

Book Journeys Author Interview - May 1, 2014

Dr. Angela Lauria with Michele The Trainer, author of *Success Journal of the 100 Ways to Lose 100 Pounds Series (Michele the Trainer's Journal of the 100 Ways to Lose 100 Pounds Series)*.

I would definitely recommend that they reach out and find the credible help that they need to really get it done. ~Michele the Trainer

Angela:

Well, hello everybody and welcome to Book Journeys Radio. My name is Dr. Angela Lauria. I am your host. I am also the founder of the Author Incubator and creator of the *Different Process for Writing a Book that Matters*. And I know that I talk a lot on this show about my own weight loss journey. I've lost a 100 pounds five times, yehey, because once isn't enough for me -- I'm an overachiever. And apparently, I have the perfect guest for today's show. Michele, hmm, excuse me, Michele The Trainer is the author of the *Quick Start to Losing 100 Pounds*, also the author of *Make a Sexy Salad* and the *Success Journal: 100 Ways to Lose 100 Pounds*. Michele, I've only found 5 of the hundred ways. But it is so great to have you on the show. Thanks for being here.

Michele:

Yeah. I really, really wanted to thank you. You are my first. This is my very first Internet interview. So yeah, I'd love to hear more...

Angela:

Oh! Awesome. Never forget, you're first.

Michele:

Ahaha! I would love to hear about your 100 pounds weight loss but you know what's funny is I started really documenting the tens and thousands of dollars and knowledge and of course, you know there's a lot of that knowledge that needs to be disqualified on a weight loss journey as well. There really is easily a hundred ways and they're not all mainstream a hundred ways. Some things are very simple too and I, in this book series, I really tried to bring things back to a very simple, you know, simple is the new sophisticated, a very basic, basic building block so that people are sort of sneakily losing weight.

Angela:

Well, you actually started this series, I think, a couple of years ago now with the *Quick Start Guide* and why don't you tell me the idea for the *Quick Start Guide to Losing a 100 Pounds*, about that book.

Michele:

Yeah, the Quick Start, you know, I had, through my weight loss journey. I was a fat kid. I was really medicated and I can remember being at the hospital as a kid, being dragged into the

weight loss meetings with the hard boiled egg and the Fresca and Tab and just looking at your parents, like, "Really? Are you really, are we really doing this?" And, you know, it was like deprivation and cottage cheese and all these stuff. And...

Angela:

Yeah. Cottage cheese. That's the ultimate weight loss food of the 80's.

Michele:

Right, right. And those diet sodas when diet soda had that aftertaste.

Angela:

Fresca. Oh yeah!

Michele:

Yeah, yeah! We all, I mean, you know, I'm probably older than you but anyway, I was there, man. And uhm, you know, then I became a raw vegan chef and I was really into it 'cause I really like the really natural, high enzyme, but it was like really complicated. You know, like, I mean I am not that, I would love to be that person to, you know, shop and prep and chop and soak and you know, do all things, blend, but I'm not. I'm like the quicky, I'm a type A person and I, my clients don't have a lot of time and I don't have a lot of time. So really, the Quick Start was really that. It was a quick way to, so that people don't think that they have to be condemned to a life of those, you know, those shitty-tasting carrots that taste like you're eating a thing of mouldy water, you know the pre-peeled carrots or you know, doomed to a life of celery only. Uhm, so I really wanted to, you know, kind of take a fusion of, you know, some of the delicious foods that I had learned in the organic farming world to make things really easy with a lot of, you know, zero calorie organic plants, it's really easy. Like, my recipes, you could make them, you know, I could make them in a the passenger seat of a car, at a picnic table, you know, one knife, one plate and we're sort of done. So, there really is a way to make fast food, you know, fast healthy food, simple, delicious, juicy, amazing where, you know, you don't have to do like this total like holiday food prep, you know, 17-days-in-the-kitchen-before-the-family-arrives type of preparation because I, you know, you're very accomplished, I'm sure you don't have that kind of time either.

Angela:

Ah yeah. That's for sure. So, how did you come to, ah, obviously, you had experience as a chef, an experience as a trainer, and then, your own experience with, you know, weight loss and fitness. How did you come to turn it into a book? Why did you decide to write that first book?

Michele:

You know, it was sort of like an accident, like, I don't know, the planets aligned, and you know, kind of at the wrong time, right? I sort of birthed these book right at the time when, you know, e-books hit, you know, the whole bookstore thing and this whole thing and uhm, you know the *100 Ways to Lose 100 Pounds* series just came out of, you know, I'd already had clients that, I mean it's amazing when you listen, which I do more than you think that now I'm talking, right? But, you

know, I listen to a lot of people and you know like beans, how do you make beans? And they would tell me, "Oh, I drive through." Haha. You know, and I was like, "Really? Nobody ever taught you how to make beans?" So, the fastfood generation and the restaurant lifestyle has really left us with a deficiency of really being able to prepare food on a very basic level that I think it's really never gonna get rid of the obesity epidemic, which I take very personally, and any of us that have struggled with weight, uhm, you know, it's a drag. It's a drag to feel like you have this burden of something that can't be solved and I was actually kind of protective about giving out the recipes. You know, like, my little close friend had them, and you know, like if you went to retail weight loss, you know, sometimes they would give you a list of, you know, "These are your free foods. You can have all of these you want." And it was like getting you back to the list of carrots, celery, and it was like, really? So you know, the benefit of having trouble with it ...

Angela:

So, why did you, why did you decide to get that message out through a book?

Michele:

I think, I was silverfish in my past life. I think I just love books. You know, I love books and I really wanted this to be, these series of cookbooks. So these books are kind of printed in sort of a non-economical, bulletproof fashion. You know, the joke with the man is that I printed them on Kevlar because I really wanted a book, a book to be on the kitchen counter that would sort of like kitchen proof and child proof and blender proof, you know, that could be wiped off, that people could really use. I didn't wanna be a book on the shelf 'cause I have a lot of those, you know and at that time, I wasn't really seeing that many people with tablets in the kitchen. So that's why it became a printed book. I would totally entertain doing an e-book in the future, but these books, I still wanna keep them as cookbooks if that makes sense. 'Cause I think I still love paging through a color cookbook and it wasn't, I also wasn't like a domestic looking to write a cookbook. I was sort of somebody who's struggled with weight and then, being in the gym, you know, the Paleo thing and there's like the 1940's high protein, which we all know, right, is like a heart attack central. We all know heart smart from a million years ago. It's been on every menu to eat heart smart. You know, Paleo sort of promoted this really heavy, uhm, meat thing, which is, which, you know, a Paleo person can still use my books for the plant portion, So I didn't wanna negate the plant part. But I really want to get away from when you're in the gym a lot, a lot of the gym people think it's protein, protein, protein, a million eggs and protein powders, which can also be detrimental to some of your primary organs of your body.

Angela:

So, ok. Great. So let's talk about how your book relates to your business and why having a book has been ah, has been important or helpful or how it's played into your work in the world.

Michele:

I really like the Getting Started book when I do, when I, you know, my initial clients, it was also what I wanted to offer. You know, you meet with me, you come and meet with me, we're gonna review getting started. And I, my program is not something where I'm telling people what to eat. I don't, that's not my thing. The people wanna know, you know, what are my snacks, what can I

do between, you know, the time I see you and the next time I see you. And so, it really gave me something very beautiful and, and simple and you know, it's, I've been, all my books, the cookbooks are colored, you know, so they're, they have beautiful colored photos on front and back of the page. And you know, I even put a little box, uhm, so there's a little, you know, cut the cucumber this big with a little, so people could delegate, you know to their spouse or their, you know, mother-in-law. Can you please make me a salad that looks like that and I want the pieces cut, you know, that big. So, I think it's been a great expository way and also to, uhm, qualify. Most people that have tried the book and have read the book and have made the recipes really can't believe how easy it is to upgrade their rice with more hydrating, delicious food that is, you know, really not expensive to prepare. So, you know, credibility and expertise, I think, has totally been validated by having, you know, something that you can show. Look, if this is really what I eat, if I'm a couple pounds up, this is really what I eat and I'm sharing it with you. And if you, if you don't like tomatoes, then, here let's talk about it and I'll give you something, I'll give you another suggestion, or you suggest to me and then we could talk about it. But it gives them a map and guideline. And I think it's very valuable for that.

Angela:

So, you had the content from your, you know, from your business and you kind of had the idea from your clients. Let's talk about the process of actually publishing and putting the book together. How did you publish your book and what was that process like for you?

Michele:

Oh, it was uhm, it wasn't easy, you know, I had, uhm, I was a project manager/engineer by first career. I mean, I still am, right? That doesn't go away I can ..., you know. So, you know, being a project manager was probably the only way that I got it done and then there is a back-burner team behind Michele, The Trainer. So I had a graphic designer. I had an editor. I did not realize how difficult it was to list, you know, listing a book on Amazon, is kind of like refinancing your house. It's not, it's not a fun thing without help. And I'm really happy to see that there's now, uhm, you know, like your business is an excellent example of helping people that have a passion and they have a story to be able to realize that dream of, you know, what if, you know, if your parents wanted to write a book and they never got to or people have that. They wanna tell their story. But self-publishing is not that easy either, so I, you know, again it's, it was, uhm, you know, I would have to have all-hands meetings, you know, sometimes rent meeting space because, you know, after a while, looking at your own words, I can't see it. I could proof your stuff, but maybe I can't see it. So, to have a team behind you or ...

Angela:

So who are, uhm, I was gonna say, what were some of the roles that you hired out? What were some of the jobs you had done in the process?

Michele:

Definitely, an editor, you know. I had, you know, several different people that looked over different, ah, revisions of the book, the graphic layout. Uhm, I, you know, the *Quick Start* book started in Word, uhm, what's that little app, WordPad? Haha. You know, it was the little art, you

know. Yeah, it was a little nothing, nothing and you know, I used to di-, you know, people would ask me, "Well, what do you eat?" And I would just send them, 'cause I'm an engineer, you know, ... that was it. You know, quick and dirty and you know, and that was sort of how I wrote the book. So I didn't really give why, you know, the benefits of cilantro or, you know. I, when I wrote the book I kinda wanna know, "Just tell me what you ate." Haha. "Tell me what you ate to lose weight so I could be done and do this." And, you know, that's sort of how I presented the book, so I needed, uhm, with the graphics and, you know, laying of the, of course, laying things out with the margin, you know, in or-, you know, 'cause laying things out on your computer is obviously different than laying things out for print. You know, the ISBN number, that whole getting it, what do I do with it? That was a whole...

Angela:

Now let's talk about the process of finding... Let's go back to design. Uhm, so a lot of times, the content that you write can influence the design. So if you're writing recipes, you're probably gonna need, I'm gonna say a design that includes pictures of the recipes in a way that like, let's say a memoir probably isn't, maybe they don't have a picture section in the middle, but it's not gonna necessarily have pictures next to the recipes. So how did you go about finding a designer to work on your book and what was some of, you know, the things that were important to you as an author to have come through on the design?

Michele:

Well, maybe I was even an opportunist when it came to that because I already had relationships with people and I sort of picked the people. Uhm, I am very good at identifying strengths among people and maybe that comes from managing more problems than I've managed people because generally, people managers don't seem to have those skills but that's a separate issue. I'm very good at, you know, at identifying while you'll be really good at this, so I could, you know, I can kind of feel that you'd be good at this and it was sort of the opportunity to, I knew I had the right person and, uhm, for graphics. I had seen the work that they had done before and I knew what I wanted in an illustrated food, again more of an expository, I come from technical. So I do wanna see, you know, tell me what to do and tell me what it's supposed to look like, you know, like a how to, very basic like that.

Angela:

Like a technical manual. Yeah.

Michele:

Yeah! That's exactly what I wanted and I, I actually think that on some levels, the books are very basic and people gloss over the value because they look at them with a full cup. They think, "Oh, you know, they open and go. Yeah, you know, I know that." I was like, "Would you? Well, have you made it?" You know, "Can you eat it once a week and see a difference?" You know.

Angela:

So how important was the design to you as an author? Having the design a certain way, how important was that for you?

Michele:

To me, I thought it was completely valuable because I can write words all day long. But the, uhm, you know, even for an example like cooking, right? I can cook all day long but I am not that person to make it look pretty on the plate. I'm not that person. So I know that I'm not that person and so, that is something that I would delegate. Before, I would try to pretend like I'm that person.

Angela:

Yeah. I think that's great. I think that's great advice. And then in terms of some of the more technical aspects of publishing like, getting barcodes or ISBNs or getting listed on Amazon, how did you go about that process?

Michele:

Brute force. Haha! I mean, it really took awhile, it took a lot of reading online, it was not intuitive. Again, I've seen, uhm, you know, I think the first book came in 2010/2011 and, you know, just in a couple years, I mean there's much more resources now than were available then, uhm, you know, even, I mean CreateSpace didn't exist yet. And uhm.

Angela:

Right.

Michele:

Yeah. You know, I had to really look, I had to, you know, tried to list it on Amazon and figure out that I need an ISBN and figure, it was really a time intensive, I mean if that, that's another thing, if that can be delegated, I absolutely recommend that because, you know, you have to own. If you're the creative, or you're the talent, you can't be everything and get stuff done. It's part of running, you know, doing a project and having a team, and you want a team that you can communicate with and trust and hand off to, you know, because you're able to produce more.

Angela:

Yeah. You know, that's obviously, you know I have a publishing company and that's our philosophy. But the other thing I tell people is that self-publishing is not rocket science. If you can run your business, you can figure out how to self-publish. There are reasons not to do it such as it's gonna suck up a lot of your bandwidth and would you be better served, you know, working with clients or working with your expertise. But I think these are really good, uhm, stories about the fact that, you know, it is possible, it is figure-outable, there are lots of resources out there to help you identify, you know, how to do this but it shouldn't be underestimated the amount of work and support frankly that you need to make it happen. So I think that there's a great...

Michele:

Then again, it's time, you know. We only have, we only have so much time, and it's so much, you know, it's like, you know, working out or losing weight. We can all start on our own but some

of these things are easier for some people, you know, maybe working out is ultra marathon's guy's gift, you know. But maybe his wife, you know, maybe she's got different gifts and maybe she needs help to accomplish what he's accomplished, you know. But maybe she could self-publish and have it not be a problem and maybe he would spend all day staring at the screen, you know so I think that we all...

Angela:

Right. And that's exactly what you, your project management skills clearly helped you get through. I unfortunately feel a lot of people that finish their books and don't actually get them published because they don't, most people don't have good project management skills. That's a, you know, that's a hard, one skill you have to really learn how to break down a project into pieces and assign it and follow up and count on, you know, interdependencies and things like that. So, I think there's a lot of people that just give because the process can be intimidating. Obviously not for you with an engineering background but...

Michele:

Well, it was tough I mean I have... Well, it was tough and it was terrifying and there was, you know, *Sexy Salad* was the last book to come out in 2013 and there was an issue with the printing. Uhm, actually the graphics company sold, and they sold the printing relationship with that. So, I ended up with a brand new, and it was, it was, here I had to almost start all over again, I had to do all-hands meeting again. "Can everybody look at this, that's not me." Do you know what I mean? To make sure that everything was ok again and ok again. And I had to go, you know, I had already done so much work with the original printing shop so to change mid-series so to speak was, uhm, yeah, I felt so good when I picked up that box, you know what I mean, when I picked up that last one, I was like, you know, I was just, I was, 'cause I also wanted them to look very similar and I'm very pleased that they actually looked so similar that in the office, I can't tell sometimes which book is which part of which theory. So it worked, you know. But, uhm, yeah, you know.

Angela:

So let's talk about from when you had, did you have an idea for the whole series or did you just have an idea for the first book and then, it kind of naturally evolved into theory?

Michele:

I think the series idea came first. Then again, I wasn't really a woman with a dream to write a cookbook. I just felt like, I guess if I had an anatomical illustrator, the depth of physical fitness books I would like to write, I have not identified or would be, they would be so biomechanical, it would really be a different type of project and not necessarily helpful for my client base. It would be more technical and more, you know, physical therapy-ish. So, you know, people keep telling, "You're a trainer. Why don't you write about fitness?" And I'm like, "Well, why don't you get up?" Haha! You know, let's just do it is not that so I didn't want to write about fitness. I felt like fitness was something we should just do but again, when you're in and out of a lot of, uhm, corporate retail and different fitness and wellness, uhm, facilities, I mean I even, I worked in UCLA, you know. So, the missing link is oftentimes the nutritional link. It's just time and it starting to come

in. So, what I wanted to do was provide something that was, uhm, that was not available or not easily available or, you know again, people would go back to some of these, uhm, uh, there's so many, you know, retail diets without naming names that just don't, they don't work, right? Everybody's gained and lost that ... 10 pounds a million times and you know, I wanted to give people something that they could really, you know, kind of make their own so, did I answer your question?

Angela:

Yes! So the question was really about this theory and so the idea of the theory came first. How has the process and how has being an author been different maybe than you expected when you set out on this journey that you've been on?

Michele:

Well, of course, marketing the books was much more difficult and you know, I think that there's actually, uhm, you know, in the world, I think there's, uhm, people don't really understand. You know, they think that just putting the book on Amazon auto-magically, uhm, you know you're gonna become a bestseller and we that have done this already know that that's not true. So, for me, I never really wanted that. That was really not my goal. I wasn't really writing with that goal in mind. I was writing for a specific audience and it seems to do very well. So, there was other books in the series that I am probably going to abandon, like I wanted to do mediterranean and I, in my engineering mind, I'd sort of compartmentalized, uhm, different recipes and flavors and herbs and genres that I wanted to bring in, in a way that they could be again easy and attainable and not heavy and not requiring a team of people in your kitchen just to make lunch. You know, because nobody really has that. I mean in Los Angeles, we don't have that kind of time if you're working. I mean people are driving through for coffee and all kinds of things because they don't...

Angela:

Was there a reaction that you were expecting to get from being an author whether it was media appearances or being treated by your clients in a different way or some level of credibility? Was there's something you were expecting from being an author and has that happened for you?

Michele:

It has happened for me but I was not expecting much. I think I'm the kind of personality that I just needed to, I've always written imperfectly, you know. I've always, I'm fortunate that, you know, the length of my essay just so happens to be about the blogpost length and, so I've always written for an audience but I've had, you know, not a giant audience and I'm not big into trophies or titles or ... However, being an author is very, and I think part of it is, you know, if it was easy, everybody would do it because there are parts of it that are not easy. I mean, again, getting the actual, getting to the point where you've actually released the product and finished, and you're actually selling it and it's actually in your hand or in a file or, uhm, you know, able to create revenue or credibility or create opportunities. You know, it's created, uhm, people love, you know they mob me when I'm speaking to come up. You know, can I get a bit of it? You know, they want a piece of that experience. You know, they want, it's like the guitar pick that,

you know, is thrown out right in the, you know, people want to kind of, have a souvenir of that energy and take that home in the book. And again, I'm very proud of the color because that's who I am. I'm the colorful, I'm, I'm, and I really eat that food, you know. I get tired of, California, you know, you can easily pay \$20 for a salad here and, you know, it kinda looks like somebody just dumped a plate of lettuce from the bag, you know. Sometimes, there's stems like, "Really?" You know, haha! You think I didn't I didn't notice that that was \$22? Or, you know, if I say "salad," even in California, you know, there's this, like, people go immediately to that stock sort of visual, like, oranges in ..., like that institutionalized, you know, prism salad with the iceberg lettuce and the 3 strips of purple cabbage and the frozen cherry tomato and I just really want to, you know, get rid of that uhm, that, you know, the only visual that's worse than that are those old school, remember those gelatin mold salads with the ...

Angela:

Yeah, yeah, yeah ... jellos?

Michele:

Those old, yeah, what is that? You know, I mean, and, you know, again, we're supposed to be a very healthy coastal but there's some, you know, I want, so yeah, I love being able to have a book that kind of looks like a kaleidoscope that I can hand in so when people, so yeah, it absolutely has, I think, on some levels created more credibility and, and more exposure than I ever really intended, you know.

Angela:

That's fantastic! That...

Michele:

'Cause I really didn't think, I never thought it would be like a bestseller, I never, uhm, I was just an engineer trying to solve a problem, you know.

Angela:

Huh. Very interesting.

Michele:

Really. And I wanted people to realize because of the, you know, they're suffering with the weight loss for so long that it really doesn't have to be, it's not that hard. You just have to know that you're not alone and that there's easy things to introduce and it, you know, in your daily life that make, that are possible. You know.

Angela:

Yeah. So I should have said this earlier, but, uhm, Michele's website, you can go to michelethetrainer. I'm gonna spell that for you because Michele is a one L, Michele, so it's M-I-C-H-E-L, the, T-H-E, trainer, T-R-A-I-N-E-R, michelethetrainer.com and uhm, I know she mentioned she looks colorful as her books. You can check them all out on her website and all three of Michele's books are available on Amazon. You can go to [amazon.com/michele-the-](https://www.amazon.com/michele-the-)

trainer, michelethetrainer. So, we've got about a minute or so left. Michele, if there is someone out there--there definitely are--who wants to write a book and they haven't been able to accomplish that goal. I know you probably get this question that, you know, cocktail parties or networking events. But what's like the one piece of advice you would give to somebody who really feels like they wanna have a book or they wanna have a theory?

Michele:

I definitely think, I mean, again, the fact that you're in this business is such a great resource for people. And I would definitely recommend that they reach out and find the credible help that they need to really get it done. I mean, unless they really want this to absorb their life, if they've gone ... you, they can go it on their own. But if they're running a business or they got a family and they got a mortgage or whatever else is going on, it's invaluable to have help by somebody who's been through the process. You know if I do more, I would definitely, you know, seek out ah, ah, you know, a team, and rebuild my team, ah, to do an e-book or, you know, uhm, another project. So, I think what you're doing with The Author Incubator, uhm, is just really valuable because again, people have a story and it's, it's sort of the legacy. It's a legacy that people are able to leave and to be able to, there's so much information that was sort of filtered by the big publishing houses that now everybody has an opportunity to give their gift.

Angela:

Yeah, I agree with that.

Michele:

And, you know, maybe in 10 years, everybody will know how to lose weight and then, I'll be able to learn and write some out in the meantime.

Angela:

Yes! Well, Michele the Trainer, author of *Make a Sexy Salad, Quick Start to Losing 100 Pounds* and the *Success Journal: 100 Ways to Lose 100 Pounds*. Michele, thanks so much for being our guest in, on Book Journeys Radio.

Michele:

Thank you so much, Angela. Thank you Dr. Angela for all you do.

Angela:

Ahaha! And we will be back next week where we're at Book Journeys Radio. Changing the world one book at a time.