

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - September 21, 2017

Maggie McReynolds with Kevin Snook, author of *Make It Right: 5 Steps to Align Your Manufacturing Business from the Front Line to the Bottom Line*.

"If we all worried about imperfections, we'd never get anything done." ~Kevin Snook

Maggie:

Hey, everybody! Welcome to another episode of Book Journeys Radio. Every week, on Book Journeys Radio, we talk to accomplished authors who've gone from having, really, just one idea for a book to a finished book that's out there making a difference in the world. Our idea for this show is for you to walk away inspired and motivated to write your book, whether it's your first or your third. Today's author joining me is Kevin Snook. He is advisor to CEO's around the world and the author of *Make It Right: 5 Steps to Align Your Manufacturing Business from the Front Line to the Bottom Line*. Hey, Kevin! It's great to have you on the show!

Kevin:

Thank you very much. It's great to be here.

Maggie:

I should tell our listeners that Kevin is calling in on Skype from overseas, and so, just like on the big news programs, there's gonna be a slight delay between my answering Kevin a question and him answering. So, just pretend you're listening to CNN or something, and it will be fine. Kevin, can you tell us a little bit about what your book's all about and who it's for?

Kevin:

Absolutely. So, I wrote the book – I've been working in manufacturing for about thirty years, and I wrote the book specifically for CEO's in manufacturing companies. Although I wrote this for the CEO's, it wasn't really with those – with the CEO's in mind. Having worked around the world with manufacturing companies, I find that there's a lot of people in manufacturing that are struggling, and that's really what inspired me to write the book. I've ... been working directly with a number of people, but I felt like, even after thirty years, I haven't done enough to help free people from some of that struggle that they had, every day, in a manufacturing company. And ... I felt ... I could reach more people by having a book, build my credibility and then be able to use that to continually change the lives of – especially the front line employees in the manufacturing companies.

Maggie:

Very cool. Do you find that the book ... has opened up new areas for you, new people that you wouldn't have – people that you would not have been able to have a chance to work with, otherwise?

Kevin:

It actually really has. Although you write it specifically for one person, and that's the manufacturing CEO, and even get more specific than that, ..., I have a very specific type of manufacturers that I work with. But what happened is, since the book has been out there, I've had a lot more requests ... to do public speaking with groups, to go to different events and put my point of view forward. So, it's opened some channels that I, perhaps, didn't expect and certainly wasn't writing the book directly towards.

Maggie:

Mm-hm. ... Mostly, when ... we work with authors, ... we say, at the Author Incubator, that we're working with authors who have a message that they wanna get out there into the world. What's ... your bottom line message?

Kevin:

Really, what I want is, I want the manufacturing employees to go home at the end of the day, feeling fulfilled and happy, so that, when they go back to their families, they are taking back some kind of pleasure and joy, and they're looking forward to coming to work the next day. Now, you can only do that, I ... believe, if you can change the culture in manufacturing companies, and that starts at the top. You need the mandate from the CEO or the owner to be able to make that kind of change. And so, targeting the book towards the business owner and the CEO was critical for me to be able to change that culture.

Maggie:

Understood. I've ... lived for a number of years outside Detroit, Michigan, here in the States, and, of course, it's a huge car manufacturing town and many, many people that I know, almost as a coming-of-age ritual worked, quote unquote, on the line for Ford or one of the other Big Three, and I gotta say, I would imagine that, for most of them, it wasn't this super happy, joyful experience. It was what it did, and it put meals on the table, but I don't know how ... fulfilled they felt at the end of their work day. I assume that's what you're talking about.

Kevin:

Yeah. One of the saddest things that I've heard is that people refer to other people as tools to get the job done, and I think that's disgraceful, For ... me, it doesn't matter whether you're a part-time employee in a production business or whether you're the ... – one of the senior leadership team. You're still there as a group – of course, we're there to get work done. The idea is to do that in the most fulfilling way, to use all the tools that we're given - ... we're - ... we're the most advanced being that has ever been, ... three billion years of evolution. And we ought to be treated that way, we ought to be working together that way, cooperating, and really taking the world forward, rather than being used as tools to get a job done, and ... that's always been my message, that this - ... been my motivation for staying in manufacturing and trying to help manufacturing evolve. And ... that's ... the bottom line message.

Maggie:

Very, very nice. I'm ... - many ... people who would love to speak with you, but I'll send them your way! Did you know, coming into the Author Incubator program, that this was your topic? Was your message clear to you, in your own mind, from the beginning?

Kevin:

I would say that ... the subject around manufacturing and wanting to get a lot of the things that were in my head down on paper, I think that was quite clear. I think the actual message became clear through the process.

Maggie:

So, was it hard ... to focus in, to narrow down?

Kevin:

Yeah, it was. When you've got thirty years in any kind of ... experience, I think working out which is the part that's really gonna touch lives and make the biggest difference, I think that is a little bit of a challenge. But the process that we follow, ... through the Author Incubator, was just fantastic, It – starting off with the way of, how do we take the bigger picture and then get very clear on who you're talking to, very specifically, who are you talking to, what voice you want to talk in, and then, what are the critical - ... what's the critical difference that you want to make? That's all brought out through the process, which is, ... – as an engineer, I was looking for something that was a process that I could follow, and I found the process that Angela and the team put together was very, very helpful.

Maggie:

Had you tried to write a book before?

Kevin:

I actually had written one book before, it was a fable. It was written, in a way, more for my children, for the kids, somehow, to know a different way to move forward, and I never got that published, and I think the reason that I never got that published was that it wasn't written on a – for a very specific audience in a very specific voice. And that was the difference with *Make It Right*, It ... was just – seems like the process was so much more clear, and every day that I sat down to write, I knew exactly what I was gonna be writing and to who.

Maggie:

So, ... the structure, I'm hearing, is what was integral to your actually being able to finish and have something that was useful.

Kevin:

Yeah, the idea of putting together the inline right at the very beginning - ... it's what people might know as an "outline," but it's very much "in line" with the purpose of ... why you're writing the book, and then, breaking that down into specific sections, the process that we follow – that ...

was what really allowed me to ... – each time that I sat down, I knew, specifically, what I was gonna be writing about. And then, I could draw on my experience with the voice that I wanted to be talking in. One of the parts of the process is around really defining your voice for the book, and for me, it's a trusted advisor to a CEO. And so, when I know that I'm sitting down in that mode, which is specific subject that I want ... to hit for that day, then it gave me the structure, the process, to be able to sit down – there was no such – for me, there was no such thing as writer's block. Having – being that specific on what I wanted to achieve, then I could ... sit down and ... just bang out the words.

Maggie:

You – what I'm hearing is, you had done so much work in advance that actually writing the book – that you ... had a ... road map to follow.

Kevin:

Yeah, you put that perfectly. That's ... exactly it.

Maggie:

Well, I've been through the program, too, so I know exactly what you're talking about.

Kevin:

That's right.

Maggie:

What ... do you wish you had known before you did this, before you wrote this book?

Kevin:

Ah, that's a good question. I think that – I always knew that I wanted to write the book, because there was something in me, telling me that there was something more that I could give. I didn't know anything about the editorial process. I didn't know about ... writing manuscript first and then go through an editorial process, I didn't know what would come out of the program afterwards. In a way, it would have been nice to have known more about that. Now, I do, but ... for future books. I think, in another way, though – yeah. The discovery process that we go through, as we write, it is ... – that's ... cool as well, because ... at each step, ... you're not only writing the book, but you're learning. And so, there's this growth that you go through ... as an author, which I had never felt in ... other aspects of my life, and so, I liked the discovery and the growth process. I'm not sure there's much that I would have liked to know before I did it, apart from the fact that, ... with the program, ... that we embarked on, now I know absolutely clearly that it's possible to be a success and to become a bestselling author.

Maggie:

Mm-hm! I think a lot of our authors say that ... they wish they had known that it was ... easier than they thought to do. Not ... that it's an easy process, but they had imagined it as this mountain ... that they could never spend.

Kevin:

... I was fairly confident that I would be able ... to get it done. What I didn't know was how to get it done. And so - ... and that's where ... the big difference was, for me, ... it's around – yeah ... I know myself that, once I get a project, I'm not gonna give up, I'm gonna make the project work, but ... I didn't know what it was that you had to do to make this specific project work, I can ... start up a manufacturing company, I can help people improve their results, but writing a book was just something that - ... it's something you don't tend to search on, "how do I do this," and "how do I become a success at it." And once I came across Angela's program, ... it was very clear that this was the program that I wanted to follow, just because it was so transparent ... in the whole process. And for me, that really appealed.

Maggie:

I get that. So, you're an engineer, you're working in a fairly straightforward industry, for lack of a better word. I know that there are meditations and rituals and visualizations that are part of the program. Did you find that all baffling? Irritating? Interesting?

Kevin:

Another great question! I actually meditate every day. I found that meditation – as a CEO, meditation is an extremely good way to get in touch with our creativity, so it's a big part of my life anyway. So, ... I didn't find the meditations in any way irritating or baffling. What I did find, though the program, is that I met some incredibly inspired authors in very different categories, if you like, or industries than I'm in. And that's been a real joy for me. People writing all sorts of different books with ... very different messages. And ... – as part of the program, ... we meet up together, we spend time on different forums, and ... it's almost like I've built a whole new tribe or group of friends ... as we've gone through that process, but in terms of the meditations, I found them very useful. I found the idea of visualizing the book as complete, what that might look like. It helped with the ... designing the cover and ... moving through each stage, visualizing the title, really trying to get into a mode of service and ... how we would most effectively create a difference, so ... I think some people, from maybe more of an industrial background like I have, may find that a little bit "woo-woo." I certainly didn't, and I think, if people can submit to the process, they'll find it ... extremely interesting and very helpful.

Maggie:

I know that something that Angela has said a lot is, "Trust the process. Trust the process, we've done this more than a few times, so just trust us," and ... it is an act of faith at some point, it is an act of trust. It is a leap ... to go, "Okay, I'm not sure ... what I'm doing here, but I trust that this is all gonna work out," right?

Kevin:

That's right, and I think that part, and also the idea of writing forward, They were ... two things that Angela said a lot, and "Trust the process, let us help you work through this," and then, "Keep writing forward." ... another thing that, for me, ... was a critical factor - ... I'm quite

self-critical. If I had got caught in any trap, it would have been looking back over what I've written already and feeling ... maybe it could be improved, maybe I could add something, but I was very disciplined in not doing that. So, I just continued writing forward, piece after piece, and then I trusted the editing process to be able to help us get that clear and structure it into the book that I would be proud to have written. And that, to me, was a fantastic experience. The whole editing experience ... was just amazing.

Maggie:

So, just to clarify for our listeners, when you say, "write forward," it's sounding like you mean ... no going back and reiterating before you're done, right?

Kevin:

Yes. But that's exactly what it was for me, so it was ... – I would sit down for a session, I'd have my inline, I'd have my specific topic that I wanted to write on for that day and I would ... bang out three thousand words or whatever it was, and then I wouldn't go back and look at it at all. I wouldn't do any critique of what I'd written already. I would - the next time, I would sit down and I would then look at the next subject and ... I would knock that out, and ... I allowed the ... contents of the book to flow from me without giving it any kind of critique. And then, later on in the process, we went through editing, which is where you then have an opportunity to go back and ... – with a lot of very professional help, form that ... into your book.

Maggie:

It almost feels episodic? Each writing episode, ... – each writing session?

Kevin:

Yes, ... I think so. I think – and ... the inline helps you to be able to do that, I ... had so much information in my heart, if you like, that it knew that it wanted to come out, ... and Angela and the process helped with this, also, ... how to sit down, get in touch with that and how to allow it to flow, and where you've got ... a small focus area that you just sit down and you wanna allow it to ... flow out of you. Then, that ... really is ... – that's your episode for the day, However much time you've been out to carve out for that day to be able to ... allow this to flow out, that you write ... this new episode and then you put it away, and then you write the next episode the next time you sit down, ... and then, at the end, you pull all those episodes together ... into a much more coherent form.

Maggie:

Yes. You have an opportunity later to ... smooth out transitions between writing sessions, right?

Kevin:

Yes, ... and even to ... move chunks of the book around, to add additional stories or - ... you don't feel like you have to get everything out ... in one go. There's enough different stages where, ... as I said, with professional help. You look at that again and say, "Hey, maybe this would sound a little bit better this way," and "This particular time, I ... went off tense, so ... I

changed from a trusted advisor to ... a bit of a pain in the backside,” and so, what I wanted ... to do is, ... turn that back around ... and get it all so that ... it’s all talking in the same voice ... in a coherent form.

Maggie:

Very cool. ... I think there are probably plenty of listeners out there, anybody tried to write a book or started to write a book on their own, and if they’re like me, it goes something like, you write maybe ten to twenty pages and then you get distracted by life and you don’t look at it again, and then, when you go back a couple of months later, you look at those same ten to twenty pages ... and you rewrite them. And then, you let them sit for another two months, and then you go back and you rewrite them again, and I really think this is how so many of us end up with this ... twenty, thirty pages of ... a book that will never be finished, on our desktops or our laptops or on our thumb drive. Yeah.

Kevin:

Yup. I seen that’s absolutely right, and I think part of the reason for that is that we change every day. I’m not the same ... person today that woke up yesterday, ... I’ve had new experiences, new challenges, new – I’m ... a different person each day. And so, each day, I look back from that work, I’m gonna be looking at it with a new set of eyes. And so, it’s not gonna be the same. And at some point, you have to trust that ... what I wrote last week was me writing last week, and that was perfectly good. And it doesn’t have to be changed for the me that’s looking back at it this week. And so, there’s a level of trust to say, “Yes, ... I’ve got that part out in the way that it was meant to come out at that time, now, let’s leave that part alone and move on to the next part.”

Maggie:

I can’t remember who it is – oh. Someone – it’s on my tongue, that’s all right. Someone talks about the editing process as “having to murder your children.” It ... all can’t go in the book, right? Did you find that – was it tempting to just say, “Well, this is my shot. I just wanna put everything I’ve ever learned and all that I know in this one book”?

Kevin:

Yes, .. and the – my editor, Grace, was just fantastic, so there wasn’t a lot to be cut out. We did trim some things down, ... to make it more to the point. I think, ... in a way, being a manufacturing book may have been different, but I ... – for me, it was – it wasn’t anything that I had to hold on to, it was much more, “How do I make the difference that I want to be able to make,” and I knew that the people that I was working with were experts, and they knew, better than I did, in many ways, how I could make the difference through the medium of a book. And ... so, I trusted that part of the process, and ... was very surprised and very impressed with the whole editing process to get as much as I needed to have in the book in order to be able to make that difference.

Maggie:

That's very, very cool. Thank you for that. I was talking to an author earlier today, who said to me that ... the idea of publishing a book, to her, felt like – and particularly, since she's writing about her area of expertise. She's saying that it feels like – the prospect of releasing the book feels like she's going to walk into her office without her pants on, ... that it's really vulnerable. And - ... to torture her analogy a little further, when you're working with an editor, it's ... like you're being asked to take off your pants in front of, I guess, the tailor, ... so you can help to cheer them up?

Kevin:

Yup. That's right, and it's a good – it's a great step forward to actually releasing your work into the world, because there's also – it's a different fear – it doesn't matter how confident we are, it doesn't matter ... how confident we are in our subjects or in our own personal life. There are gonna be different fears that come up as you go through the process of writing a book, ..., whether it's a – people will have felt it – so, there's the pers – post that's put on Facebook or the first video they've ever released of themselves or first article that you've submitted to a magazine. At some point, there's these fears around, "What are other people gonna think?" that come up. And actually, working through the editor is a fantastic way to be able to ... get feedback before you release ... this project into the wider world. And I found that working with the editor and taking the step-by-step process really helped prepare me for that. I ... didn't have a lot of intrinsic fears that I knew about, but certainly, going through that process built my confidence, ... and I knew that I had a product that was going to make a difference when it got into the hands of the right people.

Maggie:

So, you get a trial run out of – with your editor ... of what that's gonna feel like.

Kevin:

Yeah.

Maggie:

You – to have that out into the world.

Kevin:

Yeah, and of course, there's gonna be vulnerability, ... in anything where you are – you're making a change to yourself. You're writing this book, it's not just about getting your message out, ... it changes you as a person, ... and as you go through that change, there's gonna be messy parts. But you keep pushing through the messy parts, following the process, until it becomes beautiful at the end.

Maggie:

And then, you have this published book!

Kevin:

Yeah, ... and a lot of things change, I think there was two major things that came out of it for me. One was that there is a very – it helps you get very clear on how, then, to use ... your words and your expertise in the market in the most effective way, because you've already run through it ... structure to it. But it also helps with credibility, because anybody that has actually gone through the process, written the book, got it finished and got it published – there's relatively few people that do that. And so, ... you do become a published author, ... which really helps your credibility.

Maggie:

Very cool. I was surprised, when ... a fan, I guess I'll call her, of my book – and she did make an appointment, she called and made an appointment, that she was in from out of town and she wanted to meet me and she came and showed me my book on her Kindle and all the things she bookmarked, and then she pointed out a typo. Which I thought was great, ... I was ..., "Well, I'm ... just flattered that you read it closely enough to get it."

Kevin:

Yeah, that's fantastic, and ... I haven't found any yet, but I'm sure there are some - ... nothing in life is perfect, and we should not be striving for perfection. We should be striving to get our gifts out there so that they can benefit other people and ... not worry about the imperfections, If we all worried about imperfections, we'd never get anything done.

Maggie:

And that's how our books stay on our desktops, right?

Kevin:

Yeah, absolutely.

Maggie:

Only make imperfect – yes. So, ... there's a lot of people listening to this podcast who have never written a book, who want to write a book, who really wanna make this happen to themselves. What advice, based on your experience – 'cause now, you're an expert – would you give them?

Kevin:

Have faith in yourself. You absolutely do have a message ... that needs to be shared. I think, for me, there's so many people out there that are staying quiet, and – especially during difficult times, we need people to be sharing their message, and I'd like to encourage people to just do it. Find a process that you feel comfortable with, get your message out there, start helping people with the experi – you only need to be one or two steps ahead of somebody else to be able to help them. Please trust yourself and do that.

Maggie:

Very, very cool. Kevin Snook is an advisor to CEO's and the author of *Make It Right: 5 Steps to Align Your Manufacturing Business from the Front Line to the Bottom Line*, available on Amazon. Kevin, will we be able to see it in – elsewhere?

Kevin:

Yeah, it'll be out in hard copy in May the first next year, I'm really looking forward to that. So, that'll be in bookstores at that point.

Maggie:

Very, very cool. Congratulations!

Kevin:

Thank you very much.

Maggie:

And thank you very much for hav – for joining us, it was great to talk to you.

Kevin:

And ... could I just say that if anybody in manufacturing, if you – in manufacturing, or if you know somebody there, we really need to help them to be treated as people, not as tools to get a job done.

Maggie:

Absolutely. A man with a message, just like we are. That's it for us today, everybody, thank you for listening. We'll see you next week on Book Journeys Radio.

