

Book Journeys Author Interview - July 2, 2015
Dr. Angela Lauria interviews Jackie McDaniels, author of *Daughters on Duty: A Caregiver's Guide to Managing Medical Matters*

If you've got a story in you, you deserve to give yourself that gift. ~Jackie McDaniels

Angela:

Well, hey everybody. You caught me right as I was coughing. And this is gonna be a super fun show because I have some sort of chest infection that is going to join us for the show. I hope you will welcome my little phlegmy bug, uhm, and I am so excited this week on Book Journeys. We are gonna be talking to one of my favorite authors, Jackie McDaniels. Jackie is the author of *Daughters on Duty* and she's gonna talk today about, uh, about her book journey and really share with you, guys, some tips. I could not just about this book for her but really about her writing journey in general, so we're gonna talk about a bunch of things on this show, uhm, but really about how being an author, uhm, is an evolving process and owning your authority in the areas where you have authority and identifying those areas where you are an expert is maybe it's a little different on the inside than on the outside. So, uhm, yes, so welcome to Jackie McDaniels. Jackie, hi! How are you?

Jackie:

I'm great, thank you. Thanks for having me, Angela.

Angela:

Awesome. Well, I am going to put my line on you and cough for a few minutes while you tell us all. Uhm, tell us a little bit about *Daughters on Duty*. What's the book about and who is it for?

Jackie:

Well, the book is about my journey in caring for my, personally, in-laws and then my mother, in their later years that they needed help and some of the trials and tribulations that I went through, lessons I learned along the way that I really wanted to share with others that perhaps it wouldn't be such a difficult journey to them. I wrote it for those that are just beginning their journey with elder care, those that have been in it for awhile and have kinda been through the battles and like me, learned as they went along but, uhm, I'm hoping that those, and there are a lot of them, a lot of millennials, a lot of, you know, younger people that are, you know, finding themselves in the position of being a family caregiver and really not prepared for what they find. They've been healthy and, you know, not around hospitals and how hospitals work and it can be very frustrating.

Angela:

Yeah. So, but this wasn't your first writing journey, right? You have been, have you considered yourself a writer before this book?

Jackie:

Oh, absolutely, a hobby writer. Uhm, I write for pleasure, I like recounting vacations, I journal vacations often so that I can, you know, have a story left behind, ah, have a group of friends that we've shared near 40 years together and I've written a few stories along the way that I've shared with them, and poetry, and you know, it's something that's in my blood. My grandmother was a teacher and I have a great aunt who is a writer and so, I can buy it honestly.

Angela:

So. I love it. So, for you, I think a lot of people are in that exact position, like they love writing and like I always use this example, I don't know if anybody else feels this way, but for me, like even if it was writing a birthday card out for somebody, like I always prided myself on, you know, writing ah, maybe a longer heartfelt message than just, you know, *Happy Birthday! Love, Angela*. The other is, you know, writing a birthday card or a poem for somebody's birthday or, uhm, doing a little more than just a travel journal, like I think a lot of people feel an affinity towards writing as creative expression, uhm, but getting that to a finished book is a goal that they, you know, maybe have a challenge getting to that goal. It's like a dream off in the future.

Jackie:

Absolutely.

Angela:

Uhm, so, I'm just wondering, for you, what was different? What do you think were some of the things that were different with this writing experience that it became a book?

Jackie:

Uhm, I went into it a little bit differently and that when I became aware of the Delicious Book program, I looked at it as an education for how I could get past the several different iterations of my book that I had started about my girlfriends and, you know, get 20 pages along and that's as far as I got. I knew I needed some kind of structure to make it happen and so I found the program and decided to go out with something that I knew, something that I've lived for a long time that would be easy for me to build, you know, the lesson around. And it was, ah, just a different view of going about it and the process, I mean, the support and everything was just, you know, the ticket.

Angela:

Mmm. So, you think for you, support and accountability, were they missing on other, you know, writing things that you'd done or...?

Jackie:

Absolutely 'cause I was doing it all within my own little bubble. I mean I, you know, I didn't have people that were reading them for me other than, you know, my husband or a friend or two. Uhm, so I needed to get outside of my own little bubble and find a team that could help me make this happen 'cause it's really hard to do it all by yourself in a bubble.

Angela:

Yeah. I think that's absolutely huge. So, what are some of, uh, what are some of the things that you wish that you knew before, maybe that you know now that you've completed a book that would affect your other writing?

Jackie:

Uhm, I guess a lot of it is the planning part and, uhm, knowing what you're gonna do when you actually start writing. Uhm, maybe a million times I've heard you say that, you know, first thing that you, you know, mistake you made is to start writing before you planned it out. And that was huge because once the outline was done and I could look at it as a whole, uhm, I knew where the beginning, middle and end were and then I could fill in the facts and the stories within that framework and it made all the difference.

Angela:
Mmm. And have you...

Jackie:
That and also knowing...

Angela:
Go ahead.

Jackie:
Then also knowing who I was writing it for, the exercises of finding an ideal reader and writing it to, you know, an individual person as I was going through the writing process instead of globally.

Angela:
Mhmm. And have you applied that to other writing since your book?

Jackie:
Oh absolutely.

Angela:
So how, what kind of, has it changed...

Jackie:
Yeah and I'm still working, still working on my girlfriend book a little at a time and putting those practices, you know, in place as I go along.

Angela:
And so what is it, what has changed about the way that you used to write and the way that you write now?

Jackie:
Uhm, I guess it's just a process and that there's more pieces to it than just, you know, pen to paper, and understanding the story, to begin with, gives it more life and makes it easier to make it interesting because the framework is there and you're just filling in all the good parts.

Angela:
Mmm, I love that. That's awesome. Alright, so let's talk about, uhm, let's talk about your project with *Daughters on Duty*. For you, how did you pick that topic 'cause obviously, you've been thinking about, you know, other, other topics. So how did you end up writing on that one?

Jackie:
Right. Well, uhm, I kinda decided it was my 10,000-hour thing. It, for nearly 15 years off and on, I've been doing pieces and parts of it and so it was something I knew really well. And it was something that I felt needed to be shared because there are, uhm, there are lots of people that are in my position. So, that made it kind of, you know, a no-brainer.

Angela:

I wonder if you would recommend that. So if there's somebody who has, you know, sees themselves as a writer and would wanna finish their book, and maybe they have other books in mind, uhm, I'm wondering if you would recommend thinking about it from this, you know, 10,000-hour perspective. What's the thing you know best to really learn, learn the process by doing it?

Jackie:

Mhmm. I, I mean it worked great for me, uhm, because I can look at my other writings since then in a totally different way.

Angela:

Yeah. And did you still run into writer's block or having trouble focusing?

Jackie:

I did at times, I mean not so much focus but yeah, there were times that I'd look at a blank page and, uh, you know, change the first sentence 10 times and not really know where I was going with it once I sat down to write. But if I went back to the outline, maybe pick a different topic or chapter on the outline, uhm, that would spark my inner author at that moment or I go to research which I really like doing. I confess to wasting a lot of time doing research that I never really used because I enjoy that process of learning. Uhm, but that would then spark something that I would then, *Okay, this goes in this place*, and then it would kind of get me going.

Angela:

And so, what were, how was that different maybe than writer's block you'd experienced in the past? Was it because you had the outline there?

Jackie:

I think that was a lot of it, yes, is because I knew, and I didn't have to do it, having the outline there didn't mean that I had to do it chronologically starting with chapter 1 and going to the end that, you know, they were, because they had topics of their own, they were self-contained even though there needed to be flow between them, uhm, that's what made it easier for me.

Angela:

I see. Okay. Uhm, so, let's talk about advice that you, uhm, that you might have for the writing phase, then we'll talk a little bit, uhm, we'll talk a little bit about publishing and marketing as well. But for the writing phase, what advice would you give to somebody who really wants to publish a book but they haven't been able to finish it? What are some of the things, maybe somebody who, like you, saw themselves as a writer, you know, sees themselves as a writer but haven't been able to get it done?

Jackie:

Uhm, a lot of it was the writing and finding time, making time. Uhm, I happen to work well in bits and pieces and I think understanding when your creative time is and how you work, uhm, makes a big difference. And for me I could take a half-hour here, an hour there and spend some time on it, uhm, and not necessarily spend a whole day or, you know, several hours at a time just being in the way at it. But everybody's different so you have to find where you're productive, you know, your most productive time and trouble with writing at that time.

Angela:

Yeah. I totally love that advice. Totally true. For you, what's the best thing to come out of having written this book?

Jackie:

Wow. It really, really took on a life of its own. I mean I went into it, it's like a, this is my education to write my other book that I always wanted to write. But I surprised myself and was so pleased with the outcome that, uh, I immediately had to have print versions and, uhm, have gone on and talked to some, ah, community folks about a program that I found out about in the process of writing the book called *File of Life*, which, uhm, it's for first responders coming into a home where someone may not be able to answer all the medical questions that they need answers to, to treat them well, and so this program gives that information to those first responders. And then, also I was very privileged to have my book included as part of the curriculum for an elder care management course at Washington State University as a required reading for the students to understand the consumer's point of view and what families go through before they get to an assisted living place and that there's a lot more to the story before that. Uhm, things I never would have expected happening out of it when it all started and it's, you know, continuing, uhm, at this point I'm hoping to perhaps do a class at a community college, an after-hours class and their program, uh, for people that are just starting to realize that, *Mom and Dad are failing. What do I do now?*

Angela:

Hmm. That's so awesome. I love all of that. So let's talk about your, uhm, let's talk about publishing and marketing. Once your book was done, uhm, why don't you talk a little bit about your experience publishing? What for you, uhm, what were some of the bigger challenges that you faced to get your book published?

Jackie:

Uhm, while once we got it, it was written and, you know, all of that, I mean I, for me, I'm not a real good email person as far as doing like big email campaigns and all. Uhm, so trying to figure out a way to get it out to the people that I wanted to find, you know, to see it, uhm, was a challenge for me and not knowing where they were and how to reach them and not wanting to send three or four emails a week saying, *Buy my book*.

Angela:

Mhmm. Yeah that's, that's, yeah, I get that. And so...

Jackie:

So that's been a challenge but in the process of the last year, what I think I've learned is that the best way for me, and I think for a lot of others is instead of looking at it as my book, I look at it as my message, and the book is along for the ride. It gives me credibility and it gives me an opportunity to talk to people where they understand that I do know what I'm talking about. It gives me an opportunity to reach more people on a local level, which ultimately, I really feel will spread out as people understand what's in there and more people need the information.

Angela:

So did you, uhm, did you, do you, did you, wooh, let me see how I wanna ask this question. Do you feel different now that you're an author? Like when you talk about this topic, do you feel like people see you with a different level of credibility because you're an author?

Jackie:

Absolutely. Uhm, it's an odd feeling, hahaha, uhm, and it's actually something that, you know, you kinda have to grow into and like knowing some of the other authors that have published through you and some of the communications that you see is, it's a process of going to, you know, through that and then realizing that, you know, as things start to happen, people really do look at you differently, and you start to look at yourself differently as well. Uhm, I'm kind of in a place now where my mother is now in a group home and where I spent so much of my time meeting her needs, her needs are now being met there and so it gives me an opportunity to be able to take my message out and be able to do something more with it that's gonna affect a lot more people and I'm more confident about that because I wrote the book.

Angela:

And how do you think like, do people, is it that you get called back? Do people just react? How do you know, uhm, you know, how do you know that book has affected your credibility? What are some of the things that have happened that tipped you off?

Jackie:

Just being in places into like these assisted-living places that I've been in and out of and being introduced to somebody and, you know, "This is Jackie McDaniels. She wrote this great book on, you know, taking care of your elders," and so, I mean very often, you know, if it's someone that I know, they're introducing me to someone else, that would be part of the introduction.

Angela:

Wow.

Jackie:

So it's pretty out there. Hahaha!

Angela:

Very cool. That's very cool. And so, what do you think is different about being a published author and having written and published a book, what do you think is different than you expected it to be in the years that you were thinking about it?

Jackie:

I didn't expect it to change me as much as it did. Uhm, the reality of being able to look at myself as a published author, uhm, having had other family members publish books and so forth, it was like, *Ah cool, I'm a*, you know, that was pretty nice to be included in that group. Uhm, I see that it's a process and the more that my message gets out and the more that the book grows, uhm, the more it changes so, it's a continuing thing, I think.

Angela:

Hmm. Yeah, I think that's totally true. And I do think the thing that we don't talk about very much, uhm, is just how much the authors themselves are born by their books. We're so focused I think on getting, getting your book done, uhm, that no one's really expecting how much they'll change and kind of evolve to their next, you know, their next level of being in a way. I know that, I've seen that over and over again.

Jackie:

Yes, yes, absolutely. I've seen that. Yeah. And I'm sure you do. I mean I've seen it just, like you said in the few authors that I've met through Difference Press and through you, I've really seen

changes in them in the years since we published our books and where people have gone. It's very interesting.

Angela:

Yeah, that's so cool. Well, what do you think, uhm, you've talked about accountability, uhm, and you know, and getting accountability in terms of getting your book done and the importance of that. So, what do you recommend for accountability? What do you think were the parts of our program that maybe helped you with that or, uhm, what would you recommend to people in order to be held accountable in that way?

Jackie:

Well, you know, part of it, you know, doing the outline the way that we did it, you know, there was a certain number of pages attached to each part of the outline with the date so we, you know, setting my own date for when I expected to have it done. And uh, but if you don't, you know, I have, you know, just having someone else that you know well that's like, I'm writing this chapter and, you know, I need to, you know, I need an accountability buddy. And if you can find somebody that, you know, maybe also was writing and uhm, you know, swap what you've written or at least be accountable for, say, *Yes, I wrote my two thousand words* or whatever your commitment was. Uhm, but I think by putting it all ... in the outline with the number of pages that I thought each section would be and then how long it would take me, you know, it was out there so I worked towards that and I think that made a huge difference, you know, even if I hadn't had Kate on the other end of the line wondering where my copy was. Haha!

Angela:

Mhmm. Yeah, a lot of people are resistant to that 'cause like, *I won't know how long it can be until I write it*. But you actually do, haha.

Jackie:

And it could change.

Angela:

You know, at the end of the day, you should pick a number and it could change but just putting a number there and taking a guess, is so much more powerful than saying like, *Well, I'll figure it out when I get to it*.

Jackie:

Right, right. Knowing that, you know, especially on a day when I was on a roll and I put through, you know, a couple thousand words pretty quick, it was like, *Oh okay. Well, that's doable*.

Angela:

Right. Uhm, so anything else about your experience with your book journey that you think it would help people to know or understand maybe why this time was different, uh, why you think it worked?

Jackie:

I guess a big part of it was that I made the investment in myself, for, you know like, time investment, the money investment, uhm, I'd really never valued myself enough and that doesn't sound right 'cause that's not really what I mean, but to make that kind of commitment, both time and money, uhm, you know, I talked to my husband about it that I wanna do this. I need to carve out the time. I need to make the investment. Uhm, yeah, that was a gift to me, something that

I've never done to that degree and if you've got a story in you, you deserve to give yourself that gift.

Angela:

Yeah. That to me is the, that's the highlight really for this, for this episode. If you've got a story inside you, you deserve to give yourself that gift. And I think about how many people who just let time keep picking on and give that up when they don't have to. I mean in the end, of all the, you know, thinking that you have been doing about writing a book, in the end, how long did it take you to get your book written and published?

Jackie:

Yeah, to have it done in three months was just a whirlwind. It went by so fast.

Angela:

Yeah, and this is what I tell people, is like, writing and publishing a book doesn't take that long. You know wondering if you're good enough or have enough to say or, you know, like there's a lot, you could spend a lot of time doing a lot of things other than writing a book but when you're really focused on getting that result, uhm, it's pretty quick. So I love that you had that experience. *Daughters on Duty* is Jackie McDaniels' book. So, if you are somebody who has helped with elder care, if you know somebody who has been in the position to help a loved one through ongoing medical situations, you have to get this book. It's got really practical, practical things to do as well as a lot of the mindset work, a lot of the work that you need to do on yourself with, not just taking care of yourself during crisis, 'cause everyone will tell you that but they're not looking at, you know, the amount of things you have to do in that time, so Jackie really takes you through the whole process. You can find *Daughters on Duty* at amazon.com. Jackie, do you also have a website?

Jackie:

I do, uh, jackiemcdaniels.com.

Angela:

Great, so you can find out more about Jackie at jackiemcdaniels.com. You can get *Daughters on Duty* at amazon.com and one of the things I love about Jackie's story is that she really made herself this time the hero of her book journey. And so often on our book journeys we are the victim -- the victim of not enough time, the victim of not-good-enough writer, the victim of your mean third grade teacher. Whoever it is that you on your book journey choose to be a victim of people, uh, agents not accepting your proposal, whatever it is. But on her book journey for *Daughters on Duty*, Jackie made herself a hero of her book journey and if you head over to ^PageUp^ podcast, that's pageuppodcast.com, we are at episode 13 this week and it is, uhm, this episode is called How to Make Yourself a Hero of Your Book Journey. So, one of the ways, ... their book and people who talk about their book is knowing how to put yourself at the center of that story. Jackie said on the call today, she said, "I realized this was a topic I had 10,000 hours of experience on." She owned that position of expert and of course, now you could see she's evolved and she owns it even more and she's really stepped into that role of expert on a number of levels. Her book is being used in curriculums. And so, once you believe it and can see that it's true, it can become even more true. So I encourage you to head over to pageuppodcast.com. Go ahead and subscribe to the podcast and listen to today's episode or this week's episode, which is all about how to make yourself the hero of your book journey. Jackie, I am so grateful to you for sharing your story with us all today and for sharing your book with the world. Thank you for being here.

Jackie:

And thank you for having me. It was good to talk to you.

Angela:

Awesome. And we will be back next week on Book Journeys Radio, and we'll catch you then, changing the world one book at a time.