

## [Book Journeys](#) Author Interview - May 24, 2012

**Dr. Angela Lauria with life coach and international talk show host Sallie Felton, author of *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Get Rid of This Clutter? Tools to Finally Get It Done***

*"You need to become known, whether or not you do free speaking engagements or not, that's up to you. But the more you do, the more people will find out about you." ~Sallie Felton*

**Angela:**

Well hello, and welcome back to another episode of Book Journeys Radio. I am super excited to have today on the call, Sallie Felton, author of "If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Get Rid of This Clutter?" Sallie, hello!

**Sallie:**

Hi Angela! Thanks for having me. This is gonna be great!

**Angela:**

Yay! I'm so glad you're here.

Well, Sallie and I, full disclosure, we have worked closely on her book, she is published by Journey Grrl Publishing, and she is part of the "If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I...?" book series, which I'm actually working on my book, "If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Write A Book Right Now?" and—oh, I know, right? It's a little meta.

Part of why I decided to do this radio show is that I find—even though I've written books before, they have not been in this genre. I've written academic—much more academic books, and what I've found is, the bunch of experiences as a first-time author that I'm having, that when I talk to other authors, they have the same things their first time.

So, what we try and do every week on Book Journeys Radio is just, kind of spread some light on the journey of writing your first book, from the idea, when you're in that sort of dreamlike, dreaming and scheming, and it sounds like an awesome idea, through the hero's journey of the hard slog of actually getting your book written and published, until the moment when you are holding your book in your hand.

I know you, "If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Get Rid of This Clutter?" wasn't your first book, so you might have to do some thinking back, but what I really wanna talk about is that first book journey that you made. I guess, why don't you tell us about that book or whichever book you wanna think about, and what you wished you knew before you wrote that book?

**Sallie:**

There are two books: one is "Stepping Stones to Success", and the other is "GPS for Success". Both were with Insight Publishing, and it was, for me, a -- creating a foundation for becoming an author. What I was asked to do was to include a chapter into this book, and I came up with—alongside Stephen Covey and Deepak Chopra and Dr. John Gray, and Les Brown, Jack Canfield and Denis Waitley. My primary thought was, this was for marketing purposes. This was for me to submit something that I had written, and, Angela, they took it from there, publishing the whole thing. It was seamless. It was absolutely seamless.

A chapter, writing a chapter, is very different from what you asked me to do: a whole book. When I was—when you asked me to do the whole book, I remember I said, “Angela, what’s the timeframe here?” and you said, “Four months.” And I just about fell off my chair! And I said, “No, wait a minute Sallie. Four months. Let’s see.” And then you said, “it’s about 60,000 words, and ‘course I was going ‘Holy you-know-what’, and I—again. Think of what you already know, instead of having to re-do and recreate.”

So my first thought was I’m going to copy and paste everything I ever spoke about, or wrote about, and put it together, and come up with how many words do I actually have--

**Angela:**

Already written.

**Sallie:**

Yeah! Already written. Already there. Because we already knew what the subject line was. It was the clutter. So I already knew that.

So I gathered all the material the past seven years that I have done this, and cut and pasted everything. Just pasted it, and hit Word Count. I was up to 30,000 words. So I emailed you back and said, “Game On!”

**Angela:**

We can do it!

**Sallie:**

We can do this! If we already got 30,000 words, so expand on that!

**Angela:**

Well and, you know, I think people would be surprised, especially people who speak. Because if you already got some speeches that you put together, the different things, I think that-- even sometimes certainly people that blog, and even people who write long emails, a lot of times, there are treasure troves in your outgoing email.

What I like to tell people is exactly that. Whenever possible, go grab content that you've already written because you took a bunch of time to write it once. Fitting it into an outline or a structure is a lot easier than you know, defeating the blank page. And I think one of the places people get stuck with on their first book journey is really narrowing down their topic, and in your case, because you were actually commissioned to write this book, you were kind of given a sandbox to play in. Did you think, in your case, were there other ideas for books that you were playing with, or were you thinking about writing something different, and did this help you narrow that down or—how did that work for you?

**Sallie:**

Well, actually, it's interesting because it was two years ago that I was on the radio, and it happened to be New Year's, and everybody calls in with what their New Year's resolutions are. Over and over and over, I hear, "I wanna simplify my life. I wanna get rid of the clutter. I want a new relationship to brew. I want a new job." And I think it was the, *I want more time in my life, I wanna simplify and I wanna get rid of the clutter* that hit me. I'm not a hoarder; I'm not a collector, but what I do know is how to chunk something out in steps to make it work.

So what I did on that show, I said, "Hear me now. I am committing to de-cluttering for three hundred and sixty-five days. I will blog my whims, my struggles, and even what I'm procrastinating on. I will give you tips, resources throughout, and I will show you how to do your entire house—attic, basement, garage, whatever shed you have—and make this work."

And that's what I did, and so when you contacted me, basically, I had the format ready.

**Angela:**

Interesting. Funny how things line up like that, isn't it?

**Sallie:**

Yeah!

**Angela:**

Yeah.

**Sallie:**

Exactly.

**Angela:**

So, I know we've talked about the fact that about—at least half of your book—not that it was written, cause obviously, you still have a lot of work to do on it, but you have at

least have the foundation for about half of it. What about the other half? Did writer's block ever come up for you when you were writing stuff for the first time?

**Sallie:**

The Writer's Block was my inner critic. I think we all, at some point, have an inner critic that comes to light. Whenever it did show up, that writer's block, I wrote from my own experiences and those of my clients. So basically, I didn't get it, but I did get that—that inner critic saying "Who are you? Can you measure up to everybody else out there?"

**Angela:**

This comes up on almost every radio show I do, and many of my coaching sessions—the "Who are you to write this book?" phenomenon, and how did you answer that for yourself?

**Sallie:**

I sat back and I said, OK. Let's look at what's real here. Let's look at what you have done. I'm a very visual and tactile person, so it makes sense for me to list it, and then see it and read it out loud. I was affirming out loud. (**Angela:** Ooh, that sounds powerful.) I was affirming myself. (**Angela:** Interesting) I had to say the words.

**Angela:**

What did you write down that gave you that confidence? What types of credentials, 'cause obviously, we know one of them is probably that you had gotten this chapter in a book with some pretty influential and inspirational people. What were some of the other things that made you think—I used to say when I was writing my first book, which is, like I said, it was academic, but I used to always say, "I have no reason to believe that I can do this." I haven't stopped doing it. I'm very curious to see the outcome, but there is nothing in my history that makes me think "I know how to do this." So what was it that made you believe you can do it?

**Sallie:**

I've always been told that my writing style is an easy read, it comes from the heart. It is not eloquent by any means, but it touches people, and my descriptions touch people.

My sisters always said, Dad would be so proud of you because you are writing just like he would. So I had that, but I also said, wait a minute. You do measure up. You've done a radio show for six years. You have over a half million people subscribing. So don't think for a second that people aren't listening. And that was powerful for me.

**Angela:**

Absolutely. And when you were thinking about writing your book, what are the things that—we talked about what you wished you knew before you wrote your book. One of the things that comes up a lot when I ask that question is, I wish I knew that writing the

book was kind of the tip of the iceberg, and promoting it, and the marketing around it was much bigger. (**Sallie:** Absolutely.) Was that something that you were aware of, and what has marketing been like for you since your book came out?

**Sallie:**

I wished I knew before I wrote the book... the intricacies and the secrets to a launch. I hired somebody to do the launch for me, and it was worth every penny. The mistake I made was not keeping the analytic tracking of when they were bought in Amazon. I wished I had done that; I will absolutely do that next time. That would have been important.

**Angela:**

I'll just stop you there before you jump to the next point. Are you comfortable sharing—I know this, but, I don't wanna say—are you comfortable with sharing who did your launch and what that included 'cause I think people would be—(**Sallie:** Absolutely!) interested enough and also, they might not even realize that's something they need to be thinking about budgeting for that sort of stuff.

**Sallie:**

Absolutely. The person that did my launch was Denise Cassino, and she is in Colorado. She has—had a relationship with me for years, in that I helped promote her books that she pitches for people on my radio show. So it's been a win-win situation. She has, in her bailiwick, a group of authors that have said, I would love to partner with whomever Denise works with.

So here she had a list, already created, to partner with. So that made it very appealing. The other thing was, she told me exactly what I needed to do, week by week, in a set form. I mean she had that list. She said, I want this by this date, this date, this date, this date. And I got that before I even signed the contract. So I knew what I was up against.

**Angela:**

And did that (just to... the volume)... Did that seem a lot of work?

**Sallie:**

No! No.

**Angela:**

The way it was chunked—I know you're the master of chunking things down, so the way it was chunked down, it seemed like, okay, I'm gonna spend, what, couple hours a week?

**Sallie:**

Oh, it was so—it was so totally doable. So totally doable. What she did was I gave her all the names of those people I wanted to have as partners. Then what we did was, I said, this is the look I want, these are the colors I want, this is the text I want. What am I missing?

From there, she showed me the secrets in Amazon. She said, this is what you need to do to get this, this category, this is what you need to do to improve your rank in Amazon—I mean, she has it down to a science! Down to a science. So when--

**Angela:**

And if people wanna find Denise, it's Cassino—how do you spell that?

**Sallie:**

Denise Cassino. (*Note: Google Search results show that the correct spelling is C-A-S-S-I-N-O*) (**Angela:** Oh, so it's just like the gambling place.) Yup. Yup. Denise Cassino, and please use my name. She would be happy to work with you. She's done over five hundred launches!

**Angela:**

Wow. Your launch was definitely impressive, and your sales have been impressive. How do you think they would have been different if you didn't work with Denise? It was—she doubled your sales...?

**Sallie:**

I think of it more as time. What time do I have to commit to doing a launch? If you're going to do your own launch, what part of your business are you not doing? What part of your revenue are you not getting? You have to think—you have to think of your time as, what are you doing in one arena, and what are you not doing in the other? What are you substituting with that amount of time?

**Angela:**

And did you continue through your whole book production, or did you continue to work with clients, have your radio show, do all those other aspects of your business?

**Sallie:**

Absolutely, absolutely. Yeah!

**Angela:**

And obviously that wouldn't necessarily be a decision that everyone would make?

**Sallie:**

No, not at all. Not at all. You can do it! You can totally do this yourself. But I knew, I didn't have the time, nor did I want to spend hours tracking, locating, and doing all the particulars that need to happen.

**Angela:**

I see. Okay. So what advice would you give to somebody who right now is working on their book, they are thinking marketing is not something that they need to worry about, and their main concern is writing an awesome book. They have things they wanna say, they wanna write an awesome book, but they feel like marketing is gonna sort of take care of itself. They'll post it on Facebook, tell all their friends and family, that sort of thing. But it's not something to focus on. What would you—what would you tell them?

**Sallie:**

That's great! That's absolutely great. I would use as much social media as you can. Set up with Twitter and Facebook; especially Twitter. Schedule... announcements of when this book is coming out, but also give tips. Give something to keep the curiosity going. "Did you know that...", whatever it is. Give tips, send it so they—it makes them curious. You want to start building a relationship with people on Twitter, as well as on Facebook, because those people will be more than likely—either downloading your book or buying it. So you want to build on curiosity.

**Angela:**

You've also used the media to help with that. How have you done that?

**Sallie:**

Big time. I set up that I wanted to do three cable shows a month and three book signings a month. What I did was, I said okay, I am going to do a cable show in one town, and I'm going to speak at the library the same day. So I did two for one. I'm not going to go to the same place twice, I'm going to package them together.

So in the cable show, I was able to say, your library has two free copies of which I donated—and that's another thing. Always donate books to your library. (**Angela:** Nice.) Always donate. One of the first book signings I did, we had registered 33 people, and I told you this, Angela, a hundred and sixteen people walked through the door. (**Angela:** Wow.)

My first thought to everybody as I said to them, "What's in the water? What is in the water? Everybody's got clutter! This is a riot!" Thirty people signed up and a hundred and sixteen walked in, and what I did was... With the media I used as... here's an

opportunity to bring your steamer trunk, your backpacks, whatever it is that you want to unload, and learn how to do it, and how to do it with a positive effect and have total success.

So I... go, this is what you're going to learn. I put a real positive spin on the benefit and that it can be successful by using small, small steps.

**Angela:**

Small steps, and I think that is as true for clutter as it is for getting to completion of your first book and marketing it in the world. (**Sallie:** Yeah, yeah. Exactly.)

So what for you is the best thing to come out of having your own book?

**Sallie:**

Um, credibility, authorship, and building up-- a better platform.

**Angela:**

So let's break those down a little. How has the credibility, and by that, I take it the credibility has helped you because people are finding you, or when people find you, they find you more trustworthy—what is that? Break that down for me a little bit.

**Sallie:**

Credibility also is—you are now an author. I started with doing the chapter which brought me the name author, whatever that is in that world. Sometimes it's the game we play, and the other thing was, that you want to align yourself with visionaries of the same sort of topics. Of empowerment, whatever it is.

So you wanna align yourself with those people. As I said, the first two books I did were only marketing purposes. It was the beginning. It was the beginning.

That brought me credibility, and the latest book, *If I'm So Smart, Why Can't I Get Rid Of This Clutter?*, has added to that because I had a reviewer; a post on a blog that she had read my book, and all of a sudden Angela, this reviewer was getting comments from people from Africa, from Germany, from Australia, because she knew a lot of other people. So all of a sudden, the book is now being visible, even the title, in all these different countries. You never know who's going to be looking at your book when you wanna review. That took me to wanting to take it a step further with credibility, and I wanted to use more of the speaking platform and TV, and how was I going to do that, but I needed to get on TV.



That happened, and now I can very truthfully say, as featured on ABC, NBC—ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox News affiliates across the nation. That's another part of the puzzle when it comes to book launches.

**Angela:**

Interesting. Okay. You said, in terms of building a platform, does that include growing your list or growing your Facebook fans, or what does a platform mean to you and what do you want from a platform?

**Sallie:**

A platform means to me that you have to take steps. The first step is for people to know who you are. You've gotta have that website. That's crucial. You have to do social media, that's next. You need to become known, whether or not you do free speaking engagements or not, that's up to you. But the more you do, the more people will find out about you.

One of the best things that you can do to get known is to link yourself up with a non-profit organization and by that, I mean you volunteer. You volunteer with a national organization. They're going to promote you, and you in turn, are absolutely promoting them. *(Angela talks along with Sallie as she is talking at this point; dialogue is unintelligible.)*

**Angela:**

Do you have a group that you've spent some time promoting?

**Sallie:**

I have promoted Full Circle projects where athletes go and give a month's time in Third World countries, and I helped some athletes, skiing athletes do the—when they give a month's time of free labor, free sweat; they live on floors, but they believe in giving back because they have been so fortunate in the skiing world to be successful, and they really feel that they wanna give back.

**Angela:**

Wonderful. Well, I always ask people in our last few seconds here, just to talk finally about what was different than you expected with your book. So what was different for you?

**Sallie:**

What was different for me? I think I expected more, more book signings to be made for me than my having to create them; I thought I would have a better handle on people who bought the book, so I could grab their email-- **(Angela: Mmm. That's a tricky one.)**

It's really tricky. It's really tricky. You're only going to get what they provide, and Amazon's not gonna give you the list. Not happening. Just not happening.

**Angela:**

Lots of surprises, lots of hard work but it sounds like lots of upsides too. (**Sallie:** Absolutely!) Sallie, I so appreciate your time today. How can people find you?

**Sallie:**

They can find me on Sallie, S-A-L-L-I-E Felton, lifecoach.com, and if they got any questions at all, and want further help or tips, they can just send me a contact, and I'll get back to them.

**Angela:**

Okay. Salliefelton.com, oh salliefeltonlifecoach.com; Sallie, it was so great to talk to you today, and I know we'll talk to you soon.

**Sallie:**

Oh Angela, thanks! And I'm glad you're doing what you're doing.

**Angela:**

Yay! Take care. Buh-bye.

**Sallie:**

Buh-bye.