

Book Journeys Author Interview - July 25, 2013

Dr. Angela Lauria with Christine Brown-Quinn, author of *Step Aside Super Woman: Career and Family Is for Any Woman*.

"Marketing ... does have to be driven by the author, because the author is the best person to represent ... that feeling and emotion in the book." ~Christine Brown-Quinn

Angela:

Well, hello, everybody, and welcome to Book Journeys Radio, this is Angela Lauria from the Author Incubator. I am the creator of the Free Your Inner Author program and the founder of the Difference Process for Writing a Book That Matters. And I believe that everybody has their own, unique book journey, if you are listening to this show, part of you believes that you were meant to write a book, that you have something important to say, something to share, you may not know how or when to do it. But your book journey has already begun, even if you don't realize that it has. And ... I like to talk to people on this show about their book journey, how they ended up where they are, how does that first book ... out the door, and what's been good about that, and what they wish they knew before they started. And this week, we have with us a career coach, Christine Brown-Quinn. Christine is the author of *Step Aside Super Woman: Career and Family Is for Any Woman*, I think that's true for me most days, except when I want to take a nap. (laughs) So, Christine, thank you for being here, and – and tell us about your book!

Christine:

(laughs) Thank you. Thanks, Angela, for having me. Yeah, I – *Step Aside Super Woman* is very much about my journey working in a fast, past-faced – fast-paced career and having a family at – at the same time. I mean, did you – do you ever get that feeling, sometimes in life, when you're just like – you're torn between two things, and – and – and sometimes you just feel like, "Gosh, everything's up to me."

Angela:

Mmm.

Christine:

And certainly, when I started out in my career, that's what it felt like, and what I learned was – came to the realization that, actually, I'm a better person because I have these two lives! Actually, my personal life helps my professional life, and my professional life helps my personal life. We hear so much negative noise out there, like, "Oh, you know, career-life balance," and "If you work, it hurts the kids," and "You're – if you're at work, you can't concentrate," and in actual fact, if you – if you figure out kind of what you like in both of those areas of your life and do those things, then – then, actually, they complement one another. And a lot of times, people, they kinda short-circuit, they say, "How – how is that possible?" And so, how do you get through this pain of feeling like, "Okay, I'm – I'm always short-changing." The way to do that is, you think about, "Ah, okay, in my personal life, I

actually – for instance – I’m really learning how to communicate.” Kids, for me, have mainly – really clear communicator and following through throughout – for – through – through your actions, right? So, if you say something and then you don’t do it, you’re kid’s all over you. (laughs)

Angela:

Right feedback ..., thank you, kids.

Christine:

.... Exactly. So – so that’s an example of –

Angela:

Yeah. My seven-year-old’s actually – likes to tell on me. “Mom, you said you were gonna do this!” “Yeah, I got it, thank you, teacher of mine.”

Christine:

Exactly. They’re watching you like a hawk, aren’t they?

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Christine:

Yeah. ... They keep you really – they keep you really honest. And then, in – in my professional life, I – I really learned how to delegate well, and that doesn’t mean, “Okay, here is the job, it’s your responsibility” – the end – delegating is, okay, you’re – you’re kinda coaching somebody, you’re giving some – something to do, but you’re checking in, “How are things going,” and – and certainly, I’ve – I use that skill in my personal life to the nth degree. Anybody that helped out with the kids, if I thought they have potential for – for something they could do, kinda personal secretary stuff, yeah, okay, I’ll have some more of that! (laughs) So, that’s really –

Angela:

Yeah, exactly. And so, what – what was your goal with the book? What was the goal in writing it? What were you looking for?

Christine:

That’s a really good question, because I – that – that’s really what it’s about, before you even sit down to – to – to write a book, you gotta say, “Okay, what’s the purpose?” For me, it was really wanting to share the experience that I had, having the – having a dual-career family – dual career – my husband worked, I worked, two high-powered careers and three kids, and – and instead of it being a life that was completely crazy and always under stress, it was fantastic! It was absolutely fantastic, I thought, “ I want to – it’s time for me, now, to share what” – particularly with younger women, but really, younger couples, about, “Okay, here are

some of the strategies you can employ,” and it’s a great lifestyle, if you choose it. I’m not saying, Angela, by the way, that everybody should do what I did and choose the lifestyle that – that I did, but what I am saying is that, it’s an option. It’s – there’s more – more than one way to skin a cat, and it’s an option, and I really – I really want to – to – to share that – that advice.

Angela:

And when you started your book, was it related – was it related to your business, or, like, wh – what were you doing, careerwise, that made you write a book?

Christine:

Well – yeah, there is – there was a – kind of a – a journey, there, so – I would have been in financial services for about twenty years, and I was turning fifty, and – and – you turn that age and you start thinking about legacy and what’s – what’s it all about, Alfie, you know? (laughs) What – what – what – what am I doing? And I had been invited to give a talk at a launch of a woman’s network at the bank I was working at, and I said, “Well, first of all, what’s a woman’s network?”

Angela:

...

Christine:

And then, I said – yeah, exactly! And I said, “Second of all, why me?” And they said, “Well – you’re – you’re managing direct – you’re female managing director, and you have a family. W – we wanna know how you did it.” And my – I just – I had no idea, and I said, “I – I’m gonna have to think about this.” And it was really that talk that was the a – became the outline of the book, and I love the experience. Just being in front of a group of women and sharing stories and – just a lovely experience. So, I thought after that talk, “You know what? This is what I’m supposed to be doing now.” I’m – I’m supposed to now be coaching other women and – and sharing advice. So it’s not like I resigned the next day, but – but I kind of – it was a defining moment for me, and – and then I thought, “Okay, well, how do I – how do I do that?” I only – I only know finance. That w – spent twenty plus years in finance, so I said, “Okay, what I could do is, I could write a book about my experience as a – as a professional woman and – and juggling these different things,” and then I could kinda launch myself, then, into this new career that would give me expert status.”

Angela:

Mmm. Love that.

Christine:

And that was really the goal. That was the goal.

Angela:

I love that. Here's what I love about this, in the old school thinking – what year did you write your book?

Christine:

Two – it was published in two thousand – beginning of 2011.

Angela:

2011, okay.

Christine:

Yes.

Angela:

In the – in the old school, which I would say would be – probably pre-2005, what – what happened was, most books were sold in bookstores, and there was limited shelf space. And so, in order to get your book out into the world, you had to have expert status. And then you could write a book. And a lot of my clients, when I work with them one-on-one with their book, a lot of my clients think exactly this, “Oh, I have to go out and get another certification,” “I have to get a Ph.D.,” “I have to do a study,” there's all this stuff I have to do before I can write a book, they kind of talk themselves out of it. But now, we don't have limited shelf space.

There's no limit to the number of books, there's three hundred and fifty thousand new books that come out every month, and that number grows every month, and – but we know is, one of the best ways to become an expert is to actually write your book. In the process of writing my book, which is about writing books, that was how – part of how I started this radio show. I started interviewing authors about their experience writing their book, and that has made me an expert on book writing, those interviews, so the actual process of writing your book is how you become an expert. That's why I encourage people to not be in a huge rush, necessarily, to write their book in ninety days or something. That process can be a very – it can be a very powerful process, it's a great way to meet people and interview them, to be able to say, “Hey, I'm writing a book on women in Korea,” or, “Can I interview you?” You can get contacts and – in ways that will help you distribute your book later, during the process of writing it, so it's sort of a – sort of a special time while you're writing your book, to not ...

Christine:

I – I agree completely, yeah. I agree completely, Angela, and I – I think the other thing is that – that the book, it – it just becomes part of a larger project that you're working on, the project being th – this business that you're – you're – you're trying to create, right? It – it – it's happening a – a – as you say, as – as you were – as you're writing the book, it – it's not a – it's not like, “Okay, I'm not gonna do anything,” and nothing can happen until you write the book, and – and actually do i – I – I – it's – th – the other thing though – the other thing that

resonated with me, with what you said, is – is, I do think that the book writing process, it's very cathartic –

Angela:
Mmm.

Christine:
– so, for me, it was like, I had the book in me, and it was, like, I had to deliver this baby. It had to come out. (laughs)

Angela:
Mmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah, I actually have a – a program called Birth Your Book, which you can find at theauthorincubator.com, it's free, and it's – it actually breaks your book up into trimesters, because writing a book really is a lot like having a baby.

Christine:
Absolutely. Absolutely.

Angela:
You almost feel pregnant while you're in the process, you're gestating. So, nobody –

Christine:
Yeah, y – and the other thing, it was, the –

Angela:
Yeah. Go ahead.

Christine:
Yeah, w – well, definitely gonna say is, the other thing that surprised me is – so, that was my goal, and – and that goal, in terms of this thing, the start of the business – I mean, it has absolutely gotten me to – now, I run a successful – it's a really – career consulting business, with – with a business partner, and, for me, it was the book that absolutely was fundamental in launching me, and getting my head in that – in that area, and now, what I find is that, because the book was so much a part of me, so it's my baby, when I meet clients and – and – talking about – say, we're online professional development club, or running workshops for – for professional women on how to self-promote without losing self-respect –

Angela:
Mmm.

Christine:
– these are the topics. When I leave – when I meet corporates, when I leave the book, and I say – 'cause I – also, I'm sensitive – I – not all women have families –

Angela:
Mmm. ...

Christine:
– and when they tell me that, oh, yes, ..., I – I – I leave a copy of the book, and – and the book, I mean, you can't not know me when you read the book, I mean, I just laid it out there!
(laughs)

Angela:
Angela:
Mmm. That's beautiful.

Christine:
A bit – a bit – a scary process, a scary process, but it's really for marketing – marketing tool, incredibly powerful.

Angela:
Yeah, absolutely. And I love that you mentioned people getting to know you, because people like to do business with somebody they connect with. Now, that doesn't mean everyone who reads your book is gonna connect with you, and that helps weed out who are your people and who aren't your people.

Christine:
Mmm. Mmm.

Angela:
Being able to have – read a book and, “Ha, that woman totally gets me.” That's exactly where I've been. Well, that's exactly where I am, “I know that person.” I think that that particular connection you can make with an audience is – it's – it's something that only ... can do, because you have the time to get to know them and – and to develop that relationship.

Christine:
Yeah. Yeah.

Angela:
So, one thing you did mention is that you run conferences, and I actually wanted to make sure people could find you. So, womeninbusinesssuperseries.com, if you wanna learn more about Christine's – some of the programs she just talked about, the conferences and the seminars, there's – there's tons of information in there, so check out [womeninbusinesssuperseries](http://womeninbusinesssuperseries.com). How many, though – everybody's book journey is different, and nobody can know everything before they write their book, in fact, in some cases I think if you knew everything you probably would never do it –

Christine:
(laughs)

Angela:

– which is true about just about everything in life, if you knew how hard starting a business would be, or whatever else, you might not do it. But what is it that you – you wish you knew before you wrote your book? W – what do you wish you knew before you wrote your book that would have made it an even better experience for you?

Christine:

Well, I – I did hear that – with the marketing, that, today, it's – regardless even if you have a big publishing company, the marketing effort is really – is driven by the author, and although I was told that, I didn't quite understand the depth of what that meant. (laughs)

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Christine:

And it wasn't ab – ab – as I started that, I – I – I was reading a lot of stuff online, and – and I found a guy called Steve Harrison, that helps a lot of authors with the marketing of their book, and I'd wish I came across Steve's stuff a bit earlier. I attended a couple of his – his events, he has a Quantum Leap program, where, you attend a couple of conferences – I think ... four conferences a year, with other experts willing to develop business, and, really, I learned an incredible amount about how – how to create a business from whatever – whatever – whatever your expertise is. Also, following some of the stuff he does and how he does, is like e-mail campaigns and things like that. So, I wish I'd – I had come across him earlier, I found – I found ... incredibly valuable, and ... – and given my background, I just didn't know!

Angela:

.... Right. So, let me ask you something. A lot of – a lot of people that I work with say, "Mm, mm, really like marketing, I really – I'm a writer, I wanna write this book. And I will hire someone to do the marketing – I'm gonna write such a good book, people are gonna find it, but I don't – I don't wanna know about marketing before I write my book. That's not the point, the point is writing." So – so why would you – why do you wish you knew about marketing? Like marketing ... before you wrote it?

Christine:

Well – well – in terms of the marketing, I was very clear on who the book was targeted to. And so, in terms of the – the – the – the marketing – the positioning of the book, I was really clear about that. And I hear what you're saying, in terms of concentrating on – on the book, and – and – and not the marketing, 'cause you – the book, it – it's – it's – it's tough, you gotta – it's – it's a concentrated amount of time that – that you have to dedicate to make it happen. It really

– it's like labor, it's not – it's not easy. The thing is, it's kind of like – a lot of – a lot of times, when we work with clients, we'll say, "Okay, if you're gonna be successful in business, you've got to be an expert in something." Right? You gotta be this – the "go-to person." What is it? Are – are you the go-to person? And – and you do these surveys on – online when we run the webinars. And one of the question was, "Are you the go-to person?" And the answers are a bit – are "Yes," or "No," "In the process," or – or "Yes" – one of the answers is, "Yes, but nobody knows it."

Angela:
Mmm.

Christine:
And you think, "Okay, well you're great at what you do, but if nobody knows it, you don't exist!"

Angela:
Right.

Christine:
And marketing, to me, is like that. Un – unless – unless people know that the book is out there, they're not gonna – they're not gonna reach it, and also, as you were saying earlier, ... the – the – the technology has changed things, where you don't have to – a book doesn't have to be in a building to sell. It sells online, and marketing, now – it does have to be driven by the author, because the author is the best person to represent –

Angela:
Right.

Christine:
– that – that feeling and emotion in the book.

Angela:
Right.

Christine:
And – and using social media and all that, the author has got to be part of that, because – because people that are receiving and – and saying – postings and things, if it's not really from the author, then they sense it, it's not – it's not really them, so, that's why, with the marketing, it can't be outsourced, and – and people wanna know the author personally.

Angela:
Mmm.

Christine:

They don't wanna – and when it's all – when it's too artificial and it's all professional, and all – people, they – they don't bond with it.

Angela:

Right.

Christine:

Like, this – this isn't right – I – I don't – I don't feel the author here.

Angela:

Yeah. So, what – w – what would have been – is there anything that would have been different about your book if you had thought about book marketing before you wrote it?

Christine:

I think what – what would have been different is – the traction that I've had with the book would have happened sooner, because, also, with – with a book, you can be marketing even before the book comes out!

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Christine:

And, all that – all that, at the end of the day, helps with the – helps with the exposure. So, I think that's – that's would have been – that's what would have been different.

Angela:

Right. A – yeah, I think that's – I think that's great information to know, going in. When you – when you were writing, can you talk to us about your – your process for actually writing the book? How did you – did you write every day, how long did it take you, what kind of commitment did you make to getting your book written?

Christine:

Well, I – I did set myself a – a time frame, because I – I was so desperate to have the book so that I could launch – launch a business, and – and the thing is, although, technically, you don't need it, for me, it was a confidence builder.

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Christine:

So, doing the book, it – i – it – for me, it was a confidence-builder, which gave me, then, the confidence to say, “Hey! I can talk about this area, I am an expert!” (laughs) Look, I’ve written a book! (laughs)

Angela:

How – how long did it take you to write?

Christine:

It took me – I started writing in November, and, actually, I should say that, what I did was, I – I had an idea of creating a business where I would be – be a consultant, and I – I put together some ideas on – I am – Powerpoint – some Powerpoint slides. I started networking in September, and just talking to people that I knew about my idea, what did they think about doing this book, and I talked to them about some ideas for the book, and then what I would do around the book. I then thought, “Okay, I think I’m on to something here.” I started writing the book in November, and a lot – I did a lot of over kinda – Christmas and New Year’s, and then I finished in March –

Angela:

Wow, that’s great!

Christine:

– and – and had – and started giving it to people – have, like, five people to review it. So, it was – it was ...

Angela:

And when was it published? So, you finished writing it in March –

Christine:

Yeah.

Angela:

– and then, when – when were you holding it in your hands?

Christine:

I was holding it in – in, really, the end of that year, beginning of – beginning of the next year, so – so, in – when I’m finished, I’m giving it to people to review and got it – got comments back and did the revisions. We were in April, and then I said, “I gotta find – I ho – how do I publish this?” (laughs)

Angela:

Yes, well, that's my next question. So how did you publish it, and how did you reach that decision?

Christine:

I – it was amazing. I – again, just networking with people, I love to talk to people, I love to get their feedback and get their perspective, and I started talking to people, and I found out, more people – I – I met more people that had written books – I had – I couldn't have imagined. And every time I met somebody, and they asked me what I was doing, they go, "Oh! Well, I should connect you to so-and-so, they've written a book!" (laughs) So, I just start talking people, and then – and then, that's how I did my research. Okay, so what are my options? Okay, traditional publisher, smaller publisher, self-publishing, and then, within self-publishing, even, there's a – there's a wide – there's a wide variety. So, that took me – that took me a – a bit of time to do that, and in June, as well – I – I say a bit of time, but actually, the latter part of April, I had identified a smaller publisher that I – I had got recommend – recommendations for, and I thought, "Hm, this is an interesting idea," quicker to market, it wasn't – and – and also, I – it wasn't self-publishing, so I didn't have to put any money up front, I thought, "Hm, I like somebody that has the experience, 'cause, again, this is completely new to me.

Angela:

And what – and what was the name of that company, or – or ...?

Christine:

The name of the company is Bookshaker.

Angela:

Bookshaker, okay.

Christine:

It's a U – UK – yes, a UK-based company, and it's effectively a smaller – smaller publisher, and – and, yes, so I – I then applied – consider – book proposal, which – then I started getting in my comfort zone, 'cause I was effectively a business proposal. I thought, "I know how to do this, okay!"

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Christine:

What's my market, how big is my market, I – yeah, I can do this. (laughs) And, yeah, and then I think I signed a –

Angela:

Yeah, if you can really – I mean – and not everybody – not everybody knows this but, whether you're writing a book proposal to get an agent or, in this case, going straight to the publisher – the publisher cares about the topic, they need to know about your book, and – they do business books, and your book is a kid's book about monsters, they – they need to know that, but, really what they're looking for is your marketing. They're really looking for, how are you gonna get this out into the world, because they're taking a risk with their – their time and their resources on you, so they wanna understand what they're getting back in that deal.

Christine:

Yeah, and tha – and that goes back to your original – your earlier point, Angela, which is that, well, I'll just of – I'll just write a good book, and then it will market itself.

Angela:

Hmm.

Christine:

It's all about the marketing, it's a bus – it is – it is a business, the publisher wants to know who's gonna buy this and why, and – and what is your – the other – the other question on the proposal was, "In terms of your marketing plan, okay, what – do you have a website, which – how many hits do you have?" "Are you on Facebook?" "Do you have a blog?" "Are you on – are you on LinkedIn?" Right?

Angela:

Right.

Christine:

So, i – it is – it's all about the market. It's all about the marketing, and you can write a fantastic book, but unless it's written and you understand who's gonna buy it, it's not gonna go anywhere.

Angela:

Right. Absolutely. Yeah – for – fortunately or unfortunately, that is the – that is the book world, and whether you self-publish or go with a big publisher or small publisher, the – really, the marketing burden, the – vast part of the marketing burden is on every author, has to be on every author.

Christine:

Mmm.

Angela:

And unless you're just writing a book to give to your mother for Christmas, you need to be onboard with the marketing part of being an author, that's part of the job, that might not be your favorite part of the job, it might be your favorite part of the job, but in any case that is part of the experience, and I think a lot of people feel, like, writing a book sounds so Herculean that it must be – the bulk of the work must be writing the book, but writing a book – well, I'll ask you, what percentage of the time you spent on your book was the actual writing?

Christine:

Vers – the thing was, the marketing, also, is – i – i – i –

Angela:

U – up to – up to and including now, like, from the day that you got your book idea until the day – until today. How much time do you think you spent writing versus everything else, finding a publisher, promoting your book, speaking, all those other things?

Christine:

Up 'til today, I would probably say the marketing. I spent ...

Angela:

Yeah, but what – what percentage is – what percentage is writing, and what percentage is everything else?

Christine:

Oh, the whole – the whole piece?

Angela:

Yeah.

Christine:

Maybe fifty-fifty? Yeah.

Angela:

Yeah. Right. And people really think it's like ninety percent writing, and then there's this other thing that goes on top.

Christine:

Yeah.

Angela:

So, it's – it's definitely a – it's definitely a surprise for a lot of people, what – what – what is included and what is expected of being an author.

Christine:
Mmm.

Angela:

So, with that, my last question for you is really – I'd love to hear a – a "before and after" story of something that happened to you – an experience you had – business or personal life – something that happened because of being an author that wouldn't have happened if you weren't an author.

Christine:

Well, I – I have to say that the – the most gratifying thing is when I get – I – I get personal feedback. I – early on, in the process, I – in terms of marketing, ... (laughs) I was going crazy, I'd printed these book cards and – I told everybody everywhere, that I came in physical contact with, that I had – that I was an author. And I had this idea that - ... – I'm – I belong to this local health club, and I thought, "The lady's changing room, I'm gonna leave a couple of book cards there." And as you do a little negative voice said to me, "Yeah, Christine – (laughs) – what do you think? Somebody's actually pick up a book card – that's ridiculous!" So, a couple of weeks later, I get a LinkedIn message from a lady who said, "Christine – I'd like to – I'd like to connect. I've just read your book." And I noticed that she was local.

Angela:
Hm.

Christine:

So, I connect with her, and we started dialogue on LinkedIn, and she said, "I saw your book card at the health club" –

Angela:
Mmm.

Christine:

– and she said, "I – I j – I saw it," and she goes, "I'm – I was going through a really rough time. I was just separating from my husband, I've got two young kids," and she goes, "I read your book, and I realized that I am a fantastic mother. And all the things that I bring to my kids, because of my professional career," and she said, "I just want to thank you."

Angela:
Wow.

Christine:

And then, she said, "Perhaps we could – we could meet up." And – and – and I – just made me feel so good, and talk about destiny, so it turns out – I was then going to the US on a book tour which I – I organized myself, by the way, through my university connections and every –

everything else. And – anyway, I was – she said, “Can we meet up?” and I said, “Oh, well, unfortunately I’m gonna be away for a month, promoting my book in the States,” and she – and then she – she sent me another message, and she said, “Well, I’m not stalking you, but I’m gonna be in the US on – on a holiday! Where are you gonna be?” And I told her the locations, and one of the locations was San Francisco. And so, I told her, and she goes, “You’re not gonna believe it, I’m gonna be in San Francisco.”

Angela:

Aaah.

Christine:

So, this is a lady that lives near me, in London, like five miles away.

Angela:

Wow. ...

Christine:

So – so, then - ... actually coincided on the same date.

Angela:

Exactly. ...

Christine:

We ended up having coffee together.

Angela:

So many coincidences, and – or maybe they aren’t coincidences, the serendipities that can happen, putting yourself out there as an author. Christine Brown-Quinn is the author of *Step Aside, Super Woman: Career and Family Is for Any Woman*, you can find out more about her at womeninbusinesssuperseries.com, thanks for being here, Christine!

Christine:

Thank you. Pleasure.

Angela:

And that’s it for Book Journeys this week, we will be back next week, and remember, together, we’re changing the world, one book at a time.