

[Book Journeys](#) Author Interview - July 18, 2013

Dr. Angela Lauria with Tamara Cortez, author of *Flow Notes: A Collection*

"I love, love getting people's responses for my book and I think that's the validation for me because it makes me feel good that I made the right decision and that my gift is being received." ~Tamara Cortez

Angela:

Well, hello everybody and welcome back to Book Journeys Radio. I'm your host, Dr. Angela Lauria from The Author Incubator. I am the creator of The Difference Process for Writing a Book that Matters, and each week on the show we interview an author who has written a book that is making a difference in the world, and this week is no different. We have with us Tamara Cortez. She is a Reiki Master applied instructor, a yoga instructor, and the author of *Flow Notes: A Collection*, and it's a little bit different from some of the other books that we're talking about, so I'm really excited to talk to Tamara. Uhm, one note I do want to make... Tamara is on a... uh, she's dialing in through her computer. We're really lucky to have her here today, and uhm, sometimes the quality may not be what you are used to. I will try to make sure that her points come through clearly and that you can hear what she says, uhm... But we're just glad to have her. Tamara, why don't you tell us a little bit about *Flow Notes* and how you came to write it?

Tamara:

Uhm, thank you. I wanted to say, first of all, for having me on the show. I'm super happy and stoked, to be even sharing this information with everyone, and uhm, you know, I just... and so... I feel like just even glad to be able to present this little book, and uhm... one that started from a little project I started... and a consciousness project I started about seven years ago (?) and what I noticed was, uhm, that when I would talk to people, you know maybe... a lot of times that, you know, I get... I don't talk to people when I'm going through growth periods - what I call them, like... so whenever I'm going through my challenging times, uhm, you know, I noticed that, you know, I would talk to a couple of people and they were also be going through some times too, and I felt like, when we connected and I did it, you know, but... myself for saying, "Oh, this is happening right now and they told me, you know, what was going on in their world that, uhm, there are similarities happening and, you know, I started to think, maybe, you know, a lot of times when we're going through our changes, we think, you know, we're the only ones... no one else is experiencing what I'm experiencing and, you know, I'm all alone and, you know, I feel like... and, you know, I started to do this little project, and I, you know, my years in meditation and... I've been doing over fifteen years with this meditation called vipassana... You know, I think that if I do something like this, maybe, if send out a note once a week, that it would help everybody get through the change and understand, "Hey, you're not alone," and, you know, see what messages come through my meditation, and uhm, you know, I asked a couple of people that I was working with at the time, you know, if you wanna be be part of this project, and they were like, "Yeah," you know, "Sign me up!" So, you know, I... that's how it started and once a week I would sit down in front of my computer and,

you know, I would meditate and ask, "What is it, right now, the universe wants me to know and everyone else?" And uhm, you know, then I would just kind of allow myself to be in that moment that... you know, just let it flow through whatever the message was, and, you know, I also backed it up with other people's inspirational quotes because I feel like, a lot of times, you know, when we understand that there are other people who are successful, who, you know, are out in the world, doing things, and they too have, you know, similar aspects that they're going through as what you are... that that... kind of, you know, solidify, okay, I feel better now. Uhm, so that's kind of how it started, and it just ended being like a seven-year project and growing and growing and people were sharing their notes that I would email... them to other people... and then other people would write me and say, "Hey, can you add me on to your list," and, you know, I just had to grow...

Angela:

I'm a little... I'm so sorry, but I'm a little confused. What is the... actual book? What is it?

Tamara:

So the book is uhm, it's, it's notes to yourself and, uhm, it's kind of like just a perspective of how to get through your growth period. uhm, and so...

Angela:

Got it. Okay.

Tamara:

Yeah, so it's different ways to change how we're looking at what we're going through, and I think that, you know, like for example... I just wanna share this story of... really quick because it reminded me, not too long ago... like, for example, I was in the grocery.. you know, I was... the other day, and... In my mind I was [in] a loop about... "Oh, my God," you know, "It's so crazy in here, right now, you know... It's lunchtime... I had been wanting... like pepperoni pizza... to the guy and he's like, "We're sold out," and you know, like, "You're gonna have to wait fifteen minutes for the pepperoni," and I was like, "Great," you know, and in my mind I was just in this loop, like everything is, was just... not working, and uhm, you know, just conf... even in my mind complaining about I have to wait fifteen minutes for my pizza, you know. So, as soon as... I just got a sandwich, and, you know, I walked out of, you know, the store, and went to go sit down at the table, and directly in my view was a homeless man asking for change and everything just changed for me in that instant. Like all the things in my mind that I had been complaining about, and that I had been, you know, upset about, you know, and in just all these little things, that I had run in my mind in a loop, just... my whole perspective shifted when I saw this man, because I'm like, "Here I am complaining about pepperoni pizza and, you know, this man is just asking for some change..." and I... you know, at that point I had like, egg, all over my face because I was like, really... thank the universe for showing me that and just shifting me back to what I'm grateful for, like... now I'm grateful that on my bikeride home, you know, that I have a bike and I'm grateful that I do have a roof over my head and it just changed my whole... like that... different perspective changed the rest of

my day. And so, these notes are kind of like that, in a way... just how to see what's happening in the world maybe a little bit differently, and how we can move through them and what I felt after I would write a note was... I felt my life was flowing again. So that's why I called them flow notes - because, you know, I feel stuck sometimes and then I would write a note and it would just change my reality and I felt... okay I could move forward again, you know. I got through this little lesson and I learned so much and so that's kind of like how flow notes...

Angela:

And so when the time you got the idea to write the book until you wrote it, it was a seven-year process?

Tamara:

Yes, uhm, because I never... I just... My group kept growing, and I guess, in my mind, I was... I never really thought about publishing them, and so... uhm, someone suggested it to me and... my group was getting bigger, and uh...

Angela:

And what do you mean by "your group"? I'm not sure I'm totally... am following...

Tamara;

Well, the people who all signed on, like initially, and they would send it to their friends and their friends would write to me and say, "Oh, can you put me on the list?" and then people just kept requesting...

Angela:

And these were people that were gonna contribute to the book? These are your contributors? Is that what you mean by "your group"?

Tamara:

Uhm. No, they just participated where they would... they wanted to be a part of this writing project - consciousness project - it's what I called it. So they participated to where they wanted to receive emails, and so I had a group to write to and send...

Angela:

Ah, so you actually wrote your book to a group of people. You know this is not a normal thing that everyone does. Yes?

Tamara:

(Chuckles) Well, I didn't know it was gonna turn out to be a book, and I do...

Angela:

Oh, okay.

Tamara:

Yes. So, I do... I wasn't... You know, I was just doing this every week, ah, you know, as I was going through changes, and, you know, as I was, you know, seeing and, you know, awareness of my changes, meditation, and so... I didn't know that, til, maybe like...

Angela:

So when did you know it would be a book?

Tamara:

Uhm, I guess I... Maybe a year ago? Uhm, I didn't... I finally...

Angela:

So, you were like... you were just like writing, literally, flow notes... emails to people that were... your thoughts that other people, you thought would be able to benefit from as well.

Tamara:

Yeah.

Angela:

And then at some point, you said, "Let me take all the... these notes that I've already written and turn them into a book.

Tamara:

Yes, and so...

Angela:

Got it.

Tamara:

I... I would... then I felt like I was also, you know, people were saying, "Hey, you should really... You should really write a book about it, and then, that's when the thought first came to my mind, and then as, you know, time progressed, it felt like the notes were getting more profound, and uhm, then I... it felt like, "I think this is something that needs to be shared with, you know, more people than just my group," and so, that's... you know, then I would... and then decided... and then it just, you know... this needs to belong to the world, not just to me and my little, you know, 300 people, but it should be... for everyone who is going through changes, then... and especially now in this time when... where things... are just, you know, everything is like a deep construction of our belief system and what we thought and, you know, uh, you know, changing the world... justice system... you know... our government, and so I felt like this is the perfect time to release this so that, you know, it can benefit the most

people that it can and then we can all, you know, evolve and maybe be more in awareness of ourselves and maybe... maybe what's really happening... what's the underlying...

Angela:

So, basically, If I hear what you're saying, you uhm... You were doing this project just for fun with this group. It wasn't something that you thought were gonna be a book, but the reactions that you got and the feelings that you got made you wanna turn it into something more and that is where you came up with the idea to do it as a book?

Tamara:

Right. Yeah.

Angela:

So you took all the notes you'd already written, and what other works did you have to do to take it from the notes to the book? Uhm, well I had to uhm... I picked, you know, the notes that I thought would help people, you know. So out of the collection, I picked out fifty-two or fifty-three notes, and uh, you know I... I... called a publishing company and I told them about my idea and they said it sounded great, and... and... you know, I picked my book cover image and...

Angela:

And so... So let's stop there, just so people aren't confused. For a lot of people, getting their book published isn't as easy as calling a publishing company. It usually takes months or years to get a contract with a publishing company, so, how were you able to just pick up the phone and get a contract? What... What... What's that story?

Tamara:

Well, uh... It was like a self-publishing... So, I...

Angela:

Oh, okay.

Tamara:

So, I... Yeah, there wasn't... like uh... you know... It wasn't like Random House called me and said, "Alright, were' gonna give you whatever, whatever, for, you know, for your... information. You know, I...

Angela:

Got it. So you actually... So you actually paid to have your book published.

Tamara:

Yes.

Angela:

So, you were able to get it out quickly and you own the copyright, presumably, and you were able to make it look the way you wanted it to look?

Tamara:

For the most part. Yes, (Chuckles). Uhm, but, you know... and to me it felt like, uh... these messages were, getting more and more profound and so I felt like... the investment is kind of like my gift to everyone, as I just felt like this is the right thing to do, and these were not... These are messages [that are] also getting through my meditation, and so, it was so strong that it was kind of bothering me, like, "I need to do this. I need to do this. I need to do this," so I just went with the process and I just felt like, you know, this is my...

Angela:

So you weren't looking at like, "Am I gonna get a positive return on my investment?" Like, is this the right amount of money to spend by publishing it? Uhm, you know, "Will I be able to make [get] the money that I'd spent back?" So... are more of the kinds of questions you were asking. You were saying... What was your goal? How do I get it? How do I get this out in the way that it feels good?

Tamara:

Yeah, "How do I get this out?" and you know, with the hopes that it'll benefit the most people, uhm, that it can with it's messages and... that'd bring people... more people to awareness about themselves, and, you know, a greater perspective of... of... the universe and what's happening around us.

Angela:

Uhm. Okay, and then tell us about the publishing company you picked and what works and what didn't with them and any advice you would give people when picking a, you know - when you're paying for publishing - what to look for.

Tamara:

Right. Uh, well first, I would tell people, "Do you research," because I didn't. I... I, uh... You know, the publishing company [that] went through is, uh, a sister to uh, this other publishing company called Hay House, uhm, Publishing, which is a divis... you know, like Louise Hay's... know yourself-spirituality-type of book that... and so this is a sister of them, and uhm... and so, I just... I didn't do my research because I just... was thinking, "Oh, yeah. This is a spiritual book and it's what I'm doing and I just went forward with it without doing research, which, I know now and it was the first time that I'd done self-publishing, so it was a whole new, like, ballgame for me. Ah, but I'm really glad that it happened anyway because I learned so much, but... So that was different and I should've, you know...

Angela:

And when you say “research” what are some of the questions that you would ask now that you just didn’t know. I mean when we know better... you wouldn’t have known to ask them, but what... What kinds of things would you be asking now?

Tamara:

I would say, “Hey, look on Google and see, you know, what their ratings are.” What other authors are saying about this publishing company, and, you know, if this is the type of, you know, if this is the right fit for you, and uh, when you tell somebody...

Angela:

When you tell somebody that it’s the right fit for them, what are some of the things that you wish were somewhat different?

Tamara:

Well, uh, like I should have known in the beginning... I was so consumed with the publishing it... getting the information out there but like, you know, I first gave my idea to one woman, let’s say her name was Tiffany, and then, uhm, she’s like, “Great!” and then I call her like a month later and she’s no longer with the company; it was like another person that was with the company, and so, uh, I called her. She was my new [contact] person and then, uhm, when I did another revision for the book and called back, after sending it to them, she was no longer with the company, and I was like, “Uh, okay. So, you know, just... You know, I think what... You know that should’ve been a sign for me, for sure, like... uh, but, I was so... like in my mind, I just had one track - I was like, “I need to get this information out here.” This is the, uh,... These people publish spiritual books and *this* is a spiritual book and this is what I’m gonna do and then, you know, I look at the package and it was, you know, in a range that was, you know, affordable for me, so I did it. Uhm, and so, yeah, I just... and then I later looked at reviews and I saw a lot of other people that were having similar experiences as, you know, as I did, and saw other people’s, you know... You know, their comments and about this... the reviews about this publishing company and things like that and then... So, yeah that’s my little lesson, uh, and I bought into it. You know, it’s like, I bought into the idea of... of what it stood for but not really, you know, knowing you can stand for something but you really do that, you know, like... a part of Hay House Publishing and Hay House is like Louise Hay’s and she’s such a spiritual person and so I just... I bought into all of those things and this is like, “This can’t be,” you know, and I just went into it, you know, to the sister publishing, and uhm, I found out it wasn’t at all, you know, like, you know, what they were saying and, and I just have my, my difficulties with how I just wanted my book to be designed and things like that, and I think when you write something or you do something for so long, and the creative process comes along, in your mind you have an idea how you want it to be created and you keep sending messages back and forth and it doesn’t come back how you really wanted it to, it’s frustrating, but then I really have to accept...

Angela:
Yeah.

Tamara:
Yeah, so I mean, at a certain point, though, I just had to let go and just say, "You know what? The important thing is that the message and the content in the book is what is important, you know. So, uh, I did that, and anybody... I... you know... I think that..."

Angela:
So when it comes to design, were there things in your contract that you would change in terms of the minimum number of revisions you could look at or the cost of design or is there anything that you would negotiate differently that you could give as advice to people that are listening? Uhm, to make sure they get the design to look how they want?

Tamara:
Yeah. Yes. Like I picked out my book cover. They had different book covers but I knew exactly what I wanted, so that... The book cover is totally something that I was in control in, but, uhm, but I think that if you are gonna do something, you have to be really specific - know exactly every font size, font, you know, the font type, up to that point, uhm, you know how many spacings, you know, everything... You have to be really know exactly what you want and how it's going to look when it's printed, uhm, even though it's hard to understand that, but those are questions everyone should ask. It's like, "Okay, I like this font. How is it gonna look when it's printed? Is it gonna look like how it looks on my computer, or is it gonna look really different. That is something that I did not..."

Angela:
I didn't do them either. Okay.

Tamara:
Yeah. I mean... and this is a... My experience with them... I mean, I don't... This is what they told me... because when it... I picked out a font and they were like, "Whoa, looks completely different when it's printed and I was like, "It's really... Okay, I didn't know... So, yeah, things like that because if you don't, there's like, you know, extra charges for all of those things and you can get caught up in all the little charges if you are not... don't ask all of the questions about every particular thing. So, uhm, that was... That was kinda what I had to learn, and uh, it was new..."

Angela:
And if you wrote a second book, would you publish with a third party? Would you do it yourself? How would you do it then? Uhm, I mean... I... I don't know how I would... I haven't

really... I have another one that... in the process of doing, uhm, but I haven't really thought of... as far as like which company or how I would do it, uhm, you know, I don't... The... self-publishing is... uh, I'm sorry, the self-publishing is, uhm, you know, there are so many different places out there that are affordable - that you can do - and so that's what's nice about the self-publishing. I don't really know how to get a contract, because I'd never, you know, I don't know it. I just don't know how I would get a contract... that's about... You know, so...

Angela:

Right. And there are lot's of ways to self-publish. I mean you could have done it all yourself. You used a third party and paid them, but you could have just paid a designer directly and, you know, uploaded everything yourself to various printing and distribution sites. It just requires learning a whole new skill.

Tamara:

It does and that's the other part of, uhh, self-publishing is that you're... learning a whole new aspect to writing. You know, you're learning about marketing, you're learning about, you know, printer costs and, uhm... So it was a whole new learning experience for me and it was just... It was great!

Angela:

And did you have a minimum. Did you have a minimum number of books that you had to purchase?

Tamara:

Uhm, I don't think so. Uh, no, I didn't.

Angela:

And did you have a... What's your... What's your price per book? Is it like 40% off the cover price or something like that?

Tamara:

So, if I wanna buy my own book from the publishing company, I get 30% off.

Angela:

And then sometimes can you actually buy your own book cheaper on Amazon?

Tamara:

Uhhh. Hmm, it's only a couple of dollars shy from what I would really pay for it through the publishing company. Uhm, there's only...

Angela:

Yes. Yeah. I've actually got something to say. They can find their book on sale on Amazon cheaper than they can get it from their own publisher, which just seems funny.

Tamara:

Right. Yeah. And the other thing too, is that they also gave me like five free books. Uhm, I think for me, since this is my first book, I didn't want also... I didn't want to have to deal with, like the copyright laws and, you know, all of that paperwork. I really didn't know how to deal with it. So that's why I just bought, like a package, uhm, because, they did it all for you and, you know, it seems, in the beginning, easy, and then later I found out, like, "You know my book is like a print-on-demand and so you actually have to... They print the book when you order it, so... It's supposed to be eco-friendly but for book stores, it's really hard because they like to get in at least ten books at a time, and, so that was another thing. So I, you know, uh... One of my... I had to order some books [by] myself to put into a bookstore, uhm, you know, here in Austin, Texas, uhm... So yeah, I mean, you know... it's all a learning experience, then... I'm glad that I did it, and I did find out and just also, uhm, for anyone who self-publishes, and if you've never done it before, just ask those little questions, you know. If you're gonna be the creator of your book, know exactly what font you want, what size, the line spacing... all of those things and, you know, that's how your book is gonna be, and uh... (Chuckles). But...

Angela:

So, what are some of the best things that have come... When did your book come out?

Tamara:

So it came out in February of...

Angela:

Okay, so in the last six months or so, what are some of the best things that have happened to you because you had become an author? Conversations you had, other opportunities you had, or... What's happened with the book?

Tamara:

Yeah, I think... Uhm, the best things for me is people's responses, like... I love, love getting people's responses for my book and I think that's the validation for me because it makes me feel good that I made the right decision and that my gift is being received and also... So that was... that was, for me... That's just the biggest joy ever. It's just hearing people's stories, like, "Oh, you know, I just... your book and it's helped me... and I'd been feeling better and more calm," and, you know, "I know that every time I'm going into a situation, I pick it up and just open it to any page and I get a wonderful message," and so, to me that's the biggest... the biggest compliment, the biggest joy ever because I'm like, "Yes!" I just feel so wonderful and validated, just from that. So that has been it and then it's just opened my mind to more creativity and so, uhm, you know, so it's opened my mind, "Okay, so now that you've, you know, just from writing and [for] any writer(s) out there, sometimes it's hard to feel validated.

You know, that's how we feel validated, I think, through people's responses. And so it's been a great validation and a motivation for me to start another book, uhm, and so I've begun writing, uhm, different, you know, another part of, you know... you know... Notes and it's called *Gratitude Notes* and so it's just helped inspire another little creative writing project for me.

Angela:

That's awesome. That's awesome! And sooo... the... and so for you, the process had been not just about revenue or not just about, you know, some of the commercial aspects of publishing, but it comes out as a deeply personal journey and I think it's a great example of how everyone's book journey is different and our books have missions in the world that are almost or could've been... and our job as a writer sometimes is to go on the journey and see what the book wants to be. That's why call the show Book Journeys because I do so many things for so many people, their book journey looks a little different than what they expected, uhm, but it's still powerful and important.

Tamara:

Exactly, you know, and the other thing is I do get people who are, "Oh," you know, "you're an author," and I'm like, "I am, but you know, I'm just a regular person. I just, you know... I'm just a person like you and I like to write and that's what I like to do... I mean I love to do so many other things, so part of it is... This is something that was a combination of what had allowed me to do meditation and allowed me to open up and it was a process for me, so it was so much more than just... It's allowed me to keep my practice... to do this once a week... to look at myself, you know. It was so much more and I just tell people, like, "I'm just a regular person." Yeah, you know, I published a book but I'm just a regular person (Chuckles) and uhm...

Angela:

Yeah. Well, I love that. I think these are great lessons... uhm, you know, in the practical and also in the emotional part of the journey, so thank you so much Tamara... What... what... is your website if people wanna find out more about you?

Tamara:

So, uh, people, you could go to Facebook and you can go to, it's uhm, ommanipadmehum108x and so it's a Buddhist mantra or just type in Tamara Cortez. (Chuckles) And, uhm, I'm on Twitter. I'm Tamara J-o C-o-r-t-e-z and, uhm, my website is www dot om (o-m), aroma (a-r-o-m-a) dot c-o and uh... So you can find me...

Angela:

And also you can find *Flow Notes* on Amazon, uhm, the book by Tamara Cortez is *FLow Notes*, uhm... Thanks for being our guest today.

Tamara:

Thank you so much, Doctor Lauria, and uh, thank you for having me and I just wanted to thank everybody for listening and I wanted to say just one more thing, like, "In this world, we think that, you know, we're really small, but I wanted to let... know that. The more of your light that you spread, the more that you awaken people around you and this is where we're coming to and so you are... you do matter a hundred percent. Every step that you take is so important and I just want everyone to know that.

Angela:

Beautiful. Beautiful. Tamara Cortez, *Flow Notes: A Collection*. Check it out on Amazon. Thank you for being on the show today.

Tamara:

Alright. Namaste. Bye!