

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) – August 17, 2017

Maggie McReynolds with Maureen Lake, author of *Being Happy, Raising Happy*.

“Just the journey along the way, what you learn about yourself and others, I mean, is... you can't even put a price on it.” ~*Maureen Lake*

Maggie:

Hey everybody. Welcome to another episode of Book Journeys Radio. You know, every week here on Book Journeys Radio, we talk to some seriously accomplished authors who've really gone from just having an idea for a book to a finished book that's out there and making a difference in the world. Our goal for this show is for you to walk away inspired and motivated to write your book, whether it's your very first, or your third, or your... unlikely, but... 303! Today's author is Maureen Lake. She is an educator and health coach and her book is called, *Being Happy, Raising Happy*. Hey Maureen. How are you?

Maureen:

Hi Maggie! I'm good!

Maggie:

It's so great to have you on the show and to talk to you and to hear you sounding happy, which, I'm beginning to hear is kind of a theme for you.

Maureen:

It is. Life is good.

Maggie:

I'm glad. So, *Being Happy, Raising Happy*. Can you tell us what your book's about? Who is it for?

Maureen:

Well, it's really for moms. 'Cause being a mom is a lot of hard work especially if you're a mom of a spirited child or a complex child. That can be really emotionally challenging... for the mom as well. So, the book is really geared towards her and just some strategies on how to reduce your stress and anxiety in order to make a difference in the life of your child and your family, but also with yourself. So it really does start with the mom first. So that's really what the book is about.

Maggie:

Do you think that... Is there a realization early on that—hey I'm dealing with a kid who—I don't wanna say "harder than" but requires a little something different.

Maureen:

I do. I think—even though we want to—don't wanna compare ourselves to other moms, when... we do, and you see that things just appear easier to other people than it is with yourself, and you start kinda laying that comparison game and then just wondering, well, they make it look so easy, they're always put together, how can they pull this off? And I'm here alone, struggling, but, you know, trying to get myself put together, let alone—my children out the door in a timely manner. So, I do think it's kind of... You are aware pretty early on, especially if you have a child that has a little more difficulty... aren't tired as easy.

Maggie:

Yeah and that's probably more obvious to parents who have more than one child, because they've got a point of comparison within their own family.

Maureen:

Exactly.

Maggie:

But I'm getting that for parents who are single, it's a little harder to know, you know, it my kid's like, kinda high spirit and a little bit, I hate to use the word "high maintenance" but needs some extra time, care, and attention, or do I just kinda suck at this caring thing, right? Or is it both?

Maureen:

Right, and when you don't have anything else to compare it to, you're kind of living in an oblivious kind of bliss because, you're right, when you do have more than one child, you just sort of like... my oldest child was so easy. What is going on with this one? And you do definitely start to compare.

Maggie:

Mm hmm. Not necessarily unproductively. I mean that's--you saw it to a certain point, right? Just in order for you to understand what's happening, that maybe, it's not you or it's not all you.

Maureen:

Yeah, right. And especially when you're a new mom. I mean, you really don't have a baseline of comparison at all and I think that's why it's important to make sure that you're taking care of yourself every step of the way so you can be healthy as well.

Maggie:

Yeah. How young is... for you... with the kid's age? How soon is too soon to reach out and say, hey I might need help here?

Maureen:

I'm sorry Maggie. You broke up. I couldn't understand your question.

Maggie:

No problem. Is there any too soon about reaching out for help with kids?

Maureen:

Oh, gosh. I don't think so. I think the more networking you can do with other moms and the... get together socially informally and just chit-chat... Only positive, so that you can go and just have camaraderie with your peers... I think that's vitally important, otherwise, it can be lonely especially if you're a stay-at-home-mom. You know, the odds are that you do spend a lot of time by yourself or just with your children, so it's really important to get together early on.

Maggie:

Yeah. So, you wrote this book. You wrote this amazing book. How long did it take you? Now that's the amazing thing about going through Angela's program is that you're on a pretty strict timeline. I started

my book in January and was completely finished by March. So, it didn't take long at all and from the onset, never in my wildest dreams thought it'd be completed in that amount of time. But, just the fact that you have a scope and sequence that you can follow and if you stick with it, it's amazing what can happen in just a short amount of time. It really is. So, when you first started, did you have a vision for... I'm absolutely... I don't know how this is actually gonna be done and I'm just gonna trust that?

Maureen:

I knew once I started that there wasn't any way that I wasn't gonna finish. I would just dedicate it to the process...

Maggie:

[cellphone ringing] Sorry about that.

Maureen:

Oh, that's okay. I think it's kind of in my own personal DNA that once I've started something, I usually complete it. But I didn't realize the self-discovery that the process is going to take me on. But once I started that process of writing, I knew I had to see it to the end.

Maggie:

Yeah. It's sort of like, well, I've gotten on a log ride... I don't think anybody's gonna stop it and let me off.

Maureen:

Exactly! Right, and you know, you have a scope and sequence to follow and a timeline and once you get going, I mean it's... It motivates you and the feedback you receive along the way, it just keeps you going and for me anyway, that was energizing. It was a really important time of my life to be able to start something from... basically conceive it from birth and just watch it... something grow like it's almost like... a little child.

Maggie:

Yeah....

Maureen:

Actually, very impactful.

Maggie:

I get it. I get it. So, you gotta know that there are people out there listening who are going, "Three months? Like that's nothing I could ever do. That's impossible, but she's like superhuman." So, what do you wish you knew before you got started? Before you wrote your book?

Maureen:

Well, I truthfully had no idea how... not only how physically-draining it would be, but emotionally-draining, it would have on me to... because I was writing about my own personal experience and the experience of raising my daughter... Just emotional, I don't know, roller coaster ride that I went through. And sometimes it felt like I was just being sucked down a vortex and I didn't know if I'd come out the other end, but... And it... kind of scary putting your life out there in writing knowing that not just total strangers are gonna read it but even family members might read it and find things out about you, your child and your family that they never even knew before because through the process, you're opening up and sharing things and you've become very vulnerable. That's probably the most that I felt besides, just some days... I had like really strong writing days at the end of those days when I would just be exhausted and sleep really well that night, but... is a really emotional process that you go through when you're writing something that's so personal and so... who you are. So, I never knew that before I started. I didn't know it... I think I still... Even if I didn't know that even before I started writing, I still would've finished the book, obviously. But that was my biggest takeaway, was the emotional component and just even the physical kind of wear and tear it took on me anyways.

Maggie:

Sure. I mean, you know, you're writing a book. All the emotion, all that processing, the vortex... Was it worth it? Did you get stuff from that process?

Maureen:

Oh, yeah. Absolutely. I felt like I was into three months of therapy. I mean, it really takes... You know, you have to really reflect a lot, bring back memories that were possibly kept hidden for a while, and notes through all the different things that I would go through. I started heavily meditating during that time, and the information that I remembered that I later wrote about was incredible, and without going through this whole process, it probably would've stayed hidden. And then I also have to share that, you know, I wrote this book about my relationship with my daughter, and, with her approval obviously. But it just brought us so close. I mean I felt like we were close before but now we have this kind of unbelievable bond between the two of us because of this book. And if that's all that came out of the book, then believe me, it was more than worth writing it. So, that was another little outcome. I never knew that would occur before I took on this project. So, there's been a lot of wins. Even though it... be

training, I mean there's a lot of upsides to that when you get to the other side and for me and my daughter, that is the most impactful one.

Maggie:

That's very cool. And I just wanna clarify and confirm that you said... you said heavily meditating, not medicating, right?

Maureen:

Yes... No... Def--yeah... It's funny because I started.... my meditations practiced, just prior to writing the book. And then, while I was writing obviously, I was meditating, and it was just so incredibly helpful because I was having intention and I was... just the memories that surfaced during that process helped me tremendously... writing this book.

Maggie:

So, I know this is the first book you published. Is it also the first book you started to write or have you tried to write one before?

Maureen:

No, I've never tried to write one before. This was my first time at the whole experience.

Maggie:

Did you know, right out of the gate, that you were going to write about your family, your children... that this was your topic?

Maureen:

You know, the topic really kind of found me. I was blogging prior to writing the book. At the time, we thought... that my daughter had... was newly diagnosed with ADHD and I was blogging a lot about girls with ADHD, and things like that. And as I was blogging, I just knew I had a story to tell that was bigger than that topic because we started digging into my daughter and her health—all sorts of different things unfolded. So, when I first started going through the process of outlining my ideal reader and the different strategies that you go through and figuring out, kind of, the scope and sequence of your book, the topics really found me more than me just knowing from the onset that I'm gonna write this book. I just knew I wanted to write a book about girls that were... had difficulty for whatever reason, and, although I noticed there's a lot of spirited voice out there, my sole purpose was really writing about the

girls who often... throughout their childhood, and even as young adults, kind of fall on the wayside because they're not demonstrative or their behaviors are so extravagant that they're so noticeable, like, some typical boys with ADHD might appear, the girls kind of become invisible. And that was really, kind of the process of coming up with a topic that took me down that road.

Maggie:

Yeah. Yeah and we hear more... Go ahead, I'm sorry.

Maureen:

No, I was just going to say, just in a roundabout way, the topic really found me. I didn't start and say, I'm gonna write about X, Y and Z and that's all there is to it.

Maggie:

Got it. We do hear more about spirited boys, you know...

Maureen:

Mm hmm.

Maggie:

And you know, it's interesting, but while at the same time we make excuses for the boys because we expect boys to be more rambunctious. In the same way, we might not recognize that a spirited girl might not really behave like a spirited boy and that doesn't mean she doesn't have some of the same struggles going on.

Maureen:

Exactly. Yup.

Maggie:

So, every writer is different. If you sit down every day, feeling like, yup, I'm gonna write three chapters a day and that's what I'm gonna do and you just sit down in front of the computer and draw a blank.

Maureen:

Uhm, I couldn't do both. I mean, I'm not quite sure why, but even now when I sit down to write a blog post, I know when I'm ready to write and... I didn't know that at the beginning because there were days when I'd sit down and say, ok, this is my time to write and I realized... It's... Nothing was coming after...  
[long pause]

Maggie:

I got nothing. [laughs]

Maureen:

Right. I mean, why force it. Just get up and do something else. And that's what I learned in the short amount of time and I kind of realized that I kinda knew when I got up in the morning, like, oh wow, you know. I know that this is the day that I'm gonna be the producing stuff and that's usually the case. So, at first, I kind of forced it, but it was just kind of a little bit of a learning curve to realize, nope, this isn't my time right now. So, I'll get up and do something else and come back a little bit later and that seemed to work for me. So, I was just sitting there, just struggling and getting frustrated and angry that nothing's coming or, you know, spending an hour to write one page, it's not worth it. It makes a lot more sense for me just to get up and do something else and return, possibly in the next day and try again.

Maggie:

That makes so much sense... I've set aside this time for writing, so darn it, I'm just going to put words on paper or on screen.

Maureen:

Yup, and then your editor will come and take it all out.

Maggie:

That might well be. That might well be. What was key to—you obviously knew without a doubt that you had a deadline, it was out there, and theoretically, the book was gonna be done by this deadline. What made it possible for you to actually, I don't want to say effortlessly, but you just kinda kept chugging along and you've finished what was key to actually be getting to the finish line for you.

Maureen:

I think the format that's laid out in front of you, that sequence of steps, knowing what you needed to do, and the due date, just worked beautifully with me learning style. 'Cause I have it... I do tend to work best

under a little bit of pressure. So, if I knew that this was due at the... at a certain date... I just did it. I was able to do it. But... and I actually, because of this scope and sequence that was laid out so beautifully. A lot of my chapters were written well before the deadlines, and so that allowed me to go back and kind of reworked them and retool and maybe find some different vocabulary words so I wasn't kinda sounding, like using the same vocabulary over and over again. But, I just think that from the whole... beginning of the idea that you come up with that completion steps, the whole scope and sequence just made so much sense. So, it was easy to follow and people in the group would always say just trust the process, don't question it, just trust the process, and that's just so true that there's a reason behind every activity you might do, or every video you might watch. It all comes together beautifully, amazingly, really. And I just didn't doubt that. I just knew that it was something that I was gonna follow and that I would get to my end result and that's just what happened. So, I'm sure it was incredibly helpful that I do work under pressure well. So, it worked really well for me.

Maggie:

Well, and I think, for myself, having written, both with external deadlines and written without them, it's very challenging for most of us... maybe not all of us, but for most of us to create our own artificial deadlines in our head and have them... We know we made that up, right? You know, and so, we can say... You know, on our own, we can say, I'm gonna finish a book in three months. But I mean, what are the odds, right?

Maureen:

Exactly. Yeah, it's like, where do you start? I mean, you would spend the whole month just trying to figure out your title, you know, something... like you'd get stuck on... without having that scope and sequence in front of you. So... was really helpful.

Maggie:

What was interesting to me and is interesting to a lot of our authors and I think surprises them is that the very first thing you do isn't write the book, right? Like, for most of us who would think that we would try to do that on our own, we'd be like, oh well, clearly, the first thing you do is write the frickin' book. That would be Job 1. You, like, sit down, you start writing that first paragraph and then come to find out within the structure of this program, well, no. There's what? Three, four weeks of work before we start actually writing the book, and I think that's surprising to a lot of authors. What was different about the process of either writing or bringing out a book on Amazon, than you expected? What surprised you?

Maureen:

I think I was surprised at the order that I wrote the book because coming into it, I just thought, you know, you'd start from the beginning and you'd write the end. That's just how you'd write a book. I

actually wrote some of my ending chapters first and then filled in with some middle chapters and the very last thing I wrote was the beginning few chapters of my book and that really surprised me. I really had no idea that it would go that way and that just worked for me.

Maggie:

Right. It's different for everybody. Sure.

Maureen:

Yeah, but that was just surprising to me, 'cause I just kind of always just assumed, well, you just sit down and you start at the beginning and you finish it and that wasn't the case at all and I think because of the activities that you go through and the things that the program has you thinking about and working through personally, really drives how you write the scope of your book as well. At least that was the case for me. I knew that some of the... chapters, like, you get out quickly and a lot more easily, and then the ones where I really had to spend time reflecting on my past or my parenting or things that were a lot more emotional or difficult that weren't as easy to write, I needed to spend more time on and those came at the end. So... and that's different for everybody.

Maggie:

I think I'm the exact opposite more, and I think I'm like hey, I can make stuff up all day long but don't make me go research fact. Don't make me find out fact.

Maureen:

Yeah, that's funny.

Maggie:

Yeah, it's definitely true. So, your book came out in March, was it?

Maureen:

May.

Maggie:

May, and what's the best thing... What's the coolest thing that's come out of having your own book out, finished out there?

Maureen:

I think it's... truthfully, it's the recognition I've received from, not only family members, but from total strangers. It's been really powerful and more than I expected. I mean, I didn't expect to write, like a best- you know, number one bestseller. That was really unexpected. But it's really more... Some of the emails I've received from people, that I don't even know... 'Cause I didn't write this book with any kind of grandiose ideas of anything. I just want... I just felt compelled to get my story out that maybe I might be able to help another parent or mom. I didn't write it to start a coaching business. It was just really, simply to tell my story and to share it. And that's what's been powerful, for me.... is, like I said, perfect strangers that I've never met email me, contact me, and just let me know that it was meaningful and it helped them... I don't know, 'cause this... like the biggest bestseller that I might... could have ever imagined. So, the purpose of my book was really to honor my daughter and for a story, and I just... I'd like to think that I'd done that. So...

Maggie:

Does she think that you'd done that?

Maureen:

Yes. I think she does. She does. I mean it wasn't easy for her to read either, but like I said, it brought us closer and it's really helped her on her journey as well... just becoming her own person and working to some of the things that she dealt with, throughout her entire life. So, it's been a growing process and a good process that we both have gone through. So, I couldn't imagine that she would even be where she's at currently, if this book wasn't a stepping-off point for her and if that's the best thing that comes out of it, I couldn't dream of anything better to be perfectly honest.

Maggie:

Oh, yeah. Absolutely, and to have... to make that change for you daughter and then the... for you. Do you think of yourself somewhat differently now?

Maureen:

I do. I mean I really do. I feel more than anything that I've accomplished something that never in my wildest ever thought that I would be able to do. And for me to be able to say that I'm an author and I've a published book... I mean I never thought that I'd be able to say that out loud. And I'm very proud of the fact that I wrote the book and everything that... I mean every... anything else that comes with it is just like... It really is. I mean... and I'm just really proud that I could start it and finish it and be proud of it. So, it's just incredible. It really is. It's like an accomplishment that not everybody can say that they've

done and it's empowering... probably the best word I can think of. It kind of empowers you to know that you can put a challenge in front of yourself and exceed it, so.

Maggie:

Or you'll never not be a published author now, right? I mean, that's it. That's permanent.

Maureen:

Yup, that's true.

Maggie:

So, I hear that the experience is enough in of itself and, that said, what's next for you? What's next for your book? What happens from here?

Maureen:

Well, it's been picked up by Morgan James Publishing House in May. Since I'm from... the timing... perfect... Yeah, it'll be in bookstores. So, this is gonna be an exciting journey as well... with a publishing company that... really, I'm learning as I go and I've started my coaching practice and that's gonna really... Oh gosh, the.... that I have personally just by doing this, has been huge. So, it's all good. I've ended up in places I never thought I would be. I mean, it's just been really powerful.

Maggie:

Often filling out one little application, right?

Maureen:

Yup, isn't that crazy? You know, you get an idea and...

Maggie:

And you know, it wasn't really that long ago.

Maureen:

No, it sure wasn't.

Maggie:

It really wasn't that long ago that you felt that out...

Maureen:

Back in January...

Maggie:

Yeah, right?

Maureen:

I know.

Maggie:

And you're probably... at the end of last year. Yeah.

Maureen:

Yeah...

Maggie:

Yeah. So, less than a year later, here you are.

Maureen:

I know. Incredible.

Maggie:

How cool is that?

Maureen:

Oh, it's unbelievably cool. It really is. Just the journey along the way, what you learn about yourself and others, I mean, is... you can't even put a price on it.

Maggie:

Well, yeah, right. So, in a matter of months, you wrote a bestselling, internationally-bestselling (maybe) book.

Maureen:

Mm Hmm. Yeah!

Maggie:

An internationally bestselling book, got picked up by a major New York publisher, and is now gonna bring out your book and in actual physical form in bookstores, what? Nationwide?

Maureen:

In May. Yup.

Maggie:

Wow! To have as pretty much... lady.

Maureen:

I know. It's exciting.

Maggie:

Congratulations!

Maureen:

Thank you!

Maggie:

You're welcome.

Maureen:

Very remiss in not saying that I has like probably the most amazing editor on the face of the planet that helped me through the whole process, and that is you. So...

Maggie:

Yeah, pull this pleasure 'cause I edited Maureen's book. But objectively speaking, it really is awesome. Thank you for being here, Maureen. I really, really appreciate talking to you.

Maureen:

Yes. Thank you for having me.

Maggie:

And I wanna get... See you for coffee, soon!

Maureen:

Sounds great!

Maggie:

Maureen Lake is an educator and health coach. Her book is, *Being Happy, Raising Happy*. Available now on Amazon; available in bookstores next May. See you later everybody.