



Publish Your Purpose Podcast 5

Jenn: All right Mark. Here we are again with another episode of our podcast. How are you today?

Mark: Great! This is exciting! How are you?

Jenn: I am good. Really good. I am so happy that we're doing this. For so long I have been thinking that I really need to do some kind of marketing for the academy and for the publishing. And I feel like this is such a beautiful way of marketing. I think that our number one focus, for both of us, is to really give back and try to really help people who are in some stage of the process.

Mark: That's just it Jenn. I was thinking about this when you and I started talking about it, I'm sure that somebody is going to ask me, at some point, when it's all done, how did you do it? I would just be like "Do you have a few hours? Let me tell you!" I think this is great. I'm real excited to be a part of it. If I could help somebody, that is a budding author after I get done, even better.

Jenn: I like it. Yes, I think this is awesome. I'm super happy that we're collaborating on this. And we're both extroverted enough that it's like "Let's just do it!" We did, with very little planning even, we're like "done!"

Mark: Sure, it's a great idea! We're going to figure it out.

Jenn: We'll figure out the logistics later. We're good. I love it. Good thing that's not my style for publishing. That's a bonus. I am kind of quick, let's get this done, but there's a lot of strategy; there's a lot of method to the madness (which there's lots of madness.) I think we've alluded to a little bit of it as we've gone. And I'm sure it will continue to come up.

I want to keep our conversation flowing about planning. We've already been talking about planning for a couple of episodes. I think it's really important that we really reinforce this point and beat the horse to death to say that planning is key because it's going to set you up for success. And so, I've had times in the Author Academy, only one in particular, actually somebody that was in your session of the Academy, a more recent student, where once they read that first agenda, read the introduction email, they realized after just a couple of sessions, I can't do this. It doesn't fit my life.



So, I'm curious what your reaction or experience was in having been with that person. Where they were just kind of like "I want to do this. It's important to me to do this. But I just can't right now." It was that revelation of this is how much work goes into this process. How did that make you feel when that happened?

Mark: I felt bad but I totally understood that the person was being very honest. He was going to be conflicted with not being able to do the Academy justice and give it 100%. That's just being brutally honest with yourself. But then I reflected, said "Ooh. I better check myself. Did I read that thing all the way? And I am I really sure?" And it goes all the way back to the contract with yourself and that vision that you're going to start and draft. What I like about it, is the fact that everything builds on itself. I really appreciated that. That although I didn't understand some of the things in the syllabus, in the curriculum, I just liked the fact that it was organized and structured. I realized, and I get it, that it's a timing thing. And this was a timing thing for me. I have been working on this for a very long time. It definitely is a timing thing. I appreciate the fact that you have to have that honesty to make that commitment. If not, then I think you're going to just make yourself feel bad. We have enough things going on in the world to make us feel bad. We don't need to impose anything else on it.

Plus you also give the tools and the resources so, I really feel like after class, if you will, on Tuesday, you've pulled into the gas station and you refuel and you're ready to go for the next week. It's been an incredible week in the planning process. I'm hearing about, I'm excited, but it's a lot of work.

Jenn: I think that what's going to happen routinely is that I, I had a podcast before, it ran for about four years and I was constantly using running analogies, because I really equate the writing and publishing process to running a marathon. Or running any race... it doesn't have to be a marathon. It could be a triathlon, could be a 5K. It's the same amount of planning that goes into it. It's the same day to day grind that has to happen, that nobody sees, for the outcome where people see the book in hand and you're crossing the finish line. I suspect that that will continue to come up since we are both runners; it's going to be an on-going thing. For those that are not, kind of bear with us.

I bring this up because, I think about the planning. And I think about sparks of inspiration. This is something that we have not discussed before and I want to see where you stand on it. There are people who are marathoners in this world and there are people who are sprinters. So you're either running a very long distance, it's slow, it's steady, you gotta keep on plugging along. Now there's the sprinters where they're doing the 100 meter dash. Or they're running a mile. Whatever it might be. How do you think your



process is in relation to your book? I ask this because I think I'm a sprinter when it comes to the book. I have to wait until I have an idea. I might be stewing on that same idea for months and months and years even. I remember when I released my last book, which came out in June of 2017, I want to say it might have been in 2015, that I had publicly announced it on public access that I was going to be writing my next book. I made that declaration to everyone saying "Listen, I'm working on another one." And then I didn't do anything with it for quite some time because I didn't have that spark of inspiration. I didn't have "this is the idea, I need to hunker down and get it done." And then randomly, in the middle of October 2016, it hit me out of nowhere "That's it! I have to get this done." And so I sprinted through October, November and December... got it done, handed it off to an editor... it came out in June.

I bring this up because I want listeners and people who are thinking about their book and their idea and that they might have that book idea but they don't feel that tug or that I have to do this now. When it comes to planning and thinking about planning, we could be planning for something that feels very arduous. It's very "Ugh"; it's like a slog. Or you could be planning because you are skipping through the field of lilies because you are on fire and now is the right time. I'm curious if you've ever given consideration for which camp you fall into? Am I the marathoner or am I the sprinter? I know for you in particular, the listeners know this, that you've been working on this for a while. You had a little bit here and a little bit there, but then came the day where you're like "time to get 'er done." So I feel like you're a little bit of both, like I am, but I'm curious what you think.

Mark: Yeah. I would say the sprinter. I'm definitely the "I want to just go out and get it done, once I have everything together." But then again, with your runner's analogy, having competed in a triathlon, there's a reason why you have to get so many miles in to run, and so many miles on the bike, and the swimming... What I have been doing, over the time of the inception of the idea to today, which is a very long time, it would come in spurts. It would come in short little sprints, if you will. And now is the time that I felt that all that training, where I filled up each one of those vessels, and now I'm ready. I'm ready to actually ran to the starting line. The introduction to PDP has been the gun at the starting line. It's like "let's go."

Jenn: Uh hum. Let's get to the racing!

What I wanted to have us cover today is the next stage of the planning. We've been talking a lot about the mindset, making time, and we will eventually talk about a writing ritual, which I brought up a few times... getting in the habit. I say ritual, but it's really



your writing habit. What is it? How do we make something a habit so it sticks? But the step before that is the mind-mapping concept. Not everyone knows how to mind map or what a mind map is. I know our dear friend Lisa is a huge proponent of mind maps. I know for me I feel like I'm a little more equal parts left and right brain, that makes it challenging and interesting for a lot of things that I approach. And while I'm very creative, I find my brain to be very linear when it comes to my mind mapping. And so when I say Mind Mapping, I'm thinking what is the outline of your book going to be. We can't really get into a writing habit or ritual until we actually know, have a general sense of what we're populating.

Want to talk about your process, for what that was, for your version of mind mapping. I can certainly share a little of what my process is. But curious what kind of thoughts you have. And for somebody who has never heard of mind mapping how would you describe it?

Mark: Yeah. I'd heard of it before. I think I had to do it for a couple of problem solving cases in college, or something like that, but I didn't really know how to do it. I had to learn what are the mechanics and how do you do mind mapping. Once I did, I thought it was kind of cool. It was fun. It was cool.

In my mind, I had already broken out my book into four segments of my journey in *Served in Silence*. It has to have a beginning. It has to have an end. And it has to have a middle and all these things. I figured that out. I went ahead and took my four parts and I mind mapped each part out. That way, if it starts with... this was kind of liberating and refreshing all in the same sense because what you see, once you get it out there on paper, it's now out of here [indicating head], and it's not occupying all this space that we have, then it's on the paper and I could focus on the four separate sections individually. And then I just kept doing it. A mind map, on mind map, on mind map. Then it was a great experience to see that "Wow, I've got the pieces and parts! That's pretty special here." I really urge people, if you don't know how to do it, it's not that hard. It's just a little creative and it can really help you draw focus on what seems to be a very cluttered space. If you're going to write, you have to get focused on what you're writing about. And this is a great tool to get you focused.

Jenn: Walk us through. If you're thinking of part I, walk us through how you mind mapped Part I and what you felt like you were missing. Or maybe, let's back up for a second, and think of a lot of times will come before an outline. Some people don't need the visual mind map and they might just have "here's my outline." "I plan on talking..." And there's a lot of different types of generic outlines that you can model, so it's beginning middle and end. So here's the beginning of the chapter, here's the story, here's the lesson, here's



the truth, here's my take-away. It's really whatever that kind of rhythm is. What was it for you when you... Actually, let me ask you... I know you have yours broken out into four parts, can you first share what those four parts for the listeners?

[15:30 – 17:20 commercial break]

Mark: Sure. Absolutely. Because of the nature of the book, what I decided to do, the title is Served in Silence, I wanted to go through my life, living in the military under the Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy... well I couldn't just arrive and I was in the military. So, it dawned on me, I was in Afghanistan, I had come up with this notion of the book concept/idea. Right away this was very easy for me. I broke it out into these four sub-categories. It was The Early Years, The Learning Years, The Wonder Years and then The Living Years. I was able to, in the mind map exercise... at the first stage, I didn't have the actual numbers. I didn't say, Years 1-5, 5 to 10, that kind of thing. It wasn't anything like that. It was about the experiences that I had which then drove to, I could pinpoint the age group of where I was in the process. The mind map was really effective in making sure that once I narrowed it down and I had the outline of what those four parts were going to be. Now the Early Years. I just did a mind map for just what the early years looked like. And I continued to duplicate that until I was dry. I kept doing it until I didn't have any other ideas. It doesn't mean that that's it. You're not done. You can always go back and add to it. It's just that I kept just replicating it until I was exhausted of any new, fresh ideas.

Jenn: If we're thinking about the mind mapping itself. Was it you saying "here are the wonder years?" I want to talk about this story, this story, this story, this lesson I learned, this experience. Were you physically writing those under the wonder years? Were you writing them on post it notes and moving them around? Were you drawing the Wonder Years in the center and drawing out branches of different ideas?

Mark: Yeah. That's exactly it. I drew a circle and wrote Wonder years. And then like rays of the sun, just topics I wanted to put through the wonder years or living years and then it just continued to drive it. It was almost magical to me. Then I was able to look at all four of those compartments. In the class, it was "you gotta do an outline." I'm like "OMG, it seemed insurmountable!" but once I did that process, it happened automatically. I think I even sent you a text message on a Saturday or Sunday, "Voila, I got it; the outline!" I want that gold star. I did it!



Jenn: That's hilarious. Now, when you did that, did you notice that something that you might have thought fit into the Wonder Years, actually was living? Or vice versa? What was that...?

Mark: I think that when I did the exercises, keep in mind folks, you're going to do this over and over again. And it seems like it takes a long time, but it didn't. It wasn't that long. Because once you got going, it was very easy. Once the flow started.

And then, you're right. I had stuff over here, wonder years... nah nah nah nah... that experience was actually over here in the Living Years. This was in the Early Years. And I was able to start to package it up a little bit neater.

Jenn: Yeah. I feel like there's so much to this. I definitely want to keep this kind of line of questioning going. So let's think about this. I could see how this could turn into a chaotic mess. I can see how this could turn into total crazy thinking. I am a big fan of using post-it notes, which kind of sounds crazy, but to keep... my biggest goals in life are on post-it notes on the back of a giant post-it on the back of my office door. I write down the date in which I decide that that's a goal of mine. So, if my paper were actually showing, I'd be able to tell you the exact date. I wrote down my goal of being a published author. And I want to say it was some time in October 2010. So this goes quite a bit back. But if you see those goals on a regular basis, you see them.

Now I know that you're mind map and your post-it notes are not accessible to you right now, but did you use this... you mind mapped... and you're like "here's this idea, here's this idea, here's this idea. I'm going to write down these ideas on post-it notes. And now, from the post-it notes, I'm going to move them around in a very maybe chaotic, maybe frenetic way... whatever way it is. But in an organized fashion because you're looking at them. And it's visual. And you're thinking, "all right if I were the reader, this actually falls here, or this actually moves here." Do you feel like you would have been able to get to that better sense of flow for your book if it weren't for doing this more visual creative process? Do you think it could have been harder for you to outline your book if it weren't for some kind of exercise to guide you in the right direction?

Mark: Absolutely. I do my course work on Sundays. When it came to that it was going to be working on an outline. I am rusty. I haven't been in college in a long time. I was not afraid, but dreading that I have to do this outline. That wasn't interesting at the moment so "what's this mind mapping thing? Let's look at that." To answer your question, yeah, absolutely. This was key to the success of getting a solid outline. It would have taken me



a lot longer. It didn't take me long to adopt to the post-it notes. I'll share with you, real briefly, a quick story.

24:07

I was a public affairs officer at Shaw office base. I had a deputy who was a civilian. She was great. She really was the one to help keep me organized. There's a lot of things, your being inundated every day, there are lots of things. She figured out, that the best to communicate with me was by sticky notes. This was my first acquaintance with sticky notes. She would put them on my computer monitor. There would be times that there were layers of sticky notes. She would come in and we'd go through sticky note, after sticky note. I need your decision on this. Go. What's your comment about this, Go. And So I was really familiar with the post-it notes.

With the mind map, what I ended up doing is I got a white board. I got the giant paper post-it notes. I would do the mind map in one thing and then I'd do individual categories in post it notes. And then it begins. You start to learn about these different tools. How can you start to bring this all together?

At one point, I just felt, in my mind, it was just swirling with sticky notes. And how could I bring that down and focus and grasp? And that was through the mind-map exercise.

Jenn: I think there are other ways. I really am a big proponent about mind mapping. It's by no means anything that I invented. It's been around for a very long time. I just happened to find it to be useful. But you could also use index cards. So, for somebody that doesn't need the visual on the wall, you could just do them on index cards. I think that, when we're writing a non-fiction book, or a memoir, there are a lot of moving parts where you have to share your expertise. Whether it's your expertise around your topic or it's an expertise around your own story, you have to craft it in a way that's going to make sense for the reader but just the overwhelming thought...

I have it on my to do list to write a memoir. When? I have no date assigned to that bucket list item for the moment. But I even get overwhelmed. And I'm helping a handful of people work on memoirs that I even get overwhelmed with "where the hell would I start with this?" There's so many pieces. But I have a bunch of index cards that I bought for a trade show ten years ago that I never used, found them in my bucket of trade show things. So, I thought "wow, when I have a thought, that I think would go good in a memoir, I'm just going to write it on an index card and I'm going to file it away." Because I know that once that stack gets like this thick [indicating with fingers a stack size], I can go through and say, like you were doing, "this is this theme or this is this theme."



We're talking about memoirs. They usually fall into two camps. It's thematic, which is kind of your case, where there's themes. But also chronological; which is also how yours is. Yours crosses both. It's a matter of bucketing a whole bunch of themed items in one section and the next section OR it's very much like "here's my story from start to finish in a chronological way." That's a way if you're not visual or you're saying "OMG, Mind mapping scares me," do it in index cards. Make it easy for yourself.

The other way that I do it more frequently, when I mapped out what my books are going to be, again I'm the sprinter so it just kind of hits me all of a sudden. I cannot tell you how stroke of (don't want to say genius because it's nothing to do with genius), but strike of lightning, just hits me in October. Out of nowhere I had a fire lit under me where I have to do this NOW. I had to move all kinds of things around in my schedule to accommodate this new book that I randomly decided I had to do at this very moment. There's no logic that I can actually think that made me have to do it at that very moment. I do think there's a certain degree of our political climate and what have you that was all kind of turning at that point where I felt like the story had to be told faster. But I think of that and what I did was use a program called Workflowy. It's a free program. It's a to do list. There's no bells and whistles. It's not pretty formatting. It doesn't tell you if something is spelled wrong. It's a beautiful very simple thing. And I just started throwing in topics. I have got to make sure that if I tell this part of my story, here's a tip I told somebody, I want to make sure that I include that, I just started dumping them in there. It was kind of like building an outline but not quite, because then I had to go through and say "here's all kinds of random tips that I want to share; let me bucket those together under one nouse bullet that's tips. Just that refining over and over again. I want to explain those because I think somebody might say "Uck, I don't want to do a mind map." This is too creative of an exercise for me. Or It's too much of a pain. I don't want to go buy post-it notes. Any number of things. They're all valid reasons. But there are other ways. We're all different kinds of learners so somebody might do it a little differently. That's totally okay.

Mark: One of my classmates in the current academy, she did it totally different. She did it on the floor. Where she had notes in piles on the floor. She was able to see it before her. And then collected those notes and put them in file folders. There's numerous ways that you can do it. I just thought that, being a good student, I'm going to do exactly what I was supposed to and I was told to do the mind map and I did it and I'm actually one of your really good students Jenn. I will do exactly what you tell me to do. And I expect those results! [claps hands once]



Jenn: And you're really a good test case. Even though there have been at least 24 authors that have gone through this before you, it's good to see how you execute. When you and I came up with this idea of how do we document this process, to me it was a no brainer, of course I want to do it with Mark, because I know that if I say that you should do something, you do take it at face value and run with it, because you do know that there's rhyme and reason and some strategy behind it. I'm not asking you to do frivolous things.

When you were like yeah, let's try to document this. I said "Let's do a podcast", here we are, and we're getting it done. But it's good because you do follow the process to such a T, that it shows people that there can be great deals of success if you follow a very clear process.

Mark: Absolutely. I think if you've clicked and you're listening and you're in the audience, however our paths have crossed, something has driven you to get here that is some type of solution or road map. There's probably many different ways to do this. This is just one that we/I have been able to enjoy that's actually working for me.

Jenn: For resources... I don't personally have a resource on the website or anything to go to, but if you just go into google and type mind-maps, there's plenty of things that come up. Actually, I do have a resource. I have a template. That if anyone wants to email me, it's Jenn@purposedrivenpublishing.com, happy to send over that template. Super simple. Not chaotic in any way. I'm happy to share it. If that gets you one step closer to what you're supposed to be doing, by all means, tell me; happy to help.

Well Mark, we really went down a good rabbit hole today. Mind mapping in particular and outlining. This sets us up for future episodes... now that you have this mind map, how do we actually work with it? How do we get the writing done? And how do we make sure that we're moving along this process to publishing. I think we've set a good foundation.

Mark: Me too.

Jenn: This should conclude now. So good-bye everyone. We will see you in the next episode.

Mark: See you soon.

[concluding commercial]