

## [Book Journeys](#) Author Interview - Oct. 29, 2015

### Dr. Angela Lauria with Michelle Mazur, author of *Speak Up for Your Business*

"I was very structured and got my butt down no matter what." ~Michelle Mazur

Angela:

Well, hey everybody. Welcome back to Book Journeys Radio. It is so good to have you all here. I am hanging out getting ready for Halloween. Uhm, trying to pick out my costume. We have a family theme this year, and so it's Harry Potter year for my family. Uhm, and it turns out that being really... Potter is more challenging than one might... So, uhm, but we are pulling it together and meanwhile, I'm excited to be here to talk to you guys about somebody else's book journey. You guys are gonna like this one because Michelle Mazur is the author of *Speaking Up for Your Business*, and when we talk to Michelle, uhm, you're gonna find out about her book journey - how she came to write her book. But, if you're like most authors, you have plans for speaking about your book and about the topic you care about. So, you're gonna get a little double dose here. We're gonna get some of Michelle's wisdom, some of which are in her book, about, uhm, how you can use speaking; what are some of the secrets for entrepreneurs who are ready to tell, sell, and compel. So, welcome Michelle Mazur to the show. Hey there!

Michelle:

Hey Angela! Happy to be here!

Angela:

Oh, well we're happy to have you. So, let's just start off with your book. Can you tell us what *Speaking Up for Your Business* is about?

Michelle:

Yeah! *Speak up for your business* is a book that I wrote specifically for entrepreneurs about public speaking, because I take the view that public... like here's... The speech that you create about your business is an asset to your business. It's a product that you can sell over and over and over again and generate revenue. And I really wanted to give an alternative, from, like, selling, you know, like, products and programs and services from the stage, but instead focusing on the audience and creating a really great experience for them, and one where they wanna continue their relationship with you. So that's what the book is all about in a nutshell.

Angela:

That's fantastic. So, let's talk a little bit about how this book came to be - how it came to life. Tell us about your process. How did you pick the topic of writing this book?

Michelle:

Yeah, I picked the topic because I've Ph.D. in communication. Speaking has always been something that I was passionate about ever since my first public speaking class that's like 15 years old and in front of the boy I liked. That was completely disastrous. Oh, it was horrible. I

spit on him. It was a bad scene. Worst experience ever. But, I knew that if I could master that skill - that I could influence change and open up possibilities for other people's lives. And so I just became dedicated to studying the art of public speaking. Eventually, that led me to Ph.D. in Communication and I studied persuasion and taught argumentation and debate as a professor, and it was - it was an amazing journey. So, I, kinda had my book topic already, since I was a freshman in high school. So, I was lucky that way. That's how the book came... That's how I selected the topic because I knew this is what I wanna be known for.

Angela:

And so... I know when you wrote the book, or at least when you started it, you actually had a full time job and you have transitioned to working with entrepreneurs on their speaking... hm, full time since then. Uhm, how... How did you decide, when you were leaving your full time job, knowing you were gonna leave, how did you decide, like, what the angle needed to be to kind of help parlay the book into a business that you could support yourself with?

Michelle:

Yeah. I... I... That's a great question. So, I think, you know, I had been... Well, just two things in tandem. I'd been drawing my platform for a while, like even before the book, like the book was part of a bigger plan, even though I'd not been aware of it at the time, when I was doing this. So, I started blogging first and I had a following and had an email list and all of those things you really need if you want to run a business where you're attracting clients and marketing. And then, the book was really about establishing more credibility, because I know from working with speakers, that having a book is just booster for them, because not only do they have something to sell at a speaking gig, so that's always great, to have your book at the back of the room, and it's typically a very easy sell for speakers, but when people are looking, the book speakers are like, "Oh, wow. You're serious!" because you have a book. And that was one of the things I was speaking about 'cause it was this credibility booster, but also it helped me outline the process and how, like I've created whole methodology on how I work with speakers and the book was an integral part of helping me flesh out all of those thoughts so that I could...

Angela:

So this is what I wanna get into. There's lots of people who are currently in a job and they're thinking it's sort of all or nothing, like they have to figure out the perfect idea, and, you know, get their website done and get their process done and then they'll go get clients. And so the journey that I'm trying to lead you on here is that I believe, tell me if I'm wrong here, that while you were still working, you're actually taking clients and developing the process and sort of figuring out who you were, kind of while you had an income. Is that kind of how it went.

Michelle:

Yes, that's my story about a year ago. That... that's exactly how it went. That's exactly what I did. I was working full time, taking clients on my lunch breaks, or, in the mornings, or, in the evenings and working on figuring out my process and my methodology - how I best work with people. I think if you wanna make the leap into being a full time entrepreneur, that having your

day job is a great safety net for a while as you start figuring things out. Because... I mean... It didn't matter, like, I know one month I made \$88 for my business, like a whopping \$88 bucks, right? Yeah, it was like a huge month for me, but, I had a full time job, so it didn't - it didn't impact me all that much, and then it... then you can just, like test and you don't have to stress that you're not going to be able to pay your mortgage or your credit card bill before your card gets sued, because you still have that income coming in, and then thereof just becomes a point where it feels like, "Okay, I'm kind of reaching critical mass where I need to make a decision. I have to take... If I don't take the leap now, I'm never gonna do it.

Angela:

Right, right. But here's the thing that I love - is most people take the leap and, you know, you mentioned that you were a, uhm, like an argument and debate professor. You know, most people would take that leap and they could be in the world of speaking but focused on how to win a debate or trading political pundits and there's a hundred places where your business could have... And so what I see people do is they start by writing the book and they're like, "I don't know about argument and debate," and so they start writing about that book but what they haven't figured out yet is if there's a market there. And so, it's so great... about the approach you took is, number one, you actually, you know, made a little money, but... and figured out your market, and number two, writing the book after you'd actually talked to people. It's such a different experience - talk to and work with people. It's such a different experience than just making it up in your head.

Michelle:

Exactly, exactly. Well, and I also have a background in market research, right? So that's what we do in market research. Before you launch a new product... make sure it's something that they want or that they need. And it's eye-opening to hear their perspective because some people... I mean... still... now... even... that once the book is out... now that the book has been out for awhile, uhm, people don't understand that there's actually like a whole process that you can easily implement to write a speech. It is eye-opening for them. And it's... You know it's great that it's in the book; it's great that they can work with me in that way, but I... that was... One of the things I saw was that people struggling with the creative process of writing a speech because they were just like, "Alright, open PowerPoint. Slide one! What should I put?"

Angela:

Right, right. And that's exactly what happened to the book, too, you know. Somebody goes for a walk, they have an idea, "Oh, I should write a book about... this," and then they sit down and start writing and, you know, you can finish your PowerPoint that way. You can finish your speech that way or your book, but it's not, uh... It's definitely gonna be a lot harder and it's not necessarily gonna get you to your goal as easily if you can sort of start with that end in mind.

Michelle:

Yeah, 'cause I think... Just like the book, you need a strategy like you need to understand like how the book fits into your overall plan and it's going to get you where you wanna go and it's going to serve the people that you wanna be serving. Otherwise, there's no point.

Angela:

Right. Otherwise, why would you...

Michelle:

Exactly.

Angela:

It's a creative trophy for your shelf or something.

Michelle:

[laughs]

Angela:

Okay, so you worked with your clients, you figured out what the book needed to be, you picked your topic... What happens next for you? How did you... How did you get the book written?

Michelle:

So, it was interesting because even though I had, like, my audience and my niche, I still had some false starts with the book, which I think is fine. I... That's one thing I would tell people. Like, you might have a great book idea and then you end up tweaking it two or three times during the process, 'cause that's what I found out, 'cause at first I was gonna talk... just about, like, how it's alright to embrace all of, like your, foibles and mistakes in speaking and own that, and then I got bored with it and realized I couldn't write a whole book on it. And then I went into storytelling and I was like, "Okay, this is great too, but I don't wanna write a whole book on that, and I was able to fuse all of those false starts. But my process was since I was writing a book while working a full time job, I had to get very intentional about schedule. And one of the first things I did was I mind my blog posts, 'cause I had been blogging for like a couple of years at that point and I already had a lot of intellectual property around my views on speaking. So I mind that first, and then I started putting together, like the overall outline of how I think things should go and then I would set up time every morning for like an hour before I'd go from... to go work, so I didn't have to be at work... like nine, so I would write between seven and eight and work on the book, and sometimes it wasn't everyday 'cause I had other things to do on the business, but I tried to consistently get it, like three sessions in during the week, and then a couple of hours on Saturday and Sunday, because that was the only way it was ever going to get done while working full time. So, I was a very structured and got my butt down no matter what.

Angela:

I love that! For sure. And so... And... So you mind your blog posts... Did you end up... Did you find that you edited them very much? Did you like, rewrite them or did you sort of take them like right as they were?

Michelle:

Uhm, I took some of them as they were, and then I... 'Cause you know, writing a blog post is very different than writing a book, and there were great ideas that I could use but I felt that some of them could use a lot more explaining than you would do on a blog post, right? 'Cause otherwise, your blog post would be epic and no one would read it. So I would take the base of the ideas and then flesh them out further, tell more stories around them. So they're more practical examples. Maybe like an activity or something, to help people work through the book. It's a little bit of, "Yeah, I can take some of this, but it needs to be fleshed out. But at least it gave me a structure to work on."

Angela:

Right.

Michelle:

Or to work within.

Angela:

Yeah. I think a lot of people have that question. Like they feel like, "Well, I have this blog. Can I just turn these blogs, or a collection of blogs, into a book? And like from a printing perspective, sure you can."

Michelle:

Mmm hmmm.

Angela:

But a book has sort of a different goal than a blog post, so I like how you use them but then... sort of starting with a blank page but then flesh them out. So...

Michelle:

Yeah, and seeing how they connected organizing them, it was, it was... Yeah, it was good to have a starting point, because then I could like go through all the blog posts and be like, "Oh, well these two are all related, so I need to... The chapter needs to be about these two things."

Angela:

So, is there anything that you wish you knew before you wrote your book, that you learned from the process of writing it?

Michelle:

I think... I mean, one of the things that I wish I would have known was not to overcomplicate the process because I've... like... As I go along in my business, I'm a bigger... big believer in simplicity and just, like, don't overcomplicate it. Just sit down and do the work because writing a book is a process as you well know Angela 'cause you have a great process, and, you know, it's about trusting that process and not overthinking it, because I can be an overthinker and sit there in front of the computer and be like, "Well, if I say it this way, or maybe I should be positioning it this way," and that was not disturbing me. So, that's one of the things. Just sit down and kind of get your brain out of the way to write your crappy first draft.

Angela:

Mmm. Interesting. So... So do you think... Have you thought about writing a second book?

Michelle:

I have, but I don't know if I'm ready yet. [laughs]

Angela:

But if you were... Let's go there for a minute, like you think that there are some things you would do differently this time and not get thrust into that loop of complication?

Michelle:

Oh, I think there are some practical things, like, I would definitely turn off all these editing features in Word or Google Docs, or whatever, that tell you that you've spelled something wrong or there's a grammatical error...

Angela:

Oh, that's a great point.

Michelle:

That stuff distracts me and instead of writing, I'm correcting and writing as I go and that uses kinda two parts of the - two different parts of your brain and not efficient. So, and I would think, uhm, I think the other thing I would do... You know, I really would, like, working with someone like you would probably shave months and months off of the topic... off of the process, because, having more of that structure and being more intentional about what I'm creating from the start and what purpose it serves, I think will be very beneficial.

Angela:

Love that. Okay, let's talk... Let's talk about, uhm, life after. We've done the before in the process of writing your book. What's the best thing to have come from having your own book?

Michelle:

So I love it when I'm on a sales call and someone quotes me to me from the book. It is one...

Angela:

Oh, that is so cool!

Michelle:

I know. It's like one of my favorite things! Although sometimes it's a bit embarrassing 'cause they'll say something to me and I'm like, "Wow, really great point!" and they'll say, "I know. It's from your book." [laughs]

Angela:

Yes, chapter 5, paragraph 2.

Michelle:

I know 'cause they've like gone through it and are excited about it. I'm like, "Oh, yeah. That's right. I haven't read it in a while. It is in my book. But I love that because, I just know. It's like, "Oh, okay. So they already know how I view public speaking." They know my viewpoints on it. They know how I do it differently, and so it makes the conversation - in a sales conversation - a lot easier. And it's cool to be quoted! Right? Like, that's awesome! It's also great when you have people who are already really knowledgeable about what you do because they read the book.

Angela:

And has it changed? The sales process? Do you think people are... more likely to sign up or they come into the sales process with a different level of confidence about working with you?

Michelle:

Both. So I think it shortens the time for them to sign up, because working with me is an investment, and, you know, it's not something that you take lightly, and plus, the work we do is pretty intimate 'cause I'm all up in your business messaging... like very introspective and really push you to do the same. So I think it shortens that sales process and it does give people more confidence, because, you know, having a Ph.D. in communication, helped me definitely [with] a competitive advantage, but then also having the book, is like, uh, just like another competitive advantage that other speaking coaches don't have, necessarily.

Angela:

Hmm. Yeah. And the thing is, if somebody reads your book and they like the message, they can't really go to another speaking coach and be like, "Can you teach me the methods from Michelle's book?"

Michelle:

Yeah!

Angela:

And that sort of makes you the only person they can work with if they like what you're teaching in that book and they're gonna have to hire someone, it's most likely gonna be you.

Michelle:

Yeah. Yeah, because, otherwise, if they go to someone, that person might be like, "Well that's not the way I work."

Angela:

And they probably would.

Michelle:

Yeah, and they don't have all of the, like, you know, there's a whole system that I have in place when I work with people and they don't have access to that intellectual capital or how I see things because my brain works very differently than a lot of people. So, if you like the thinking in that book and you want it applied to your message and to your speech, then, yeah, it becomes a no-brainer to hire me.

Angela:

Absolutely. Love that. So now, uhm, let's talk a little bit about your specialty, which is speaking. Have there been speaking opportunities that have come to you because of the book? And what's your general... What's your general advice about how a book can help you get in front of an audience to speak?

Michelle:

Yeah, I definitely feel like I've gotten speaking opportunities from the book. And for me I have very specific goals around my speaking, like I only want to speak between eight to ten times a year and that's because I don't... I wanna be home, I don't like to travel - well I'd like to travel but I don't like to travel for speaking 'cause it's pretty unglamorous... like... changing in a public restroom before a speaking gig. So, yeah, that's the glamorous life of a speaker, everyone! Supersexy!

Angela:

Supersexy! [speaks at same time as Michelle] Yeah!

Michelle:

Yeah. So, I do feel it can get you speaking gigs and it's also something, when someone is interested in hiring you, you can send them your book. Like if you have contacts - like somebody contacts you, it's like, "Hey, I looked at your website, it's really, you know, you're very interesting. I'm looking for speakers, then you start having an interaction with them, you could send them your book and that is something that's typically very impressive to them when they're interested in you. So, yeah, it's definitely gotten me speaking gigs, and the nice thing is since I

am not an advocate from selling from the stage, I don't... like the book kind of sells itself at speaking gigs. Like you don't need to push the book... You don't have to sit there...

Angela:

Right. You don't have to push it. Here are the three reasons why you should purchase this book.

Michelle:

I know, and the great thing is, one - the person - your emcee who introduces you, typically takes your book onstage with them and shows it to everyone in the audience! So they're selling it for you. So, I think that's another thing to keep in mind. So yeah, your book can also be your speech. Your speech is in your book. So if you're up there and you're thinking, "I wanna become a speaker. I don't know what I'm gonna speak on," and you have a book, your topic's already in there. It's about mining it - mining that book for your topic and then positioning your message so that you're the go-to expert in that industry.

Angela:

Yeah. So, are there ways, uhm... Do you usually respond to incoming requests, or do you pursue speaking opportunities?

Michelle:

So, most of my speaking opportunities come to me through my network. So, uhm, it's funny. I just started a podcast the other day, or like a few weeks ago, I had a Facebook group that goes along with it, and it's called the Rebel Speaker podcast, and we... like someone in there... as a conference planner... So he's planning a conference and he posted this really bad pitch for speaking out of a conference, like, it was pretty much like... It said, "Hello," not even his name, and "I'm so and so, and I speak on such and such and I'm awesome!" That was pretty much the email and I think that's one of the reasons why I don't like going out and blindly pitching and instead I like to leverage my network. All of my best speaking gigs have come not because people know me and they want to bring me in, or they've seen me speak at another gig. Because if you go in and you have a great speech that - basically a great... you're selling this product on stage when you're delivering your speech and someone sees you, you're more likely to get booked that way than doing a lot of outbound marketing and cold calling, so it's all about your network. Start there, like if you are just starting out, get on LinkedIn or Twitter or whatever social media platform is your preference, and start looking at who you know and organizations where you want to speak, and cultivate those relationships, because that's how you get speaking gigs. It's not about, you know cold calling a hundred million organizations to land one gig. It's about your... It's about the people you already know and how they're connected. So that's my advice and how I get all my speaking gigs. They're my connections.

Angela:

Love that, and so authentic and you know the people whose stages you're speaking on and you already have a relationship with them, like, what a great way to go in and connect with the audience, when you've already connected with people running the event.

Michelle:

Yeah, and the other thing is I was talking to an event, or she - she organizes the "What If?" conference and basically, she - you know, she does a call for speakers every year, but she only wants to hire speakers who, first off, are doers. She doesn't hire speakers, she hires doers - people who are taking action in other ways. And secondly, she wants people who have been to our conference before. So, if there's a conference you wanna speak at, an organization, go.

Angela:

Go?

Michelle:

Just go and meet the people.

Angela:

Yeah. Can't emphasize that enough. For sure.

Michelle:

Mmm hmmm.

Angela:

So, we're coming to the end of our time together, but I wanna end with asking you, what advice would you give to somebody who wants to write a book but hasn't been able to finish it, and, uhm, I'll give a little caveat to that for you, which is... and particularly for someone who wants to write a book that will help them get speaking gigs, what advice would you give them if they haven't been able to finish it?

Michelle:

Oh, man. I think the biggest advice is to just think about the audience that you want to serve. Like what problem do you want to resolve for them. What challenge can you help them with based on your expertise and based on how you do it differently than anyone else. Because I think that is important, especially for getting speaking gigs. Your book has to solve some type of problem or challenge because no one is really gonna hire you because, "Oh, you have such a great story," unless, I don't know, you climb Mt. Everest, then, yes, you could probably get hired because your story is so great. But, for regular speaking, you know, opportunities, it's about? What's in it for me? How is it serving? And then to get it done is... First off, I would say, read Steven Pressfield's *The War of Art*...

Angela:

Love that.

Michelle:

...because that talks about... why you're not getting it done, and then honestly it's about sitting your butt in the chair and just doing the work, like, making it your priority because you have a bigger vision for this book you just have to get the book done so you could get to that vision.

Angela:

Absolutely awesome. Well, Michelle Mazur is the author of *Speaking Up for Your Business*. You can check out her book, *Speaking Up for Your Business*, on Amazon.com. You can also check out Michelle on [drmichellemazur.com](http://drmichellemazur.com) (with 2 Ls in) and Michelle you have a new podcast, right? What's the name of that?

Michelle:

Yeah, it's called the Rebel Speaker podcast and you can go to [drmichellemazur.com/podcast](http://drmichellemazur.com/podcast) and get info on it.

Angela:

Fantastic. So check out Michelle's podcast. Get a copy of the book, for sure, and Michelle, thank you so much for being with us this week.

Michelle:

Thank you for having me. It was great!

Angela:

Awesome. So, you guys, we are gonna be back next week on Book Journeys. We'll hear another person's story; their personal book journey of crossing the threshold from author-in-transformation to published author. That is what the show is all about, and meanwhile, I am going to go celebrate a very celebrated published author, J.K. Rowling, uhm, for Halloween, so I hope you guys all have a great Halloween and we'll see you next week on the show.