

[Book Journeys](#) Author Interview - June 27, 2013

Dr. Angela Lauria with Business Coach Kevin Weir, author of First Aid for a Wounded Business

“One of the best ways to get over writer's block is do not focus in on your lack of production, focus in on what you got accomplished, no matter what.” - Kevin Weir

Angela:

Well, hello everybody and welcome to Book Journeys Radio! This is Angela Lauria, I am the...uh, the Author Incubator, and every week on the show, we talk to another author about writing a book that matters.

This week on the show, I am excited to have Kevin Weir. Kevin's a business coach, and he is the author of First Aid for a Wounded Business. So Kevin, welcome to the show, thanks for being here.

Kevin:

Thank you Angela! Doing great, other than the fact that I was driving over to the office to do this interview, and I was driving up the road, and the road got closed. So I had to make a total and complete detour, and just charged in here. It's one of those things where sometimes, you just got to roll with the flow and just have fun, even though you're just going “why did this have to happen right now?”

Angela:

Well, I'm glad you're here, and we started a minute or two late today, but hopefully, we'll get back on track and you can tell us a little bit about First Aid for a Wounded Business. How did you come to write the book? Tell us a little bit about what it's about.

Kevin:

Well, yeah, very interesting. Yeah, so, I'm a business coach, and one of the things we do is we work with small business owners to help them really grow and develop their business. What was happening is, when the Recession hit in 2009, we would offer complimentary coaching sessions to business owners. They would come in, and we would give them all the ideas in the world, and then we'd talk about investing and coaching, they would just have no money whatsoever. Some of them would say, “How can I pay for coaching if I don't even know if I'm gonna be able to make payroll in a week?”

I was in the hallway of our office here, and my business development manager just said, “Gee, this feels like a business emergency room at times. The only problem is, is that we're working for free.” I said “no, it's a good point, Don, and I'm thinking to

myself, what if I could sell them a small resource, almost like a first aid guide of what do you need to do to stop your business from bleeding to death. So I went out online, and I started doing some research, I wanted to find a book that was applicable. I spent hours researching, and I couldn't find anything. So one day, I thought, I might as well just write it. **[Angela: I'll have to write it.]** What's that?

Angela:

I'll just have to write it. I can't find it.

Kevin:

Yeah, I can't find it, so I decided to write it. That's basically what ended up happening.

Angela:

So, from the time when you got the idea, I guess I'm just gonna have to write this thing, until the book was written, do you have a guess at how long that whole process took?

Kevin:

Well, you know, it was 2009 when I did the research to find it. Having never written a book before, I just started—you know, kinda thinking about it, and processing it, and then one day, in February 2010, I was sitting in a Starbucks over in Tacoma, Washington, getting ready to meet with a new client of mine, and I have, like, two hours to kill. So I flipped open my laptop, and it just started coming out of me. I just started putting an outline together.

Basically, it was about a year and a half, from the time I got the conceptual idea, to the time when I actually started putting something on computer, something that I could actually sink my teeth into.

Angela:

How long would you say that it took you, from when you started writing to have the manuscript in your hands?

Kevin:

When I started in February of 2010, once I got the outline done, and I started basically just going from chapter to chapter to chapter, and I finally got a manuscript by October of that year. I could tell you, very interestingly, is that I would take little bits and pieces of it, my biggest chunk of writing was on an international flight—it was August of 2010, and I had an action coach conference in Barcelona, Spain. So obviously, from Seattle to Barcelona, that's quite a long flight and back. Well, guess what I did. I bought the laptop, and I went crazy both ways, just going wild writing. I got a lot done there.

Angela:

This is great, this is great. I wanted to stop and focus on this point a little bit.

One of the things that I teach in my career and our author program is finding your author mojo, and what that's about is not...accepting...some of the ways that people will tell you to write a book is to, you know, before you do anything else in the morning, make sure you write five pages, you know, before 10 AM or something.

The thing is, that might work for someone, but everyone has their own way that they're productive, and knowing—and this is a great thing for you to know about yourself, and a great thing for people to check in with about themselves is—knowing that in that environment, you can be super productive, it's great to not expect yourself to be great at writing for an hour a day every day, if you're the type of person who works really well in isolated chunks when you have no other distraction.

So lots of different ways to get your book written; I have somebody who wrote her book—one of my clients wrote her book in 15-minute chunks. And then, I have other people that have written it in—almost a weekend, kind of the way that you did. Maybe not all of it, but banged out a whole massive lot of it, because they were able to get a couple quiet days in a row. I think that's just a great lesson about finding your own way, running your own race, with your book, so that's great.

What's the hardest part--

Kevin:

The biggest thing with me was that I had to keep some level of forward momentum going. There would be times when—typically, I would write my book in the evening, or on weekends. I would typically know—I knew how much I could do, and there were some times I could go for two hours, and I was really flowing. Other times I'd open it up, thirty minutes later, I was done. There's just something that's not working today, and I had to know what that point was, because there would be times when I was just totally off my mental game, and then I'd open up, two days later, when I went back to it, and read what I wrote, I'm thinking, who is this person that wrote this? This is not—and I'd have to edit completely, but it's interesting for me, when I'm on an airplane, it's like, for some reason, I'm in head down, go for it mode. Whether it's reading a book, or doing whatever, when I'm in an airplane, it's almost like I'm locked in. My mind says, well, there's nothing much else you can do, so lock it in.

Angela:

Let's do it. Yeah, that's a great thing to know, great thing to know for the next book.

What were some hard parts between February and October... is that—I guess seven months to really go from outline to completed manuscript. What were some of the places that you got hung up, and how did you get through some of those challenges?

Kevin:

I think the biggest thing where I got hung up with was just really figuring out what would be the best way to say a certain thing, I did have to do some research to make sure that some of the information I was putting out was valid.

I guess, where I probably did get hung up the most was... was developing the characters and giving them the feel. Because the way my book is written, is an allegory story, such as...if anybody has ever read any Michael Gerber, or Brad Sugars' book then, I wanted to make it an allegory story so the reader could relate to the characters. There would be times—I would be in the middle of a book, and if I knew exactly what I wanted to say, I wanted to know what did that character feel when their coach told them to do that. Sometimes I would go back and forth going, okay, what's the right—what was the conflict there? What did they have to feel? Because the book itself can't just be about information; it has to communicate an emotion to connect to the reader. So what I really focused in on then, is making that connection that, when a business owner reads it, they connect at an emotional level with the business owner character in the book. And that was sometimes the blockage, because I would go back and forth on that, but a lot of it was---like the Nike slogan, Just Do It. Get it out there, even if it is not perfect, just do it because in the editing process is where you can refine it.

Angela:

Right. Were there periods where you actually had writer's block, or where you wanted to write—like was there a time when you sat down and said today, I'm gonna write my book, and like, you just couldn't get words on paper?

Kevin:

You know, there were times, yes, and that's where I would basically have to go—my mentality is, if I got one sentence down, I got something accomplished, and that's okay.

I think, with other writers that I've talked to, when they have writer's block, they go into a negative mindset and they start beating themselves up. I learned long ago, when I started writing this book, is that if I got one sentence written, in 45 minutes or an hour time span, that's all I did, I got something done. I actually accomplished something.

I think that is one of the best ways to get over writer's block is just that: do not focus in on your lack of production, focus in on what you got accomplished, no matter what.

Angela:

Mm-hmm. Love that. Fantastic advice. Fantastic advice.

At what point---let me ask it this way. At what point in the process did you start thinking about how you would publish?

Kevin:

Well, I obviously thought about it, as I was starting to write. I kinda start thinking, well how am I gonna publish this book? That kind of--as I was writing it, the thought came up, but the real actions just really didn't come in until I was halfway through the editing process.

Angela:

Talk us through this. How did you make your decision of how you published?

Kevin:

The biggest thing is that I had a person here in Spokane who looked at the journal of business, do the initial editing, and it looked great, but I didn't know anything about self-publishing, and I was having a conversation with my brother-in-law, who is an executive with Amazon, and so I'm telling him about this, and he goes, did you realize that Amazon has a thing called CreateSpace? I said I had no idea. So I looked at it, and I thought, that's fine, but I had no idea how to do a book cover design, or do the processing, so I found a person in Atlanta who did all of that stuff: the cover design, the formatting, the editing, and so I decided to invest some money with her, and she took it all the way through the process, getting it all ready, so we could put it on to CreateSpace, which then puts it right up on Amazon.

Angela:

How do you feel about that decision? Did you have any doubts or regrets? Did you think about going a more traditional route? What worked and what happened? Give us a breakdown.

Kevin:

I think, if I had gone a more traditional route, I certainly could have done that, but I guess, to me, I wasn't ready for the intense effort to approach publishers, and jump through all of the hoops that they required, because to me, I wanted to get this out as a resource, not only in my local market but globally, and if I only sold---obviously, wouldn't it be great to get your book inside a Barnes and Noble, and then Borders--at the time obviously---and other bookstores and sell a hundred thousand copies and instantly become a _____-times seller. That would be great. But I guess to me, I wanted to get this thing out there, for an audience who could benefit from it right away.

Angela:

Yeah. So to you, and this is a great thing to think about is, to you, the speed was more important than some of the other advantages that might come with alternatives. Knowing that helped make that decision---I was gonna say not painful, but clear. You

know. That made it a clear decision that you weren't willing to wait for a year and a half, or two years, 'cause that one's gonna meet your other goals.

In the Difference Process, one of the steps is to focus on your outcome, and so, knowing that speed was a part of your outcome, helped determine the right publishing method for you.

And then you ended up—and this is another great lesson—you ended up self-publishing, but you did it in a way that you didn't have to become an expert in self-publishing. You're already an expert in coaching. So you outsourced some of that, how did you make a decision about—just kinda do your Cost-Benefit analysis of how much to spend on someone to work with. 'Cause obviously, if you're self-publishing and paying for people to help you, you could spend a thousand dollars, you could spend ten thousand dollars. [**Kevin:** Right.] so how'd you know what kind of investment to make? How'd you make that decision?

Kevin:

Well, couple things on that. Number one is that I knew that I couldn't do this myself, so I paid an initial publisher a couple hundred dollars here, and he did the initial. But I also knew that—I take a look at what's the value of my time. When I looked at the challenge of putting the book together in a professional-looking process that would basically lend itself credibility, I knew that okay, I could probably learn how to do it, but how many hours would that take, and what's the value of my time? And what am I good at? I'm good at writing. I am not good at doing design and formatting and other technical details, so...I'm with a service called iText, which is a trade, and I do some...a small portion of my business I do on trade, and so, I had some trade dollars that I had available, and I found a person that would take trade dollars, and so, she said, you know, it's 3500 dollars, and trade dollars, and she did it all, and as I said, I thought she did a great job for what—it took a lot longer than I would have liked, because—everything that you think takes...took a lot longer.

Angela:

--they say that double the time, twice the cost or twice the time or whatever.

Kevin:

Yeah, when I came on board with her, I figured this is a 30-45 day process. It actually took about 90 days to get it all the way through. Back and forth and back and forth and back and forth. Yeah.

Angela:

I think that three months is pretty standard for a new manuscript to finished, so you can imagine holding your book. There are certain ways to do it faster, I mean, if you are doing nothing else, and you are willing to pull out your credit card, you can get it

done faster, but I think 90 days is a good expectation. Obviously, that's a lot different than a traditional publisher, where you're looking at like I said, 18 months to 2 years.

So, how did you know what _____ the book was? How did you know what you wanted from this book?

Kevin:

What I wanted from this book is, number one, credibility of being a published author. One of the things I realized right away in writing this book is that—the book, in and of itself, wasn't going to make me rich. Obviously, there are some people who make their money off of book authoring. What I knew right away what this book was designed to do is lend a level of credibility that would say hey, I wanna work with somebody like this, who is a published author.

Number two, it actually gave me my very own tool that I could give to business owners. So now, all of a sudden, if I got a business owner who's brand-spanking new with me, I said, okay, your homework is to read First Aid for a Wounded Business. Here it is, and you can see who the author is. They said, you're a published author? I said absolutely.

Now, all of a sudden, they feel a connection with me as their business coach. When they're reading the words in that book, they can feel the way I'm gonna work with them, and that's a huge amount of the client feeling that they know what I'm doing, and I'm there for them.

Angela:

Let's take back—before we hit that also, because I think that's also a great point. You have had clients before being an author, and you have had clients after. Can you give us a specific example, or maybe something that's happened that kind of shows...that can show us is different? _____ in theory, but give me an example of how it's different.

Kevin:

Okay, let me give you a good example. Before I was a published author, I was using other books. Great stuff, great resource. Now when I became a published author, there was—I'll give you an example. I have got a current client who was literally bleeding to death. I said, here's the outline of how we're gonna work. It's my book, and I've done this before. What I got him to do is literally walk through step by step, and prove out everything that is in the book. As he did things, and he came back to me, it was incredible, the level of...first of all, satisfaction on my part, feeling I really helped this individual. ___ immediately became a positive voice that says hey, this guy knows what he's doing. He's not only written a book but I've used his book, and it works.

Angela:

That's awesome. That is awesome. That has to feel really good. [**Kevin:** It feels great.]

I think that it's a big mindset thing—seeing it in a book form for some reason makes people think feel like, okay, I'm gonna try this stuff, even if some of it sounds crazy, or I don't think it's gonna work, or I have other things that I should be doing right now rather than doing this thing, that it feels so real in a book form as opposed to if you just printed out worksheets with all the same information on it. It just has a different psychological effect on clients. [**Kevin:** Sure does. Absolutely.]

Okay, now, I cut you off. Do you remember the second thing?

Kevin:

No, but I think I've pretty much covered what I wanted to cover with that; but no, thank you so much. That's a great lead-in, probably to your next question.

Angela:

It is. So here's the thing. People want to write a book that makes a difference. For many people—you alluded to this before, but for many people, when they say they wanna write a book that makes a difference, they're immediately thinking, "New York Times Bestseller", "The Today Show." And that is great, and it's one way to write a book that makes a difference. But I think you've given a great example of another way that a book makes a difference is just even the...you know, twenty, thirty, forty coaching clients you may deal within a year, getting them to move faster through their own work, and knowing that a book will help them do that, can be another way that a book makes a difference, and there's lots more. There's no two ways. There's a lot of ways.

What are some of the ways--

Kevin:

I'll tell you another way that a book makes a difference, and I'll give you a story.

I have a fellow coach, action coach in New York who read my book. He told me, he says Kevin, I wanna order a bulk order of your books, because this book is not only meant for wounded businesses, it's also meant for good solid businesses that could take on the next level, because a lot of the principles you talk about can be _____...he says "I'm gonna give it to every one of my clients." And what that really did is now, all of a sudden, I'm helping other business coaching practitioners with a tool that can help them accomplish something that they may not have been able to accomplish with any other resource, and now, it's a resource for those individuals too!

Angela:

Wow. That's good. That's really good. Would that have surprised you? Did you go into your book saying, here's how I wanna use my book?

Kevin:

You know, obviously, I wanted to have...help solve people's problems. I wanted it to reach out and be something, a resource for these business owners that are bleeding to death, but I guess I never anticipated that other coaches would wanna use it on their clients, and for me, it was very gratifying to see that.

Angela:

Any other surprises that have come to you? Things that happened as an author, conversations that you've had, or opportunities that have come up that have surprised you?

Kevin:

You know, I think the biggest thing that it's done is that [it] allows me to get speaking engagements—it's much easier. Before, giving speaking engagements is very difficult. All of a sudden, when you say, hey, I'm a published author. Here's my book on Amazon, now, all of a sudden, it's like yeah, of course we'd love to have you speak at our organization.

That has really helped me open doors to have a greater exposure of who I am and what I can do for business owners regionally here in the Pacific Northwest and certainly, someday, that would be, hopefully, nationally.

Angela:

Yeah. Absolutely.

If you meet somebody or when you meet somebody, I'm sure this happens to you frequently, when you meet somebody and they hear you're an author, and they say, wow, that's amazing, I really wish that I could write a book, I really want to write a book, how many people get it done. What advice do you give them, or what advice would you give somebody who really wants to write a book but hasn't quite made it over the finish line?

Kevin:

I think the first thing is the decision in and of itself. I believe it was Tony Robbins [who] said that one time, he said that the greatest power that you have is in the power of decision, because now the thing is, is that—people have asked me this before, and I always ask them, is there a reason why you haven't started? Well, you know, they try to give me excuses and I said, the greatest power that you have is in the power of decision. If you decide, "I want to do it," then the first _____ the power to do it and decide.

The second thing is, don't try to eat the elephant in one bite. Just start jotting some notes down, how do you want the book to be laid out, what are some of the bullet points. If you don't ever start somewhere, it's never going to come to fruition, because for 18 months, nothing happened until I absolutely—number one, made the decision, and then number two, started the most basic of outlines.

Angela:

Wow. Yeah. Right. There's a lot of power in decision, and there's a lot of power too in the "maybe". You know, like I think I'm gonna do this. Once you really commit and get off the fence about it, I think a lot of the magic really starts to happen.

The one thing that we didn't mention is your website, and I'm sorry about that, but I know people will be interested in First Aid for a Wounded Business, to check it out as a model, or to actually read it as a book. So where can people go to learn more about you, and to get a copy of the book?

Kevin:

Well, the copy of the book, it is offered at Amazon, and on, at barnesandnoble.com. It is available in both paperback and Kindle, and Nook. To learn more about me, you can either go to actioncoachspokane.com, or you can go to actioncoach.com/kevinweir, so that's definitely something to look at.

I definitely, just to let you know, I am gonna be in the process of writing book number 2, and the working title is First Aid for a Wounded Dental Practice, and I'm actually gonna be co-authoring it with Tracey Lennemann, who is a world-famous individual in the dental consulting business, and works with the hygiene field. She actually lives in London, but she's also one of my family members, so we're excited and we're just gonna get the process started.

Angela:

Yay, well I'm excited about that! Kevin Weir, thank you so much for being our guest on Book Journeys Radio, I think people have learned a lot from your experience, and I'm glad that you shared it with us today.

Kevin:

Thank you so much, Angela, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to your audience and to talk with you today. Thank you so much.

Angela:

Thank you, and every week on Book Journeys Radio, we talk to another author about how to make a difference with your book, so together, we're changing the world one book at a time.

