

Book Journeys Author Interview - September 20, 2012

Dr. Angela Lauria with Dr. Laureen Wishom, author of *How to Become Fit, Fine & Fabulous in Career, Business and Life*.

“Once you develop the outline, you stick with the outline, and you have to write every day.”

~Dr. Laureen Wishom

Angela:

Well, hello, everybody, and welcome back to Book Journeys Radio. This is Angela Lauria, from Journey Grrrl Publishing, and I am so excited to be broadcasting to you today from the Children’s Miracle Network, their big annual celebration conference. Such an exciting place to be, and I am with the author of *Bankrupt at Birth*, which is a book that my group published recently, and so excited that we got to show that book with a thousand of the top luminaries in, particularly in the hospital space, but people that are like-minded, people that also want children help parents, just like the book *Bankrupt at Birth* does, and it’s a great example of the kind of synergies that you can have, ways you can get your book into the world, make the impact you wanna make, and, in Joe’s case, really make an impact on the world, all the proceeds of his book go to the Children’s Miracle Network, and the Children’s Miracle Network is also working with him to help get the book out into the world, and it’s kind of a - it’s the perfect win-win that I wish for every author, really. It’s very exciting to be here and to be a part of that. So, I just want to share that with everybody, and remind you of what is possible when you are an author, things that just really wouldn’t be possible without a book. So - and with that, for today, what we’re gonna do is talk to Dr. Laureen Wishom, and - Dr. Laureen, did I say your name right, again? Wishom.

Laureen:

It’s Wishom.

Angela:

Wishom, yes. As soon as I said it, I thought, “Wait, that’s not right!”

Laureen:

(laughs)

Angela:

Dr. Laureen Wishom, she is the author of *How to Become Fit, Fine & Fabulous in Career, Business and Life*. Who doesn’t want that? So - and if you want to check out Dr. Laureen’s site, it’s drlaureen.com, or you can check out [fitfineandfabulous](http://fitfineandfabulous.com) - fitfineandfabulous.com. So, as we’re talking today, please check out those sites, for a little more information about her. Dr. Laureen, we on the show, what we like to cover is what I call the process of transforming into an author, going from, “I wanna write a book,” to holding your book in your hands. So, why don’t you take a minute and tell us a little bit about how that happened for you with this book?

How did you come up with the idea, and tell us a little bit about what it took to be where you are today?

Laureen:

Well, I think the idea was that I really wanted to write something that was geared for my particular audience or my particular niche, and one of the ways that I knew that I could do that if I wrote something that most women are concerned with, either their career, which we all are, our business, and, of course, you know, our life, and that's what prompted that, and the part that was really interesting, as I wrote this book, it was about how to, you know, change that whole process, how to find your own network, how to define what success means to you. I actually went through that whole process that's defined in the book. And it was really quite interesting for me, so I think, for most people, I think, if you write about something that you truly enjoy, I think that's really what makes it a lot easier, because it's a subject that you know a lot about, and if you don't, if you kind of live through the process, it makes writing a book quite easy, as well.

Angela:

And so, when you - when you got the idea, and how - well, let me ask this, how did you get the - how did you get the idea to turn this into a book? 'Cause those are great topics, but there are lots of ways to address that, so what made you think, "I'm gonna write a book?"

Laureen:

Well, you know, because I travel a lot to so many conferences, and I would - and I surveyed a lot of women, they didn't realize I was asking certain questions, you know, how you network when you're talking, and I found out that most women, they really didn't know their purpose, or if they did know their purpose, they didn't know quite how to make it come to pass, they just didn't have the tools that they needed. They knew, maybe, "This is my purpose, this is where I wanna be, I'm at Point A, so how do I get from A to Z?"

Angela:

Yeah.

Laureen:

And so, ..., all these women are the women that are my target audience, why not write something that can not only help myself, because I also needed to know all those steps as well, but would also help other women? ...

Angela:

I like that. You really highlighted, I think you've highlighted a great thing, so I just wanna jump in and point this out to people. If there is something - one of my clients right now, for instance, is working on some health issues and she really wants to understand how food in general affects the body, how you can use food to change your health. She's really interested in that topic, because it affects her. Using a book as a way to really learn a topic in detail -

Laureen:
Absolutely.

Angela:
- to get some of these questions that you had, in your case, or ... my book-coaching client - it gives you a tremendous perspective as an author, to answer those questions, so even if you're just a mom trying to find, I don't know, the best Legos for your kid, to answer that question from the perspective of an author gives you a really different perspective, and access to different answers. I mean, I'm sure you were able to get interviews and have conversations that you might not have been able to get if you weren't in the middle of writing a book.

Laureen:
And that's so true, because, the minute that I talked to ..., I said, "You know, I'm writing your book, and I just want to know. . ." and, of course, everybody wants to talk to you, because, again, people wanna share. It's really interesting when people know that you're writing a book, ..., whatever it may be, they really want to share and they really want to help, and I found that to be so true with women, and I even interviewed men, even though most would take this book as for women, which it is, but I call it - I also, in the book, I ... for those men that are enlightened. In other words, they understand, they, too, can be fit, fine and fabulous.

Angela:
Excellent! I like those guys! Send them my way!

Laureen:
(laughs)

Angela:
And so, okay, so you figure out, "I wanna write a book," and let's talk about - how long did it take you, from when you got that idea, "I wanna write a book about this topic, until you were holding it in your hands. How long did that take? That's a question I get all the time.

Laureen:
For me, I would say about a year. Even though I did research for a couple of years, just traveling to all the different conferences, I really didn't start putting pen to paper, and I would say a year. It took me a year, and I actually have the manuscript in hand, we're actually going to press with it now, as we speak. So, it was a year process. Could it have been shorter? It probably would have been, but even in the course of this year I was still talking to other people, I've - you know, so many ideas have come into ..., you know, I've had more ideas than the book could fill. I had too many ideas, so I had to take a step back, and I outlined what did I really want to say? So, putting together that outline, and within that outline we finally put each chapter was going to look like made it a lot easier, because I had - and that's

since I had too much material - and I know I talked to some people, and they don't have enough, but I had way too much.

Angela:

Mmm-hmm, it's usually one way or the other. It's hard to come up perfect, I guess. And so, it took you about a year to write it, and now you're in the process of publishing, are you self-publishing?

Laureen:

I - what I did was, for me, because so many - as I talked to various women, they are also looking for someone to help them publish their book, so, because I've - you know, this has been almost four years of my life and doing three years of research, I actually set up a publishing company and I had a publishing mentor. So I kind of did it a little bit differently, it's a combination of self-publish, but I also have a publishing company now.

Angela:

Nice! That's very exciting. So, let's talk more about your writing process. So, it took you about a year, which is actually pretty fast on the scale of things, although you say you could have gone faster. And during that year, what sorts of - I mean, you know, it's full of obstacles, and everybody faces roadblocks, what sorts of roadblocks and obstacles came up for you? ... we talked about? Yup?

Laureen:

... I think, for me, as I said, was having, again, too much material, making sure some of the obstacles - I found a couple of times I was getting off-course, but I'm always making sure I stayed on course, because I knew what the book was going to be, that's the first thing that I did, okay, what is this book, what is it supposed to do? And sometimes I found myself getting a little bit off course, maybe because I'm a visionary because I can see all these different ways that I can do all of these things! But just making sure that I stayed on course, making sure that I followed the outline, that was really critical for me.

Angela:

And what happened when you - what was one tip or trick or technique, or maybe something you learned from your mentor to get yourself back on course?

Laureen:

That one thing that was that he, that he shared with me was that I thought was really good was that, once you develop the outline, you stick with the outline, and you have to write every day. And, although I did not write every day, what I did do every other day, I did set aside two hours, I wrote for two-hour blocks' time. And that - you have to have that consistency, otherwise you would tend to put it off, you .. to get to it tomorrow, but I literally scheduled - and this is one of the things that he said, you schedule the time to write, just like you schedule the times to do anything else in your life.

Angela:

Mmm. ... And you, in two hours - how did you get to the two-hour time block? Why not an hour, why not four hours, how'd you come up with two hours, and how did you know that?

Laureen:

Well, for two hours for me, it made - I could get a lot done in two hours, I started off with one hour, and one hour, by the time it's due, you know, got your materials and you start writing, the hour went by so quickly. So, I just selected - I said, okay, let me add another hour. And two hours really worked out well for me. A lot of times, what I also did, on the weekends, especially on Sunday afternoon, if I didn't have any plans, I would take four hours on a Sunday afternoon and I would write. And it was usually from twelve to four. ... And Sunday afternoons is one of the best times to write, because, it's kind of that, you know, in the afternoon, we kinda relax, you've done whatever you're gonna do that morning, you've gone out to brunch or breakfast, and it's just a great time to just kinda curl up and just to write!

Angela:

Yeah, that's fantastic. And, did you find, when you were writing your book during that period of time, that you had to say "No" to certain things, whether they're social obligations or business obligations? How did you carve out, you know, two, four, six to ten, six to ten hours, six to twelve hours a week that you were working on your book?

Laureen:

You know, you're right. You find yourself saying no, because, if you say "Yes" all the time, then the book is not going to get done. And most of the people that knew me, they knew I was writing a book, and ... they timed their life's schedule, they knew kind of like, okay, Sunday afternoons, okay, she's writing, and so, when I said, "No, I've got to stay on track, I've got a book, they were okay with that. But if there was something I could not get out of, let's just say there was an event I *had* to go to on Tuesday, and Tuesday was my writing time, then I had to make up that time somewhere throughout the rest of that week, whether it was Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, the time still had to be allocated to writing. It's when you co - you know, it's when you have that commitment to it.

Angela:

Right. Right. And so, so you went through, you went through your process of writing, and was writer's block something that came up for you? Did you sometimes sit down for a two-hour spell and find nothing wanted to come out of your fingertips?

Laureen:

That's true. There were times you could sit there almost an hour and forty-five minutes, and you're kinda making all these notes, but nothing kind of resonated to the point that you could go back and put this in the book. But what is interesting, if you still spend that time and whatever you're thinking about, still jot that down, because at some point, that may be

something that you can use later on in the book. So, I've kept kind of a separate notebook, at any time I have writer's block, just whatever came to mind, I just would jot that down, write it, I had a hand-held recorder that I used as well, so I kept track of all the time where there was just nothing, and I would just talk! You know, I would just, okay, I was just thinking of writing on this chapter, but nothing's come to mind, but I'm thinking about, and I would just list those things that I was thinking about, and, believe it or not, a lot of those ideas, I was able to use elsewhere in the book.

Angela:

And, so, did you actually - I think I'm getting this right. When you set aside two hours, even if you weren't feeling motivated, even if you were, maybe, writing random thoughts and not keeping up with your book outline or something like that, you would still dedicate that - that time to your book, even if it didn't feel - you know, even if you didn't feel super motivated.

Laureen:

Absolutely. ...

Angela:

I think that's a big, I think that's a big tip that people can take away, is to carve out that time commitment, stick with that, write something even if it's not your most inspired stuff, put it in a file called "Something," and then - very interesting how it ended up making its way into the book, even .. not the way you expected it would.

Laureen:

And it's so interesting, what else it did for me, I could look back on that file of something, and it would sometimes trigger something that I needed for whatever chapter I was working on, just looking back at notes! Because it's always going to trigger something - everything that made it in the book, but it always sparked something else for me to write about, maybe in a future chapter. I - that was, to me, that notebook that I used was my most valuable piece of information, because it just had every - every time there was an idea, it would enter that notebook or it went onto the recorder. Even when I was driving, I kept my recorder with me. So anytime anything - you know, sometimes you can just see a billboard, and a great idea would come to mind, I recorded it, or if I was able to write it, it went - you know, it went in that "Something" notebook.

Angela:

Did you, did you write your book longhand?

Laureen:

I worked a lot of it longhand, and I learned - this is a tip I learned from my mentor, he said, "Practice writing longhand." It's easy, of course, we could just sit in front of our keyboard and we could type whatever, but he said, "Get in the habit of writing longhand, get in the habit of journaling, because it will help you get more creative." And, true enough, it was one of the

things I did not want to do when I first started, I thought, “Why am I wasting my time? This is taking too much time.” But it was when I did my best work, was when I wrote long-handed.

Angela:

So, interesting, you’re like the third interview I’ve done in a row that said that same thing. I’m working on my book right now and I have not even thought for a minute about writing in longhand, but now, I’m like, “Oh, my God, did somebody else just say it?”

Laureen:

Yup.

Angela:

I feel like it’s the universe talking to me. So, that is very interesting.

Laureen:

It makes a difference, it really makes a difference in your whole thought process, it - it’s a very different way of tapping into, you know, your thought process and how you want to see it on paper, it comes across very differently.

Angela:

Yeah. Hm. And you mentioned using a recorder, now, one of the things that I teach my clients is, we actually take their book outline and we turn it into an interview, and then I will record them, I will interview them and record it, and we get a transcript of that as a basis for a chapter. You mentioned using a recorder almost for your own notes, maybe times where you either couldn’t take notes ‘cause you’re driving, or maybe didn’t feel like writing and wanted to talk, did you then get those transcribed, or did you go back and listen to them? How do you -

Laureen:

I can tell you, my VA actually did the transcription of those, sometimes it was just a saying, sometimes it was just a thought. It wasn’t anything that you could maybe just take it literally and put it in the book, but it triggered so many other things. Sometimes, it was just a quote that I may have heard, or I might have been at a network event or at a lunch, and someone might have said something, I always carry an index card because, when I couldn’t use the recorder, if I didn’t have the notebook, I never leave home without index cards. So, if you had a networking event, or a luncheon, you could quickly make a note there, so I just kept all of that, and my VA actually did transcribe all of it for me.

Angela:

Fantastic. Well, okay, so now you’ve made it through writing your book, let’s talk a little bit about the publishing process. I know you’ve talked about self-publishing and actually starting your own publishing company. How did you - how did you reach that conclusion? How did you decide to go that route, why, and what are some lessons learned you might leave people with?

Laureen:

Well, you know, I - I think, for me, it was the best route, because it - it also is going to create another stream of income for me, being a publisher, I will be able to help other publishers, I looked at the self-publishing, I knew that wasn't exactly what I wanted to do, because there are pros and cons of that. I did submit a book to a publisher, and the flavor of the book was changing a little bit too much from what I really wanted the book to be, so I kinda took that middle of the road, I had a combination of - you know, I took what's great from the self-publishing side, what's great from having a publisher, and kind of that was the road that I chose for myself. Now, I do have an editor, and of course I have the proofreader and - that my editor - the person that I'm using to do that, they're making sure that it comes out in the e-book format, they're taking care of getting all the reviews ... so, I pooled the best from both worlds, and then combined that .. this is what truly works for me.

Angela:

And, it - it sounds like you - do you have a speaking career, or how do you -

Laureen:

I do. I do have a speaking career, and part of what the book - I wanted the book to do was to open up more speaking opportunities for me, because, obviously, if you've got a book, especially depending on this subject, it does open up speaking opportunities. And one of the things I can say that has truly done for me going this particular route is that I have, probably right now, probably ten sponsors for the book. So, I also chose to go differently, because I wanted sponsors, I wanted name sponsors to be the backers of this book, because, again, I knew that that would open up more opportunities for speaking engagements as well.

Angela:

Well, let's talk about that! That is something that I never heard about on this show. Tell me about, what is a book sponsor, how did you find them, who are they, tell me about this?

Laureen:

Well, I can say, at this point, because they - they're just doing their contract - all, everyone's doing their contracts ... I really can't say their names ... -

Angela:

Well, you don't really have to say who they are, tell us - what is it?

Laureen:

Yeah, I can tell you, I do have I do have a major magazine, I do have a major magazine and - that's sponsoring this, and because it's *Fit, Fun and Fabulous*, I have a major company that handles workout equipment, they wanna be publish ... -

Angela:

Okay, but before we get into that, tell us what - I need to know more about this concept, 'cause books don't usually have sponsors, so why don't you ... -

Laureen:

I know, and it's all because - and here's what I did bec - I combined the book with an event. So, when I was - when you're - when I approached a sponsor, I approached them with, okay, here is the idea, here is the book, here's what I want you to do in terms of sponsoring the book, here is the event that is going to follow after the debut of the book, and I would like for you to sponsor not only the book but to be a sponsor for the event. So, I approached them, because I wanted to tie an event around the book, I wanted to have a *Fit, Fun and Fabulous* event. So, that's how I was able to garner sponsors, because of -

Angela:

So, I wanna make sure everyone's getting this, 'cause this is pretty revolutionary stuff. I don't know if this is something you heard about, or you invented this, or what, but this idea is basically, when Dr. Laureen's book comes out, which is, I think, she's coming out a month from today, she already has twelve events, you can think of them probably as book signings, or a book tour, or something like that, she has twelve of those events scheduled to let people know about her book, and I'm guessing that those twelve events are actually paid for by a sponsor.

Laureen:

Absolutely!

Angela:

So, she is not spending any money here to get - for - to do twelve events. If you are signing up - and authors come up to me all the time and they want to do bookstore signing, where they're lucky to get a dozen people to come to their signing -

Laureen:

Right.

Angela:

- she has twelve events set up, she has sponsors who are corporations, she mentioned one is a magazine, but retailers, brand names, products, magazines, and ... anything you can think of here, they are interested in her book, they are they are trying to reach the same people as her readers will be, women who want to be fit, fun and fabulous in business, career and life, that is their target market, their demographic. They're using her book as a great excuse to reach their audience, and, by the way, she's using their products as a great way to reach her people! So, this is what I'm talking about, with Joe's book that I started today's show with the Children's Miracle Network is, when you find a partnership, when you find somebody with

reach - a brand or, in Joe's case, a charity, in Dr. Laureen's case, a magazine - whatever those connections are, and you structure, and the word I use is, architect your book around those types of connections, in this case around sponsorship, you not only have money for book signing events, or a book tour, which most people, by the way, .. with, you know, the biggest-name publishers don't have. So, Laureen's already ahead of the game there. But you have a way to get your wo - the word about your book out to even more influencers, because who do you know that goes to a - you know, today, I'm at the Children's Miracle Network annual event. They are not sending their interns and entry-level employees here. They're ne - their most significant corporate sponsors are here. Their most senior officials, administrators, program directors are here. That's who's getting a copy of Joe's book, and at the events that Laureen's talking about, her book is gonna go to people that are networking, people that show up at events, those are often very influential people, and I will tell you, I will be shocked if those twelve sponsored events don't lead to twelve more somethings, whatever they are.

Laureen:
Absolutely.

Angela:
Speaking engagements, consulting engagements, other sponsored events. So, I'm really excited you brought this idea up, so excited we stumbled on this, 'cause I think it's a great idea of the kind of creativity that having a book open up, and a really great idea of some of the possibility that's out there. You know, people get stuck - for a long time, I used to talk to authors who wanted to be New York Times bestsellers. Now - now, what I hear is, I wanna be asked to do a Ted talk. But those are very small, limited goals, I've never had an author come to me and just say, I want, you know, I'm really hoping I get twelve sponsors, and, you know, to do twelve events of my book launch. But that could really, in many ways, be a much more exciting, powerful and even lucrative opportunity than being a New York Times bestseller!

Laureen:
That's true, very much.

Angela:
I think this is so exciting, and so you - so, you're having these twelve events, are they - is it exactly the same cookie-cutter event with twelve different sponsors, or is each event custom?

Laureen:
Each event is going to be a custom event, each event will be custom. I don't wanna do kind of cookie-cutter - you know, part of my whole book is that you do those things that separate you, that make you different, that make you - it - you're creating your own space, you're creating what makes you unique. What is your definition of success? So, I won't do anything that's cookie-cutter, and, depending on the event and the sponsor, it will be very, very

different than most events, and I have gone through - I've gone to so many conferences and workshops that I really just decided I want to .. into what not typically being done.

Angela:

Wow. Well, that's Dr. Laureen Wishom, calls herself the "Million Dollar Solutionist," and I think now everybody knows why. Please go to drlaureen.com or check out fitfinefabulous.com, and you will probably get a bunch of other ideas from her, like we all have today. Dr. Laureen, thank you so much for your time and your amazing insights. I'm really excited for your books that come out. Make sure you let us know -

Laureen:

Oh, I will.

Angela:

- make sure when it's live so we can review it and tweet it and hear it with our community. It's really - it's really a gift to the world.

Laureen:

Thank you so much, and it's been my pleasure. I - I really have enjoyed being on this show, very much so.

Angela:

Fantastic. Well, if you feel like you have a book inside you, if you feel like Dr. Laureen's message today, about working with sponsors, or speaking to groups, if that is tugging on your heartstrings, if - if there is a little more soul of that, that feels like you can - you can do this, you can make it happen, too, I really wanna encourage you to - to follow that lead, you're - you're hot on the trail of something that can really blow the doors wide open. You can certainly check out the Book Circle Live event that I'm doing in Phoenix, bookcirclelive.eventsbreak.com, check that out, check out Dr. Laureen's website, drlaureen.com, and, really, I would say continue to follow your nose on your book dreams and make those dreams come true, it will - it will be worth it. So, that's Book Journey Radio for this week, we'll see you back here next week with another great author.