

Book Journeys Author Interview - Lisa Culhane

Dr. Angela Lauria with Lisa Culhane, author of *Discover the New G Spot (or How to Unfriend Your Guilt)*

"Find a way, you know, get the scaffolding you need so you know what you are gonna write about." ~Lisa Culhane

Angela:

Well, hey everybody! Back at Book Journeys after a couple weeks off. I am so excited to be back and we are broadcasting for the first time from the Author Castle in McLean, Virginia. I'm so excited, I'm gonna tell you guys more about the Author Castle and how, if you are an author or an author in transformation, you can make your way to the castle and learn more about how to make a difference with your book. Uhm, on today's show, we have an exciting topic, although maybe less exciting than it might sound 'cause it's gonna sound salacious to you. We're gonna talk about *The New G Spot* with author, Lisa Culhane. Ah, Lisa published with us a few months back and, uhm, she is here today to talk about her book journey so that you can learn some of the things that she learned in her process and take them forward with your book or your next book, whatever you are working on. Ah, Lisa, thank you so much for being our guest today.

Lisa:

Thanks for having me. Excited to be here.

Angela:

Awesome! Well, let's just start off by telling people about your book. What's it about? Who'd you write it for?

Lisa:

I wrote it for people who feel guilty because I found that in my own life, guilt kept getting in my way. So, especially as a parent, I personally felt a lot of "mama guilt." And...

Angela:

Yeah. I hear you on that.

Lisa:

...that, yeah! And so, there were all these different things that just kept coming up for me and it truthfully sometimes just got in my way to being a better parent because I was so wrapped up in the guilt, I wasn't taking steps forward. I wasn't taking the steps I needed to, to make things better and I was spiralling in the guilt instead of looking at it, figuring out what it was trying to tell me and letting it move me forward to the next step. And so, I wrote it for people like me who were out there experiencing "mama guilt," all sorts of, you know. One of mine was, initially I worked when I had my kid, and so I felt guilty when I was at the office. And then, when I quit, I decided to be a stay-at-home mom to get rid of that guilt. I felt guilty when I was at home because, you know, maybe I should be out there working. So there's this just all these things you feel and it initially, it's just looking at the guilt to figure out what it is trying to tell you.

Angela:

And what are some of the key takeaways that you, uhm, share with people who read your book?

Lisa:

Well, first of all that, uhm, guilt is a messenger. That's what it's here to tell you. It just has a message for you and if you take the time and listen to the message, it, you can move forward. And what I found is that once I did that, guilt had this kind of crazy bedfellow, which was gratitude. And that crazy little bed-, you know, that's an odd combo. But once I could actually look at the, once I could look at the guilt and see what it was trying to tell me, and literally thank it for showing up in my life so I could move forward, that was the crazy bedfellow. It's like once I face it, looked at it, I can move forward. So, it was, my book, the takeaway is guilt, guilt is there for a reason, pay attention to it, look at it, take it for its message and then move on to what you can feel grateful for in your life 'cause that's a much better feeling.

Angela:

So, I think there are lots of times when people have kind of discoveries like that in their own life, epiphanies or things that have changed things for them or helped them. For you, how did this become a book? How did you pick this as a topic for a book?

Lisa:

Hmm, that's a great question Angela, uhm, Angela. And one of the things that I think about when this whole thing started -- I just finished another great book called, *The Happiness of Pursuit*. And in it, he talks about the difference between a dream, a goal, and a quest. And so, my dream was to feel more gratitude in my life. It was pretty simple. And so, initially, my goal was to learn more about gratitude, to figure out how to have more of that in my life. Uhm, along with that, my dream was to be more grateful and to feel less guilty. And so it was, how do I feel less guilty? What do I do? What are the steps? And out of that, another goal kind of was born, which is I started blogging about what I was learning about. I started blogging about gratitude and with that was another goal, which was for others in feeling more grateful. And then, you showed up in my life and all of a sudden, it became a quest and the quest was to write a book about this so I could help even more people to coalesce all that I have learned into one place.

Angela:

Yeah. I love that. So, did you envision this book completed before you started it? Did you know what it would be like to be an author? Have you thought about that?

Lisa:

I wish I could say yes but the answer's no. It was less of a vision and more, again, the dream, I had another dream, which was to be an author and it took you and your process to help me figure out how to take that dream and make it into a quest, make it into something very specific. But I needed help with that.

Angela:

And so, is there anything that you wish you knew before you wrote your book that you know now that you might take into if you were writing a second book or are there some things that you learned that you can share with people, uhm, that you wish you knew before you started writing *Discover the New G Spot*?

Lisa:

Uhm, absolutely. Uhm, one of the biggest things I wish I knew was how easy it would be with the right direction of scaffolding. I think it's really hard to do many things on your l-, in your life on your own without somebody there helping you along the way. And so, I wish I had known how easy it would be when I had some, just having somebody to hold my hand and take me along through the process.

Angela:

Hmm.

Lisa:

And all those things that sounded overwhelming beforehand kinda disappeared 'cause somebody else knew the answer or could help me find the answer.

Angela:

Mmm. So, have you tried to write a book before without the, the scaffolding, as you call it, uhm, and it hadn't worked?

Lisa:

I had, oh my gosh, I can, I still have, you know, paragraphs to the start of, I don't know how many books on my computer. And then I had also written, but this was strictly for my children's consumption, I'd written a children's book in rhyme about, of all things, farting and burping, for my kids when they were little. And all of those are all just still on my computer.

Angela:

So what do you think the difference is? 'Cause I think a lot of people, they're, I don't know, they take a road trip and they get an idea for a book or they're, they take a shower or go for a swim and they're like, "Oh, I have an idea for a book!" What do you think is the difference between all these ideas that made it to a one paragraph description and this one that you actually finished and published?

Lisa:

I think there are a couple things, uhm, again, it's getting back to the idea that at the time that I had the idea for this book, I also learned about you. And I realized that it was not gonna, it was gonna remain a dream or a goal and not become a quest if I didn't get the help I needed, if I didn't have somebody else encouraging, if I didn't have, it ended up being a huge bonus to have something due to somebody else once a week. That was the scaffolding that I needed. I needed somebody else saying, "Ok, this is what you do now. Go do it."

Angela:
Yeah.

Lisa:
Yeah, it's a whole idea that, you know...

Angela:
So ... difference, like do you think this was, do you think this was a better idea than any of your other ideas? Do you think you had more free time than you ever had before? Like, a lot of times we think those things are external but I'm guessing, the external things actually weren't all that different this time around.

Lisa:
No, absolutely not. In fact, this was a terrible time for me to decide to write this book these three months. I was gonna be out of the country for 4 other weeks, have my own, my family. Uhm, it was all those other things are just stories to get in your way of writing your book 'cause you can, I say this a lot, uhm, that you can tuck yourself out of anything or into anything. But there's usually just one good reason to do it. I talk a lot about that one. I talk about running. Uhm, I've now been running for 20 years, actually it's jogging, it's not running, pretty consistently, uhm, getting myself out the door. And I have to tell you, every time, and people say, "Oh my God, I could never do that." And I've yet really to go on a run while like, *Oh my God, I'm so excited to go on a run*. There's always a reason to not do it. My, it's cold out. My bed is, I didn't get enough sleep. My child is sick. Uhm, I have too much work. It's too early. It's too late. I didn't eat right the day be-. I mean, there's a million reasons to not go for a run and there's only one reason to go for the run, and that's because I decided to.

Angela:
Mhmm. Yeah.

Lisa:
Period.

Angela:
And that's it. That's really one of the big keys, I think.

Lisa:
Yes, it's so simple.

Angela:
So when you make that decision, when you make the decision to write your book, you make the decision to go for the run, that doesn't mean things aren't going to come up, right? That doesn't mean you're not gonna fall into a drain, or it doesn't mean that you're not going to run into writer's block. So, with your book, did you ever reach some of those obstacles that were like,

Okay, I wanna stop now. Like, I've made this decision but now I'm stuck. And if so, how did you deal with it?

Lisa:

Absolutely. I, we all experie-, I don't know anybody who doesn't experience writer's block that's written and the same thing, you know, you go out for a run and you get a cramp and what you do, you just stop and you walk and you take it slow, and you figure out what your next step is. So, you don't look two steps beyond. You only look one step beyond. And just like running and writing have a lot in common, if, when I got stuck and I tried to look at what the whole chapter was gonna be, I got overwhelmed and I couldn't write. But if I could just look at what, *Could I write one more sentence? What's the next sentence, what's the next sentence?* And add to that the fact that it, when it was terrible, I sent it in anyway. And I just sent a note to my editor, *Oh my God, this sucks.* (laughs)

Angela:

And here it is.

Lisa:

And here it is!

Angela:

And how many runs have you gone on? Like I find so many shuffles that were not like my best run...

Lisa:

Oh my God.

Angela:

...and I didn't have some amazing runner's high but you just, you just do it. You just dial it in and do it.

Lisa:

You too and you know, as long as you don't have the expectation, you know, in this book, my ... to *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, absolutely not. But that took him ten years to write. So, sometimes you just have to go out and have the bad runs and have ten bad runs 'til you get a good one. And sometimes you have to just sit down and write, and you have to have ten terrible drafts 'til you get one that makes sense. But again, having this structure and having a scaffolding, I had somebody to send it into who could read through it and check out and say, "Okay, you do your three salient ideas in what you've written, out of the fifty that you just threw at me. Go back and look at those three.

Angela:

Right.

Lisa:

And that's where the scaffolding was so important, especially...

Angela:

And do you feel like that would work equally well, let's say you had a friend who was, like, "Sure I'll read whatever you write." Do you think it would have the same effect as, you know, at being part of a program that's more formal than just like an informal agreement with a friend?

Lisa:

Okay, I'm totally giggling that you just asked me that question because this morning I was walking my dog and I ran into a friend who is in the process of editing a book for a friend. And he was regaling me with how awful the situation was, hmm, because he said, his writing's horrible. I can't make heads or tails of it, but I can't tell him that because he's a friend and the friendship means too much. I don't wanna risk the friendship.

Angela:

Mmm.

Lisa:

And so, literally, I just heard that story, so funny.

Angela:

Yeah.

Lisa:

And that's what, you know, you can't, yes, you know, could I have my husband edit the book for me? I absolutely could. But will he always be a 100% truthful? Maybe not, because he doesn't want to hurt my feelings.

Angela:

Yeah. Yeah and I think there's something too about when it's a friend you can blow off deadlines in a way that you can't when it's, you know, a more formalized program that you paid to participate in.

Lisa:

Oh, absolutely! I mean you can't, again, it's the scaffold. There's lots of scaffolding if you do that. Like anything, you could go out and try to do this on your own. Uhm, but that has more, sometimes it's information without action, or it's action that doesn't move you forward, and both of those things in my experience cause a hell of a lot of guilt.

Angela:

Mmm. Yup.

Lisa:

If you've got the information, you're not moving forward, or you're taking action and it's not moving you forward, a lot of people just don't, you are not feeling terrible about yourself.

Angela:

Yeah. Yeah and then that creates the whole cycle of shame where then you feel bad, which makes you not wanna write, and then you don't wanna look at it or think of it or open it 'cause it just makes you feel bad, and that's not the great environment to write from, so you run into this whole cycle. Yeah.

Lisa:

Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. So, hiring it out makes that.

Angela:

Yeah. And are some, are there any other, uh, tips about managing guilt 'cause I think people do have a lot of guilt with writing whether they have promised themselves they would get their book done, uhm, and, uhm, and, and it hasn't happened, right? So, they've made that promise, uhm, and now they are feeling guilty. What are some of the things you would say to somebody since you are the queen of managing guilt? Uhm, if you promised yourself you would write a book in 2015 and it's October 1st and you haven't even started and you're just feeling like, uhm, just really guilty that you have broken this promise to yourself, how would you tell people to manage that?

Lisa:

Well, I would say, look at what's going on, turn around again and look at the guilt. Is it that, this really is not a driver for you that you are not 100% committed 'cause maybe you're not, maybe and that's okay. Uhm, but maybe the answer is you don't know where to start. Okay. There's one way to start. Hire, you know, hire Angela. You know, do this program that can get you moving forward. Uhm, as far as managing the guilt of it, it's like you just need to confront it. It's like, *Am I not writing because I don't know what to write?* Find a way, you know, get the scaffolding you need so you know what you are gonna write about. That's something your program does. It helps you find those pieces. Uhm, for me, you know, it's a calling. Is there some ... that you wanna get this done? If that's the piece and that's, you can overcome the guilt. You can look at it, you can say, "Hey, I'm not doing this because I don't know what the next step is." But there are people out there who do. Get their help. None of us do. We all need help. Trying to go it alone can be really discouraging and if you're in that place of discouragement and guilt and you're cycling in it, stop, take a moment, look at what it's trying to tell you, and then move forward from there. And it might be trying to tell you, "You know what? This really isn't your thing. Writing's not your thing. Uhm, maybe you wanna do a video, you know, maybe there's something else. Maybe it's art. Maybe it's video. Maybe it's, you break it out in a completely different way.

Angela:

Yeah. I love that because, you know, for many people the answer is, if you're supposed to write a book, you could have written a book. You know, it's not always that complicated, but we have these stories about ourselves and reaching the point of being honest with yourself about what's true for you, uhm, seems like it should be easier than I think a lot of times that is for people because they're rectifying the story they have of who they are with the truth of who they are and that can take a little bit of effort to do.

Lisa:

It can, which is one of the blessings of, again, your program 'cause it's not just about writing a book, there's coaching involved. And it can help you get to that place.

Angela:

Yeah. For sure. Okay, well, let's talk about, uhm, some of the things that have happened for you, expected maybe and unexpected. What are some of your favorite things that have come out of being an author?

Lisa:

One of them, uhm, truthfully is confidence, feeling like I really know this particular subject area inside and out. I've researched it. I've written about it. I've, you know, taken all those little steps, and so that's really fun. It's fun to feel like you have an area of expertise. Uhm, another...

Angela:

Mmm. I think people underestimate that. I think people don't realize, uhm, that having the book itself, how much clarity and confidence that gives you and how that makes you show up in a different way.

Lisa:

Yes, absolutely does and other people also expect it of you and again, any of us with children understand the importance of expectation. If you expect a child to misbehave, they will. If you expect a child to behave, they usually do. If you expect them to do well in school, they try to live up to our expectation based on tons of studies on that. Uhm, and whether those expectations are good or bad, they try to live up to our expectations. And so you do the same as an author. You wanna live up to people's expectations of you. So that confidence piece, uhm, some of them's just, you go Angela, just to be totally honest when I introduce myself and somebody says, "What do you do?" Uhm, for the longest time, I said I'm a stay-at-home mom.

Angela:

Mhmm.

Lisa:

And to tell you the number of eye rolls you get with that one, you know people...

Angela:
No! I think that's nice.

Lisa:
If you're at a cocktail party, if you say that, they go, "Oh my gosh, look at my drink is done. I need to get a new one, haha! They are so out of their ... So, it's fun when you say, "I'm a coach and I'm an author." It piques their interest. They're like, "Wow! What'd you write about?"

Angela:
Yeah.

Lisa:
Because, and some of that's just ego and some of it is just having interesting things to talk about with others.

Angela:
Yeah, I mean so much of that, like people are always saying how you should network. But it's so hard to know what to say, like, *Oh, what do you do?*, like networking is so hard. When you have a book, networking is so easy because how often do people say, when you say, "I have a book," like, how often do they say, "Oh, that's nice." Like they'll always say, "Oh, what's it about?" Like, "What's the name of it? Is it on Amazon?" Like, it opens up conversations that you might have never had before.

Lisa:
Absolutely. "How'd you write it?" You know, there's so many different, people are interested in so many aspects of it and you never know what it's gonna be.

Angela:
Yeah. So, are there any goals that you have with your book, uhm, that has sort of changed? Goals that you had after writing a book that you didn't have before, things you wanna do or ways that you would like to use your book maybe that haven't come to fruition yet?

Lisa:
Absolutely. Uhm, I would like to, I never really thought about myself as being a speaker until I had the book. And then I thought, *That's another way to disseminate this great information. I'd love to do more speaking.* Uhm, I would lo-, I really enjoy talking to, I've been asked to come and talk to book groups and to a lot of networking groups, uhm, because they're interested in the subject matter. And I really enjoy that and I enjoy meeting people and being able to go out and talk about it and I'd like to do more of that. It also makes me wanna write another book. That's another goal.

Angela:
Ah! Let's talk about that!

Lisa:

Yeah, okay, this is great! Get to check it. Yeah, just check this off and then, I don't know! Now, I wanna do more. This is really cool! This is fun! I enjoy the ...

Angela:

Do you feel like having a book has given you, has it given you, has it given you more clarity on what a second book might be or did you end up with so many ideas that you have less clarity now?

Lisa:

Ooh! Uhm, maybe a little bit of both. How's that for an answer? There are times now when I see something, I'm like, *Oh that would make a great book*. And I used to do that, you know, other than my little paragraphs, maybe I did that a little bit. There's also a piece of me that, you know, it's like, okay, I wanna write a book about, uhm, really specifically about, my family travelled for a year and I'd like to write specifically about that. And the scaffolding, and I've, that's always been at the back of my mind. But again, the scaffolding you gave me to write the first book is driving that second one.

Angela:

Love it. Love it. So, thinking about that scaffolding in our last couple minutes, is there any final piece of advice that you would want to, uhm, that you would wanna leave people, with someone who wants to write a book but hasn't been able to finish it? What would you say to them?

Lisa:

Other than hire, hire you? Hahaha!

Angela:

We'll take that.

Lisa:

Exactly. It's, it's the same thing that I say about coaching. I'm a personal and professional coach and it applies to writing a book as well. And truthfully, you could decide to muscle through this and do it on your own. But it's much, much easier and faster and plus, it's a joy to do it when you have a support system on speed dial, and that's what you provide. It's a support system on speed dial. If you wanna write a book, if this is your year to do it, get that support system on speed dial, and you'll get it done, and then you can say you're an author.

Angela:

Love it. I love that. So Lisa Culhane is the author of *Discover the New G Spot (or How to Unfriend Your Guilt)*. You can find her at lisaculhane.com. That's Lisa, L-I-S-E, L-I-S-A, Culhane, C-U-L-H-A-N-E dot com and you can find her book, *Discover the New G Spot*, on Amazon. Thanks for being our guest.

Lisa:

Thanks for having me. It was a pleasure.

Angela:

If you are interested in writing a book that makes a difference or starting a movement with your message, feel free to email me, angela@theauthorincubator and I will get you all the information on our upcoming events at the Author Castle and we'll be back next week.