

Publish Your Purpose

Episode 1

Jenn: Okay so welcome to the first episode of Publish Your Purpose. I'm Jenn T. Grace. I'm with my co-host Mark D. Gibson. Mark said, I'm so excited to be doing this. I want to chronicle my journey as an author. I said, Hey I want to start a podcast. It was quick.... within a few days it was like, let's do this. And I said ... 11 pages of notes, points, etc.

Mark: Happy to be doing this. I've been talking to aspiring authors on regular basis. They don't understand the journey, the process of going from having an idea in your head, all the way through holding a book in your hand.

Jenn: This was your idea. You're writing a memoir and you wanted to chronical how this all happens. And it's just such a perfect marriage of what we're both accomplishing.

Mark: Songs play big role in my life. Aerosmith song "I don't want to miss a thing". I got so excited when I got the first email for the Academy. I'm like a dry sponge, and I want to absorb everything. Thank you for inviting me along to do this podcast.

Jenn: We've got a whole bunch of these planned. Our goal is to show you all the behind the scenes of working with Mark. Basically, start to finish of the entire book publishing process. Our goal is to talk about the highs the lows, the roller coaster, the logistics of it, the minutia, the emotions. Give you a full, comprehensive understanding of what this is all about.

Jenn: Mark, why don't you share what the name of the book is that we're working on together. And how we came to be. We're brand new to faces in our audience.

Mark: Well this is a project that has been ruminating for quite some time with me. It started on my first deployment to Afghanistan. I've been talking to other authors and other people that are in the process. A lot of them don't have their titles. Or, they know what they want to write about, but they're not really sure about their outline or the structure. That, oddly enough, came to me first. I wanted to publish a book, the title is *Served in Silence*. It is the life story of me growing up and living in the military, in the Air Force under the *Don't Ask, Don't Tell* policy. Talking about the pros, the cons, the good, the bad of what the DADT policy does to a person. It really gets to the heart of authenticity.

I'd been fumbling and I was writing... I didn't really know what I was doing. I'm not a writer, per se. I had solicited assistance from some friends of mine; friends of my family. We had just gotten to the point where the goals weren't aligning, life just wasn't aligning at the same time. It wasn't until early summer that I reached out to a dear friend of mine, Sam McClure, from the NGLCC. I had worked with Sam, two years prior. It was a pretty awesome experience. I learned so much from being on the road with Sam and working on a program together. From the US Small Business Administration to her being the Senior

Vice President at the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce. I developed a great deal of respect and love for Sam. I trusted her opinion.

Out of the blue, I just texted her one day. I was really frustrated. I didn't know what else to do. I said "Hey Sam, do you have a minute?" And very graciously, I'm sure she didn't, she always makes time. She said "Yes, I have a few minutes. What's going on?" I explained to her what was going on. I think she knew that I had been toying with the idea of writing a book. I asked her if she knew if there was anybody I could talk to about getting some assistance. You know how you can see the little bubbles when someone is texting... she fires back really fast..."Jenn T. Grace; Get you the number. Hang on a minute. Will make introductions. Talk to you later."

I thought "What was that? What just happened?" I immediately jumped on the internet, googling Jenn's name.

Jenn: Stalking at its finest.

Mark: Cyber stalking. Anyway, later that afternoon Sam had made the introduction on email and Mark fashion, I had already gone on Jenn's website. I saw an opportunity to schedule a one-on-one appointment with the publisher. "Wow" I thought. I jumped on the very first one that was available. And so, here we are. It's because of our dear friend Sam.

Jenn: We love Sam and I can't wait for her to see. We haven't told anyone that we decided to do this. The spark... It was like just "DONE". No real thought about it. No idea about execution. No anything. We were like "Let's do this!"

I use Zoom video so I said "Let's get this done" and we went on Zoom to start recording. So it will be a surprise to Sam as this comes out. We should give Sam a heads up. Sam and I go back a good seven years or so when I was running the local CT chamber. She's part of the national organization. We instantly connected. She's a really good friend of myself and my wife.

She sent me a text after you two connected, "Mark's going to be contacting you. He's amazing." Sam doesn't make connections unless she knows they're going to make sense. I feel like I'm strategic with connecting people myself. I totally respect her so anytime Sam says "you should do this", you should do it. It is what it is. I replied "He already has! He's booked an appointment on my calendar."

Little fun fact, probably embarrass her... my son calls her (even to this day when he's now 9), when he was three he used to call her "the grand old Sam" he ended up making up this whole song about "This Grand Old Sam", like the "Grand Old Flag." It still sticks with us today. He hasn't called her that in a while.

I adore her. I'm so happy that she did connect us.

You just alluded a little bit to it... Sam makes the introduction, this all happened within a three day time frame.

It's a Saturday morning. Saturday morning in my household tend to be a little chaotic with children 10 and under. I'm sitting out in my car, having a conversation with you with my coffee. I was thinking "This is such a beautiful way to start a weekend. I think it was ten in the morning. Anyone who is like you, to say I'm going to have a ten am call with someone, I said "let's do it". I talk to people who might be in a different country or different time zone, so I try to throw in random availability.

So, we talk and I want to hear your impression of that first conversation. Where we went from there.

Mark: There was a lot going on in my mind. I'm not really a writer; I don't know very much about this process; and all kinds of emotions are going through me. I felt very safe with Sam. Sam is a trusted colleague and trusted friend. I knew that she wouldn't steer me in the wrong direction. I'm really happy that I took that leap of faith.

Because that's a little exposure... I didn't tell her who I was... Now I'm tipping my hand... I'm really writing a book... that's accountability. Anyway, I threw it out there. I took the first opportunity on your calendar. So the night before I cleared the distractions, I cleared the space, I'm up early anyway, I had my coffee ready, I had my list of questions, all organized, at my kitchen table so I was really excited to meet you and talk to you because of the Sam connection, I felt trust there.

I had this preconceived notion of my interactions with publishers up until this point and it wasn't that great. This is the Hail Mary Pass, the last-ditch effort, I'm just super excited about this call. I was going to rattle off these questions as if I was going to grade them later, because of the mindset of what I had with other publishers. That quickly just disintegrated into this beautiful, comfortable conversation, of Mark and Jenn. It wasn't the new author and publisher. You were very encouraging. You said "Tell me what's going on." "Tell me, where are you?" Just very actively listening. It was quite remarkable. After I hung up, Mr. Wonderful (my partner) came downstairs and he said "Uh Oh, some thing's going on. What happened?" It was pretty amazing!

Jenn: I talk to a lot of people, being a publisher. For a long time, I had a consulting business. I had to very pro-actively hit the ground hard trying to get people to listen to me. For me to say "Hey, you have a problem. I can help you fix it." But now I run a publishing company, people come to me because they're in some various stage of the publishing process. Or the writing process. Or they're JUST starting to think about. It's exciting to me when I talk to somebody like you. I remember hanging up the phone... I get so energized talking to people with high energy. It's Purpose Driven Publishing, publish your purpose. So, it's all about people who are trying to change the world in whatever way that looks for them. So, for you, it's a matter of bringing awareness to serving in silence, don't ask don't tell, so that can be applied to any one serving in their own version of silence. For me, it's like "Holy Shit! This is so someone who is perfect for us!" I have

a vetting mechanism and we're really kind of particular about who we work with because you have to fall into the criteria of being purpose driven.

I'm not the one to decide what your purpose is. That is for you to decide. But it has to fit into the mission of Purpose Driven Publishing which is to impact the greater good, by telling your story. Whether it's a diverse story or adversity; any number of things.

After we hung up, I get super excited. I go skipping into the house. "We have a new author. I just know it!" I don't know what yet, but we're going to do something. My wife is, at this point, because I'm so like the excitable dog, I have to talk to another human! Having just finished summer break recently, it's one of those things where she's been in my personal space because I work out of the home, and so when I have really exciting things, like us, when we decided to podcast, I go skipping down the stairs. "guess what we're doing!" I don't know how either of our spouses handle us, but it is what it is.

Let's bring the viewer further along. I strive to be an active listener. I really figure out where you are in the process of writing a book. I will strategize with anyone, just talk to me. Tell me what you've got going on. And I'll tell you what I think is going to be your best bet. There are plenty of conversations I have where working with me or going through the author Academy is not in their best interest and I just say it right up front. "I would love to work with you; I don't think we're a right fit here. Here's this resource, here's this one, here's this one." You know we work on non-fiction, memoirs specifically. Fiction marketing and non-fiction marketing could not be any different if you tried!

I know nothing about marketing fiction. But I know resources. I was able to point her in the right direction. She went off on her own. If I was trying to wedge what she was trying to do into our company, I feel like it would water down what our purpose is. I don't want to over-use the word purpose.

[Academy advertisement]

[Mark David Gibson SIS memoir promotion]

Jenn: When I talked to you, I just knew you were perfect for Purpose Driven Author's Academy. I'll share super quick how the Author Academy came to be. Then we can explain your interaction within it. And how we got to where we are.

In 2015 some time, I was looking at my year end financials, and thinking "I'm doing a lot of individual consulting [through my consulting practice.]" I worked with Fortune companies. All over the map. I really love these three people I'm working with. I love these over here too. But there's something missing with the folks over here. It wasn't until I made a list, and I realized that the people over here were working on books and I was helping them in a coaching capacity, my background is marketing, I've done a lot of business coaching, efficiency focused, operational focus. I was helping them map out exactly what the Academy does which is going from your idea through getting the book

done. I realized “I’ve got all these people over here that I love and I’m so inspired by what they’re doing and I was helping other people at that time work on their books. I wrote my own. I decided to put a coaching program together. Let me try this out. I was super clear with everyone, I’m not guaranteeing this will work. I’m making this up as I go. However, I feel confident I can get you from start to finish. If you follow this blueprint.

I was clear that if you want your money back at the end because I did not deliver what I promised, by all means, I will happily do that. I appreciate you trusting that I can help you do this. No one asked for their money back. Handful of successes. People were really loving it. I keep iterating it. I had the one version, I asked for feedback. “Oh, if you do this, it would make it better.” And then I did that again and again and again. It was those students who were okay. “I’ve just spent fourteen weeks telling me how to do it. However, can you just do it for me?”

I was like “What the hell?! No!” I have like a coaching and consulting business. And I have this group coaching. It’s scalable, it’s exciting, I love teaching. I have people asking me to just publish their book for them. I realized “Holy Shit! I have to start a publishing company.” And that is why PDP even exists. My Academy students saying “I just need you to do it for me.” Writing a book is not an easy process. Which we’ll totally get into throughout this whole podcast. That’s where you enter the picture. I was listening to what you were saying. Perfect. Mark totally belongs into the Academy because you get things done. You’re on top of it. It’s all about taking action in order to get a book produced.

I say to you, “Hey, here’s this opportunity. PDAA. I run 20 something students through it. It seems to be good with them. Learning a lot. Constantly providing new things that I find. You have signed up, registered and paid. It had to have been within an hour. It was so crazy fast. A lot of people want to look at the agenda. Let me look at the website. Let me look for more detail. Not you! You were just done. Well, that was fast!

And this was about a week before the Academy was starting. Timing couldn’t have been any more perfect in terms of our connection. I only run them three, sometimes four, times a year. You just happened to catch it right before the next time was starting. If not, you wouldn’t have been starting until three months later.

Mark: Right.

Jenn: Which is crazy. We start at the Academy and this is how all of this begins to unravel and that’s how the podcast is uncovered. I’m curious to hear what your vantage point of what I was just describing is and then we can explain why we decided this podcast makes sense.

Mark: I think that’s key. How quickly I did register because when Mr. Wonderful, came downstairs, he just knew something had happened and it was great. Because, like you, I was full of excitement and anticipation and I just knew it. You were a take charge kind of gal and that’s what I needed for this project. We have been going through these ebbs and

flows and “okay we’re going to get it done”, “No we’re not.” “We’re going to get it done!” “Eh, No we’re not.” I think that Aaron was tired of seeing what that was doing to me and I have some other goals and things I want to do in my life and he’s great at this – because I am definitely squirrel. That’s shinier, that object over there is fun, let’s go over here. And he said “you’ve got to get this done. Once you get this done, we can go on and do other great things that you want to do. That really squarely, right between the eyes.

Okay I’ve got to figure this out. In a matter of seventy-two hours from that text message from Sam, and her vote of confidence of saying “I trust her” “you’re amazing” “I don’t know what you guys are going to be doing. But I’m sure it’s going to be great. Go do it”. You’re talking about how quickly I registered. I think I registered even before he came downstairs.

He can tell you a little bit more about this. I hardly spend money on myself. It’s for you, if it’s for him, if it’s for my family, I will buy the best for anybody else. I’m not... I’ll buy myself stuff, but it’s on sale. I’ll very seldom will take time to do something like this for myself. When he came downstairs, it was almost, booked, I already registered he was so excited. He wanted to learn more, but can we have some scrambled eggs first? It’s called purpose driven publishing. How cool is that? This is my life. I’m purpose driven. I could do this. I was so excited. The timing couldn’t have been any better. I don’t think Sam knows when your calendar or academies are. She might.

All of these signs are coming. I meet you. I talk to you. It wasn’t like “Hey, Mr. Gibson. How many words do you think this? Nope not 50,000; 60,000. You were calm. Just tell me, where are you? Talk to me? Just continue to talk to me. Let me tell you what I think we can do for you. I felt comforted. I felt safe. It was a safe space that I could share this idea. This project I’d been working on for a while.

Then, behind the scenes. You saw me register. Behind the sense, you would think I was going to fifth grade. I went through this house. I prepared the space. The next thing he knows, the Apple box is coming in. I needed a new computer. The white boards. The markers. Totally getting in the mind set. Getting ready for going to school. I haven’t been in school in a long time. I’m an over-achiever. I’m an A student. I knew I was going to bring that to the table. It’s been wild.

Jenn: I agree. Wild is a good word to frame all of this. With that being said, this instant connection. When you said “Let’s start a podcast”. My trust in you was total when you said “We can do this. We can crank this out.” It’s not always going to be easy. We don’t know what’s to come in terms of episodes. We want to keep these episodes as close to the thirty-minute mark as possible. People can consume them in the car or while out for a run or whatever.

Let’s walk through, share your experience in the Author’s Academy. We can unravel what the impetus was. We have to share the behind the scenes journey from idea to book.

Mark: I wanted to capture the excitement. I knew that I was super excited. That first day when we got to meet all the other classmates. There was a certain buzz in the air. Really exciting. You've got a group of people that are like minded, that are trying to do something pretty spectacular and I didn't want to miss a thing. I wanted to catch everything. I wanted to make sure that I was absorbing it all. When I got the introduction and the awesome welcome email that comes... there is your own profile space that you set up and your own account. I thought this was really cool. I loved this. And then the curriculum and agenda. Your own Zoom. I didn't know about zoom, and here it was and now we're doing a podcast on Zoom!

I was just totally immersing myself into whatever it was. I knew it was right. Although we don't know what we don't know. If you just trust in the fact that you're going to learn what you don't know, and that's going to help you. I just put it out there in spades, that this is going to work. It certainly wasn't working before. The last couple of years all very good intentions, just the priorities didn't align. No structure. No captain of the ship. That's why with the Academy it really resonated with me. This is how I'm going to be able to get this done.

Jenn: I like that a lot. We're not making this as an infomercial, we're collaboratively trying to grab those nuggets of wisdom that you've learned that I know from a publisher perspective but we need the author prospective too. Here are the keys to being successful. I think there are a lot of things omitted... when you think about publishing a book. It's been a long time since I first published my book. My first one I started writing in 2012. I've done five of my own, in addition to the works that we've done for our authors. I can't put myself in those shoes of "what did I think this process was going to feel like?" I really don't know. My mind probably went to logistics. I think efficiency, logistics. That's where my mind goes.

Thirty-thousand-foot view over here, how are we actually going to get this done. Both sides. Thinking about your process and going through and how we're going to share this. We're trying to extract things as they're happening in real time. So, for the purpose of the viewers.... You had the Academy and then, from the Academy [The Academy is its own stand-alone course; so anyone can go through it at any stage of where you are as an author. If you've already written your manuscript you can totally go through the Academy and figure out how you're going to get that published. If you're self-publishing, working with us, working with somebody else. Whatever that scenario is. Or, if it's "I haven't written a word yet", It fits that kind of profile as well but we do have the option at the end of the Academy if you want us to publish your book we can certainly work together on that.] You have already agreed that you will be one of our next published authors. Super exciting. I'm thrilled because I'm thrilled of your topic. I'm thrilled of how we connected. And I just think it's awesome. This podcast is going to cover through the Academy process but it's not specific to the Academy. It's more just mindset and vision and logistics and how do we get this done and what things are working for you. Anyone who's watching this they can say "oh, I have this idea, is this right for me?" We're hoping that this podcast can chronicle a lot of ebbs and flows and the roller coaster moments because as we already know in the brief time we've been working together,

there's a lot of emotions and there's a lot of roller coaster. It just goes up and down and its part of the process and I don't think it's spoken about enough. I'm hoping that you and I collectively are going to raise awareness around this.

Mark: That's my intent too. To chronical the served in silence and how it was born, how it began. Also help someone else that's trying to just "how in the world do you figure this out?" hopefully we can put some good nuggets out there for people to learn from.

Jenn: I feel like this is a great introduction to who we are so, we'll quickly people can find me at purposedrivenpublishing.com. We're on the social media sites too. I'm excited to talk to anyone, even if it's a fiction related book, I prefer non-fiction because I can certainly help you better. However, if you have questions about fiction, I am happy to provide resources.

Mark: It's very premature but you will be able to contact me at ServedInSilence.com or MarkDavidGibson.com.

Jenn: We're doing this as we go. The listeners can see as we embark on the publishing process, trying to figure out your website and what it will include. By the time, you are on this journey with us, it will exist. Looking at August through March timeline of chronicling your journey. I hope everyone watching is excited.