

Book Journeys Author Interview – June 4, 2015

Dr. Angela Lauria with Rachel Rose Alexandria, author of *Woman Overboard! Six Ways Women Avoid Conflict and One Way to Live Drama-Free*

You don't have to do it alone. Get help so you can get it done. ~Rachel Rose Alexandria

Angela:

Well, hey everybody! I am so excited to have you back at Book Journeys Radio and I'm really excited about the topic of today's show on a number of levels. Uhm, I have had the honor of working with Rachel Rose Alexandria as a client and I also had the honor of publishing her book, *Woman Overboard! Six Ways Women Avoid Conflict and One Way to Live Drama-Free*. And so I know today's conversation is going to be very enlightening and we're super-lucky to have her on the show. So, Rachel, thank you so much for being here.

Rachel:

Yay, I'm glad to be here, Angela.

Angela:

Awesome. Well, let's just start off by talking about your first book, *Woman Overboard*. Uhm, why don't you tell people what it's about?

Rachel:

So, *Woman Overboard* is basically about how, women especially, have difficulty with being feeling responsible for other people's emotions and how we end up avoiding conflict, like that there's six different ways that we avoid conflict. It's about how that's really counterproductive to us getting into higher levels of leadership and success and getting our needs met. And the second half of the book is devoted to the solution that I created, which is called the self-rescue system. So, it's all about...

Angela:

Which I love and I use the self-rescue system. So, actually I'm gonna ask you this already at the beginning of the show because I'm such a big fan of the self-rescue system. Is there, uhm, what website should we send people to if they wanna learn more about you?

Rachel:

So, they can actually go to women-overboard.com.

Angela:

Awesome. I am so glad I asked. So, definitely check that out and then, let's just give people a sense of the six ways that women, uhm, 'cause I used a couple of these and I thought they were pretty good ideas until I worked with you. So, uhm, tell us the six ways that women, and really, it's not just women although I think we're really good at it 'cause we're over-achievers.

Rachel:

Yes. Yes, exactly.

Angela:

So, what are the six ways that we come up with to avoid conflict?

Rachel:

The six ways that we avoid conflict are distraction, overwhelm, self-flagellation, shut down, blame and passive aggression.

Angela:

Oh, yeah. I'm good at more than two of those. I just, if that was a report card, I would have like, I would definitely be passing. That's awesome.

Rachel:

Hehe! You get marked across the board, right?

Angela:

Right. Yeah, I don't think I would get straight A's but there's a good three or four A's in that collection. So, it's a fantastic book and so much amazing content you share in this book, but I think so many people have great content and they have the dream of writing a book but a lot of times, they don't make it happen. So, I'm hoping today this conversation, obviously, I want people to learn about the self-rescue system in your book, but I also want them to understand, how is it you were able to get this done. So, let's just talk about what is it that you wish you knew before you wrote this book?

Rachel:

Oh, what I wish I knew before I wrote this book. Uhm, in some ways, I would love to say I wish I knew how much time and energy it was gonna take but I also know that it's better that I didn't know, hahaha, before getting started. Hahaha! You know, I wanted to, although the thing that I think was most important for me and I'd wish I had known earlier in the process, was how much time and energy I needed to devote to marketing way before the book was published because, you know, it's all well and good to write a fantastic book which I think I did. Uhm, but if it only gets in the hands of a few 100 people, it's not really serving the way it's meant to serve. So, marketing is a huge piece of that journey and that starts much earlier than I would have thought. It doesn't start when the product exists, it starts way before that.

Angela:

Well, and you did that because you actually ran a crowdfunding campaign, uhm, for your book before you wrote it or I mean it may have been after you started it, but certainly before you finished it. And so what, what are some of the things that you learned about crowdfunding and maybe how it relates to marketing?

Rachel:

Well, yeah. That's a good question. I did start some of it definitely earlier and that's part of why the book did fairly well from the launch. Uhm, I think crowdfunding is kinda of a genius way to market. That's not why I did it. I did it 'cause I actually needed the money but it was a win-win scenario because it gives people a chance to be invested in the product and people have a different mindset about something when it's being created than with it already exists. Like people believe in a passion project and that, you know, inspires them to want to participate so it gives them a chance to be in relationship with me as a producer of something, as a person with a dream and that helps, you know, people, like, wanna join in and be a part of that because they get catharsis from there, like, you know, everyone has dreams and so, everyone likes to see, you know, YouTube videos of someone accomplishing their dream. So, when you get to be a part of that, I think that's why Kickstarter and Indiegogo are so successful. People like being part of someone else's dream and they'll be excited to talk about it 'cause they feel like they're part of that family, once it's in existence.

Angela:

And were the people who funded your crowdfunding campaign, did they participate when your book came out? Do you feel like you got a different reaction from them than other people?

Rachel:

I don't know that I can, I think, I don't know if I can say that quite across the board but I think, I think a lot more people were excited about the journey than actually gave money, uhm, which is really okay. Like I think there's a...

Angela:

Hmm. Oh. That's a great point.

Rachel:

Yeah. 'Cause there's a, there's a pyramid, right? Like, they actually participate in the system, sign into a site and give money, is a whole other, you know, third level of investment, but, uhm, you know, there was a wider breadth of people who saw it happening.

Angela:

So, what you're saying is even people, right, so even people who didn't fund the crowdfunding campaign, doing the crowdfunding campaign helped raise the awareness of your book before it came out even by people who didn't fund it.

Rachel:

Yup. Oh yeah. I only have like 45 donors but I know more than 45 people.

Angela:

Which is amazing.

Rachel:

Yeah. I'm very happy with that and, you know, I have a thousand people that I'm connected to on Facebook alone, uhm, so, you know, that's a small percentage but I think I never really counted and I wish I had. The launch date was so crazy. That's another thing I wished I'd known. I wish I'd had somebody like a friend or a family member or somebody to be with me on launch day to help me to keep track of all the things that were happening and, like, record them because I've lost all the Facebook posts that people did about the book on launch day. But it was more than 45.

Angela:

That's a great point and a great suggestion. Let's go back to the writing process. Actually, let's go back to even before you wrote. Tell us how did you kick this topic and how did you kind of narrow your focus with so much information? I think it's hard for experts to decide what to write about. So, how did you pick this up?

Rachel:

You know, in honesty, I mean I'm gonna go in kind of into the ... here 'cause that's my nature. Ah, this topic picked me. That's honestly what happened. I was already midstream writing a different book that was about my business focus, which is healing for good girls. And you know, it was kind of more of like your traditional expert book, like *Let me talk about this topic* and *Here's some different things to think about*, meh, meh, meh, meh, meh. I mean I was doing alright with it, but it really wasn't inspiring me. You know, I just felt like, *Well, I need to get something out about this stuff*. And then, I was working with one of your other authors actually, who's a speech designer. And we were working on designing a speech for me and in talking about it, I came out with something that I hadn't realized that I had the secret to, which was how to handle conflict like a secret to handling difficult conversations and not getting triggered and like all freaked out and stuff 'cause I used to. And when I was describing it to her, she was like, "Wow, that's new." And I realized that I was sitting on this treasure that no one else knew about. And I sort of had to write that book, like that book became like a consuming passion for a year where I just talked about it non-stop and I tested it out with clients and I tested it out with friends. I had people looking at my copy and at the concept and, yeah, so I would say it picked me.

Angela:

I love that. Uhm, and then, once you had, this is something that really fascinates me. When people come up with a topic or an idea for a book, they also often have like a vision of what that is gonna look like and I wonder how similar or different and there's like no right or wrong answers here, but when you originally had that conversations you're talking about an author named Michelle Mazur who wrote *Speak Up for Your Business*, when you had that conversation with Michelle, how different did the book turn out to be than that original idea?

Rachel:

I didn't even know that that was a book I did at that time. I just thought it was a ... idea. But, uhm, the, ah, I think the seeds of what was there, I'm trying to think back to those notes I took that day, the seeds of what was there, yeah, well, I think what changed was, originally I thought,

“Oh, I can just make this like an e-book or a pamphlet or something.” You know like a long pdf.

Angela:

Mhmm.

Rachel:

That definitely changed like, because I taught a class on it as I was writing the book and watching people go through it, like I realize I kept needing to add more information and more information, so that they could, you know, there was a lot of cursive knowledge that I had, meaning that I couldn't see what they didn't know yet because I had already integrated this information. So, I think the only thing that changed was that I wrote a heck of a lot more than I thought I would.

Angela:

Ah, got it. So, when you started writing, talk about your writing process. How did you do it? Did you write a little bit each day, did you write big chunks, did you run into a schedule that works or how did that happen?

Rachel:

Uuuh. It was sort of like, hahaha, it was like a person running a marathon for the first time who's never trained for it or, you know, who's barely trained for it. You know, I have a background in poetry, so I'm really good at writing at least short little things and being done. So, it was kind of like blood, sweat and tears. Like, I would sit, sometimes when inspiration would strike, I'd sit down and write and that those were the great times. Sometimes, I would try to force myself to write. I'm a big extrovert, so for me, scheduling time in my calendar to sit down and do something solitary when I know I actually don't have to, it does not work. That doesn't work for me. It never has. So, I would schedule writing dates with people. That was usually somewhat productive although we would talk for like the first hour.

Angela:

Yeah.

Rachel:

But it would give me somewhat done. But it was just kind of like wherever I could scrape it together, wherever I could, you know, I went on a, I've actually led a writing retreat. I got some done then. Part of what happened during the process was I started drawing pictures, uhm, and then, actually led to it being a big feature.

Angela:

Mmm, talk about that!

Rachel:

Yeah! So, I was trying to write and I don't, at this point, I don't remember what I was trying to write but, uhm, I think it was something for the book. I was trying to explain the concepts and I

was thinking, "Oh, I'm gonna need pictures in this book." And I just hate sourcing stock photography. I just hate it. Uhm, so I was just like, I just got frustrated. I'm, like, "Dang it! I'm just gonna try to draw it. I'm just gonna draw some kind of stick figure representation and that's gonna be good enough for now." This was back when I thought that was gonna be an e-book that was not, that was self-published as a pdf. I thought, "Well, the important thing is the concept." I don't care about it looking perfect. And then I posted pictures of those drawings on Facebook and people just freaking love them and I was really surprised. And they freed up my creative energy because I didn't get so stuck on how it has to look or describing it perfectly because I could convey it through a drawing. And, you know, people go look at the book or they go look at my website. You'll start to see like they're so not perfect, like it's not like I'm some sort of amazing evocative artist but somehow these drawings have magic in them.

Angela:

But you get your point across in a different way.

Rachel:

They do, they do.

Angela:

Like I think some people are really visual and that's such a powerful tool and I actually like that you're not, it's not some amazing art. Like I think it makes you more approachable. I think a lot of authors would wanna do that and wouldn't necessarily allow themselves the freedom 'cause they're not a trained artist or something. But I think that made such a personal connection, especially to the people who are more visual and just connect that way better with people.

Rachel:

Yeah. It's one of the funny things that works out really well because it's the thing that made it easy for me that fits my capability and my joy, and it just happens that it really works for the audience too, like, one of those things I could have never expected or planned but there's something bigger and magical that just worked out there.

Angela:

So, I know that in the past, you had tried other books that you didn't finish. Why do think this one was different? Was it the drawings? Was it the writers' groups? What do you think made the difference?

Rachel:

You know, I think that the idea, first of all, I've been in business long enough. I think I'd amassed enough, you know, I'd suffered enough, I'd amassed enough with them, like, I really felt like I did have something unique to say, so that was part of it. I couldn't write a book until I felt like I actually had something different to say and not just a slightly different take on something, like, I, to me, this feels unique. And that was important for how much I don't like the process of writing, I have to have something important to say in order to do it and it has to be a consuming passion, so that was part of it. The reason that I, so that was the reason I really got two-thirds of

the way in. The reason that I finished it was hiring you and going through your process and having an editor that I worked, like a developmental developer that I worked with because I was in the weeds by that point and I just didn't, I couldn't get out, I was overwhelmed. So, having someone that I owed work to each week and she would send me stuff back and give me compliments and advice, that's what got me to finish.

Angela:

So, writing a book, and I love that you used the metaphor before of running a marathon, uhm, especially running a marathon where you haven't trained for it, uhm, but writing a book has so many things happening and I think they all use like different parts of your brain, like, the part of your brain that needs to be good at writing and coming up with content isn't necessarily the same part of your brain that's gonna be awesome at marketing or at finding an editor or at managing timelines and deadlines, like they're all such different skill sets. And so, do you think that the, you know, was it straight up overwhelmed that might have stopped you from finishing without, you know, our team or something like that? Uhm, is it just that there are too many things to keep track of on your own or was it more like writer's block, and like, *Am I good enough to write a book, am I good enough to put it out there?*

Rachel:

No, no. It was more like I was drowning in a sea of words, like, when I'm, I don't know, if anyone's ever like moved their home, for example, and you have like 50 boxes that are packed and another 25 that are half-packed and your house is like two-thirds of the way empty, and you just kinda look around and go, I don't even, which one do I, how do I even, like, keep going? Like it's, yeah, it's so different than like starting. When you're like, "Great, I can take all these books off this shelf and put them in a box." Like that. Simple, it's done. But when you start being like, "Well, but I only have this much of this box left. And how do I fit this in there?" And it was more organizational and just every time I'd look at it, there'd be 8 things to be paying attention to. It was like juggling all the words and all the strategy and all concepts at the same time. I just needed another pair of eyes on it. It's the kind of thing I could do for somebody else but I couldn't do it for myself at the same time as I keep glogging through when I was already tired and just like, you know, in the third trimester, you know, trying to, you know, get this baby pushed out. I was like, "You gotta have a birth coach or something", like, I just can't do it by myself.

Angela:

So, your book came, did your book come out in January? When did your book come out?

Rachel:

December.

Angela:

December, okay. And tell us what has happened since your book came out. What are some of the best things to have, or the worse things...

Rachel:
Hahaha!

Angela:
Uhm, but what are some of the things that have happened in your life, in your business, uhm, things that have changed for you that wouldn't have gone that way necessarily if you didn't have the book?

Rachel:
You know, I think some of that still, I'm not always aware of some of it, you know, I think some of it happens in a larger context but definitely, uhm, you know, it's been lovely to get royalties. It's been really wonderful the way that people treat me as an expert, like I really don't, I already felt serious, I think, in my profession.

Angela:
Do you see a difference there?

Rachel:
I do. Yeah, like, there's no question anymore. Like, if I say I'm a difficult conversation expert, everyone's, like, "Yeah, okay." Whereas before, no one said anything, but there was just an energy of kind of like "Weh, meh" you know. Uhm, for a little while, especially when I do speaking gigs, I mean, 'cause I run in a network of a lot of entrepreneurs who've also written books, so they're all, we're sort of peers, we're like, "Yey" each other. But whenever I get kind of among the rest of the people, 'cause I forget that that's not common 'cause among the people I know it is common. When I do speaking gigs and, you know, I get introduced and, "Oh, she just wrote a book and published a book" and people would get like big saucer eyes like, "Wow, you know, that's so amazing!" And you know, a lot of my, like I got, one of my high school classmates, uhm, she knit me a hat 'cause she posted something and, or I posted something about a hat and she was like, "I can knit that for you." And she sends it to me and she sends it to me with a card. I haven't talk to this person since high school. And she sent me a card and she's like "Honestly, I'm just so excited to have been able to do this for you, like you're, you know, it's so exciting to say that I needed you back when."

Angela:
Aww.

Rachel:
People have said stuff like that, so it's a nice perspective to feel like, you know, people really can like, see that I've done something that's big and I think internally that's one of the biggest shifts, like of all the accomplishments I've had, like I've gone to, you know, graduate school a couple of times, which, you know, people don't care about it a ton unless you're applying for jobs. I mean they care that you're qualified but that's it. Uhm, and I've had different kinds of personal triumphs but this is something, like this book is something that no matter what else

happens in my life, nothing will ever change the fact that I wrote this book and that it's in the hands of other people. Like, you know, I think my work as a therapist on an individual level, people get lasting facts from that but people can forget, people die, you know, but something about this is just like a rite of passage and it will exist forever. That achievement, you know, even if everything stops, like I will never have not written that book and somehow that makes a difference to me.

Angela:

Yup. I think this is one of the most fascinating things because I've talked to so many authors who were like you -- had many degrees, had spoken at events, were clearly already experts, had written thousands, tens of thousands of words in blog posts, have helped dozens of people, maybe hundreds of people, and they didn't get the same level of third-party credibility of just being recognized as an expert until they wrote a book. And like, I don't think they're any smarter at the end of writing a book or any more qualified or valuable as a human being. But it does change the way other people see you, and like you say, especially people who aren't running around in a world of everybody publishing books, but yeah, like automatically puts you in this other category and you can't not be in that category once you're in it. You're just deemed differently and it's such a powerful tool.

Rachel:

It really is. And there's, of course, also the benefit of, you know, running into people who are like, you know, people on Facebook, people I didn't even know bought the book and then coming to me and saying, "Oh my God, that was so helpful. Thank you so much, like this made a big change for me." So there's also something kind of cool and different about. I think it must be, like, I don't have kids, but I think it must be like having a kid and then hearing that your kid is off making the world a better place. I didn't do that part. Like once it's off in someone else's hands, their relationship with it is their own. And so that's kind of amazing that I created some sort of entity that is also helping change the world but I don't, I'm not doing that actively anymore. Our timelines have diverged. It's really fascinating.

Angela:

Mhmm. Yeah, you're done. It is totally.

Rachel:

Yeah. I'm done but the book isn't, and the book will continue.

Angela:

It's like an asynchronist relationship. They're having a relationship with you over in Chicago and you're like doing your own thing, don't even know who they are, and there's a whole thing going on.

Rachel:

I'm writing a different book, yeah.

Angela:

Right. Well, let's talk about that actually. Uhm, what is your next project?

Rachel:

So, ah, of course, I have, like four right now but, uhm...

Angela:

Your next book project.

Rachel:

I had a bunch of books try to come in to me as I was finishing the first one. I'm like, could I just have time, like could you give me just one?

Angela:

Give me a minute.

Rachel:

Yeah. I mean not to, you know, bat the muse's hand away but, uhm, so the ones that showed up most recently, it's entirely illustrated. It's kind of like a la Shel Silverstein is what I'm thinking, uhm, so I'm taking those stick figure drawings, but every page has stick figure drawings and just like one sentence of text or less. It's called *How to Change Your Operating Instructions*.

Angela:

Love it. And you actually, I think you sent us some pictures from that, right?

Rachel:

I did, yeah. Yeah it was a couple of the first few pages, yeah.

Angela:

Yeah, if you wanna see what Rachel's talking about here, go to the authorincubator.com/blog and you'll be able to check out our blog post on this episode, which is episode 118. Uhm, you would be able to find that right on our blog and check out some of the pictures from her new book. So pretty creative idea, who are you writing this for?

Rachel:

I think this is for anybody, like the more I work with people, the more I see how we all have, we all struggle with our inner critics. You know, I see that that as a huge reason that there's suffering in the world because of the ways that we judge ourselves and then like sequentially, then we judge other people because we're not able to be compassionate and loving with ourselves. And there's lots of stuff about inner critics out there but what I've hit upon lately, which kind of came out some of my session work with clients is, you know, you can do a lot of work with the inner critics and be like, "Please, don't beat me up, you know, this isn't helping." But part of the problem is the instructions that they have from your childhood that say this is how a good person is, you know, for example, uh, children are seen and not heard. You know, or like

I had one recently that I discovered in myself that was, uhm, I have to meet people's expectations in order to belong. Like that was an operating instruction, so whenever I wasn't meeting that or like adhering to that instruction, like if I'm in a leadership position in a group and there's other leaders, and I'm not sure what their expectations are, then I get all weird and wonky and triggered and I realized that I had this operating instruction. I'm like, that is so not serving me. My inner critic's beating me up on this. This is not a useful operating instruction anymore, so I changed it.

Angela:
Love it.

Rachel:
So it's kind of a primer on helping people like to change what they believe about who they are.

Angela:
No one else can change it.

Rachel:
Yeah, nobody else can change it but people don't realize that they can change it, but they can be changed.

Right. I wanna recall the program.

Rachel:
Yeah! Exactly!

Angela:
Mhmm, so powerful.

Rachel:
Like reprogram your brain to say, I don't need to believe that anymore. So, I changed that one to, *I trust that I belong and the Divine leads the way*. And I haven't been triggered about this since then.

Angela:
I love it. So, Rachel Alexandria, you can check her out on woman/overboard.com or go to healingforgoodgirls.com and you will see more about what Rachel is up to. I really, uhm, encourage you to check out the blog post and check out the pictures from her new book and hopefully connect with her as well. The book is really powerful. Your advice to other writers is appreciated. We've got about a minute left. Any final words of advice that you would want to leave future writers with?

Rachel:
You don't have to do it alone. You know, get help so you can get it done.

Angela:

I love it. I love it. Thank you, Rachel, so much for being here. You know I love your work, I love you and I love this book. I hope lots of people find it and thanks for being our guest today.

Rachel:

Thanks so much for having me. I hope it helps.

Angela:

Yey, and this week also be sure to check out the ^PageUp^ podcast for more advice on how you can get your book done. We'll be back here next week talking to another author and changing the world one book at a time.