



Publish Your Purpose Podcast 8

Jenn: Again, here we are. Another episode of the podcast. How was your morning going?

Mark: Hi. How are you?

Jenn: We did a pre-call video chat before we actually hit record, so I have a little bit of a sense of how you woke up today. I think that this is such a perfect opportunity for our viewers and listeners to really get a sense of what this whole process (of publishing) can do to one's emotions. When we talked briefly beforehand, I didn't give you any clarity or guidance or any cheerleading pick me up type of moment so I think it's good that we can be doing this in real time. Demonstrating for the listeners and viewers what this does to someone when you're writing your story. Your energy level is significantly lower than usual. Why don't you give the listeners a little bit of what happened that you woke up in the state you're in.

Mark: Yeah. I think this is important to talk about. That's why I called you right away. I think it's reassuring to me that although you don't feel like you had any pearls of wisdom at the time, just the fact that you listened. I guess you take the good with the bad, if you will, and the ups and downs, the ebbs and flows. I've gone through a couple of them already where there's the doubt and those types of things. We've addressed that. We've talked about that in the Academy and building your support system. Throwing the lifeline, the SOS text messaging. But today was a little different. I woke up and I'm usually a full throttle, high energy, high impact, happy-go-lucky kind of guy. Today is really ripping some Band-Aids off some old wounds and the old wounds are the memories.

There's tough things that we have to go back and tighten up on the outline and add more detail. At first glance, if I'm working and I'm in the thick of it, it's "Yeah, I'm okay. No problem." I just continue to knock this out and get it done. On a schedule. Fourteen weeks, here we go. Well, I hit the wall today. Today is particularly emotional. It's very sad. Going back, I told you earlier, I can see it, I can smell it, I can almost taste it. And this was years ago. This was in Afghanistan, and talking about one of my deployments. I was reassured that, one, you picked up the phone, you were listening. I think that you could quickly identify that this is another side of Mark. Your kind listening. Your reassurance... "I can't help you live through this moment right now, but I can tell you that other people have gone through this." You've gone through it yourself. You also explained to me, this is all new to me, you also explained to me that a memoir is also particularly difficult because you are writing about real life experiences and you have to



go back and re-live those. And they weren't very fun the first go-round. You're kind of cheating yourself if you think "Oh yeah. This will be a breeze." It wasn't. So that's where I am today.

Jenn: I want to get into the meat of this. It's not a pleasant process. One of our already published authors included just a little bit. It's James Nowlin. He's going to be a guest with us in a few episodes, which I think is going to be incredible. He wrote the *Purposeful Millionaire*. He's also about living a life of purpose and giving back to those that are trying to figure out... for him it was the American Dream. "If I can attain the American Dream, how can someone else attain that?"

We worked really diligently on his book. He was also part of the Author's Academy. He came from the Academy and into the publishing. For him, he only put a very small piece of the real emotional depth of his story. And that's just a little bit in the very beginning of his book. And then he shares his story throughout because it's really his approach and his life lessons and how he attained wealth and how he can help others also attain it. Looking at the process that he went through when his book came out, it wasn't well received by a few family members. I remember just the emotional process of having that conversation.

It's a matter of being true to your story. Being true to your words. It's not going to be fun. It's not going to be easy. But to get the reader to connect with you, we have to be raw. Really raw. And that wasn't the purpose of his book. But it was just a little piece. And I remember what that experience was with him. He'll be on as a guest because I wanted to connect the two of you together. He can share what happened after the book came out.

We're so far removed from your What Comes Next, because we're just getting into the thick of the actual publishing process. As everyone knows at this point from watching, you've been in the Academy, we have a strong relationship we've been developing for months, but now we're getting into the meat, the hurdles. Looking at that, is there anything that you feel you need from a support system, from outside resources, accountability, anything that you personally feel you need to be able to get through these humps? Is there a way that you feel that you can almost plan for "how do I get through these down times?"

I suspect that people who are watching this, they don't really know that this is coming, but it's going to come. I have many more examples that I'll share throughout this episode of people who are in the same type position. It's very common for us at PDP to really focus on the emotional overwhelm. We talked about this in previous episode where I have



it on the website. Where it actually talks about the emotional overwhelm of the author because there's so much of it.

Because you're in such a raw state right now, what do you feel would be most beneficial for you to help you continue, for you to be able to plow through all of this, just really hard stuff right now?

Mark: That would be like the million dollar answer, wouldn't it? I think as I'm talking through it with you, what's going on in my mind, I'm not a duck and run kind of guy. I'm going to face this. I'm going to get through it. When you read it now, the reason why it doesn't make a lot of sense is because of this problem, right here. It's not necessarily a road block, it's like I pulled up to the gate of these very bad, very sad emotions; very traumatic times. I have to decide "am I going in?" Am I going to go in and address and talk about OR what's clearly evident in the writing right now is "Nah, you just kind of knocked it and you just kept going. That's why it's not making a lot of sense. That's why it's brought itself to my desk this morning – as part of the writing strategy for today. I've got to get through deployment one and deployment two.

Knowing that I was going to be working on this project with you today. My mind is swirling. If there's something that's constant, is that it's taking me back to when I first called or texted or emailed you; it was the early stages of doubt. We talked about that. We talked about it. You and I talked about it. We talked about it on the Facebook support page with my classmates. And then we talked about it collectively as a group. It was very comforting to hear the other people from all over the country that are on these calls, that they're going through the same thing. It's like "Who am I to write this book?" "You are not good enough." All that crazy stuff comes in. You had us, as an exercise, develop (since we knew that was going to happen, get ahead of it) what are you going to do? You can't necessarily address the actual emotion and what you're feeling about at that time, but when you see that dangerous situation, what are you going to do? Referring back to the process early on.

This is helpful in talking to you about why it's important not to just breeze by that gate. Why we do have to go in. We do have to go in and talk about it. It's a lot of my story, of how I was so used to just driving by the gate and not dealing with these emotions. Not dealing with relationships. I don't want to get into the whole book now, but just the authenticity piece. I'd be a fraud if I didn't address this as authentic as possible. I think I'll be fine. I think I'll get through it. It's just not easy. It's not the fun stuff. That's for sure.



Jenn: It's not. There are a lot of pay-for-services-publishers out there. They'll take whatever you give them. They'll put it through a line edit, a copy edit, and a proofread, to make sure that it is somewhat sufficient to the market. But many of them don't actually do what you're in the process of right now, which is going deeper and going further. I haven't looked at your work in a while. You and Fern are a very self-sustained system. I'll start to get into the weeds of it very soon actually. We'll be talking about that in future podcasts.

I think that what's happening is that you've made the first pass at most of your manuscript. Now it's going in and adding that depth and that extra information and that emotion that is what is critical for the reader. So, someone could easily read your manuscript and say "Wow, I get it. I get what he's saying, I get where he's going." But if you're not vulnerable and you're not putting the emotion in it, it's going to lay very flat and very one dimensional. I think that's the process that is happening right now.

You and Fern have such a great partnership as a manuscript strategist and all and she's really pushing you harder and deep. On the flip side, it's going to go to editing and we have Heather, who will also be a guest at some point in the future too, and she is brilliant at what she does. Absolutely brilliant. And she's going to make you go even deeper.

So, I know, I can see the ... in your eyes. For those that are not watching, yes, there was quite a reaction. And it's because we want that multi-dimensional story. That's going to be really related to the success of your work. Heather talks about her first feedback to any author is just thinking about from a very high level... why is the author taking me here? That's the first thing the reader is thinking of. Why is he telling me this story? What does this have to do with anything? Why is this important? Thinking of that and thinking of the added layers of depth that have to happen. That's just part of the process. It's not part of everyone's process but we want a strong body of work that is going to impact the lives that you're intending to impact with your work. With all that being said, maybe we can think about, brainstorm live for everyone to benefit from, what can we do to help that Band-Aid being ripped off and allowing you to actually open that door rather than driving by it?

I have yet to crack the code of what that is, other than being an empathetic listener and being compassionate. We have an author in the Academy; she has a non-profit about domestic violence. She's a survivor of domestic violence herself which is why she founded this organization. Throughout the entire time of the Academy it was back and forth wrestling with her emotions. We would be texting.



The emotional monster is coming for you but just go into it. It sucks and requires having a therapist who can also be there to support you. As much as we say in a joking way “we’re not therapists”, we do listen and we listen well I think. What can we think might help you? I think what has to happen is you have this big monster over here, that’s the story, and you’re over here and you don’t want to do it. You have to just jump in it, get it and move the hell on. Not being in it and dwelling on it; not letting it drag you down. It is triggering flashbacks and PTSD and real serious stuff. There has to be a constructive way to approach it. I’m curious if you think, if there’s anything that comes to mind, “if I had this, maybe it could help” or what could we institute? Because if we can figure this out for you...so many other future authors that we work with will also benefit from it. You know?

Mark: Yeah. Earlier, in typical routine, woke up, normal day. I had been working yesterday with Fern who is just amazing. She’s amazing in navigating the space. She’s been a lifesaver in this whole process. She saved the life of this book and the manuscript. But she’s also keenly aware, to your point as you were just talking about, while not a therapist, she’s a person, she’s listening, and she’s like “Oooh, are you okay? Are you okay with this?” So, this morning I got up and I knew what was lingering. I went to dinner last night... “All right, we’re going to push that aside. Let’s just focus on dinner.” Well this morning I had to face it head on.

I read a part of what I wrote. Some of it I wrote while I was at war. And it was rough. Really rough. I got tears in my eyes. We had houseguests here. You wipe those tears away. More scrambled eggs? Get busy. Coffee? I think right now what I’m going through... everything in my office right now has something to do with *Served in Silence*. It’s clearly an objective; it is a goal of mine. No doubt. If you are close to me, in my life, you know, from Facebook, from the sticky on my mirror in the bathroom, in my car on the visor, it gets crazy. It gets wild crazy. SIS. Some people were like you mean SOS? No, I mean SiS *Served in Silence*. Oh, okay.

I think that what I am able to do is reach back to the tools that I have had in my life for how did I get through other difficult times. Whether it was difficult times in relationships or just competing in a triathlon. How did I do that? That’s what I’m kinda leaning on right now, because it’s just me. I know you’re there and I appreciate that, but I mean it’s just me. I’ve got to plow through this. I know that this is an integral piece to the book and not just because of the fact of being deployed and what I experienced there but it’s what I learned up to that point and how I dealt with life in general and the lack of authenticity. Then that very moving experience of being deployed and keeping that same formula of the lack of authenticity, well, as we learn later, that doesn’t work well. Some people reach



their bottom, some people hit their walls or whatever it is. It's actually true and that's why it's called dutiful(?) wall. It's just tough. I feel like I'm rambling too.

Jenn: It's your right to ramble right now. It's a rough time. It's not a common occurrence that you hit a low like this. It's the ebbs and flows. Every episode we talk about the ebbs and flows, the rollercoaster... it's just part of the process. You know?

20:58- 23:00 COMMERCIAL

Jenn: I want to ask you about just, it's such a deep issue that sometimes I can't even formulate the question I'm trying to ask. I think about a couple of people that we are working with that are writing memoirs that are non-fiction that's really specific to their story. How emotional of a process that becomes. To be honest, that is why I have yet to even consider writing my memoir. So, when we recorded that episode with Fern, after we hung up, I said "Fern, you need to help me with my memoir!" For me it's way too painful. I am not in the right space mentally or emotionally to even consider tackling it. But, maybe I will be down the road. I think of my experience writing my last book, even, actually if I think about it, the first book I wrote. My books are on, four of them are on, LGBTQ topics and another one is on mental health. The first one I wrote, I outed my family as a bunch of racists. Within the first chapter of my first book.

Mark: That's just ripping Band-Aids off left and right! RRRRipp

Jenn: I just did. Because I've always wanted to disconnect myself from my family. It's not all of my family; just a certain part of my family. It was relevant to what I was writing about. I've always been writing about inclusivity around LGBTQ and there are things that make us more prone to be an activist. Or more prone to be an advocate for other people. I think a lot of that comes back to personal experience. Having or being discriminated against.

Mine is because of LGBTQ, that does not mean that my issues do not stem further than that. Being upset by people who are discriminating against anyone of any race, someone with a disability, it doesn't matter. My advocacy just goes all in for everyone. I feel like we all have an equal voice that needs ... a story that needs to be told, a voice that needs to be heard.

I just think of that first experience in 2013 when I published it, so I was probably writing it toward the end of 2012 is my guess. I just remember what a little of an emotional process that was. I wasn't really thinking about the emotions and it was relevant. I don't



care who I piss off. No one in my family is going to read this anyway. It's a non-issue. Honestly, it never became an issue because indeed no one in my family read it.

Fast forward, my fifth book that came out, an LGBTQ book, *Beyond the Rainbow*, I spent my entire last chapter talking about my feelings as it relates to living in a post Orlando tragedy world. And so that was emotional. That was not fun. And Heather, who our listeners will meet soon, pushed me and pushed me hard. I was not a fan of it. I was not happy about it, and at one point she was just asking for the smallest correction. I mean "Jenn you're missing a bridge paragraph between this one and this one." Like it was such a minimal request and mind you I had cranked out that book in like six weeks. I sat with it, and I sat with it, and I sat with it. I was depleted. I was emotionally depleted from that one chapter of a much larger book that is focused on inclusivity of LGBTQ people in the workplace, the marketplace, economics. And my story is weaved throughout the entire thing because that's what I've always done – is just tell stories to help illustrate how ridiculous people are in most instances, or how great people are in others. It was just one very, it was probably like 15% of the whole book, and it just knocked me out. I couldn't get out of my own way. Which is why, I am not at the place where I am writing a memoir. Because this just happened probably six months ago or seven months ago at the time of this recording. It was probably in the beginning of 2017 that I was working on these revisions that she was asking.

So now, what you're doing is magnifying this on an epic level. It's taking my very small piece of my book that was riddled with emotion, same thing with James, who will be on too, where his was such a small percentage but really, it's wracked with a lot of emotion. It's hard, is my whole kinda point here; it's hard when you're writing your story. You have to go back, you have to finesse it, you have to retell it, you have to provide details and examples and emotions and truly relive all of that. I'm thinking about Orlando, I didn't lose someone close to me in that. What you're writing about, in terms of deployment and losing people that were close to you, that's a whole other animal. I think just being honest with it and being really vulnerable, raw and authentic. Telling people "Listen, this is the headspace I'm in right now. You're going to have hold off."

With Fern, being honest and communicating with her, saying "listen I need extra time to process this," and if that delays your timeline, you Mr. Type A-crazed, charged, I'm going to do it half time of anyone else, quarter of the time, a fraction of the time as anyone else, I think you need to give yourself permission to let yourself in that grossness, because you're going to come out the other side. It's a known fact. You're going to be sitting in it and then you're going to come out the other side.



I was watching a Ted Talk (I don't know when it came out, I want to say it's a few years old), about the difference between depression and feeling depressed. It just happened to come up on Facebook. It was a big picture of a monster. I'm like "Oh, what's this?" And it really illustrated what it feels like to be depressed and (I don't have depression but I have friends that do, so I can only imagine) it was really helpful to see what they experience on a day to day existence. And then it was like "What is it like to be depressed?" Then it's showing a little blip of how we all have natural ebbs and flows where we just get down. It is what it is. What you're doing, you know you have this status quo (yours is up here [showing with hands] and everyone else is over here) and your energy is up here all the time, so when you DO dip down, you're dipping this far down vs. the average person who's... it's just a little bit. And then on top of it you're dipping, you're already coming down, but then you're going deeper because you have to go into the emotion, you have to live there so you can retell it. And then you have to get that ascent back up to where you were.

I think that for people who are writing memoirs, that the way those curves line out, is way more emotional than the average person. I feel like giving yourself that permission to live there and be a miserable grouch for a couple of days and then you'll bounce back up. As long as everyone around you knows, and you said that previously, that everyone knows this is coming and this is what you're working on. You've got shit everywhere. They know. So, if you tell them "Listen, I'm going to have this bad day... there's going to be more than one of them." I think that generally that's going to be the support that you need. To have your hand held as you hit that low and then kinda reel it in, time to get out of the ditch, let's go.

Mark: Yeah. I was writing something down when you were talking, about you toying with the idea of doing a memoir and to me, right away, it's not for the weak, it's not easy. But then a couple of key things that resonated with me. One, you talk about (poor Heather, she gets such a bad rap for being [31:00 [a...? ass kicker?]) doesn't she? Everybody, when you meet her, she is beautiful. She is the loveliest person. So meek and a sweetheart. You'll be like "wow, they're really giving her a bad rap. She's a nice lady.") It's just the process. Truthfully it is.

Jenn: That's all editors. This is not specific to her. It's editors generally. They all get a bad rap.

Mark: So then you were talking about Lisa and how we met Lisa early, early on in the Academy and I left that one feeling so ... Lisa gives you the Lisa armor that you can just put on and you can dare to dream and you can dare dream great. She's just that type of person. I can't wait for y'all to meet her. And then Fern, bless her, bless her, she has been through



so much of my whole story and we kinda kidded about this... “Wow, I bet I know more about you than Mr. Wonderful.”

I started thinking about all those things and what you said. What was really poignant to me was that's that support system. That is what I have developed and I have to just rely on that. So, what I wrote down while you were talking is “the end game.” If there's something that I could tell somebody who is going through whatever it is... if you're going through doubt, and you just don't feel like playing author today, or the world is against you and you just want to eat a half a gallon of ice cream and sit on the sofa and watch bad TV, whatever it is, it's okay. But, when you were talking I wrote it down, end game is Mark 2.0. In the book, we're going to talk about Mark 2.0. And we can't get to Mark 2.0, which you see on other episodes, this is maybe Mark 1.5 right now, but Mark 2.0. You're not going to be able to understand the value or you're not going to appreciate the importance of Mark 2.0 unless we do talk about those life lessons. I have to remember that. I have to keep it true to myself, true to my heart. I think that that is going to be the valuable lessons that when it's done, it's not going to make it less raw, it's not going to make it less painful for me to go back and think about, but what I hope it does, for you the reader/viewer/listener, is I hope that you look at it and you put your set of deployments, and how whatever you're going through, and then hopefully you and I together, reader and author, we're going to get through this to get to your 2.0.

Jenn: That is such a beautiful way to

Mark: It's a good thing we recorded that. That sounded really good.

Jenn: That's like your epilogue. That's like your final chapter. Let's make sure we have Fern watch this. That was so perfect.

Mark: She's awesome at transcribing, by the way. She'll do that [snap] just like that.

Jenn: We'll make a priority to send this to her before everyone else sees it. Yeah, that's beautiful. I feel like I have nothing to counter with that.

Mark: Is this where I drop the mic?

Jenn: You do! Just knock it off the desk and walk away.
Well I am so thrilled we're doing this. I feel like we're really finding our stride with this whole podcast. I'm just hoping that those who are watching/listening are benefiting as much as we are from having this conversation.



Mark: I kind of feel bad. It's the A personality go getter kind of guy that I am. Unapologetic, apologetic, it is what it is. But I hope that you, the listeners or whoever is viewing this, that I have gone through this a couple of times with "am I good enough to do this? Crazy idea!" but this time it's really knocked me for a loop. I think you hit the nail right on the head, is people that aren't hyper, hyper, hyper positive, high energy all the time, all the time, then our lows are much lower than the typical low. I know that about myself. Again, it doesn't make it any easier. It's nice to talk about it. And hope that somebody else can benefit from it too.

Jenn: A friend of mine in the Mastermind group said to me for every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction, don't remember that, because that applies to your emotions too. I was like "Son of a bitch, that is so perfect!" because my highs are so high, but then when you get down, you're falling a lot further than the average person who doesn't have those crazy highs. So, yeah, I'm glad that you know that about yourself because I know that about myself too. Not to say that I go through it gracefully by any stretch, but I do have my low points and I just buckle up and apologize profusely to my wife. I'm like "Listen, sorry. Sorry I'm a miserable bitch today. We'll be fine." I think if you know yourself and you are honest, I think that's what it comes down to. I think this conversation has been so helpful and I think it really will kinda help shape how the ending of your book... just thinking how we're wrapping a lot of this together.

I think that covers it for today. As always, I'm always happy to see your face. And happy that the listeners and viewers are watching and responding and people are getting value. I guess we'll see each other in the next episode.

Mark: Okay. Take care.

Jenn: Cheer up buttercup! [laughs]

Mark: All righty!

Exit music... Commercials