

Book Journeys Author Interview – April 19, 2012

Dr. Angela Lauria with Loren Gelberg-Goff and Dr. Carmel-Ann Mania, author of *Being Well Within: From Distressed to De-Stressed*.

“Stress is a given in this lifetime, suffering is optional.” ~Loren Gelberg-Goff

“Put the book in unexpected places.” ~Carmel-Ann Mania

Angela:

Well, hello and welcome to Book Journeys Radio. My name is Angela Lauria and I am very excited today to have with me co-authors. I think this is going to be a great, great show for everybody who is thinking about writing a book with a friend or colleague. I am really excited. This is the first time we've done this, and I got Loren Gelberg-Goff and Dr. Carmel-Ann Mania here. Say hello ladies!

Both:

Good afternoon!

Angela:

Thank you so much! And Loren and Carmel-Ann, your book is called *Being Well Within: From Distressed to De-Stressed*, which I think is a great little play on words there, and... I guess let's just start off by... Why don't you guys just tell me a little bit about yourself, and about the book, and who it's for, and why people might be able to use it and like your book.

Loren:

Well in a nutshell, we decided to put this book project together because we've known each other for many years, we've been friends, we've been colleagues, and we come from a very different perspective. Carmel-Ann is a holistic chiropractor and I am a psychotherapist. We've been in practice independently for... Carmel-Ann has... longer than I'd like to remember.

Carmel-Ann:

Sometimes we don't want to admit how long. But we have a... the similarity that we have is we really feel that the body and mind are connected and need to be connected, and in need to be balanced. So Loren approaches it from the mental and emotional psychological viewpoint. I approach it from a physical and a metaphysical viewpoint, and the book kind of came out of work that we've done together in seminars and workshops for patients, friends and colleagues.

Angela:

And I would say it's an interesting combination, because Loren you are a licensed clinical social worker right?

Loren:
Correct.

Angela:
And then Carmel-Ann, you're a chiropractor?

Carmel-Ann:
I am a chiropractor.

Angela:
Right! That's really body and mind right there.

Carmel-Ann:
Yes.

Loren:
Exactly. As we say in the book and in our workshop, stress is a given in this lifetime, suffering is optional. And we really wrote the book, so that people would have a resource to learn how to use the stress that is an absolute given in our lives; that it doesn't have to wear them down. It can actually empower and motivate. And using different strategies and support and... We have workbook pages at the end of each chapter so that people can really get into the work of taking back the power in their lives, mentally, emotionally, physically. And the book, well, we didn't really have a specific age group that this was targeted for, because so many people are dealing with the effects of stress in their lives. It's really for anybody, over... probably over the age of thirty who have stress. Because I think that people under thirty don't connect to the stress levels in the same way.

Carmel-Ann:
Right. I think they have...

Angela:
I think it is interesting.

Loren:
They what?

Angela:
They have different coping mechanisms.

Loren:
Absolutely.

Angela:

Yeah. So what I think is interesting about this topic... This is... I do book coaching as well as publishing, and when I'm talking with authors at the beginning of their process, very often they have a book idea, that you know maybe about stress or maybe about happiness, or anxiety—different sorts of general topics that would appeal to everyone. And I think a lot of people want to write a broad book that kind of appeals to everyone but there's... at least from a publisher's perspective, there are some challenges to writing a general book from a marketing perspective. Is that something you guys have found in terms of how to connect with the right audience?

Carmel-Ann:

Yes. To some extent that's true. What we found though is that we sort of directed it towards people that we've dealt with. I've had very generalized practice with very young patients and very old patients and Loren also had had some but we tend to find that the people that are most stressed out and need those tools are really people... let say between thirty and seventy. And... you know we fall in that category somewhere, close to the thirty and seventy, maybe... and what we found is that the advice we were giving our clients and our patients, and that we were using over and over and over, was something we thought needed a broader audience. We needed to get it out to more people because that appeal was very broad. And we wanted to be very, very practical. One of the feedbacks we got on the book when it went out was, "Gee! It was very practical but full of love." And we tried to be non-judgmental—but to give people practical tools; to be able to go forward in their lives in a way that they would feel balanced and feel empowered, and feel comfortable.

Angela:

But do you find that people don't enjoy being lectured to by their authors. How they not, uhm... Compassion and empathy... I'm sure... It's a big benefit of a book like this... any book like this... is being able to balance advice without that sort of nagging and lecturing approach.

Loren:

And having read many self-help books; having been involved in the mental health field for so long it... People pick things up all the time and... "I have found the keys. How do we implement these strategies?" People have plenty of great ideas. How do we do them? How do we bring them into our lives? And that's really the core focus of the book. It's bringing these strategies to distress... different aspects of your life at any given moment; being able to use them on a day-to-day basis.

Carmel-Ann:

One of the differences that we do try to explain to people... that there's a reason why they feel the way they feel—what it's doing in their body; what it's doing to their nervous system; what it's doing emotionally and try and help them not be judgmental about themselves; understanding that there may have been a very, very good reason that they did certain

behaviors or had certain habits or, whatever, and just saying, “Ok, there was a reason. It’s done now.” Let’s go forward and not encouraging the person to beat themselves up or be guilty about it.

Angela:

Right. Well I do think the most important ingredient that any author has is—and in Book Journeys we focus on writing that—that first book and the obstacles that come up for people. So I would say the number one thing is to have a passion about your topic and it sounds like you guys have no problem with having passion about this topic. But what do you think, other than that passion, what do you think are some of the other things that first time authors need to have to be successful? I’d love to hear it from you guys and especially first time authors that are thinking about co-authoring.

Loren:

I think it is... from my perspective, it was really important to be focused; to know that there was a certain time of day that I sit down and write; that there was open communication between myself and Carmel-Ann so that we knew where we were coming from and what was going on. We used... for the most part we used Google Docs so we could be on at the same time and compare notes. I had written a newsletter for many... for a number of years before we embarked on this journey, and so I had a lot of material already written and I would get it down on screen, and found it... From my perspective, it gave a launching place for where Carmel-Ann’s voice to come in and it could be blended. And I think that’s a really important part especially [when] people are gonna write a book together, because you want to have those voices blended so it isn’t... it doesn’t feel as broken off.

Angela:

And did you write as a “we”? When you’re saying your voices were blended, did you use... did you have sections that were written by you or by Carmel-Ann or... How did you deal with that?

Loren:

We each did write to the topic, and then we tried to put them together in much the same way that we do our seminars or the other talks. We always try to balance out the various aspects of it. So, we might have jumping-off point. We kind of designed where we wanted to go (what we specifically wanted to cover) and then we went into some of the workshops we’ve done. This is a very important thing and how can we bring this forward and expand on it or simplify it or open it up. So we did write... I’m gonna say sections... Every chapter has something from each of us, and something from both of us. And hopefully it’s kind of seamless and you won’t really know which is which because we wanted to speak with the unified voice. But there were so many different aspects of it, you can’t see when this is more from the psychotherapist viewpoint or this is more from a chiropractor’s viewpoint, or more from a physical viewpoint and an emotional viewpoint.

Angela:

Where there areas that you disagreed on how to approach a problem or a chapter?

Both:

Not really.

Carmel-Ann:

We... when we started out, we did it by... because It takes twenty eight days to make a habit for the most part, we originally envisioned the book being twelve chapters. People could do one chapter a month if they wanted and really work things through in each chapter. So we set it up... We came up with twelve chapters because that gave us a framework from which we could work and put information in different categories, in the different chapters, and that's why the last chapter is all about having fun, because at the end of the day, we set out to find ways to have fun. And we did do our best, like you said at the end of the process... It didn't take us that long as people expected us to take, and at the end of the process, we're still friends, we're still talking, we're still...

Loren:

We still respect each other...

Angela:

It sounds like you guys have worked together before this book. Would you recommend that to people that are thinking of co-authoring—doing something together first?

Loren:

It might depend on what type of things they were doing together. I mean if they have worked together and they're gonna write a book about building a house, maybe that's fine, but if they'll gonna write a novel, maybe not.

Carmel-Ann:

I think it... knowing who you are writing with and being able to have open, healthy communication there is... I find it very important that whatever happens, one of the basic tenets that we operate from is that we take nothing personally. Either one of us, or anybody thinking of writing with somebody is you're going to have stress, anxiety, tension and you will have different working styles. And it's really important to not put your working style on someone else. And there were times that I know I pushed because I operate on a very different time plan than Carmel-Ann.

Carmel-Ann:

Oh yeah!

Loren:

And she was very patient with me and very understanding.

Carmela-Ann:

But on the other hand Loren was also very understanding because I am more of the spurt writer and she's more of a "Ok, today I'm going to sit down and do this for this amount of time." So I'm thinking and thinking and thinking and then I sit down and go "brrrrm" and write the whole stuff down and she's going from another viewpoint. But, because we are good friends; because we know how to say, "We really need to get this done by today or tomorrow" or you know calling and saying, "I just couldn't do it today, sorry." And in the end, we were able to get it. We did have a relative timetable, which... We pretty much kept to our timetable. I think we went about twenty eight days over what the expected finish date was. And a lot of what we were able to do, we had really worked together. The book really came out of the work we had done, the research that we had done, the points that we felt were very important, when we work with individuals or when we work with groups. And we had worked out a lot of that together before, and it became a matter of just writing it down, you know, on paper or in the computer (and computer paper).

Loren:

Right.

Angela:

On Google Docs, which I think is a great collaboration platform and I particularly like the price point 'coz free is my favorite number.

Carmel-Ann:

That's right.

Loren:

It was very good for us to be able to do that—make corrections and do it together when we needed to, or separately. It was great.

Carmel-Ann:

Yeah. Pretty amazing.

Angela:

So one of things that I tell people that I have seen is even if no one buys your book, just having completed a book and being able to hold it in your hand and bring it to a speaking engagement or give it to a prospective client or partner, something like that, can have tremendous positive effect, even if you don't do the marketing behind it, which... I know I want to get to and talk to you about that in a little bit. But, I am wondering... For each of you, have there been any positive outcomes of just having a book and has it different for each of you?

Carmel-Ann:

Absolutely, there has been some positive outcome of having a book. There is a certain sense of validation that you show up at a networking event or at a business meeting, or even with prospective clients and patients. "Hey we've just written a book; here's our book," and immediately puts you on a different validity level. You're recognized. We had... Well getting to the marketing, as you say ('coz I think this is the toughest part of this journey for me) it's finding out who you need to know; when how to make those contacts... because it doesn't seem enough. To have the book, it's wanting... For me it's wanting people to know it's there and how good it is.

Loren:

For me, I have to say that one of the most exciting things is not only that validation. It sets a different tone when you say, "Well, you know, I just wrote a book," and then people will say, "You wrote a book? I never met an author before." And that was kind of a fun thing to come to realize... But the biggest surprise was people that I have talked to for years and helped for years and who I felt respected by for years would say, "Wow! This book is really good!" or "It changed my life!" and I know I've told them what they're commenting on a dozen times, twenty times, thirty, fifty, a hundred times but seeing it in print says something to people that makes it very real. And being able to go home and look at it and digest it, outside of the fifteen minutes or two hours or four hours that we spend together, this really... It's a revelation to me that the written word has a real effect on people.

Angela:

Yeah, and people process information differently, right? Other people might've gotten it more from a speech or video or reading it online and for me, you know, I'm such a book person that, you know, holding it in my hand... Sometimes it's the way that the information gets in this.

Carmel-Ann:

Absolutely.

Loren:

Yes, me too.

Carmel-Ann:

Yes, and I love the idea of having a book that presents something for people, and they look at you differently. You're seen differently. If nothing else you have a prop to go into a meeting with.

Angela:

Yeah. I loved that work prop and I work a lot with people getting media appearances and sometimes holding the book is a really nice prop to make your media appearance kind of pop a little bit, just having that [prop].

Carmel-Ann:

Well, there, I did had an experience of going to a networking event and I had the book in my hand and I was showing it to somebody who said, "Oh, thank you so much!" as if the assumption was it was just a giveaway. And I found that a very interesting moment for me because it was like, "Oh well it's not a gift," and needing to address that to people thinking that if they meet you, you should just be giving them... a book.

Angela:

Right and actually this is an interesting point. Like I said, I wanted to talk about marketing and this relates to marketing which a lot of authors don't realize, and you guys published with Balboa, which is the author-funded division of my favorite publishing house which is Hay House.

Carmel-Ann:

Since about a year ago, they started a program where, once a quarter, they pick a Balboa press book and they move it over to the Hay House label.

Loren:

Right.

Angela:

Yeah. I think it's a very exciting opportunity that I think makes them unique as an author-funded house. But many people think that, "Hey, it's your book. You own the copyright. You paid for it to be published. You must be able to get, you know, unlimited copies of it or couple hundred copies." Doesn't exactly work that way right? Was that a surprise to you? Did you know about that and how much did you pay for copies and how did it work for you?

Carmel-Ann:

Wow. Well, it was a bit of a surprise but we knew that it was semi self-published, I think that was the way they told us it was. Well, it was interesting to find out that the great big distributors could get it for less than we could, and it was our book. But, you know, we're big girls and we've been in business separately and so we know that things cost money and we went forward with that. I would have liked to see a little better marketing involvement but I think that we may have been surprised that time. I think they were pretty straightforward with us, and I don't know how other publishing houses deal with self-published authors, but I imagine it's kind of similar. We like their... We fit in their demographics; we fit in the type of books that they publish; we like that they were associated with Hay House, so we wanted to go to with Balboa based on that. But, you know, we just had to take a crash course in marketing.

Angela:

Well most publishing houses, you know, whether you're self-published or not, do charge authors. Usually you'll get a discount. I know with our standard, it's 40% off the cover price,

and that's pretty standard. There are definitely some places where you can... like work out both sale offers, but if you're going to buy a certain number of books that discount goes down, but like you said, wholesalers, even the boutique down the street, if they wanted to buy ten copies for their counter, will normally get 60% off. And then with the wholesalers, it's usually 80% off the cover price.

Both:
Right.

Angela:

So you guys, most self-published authors are getting 100% of the royalties but what they don't realize is that it's not 100% of the cover price.

Both:
Right.

Carmel-Ann:

And we're learning also that we need to put the book in unexpected places. We have the book in the boutique gift store—it's not a bookstore and we have our book in health spas, or, you know, day spas, where people are going to de-stress and finding the book there is an opportunity as well.

Loren:

When we do our own workshops or live workshops, then we offer there also. So people that might not see us in the bookstore might not know about it and say, "Oh. Look at that!" And they come back and say, "I want one for my mother" and "I want one for my cousin" and "I want to send one to, you know, my best friend in Omaha," whatever. So that's kind of interesting—that we've actually had sales in our office for example, or when we go in a networking meeting or something like that. It's not big marketing, but it's interesting because it does come back and people say, "I want a couple more copies." So that's kind of fun.

Angela:

So when it comes to marketing, what would you say to... Most people that work with a publisher expect them to do some amount of marketing, and usually marketing is a part of the proposal; it's part of the picking—if you're paying to be published, how you're picking who you're going to pay. You talked about the demographics of Balboa so you're probably listed on their catalog or on their website, so you're reaching the right people in that way. But what has been (either expected of you or what have you expected of yourself) in terms of the marketing contribution you need to make to the equation.

Carmell-Ann:

We've had to... basically do everything. They offered suggestions and recommendations but it was on... incumbent upon us to get out there and do it. For additional few thousand dollars,

they would do a little bit more. But it was not... We got a list of suggestions doing radio program...

Angela:

And the list that you got? Was that the same list that anyone would have done or did they customize it to your book or your goal?

Carmel-Ann:

No. It was the same list that I'm pretty sure anybody would have gotten, and I spoke with a couple of people who have published (but they were not self-published). They were telling me that publishing houses are doing the same thing. They're really into very limited budget now for any kind of marketing from publishing houses because of the competition and the economy and everything else. And I think that that's a huge thing for people to be aware of—that it's finding the right marketing strategy—social networking... We were very blessed that we got put on Barnes & Nobles' Staff-Picked on January 31st.

Angela:

Wow. That's exciting.

Loren:

Yes. We were on their number one page on January 31st. That was very exciting. It's hard to know because we're doing our best to get the word out in a variety of ways and social media is clearly a huge one, and it's finding the right venue, and doing... connecting with people who were in charge of authors' events at bookstores like Barnes & Noble—like the local big bookstores in your town doing library events. Those are the marketing that people can do on a very limited budget. Clearly if you have income and you want... If money was not an issue, what marketing strategies would be most effective? We had found, paid advertising doesn't do much.

Loren:

Maybe we haven't been in big enough in paid advertising, but again it's not... We didn't win that mega-millions lottery.

Angela:

Well people always ask me all the time, "How much should I budget for my book project?" And, you know, with self-publishing, I generally tell people (even if you're doing everything yourself and bootstrapping it), you're not going to be able to spend less than a thousand dollars, probably, just to get your book out, and you could spend as much as you want. You can easily spend on ten thousand dollars... It kind of depends on how many edits you want to pay for and how much money you want to spend on the designer, for the cover, and, you know, who you want to partner with obviously. Balboa is a little bit more on the expensive side but there are lots of advantages to being on that label, so it kind of falls in the market somewhere between a thousand and ten thousand dollars. In a perfect world, what would you

say they should be budgeting in terms of marketing? Like should you spend that much in marketing in comparison to having your book ready, or more? How should those budgets...?

Loren:

It's probably... I wouldn't say quite 50-50, but maybe 40-60, as far as budgeting for the book and we've done a lot of time... So, you know, maybe it wasn't a cash-in thing but we've done a lot of time and we're committed to doing more time on a regular basis of making those phone calls and sending those emails and doing those type of things. I mean... to me one to ten thousand dollars sounds like what people are going to have to do and we haven't hit that mark yet (ten thousand we haven't hit) but we're over a thousand dollars in marketing, and yeah, quite a bit.

Carmel-Ann:

Probably one of the best suggestions we got for promoting the book, and a way of marketing, is to go to different venues, depending on the topic of the book obviously, whether it's a rotary club or Knights of Columbus, or a church, a synagogue. And rather than being paid to speak, the organization buys a certain number of books to give away to authors, to their patrons, to their congregants, whomever. They can get a discount off the book. If we pay 50% for our books and we give it to them for... a slight mark-up from our cost, we're still getting something because they're buying our books.

Angela:

So we are right at the end of our time. Loren Gelberg-Goff and Carmel-Ann Mania, thank you so much. Check out *Being Well Within: From Distressed to De-Stressed*. Loved that final suggestion and I love talking to you ladies. Thank you so much for your time.

Loren:

Thank you. Thanks for having us.

Carmela-Ann:

Thank you so much Angela.

Angela:

Bye bye.

Both:

Bye bye.