

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - May 31, 2018

Pleasance Silicki with Kristina Hallett, author of *Own Best Friend: Eight Steps to a Life of Purpose, Passion and Ease* and *Be Awesome! Banish Burnout - Create Motivation from the Inside Out*.

“When you are feeling that drive to do that, it is totally okay for whatever is the best fit for you, because that’s how you’re most likely to actually get in that zone.”-Kristina Hallett

Pleasance:

Hey, Kristina! Are you there? Kristina?

Kristina:

Yes, I am. Can you hear me?

Pleasance:

Hello? Oh, hi! Great!

Kristina:

Hi!

Pleasance:

I - hi, welcome!

Kristina:

Thank you.

Pleasance:

The show started, and since you weren’t quite on yet, I was working the technology. They got on and logged back in and made sure that there weren’t any issues. So, I’m so glad you’re here. Welcome.

Kristina:

Absolutely. Thank you.

Pleasance:

I’m super excited to talk to you, ‘cause I was just reading through your questions and your ... materials and I can’t wait to hear about your journey, and it’s so fascinating that, since the first book - now, you’ve already gone ahead and published the second book and have that out in the world. So, let’s back up a little bit. So, I’m Pleasance, and I’m also an incubated author. My book, *Delight: Eight Principles for Living with Joy and Ease* came out in April 2016, and ... -

Kristina:

....

Pleasance:

- what'd you say?

Kristina:

I said, "That's wonderful!"

Pleasance:

Well, it sounds like you're - that's ... feel soul's connected to you, 'cause your book, *Own Best Friend: Eight Steps to a Life of Purpose, Passion and Ease*, ... we're soul sisters, so I'm super excited -

Kristina:

Exactly!

Pleasance:

- to hear about your journey. Okay. So, how did you start the process, ... where did you, quote unquote, see Angela, or meet Dr. Angela or what inspired you? What's a little bit of the back story until you - how to - how you came to Author Incubator?

Kristina:

Sure. I saw something on Facebook about one of Dr. Angela's Facebook posts that just popped up in my feed, about wanting to write a book that made a difference, and so, I looked at that and ... because I'd had a book that I'd worked on, on and off for a couple of years, mostly off, not on, and I had been doing some other things in my life at the time, and I thought, "Oh, maybe I should write a book about these other two things," and so, it caught my eye, and I begin to explore it.

Pleasance:

Okay, awesome. So, what happened - tell me a little bit about this book that you were writing ... off and on. What was that process like, and - and why didn't it ... come to life?

Kristina:

That was the original book that I had started a few years ago, in my head, it was called *Being Awesome*, which ... transitioned into my second book now, *Be Awesome*, that - connected but different, and I knew that I wanted to share some of the things that I've learned in working with people over the years, in terms of psychotherapy and coaching, teaching, all of the different things I'd done, and I really thought that there was some basic building blocks that would be helpful to share with people. And what would happen is, I would have an idea, and I'd start writing, and I wasn't really sure where to go, or if I was writing in a way that would be - audiences would be receptive to, ... taking the right tone, and I would lose steam and lose

energy, and so, I'd put it aside and then, I'd think, "Oh, I should pull that out," and I'd do a little more work and I'd lose steam again. So, that wasn't actually the book, when I first saw Angela, that - that wasn't even the book that I was going to write. I had - had yet another idea, I'm And the time that I had this idea, that has not yet been written, I was thinking, "Wow, I'll never finish the first book. Do I care about this new idea even more, and would it be a way to make sure I got it done?"

Pleasance:

Okay. So, then, you sign up for the program, how does your life change, or how - what habits did you have to have - ... how did you start to move through the program and actually finish the book?

Kristina:

The thing that was biggest for me was accountability. So, I respond really well to accountability and clear deadlines, and so, Angela provided a very clear structure and specific deadlines. And I guess I also have a little bit of a competitive streak in me, or a ... - a "like to perform" streak. So, my goal was to ... meet or beat each of the deadlines, so then, it made ... time frame that I need. Now, I - I'm also pretty able to sit down and, when I write, be very focused, and I have a pretty good output on a fairly fast pace, and I knew the things that I wanted to say, so even though I didn't have specific outline of what I was going to say, even when I began - pretty comfortable with that, and also pretty comfortable with my writing. My actual writing didn't need a lot of work, 'cause I, professionally, have done a lot of that and tend to write in my voice anyway.

Pleasance:

So, what were the biggest - well, actually, I wanna ask about the cohort. So, tell me a little bit about your cohort and working with the cohort - my - I took the program in 2016, so it's different now, parts of it, so, I'm always curious about how the cohort helps to predict - ... how it hurts, it helps - what was happening there?

Kristina:

So, that was interesting, 'cause I - I know it's also different now, than when I - I was in it, in - so, I was in November of 2016, and we - that's when we started, November 2016, and then came out in April. So, in - there was something - I'll come back to that, but there was something important for me about that time and how I ended up writing what I wrote. So, we had a pretty active Facebook group, and we had the weekly calls, most of those were great. What also - I actually got a lot of comic relief from our Facebook groups, I'm - because there were people who - it was clear we're picking things that were said or not said very, very personally, and in many ways,

Pleasance:

Well, you're a therapist, right?

Kristina:

Yes. Yup. They were acting out the very things that I was writing about, how to fix, so for me, I was ..., "Aw, look! ... the Universe is giving me examples of people who are not using my system! Well, son of a gun!" So - so, that was one side of it. Between my cohort, and then, the other times that I've gone back to the Author Castle, I have some of the most amazing friends and networks that - and ... that was one of the major, major positive takeaways for me in this whole process, with the relationships that were built with people that I never would have encountered otherwise.

Pleasance:

Okay. Do you wanna - let's go back to - you - you said you wanted to go back to the writing process in November, when you started and how it adjusted - yup.

Kristina:

Yes.

Pleasance:

So, let's talk about that one.

Kristina:

Well. Really, what I was going to say is that - so, I started this process. I did my interview with one idea of a book in mind. And then, the U.S. had our last presidential election. And, following the election, there was so much disconnect and disharmony and unease in the world that people in the U.S., and that really bothered me. And literally, the idea was that this book, specifically, other than the one I had applied for. So, the book, *Own Best Friend*, came about as a direct result of the challenges among people, that we saw in the U.S. ... the 2016 elections, and that's really where it became clear to me that that's what I wanted to write about. And so, the process, then, in so many ways, was really easy, because I had shifted to something that, not only am I an expert in, not only have I also gone through it myself but no idea thousands of people on, ... backed by ... sound psychological science. But this was really a place where I could see making a difference, because the world, or the - my immediate world, in the U.S., was in such need. And so, this wasn't as a political statement, but it was, from my perspective, a healing action that I could do to ... begin to contribute something more positive and helpful to counterbalance, and hopefully counteract, what was going on ... in the general human-to-human atmosphere.

Pleasance:

So - okay. So, thinking about the writing process itself, too, ... this kinda leads into it, is how did you - what was that experience like, in terms of the highs and the lows of that ... incubated time?

Kristina:

Yes. So, the writing experience for me - what I did was, I set a routine. And so, I had a specific - an office in my house where I write, and it happens to be where we also keep the cat litter, so my routine was that - ... the litterbox. So I would go in and ... clean out the litterbox and then straighten out my desk, and I had made - one of Angela's suggestions was having a playlist, so I just made a playlist, and I would turn on my playlist sound and write whatever it was that I was going to write. Almost every time, that worked. There were a couple of times where the chapter I was going to write, I was just really feeling a lot of resistance, to writing that chapter, so I would work on a different chapter. And the structure that she provided really allowed me to be able to ... functionally switch between chapters. So, I did not - that book, I did not write from Chapter One through to Chapter Twelve. That book, I actually wrote - I wrote from Chapters Six, Seven and Eight and then went back and wrote Chapters Three, Four and Five, and then One and Two, and then Nine, Ten, Eleven, Twelve. Whereas, for my second book, that happened to have been written Chapters One through Twelve, sequentially. And then ... a couple of times, I knew I was not in the place of wanting to write. ... I sat down and I'm ..., "Muh, I just don't feel it," and so, rather than waste time, I would reschedule myself for a different writing time and then go do something else that was going to bring me enjoyment and ... change how I felt.

Pleasance:

And then, did you find - and so, then, once you ... did that a few times, you realized, "Oh, that was the habit." So, was it ... a big - you - you trusted that you would go back - 'cause I think that's what happens to a lot of people is that ... if they sit down - they schedule writing time and they sit down and they don't write - or they don't feel like writing, I should say - then, they ... "Ugh, I'm never gonna get this done," ...? It's ... goes right from your? And then, they ... throw away the whole thing, so.

Kristina:

I didn't experience that at all. I think something that may have been a benefit for me was that ... I've certainly written professional articles and had other sorts of projects that would require me to simply set aside time, plan to do it, sit down and get it done.

Pleasance:

Well, I think, also, ... part of this - I have all these conversations with authors who, obviously, finish their books and publish them, and the type of people that are attracted to the Author Incubator and accepted into the program and finish, is a very - ... tends to be a high-achieving person who obviously - ... again, attracting servant's heart, a lot of us have done so much of our own growth and development - ... obviously, you're a therapist - ... we - we have a lot of experience, so putting - I think the - the fun and cool and interesting part, for me, through the process, was putting a lot of the tools that I had been mentoring other women on, really into practice, in terms of boundaries, in terms of consistency, and then ... impostor syndrome, and ... moving through these stages as we got closer to publish date, my fears were really growing.

Kristina:

Yep.

Pleasance:

So, it was fun to see that ... play out in real life, and putting myself in this situation, where I can really relate to what my students and clients are going through, ...? Did you have any of that experience, where you had ... - parallel the stuff you teach ... what was happening or the - ... the stuff you mentoring and - ... your clients on versus what you were going through?

Kristina:

I, personally, experienced less of that, in that the things that I was - the things that I was writing about are all the things that I had practiced with myself and my - with my clients, my coaching clients in specific, 'cause that's really what this was about, but also my psychotherapist, I've been doing that for twenty-five years. So, I was really clear about that, and also, for whatever reason, really convinced - ... I was just absolutely convinced that this was going to be meaningful, and at some level, I guess it also didn't matter if it was meaningful to anyone other than me, because once I got into the process, it mattered to me that I was doing it, and I wanted to help and believed it would help, but it wasn't about - I didn't struggle a lot with the, "Is it going to be good enough?" I guess ... that's the way to put it. So a lot of my books and my work is about getting over the worry about feeling good enough or not good enough, and the feedback that I got, as I was .. going through was enough to suggest that I was on a reasonable track, and so, that took care of that particular demon. So, I - I didn't feel like I was re-experiencing this ... going through that parallel process, although I know a lot of people in my cohort did.

Pleasance:

Did, yeah. And then, was that on the - okay, so, that's the content side, but then, we also have the business side. So, let's go through - let's talk about the marketing and the business side. So, you moved through and your book comes out. What did you do to grow your business or your reach or your speaking, or what - what was the business side of your publication like?

Kristina:

The - from the business perspective, I think where I ... struggled or felt like I was running around in circles was being clear about who I was trying to get this out to and ... what was going to be a way that worked to do that. So, on the one hand, there were a number of suggestions and tips from Angela and from others in my cohort about ways to do that, and I had a lot of people who were interested in my book. So, interest wasn't an issue, but creating clients from interest, that was more of a struggle. ... that was - for me, that was the harder part, and I think much of that had to do with my own mindsight and my own training as a psychologist, in terms of ... what it means to market and how you put yourself out there and - and all of that. And so, one of the things that I discovered in working with Angela and through the Quill was, really, about who I'm being, speaking, and so, I began to do more and more speaking and it was speaking that grew my business. So, from a financial perspective, I began speaking and being paid to speak, and

speaking allowed me to get in front of the people who want me to coach them. So, that ... went hand in hand.

Pleasance:

And that was a different way - it sounds like you ... restructured your business model after the book came out. Is that true?

Kristina:

Absolutely. Yes.

Pleasance:

Yeah.

Kristina:

Yeah.

Pleasance:

.... 'Cause again, I think, a lot - go ahead.

Kristina:

Oh, I was just gonna say, I - I don't know that I was really clear, so I've had ... my own psychotherapy business for years, but I never had to market it, ... I had an ongoing word-of-mouth, filled-to-capacity business, ... for a couple decades. So, I was ... a babe in the woods. I was ... "Wow, ... I have no idea what I'm gonna do." So, I felt that I got a lot of guidance upon what are the next steps to take, or how long do you try something, and when do you ... cut bait and say, "Okay, that strategy didn't work," how long do you hang in, what kinds of investments do you make, and - and that was extremely helpful. So, I ha - not only did I work on a specific business growth model with Angela, but the other piece was ... having that container from which I could go pull ideas about what to try and it would help me boundary how far to go.

Pleasance:

Yeah. So, after you moved through that, it sounds like - like you're now at this other end, where your business looks different and ... your daily life probably looks different. What are the things that have most surprised you about being on this side, and do you wanna write more books and ... give me a little check point of where you are now, and - and where you are going.

Kristina:

So, let's see. Well, I got to two, now, and I thought that I was done, but - but I really love to learn things and I'm ... to research and data. And I have one friend who keeps pushing me for ... a third piece to this, and so, it would be, in some cases, a trilogy, different aspects coming at ... what it means to be your own best friend, or to not get burned out - to actively ... learn from a professional woman who's had the best of everything. So, there's possibly a third book just

coming up, and then, I'm under contract with a publisher, already, to do a mental health exercises workbook for adolescents, ... they really like that I've already published books. I, at this point, ... requests for keynote speaking and other kinds of speaking because, of course, people say that you have a book and that automatically brings credibility, so that's a plus as well.

Pleasance:

Okay, awesome. So, say, someone's listening and they're thinking about doing the program but they have fears or doubts, what would you say to them?

Kristina:

Oh. Well, I actually just referred someone who'll join the program, so I can reflect upon that whole ... conversation. And this is someone who really wanted to write a book and really wants to share their message and is very committed to making a difference, and was worried - was worried whether or not she'd get it done, whether or not she'd be good enough, whether or not - if she had the resources, financial, emotional, physical, et cetera, to do this - all of the questions that I think are very, very common for writers or would-be writers to grapple with. And I said to her that, what I found - just like I said in the beginning, here, was most helpful - was structure and accountability, and a very clear process that allows you to connect with who your ideal reader is, to know your ideal reader - a process with which to connect with that person and really speak to the person that you're writing this to, and then, I felt that the - the guidance, absolutely, made up for whatever the various doubts are concerned or intended to come up.

Pleasance:

I think it's really important - I think it's really ... awesome to have that kind of strategic thinking and coaching and mentoring when you're making that decision and having someone who's been through the program, whether to say it's a good fit or not a good fit, right, 'cause it's not necessarily for everybody, and ... it's a big investment, financially, for you just to write something that you don't want to work, either from speaking or growing ... - growing your list, or ... having a bigger reach and serving, so I always like to ... put that in the context that it's okay if those are things that you don't wanna do, and just finding other ways to write ... to ... bring your work into the world, from the more creative process. But I think

Kristina:

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Pleasance:

Yeah, go ahead.

Kristina:

Oh, no, go ahead.

Pleasance:

I was just gonna say, it's - it - the - the writing piece is the part that people always say ..., "Oh, it's too hard to write," or, "I'm not a good writer," but when you're coming with the expertise and the passion and the servant's heart, it flows through you.

Kristina:

Absolutely. Yes. And that was very much my process, and I was in - that I have a younger brother, and he's currently wri - he's writing fiction. And so, he took a very different path, He signed up for a writer's work through Wesleyan University, and he is working on his fiction book with them. And ... he knew very much what my process was and I respect that his process was best for him and what he was trying to do, and that he and I are different, and there's no better or worse way of doing it or who you're working with or what it is that you're doing. It's - there's so many reasons people want to write a book and, granted, we know, no everyone who wants to does, and of those who start, most don't finish, but I think when you are feeling that drive to do that, it is totally okay for it to be ... whatever is the best fit for you, because that's how you're most likely to actually get in that zone.

Pleasance:

Yup, totally. It was so fun to talk with you, and I'm excited about your books being out in the world and helping more people and the speaking that you're doing, and excited about that Book Number Three possibility, and I just really appreciate all of the work that you do in the world. I think it's very important, so thank you very much for coming on and chatting with me today, and wish you a lot of luck! The best of luck.

Kristina:

Thank you! It was great to speak with you, and best of luck with you, as well.

Pleasance:

Thanks! Take care!

Kristina:

You, too.