



Publish Your Purpose Episode 10

Jenn: All right Mark. Here we are for another episode of Publish your Purpose podcast. How are you today?

Mark: Hi there. Great. Wonderful to see you. How are you doing?

Jenn: I'm good. I'm hoping that we've done enough episodes so people know that I am Jenn Grace and you are Mark Gibson. For those that don't, that is who your hosts are for the day.

Mark: Just us.

Jenn: Just us. [Kibitzing (means joking around in Yiddish)/Kvtzing (means complaining in yiddish)?] over the publishing process that as we both know has its ups and downs. I feel like I want to start with the ups. Since our last episode we had, as you called it, our kick-off party. Typically, our team says we're having a kick-off **call**, where it's a two hour call and we get everybody who is involved. It's me, it's our project manager, it's our operations person, it's editing, it's your coach, it's you and whomever else. It's a big ole gaggle of people and we talk for two hours and we just map out the big picture strategies. That is the most recent thing that you and I were up to together. I would love to hear your thoughts on the whole process.

I know that before we even got to the kick-off, I had to do a little pulling you in off the ledge. I wasn't really expecting at that phase to be doing that. So, why don't you give everyone a rundown of what has been happening.

Mark: Wow. I mean, the nation just went through the horrible hurricane season (well, we're not done yet) and it really flipped me upside down. Just me personally. Nothing really happened here in Atlanta.

Since we last talked we concluded the awesome Author's Academy. It was so rewarding in the class. It wasn't a typical good-bye graduation. It was like "We'll see ya next time, when we see ya." I really liked that because immediately you're moved from the active Academy, and you go into the Facebook alumni page, and once again, supported by wonderful people that you can ask questions, while you continue your journey. That part



has been really fun. Plus, I made some great relationships and friends with my classmates and they're not going to get rid of me that easily.

We had known that FLAME was coming shortly thereafter. The kick-off (I raised it up a little and called it a kick-off **party**, and had to come up with a theme and present these awesome thank you/welcome baskets to everybody), I was so excited, and I had everything focused on that.

Just like we've been talking about in the Academy, you just don't know when it's going to happen; like a snow-globe tipping me upside down. I'm done with the Academy and I'm going to get ready to roll into Flame and the kick-off, this was my goal was to have the manuscript done to hand over. I am so excited to report, that I did it. I could not have done it without the Academy and without Fern and her tremendous leadership in guiding me. And then, of course, you there the whole entire way, coaching and kick-butt. I love it.

In that short period of time, I looked at it again, and I'm reading it. This is no. This is garbage. We're throwing it away. We're going to reset the marker. We're going to re-do it. I can't tell you why or how that happens. I think that what we learned in the Academy is to expect it. It's okay. It's coming. Just get ready to deal with it. I think it's kind of normal in the process. I will tell you what I learned – it didn't last as long. When I text you or when I email or text Mr. Wonderful, I think that everybody is accustomed to “Okay, it's one of these moments.” “All right Mark, we'll indulge you for just a little bit of time, but we're busy too. Are you done now? ... Good... Move on.” I think your quote was (wish I had the text), “Yeah. All very interesting. Go for a run. You'll feel better.”

Jenn: I definitely know I used the phrase, Go for a run. You'll be fine. [Mark laughs]
So, what do you think... If you were to dissect this a little bit... I do think this is such an important topic to talk about. The Academy ended on a Tuesday and our kick-off party was on Friday. And we (to date) have not had anyone that we've worked with that has ended and begun in such a seamless way. I wish everyone worked with us in that way. Timeline wise it just worked out beautifully. But that doesn't always happen.

You're going from this high-high of “this thing is done. I have written it. Thank G-d for Fern. It's off my plate” to a two day window of time for all this shit to bubble up. Can you pinpoint where or what or some part of this, that just made you overcome with all that self-doubt?

Mark: Yeah. And it's so powerful. For those of you that are watching/listening, I'm sure you know (or you know what I'm talking about or mean) because when you're writing you're



really exposing yourself. We're brought up in such a world that is so critical in and of itself. The criticalness of it "Is it good enough?", "Maybe this is just a draft", it happens so fast. You know what I did? I played a little game on myself. After I wasn't getting any sympathy votes from Mr. Wonderful or you, no one wanted to cry in their beer with me. I just, at random, opened up the manuscript and scrolled the mouse and where it stopped I just started reading. And I continued to read. And I read. I'm like "Huh. Not bad Gibson. This actually doesn't sound too bad. All right. Whew. I'm glad that's over. Let's go to the kick-off. Let's get ready to hand over the manuscript."

I can't tell you why it happened. But it's very real and it's all of the self-doubt. You are so raw and exposing yourself. I don't know if you're listening/watching, if you're going to roll your eyes like I did to hear "trust the process", "trust the process", "trust the process". The first time Jenn told me that, I was like "If I hear that one more time, just one more..." [laughs] It really, really is true. When you have those moments, just don't focus on it. Just know that it's there. I don't mean avoid it. I don't mean ignore it. But that is not the end all, be all. For me, this has been years in the works. What am I going to do? Just throw away those years' worth of work? No. Am I going to perfect it and make it better? Probably; that's just how I am. That's how most people are that are writing. I think embrace, learn from it. Try to grab something that helps you focus, readjust, and recalibrate.

Jenn: I think the important thing to note is that it's the first draft. Right? This is by no means what the final will look like. In some instances, from the first draft to the final, it looks drastically different. And then other times, it's just making it better. At the end of the day, that's what we're all about.

So, we think about the kick-off call and we have a lot of people on it. But if we think about Fern and Heather specifically- Fern being the manuscript strategist, and Heather being our director of editorial content. She's the one editing your manuscript specifically. What would you say (I know we talked about this on that call), what helpful things, maybe one or both of them shared with you during that call to help you realize that "Oh, I'm over here being a perfectionist, this has to be the best first draft anyone has ever submitted in their life..." and then the reality is, it's the first draft! You know. It's like this [a hand gesture made?] compared to what it will be.

Mark: We talked about managing expectations in other episodes... If you go all the way back to the very, very beginning of the Academy and giving yourself permission and really doing that deep dive in the goal setting... all of it builds on everything else. At least it did for me. I've learned so much. It was such a game changer for *Served in Silence*.



To answer your question specifically, for the Academy, I thought it was really powerful for me to learn. I was intrigued by the lesson about the editor. Without putting a name on it. Just what is an editor's relationship to the author. And how does that work. I think that there might be a misperception out there that the editor is somebody you are beholden to and you don't get to participate with, (I don't know there could be a lot of different opinions out there.) My experience talking to editors in the past, is it was all about how many words. Just how many words, I don't really care about your story. I don't really care about the message. And that kind of thing. I could not get married up to that situation.

In the Academy it's about permission, right? So, you're giving us permission to ask questions. You're giving us permission to say "I'd like to interview you." I'd like to talk to you. I'd like to understand. Because we're going to spend some time together here. This is me, on paper, and I want you to be nice to me! I want you to be constructive, but I still kind of want you to be nice to me.

Anyway, when we got to the kick-off call, I thought that was really amazing. I was super excited, I barely slept the night before, it's like Christmas Eve, I've got everything in place. I've sent the care packages in advance. A little over the top. I know. I get up that morning, bounce out of bed like Tigger, like I normally do, and I was just so excited to meet everybody. I was a little nervous too. Because you've got that element of "Okay it's the manuscript and here you have this whole team of people that believe in you; that believe in your project. You're like "OMG, is this going to be good enough?"

And then here comes Heather. She swoops in with such a warm and welcoming voice. So constructive. And this is how I felt. I felt like Heather was maybe a guard on the football field, she put her hand up, "I got this." You, over there, author, have a seat; take a breath; you've done good up to this point; now you sit on the bench for a little while, and do what you have to do but I've got this from here. You're in good hands. You can reach out to me. You can talk to me. Because, in my mind, the editor, where are they? You sit in this tall building in a city, I don't know. She actually... and then we had a great dialogue. In the kick-off and then the hand-off, where I wanted to make sure that there were some key things for my manuscript. Even though I know that was my intent, I want to make sure that it was written that way. There were just a couple of times that I was like, "I don't know. I don't know if I could let go of that much control. I want to control." Again, with that process, I felt totally comfortable. So comfortable, that after that call, I drove to the lake. I was exhausted; I just passed out. And it's hard to slow this down.



And then Fern, on the call (you've heard me talk about Fern as the manuscript strategist), I could not be here today without Fern. Just her friendship and her kindness and her stick-to-itiveness. And then her leadership, right, where "Yeah, I really hate it that you're in the dumps but that has nothing to do with the 2 o'clock deadline that we have today. So, can you have that little melt-down some other time?" And, if we can just talk about Fern for another second, in the midst of it, she's in Florida. And the Hurricane is bearing down on her, and I could just picture her by a flashlight, under her covers, and she's still meeting deadlines. She's still figuring out how to hold the curtain hanger outside the window with her phone and transferring data. By the time we got to the kick-off, the hand-off happened shortly after there, that's when we actually handed off the manuscript to editing, to your director of editorial content.

The Flame kick-off party was quite remarkable.

Jenn: How did you feel once you knew you had it done? You had the gremlins, the doubt demon, you pass it off, it's now in Heather's very capable and loving hands, how do you feel? Or even now. You don't have it now. It's going to be in the editing process for quite some time. It is not with you right now. What do you feel knowing that you've been, this is something that has been moving over you for a decade? And then it was like, we're sprinting, 14 weeks, we're getting this done. And now it's just out of your hands and out of your life. What does that feel like?

Mark: I just alluded to it. I wish Mr. Wonderful was here because he could probably tell you. I was exhausted. I feel like I did just finish the triathlon. It just turned a major corner in my life; a bucket list item. But such relief. It was such a sigh of victorious release and a little tear in the eye driving to the lake. Wow Gibson, you really kind of did it! You're doing it! And by the time I got to the lake [?????] and I just [hoarding] to that bed. I was gone. I don't sleep that much anyway but I seldom... You know, he pretty much just left me alone, because he knew that I really needed to recharge the batteries.

I've never done this before so I don't know how I would have felt in a different scenario but, if it was that the publisher that was all based on "Nope, it's only 40,000 words we don't want to do it. It's not worth it because we get paid by the word," I don't think I would have felt as comfortable in that scenario if I had taken a different route. Knowing that the Flame kick-off was a chance to meet everybody from the publishing house and what their role was; when they're going to touch my baby. "When we hand you off, this is the person we're handing you off to. This is what you can expect from me to do with you before I hand you off to the next person." It's just so comforting to know that



process, right? I felt like it's in great hands. I can help tweak it. I can help make it better. But for the most part, she's done.

19:20 – Commercial

Jenn: So, in your opinion, your only publishing experience is working with us specifically, so you don't really have what the other side looks like, but if you were to think about it; if you were to strip away all of the very intentional extra care that we employ (that is something that is super important to us) how do you think this process would be different for somebody who it's very mechanics and robotics, of you just hand your draft off to somebody? They don't give you any type of warm and fuzzies of "I'm going to take care of this baby?" I know for us, me in particular (being the CEO) every [balls through me] at some point in the process. I, most of the time, am the first person that someone has handed their baby to. That is a lot of weight and responsibility. I have to say. Especially

Mark: No pressure!

Jenn: Yeah. No pressure at all. I actually had a call with somebody who, he and I have been colleagues for probably about five years now, and we're no longer working with the same company, but he reached out and said "Hey I wrote these things after a very traumatic incident, like fifteen years ago. I haven't looked at them since. But I'm thinking I want to put them in a book. Not a single soul has read this. I haven't even read it in fifteen years. Can I send it to you and you let me know if this makes sense to become a book or not?"

Mark: No!

Jenn: It's a lot of pressure. It's somebody that I know really well. He wanted me to work with him specifically because he and I have a very deep level of trust that we've already created.

Mark: Well, that's just it. It's the trust. Yeah.

Jenn: Yeah. I guess that's probably the question. How much more difficult would this be if you're working with a team where there's a lack of trust, that is missing. Or even just lack of relationship. I think that's what this all comes down to relationships. Everyone needs to handle your baby with care, as if it's their own baby.

Mark: Even if it's ugly! It's still your baby. It's still got ...



Jenn: Your baby.

Mark: Think about the people that are, the different levels of where they are in this journey. I think about that often when I'm preparing for getting together to talk to you. What you're doing, self-publishing, or the different stages. Well, for me? I guess my advice to you... that budding author is, you really need to take a deep inventory of your support system that's around you. And if you don't have one, I highly recommend pausing and developing one. It doesn't have to be, you don't have to spend weeks on doing this. It could be just as easy as talking to your neighbor that you enjoy and just saying "hey, this is what I'm going to be going through. I hear it's kind of funky. I hear there's ups and downs. But I want to know maybe can I use you as a sounding board? An accountability partner? That I can rely on somebody else?" Because if it's just you and your computer, and you're naked, exposed and raw, and all these things, then you have the doubts. Then you have those doubt demons that come in. You've got to do battle with that. It's exhausting.

I don't know if I could have done it without that added finesse of support. For me it was dealing with some pretty rough issues with being deployed. There's lots of things that people are going to be going through. And those are the raw emotions. So, I don't know. I don't know how people can do it without that. And just literally zipping it off to someplace in NYC or LA, and then just hope that it goes through the editing process. That's not what I was taught in the Academy. I was taught in the Academy to really interview that next person. Like the daycare where you're going to drop your baby off to. You want to tour the place. You want to make sure it's safe. There's no exposed wires and whatever.

Jenn: You have to interview people and you have to know what their skillset is. What they like working on. If you have somebody that's writing about a topic and you have an editor that is politically opposed to said topic, or has some issue with the topic, or maybe it's a trigger for them as the editor based on what you're writing about. Because we work some really sensitive topics. I'm sure there are triggers for people. So, making sure you're working with a really strong person. Of course, we have our whole [bench] of editors at this point.

My first thing is, what style of editing do you like to do? And what are you good at? I want both answers. Because that doesn't mean they're actually the same. So even if someone's preference is to, maybe they're really good at scientific editing. Who knows? Technical type of editing. But really interested in your topic in particular and they're already an editor, that's a decision I make on the back end that says... this is something



Heather and I do because she manages all editorial... to say maybe this person makes sense. We should give him a shot though that's not necessarily their area of expertise. They haven't edited a memoir but they do have editing experience and they're really interested in this topic.

For people listening, and they're trying to figure out, editing is the next natural progression in this. It's really a matter of finding that right match. It's a personality match. It's a content match. It's a skill set match. And you can be really selective because, at the end of the day... editing, there's a big [old/whole?] field of people who can edit. But there are so many differences and variables within the editing process. You want to make sure you get the right person. (And we will have Heather on at some point in our show and have her bring her glory to the table and talk about the different things too.)

During the publishing process, there's so many moving balls. Everything's in the air at once. One thing can't happen because of another and vice versa. It's this whole big old chaotic three ring circus, to so many degrees.

Mark: House of cards.

Jenn: Totally is. We're juggling everything in the air. Making sure the house of cards doesn't collapse behind the scenes. But to me, it's the editing that is the biggest, biggest thing. That's where you as the author can be completely destroyed if you work with the wrong editor.

Mark: I can only imagine. Wow. The other thing I wanted to mention about Flame... you were talking, well it was everybody on your staff. I felt so reassured because it was just two words from Heather, and she said "Thank you." She said "Thank your entrusting me and thank you for allowing me to work on this with you." It wasn't just ripping the baby out of your arms and screaming and crying and gnashing of teeth, and all of that. The other thing with Fern, she thanked me from the very get-go. And I'm like "No, no, no. Thank YOU!" That part just meant so much to reassure me that we're good. I was really touched, very moved, that Mr. Wonderful was able to join us and witness this part of the journey.

Later on, that night, when I finally did wake up from my little slumber there, eight hours later, he felt so excited, energized. First, he's so proud. And just watching this craziness happen in fourteen weeks, but he just knew that we made the right choice, after meeting your entire staff.



Jenn: It was so nice to meet him too. We've all known of him. Saw copies of emails here and there. It's actually nice to put a full face with a name. It was definitely nice.

I want to mention one more thing about the kick-off call. And then I want to talk about FedEx for a minute. And then we can begin to wrap up.

The fact that we're as many episodes in as we are, it is very evident that you go all in. You like to do things big. I wanted to share briefly, at the end of the kick-off party, you had music playing. It wasn't planned, but...

Mark: Big inhale

Jenn: Talk about insanity. My daughter happened to be home sick. She's in the house with her grandmother. I'm doing the kick-off call from my deck. And Niki, on our team, is with me. I sit on the deck quite often. (Maybe I'll do a podcast from the deck one day.) It's just very pretty and peaceful out there. Out of nowhere, right as we're wrapping up, it was almost exactly at the 12 o'clock mark, we're wrapping up, and the National Anthem starts to play. I can hear it, and then I look at Niki and she can hear it. I'm doing this [hand motion] into the video, telling you all to just Shush for a second. No one's paying attention. I'm muting you and I'm doing this [hand motions]

Mark: And we're all waving back at you like "hi!"

Jenn: It's hilarious. I'm like "where the hell is that music coming from?" And come to find out there's an aerospace company that's far enough away that they're not near us, but they were doing some kind of barbecue fundraiser something or other. And they were kicking it off by playing the National Anthem. But Niki, on the other hand, was expecting a marching band to be coming down our street with the national anthem. Because you are so over the top! It was so hilarious. It was almost as if the universe orchestrated for the National Anthem to be playing at the end.

It is funnier because it was the National Anthem, which is completely relevant to *Served in Silence*. We couldn't have planned this any better if we had tried. Of course, my mother-in-law (we bought our house from our in-laws) I asked her "in the 30 years you've lived here, has this ever happened before. She's like "no".

Mark: She's like, what are you talking about?



Jenn: She thought I was crazy. But at least she was over here. I said “Tell me where it’s coming from.” In thirty-two years this house has been in existence, no one’s ever heard the National Anthem in the woods, across the way, until Mark is doing his kick-off party.

Mark: You’re going to call them all kick-off parties in the future, aren’t you?

Jenn: I actually might. I was thinking about doing helium balloons behind me, or something. I feel like we have to up the game now. Especially for people watching this and come to work with us.

Mark: They are going to expect it.

Jenn: I know. So, when I say we’re having our kick-off call, which is exciting, now they’re going to want care packages, like this little gem filled with Georgian goodies.

Mark: And a logo.

Jenn: [?] too many people can see the logo. Reflective of flame, *Served in Silence*. Oh yeah, you definitely go all in. But I’ve been loving the process. It’s definitely upping the ante for us. Especially as we’re all on the kick-off call from different locations and everyone is eating sugar and goodies. Which is really funny.

Mark: I had fun putting those all together. Everything was made in Georgia. I wanted everyone from around the country that is on the team to always have Georgia on their mind.

Jenn: These are my favorite. [showing?]

Mark: They are SO good.

Jenn: They are like 41 grams of carbs and x are sugar. Still in the package. I’ll eat them. Don’t you worry. We’re off track. Squirrel. I know we need to conclude here. I know that you had an experience at FedEx, so I’m curious if you wouldn’t mind, because it does kind of tie into what we’re talking about. You’re getting your text. There’s always something. I don’t know what to expect at this point. It’s like whack-a-mole. You don’t know what’s going to pop out in the next text.

Mark: I love it! And I love the visuals. Okay, after Flame For those of you just joining us, when I threw down my commitment to get my manuscript done in 14 weeks, and I started with Fern, a manuscript strategist, that was the **Spark** conference. At the Spark conference we



got together, Fern took all the notes and pieces and paper and out of that we came up with the outline, and Table of Contents. Then mid-way through the Academy, we did a check-in and I labeled that **Ignite**. And then all eyes focused on the kick-off party that I named **Flame**. That's why it went **Spark, Ignite, Flame**. The launch for the book is just going to be out of this world, so hang on.

After the kick-off party. I had to go to Washington, DC for work (which I do from time to time). It was reminiscent in a way, because you and I had met there. We were able to host the event at the Small Business Administration, which was just incredible. It was nice. I was relieved, not in a bad way, not a burden. Maybe parents feel that way when they drop the kids off at the Grandparents and they figure "Maybe I can get some sleep now."

Fern and Heather, the editor, we got together and had a hand-off call. Just to express my intent again, before we start pulling my baby apart. And that went great. I get an email that says it's done, it's great. The transition went fine. The program we used is Scivener. It got everything together. We merged it into a Word document. That's how the editor wants it.

Now I have the link to this in the Google docs drive. I got the link to this very large document. 250 pages. Mr. Wonderful in awesome fashion is going to blow up the printer in our office and do fifty pages at a time, and let me go to Washington. I'll go ahead, and once I get to my hotel, I'll find a FedEx or Kinko's and have it printed. And I'll collect it when I get up there.

I'm thinking, no big deal. I'll just print it. OMG Jenn. I get to the FedEx place, and it was packed. The lady on the phone couldn't wait to meet me. I'm sure the phone is vibrating. "OMG, I'm sending you my manuscript; this is great!" I walk in and (they did like a roll-out) and they presented it to me (I wish we could have video-taped it), because it was unbelievable. And they bound it. Here is the first time that I am holding ten-years worth of thoughts and emotions and it was pretty...

Jenn: All in one place.

Mark: And it's there; and it's bound. *Served in Silence* by Captain Mark David Gibson. Draft. So, I thanked them. They were wonderful. We were having so much fun. I walked outside, and this is back to the Academy, back to Flame. I don't know how other people do this without knowing that Purpose Driven Publishing, my publishing company, and everybody there, is my safety net. Even off you fall off that high wire, 'cause I walked out those doors naked and afraid. In the city, now I'm naked; now I've got to run. Run,



Run, Run, Run, Run. That was like a Nano second– because it was immediately replaced by comfort and reassurance. Fern had taken very, very good care handing it over.

Then I went for a walk. Just kinda spending a little Mark time, reflecting. I'm kind of hard on myself to celebrate these wins; and to proud of these incremental wines. Luckily had dinner in DC with great friends and celebrated. That's my little naked and afraid story with Federal Express.

Jenn: My visual of this as you were sending me texts is that you were strutting across the street, Mary Tyler Moore style, throwing a hat in the air. That's literally the first image I got. Maybe it's the Air Force hat. I don't know what the name of it is. Yeah that's the visual I got; you strutting across the sidewalks of DC.

This has been an entertaining episode. Are there any other things that we haven't discussed as we wrap up?

Mark: Nope, I think that brings everyone current to this wonderful awesome journey. Just if I haven't said it enough thank you, your entire team. You know... we did it! In fourteen weeks. It took an entire team.

Jenn: I can see when you're holding your first proof copy in your hand, the real deal. You're going to find a place to go sob awhile. It's going to be emotional.

Mark: Tell Niki to cue the marching band.

Jenn: For real. Maybe we'll be sending a marching band to you. [Mark laughs] Add that to our Cost Of Sales – Marching bands.

Well it's been fabulous talking to you. See you in the next episode.

Mark: All right. Take care. Bye, Bye everyone.

[Closing commercial and music.]