

[Book Journeys](#) Author Interview - Aug. 14, 2014

Dr. Angela Lauria with Dr. Kathy Gruver, author of *The Alternative Medicine Cabinet*

"I find it very empowering to people to know that they don't have to be a slave to what their doctor tells them." ~Kathy Gruver

Angela:

Well, hey everybody. Welcome to Book Journeys Radio. We are back with another exciting episode. We are going to be talking this week to Kathy Gruver, actually Dr. Kathy Gruver. She is the author the *Alternative Medicine Cabinet* and today are going to be talking about her book. Kathy, thank you so much for being with us today.

Kathy:

Oh, thanks for having me. I appreciate it.

Angela:

Well, terrific. I guess to kick this off why don't you tell us about *The Alternative Medicine Cabinet*. What's your book about and who's it for?

Kathy:

Yeah, absolutely. You know it's for anybody that wants to make really self-propelled changes in their lives... I'm not opposed to Western medicine but I think we have to pull the best aspects of that and the best is alternative complementary medicine. And that's what I've tried to do with this book. It starts out really general. What are homeopathics? How to use them? What is Reiki? What are the different types of massage? I sold a very active massage practice... and people ask me all the time, What is this type versus this type? Well you explain all that to people and I really wanted to make it clear that alternative medicine doesn't have to be scary; it doesn't have to be this thing... you sneak into the back room where you'll find some... woman with a potion, I mean, It can be very mainstream and really easy to incorporate into your lives. So then I get into being much more specific talking about cancer and weight loss and different ways that you can incorporate this into your life, very easily with subtle changes; it doesn't have to be this all-or-nothing thing. And I've gotten great compliments from people who know alternative medicine who said it's a really great reminder... and also from people who aren't familiar with it who said it's a great primer... it's a great introduction... to be introducing that type of medicine into their life, so... it's easy to read; it's fun; I've had people tell me it sounds as if I'm reading it aloud to them because I write very much the way I speak - it's a very ordinary process for me, maybe. And it's fun... I want to make it a fun journey. Anybody can, you know, make a very dry blah blah blah kind of technical blab, and... I put in technical but I also put in fun... that's just sort of me, so... yeah... and it's won a couple of awards which I'm really excited about...

Angela:

That's awesome... we'll go to that award in a second. I want to talk about how you reached the point to write this book because you actually are a natural health practitioner. You mentioned that

you are trained as a massage therapist. But you've actually done quite a number of things, right? So what are some of the other natural medicine practices that you are certified in or that you've practiced with actual clients?

Kathy:

Yeah, well, absolutely. I started out as a massage therapist and it's so funny because I found people were lying on my table and asking me very not-massage-related questions. They'd say: *I just had open heart surgery... I had this blood test... My kid has autism...* and you know, I've found that they really wanted me to be a health practitioner for them and not just a massage therapist. So I got my doctorate as a traditional naturopath, and that wasn't quite enough for me so I got my Masters and Ph.D. in Natural Health and with that I incorporated a lot of this stress... body medicine. And that's a huge part of what I do. I wrote two more books on stress because I had to add that in. I really can't stop writing. It's an addiction. I'm finishing up a hypnotherapy program which I'm really excited about, and I work a little bit with herbs and homeopathics.. a lot with nutrition... and I speak around the country on all of those topics and... you know, the lecturing, the writing, and TV and radio and I just love... people who know they have other options. I find it very empowering to people to know that they don't have to be a slave to what their doctor tells them; that they can actually ask questions and make different choices and that really excites me to get to help people to know that.

Angela:

Well, that's awesome. Now I know people can read more about *The Alternative Medicine Cabinet* actually at thealternativemedicinecabinet.com. But I dugged in a little more and I went to kathygruver.com and Kathy's very groovy last name is spelled G (as in George) - R (as in Romeo) - U (as in uniform) - V (as in Victor) - E (as in Elephant) - R (as in Romeo), so it's Kathy K-A-T-H-Y Gruver dot com. and... you seem to collect certifications ma'am. You have done a lot of training like this is in your full time job. How did you finally get yourself out of the classroom long enough to write a book. What was it that made you want to sit down and take on this amazing body of knowledge and put it into this sort of primer book? This is, you said, your first book, so we'll talk about the others as well, but how did you kind of, settle with yourself down, to do that?

Kathy:

What's settle? No. I mean (laughs), somebody asked me what I do in my free time and I said, "I'm sorry. What's free time?" Well, it grew out of two different things. One, was very practical. Which was... I was working one-on-one with people in my office, and I thought, *God, you know, I want to reach more people. How do I do that?* And there was a local magazine that was looking for... It was like a fitness magazine... and I met the guy, who had this business function, who said, "Hey, why don't you write an article for me?" And I said, okay, how about on the different types of massage? Because again, that's really confusing for a lot of people because, you know... shiatsu versus hot stones versus Swedish. What is all that? So I wrote this really fun article... he put in the magazine... and I started writing more from there. I ended up writing for some of the big massage magazines, and you know, different people's blogs. And being that I

was in school, I had to write papers; I had to do projects... and then the second way the book came about is I used to be an actress. I used to be a performer in Hollywood for years and years... grew up acting... and I wanted to do public speaking. I had met a gal at a business function and she was a public speaker and I said, you know, I feel like I need to get with a speakers bureau and she looked at me and said, "Oh, that's great, and you wrote a book, right?" and I said, "Uhhh. What do you mean?" She said, "A speakers bureau won't touch you unless you have a book. So I sat down and I thought, *What the heck am I going to write?* I mean I seriously never thought, I'm going to write books. My husband's a writer. He's the writer in the family... I'm a practitioner. And I sat down and I started from scratch to write this very technical, very complicated book and I got about 20 words into it and realized, *I have all this stuff I've already written.* So I pulled all these articles and all these projects and all these papers that I had to write for school and I realized, *Oh, my god, I have a book!* So that's where it grew out of... the practicality of wanting to reach more and more people, which I have with the book, but then also realizing... to be an expert in my field; to really be taken seriously as a speaker, as a presenter, I needed to have... that book! So there's kind of a two-fold reason for writing it.

Angela:

I love it! And I love so many people don't realize how much content they have, even if it's content you've generated by answering client email, or, on your blog. But then to think about, during your trainings and certifications or even just two-day conferences you've attended, what is... the journaling or the papers or the articles that you've generated... and sometimes just to print them all out and look at them, can be a tremendous resource so you're not starting with a blank page. That's an amazing tip right there.

Kathy:

Well that's exactly what I did. You know, I keep all the magazines. I keep all the printouts that I had written and of course I was still in school when I wrote my first book, and so I was in the midst of studying school and writing a book, and having my practice and I have a husband who wants to see me every once in a while... so I put everything out on the floor, spread it out and went, "Oh, my God! I've written a lot." You don't think about it until you've looked at it in one big pile and realize, "Wow, I have quite a body of work." And when I put the book together, I changed some things and added some things... I think I would do it completely differently now that it's done... but, yeah it was such a fascinating process to figure out how everything intricately fit and... what I really want to put in; what is really important to tell people and it was such a fun process, I actually did really enjoy it.

Angela:

That is fantastic, and I love this... let's shatter this mess right now. I hope you will go on this journey with me... I hear so many people, so many clients that want to work with me on a book who would call me and talk about how they dread writing and how writing a book is drudgery and how hard it is to write a book. And I think you can help me shatter this mess because when you are coming from something that you are passionate about and you love, and when you can look at all the resources you have supporting you, it doesn't have to be drudgery!

Kathy:

There were certainly moments when I went, *Oooh, God. Help!* But for the most part, it was writing down ideas and pooling ideas I already had and just organizing them and expanding upon them. You know, taking, like you said, a blog entry or a journal entry and turning that into a chapter. And one of the things... my brain works really, really fast... as you can tell, I talk really fast... I'm from the East coast originally... So to sit down in front of the computer and type--really difficult for me sometimes because my brain goes faster than my fingers. So what I'd do is I'd dictate... and we have this fabulous invention called the iPhone that has a Note feature... and you know, literally, I just did two really big interviews for magazines where they sent me, you know, 15 questions that needed and oops to every paragraph as an answer. I would... no, I'd still be driving... I dictated into my phone... I'm sitting here getting an oil change this morning and I dictated my answers. And that other thing I really like about doing that is it makes it natural. And that was really hard for me... When I had to write my dissertation, you know with a Ph.D... it's very technical. So I couldn't be smart-alecky and can't indulge and won't and it has to be: I cannot, I will not, and should not and yeah. If you have trouble writing, speak, talk, you know. It's an easy way to get that book out.

Angela:

I love that. You've obviously written more than one book so let's talk about your other books, but I want to talk about it in the context of... There has to be a reason after you finish your book that you've gone on to write three more books--I know you're working on your fourth... So what is it that having that first book did for you that made you want a second, a third, a fourth, and now, maybe a fifth?

Kathy:

It was a two-fold thing. Part of it was, I got so many great compliments of: *Oh, my God. I keep your book in my bathroom... I'm reading it all the time... Everybody should have it in their house... It's such a great resource...* you know. I mean hearing that feedback all the time... and you know, you hold that book in your hand and you stroke the cover and there's truly this sense of pride of, *this is something I've created*. I don't have kids. You know, I'm sure people... your mother are looking at their kids and go, *Oh, my God. This being I created*. Well, that's the book for me. It's a tangible thing that you can look at and then say, "This is mine. This is my legacy. I'm leaving this to help people. There was a confidence that came from that and that desire to share even more knowledge. And the advantage with my second and third book... again they were kind of already written because they were my dissertation. I did this phenomenal dissertation on stress and mind body medicine and I thought, *What a shame, only three people are gonna to read it*. You can't go around and hand people a bound piece of paper--all your papers--and say, "Here's my book." So I really wanted to share that knowledge and you know stress is such a huge issue in our society right now, so it needed to be told, and that thing that I needed to get this information out there, so I wrote two versions of my dissertation, one for other practitioners and one for the general public. And it was a matter of reorganizing and adding things to make it more public-friendly. I then took all my cannots and will nots and made them

can'ts and won'ts and altered that document into what turned out to be a phenomenal book on stress.

Angela:

That's awesome. So... your books... can they find them all on Amazon?

Kathy:

Yeah, they're all on Amazon and they're all on the website you mentioned earlier, which is The Alternative Medicine Cabinet.

Angela:

Okay. So you've talked about... obviously working with science... and the clients that have... maybe found you through your book, but it's also... You have quite a lot of experience seeking and both for corporations and also for, like conferences and events. So how has having a book helped you as a seeker, you know? Are there other opportunities that you have had that you wouldn't have had? What are some of the things that come out of having your book?

Kathy:

Yeah, I don't know that I necessarily, you know... I think once you... especially have more than one... Because I found that I was taken even more seriously. It's like, Okay, you're the author of *The Alternative Medicine Cabinet*, when you have three? (laughs). I'm taken even that more seriously. And I have another book that I've collaborated on, about business and marketing in your medical practice so that's I guess three and a half that I'm working on... four and a half... and that one was written from scratch. And collaboration in the writing process... you should do a whole show on that... But, I think people really view an expert that way. The second they hear you've written multiple books, you're immediately an expert and when I talk to people about what I do... I never know how to answer that, because I do sorely think, and I don't want to say, "I'm an author..." necessarily, because to me, my husband is the writer. I never really won that role the way he does, because I'm a practitioner and I'm a speaker and I'm a TV host and I'm a... you know I do so many things I never know how to answer that question, so I just... throw it back at them, "What do you do?" Writing, having the books really places you as an expert and to be taken more seriously in your field, well I'm talking specifically non-fiction, you know, it really has propelled me into getting more media attention and when I see that... like before I got on with you, I was talking to a gentleman, who was writing an article for a big magazine for salesmen, about stress, and I saw the query and I responded to it. I said, you know I'm the author of the award-winning book, *Conquer your Stress with Mind/Body Techniques*. Here's what I suggest.... I'd love to answer your questions for you and he was one the phone with me... So in that way, having a book places you as an expert for magazine interviews and to be quoted and things. You know I have been quoted in major publications and major websites and major channels and it places you as an expert. It shows you've an area of knowledge that has been recognized. And that's one thing that I want to do. I figure the more my name is out there, the more I can help people with what I write about, which is health and stress.

Angela:

So we need a lot more media attention to get on there... it's a start. Clear. So give me the before and after. So before you became an author, have you done any speaking and how... what were the size of those speaking engagements, how much did you get paid or were you paid... what were those engagements like, and then how does it happen now that you get out to be a speaker? Has the pay changed or the size of the audience, or anything like that?

Kathy:

You know I can't honestly say there's been much of a before-after. But the speaking thing, it's really changed. I was having a conversation with a gal this morning... What I'm finding in my field is that very few places pay to have you come speak. And from most of the conferences, so all these, like... you know, natural product shows and health expos, blah blah blah... What I had found, and it's so frustrating, is that not only do they not pay you to be there, oftentimes, they want you to pay to attend the conference, and/or they require that you have a booth there. I look at some of these conferences and, you know, it's 1200 dollars to have a booth and you get 15 minutes to talk... well, you know that's great if you're [recognized] like some huge nutraceutical company or if you're... selling three different books and you have this huge name. I can't justify standing in a booth for three days for 1200 dollars to sell a 15-dollar book. So I have... I don't want to say, missed out on, but I've applied for a lot of speaking gigs because that's the situation. The other thing I'm seeing now is, yes, you can come speak but you don't want to sell anything. So I just did a huge conference in New Orleans. It's probably the biggest I've ever done. I got amazing, amazing recognition and the place was packed. They put me in a room that sat 250 and there must've been 280 in there. They would open doors and people were in the hall listening and it was so awesome. But what was frustrating was that not only was... they weren't paying me to be there... Well they gave me some meals; they gave me, you know, lunch and I got to go to parties and stuff like that, and it was a great time, but with the 280 people that watch me speak... I... could've sold at least 50 or 75 books, but, you're not allowed to sell. So I handed out cards. I gave people my website and I really hoped they'd go to it and buy a book. They're probably not going to. You know, it's in-that-moment; it's that back-of-the-room thing where you really sell most of your books, and that's where I sold most of mine. I have had very few paid speaking gigs. They're really hard to come by. I've been speaking for years. I've done, you know, 200 radio and TV shows; I've done well over a hundred lectures around the world...

Angela:

Wow! With three books (award winning), the acting background, the TV show... they don't want me [you]? It's definitely competitive out there. How do you deal..? What are some of the things that have made it valuable to you in your career? Has it helped at the individual client level? Or where do you see that?

Kathy:

Yeah. Now I think... I don't want to say that it's not helped at all... I just think the world of speaking has changed, you know. So it's not really a reflection of having a book or not. Well, the way this has helped... I have to say... having a book got me the TV show. So... I mean, I have a TV show

based on my book, *The Alternative Medicine Cabinet*. I got that because I had the book. You know, I walked into the producer's office and I handed him the book and I said, "I wanna do a show based on this." No, that's not going to work for everybody but... It has gotten me, I'm sure, some of the speaking gigs I have gotten... It's because I had a book. You know, like I said, getting some of the magazine stuff and some of the radio things, has only been because I had the book. I do these business workshops and I had people say, "I wanna do radio." And I said that's great, well, what do you have to offer? And they don't really have anything, you know. And I found that very few radio shows, you know, want just songs randomly talk about stuff. You have to have a product... a book... something that is newsworthy that you're talking about. So for no other reason, I encourage people to write, even if it's a short book, to have something to offer to people when you are speaking... things like that. So it's definitely been valuable and my clients love it and... it's just really exciting.

Angela:

So, when you set out to write a book, and you probably had some ideas in your head of what that will be like, how has being an author met your expectations, and then how does it surprise you? What are some of the things that didn't go how you thought they would?

Kathy:

I thought it was gonna be harder than it was. I really did. And... I had the advantage in that I had already written a lot of components of it and I just had to put together, in a very cohesive way, but it was easier. Now that as I sit down to write the next one--it's actually going pretty easy! So it's not as hard as you think it is, and oftentimes, we put those blocks in our minds... We're really powerful and we can talk ourselves in and out of things. So talk yourself into it. What surprised me was it's been harder to sell than I thought. You expect all of your friends on Facebook and all these people who communicate with you... You expect them to line up and buy a book and they'll like it. But they won't buy it, and I'm like, "It's twelve dollars, buy the book!" You know, they have no problem asking me for free [complimentary] copies on Facebook, but they didn't buy the book. You know some did. Some were incredibly supportive. Some bought three or four copies and gave them to their family... It was a harder sell than I thought, and I think that's a hard thing right now, too. You know the publishing industry is so different and, you know, I've... in Santa Barbara and, we don't have a good book store. We have no Borders or Barnes & Noble or any of those types of stores. We have two local bookstores and that's it... uh, maybe three. But you know, so, I think the world of books is starting to change and, I don't wanna say it's a dying breed, but... because I only want books. I don't have a Kindle; I don't have an electronic thing to read on, but I think it's going to be harder in the future to stand out and to make yourself really unique with your books. I think we should all start writing. We have to, if for no other reason than to express ourselves (it's such a great release), but I think, in the future as we move forward, selling might still be a challenge.

Angela:

Hmm. Absolutely. Actually the new Amazon model--all you can read for just ten dollars a month--uh kinda like the Netflix model... I think it's an interesting way... We're gonna see our

readers' relationship to our books change. Um, that is not necessarily such a direct purchase. Um, kind of like the way the movie industry has change. We used to go to the store and buy a DVD or a VHS tape and now you buy Netflix and you watch... a distribution deal. So I guess in our last minute or two what I want to ask you is really about being somebody who's acceptable and really finishes it. So many people have spent months, years, or even decades saying I want to write a book. And you've actually done that. You've done it a few times and you'll probably do it a few more, and if you met one of these people at a cocktail party, or if a friend said, "I really love your advice on this," how do I get past my procrastination; how do I get this done? What is the last bit of advice that you can leave our listeners and how to really achieve it all?

Kathy:

Yeah, I think one of the big things I see with that is that people have to realize that it's not going to be perfect and people will... with that for a decade. At some point you just have to be done with it. You can't keep fiddling. And I know people who are like that. They had a book that they've been (quote) writing for fifteen years. It's done. Turn it in, you know. Because to me, that says: *Maybe you don't really wanna have the book.* Maybe you just wanna sell your writing because there's some secondary... to that. Just... turn it in and be finished with it. At some point, you have to cut a corner on that, or... You're a writer but you never finish a book. I'm very goal-oriented, so when I set out to do something, I do it. I just do it. It's my personality. But I do see a lot of people procrastinating because they want to make it perfect... It's never perfect. It's never ever perfect. So just write and it's done. Take a date and it's done.

Angela:

Well, I like that. Take a date, and it's finished. Cut the cord; accept that your book is going to be imperfect and no matter how much time you've spent perfecting it, in a year, you'll be different, in 6 months, you'll be different, and I mean you'll be like, "Oh, I would totally write this differently now. So I think that is a huge obstacle and you get... on something else to... which is really that... for some people, there is a secondary, often subconscious, benefit. It should say, *I'm working on a book*, and that maybe there's some part of you that doesn't really want to finish. Clearly that was not your case, Kathy Gruver is the author of the *Alternative Medicine Cabinet* and other books as well, but you can go to thealternativemedicinecabinet.com. I'm sorry, her book's name and her book title's *The Alternative Medicine Cabinet*. So check out the alternative medicine cabinet dot com to learn more about her and her books are available on Amazon. Kathy, thank you so much for being our guest today.

Kathy:

Oh you're so welcome. Thanks for having me.

(Interlude)

Angela:

We will be back here next week and we'll be talking to another author about their Book Journeys process. So, hope to see you back here over at The Author Incubator for Book Journey's Radio.

