

Book Journeys Author Interview – May 28, 2015
Dr. Angela Lauria with Jill Angie, author of *Running with Curves*

If you know who you're writing to, it makes it a lot easier to formulate your message.~Jill Angie

Angela:

Hey everybody! We are back at Book Journeys Radio. We've had a couple weeks' hiatus and it is nice to be back in the studio with an amazing guest this week. I'm so excited to introduce you to, uhm, this is actually Difference Press's top-selling author. I always like introducing her this way. Jill Angie is the author of *Running with Curves: Why You're Not Too Fat To Run, and the Skinny on How to Start Today*. Jill, thanks so much for being here.

Jill:

Oh, thank you. I'm so happy to be here.

Angela:

Yeah. So every week on Book Journeys, we talk to an author about not just their book but the entire journey of becoming an author. I think everybody's book journey is unique but there are some lessons that those of us who have not crossed the finish line yet but are looking for how to finish their book, I think there are some lessons that you can take from people's book journeys to find yourself on that road and to finish your book. So I think today you will learn how Jill has done that, learn a little bit about it, but I wanna start the show off by talking about your book. So Jill, why don't you tell us about *Running with Curves*. What's it about and who's it for?

Jill:

So this is basically the book that I wish had existed when I started running almost 20 years ago. And it's essentially a how-to guide, how a woman who's overweight can start running in the body she has right now.

Angela:

So I guess there are some niche out there that you were trying to ... some feelings that people had maybe that there was a certain weight you have to be to run, or a certain body type. What made you, what was it that inspired you to write the book? Where'd you get the idea for this concept?

Jill:

Ah, it's a great question. So I actually went through a fitness journey of my own, uhm, you know, maybe starting around 2009 and I lost weight using a personal trainer and training for a triathlon and doing all kinds of great stuff like that. But I didn't lose a ton of weight and what really turned out that I was running but I was not a typical runner. And I kind of realized that there were, you know, here are some of my clients, I became a personal trainer along the way, heard a lot of my clients saying, "Oh I can't do that. I'm too fat. I'm too big, I'm too whatever." And I kind of realized that there's sort of this gap out there where people believe they have to be thin to start working out and to start running and to start doing all these things. And I wanted to tell everyone like, you don't have to wait until your body looks like a fitness model, like you can start doing all that stuff now. And along the way you're gonna

realize it doesn't really matter if your body ever really looked like a fitness model, that you can just be amazing and powerful and feel wonderful in the body you have right now, and that running can help you get there.

Angela:

And we talked about this before but for you, you say running has a lot to do with confidence, with body confidence? What's the connection there?

Jill:

Yeah, it's kind of incredible how the more you run, the more confident you are in, you carry yourself differently. You start carrying yourself like somebody who feels good about themselves. You become confident 'coz you realize you can do things you didn't think you could do. Suddenly, you know, you're running a 5k and you're just like, "My God, when did I become that person that goes out for a run first thing in the morning?" And you realize it sort of like translates throughout your life. It's not just, "Oh, I'm confident I can run." It's "I'm confident I can do anything I wanna do. It's just a matter of, you know, putting my mind to it and working hard and so it becomes not just about the running. It becomes about everything and how you look at yourself as a person and as a woman.

Angela:

I love that because it has so many parallels with writing a book. I mean so many people see writing a book the way maybe they see running a marathon, that it's something for other people or it's something off in some distant future when they're thin or when they've taken enough writing workshops or whatever. And so I think it's such an amazing lesson in how a project like writing a book or writing or running your first 5k can give you confidence in other areas of your life.

Jill:

Yeah, and so it's funny you should mention that because when I was running this book, I was training for my first half marathon and I started doing them both around the same time. And I would apply lessons from writing the book to my training, and I would apply lessons from my training to writing the book. So it's really, there are a lot of parallels. It's just that one step at a time and, yes, it's an incredible parallel.

Angela:

Alright, so let's give people, let's just start off with a piece of advice. What is the one, what's the one piece of advice that you would give to somebody who has wanted for a long time to write a book and they haven't done it. Maybe it's the same piece of advice you would give to somebody who has wanted to run for a long time and hasn't done it. What's the thing you say to people about getting their book done?

Jill:

Aside from calling you first? Hahaha!

Angela:

Oh! Okay, call me but just in case my number's suddenly unpublished.

Jill:

Hahaha! I guess it would be, know who you're writing to, I think, because that's one of the things I think that made it easier to write my book 'coz I was writing it to myself almost, almost as a love letter to myself honestly. But my ideal reader, I kind of framed her out to be, to be me, to be somebody who was overweight and had, you know, wanted to do different things that she thought maybe she, you know, shouldn't be, quote-unquote, allowed to do but I knew that she could. So I guess if you know who you're writing to, it makes it a lot easier to formulate your message.

Angela:

Totally true. Obviously, I believe that one. What is something that you wish you knew before you wrote your book?

Jill:

Uhm, so I guess if I'd known how completely life-changing it would be, it was totally career-changing because it created a whole new career for me that I didn't even know was gonna exist two years ago. But if I'd known how personally life-changing and how much growth I would get out of writing this book, I think I would have started sooner, haha, 'coz I talked about it a lot, you know, I should write this book, I should write this book and uhm, and I just, I didn't realize just how, the magnitude of changes that it would bring to my life. So I think if I'd known that, I would have started earlier. Yeah.

Angela:

Well, share with us a little bit of the before and after. So what was your life like and your business like before you wrote the book and what is it like now?

Jill:

Uhm, oh gosh, I just love my life right now. It's amazing. So when I wrote the book, I think I started it in August of 2013, so just a little under two years ago, and I had recently quit my fulltime job in pharma. I was a corporate desk jockey for 20 years and I quit my job and about nine months after I quit my job, I started writing this book. And when I quit, I thought I'm gonna be a personal trainer. That's what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna, you know, live out the rest of my life 'coz I'm gonna bring women into my gym that my husband and I built and I'm just going to be a personal trainer. And then I thought, "Oh, you know, I should write this book 'coz I wanna get this message out there that you can be fit and happy in the body you have right now." And that book changed everything because after it dropped into Amazon which I think was, I wanna say November 2013 or early December, I started getting like emails from people that have read my book and they would say, "You made it okay for me to start running and not wait till I'm thin." And like the light bulb went off in my mind that like, I can help people in a whole different, at a whole different level, on a whole different scale than just being private clients in my studio, like I can help people literally all over the world. And so that kind of started a lot of processes where I created a website, I created a Facebook page, and then I created a private Facebook community, and then those women started connecting with each other. And so it resulted in me being able to grow this book into literally a worldwide revolution that everyday like, I'm just constantly blown away by how amazing the people are that have come together, that are, you know, that are part of this community that are like, now they're spreading the message. So yeah, so before the book, I was happy training my clients one at a time in my gym, and now it's like everyday, I get to

connect with and lead and inspire, and be inspired by literally women all over the world. So it's kind of awesome. Haha!

Angela:

Yeah, that is pretty freakin' awesome. So if you guys wanna learn more about this or follow along during this interview. If you go to runningwithcurves.net, you can learn more about the curvolution that Jill has started. And if you're on Facebook, and you search for the group called Running with Curves, you'll also learn more about the private Facebook community that she mentioned, uhm, which I think is awesome especially if you wanna be runner and participate, but to also see how you can create a movement with your book that just goes far beyond the pages of your actual book. So I think you sort of answered it Jill, but I wanna talk about what you had envisioned before you started because obviously you talked about how you had this, you had a personal training business and I think you saw the book in one way, and now really your business has shifted from personal training to really running this movement. But what did you envision before you completed your book?

Jill:

Ah, that's another good question. I'm not a hundred percent sure because I don't think I had really thought it through. I wanted to be somebody who'd written a book so that much was very clear to me. I wanted, I literally just wanted the experience of writing a book and I wanted to put "author" after my name. And I guess like, you know, when you asked the question, "What do you wish you'd known before you wrote your book?", like I had no idea how life-changing it was going to be and so I didn't envision everything that's happened since the book came out. Yeah, I still sometimes sit there and go, *Is this real? Is this really happening?* because I did not envision that. So if I'd known ahead of time just how powerful it could be, uhm, yeah, I may, I might have, I actually, no I take that back 'coz I think if I'd had an end game in mind, at least for me, it might have changed how I wrote the book because the book really was a love letter. Uhm, it came absolutely straight from the heart. So I just, that's all I envisioned. I'm not sure if I answered your question or not but...

Angela:

Yeah! No, it's interesting. So why do you think when there's so many ... more than 350,000 new books come out every month. So why do think it is that some books get into readers' hands and into their hearts and they become part of a movement like yours, and then some books just don't make that same impact? What do you think that your book has that people have been looking for?

Jill:

I think, I think it's relatable because I didn't write it, I wrote it from a place of love for my own clients, for my readers. And I think when you write from that place where all I wanted to do was help them become, I'm getting teary just talking about it, but really, all I wanted to do was just help them feel better about themselves. Literally, that's what I wanted, you know, for the book and for, even if I had only one person reading it, I wanted them to feel better about themselves afterwards. And uhm, and so I guess if it's somebody's goal from writing a book is strictly just to sell books and make money off of it, uhm, this is a well-written book and if it happens to resonate with people, you know, I think that'll be well. But I do think there's that piece of the intention of the author and the feelings that the author's having when they're writing, I think it comes through. And so if you're writing from a point of uhm...

Angela:

Yeah, what I always say is, what I always say, the emotion that goes into the book is the emotion that comes out of it. So if you're writing from that place of loving connection, that's what your readers are gonna get. And if you're writing from wanting your readers to do something, it will have that kind of energy and so you have to be really careful that you hesitate ... when you write. 'Cause it's not just about the words, some of it's the words. That's a piece of the communication but a lot of it is the energy that comes through the book that we decide, like is this the person I wanna connect with on a deeper level?

Jill:

I think that's it exactly.

Angela:

So let's talk about writer's block. So what happens is a lot of people who write their books, they get an idea, they get started, and then 20 pages in, something happens. I don't know, they get a cold or something and they miss a couple days of writing, and then everyday that they're away from their manuscript, it gets harder and harder to get back to it and people get stuck in writer's block. Did you have any writer's block?

Jill:

Oh, definitely. Haha!

Angela:

And if so, what did you do about it?

Jill:

Yeah, I definitely had it. I think, uhm, it's funny 'coz the first couple of chapters just sort of poured right out of me. It was just like, *I gotta get this out there*. And then I think I went through a period of questioning, *Can I really help people? Do I really know what I'm talking about?* I get all kinds of questioning thoughts and every time that would come up, I would find myself finding reasons not to write or, you know, like I had writer's block but once I, and sometimes I would literally just sit down in front of the computer and just stare, haha! But I would make myself kind of sit there in the allotted time that I said I was gonna write and eventually it would come out. And sometimes I would, you know, just kind of write to myself like, *Who do you think you are?*, like, you know, kind of like getting all my negativity, just get it out on the page and then to lead it. And then sometimes it was easier to write after I got all that crap, so to speak, out of my head but there was definitely writer's block but it was all tied to me questioning myself and questioning whether I was qualified to write this book because when I was in a space of, *Of course I can help these people. Of course I'm qualified because I've lived it*, like from that space it was very, very easy to write.

Angela:

And so, uhm, have you, you mentioned that you had wanted to write a book for a long time. Had you tried with something different this time or why do you think you were able to get through when so many people get stuck at that point?

Jill:

You know, I've never actually tried to write a book before this particular effort. I had written a blog. I had a blog for many years and so I found that I enjoyed writing and I think I had started talking about writing this book for, you know, for several months and right at the time I kind of made this decision like, *Yeah, I'm gonna write this book*, somehow the universe or some higher power put you in front of me and I was like, *Well, that's my sign*. I need to, you know, pursue this with the Difference Press 'coz it seemed like the perfect opportunity. So I just think it's kinda interesting like at the point that I was getting readier and readier, talking about it, talking about it, and then really envisioning what it would look like, the right opportunity came up.

Angela:

Mmm, I love that. And so why do you think you finished? Was it just having a mentor or was there something about the program that you think made you more likely to finish? "Coz lots of people hire book coaches and they still don't end up with a book so..."

Jill:

Yeah, yeah. Well, I do think so because there was a deadline. There was, I mean, it was, I was committed. I had a contract, I was committed, I had to deliver this book at such and such a time or I would lose money on it. So I knew, like you know, I had this like, *Alright I'm committed to make this one*, and it was a short enough time frame. It wasn't like, *Oh we're gonna work over the course of a year*, you know. I signed the contract and then the next week it was like, *Okay, let's get this, you know, let's get this going*. We had deadlines, but it was very organized. I didn't write anything until the entire book was outlined, until my ideal reader had been clarified. And I think that right there, like knowing what each step of the process was in, and almost like, you know, running a marathon or training for a marathon, like I just had to look one week ahead. That's all I had to do, like these are the things I need to do this week and then I'll worry about the next week. And I think like having it that organized, having somebody that I was accountable to aside from just myself, 'coz I'm not the most reliable when it comes to accountability. Well, like having someone else that was expecting a piece to be done and that was kind of a sanity check was immensely helpful.

Angela:

So I love all of that but I wanna go back to marathon training 'coz I didn't know this technique. So you're training for a marathon and you have let's say a training schedule. Is that one of the things you teach, is only look like a week ahead?

Jill:

Yeah, it's just worrying about the next mile. It's even smaller than the week ahead.

Angela:

Wow.

Jill:

I mean aside from looking at your schedule and saying, *Okay, I'm on vacation. That week I have a 12-mile run schedule*, you know, you have to have a little bit of long-range planning there. But beyond that, just get through the next mile, just get through the next ten minutes,

like that's literally how I got through, you know, I get through training for all of my long distance events.

Angela:

I actually love that and I had no idea but that's exactly right. So one of the things that we do at The Difference Press is we break your book up into essentially one assignment a week and we kind of hold that bigger picture for you. Like yes, you have to make sure the day your book is gonna launch, you aren't in Costa Rica or let's say whale-watching the Morocco Coast of Sta. Barbara. But other than those things, as long as you've got kind of the days cleared, there's one task to work on for a week and I find that holding that whole big picture of doing the book feels like so much to juggle that you end up like needing to nap more frequently. So if you have someone who's like, *Okay, all you have to do this week is this*. And then sometimes it's literally all you have to do right now is write the next word, write the next sentence, and then decide if you wanna write the next sentence. But I guess, you know, it's really, it is like a long distance run or training for a new distance in that it's much easier if somebody helps you break that up and somebody helps you stay accountable to the ... so really fascinating. So let's talk about what for you was maybe different than you expected. A lot of people think having a book is gonna look one way and then it looks a little bit different. So I know that you've said it's been a really great experience for you but what was different maybe than what you expected or what surprised you? The image you had of writing and publishing a book, how is it different than it ended up being?

Jill:

I think it was just so much easier. Haha! It was so much, all aspects were easier. I mean it may have been because I was working through your program instead of trying to self-publish. And I do have friends who have written books and self-published them and uhm, had a lot of frustration. And also I read their books and I look through and I'm like mentally picking out all the typos and stuff like that because they've chosen not go with professional editing. So I think for me, it was just so easy to have somebody else take care of the editing, take care of the cover photos, take of the formatting, like having someone to figure out just how to get the thing uploaded to Amazon, like all of that. Literally all I had to do was sit down and write, and that I think when I originally thought, *Oh, I'd like to write this book*, maybe part of, you know, I'm talking it through now and realize that probably part of the reason that I didn't start was because it seemed very overwhelming. It wasn't just the writing, it was everything else and I was like, *Oh, I'm gonna have to call publishing houses and shop this around and it's just gonna be like*— It was so far out of my comfort zone. The writing itself was not that far out of my comfort zone. That's something that I truly enjoy. But everything else seemed really hard, so I think uhm, yeah, The Difference Press, that's the difference. Haha!

Angela:

Yaaah!

Jill:

It really is! I mean, you know, we've talked about this, like how much I enjoyed that process and how I can't wait to start writing more books because it let me do what I'm good at which is writing and somebody else worried about all the other stuff.

Angela:

And you actually have another book coming up that I think you're gonna start this summer?

Jill:

Yeah.

Angela:

Tell people about that one.

Jill:

Oh, this one I'm super-excited about. So in the community, the Facebook community that I run, I am privileged to hear story after story about uhm, there's just these incredibly brave and courageous women that, you know, they might come in last place during a race, they might be running at the back of the pack, they might be slower than everybody else and then never ever do they question whether they should be a runner, whether they should quit, like they just keep doing what they're doing because they just enjoy it so much. And a lot of times they're even overcoming obstacles. You know, I have one of my group members has rheumatoid arthritis. I have several group members that have literally lived through cancer, others that have lost 2 or 300 pounds to running, like every possible obstacle you can imagine and they've overcome. So the next book I'm writing is going to be telling their stories and kind of drawing together, like how running can change you as a person and just ah, I just get emotional everytime I talk about these women because they're so amazing. But yeah, so I wanna tell the stories, you know, in the first book I kinda told my own story and I said this is how you could be a runner. And now I wanna tell the stories of all the people that are doing it, that are living it, and kind of like give them, you know, celebrate all of the people out there that are sort of living this running lifestyle even though they're not typical runners.

Angela:

I love that and it's a perfect segue into my last question. We've only got about a minute left but I'm wondering if you can think of a specific before-and-after story, something that's happened to you since you've become an author that wouldn't have happened if it weren't for your book?

Jill:

Uhm, you mean a person that I know that's had...

Angela:

Maybe a person you've connected with or an opportunity that you've had, something that wouldn't have ... your book that you're really proud of or excited about.

Angela:

Uhm, ah gosh, I feel like everything in my life is an example of something that wouldn't have happened if I hadn't written my book. I truly believe that but I think uhm, the connections that I've made, both locally and worldwide, with people that I never would have met otherwise if I hadn't written my book and people that have changed my life because they're in it. Like that in and of itself, and like ah, see, virtual races, right? So I've started running

virtual races and I've had the chance to actually create local events so people can come and run the race and I've been able to hold the finish line for them and put their medal around their neck as they cross it and that would never have happened if I hadn't written this book and that's just, that's been amazing for me.

Angela:

That is so awesome. So if you wanna find out more about Jill Angie who is the author of *Running with Curves*, Jill said she's been running virtual races, she doesn't just mean running them, she actually means, right, organizing them. So you can join one of her virtual races. The website is runningwithcurves.net, the author of *Running with Curves: Why You're Not Too Fat to Run, and the Skinny on How to Start Today* has been our guest today. Jill Angie, thank you so much for being with us and sharing your book journey with us.

Jill:

Ah, thank you. It's been a pleasure.

Angela:

And as always, check out our sister show, *^PageUp^*. You can find *^PageUp^* on iTunes. There's a great episode this week about your ideal reader. Jill talked a little bit about that and you can learn the Difference Process for identifying your ideal reader and how that is different from identifying your target market which is what most authors are taught. So head on over to iTunes and check out *^PageUp^* and we'll meet you back here next week on Book Journeys, changing the world one book at a time.