something I think is really important in a non-fiction book, is to take something that you do and to turn it into a system that somebody else can replicate. Was that something you came up with on your own, or how did you figure out how to do that, and maybe you can give us an example, 'cause I think that's something I have heard - you know, many of my coaching clients and people in my classes get kind of stuck on when I tell them to invent a system, they're like, "Aah, I don't know, I just do it. It's not really a system, it's just what I do." So, how did you accomplish that?

Alka:

The system to develop a system for whatever you are doing, it really doesn't matter what your subject line is, developing a system is very, very important. I'll just give you a simple example. ... was raising family a long time ago, and also working and studying - I needed to be very, very organized, otherwise I couldn't have done what I did, and therefore I developed a system. For example, I needed to do a lot of social networking, and I didn't have money, neither I had that much time to do everything, and still I wanted to do the social networking, so therefore I created a system where I could involve my children as well as have potluck parties, and several of them, so we can meet people, interact with them, we didn't have to spend that much time cooking, we didn't have to worry about children babysitting, they would be all together and playing with each other, and at the same time we could be networking side-by-side and didn't have to spend all the time and money. And that's really, really proved very successful and well. And I can give you examples of many people, like Bill Gates, Steve Jobs - I mean, Steve Jobs has a simple idea about the Apple. I mean, he took a name, "apple." How simple it is? I mean, we talk about it, and now, he just created the logo, and he gave a name, and that was his creative solution. And ... if you talk about Bill Gates, he took some ideas from IBM, and, originally, there were so many things were already invented, but the way he put it together and created Microsoft! Because mouse was already invented by Xerox, there were few other things, IBM had idea on special codes and everything, and he put things together and came up with creative solutions and created a giant Microsoft. There are so many examples -

Angela:

So, when you talk about your social networking example, did you turn that into a system, like, did you name that and find a way to teach other people to do it? How did you know that that was something teachable?

Alka:

Yeah. For example, when I was changing careers, what I did was, any system that I created, to make it more automated. Because if you spend too much time with any subject or anything, then it's going to really take away lot of your time. So, therefore, anything you are doing, yes, I created a system, I organized everything. I organized all the names and numbers and everything and I also put the menu in a book - I didn't have computers at that time - and referred to it next time. So, I have something in place, I don't have to reinvent the wheel, and I had something in place. And I took from there - I wrote my own notes and used

it for the next party, and the next party. And that's how we grew, and we created the network of people who would help each other with any kind of problem, like if you are looking for a job, if I give out in my networking system, at least someone would know someone who is looking for a job or who has a job. So, things like that started working for me.

Angela:

Excellent. Did you, when you were writing, did you run into any periods of writer's block, or a lack of creativity or an inability to write? Did anything like that happen for you?

Alka:

Yes. It did happen for me. There were some days I just couldn't write. It just wouldn't come to me. And it happens to every writer, or to all creative person, or artist, or anyone. There are some days where you're totally blank, it doesn't come. And there are some days where, all of a sudden, you have influx of ideas. So, what I do is, the day I have all these ideas, or if I'm walking or driving, or something, you can just think of that idea, and when you stop your car, at least just put it on paper, or put it on your iPhone, or somewhere where you can refer back to it. So, ideas can come any time, any minute, any moment.

Angela:

Got it. And - but, I guess I wanted to ask you about that is, when a period like that happens, when you're on a roll, and things are flowing, and you're having fun writing, and all of a sudden you hit that wall. It's easy to either stop working on your project altogether or to force yourself to write something and it's not, maybe, as fun, or in your authentic voice, and a lot of times I find those projects stopping themselves, one way or another, too. So, how did you stay positive through a period like that?

Alka:

Yeah. Through the period like that, what I did for myself, because I had the timeline that I needed to follow, what I did was, I started reading. I grabbed a new book, and I just read it, because, sometimes, you have a blog, you need to get out of that frame of mind and do something creative, so that, immediately, your creative juices starts flowing.

Angela:

I love that, that's a great tip. I think people will stay in that uncreative kind of dark space for a little bit too long, and reading something else, even something unrelated, can really help shake that up.

Alka:

Exactly.

Angela:

Okay, so let's turn our attention now, and let's talk about your publishing You got through writing your book - did you work with an editor on editing it, or did you write it all yourself?

Alka:

Yes.

Angela:

How did you find your editor?

Alka:

I found a college professor who was a Ph.D., and I worked with him, and he was very kind, and he helped me edit my book, and he did.

Angela:

Terrific. And then, you knew, up front, that you wanted to self-publish, correct?

Alka:

Yes. I knew up front because I needed something to publish as soon as I could when I finished it - like, after editing process.

Angela:

'Cause you really wanted your book quickly, which is a great reason to self-publish. And, why don't you tell people a little bit about the self-publishing process? For you, who did you ... and who would you recommend?

Alka:

Yeah. Well, I found, at that time, I found createspace.com. They are Amazon company, so I found them through a friend, he recommended me, that I should check it out. Then I went and checked them out. I saw how the processes, and it was pretty simple process to follow, if you're a first-timer it may take you some time, but they have a great help on phone, ... e-mail, and I could ask them all the questions that I needed to ask them, because there are so many different things that are happening, and you need to know the process that they have, and I just learned that quickly, and I followed that, and it was lot easier once you understand their process. And it was lot cheaper, also, compared to traditional publishing and doing it. Traditional publishing takes at least two years, you have to talk to publisher, and, sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't work. Whereas, self-publishing, it works, however, selling of the books are different, depends on how hard you work, and also selling of your book and marketing of your book.

Angela:

Yes, that is true, and that's actually a great transition to my last question. I always like to end my interviewed on a positive note, and if you can share with us - I like to think of this as your "before and after" story, if you think about like those makeover pictures, before the makeover and after the picture - can you share with us what is the biggest difference in your life before you're an author and after you became an author? How is your life different and what's

something you have accomplished now or received or been able to do that you couldn't do without your book?

Alka:

Okay. Now, the first thing I want to tell you that, my book is my new business card, and that is a very, very strong statement that I'm making, and it has really affected me tremendously. Before my book - when I started telling people that I'm coming up with the book, people really look up to you, and there is a different kind of respect that you gain from people. Now, once I completed the book, I ask - I had a book signing, and a very successful book signing in Venice, California, and I wrote to all my friends, and I invited them, and luckily I got so many people to attend that, at the bookstore, they said, you were the most successful in that year for the book signing.

Angela:

Wow. That's amazing.

Alka:

Yes. It was amazing, I just couldn't believe it, and it was such a great event, and that also - all my friends, they not only bought the book, they started reading it, and I found so many other people from them that started reading and using my book, so it was my new business card after writing the book. Then, also, I carried my book everywhere, it's in my pocket book in my car all the time. And anytime I meet new people, or if I'm talking to someone, it has affected so many people from age thirty to ninety. And, in fact, more on giving the personal coaching to a eighty-five year old who is trying to finish her books from her blogs.

Angela:

Excellent, I love that! Well, Alka's website is findyourcreativegenius.com, you can sign up on her website to get some of her creative genius tips and check out her book. Alka, thank you so much for being here.

Alka:

My pleasure.

Angela:

And, next week, I'm very excited that we are talking to Dan Stratford. Dan is an author and a businessman, his book is called *The Men's Code of Honor*, so we're gonna mix it up a little with the topic last - next week, and in our last few minutes I just want to share with everybody, I am, right now, this is the first time I have broadcasted live from another city, so I am in Santa Clara, California, which is just outside of San Francisco and I'm here at Brendon Burchard's Experts Academy, and if you are an author checking out Brendon Burchard's videos, you have lots of free trainings online. I am here at his live event, and it's really focused on how authors can claim their roles as experts, develop related products and services, little bit like

Alka mentioned in her interview. And, more important than that, and really why I'm here and why I do like a lot of the stuff that Brendan makes available is, Brendan is very focused on using his life to make a difference in the world, and he tells a story about a car accident that he had where he feels like he was given this mission to help other people change lives, and to change lives that way, so it's more like a tagline to share your voice with the world, and that's definitely how I feel about the authors I work with. But one thing really -

Alka:

I have read his book!

Angela:

Oh, it's a wonderful book, isn't it? Yes, he probably - are you talking about *The Charge* or *The Millionaire Messenger*?

Alka:

Yes. The first one. And the second one, too, yes, I have read it.

Angela:

I would definitely recommend his books, and this quote, I just heard this quote this morning, I ducked out of the morning session to come to this interview, but I wanted to share this quote with you guys, because, when you're in the process of writing your book, and it can seem daunting, and it can seem like, I started but I'm not gonna finish it, I'm just gonna file that 'cause I'm too busy right now, other things come into your life, I don't know, you get a new job, you move, you meet a guy, what - all those things that happen, they happen to all of us, and the authors we interview on this show have found a way to cross that finish line, and they've found a way to get through that stuff, and I found this quote from Brendan this morning, really inspiring. He said, "Only two things change your life. Either something new comes into your life, or something new comes out of you." And with your book, you will not only change other lives, which, invariably, you can share ... this amazing story about coaching an eighty-five-year-old about how to get their book done - I love that story! You will change peoples' lives with your book, but you will change your own life. You want to transform into an author and almost everything in your life will be at least a little bit different. Yes.

Alka:

And, please, say hello to Brendan!

Angela:

I will pass on your hello to Brendan, I am gonna get back to the party, because it is rocking and rolling in the conference room. I definitely could not broadcast live from that room, it is very loud. I am excited to talk to Dan Stratford next week, and so, thanks for being on Book Journeys Radio!