

## **Book Journeys Author Interview - Feb 6, 2014**

**Dr. Angela Lauria with Carolyn Wilman, author of *You Can't Win if You Don't Enter*.**

*"If you went on a diet for three days, would you expect to lose twenty pounds? No. It's consistency, it's over-time consistency." ~Carolyn Wilman*

Angela:

Well, hello, everybody, and welcome to Book Journeys Radio. My name is Dr. Angela Lauria, I am the founder of the Author Incubator and creator of the Difference Process for Writing a Book That Matters. Every week on this show, we interview an author about their experience writing their first book, and this week is no exception, but this week is an exception, in that, instead of coming to you from my home studio in Washington, D.C., I have just landed in Las Vegas and I am in the middle of a conference that is not my conference, it's the American Physical Therapy Association conference. I know nothing about physical therapy, but I have hijacked their wireless, and I am excited the show goes on today, hopefully there's not too much background noise – because we are really lucky to have Carolyn Willam – Wilman here – with us today. Carolyn is the author of *You Can't Win if You Don't Enter*, you can check out her website at [contestqueen.com](http://contestqueen.com), but we have a really fun show today, if you like to win, and there's no better place to do this show from than Las Vegas. So, I am at the Venetian Hotel, really excited to be talking to you, Carolyn, how are you?

Carolyn:

Good, thank you! ... Las Vegas!

Angela:

Well, tell us about *You Can't Win if You Don't Enter*. Well, I'm hoping you can give me some tips, so that it's a really good weekend.

Carolyn:

Well, I would love to give you tips, unfortunately, my forte isn't gambling, and I'm a little too cheap, so even when we can ... I'm on the penny slots and the nickel slots.

Angela:

Great, there we go. Tell me about *You Can't Win if You Don't Enter*, what's the book about?

Carolyn:

Well, what I do is, I teach people how to find, organize and enter and win contests, sweepstakes and giveaways. And the key to what I teach people in the book is, be organized, because the – the idea is to enter as many promotions as you can in the shortest degree of time. I got a lot of people thinking I enter sweepstakes all day long. I don't. I spend an hour, maybe two at the absolute most, entering. And it's – that's it. It's no – it doesn't take as much time as you think to win. Now, there is a bit of a learning curve, I do tell people they're gonna

...

Angela:

So, why don't you .... Back me up a little bit, 'cause I wanna make sure that you're talking about – I – I couldn't think of how to find two hours a day worth of contests to enter. So, what – w – what are the contests, and who enters them? What are you talking about? I don't know anything about this world!

Carolyn:

Oh, my gosh! Okay, well, first of all, companies in the U.S. last year spent over three billion dollars running promotions. It's a massive marketing tool for corporations.

Angela:

What?

Carolyn:

And even – due to social media, small businesses.

Angela:

And what ... prizes are you talking about?

Carolyn:

So, you see a magazine ad for winning – win a trip to – win a trip to Walt Disney World, you see the ads on TV, win a trip to the Super Bowl. Those are what we enter, that is what I teach people how to win. ... they're everywhere.

Angela:

... sense of what prizes that you – I don't – I don't know, have you won – what's your history, have you won a lot of these contests?

Carolyn:

I – I have, I – no, I – I enter, usually, on a daily basis, anywhere between five minutes and two hours, depending on my day, so I don't stress about it if I miss a day, 'cause I figure I was gonna win what I win, and I've been doing that since 2001. Since 2001, I've won over quarter million dollars in prizes –

Angela:

Are you kidding me? ...

Carolyn:

– I've won fifteen trips – no, and what's crazy is that I've been so busy, the last three years, some months I didn't enter hardly anything, and I feel like there's people that make me look like an amateur. They've won so much stuff.

Angela:  
Wow!

Carolyn:  
So, it's a matter of – and it's because they have the time to enter, that's the key. If you have the time to dedicate to it daily, you will win. I don't know anybody who hasn't started entering on a daily basis that doesn't win. And it's no different. People say, "Well, I entered three and I didn't win anything." Well – if you went to the gym for three days, would you expect to lose your twenty pounds?

Angela:  
Right.

Carolyn:  
No. If you went on a diet for three days, would you expect to lose twenty pounds? No. It's consistency, it's over-time consistency, the same with sweepstakes.

Angela:  
Wow!

Carolyn:  
You have to dedicate the time every day and you have to be consistent, and – people say to me, just like you did, "Where do you get the time?" Many, many people waste time playing Candy Crush – ... Candy Crush – the people who made it, they're brilliant – game, but I don't spend my time playing that little game, I take – ten minutes, half an hour, I enter sweepstakes, 'cause for me the rewards are far greater.

Angela:  
Wow.

Carolyn:  
I don't – if I'm going to watch TV, I'll sit there with my laptop. You're watching those mindless – your – your soap operas, your – your evening game shows, no reason why you can't be clicking a mouse while you're watching – your favorite celebs answering questions on television.

Angela:  
So, okay, so w – so, tell us what your book is about, does it help you find the contest? Does it give you a strategy for how to win? Te – tell us more about it.

Carolyn:  
Right. So, I cover – I cover the whole hobby, I talk about everything from how I started to – to – let people know that I'm a regular person, just like them. I go into why companies ...

promotions, I talk about the – I have a chapter dedicated to the num – my number one tip, which is, always read the rules, and why, so there's a whole chapter on rules, I have a chapter on finding sweepstakes, which is key – where do you find 'em. There's actually an entire community out there, and there's websites dedicated to legitimate sweepstakes. So, you don't have to go hunting for them –

Angela:

Mmm.

Carolyn:

– you group with other sweepstakers and – on websites, and they're compiled, so if you find one, you post it, other people post, y – they're all there for you to enter.

Angela:

Wow.

Carolyn:

So, the places you would find them – then I teach you how to use different tools to organize yourself, because that is one of the biggest mistakes I made at the beginning, is, I was this – I wasn't organized, I was wasting a lot of time, that's key. You don't want to be entering a promotion that's already ended, you don't want to be entering before it starts, you don't want to be – there's lots of little things that you want to follow.

Angela:

And so, how – so, tell us – so, tell us a little about your story, how did you come – first of all, how did you come to discover contests were something you were passionate about, and then, how was it that you decided to write a book?

Carolyn:

Well, I – I've always liked entering. As long as I can remember, I'm always trying to win stuff. I remember dialing into radio stations on a rotary dial phone, I'm so dating myself at the moment. (laughs)

Angela:

Oh, God, I remember doing that, holding off on the last number.

Carolyn:

... we're in the same boat! Okay, so –

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Carolyn:

So di – dialing and – winning tickets to go to the concerts, and my mom having to go pick up the tickets, because – I was too young to go get the tickets. So, I – I've always liked it, and I remember watching people – I remember Don Hugh, I used to love Don Hugh, and I remember a fella coming on there and he talked about winning and his strategies, 'cause it was all mail-in at that point.

Angela:

Mmm.

Carolyn:

There – I – I am from Canada, and there is still mail-in in the U.S. because of the – your specific laws, 'cause there are laws surrounding sweepstakes in – in pretty much every country. The promotions laws are different in Canada and the U.S., so there is still mail-in sweepstakes in the U.S., which is diminishing, but we haven't seen – I haven't seen any mail-in specific sweepstakes in Canada since '06, so I keep warning the Americans that, just like doing the mail-ins, that you'd better get online, 'cause your odds are quickly disappearing.

Angela:

Wow.

Carolyn:

Yeah. And – and the only ... in Canada are ...

Angela:

So, these contests, ...

Carolyn:

Sorry.

Angela:

... are mostly – are they mostly online or phone-in or is –

Carolyn:

They're mostly online. So, my book is all about online sweepstakes, I do have – a section on mail-ins, I'm – I'm actually writing an updated version of my book, ... and I'm actually stripping out everything to do with mail, and I'm adding in a massive social media section, because – what has taken over is Facebook contests, Twitter contests, Pinterest contests and Instagram contests.

Angela:

Oh, wow. Wow.

Carolyn:

Yeah, so I'm taking out a little section and quadrupling it.

Angela:

So, here's the thing. Someone could argue that, as a contest participant yourself, doing this book actually decreased your chance of winning. You're making a whole bunch of people – enter contests that you might not have entered before. So, how is it that you decided you wanted to turn your experience into a book? What were you hoping to get out of it?

Carolyn:

Well, it's funny, because you – you – you think that that is sound logic, but it's actually converse.

Angela:

Ah!

Carolyn:

Because, the marketers see that their promotions are working, they're gonna spend more of their marketing budget on promotion. Since I've started, I've seen marketing budgets triple, the amount of money spent on online promotions has tripled since I started, in the early two thousands.

Angela:

Wow.

Carolyn:

So, companies went from a bill – from a billion to three hundred – to three billion in the last ten years. There's only more promotions to enter as more people enter.

Angela:

Wow. True.

Carolyn:

And you'd think that I would win less, right? But I win about the same amount every year.

Angela:

Wow.

Carolyn:

It goes up and down a bit – I've had some really big years and I've had some lean years, depending on how much time I have – the years of – I spent writing a book or running a convention, sometimes dwindles a bit, but – if I dedicate the time, my – my winning's

consistent. And somebody said, “Well, if they – if agencies know who you are, you’re not gonna win.” Well, that’s not true, ‘cause I’ve interviewed all of them, I know the heads of most of the agencies and most of the companies running these promotions, they all know who I am and I still win, so I think that’s bunk. (chuckles)

Angela:

So, what – for you, what has been the biggest surprise about writing a book? How has it been different than you thought?

Carolyn:

It’s – okay, well, I love reading, my dad gave me my first motivational book when I was around eighteen, and he said, “If I can teach you at eighteen what I learned at thirty-six, you’ll be way ahead.” So, I loved these books, and I read Robert Allen’s *One Minute Millionaire*, and I wanted to make a million dollars – to write a book in ninety days and make a million dollars. Well, it doesn’t work that way. (chuckles)

Angela:

Hm.

Carolyn:

It took me twenty months, from start to finish, for my first book, eighteen months from start to finish with my second book, I have yet to make a million dollars, I think I should ask Robert for my money back. (laughs) But I kept it up.

Angela:

So – so, where do you ... – a lot of people have – a lot of people have that experience.

Carolyn:

The best advice I ever got, writing my book was, “Write a table of contents and keep writing.” ... and keep writing.

Angela:

Mmm. ... advice. Yeah. So, I – I – so, I would totally agree with that, and I think a lot of people have – have the idea that writing a book can be – kind of a fast – a good way to make money, or a fast way to make money, or – that there are things that y – that you can get from a book that you can’t necessarily get from a book, so you have this idea, and it’s – it’s a little different than you thought it would be. But what have been some of the best ... out of becoming an author? Maybe things you didn’t expect that have been ...?

Carolyn:

Well – yeah, well, the tenacity was good for me, because I’d – I’d – I persisted, even when I wanted to give up. So – I kept writing, even though I felt I was never gonna finish, and I’m so happy, when I finished writing, that the book went to editing, and then, it was – another six

months, and I wanted to cry, because I thought I was done. No! I was rewriting and rewriting, and – and – and I learned it's okay, so, now that I'm working on my third one – okay, I'm just gonna start when I'm done, I'm just gonna keep hammering at it, and I know it's gonna come out this year, and I'm fully expecting – I'm not so scared of the editors anymore, and I also know my process isn't the same. I just moved, and by coincidence, two doors down from me is a – a – a young adult writer, Wesley King, and so, we got chatting – one day, and he said, "Oh, my publisher's getting me to write my next book," and I asked him how long it was gonna take him to write his book, and he says, "Three weeks," and I wanted to cry, because – he writes fiction, and so he sits down and he just uses his imagination and ... a book in three weeks. And I thought, "Oh, my God, wouldn't that be amazing," 'cause I do so much research in my book – research alone, I know I'm gonna be at least six months minimum, before I can even think of finishing, because I have so many people to contact and so much stuff to go back and forth with, with other people. I must – I must contact at least five ... people to write my book.

Angela:

And so – and so, what are – so, why go through all that? Why be an author, for you, what's your answer to "Why is it worth it?"

Carolyn:

It's – it's own – in – innate in me, I feel like I – have to do it. It's – like .... It – it sounds – weird and funky, but that's how I feel, and when I – I had a similar question asked me before I even wrote the first book, someone said to me, "Why would you give away all your secrets?" I had no idea, and I was driving from a girl friend's house to discuss that very question, and I passed a church, and on the service announcement board it said, "You can't lose helping others win." And I thought, "That message is for me!" And I really wish I took a photograph of it, because – people say, "Oh" – they pray a lot and they ... "God, please give me a sign," well I had a literal sign from God that it was okay, and –

Angela:

Wow.

Carolyn:

And – I get letters from people that say, "Oh, my God, I bought your book, I followed your advice, I've won all this stuff, you've changed my life" – or, I had one woman who – well, she said she had a brain tumor, she's sick, she's in a hospital, and entering sweepstakes – she read my book and it kept her busy and focused on something positive while she was recuperating.

Angela:

Wow.



Carolyn:

Yeah, I know! So, if I were having a bad day, I think of her 'cause I think, "Wow! She's entering sweepstakes and she might not be breathing tomorrow, but she doesn't care, she's focusing on something that's fun and positive and now. And that's what this whole thing is, and it's led me down paths, and I've met people and done places and done things that, if I hadn't gone down that path, I never would have discovered, 'cause one of the things I discovered, while researching the first book, was convention. And so, in Canada, we were all online, and I came down to Moline, Illinois, in '05, for the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual National Sweepstakes Convention, and I was in a room with six hundred other people, just like me, and – I was married at the time, and I said to my husband, "Oh, my God, I'm coming every year." (chuckles) I couldn't explain the energy, and I have, since then, made friends for life. I have, sadly, been to funerals, I've happily been to weddings, there's been announcements of babies, there's been children graduating, there's been grandbabies born, it's just amazing. I have – I've twenty three hundred friends on Facebook, a lot of them contact – connected me 'cause I ... sweepstakes, I know actually – physically know about half the people, 'cause I met them at conventions and recognized them.

Angela:

So, there are actual conventions for people that participate in sweepstakes?

Carolyn:

Oh, yeah, if you go to my website under – Resources, a – there's a link, and it says – "Meet other Sweepers" –

Angela

Mmm. Wow.

Carolyn:

– and I have a ... time that are happening this year. And I'm going to four and five – the only reason I'm not going to Maryland is because, one, it sells out in five hours ... the moment that the tickets went on sale – I – I wasn't available to grab the tickets, plus it was the same weekend as my daughter's birthday, so I'm not missing her birthday party to go tweet. ... But I'm taking her to her first class!

Angela:

So, ... about this – here's what the main thing about this, by the way the ... contest – the website is contestqueen, and Carolyn, what I think is so fascinating about this story is, when there are so many people that have hobbies and passions, and they have this wealth of information, obviously, I know nothing about contests, so you're – introducing me to a whole new world here, but what I think is so fascinating about ... you've really established yourself as a leader in this little community that people – know you, that you connected with people that you might not have if you weren't an author, and – I'm thinking of, when I was in my –

when I was in my teens and twenties, there were bands that I was very big fans of, and I would travel around the world to see the bands play, and how different my experience might have been had I written a book about – I certainly had information in my head about it – but it never occurred to me to actually write the book, so I'm re-thinking some of my passions and hobbies now – in – in this context, and I'm wondering, is there a "before and after" for you? Were you participating in contests before you were an author, and then after you became an author, and did it change how the people in the community saw you? Or see you?

Carolyn:

Yes. So, I'll say "yes" to all of that. So, first, I was a contesteer before I entered. First, I was a frequent contesteer, and then I became a daily hobbyist, and then I wrote a book, which you all have to remember, what makes my background unique is that I am a marketer, and I was a marketer all – before I was a contesteer, and contests are a niche of marketing, right? They're one marketing tool in a marketer's tool box, right?

Angela:

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Carolyn:

There's advertising, there's social media, there's – soaps, so ... a company writes a marketing plan, part of that may include – using social media, and part of that social media marketing may be a sweepstakes, right?

Angela:

Sure.

Carolyn:

Like it ka-chunks down, it's a very small piece of a – of a very large plan, depending on the corporation. And just like any marketing tool, you have to look at it – as to what you're gonna use it for, so I had a marketer's brain, going into the hobby. So, not only do I teach people how to win, I also work with companies making sweepstakes better.

Angela:

Hm.

Carolyn:

So, really, you're right, I – I am a really unique – queen, I guess, and I – I will – I say "expert," but I'm also a queen on both sides of the table.

Angela:

...

Carolyn:

'Cause I can answer questions from marketers and ... contesters 'cause I understand them and vice versa, 'cause some people write me all the time and say, "Well, I don't understand, why would this company do that?" and I say, "Oh, well, here, let me explain that to you." So, it – it – yeah, having ... both sides of the table makes it really unique, and I love that I've gotten to make friends for life, and then also, when I published my first book – I didn't actually market myself as ... people thought I was just a stay-at-home mom who decided to write a book and call herself a marketer, which – irked me to know, and because I had all this experience in the industry.

Angela:

Mm-hm.

Carolyn:

At the time, even moreso now – and then, people in the community, I had fla – do you know what a flame war is?

Angela:

Well, I'm guessing it's – fighting on the Internet, people –

Carolyn:

I had a ton of – yeah, I had a ton of backlash when my first book came out, because people hated me –

Angela:

Wow!

Carolyn:

– because I'm telling everybody about their secret hobby, and if all the companies knew about these contesters, they're gonna stop running contests.

Angela:

Mmm.

Carolyn:

And I thought, "Oh, my God." First of all, marketing companies, they all know we exist, hello?

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Carolyn:

They ... hire me, now, to start promoting contests within the contest community before they even start, so, yeah, they do know you exist, hello? This isn't news to the marketers! And, no, they're not gonna stop running contests 'cause you're entering. And ePrize would just change their name to HelloWorld, in 2010, wrote a white paper proving what I've been saying for years, but didn't have the budget to get the data, was that ... make more loyal customers.

Angela:

Wow. Fascinating. ...

Carolyn:

Yeah! I know, one other thing ... I think I have a marketing book in me, too – one for the other side of the table, but I have to finish ...

Angela:

Absolutely, I'd love to see that. So – so, one of the things that I – I – that I talk to – that I talk to my clients about is creating their special sauce, so what I find is that people have a way they do things, whether their book is about – yoga or cooking or relationships or contesting, there's a way – there's a way that they do things, and, very often, they feel like this method isn't special. They just fell like, "Well, yeah, that's how I do it," or "That's how somebody told me to do it," but there's something unique about it that theirs can verbalize it, and when I work with my clients I help them figure out what we call their "special sauce." For me, that's my Difference Process, my Ten Steps for Writing a Book That Matters, and – some of the steps are unique, but a lot of them are things that a lot of people would tell you about writing a book, but they're put together in my special way, and nobody could copy that. So, I noticed that you have a – a system like that as well, you have your online contesting system. So, I wondered how you developed your online contesting system and how you came up with that as – as a process.

Carolyn:

Well, it is basically trial and error. The – the reason I wrote this book was to help people not make all the mistakes that I made.

Angela:

Mmm. Absolutely.

Carolyn:

'Cause – because, if you follow my steps, you're gonna save yourself a ton of grief and time and – and using tools to help you, so I made, basically, all the mistakes, and as I figure – and because I'm a marketer, I could look at the hobby a little bit different than everybody else, and so, as I made the mistakes, and I developed an online entry system to keep myself on track, and spending as little time as possible on maximizing my winning entries, we want – we had a bit of a winning streak, and everyone said, "Well, what's your secret?" And I said, "I have a

system,” and after the hundredth person said to me, “What’s your system?” I thought, “Mmm, maybe I should be writing this down!”

Angela:  
Uh-huh!

Carolyn:  
That’s like – the idea started to tweak about a book, and – then the – a few other things occurred, and I thought, “I’m gonna write this down,” and – and actually, the system has changed over time, and w – this is what I – I actually wrote – a blog on this, and it’s basically you’re either changing – I think the expression, the famous quote is, “You’re either growing or you’re dying.”

Angela:  
Mm-hm.

Carolyn:  
And people have been blamed – like you said, it was a – it was a bit of a backlash, people have often blamed me for changing the hobby. They’re seeing the mailing entries disappear and it’s all going online and all going on social media, so it’s my fault, which is awesome, to think I can control a three billion dollar industry all by myself. I rock. So –

Angela:  
You’re so powerful – yeah.

Carolyn:  
I know, I am, ...? So – (laughs) – so, I tell people, the hobby is consistently changing. I’m gonna recommend a movie, ‘cause it was a book first, so I’ll recommend the book first, but - ... time to read both the book – actually, I’ll recommend both. *The Prizewinner of Defiance, Ohio*, by Terry Ryan. Get a Kleenex box and watch the movie and read the book, I cried during both.

Angela:  
Mmm.

Carolyn:  
And i – it’s about the hobby in the fifties, when it was jingles. And so, it has evolved – from jingle to contest to sweepstakes to mail-in to online – the hobby has consistently changed over the last – fifty, sixty years. And so, it’s gonna keep changing, and so, if you get stuck in one modality, you’re not gonna win. I finally, finally, finally got a phone – I must have been the last Blackberry hang-oner. I finally got an Android phone last summer –

Angela:  
Mm-hmm.

Carolyn:  
– and ... enter I – I – Instagram contests, I'm thinking, "Oh, my God, I should have been ... way earlier." I was even – getting on Twitter, you'd think me, being the marketer, I'd be an early adopter, but no. (laughs)

Angela:  
Mm-hmm.

Carolyn:  
I didn't get onto Twitter 'til 2009, only to – because, for the past – the previous years, people were telling me they're winning a ton on Twitter, and I thought, "You'd think I'd be jumping on the bandwagon, but no." And – w – winning on Twitter, and there's different ways to do things, so I – and then I played with it, and I make all kinds of mistakes, and then I teach people, "Hey, this is what I figured out," and then we also help each other, this is a nice thing about being part of a community, is that I learn from fellow sweepers. Someone will say, "Hey, did you know I figured out that, if you do this, it can help you win?" "Oh, really? Oh, that's cool."

Angela:  
So, and actually, I – I –

Carolyn:  
So, what ... people, and I share tips and – ...

Angela:  
What's the best thing to come out of having your own book?

Carolyn:  
Oh, my gosh.

Angela:  
And it could be – it could be financial, it could be emotional, are there job opportunities or consulting opportunities, are there contests that you've won or heard about that you might not have, are there people you've met – that you wouldn't have met if you didn't have a book, what would you say – is the best thing to come out of being an author?

Carolyn:  
Oh, my gosh, well, yes. First – first, I would like to say ... experience, I had a fella that I loved to read, one of my favorite authors and things, Robert Ohotto, he wrote the book *Transforming Fate Into Destiny*, and he said on his radio show – people thinking he made a

fortune writing that book, and he's had to spend all his money on a PR agent, and –and whatnot, and I said – so, I e-mailed him, and I said, "What makes you think that you're gonna make money from your book? All it does is establish you as an expert in the industry." Now, I don't know if that's true, there may be people that make millions from their first book, but that wasn't my experience, I lost my shirt on my first book –

Angela:

...

Carolyn:

– I broke even on my second, I figure, now I'm gonna make money on my third book!

Angela:

Hm.

Carolyn:

Maybe it's the topic, maybe it's how I went about publishing, and I don't know. It's – it is what it is, right?

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Carolyn:

Maybe it's cause it's – maybe it's 'cause now, I'm coming out with a better – the next book is actually – I'm changing the name, it's gonna be *How to Win Cash, Cars, Trips and More*, which ... a little more appropriate to what it is. And – and, coincidentally, December thirty-first, I got an e-mail that I won a publishing package for my book. (chuckles)

Angela:

Ha!

Carolyn:

And I now work – I know. She was so happy when she saw what my book was about, when I'm working with a – with a different kind of publisher, 'cause I self-publish, but this time I wanna publish in package, now I am working with a professional publishing company that I think can actually take the book to the next level, so I don't think it's an accident that I won this prize –

Angela:

Wow.

Carolyn:

– to publish my next book. I know, how exciting! So, I figure, okay, the Universe is telling me something, they're – (laughs)

Angela:

Yeah, I love that, you – have you felt –

Carolyn:

So, I don't ... publishers, but now that I'm talking to ...

Angela:

Have you felt before, that – that there – that there are times, in the contests that you win, that you're – the ones you win, you're meant to win, in some way?

Carolyn:

Sometimes. So, the one I write about in the book, we won a trip to L.A. to meet Bob Blumer, and I – I'm a big – I love Deepak Chopra, and he's – he's – there's nothing that's a coincidence. So, we're in L.A., I'm with my husband at the time, we're ha – we won dinner at Bob Blumer's house, he's this ... gourmet, he's written – I have lost track of the number of books that he's written. So, ... in the morning, and we've – had some wine, and he's cooking for us, and he says to us, "You know, this is the center of my universe," and he's talking about the space in front of him ... butcher block, this beautiful – three foot by three foot – this massive – a foot six butcher block. He says, "This is where I ...," I thought, "That's very profound to – to – to say to strangers." And he said it again, and I thought, "Mm, that's a message for me."

Angela:

Mmm.

Carolyn:

And I think back on that, and he's also fascinated with this hobby, 'cause it's actually when I was just thinking of writing a book.

Angela:

Where –

Carolyn:

I hadn't even thought to that stage yet, so I was asking him about his books and how he was not a chef, and now he's written all these cookbooks. So, I thought, "Hmm," I – took all that away. And what happened from that was, I turned around and took his advice, and – 'cause I had a girl friend say to me, "What's the center of your universe?" and I thought, "Contesting," and I thought, "What do I do with that?"



Angela:  
Hm. Well, ...

Carolyn:  
So I ... my book, and I went off on this path, but, you know, it's crazy? He took that experience – oh, I know we're over time, I'm sorry.

Angela:  
Yeah, it's okay, I'll let you finish up, and then we gotta end this show.

Carolyn:  
Yeah, really quick, he took that and he started entering cooking contests, and he ended up in the world – Guinness Book of World Records for flipping pancakes.

Angela:  
Amazing, amazing, well, "What is at the center of your universe," is the question we're gonna leave you with today, author Carolyn Wilman, w-i-l-m-a-n, you can find out more about her on contestqueen or *You Can't Win if You Don't Enter*, thanks for being with us, Carolyn.

Carolyn:  
Thank you so much!

Angela:  
And we'll be back next week, on Book Journeys Radio, where we change the world one book at a time.