

[Book Journeys](#) Interview - January 15, 2015

Dr. Angela Lauria with Dr. Shaelyn T. Pham, author of *The Joy to Me*

“Treat writing as just like a hobby that you have started out with and enjoy every single word and sentence that you have to put out there.” ~Dr. Shaelyn Pham

Angela:

Well, hey everybody. We are back on Book Journeys Radio. So happy to be here this week. And every week on the show, we talk to authors who have made it to that magical publication day. So many writers want to write a book and they don't cross that threshold and my goal for this show is to talk to authors who have made it there and see if we can pick apart what some of those missing ingredients are. If you haven't finished your book yet, what is it that you, what connection have you not made? What don't you know yet? And that's really the purpose of this show is authors talking to authors about what made it happen. And so this week, our guest is Dr. Shaelyn Pham. She is a business coach, a life coach, a therapist, psychologist, and she is the author of *The Joy of Me*. So welcome to the show, Dr. Pham. It's great to have you here.

Shaelyn:

Thank you, Dr. Angela. It's great to be with you.

Angela:

Awesome. We've got two women doctors but I think yours might be more legit than mine. I just have a Doctor of Philosophy. I just like to talk a lot and read a lot. So...

Shaelyn:

A doctor is a doctor.

Angela:

Aw, thank you. So, awesome. I'm really excited about your book *The Joy of Me*. Let's just, to get started, tell people what the book is about.

Shaelyn:

The book is about finding your own worth, your own happiness, and your own identity. And particularly it's for anyone who feels like they have to earn the love or run around doing everything in order to be liked and to be loved, and you know, giving, giving. It's the one who consider themselves as the giver, the caretaker, and who are running low on the fuel.

Angela:

Mmm. I love it. So the subtitle of *The Joy of Me* is *Uncover Your Loving Self Through the Art of Being Selfish*. So “The Art of Being Selfish” that's sort of controversial. What do you mean by “The Art of Being Selfish?”

Shaelyn:

It is to turn that word upside on its head and really examine what is selfish because a lot of times, in a woman's, I mean men too, but more so with women who are nurturers and they nurture, they take care of everybody around them except for themselves. And they don't give themselves the time of the day, their necessity time of the day, and they need to give themselves the care, the proper care to take care of themselves so that they can also be happy as well. And so that selfish part is learning to really love yourself and to take care of yourself so you don't end up just giving and hoping, waiting and wishing for it to be reciprocated.

Angela:

Yeah, I love that. It's reclaiming that whole concept and making being selfish a positive part of your identity which I think, you know, so many of us could use with actually being a little more selfish. So great! Well, tell us why you wanted a book? Why did you want to write a book and why did you want to write this book?

Shaelyn:

Uhm, I have always wanted to write a book. I think when I was 16 I was talking to my sister and I was like, "This is my lifelong goal. I am going to write a book someday and publish it." But I didn't really know what to write and I was like, "Okay, who am I to write a book?" But after decades of being in practice and doing talks and such, I keep seeing and hearing a recurring theme that's coming up in the practice and also with the people that I encounter and talk to, is that they give so much but they don't get anything in return. And it's like they keep pouring out, you know that, imagine yourself as like that pot of tea and they keep pouring and pouring and they don't refill their cup. They're hoping that someone else will refill their pot for them. And it leads them to being very unhappy, very destructive in relationships, and the worst of it all is it leads to resentment. And so when I'm seeing, you know, thousands of people over the decades, I was like, okay if this is the recurring theme, then there must be plenty of people out there who are also struggling with the same issues. And so I had to write this book to get the message out to the people that I would otherwise have opportunity to meet and to sit down with.

Angela:

I love that. So did you actually envision your book completed before you started the process?

Shaelyn:

Oh yes. It may sound silly and you will probably laugh at this but before I actually wrote the book, I actually have the, a banner, I have a giant banner and I put it over the fireplace and it has my name. I didn't have the book title then, so I say, you know, I just make up a book title and I have my name and underneath I have "best-selling author." And that was what I looked at every single day while writing the book.

Angela:

I love that. That is so inspiring. That's fantastic. So it sounds like you really were clear on who you wanted to help and what your message was. What are some of the things that you learned after writing your book that maybe you wish you knew before you wrote the book?

Shaelyn:

I didn't realize how much marketing that went into it. And one concept that I learned later on is, because I have always been feeling a little eerie when it comes to marketing 'cause the image that comes to my mind is like an old car salesman kind of deal when I think of marketing. And so that is something that I've learned and I'm still trying to learn to embrace that, is that you know, you can put out a wonderful book but if no one knows about it then it doesn't help anybody. And so part of the marketing is to looking at it as in I'm trying to reach the people maybe who's in Canada or in Virginia or Texas and I need to get the word out so they know the book, so they can benefit from the book.

Angela:

Yeah, I mean you have to have a powerful and well-written book to make a difference but if nobody reads it, it doesn't matter if it's the best book in the history of books, right? If nobody's reading it, then it's not gonna make the difference you wanted it to make.

Shaelyn:

Exactly.

Angela:

So I think people are often surprised by how much marketing there is and that writing a book is just sort of a small piece of the, you know, piece of the puzzle. You have to have the book and you have to have it published but that's just a piece of the puzzle. So we'll get back to that in a minute but let's talk about writing the book. How long did it take you and what tips or tricks can you share about getting it written?

Shaelyn:

I dabbled into it for a couple of years but to really sit down when I make decisions like, I'm going to write this book and publish it and really going to make it a goal, it was started in March of 2014 and I actually got it published by the end of October 2014. So it's about six, seven months?

Angela:

Fantastic! That's great. And what were some of the things that kept you writing? What kind of a schedule did you set for yourself or not and when you got stuck how did you get back on track? 'Cause everybody has moments where they get stuck so tell us how you got it done.

Shaelyn:

It is definitely a self-discipline aspect and component that you really have to keep. I make a schedule to write every single day. After work, from being in the practice, I would go home and I would write and what I have found is, at night when it's all quiet, everybody's going to bed, it's the best time for me to write, too. And so I make it a conscious decision to write everyday after work and if I have any idea throughout the day, I would just jot it down, whether from napkin, to Post-it, to my phone, whatever that I can. And I would revisit that at night and if I ever have writing block and you know, at night also you get tired too, I would just put it aside. Either I can, you know, on weekends and I would make it a whole day on Saturday, a Friday, and if I ever encounter and which I did, and any authors will say the same, at some point in their writing career there will be writer's block is, I just put it aside. I go make a cup of tea, I like, go for a walk and just clear my mind so that I don't just sort of just hammer it in and it's not going anywhere. So I put it aside, I go do something else and to make a decision to come back to it 'cause sometimes people never come back to it. So give yourself that, you know, half an hour what not, and come back to your writing.

Angela:

I love that tip. I think that's really key is, it's so easy to step away from it and then not come back. So deciding before you get off and take the break, is ah, is it gonna be a half an hour break, is it gonna be a fifteen-minute break? But really making a conscious decision about how long you're gonna step away I think is a big key.

Shaelyn:

Mhmm.

So okay, now you've got your book and you've finished writing it. Tell us about publishing. What are the different publishing routes that you've considered and how did you end up getting your book published in the end?

Shaelyn:

Uhm, at that time, I was doing research, learning, studying traditional publishing to halfway house, that sort of uhm, you know, you have some creative control. The halfway is partly traditional but partly the uhm, self-published and then the other is the full self-published. And so I was studying all those and because of my goal and how quickly I wanted to get the book out, at that time when I was talking to the editor from the publisher, it's ah, it told me that it takes anywhere between three months to six months for them to, you know, get the script, read it, do all that is necessary. And so the timeline was not what I was fond of and in terms of going with traditional, ah, the halfway house, you know there is, I mean that is if you want to have both worlds that's probably one of the best approach and the best way to go. As for me I chose to do full self-publish because I would have control over every single thing. And also given this is my first print book, I want to learn the ins and outs, the nitty-gritty of everything

from publishing - writing to publishing to marketing, so that I have a better idea when I come into the next book, I know what to expect.

Angela:

Yeah, I do think that's a great little tip because even if you wanna hire any part of the program out, or if you wanna hire all of the publishing to somebody, or if you wanna hire someone just to do the cover, really understanding the whole process beginning to end is just gonna make you a much savvier shopper for your next book. So I think that was a great decision.

Shaelyn:

Thank you.

Angela:

And so tell us...

Shaelyn:

And also to my knowledge now, uhm, what I have come to learn is, you know, in the old days, publishers they do a lot more, whereas nowadays, even when you go with a traditional publishing house, you still have to do a lot of heavy lifting in terms of marketing as well.

Angela:

Absolutely. So tell us, for the publishing, how did you do it? What service did you use? How did you find, you know, designers and editors and things like that?

Shaelyn:

Uhm, I used ah, CreateSpace which is an affiliate with Amazon and they are the, all about the self-publishing book. And they were wonderful, the service was amazing, they have really quick response. If you have any questions, they're there. They also have built-in services such as, uhm, editing or book covers and all those, but I chose to get my book cover through the 99designs actually and...

Angela:

Hmm!

Shaelyn:

Yeah when you go to the 99designs and you know, you pay for the, I think platinum or gold, I don't know which one it was, the top one, you would have hundreds of designers to submit their design. And each designer, they keep submitting design until you find the one that you like and if the one that has potential, you can talk with them, have them tweak it. So really they are there to serve you however you want it. And that was the route that I go with design and in terms of editor, I do know some of the authors, people who have also worked with

traditional published housing so they gave me numbers of editors, whether from copywriting editors or content and all those. And you just go through interview them. Uhm, it's a job because this is your book, this is your baby, so you, I interviewed a number of editors and found the one that was best fit to work with me.

Angela:

So any tips that you have for people on finding people to work with? What was your guide? How did you know somebody was good? Did you look at reviews? Did you just go with your guts? What are some tips you can give people in terms of finding resources to help publish their book?

Shaelyn:

Uhm, looking at reviews is also a bonus. Knowing the person, if you know someone who has worked with that person personally, you know the word-of-mouth recommendation is what I highly value. And also, one of the things is, a lot of them, they're willing to look at your manuscript and they're willing to, you know, look through the first few pages, and they can do some editing, give you feedback. So if you like their working style, and if that's the best fit for you, then I mean, that's the best one to go with. But don't be afraid to ask because a lot of them, they're willing to do that for you and say, "Hey, you know, I have the manuscript and I want to see what your working style is like. So would you consider looking at the first few pages and tell me your feedback?" And they'll be more than happy to do that.

Angela:

That's a fantastic idea. Uhm, ok so let's talk about when your book was published. Ah, your book came out, when was it released?

Shaelyn:

It came out October 21st of 2014.

Angela:

Wow! That really was fast from April to October. So your book comes out in October. It's been out now for about three months. What are some of the things you've done to promote the book and what would you say has worked best and maybe things that you wouldn't repeat again?

Shaelyn:

Ah, well, one of the things I would do is exactly what I'm doing now, is to talk to radios, try to also get into print, TV, and also, you know, talk to your colleagues and the people that you know. I literally was shamelessly telling everybody I know, even people, strangers that I meet in the elevator about the book and particularly because the book came out right before Christmas. So I remember, I would get off of work one day walking down the ah, you know, getting into the elevator to go down and there was this older gentleman and I would just

starting ... and I was like, "You know one of the best ways to stuff your stocking is get this book." And I just pull out my book and just show it to him.

Angela:

That's awesome.

Shaelyn:

So, you do have to shamelessly, and I love using that word now, is just talk about your book. Talk to strangers, talk to family, talk to friends. Talk to whoever that you see and meet. And if you're afraid of talking, you definitely have to develop that thick skin to talk about it.

Angela:

Absolutely. So you talked about radio shows like this one. How have you been most successful at getting to be a guest on radio shows?

Shaelyn:

One of the things that I have found is, you know, we all have something to offer and we all have needs as well. And so, you know, you approach, uhm, talk show host that if you know what the audience needs, uhm, like for you, you're talking about, the show is to inspire writers who want to publish their books. So what can they learn from it? So the best way is knowing your host and the show that you want to go on and what you can offer. Uhm, what service can you offer? What tips? What advice? Basically, what can you offer for the audience? And that's the best way I've found in terms of approaching radio or any social media actually.

Angela:

Mhmm. And I noticed you have a gorgeous website. The website is actually thejoyofme.com. So you guys can check this out but it's beautifully designed and has some opportunities for people to stay in contact with you. Did you have this website before you did the book or did you launch it with the book? How did you know what you wanted the site to look like?

Shaelyn:

Uhm, I had an idea because, you know, by the time I had the website up, I pretty much in the last phase of the book, you know, with the book covers and what I want the back cover and all those, and what I want to talk about the book in a short paragraph. And so I actually had the book, uhm, published after the, launched after the website. So the website came first and I hired other people. I hired a designer and when you hire that, there are a number of websites. One of the ones that I went to is called elance.com and that's where I found my web designer. And from there I had him design, you know, work with me in the layout, the color scheme and all that. And I also had an opportunity to do a pre-order before the book launch and that was also very helpful to get the word out for the book.

Angela:

Let's talk about that. That sounds like a great way to sell your book at you launch. So how did you do a pre-sale?

Shaelyn:

Uhm, basically you know, with Amazon, you can do pre-order and they won't charge your cart until they ship the book. So really there is no risk in it. So you can just go to Amazon and set up an account before your book comes out and you make it as a pre-order and they will give you all the code and you can just pluck it into your website. And when people click on that pre-order form, it will take them directly to your Amazon page before the book comes out.

Angela:

Wow that's fantastic! So, okay what for you has been, in the last three months or so, you said you had a lifelong dream of being an author, so what is the best thing to have come out of having your own book?

Shaelyn:

What I have found really rewarding and the joy of really the heart of the reason why I wrote a book is I periodically get messages and sometimes, uhm, you know, my friends or people who have bought the books and give to people that, you know, their friends and people I've never met and don't know. But every now and then I get messages that say how wonderful the book is, they love the book, it really helped them, they pick it up and they haven't put it down. So those are the things that it really makes it worthwhile to write the book and the message because I know that it's reaching the people that, like I said earlier, I wouldn't have the opportunity to meet them. And they can get the teaching and the message that I would have to see them in person or go to one of my talks. So this way they can also learn the message that I have to teach and benefit from it.

Angela:

And do you have other ways that people can work with you who buy your book?

Shaelyn:

Yes, I do have, either you know, you can come to see me, you go to one of my talks. I also have online coaching programs. Right now one of the programs that I do have is called "Master Your Emotions to Supercharge Your Life" and this is an eight-week program that is going to be launched in uhm, next month. So that's one other way you can work with me. Also, there are other shorter coaching, uhm, online coaching that you can also get to work with me as well.

Angela:

Love it. Fantastic. So I mentioned your name earlier but I just wanna spell it for people so they can find you. We talked about thejoyofme.com but you can also find Dr. Shaelyn Pham at drshaelynpham.com. So that's D-R-S-H-A-E-L-Y-N-P-H-A-M. So Dr. Shaelyn Pham, she is

the author of *The Joy of Me*. We've got about a minute left. Any final advice that you would give to people who wanna write a book but maybe haven't been able to get all the way there yet? What advice would you give them?

Shaelyn:

Don't give up because it doesn't matter how hard it is. At the end, it will be all worth it and also learn to enjoy the journey.

Angela:

I love that. Learn to enjoy the journey. Could you say a little bit more about that?

Shaelyn:

A lot of times we are too focused on the result and we forgot really what writing is all about and you start writing because you actually love writing but when you're too focused on the result, you also get overwhelmed. So treat the writing as just like a hobby that what you have started out with and enjoy every single word and sentences that you have to put out there.

Angela:

Wow! Well, that was fantastic advice. Dr. Shaelyn Pham, author of the book, *The Joy of Me*. Thank you so much for being our guest today.

Shaelyn:

Thank you for having me.

Angela:

And we will be back next week at the Author Incubator here at Book Journeys Radio where we're changing the world one book at a time.