

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - July 5, 2018

Pleasance Silicki with Nurys Harrigan-Pedersen, author of *Make Your Mark: The Smart Nonprofit Professional's Guide to Career Mapping for Success*.

"It's not easy. But the program makes it easy."-Nurys Harrigan-Pedersen

Pleasance:

Hi, everyone! It's Pleasance Silicki here. I'm the author of *Delight: Eight Principles for Living with Joy and Ease*, and today, I am here with auth - the author of *Make Your Mark: The Smart Nonprofit Professional's Guide to Career Mapping for Success*. Nurys, are you there?

Nurys:

I am, how are you?

Pleasance:

I'm great. I wanna make cer- ... -nouncing your name right, 'cause ... Pleasance, I always - I often get Plee-zans or Ple-zans or something. So, tell me how to pronounce your name the way that you say it.

Nurys:

Nurys. Yes.

Pleasance:

Nurys? Harrigan-Pedersen? Harriga - tell me your whole name.

Nurys:

.... Nurys Harrigan-Pedersen.

Pleasance:

Beautiful! Thank you, Nurys! Is that Persian?

Nurys:

It's not! Well, which one? The first name is - is Latino, which is Spanish - Hispanic, and Harrigan is English, Pedersen is Danish. So, all over the place, yes.

Pleasance:

I love it! I love it! Well, welcome.

Nurys:

Thank you!

Pleasance:

Yes! Oh, so fun. I love to do these interviews. I love ... talking about going through the program. I did the program two years ago - actually, more than two years ago, now, 'cause it was Ia - it was winter 2015, so I love hearing about the changes and what people have been through and what they're author's transformation was like. So, tell me a little bit about what your life, your career and your work looked like before you went through the Incubated Author process.

Nurys:

It was a full - a full life, it was great, it was comfortable, it was easy, right, and everything that I - that I had wanted to do, I - I'd - I'd done. So, I was in "maintenance mode" before I had found the Author Incubator. I was ... coping, right? I was ... living life, no drama, just doing what I wanted to do, but something more that was there, that I wanted. There was something missing, right? I'm always trying to go and stretch, and I got into a place where I was very comfortable. I'd achieved a lot, done a lot, I was happy, and I was giving a lot of my time and experience to others, bringing others to me, but something was still missing. And it was starting to block ... in side of me.

Pleasance:

How did you figure that out? How did you know that?

Nurys:

So, career mapping, so that - I've been doing very organically. I do staffing and recruiting for the nonprofit sector. And I've been doing this work for about twenty years, now, let's see - ... twenty - 1997? Twenty-one years, right? This past May. Twenty-one years, doing recruiting, meeting with people, interviewing them, connecting amazing professionals with amazing nonprofits. All nonprofit work, right? And in doing that, I would meet with candidates and become their best ..., because I was trying to help them find a new position, the same with my clients. I was helping ... nonprofits find the right fit for their open positions, and in doing that, I made really, really good connections. So, the most part, I - I connected well with my clients and candidates. It was more than a transaction, it was - it was a relationship. So, those candidates, I know ... would come back to me and tell me, "Okay, Nurys, I've been here for two years, I've been here for five years, what's ...? I'm a little bit - I'm a little bit eager." And we would sit very informally, Pleasance, really informally. We would just sit and chat over coffee, over lunch, and think about what's next. And we would plan out their next step, where they - what they had done, what they had accomplished, and where would they wanna be and how - how could we get there. What were the missing steps in between Point A and Point B, and we would count it out. Those ... and did that at any level of their professional lives - so, they were two years into the workforce, ten years in, twenty years in, I noticed, were ex - were more successful and happier than those candidates that just winged it. "Oh, I'll take a job." "Oh, I'll quit this job." "I'm getting fired." I'm ... getting downsized." Those candidates are - were in the - in the driver's seat of their professional lives, were so ... they had accomplished, they were happier! And they got to where they wanted to be in a lot less time, with a lot less ... form, ... "Okay, there's something to this - this - to this thing," And I've heard - ... and then, it became a lot, ... I would - I would - I would reach out

to those - to my favorite candidates and say, "Hey, let's chat about your next move - your next career move - or moves, in the next five, ten, fifteen years, let's chat about that and print it out," and they will come to me and say, "Hey, you - you and ... so sat down and did this, let's do it." And - my husband once said, "Why don't you just do a workshop on that? Why don't you just train - teach ... time, because it's - it's different, add value. You like it, people love it, there's something to it, make a workshop and add value to the candidate base." So, I'm ..., "Great. I like adding value, I like innovation, I'll do it." So, I prepare a two-and-a-half hour workshop that I invited candidates in, and also my clients so they can use it in their nonprofit organization, and it evolves. I was doing it, what? Four times a year, five times a year, as a hobby. And it was very popular, so then, my husband, smart man that he is, said, "Why don't you just write a book about this? This will add value to the marketplace, right?" And - and - and me, always wanting to - to - to add value, to innovate, to grow myself, and to - to just give up something back, right? And make a difference in people's lives, so I - I said, "I'll think about it. I'm not a writer, English is not my first language, that's a valid ..., I don't have the time, I don't know how to write," ... it was ne - ... it was never - it never crossed my mind. I had a hundred bucket list, it was never on the bucket list. It was not my thing. I don't write books, it's not what I do. But he planted the seed, and it grew on me, it grew on me - it made to the list. So, one year, twenty sixtee - December 2015, I was doing my - my vision board for 2016, and the - the book made the list! I had top four goals, the boo - a guide - so, okay, I'll do a guide - a career map and guide, that ... I can do. A little bit of a workbook, ... and I'll be gone. So, it went to the list and ... the whole year, I never bought - I didn't look into researching how to write a book, it was just a thought. And I gave myself twelve months to do it, ... months go by, and I had four top goals. The other three, I accomplished by April. The guide, I never touched it. Never. But, it was - it was ..., "I'm gonna get to - I'm gonna get to December 5th -" when I wrote this - when I wrote this list - "and I'm not gonna have my guide." And I didn't. So, December 27th, 2016 to 2017, I said, "Fine, I'll write. I'll make it - I'll make the list again." So, my four goals for 2017, the book made the list. So, come January, ... come February, nothing. I ha - I didn't write one word on anything. ... it was - I ... happened. I have to find the right - the right computer, the right desk, the right chair, the ... write this book, the right inspiration, it never happened, until one day, I was cooking lunch on a Sunday, and I was on Facebook and - and I'm ... - laptop at the kitchen counter, full of multitasking, and Angela's video popped up. And I signed up right there and then to see - to get a free webinar on how to write a book, and two days later, I signed up to the Author Incubator. It was a "Hell, yes," it was a very clear "yes." So - and by April -

Pleasance:

So, you just ... moved through - yeah. You moved through the resistance, you just ... opened up to it, it sounds like you were just following flow, following energy, getting tired of not doing it, too.

Nurys:

It was - it was taking time from my days, 'cause I was - I'm a doer, right? I'm a - I'm a - I'm a noveli - achiever, so it was just taking so much time out of my days, thinking about this thing that I can - I couldn't get to. But ... I love coaching, I've had - I hired many coaches ... my life, and

when Angela showed up as a coach, I'm a - ... to me, it was an easy decision to make, because I - I'm used to being coached. And I ... a lot through coaching, so it's ..., "Okay, this is how I'm gonna get this done. Lemme hire this woman and get this done." And I did, and by April of 2017, I was done with the book. I wrote my book in four weeks. So, ... was on cloud nine.

Pleasance:

So, what was that process like? ... get me - now, tell me a little bit about what was that process like, the writing - was it really easy, what were the - ... what were the highs and what were the lows?

Nurys:

It wasn't easy, is - easy for you, ...? No, ... it wasn't easy, it's not easy. But it - it - the - the program makes it easy. Right, I - so, I told - it was an eight-week program, or nine weeks, with Angela, and I had an end date in mind. I knew that, by April 23rd, I had to hand in that manuscript. And I had a schedule to follow. So, the first four weeks, I was ... to the videos - it was ... - I was very inspired, very motivated, it makes sense. She broke it down in very easy, digestible pieces. She spoke my language, with the mediation piece, I'm getting it organized, and the mindset piece, so I did that four weeks, and then, when it came down to writing, that was very scary and stressful to me. It was very scary. But you know what made it easy for me, and

Pleasance:

So, how'd you deal with that? Yeah, how do you deal with the fear, and what do you do?

Nurys:

... right now. Oh, yes, timer is the best friend. I got the timer. I said to myself, "I'm gonna go to buy ... - and I don't have to write a book when I sit down, now, ... I'm gonna be in today. I'm gonna write whatever comes out for two hours, and that's all I'm doing. And that's all I did. Two hours at a time, I wrote - I wrote every chapter, I gave myself two hours per chapter for the first draft. It sounds easy, ... sure it sounds very easy, but it wasn't, ... it - ... it was a challenge, it was ... the strong goal, because you have demanding things coming at you, you have a full - I have a business to run, I have a full time job, I have two little kids, my husband. I have a full life. I travel a lot, I do a lot of social events, I have a full life, so I - I did one more thing to that list, but I managed. I dream - you know what I did also? I - and this might be - this might sound silly, but a month and a half, I served dinner and lunch on paper plates. And I used - I used plastic utensils. ...

Pleasance:

You simplified your life!

Nurys:

Yes! I - I simplified. So, paper plates and a timer were my - my - my buddies in - in doing - in doing the first book. Yes.

Pleasance:

Okay. So, you go through the process, tell me a little bit about what Angela's - Dr. Angela's process and the cohort - ... what was the program like for you? ... I heard a lot about what you did, specifically, but what about the structure of the program and how that - did that work for you, what are the parts that worked for you, what are the parts that don't? I think a lot of times - again, I'm really glad that you spoke about the time commitment, because I think a lot of times people say or think, "Oh, I don't have time to do this, I don't have time to do that." And so, making the time, but also, what were the things from the program and the cohort that helped you?

Nurys:

The guys that Angela ... us, she warned us that a lot of things are - will - will going to show up, and - and it's amazing how she figured this one out after doing it all the time, and a lot of things will show up. You will have - ... I - I - I felt a lot of anxiety, because I was growing. It was a year of growth for me in other areas as well, and the way - ... when you write a book, it's - it's - ... I don't write books, it's not something like that - just anybody does, I'm gonna give "yes." Anyone can do it, if you ... - if you - if you ... the time and - and - and the time and effort and - and - and focus on it. But I knew that book ... for us ... in - in - in very easy steps. If you follow the process, you get it done in a very easy manner. And being prepared, knowing that, yes, drama and things are going to show up, ... come out of nowhere, and for me, it was anxiety, the Impostor Syndrome, ... "Who am I to write a book?" "What will my ... members at work, what will they think of me, if I - ... why are you wasting time writing a book," and I use the - the word "wasting" because, in my mind, it's ... "Wh - why -" I knew that I had a big goal in mind, you - ... was to serve professionals in the nonprofit sector, and give them something that will, for sure, uplevel their - their professional life. So, for me, I - I saw - I saw it - ... I'm taking time away from my family and the work from - from the staffing company, and what will my staff members think, here I am, taking time to write a book when I could be working with them or helping them, and a lot of guilt and - and anxiety came with it. But ... it was all in my mind. And knowing that Angela would say it, over and over again, "Stuff will come up, knowing that - okay. Because you're free-thinking, this is what is coming up for me. It's - it's part of the process, I g - work through it, work through it, work through it." And I did that. The cohort was amazing. I made amazing friends that I've kept - I've made a lot of my - my current friends, my current good friends, came from my April ... 17 cohort. And the people that are living life like I'm living life, they've written books, they are - they are - they're creating a coaching program around their books, which is what I'm doing also. They get me, they know where I'm coming from, we've been through the same thing, we think alike. I think we signed up for the program with Angela because we have a lot of things in common and we're drawn to what she has to offer and teach. So, the cohort was amazing. We - we - my cohort was the cohort that created writing parties. So, we came up with the idea of, "Okay, tonight, who's ready to write?" And ... Angela made it a thing, now, after the - between 17 cohort, April - now they make it an official thing where somebody at the Author Incubator says, "Okay, guys! We'll turn the lights, we're writing for two hours," and - and we did that, and in the company of some of my friends, we would just writing at nine or ten pm and go

for two hours nonstop. So, we would say, "Okay, the goal is ... hours tonight," and we would check in, halfway point, "How are you doing?" "Are you tired?" "Keep going." "Let's do this." "We're doing good." A - and then, at the end, we would be ..., "Okay, word count. What do you have?" And ... when I look back, right? You have this - this team of people around you doing the same exact thing, encouraging each other, and we did that ... a lot of - lots of nights. And it worked really, really well.

Pleasance:

Oh, awesome. Yeah, that's really awesome. Okay, so your book, done, you've done all the work, when did it come out - tell me a little bit about the publishing and ... the transformation from writing and cohort to published author.

Nurys:

Yes, so, it added - it gave me a little bit more clout, right, which is what I wanted. I wanna be seen as the authority - authority in all things nonprofit staffing. The book has given me that, I - I've had people read it, send me beautiful notes and beautiful e-mails about how much of an impact it has been in their life, so I - now, that is impostor syndrome thing is gone, ... I don't even - I don't even worry about that anymore. I know what I know and I'm sharing it with love, with the nonprofit world, and that's all I care about. The - I - I finished my manuscript on the deadline, April 23rd, I think it was, and then, I - I did the - the Amazon Online I - launch with Angela, and that was a re - re - a very beautiful process, say, her group edited and line edited and proofread the - the - the manuscript and turned it into a book. I got a book cover with their help as well, and then we went on Amazon end of June of 2017. So, wa - a little bit - a little bit over a year ago, I was on Amazon. It made bestseller list ... for taking out internationally, I think - I think multiple countries like ..., the US, of course, Canada, the UK, and something else, Mexico, maybe. And others. And I was able to share it, share - share the - the excitement, the news, the - the work with my community. Family, friends, ..., and then, with the help of Angela, a publisher in New York city, Morgan James, approached me and other people in my cohort and - and offered to publish the hard book. And I went with them, and by December of last year I had a hundred copies dropped off at my door.

Pleasance:

Yay! How did that feel?

Nurys:

Yes! Yes. It gets better, it gets better. I am - as an immigrant, I love Independence Day. I just love this country. The - I am living the dream, the American dream, in every single sense of the word, I am. So, they asked me,

Pleasance:

Where are you from? Hold on. Where are you from?

Nurys:

The Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic. Yes.

Pleasance:

Oh! Awesome. Okay. Yeah, awesome.

Nurys:

An - an island in the Caribbean, and so, the - Morgan James, we were discussing the - the dates for publishing, and they - they gave me a couple of these dates, and ... July 3rd it is. I just - this is my holiday, I love Independence Day, I was not born here, but I feel as American as anyone. I just - I just ha - I have so much appreciation and - and - and I - and I'm so thankful to this country and all that I've been able to - to create and build and do here. So, Independence Day, I - it's a - it's my big party, ... I wear red, blue and white, I have a hotdog - I don't eat hotdogs, but for that day, I - I do have a hotdog, that's my one hotdog a year. That was last night, I really enjoyed it, and my book came out on Tuesday in book - bookstores, local bookstores, so, super exciting. Super exciting. And ..., it wasn't as - it wasn't as - it wasn't bad, ... I keep saying I had anxiety, it wasn't easy - i - it - it wasn't easy, I know ... it wasn't, because I find ... - I had the chance to write a second book under Angela's guidance, ... car, and I did! I wrote my second book! And - just this - this winter. And that one also - yeah. Yeah.

Pleasance:

Oh, awesome! Tell me about that.

Nurys:

That one is the counterpart of *Make Your Mark*, it's called *Careers in Nonprofits*. That one, I'll say more on the next podcast, so w - we can talk about that one later, but that one is meant for the client, so my ... book for the clients who are now handling nonprofi - nonprofit professionals who are coming with a career map in hand, and the second book is to help the employer prepare the grounds, so we see these professionals are coming in, empowered, with a career map. And to help nonprofits employers also present career mapping, introduce it to their hiring classes. So, it's a beautiful book. Just - I am having so much fun talking about it, teaching the book to my people in the ... sector and just - it's been a blast. It's been an amazing ride, and I am loving every single minute of it. To just think that I had so many doors open because I took a - a - a chance, and thankfully, Angela made it so easy for me to get it accomplished, not one but two books. I'm grateful, I'm happy, I - I wouldn't change anything for my journey.

Pleasance:

So awesome. And so, what are you doing now, with it all? ... tell me about your - your work and your daily life. We have about three or four minutes left to just chat, so what does it feel like now, and how has it changed? ... it sounds like things were pretty good before, but you just wanted to grow and evolve and try something new. So, ... until now.

Nurys:

... it's always "what's next?" with me, right? "Well, so, this is what's next," a year and a half ago. Now, I am just taking this book out to the sector, the nonprofit sector, and anyone who wants to hear about career mapping and how it can change your lives, I am talking to them. I am creating my workshops around the country. I had the privilege of being able to work out of offices and see Chicago and San Francisco, and I - I just pro - when I'm traveling there, I schedule a workshop, and I schedule conversations, and I invite people in to learn more, and - ... learn how to do career mapping in the daily professional life, and it's a joy to just see what a difference it makes.

Pleasance:

So great. So, someone's listening, they're thinking about signing up, they're thinking about the program, why don't you give them a few pieces of advice - what would you tell them?

Nurys:

Yes, well, if you're looking to uplevel your professional life and get - get to the next level with ease and comfort, I would say, take some time to work on four things, which is the - my book teaches. Gaining clarity - so, clarity, purpose, direction and intention. Clarity - what is it you want? Purpose - why do you want that? Direction - where would you go get it? Intention - how would you go about it? So, four things. You have those four things in place, and you should be up to - to creating an amazing and beautiful career map for yourself.

Pleasance:

Well, I love that so much. I love the work you're doing in the world, I love your energy and just such a model for positivity and growth and expansion, and so, keep up the awesome work.

Nurys:

Thank you!

Pleasance:

Keep writing, keep sharing, and keep helping - 'cause I know, these nonprofits, especially right now, we all need to support the caregivers, we need to support our nonprofits financially and on the ground in any ways that we can, for humanity, really. So, thank you for being - having a servant's heart and doing the work. I really appreciate it.

Nurys:

It's a joy. Thank you so much for the time, I really appreciate it.

Pleasance:

Awesome. Where can people find you, if they wanna learn more about your work?

Nurys:

Great question. So, an e-mail, it's the, t-h-e, thecareerincubator@cmpstaffing.com. Cnp, charlie, matthew, peters, staffing.com.

Pleasance:

Awesome.

Nurys:

'Cause we incubate careers at the Career Incubator.

Pleasance:

Awesome. I love that so much. All right, well, thanks so much! Have a great rest of your day!

Nurys:

'Bye, Pleasance!

Pleasance:

'Bye!