



Publish Your Purpose Episode 9

Mark: Hi there. How are you doing?

Jenn: We are so close to embarking into the whole kit and caboodle. Let's update the listeners/watchers... on where you're at, what's next and all of your thoughts and ideas around how this is all playing out. I feel like we're moving so fast.

Mark: It is, it's light speed. I knew this early, early on in the Academy. This would be the game changer for my project, for *Served in Silence*. I never expected it to be life changing as well. It has been such an incredible, incredible experience for pulling this together. And it's still not 100%. It's not even close yet. But, I went from all of those sticky notes and napkins and ideas... I stuck to the process... I believed in Jenn and the Academy. She said "In fourteen weeks you're going to have a manuscript." I said "Really? All right! Let's see!" And I still feel like I'm on a high, running around the building on a victory dance, or the victory laps. This is just quite a sense of accomplishment.

Jenn: I completely agree. We're running those laps together. I want to provide a small point of clarification for those watching or listening... that YOUR goal was to have the manuscript written in the 14 weeks. The Academy is very much self-paced, do it as the time makes sense for you. But it's really providing all of the logistics of going from start to finish. From the idea generation, through knowing how to hire an editor, to knowing how to get it published. That's the intention of the Academy.

You, as everyone knows at this point, like to take it to the next level and decide to write the whole manuscript in that same fourteen week block of time. I don't want anyone to

Mark: Should we clarify that *I* added that last piece? [Laughing]

Jenn: Yes. I don't want somebody thinking that maybe the academy could work for me and think "Oh Christ, how am I going to write 50,000 words in 14 weeks?" Not everyone's a Mark Gibson. However, we have had a couple of Academy students who have gone through and [finished] very shortly thereafter. It's totally possible. But it depends on what you bring to the table when you start the academy. If you have content already, great. But if

Mark: Truth in [blending]... Let's be clear. I had a lot of it, rough draft. I had a lot of it already written. Or in my mind I had a loose outline, but it really didn't take long to populate the outline, after just learning the strategies.

Jenn: Yeah



Mark: If you're coming up with just the first [idea], this is years, folks. This is years in the making.

Jenn: I would say that if I look at those who have been in the Academy, it's people who have a draft and people who are just trying to figure out "does this make sense" for them. It works for both people. It's just everyone's on a different timeline. Some people can start the process of writing and publishing.

I know for my last book, I want to say it was October to June. So, a nine month period of time, I was able to go from start to finish. But I'm also a publisher so I kinda have a leg up in that regard.

But you know it just depends. You took a more efficient path by having somebody like Fern help you. Not having Fern's support could easily have added years to the project.

Mark: Oh my gosh. Yeah. She can muddle through it as a manuscript strategist. She was able to really help me pinpoint and come up with that solid outline first, then Table of Contents. We talked a little bit about the **Spark** conference and then we rolled in. We took some time. Then we worked on the whole. And then we had the **Ignite** conference and really beefed it up. Yeah, it's been pretty full throttle for 14 weeks.

Jenn: It has. I know when Fern was on awhile back, you had mentioned that you were about to embark on the **Ignite** conference. I don't think we actually talked about what that was. Can you just give a snippet of what your intentions were for that?

Mark: We decided that... we broke our relationship, if you will, into phases and what she was going to do for the strategy of *Served in Silence*. We had to tweak that back and forth so that way I could lay it over the couple of timelines that I had; the fourteen week Academy that I was in. Really get to the different phases. I just thought it would be fun to name them, rather than Phase I. That was **Spark**. Then Phase II. That was **Ignite**.

Ignite was just going back and really polishing up, not necessarily editing, but really polishing some of the holes. A lot of heavy writing had to be done at that time.

Jenn: And so now, what are you feeling? We haven't had our kick-off. Let me clarify... Our team calls it our "kick-off call." A kick-off call is a two hour meeting that kicks off everything that's to come. The author meets with me, Niki on our team (whom we've barely mentioned in any of the episodes – she's totally the woman behind the scenes, the curtain, making sure that everything runs smoothly) and so she's there. And then we have the editor. We'll have Fern involved. We'll have Lisa who does our coaching. It's a whole team affair.



You have however, decided to call it a kick-off *party*. So now you, in pure Mark style, have upped the ante quite a bit.

Mark: Well wait, we're going to up it again. You don't even know this. We had Spark, we had Ignite, I've labelled the kick-off party as **Flame!**

Jenn: Flame. Oh perfect. I thought you were going to say like Explosion. Maybe that's the launch.

Mark: [Excited!!!] That'll be the launch? I LOVE IT!!! Yes.

Jenn: Done!

Mark: So, Flame...

Jenn: I want to know from your, because I haven't been in your shoes, I haven't worked in this capacity; I'm the facilitator of this; where is your head at as we embark on kick-off calls/party/Flame? What are you feeling right now?

Mark: I am so excited. I'm not a parent. I don't have kids. I mean if you could just imagine... I guess I imagine how it feels to watch your kids start to walk, walking and talking and so excited. I'm really proud of the work that we have done. I know that I've worked really hard. At the end of each class in the Academy, Jenn ends it with "Now go out there and kick some ass." I'm like "okay, that's what she said. Let's do it!" I don't know how but...

I'm excited, a little nervous; I tend to be, as you've probably gathered from these episodes in the Podcast, Jenn's getting to know me as pretty much a perfectionist. I want to be ready. I want to be prepared. I don't know how many emails I've sent you in advance. "How many people are going to be there? What are their names? What are their bios?" I want to be totally prepared.

I'm also very honored that my partner is going to be able to join us. Mr. Wonderful has been just a rock. A solid rock. He lets me whine and complain. "Okay, that was fun, that was interesting, but what does that have to do with you getting your book done?" So, he's going to be there for part of it too. I'm just excited. I think it's going to be a proud moment. I think that that will change quickly to "Wow, this is another fourteen weeks" (or whatever the time frame is going to be of a lot of work) but I'm up for the challenge.

Jenn: Yeah. Our timeline for those listening/watching, is six months from kick-off party/call/Flame to launch. And now, our publishing timelines are six to eight months usually. Since you went through the Academy, we can knock down a lot of that timeline because you're already much further ahead of the game in terms of understanding what our process is and knowing what we're going to ask for and being properly prepared. It just makes that timeline easier to shorten. So that's six months.



Mark: It's going to also be beneficial with Fern being an Academy grad and strategist. I feel very confident (10 feet tall ball proof? Bullet proof?) that she has got me in a great position to come up to the starting line.

Jenn: It's so true. If somebody can't afford to have a Fern help them, finding somebody else that can be some level of accountability; some level of back and forth; some level of support. Grab someone who knows how to write or has written a book and see if they could help you. Or get someone to help coach you. Of course, we have a whole team of coaches. Fern being one of them that's accessible to people in a pure coaching capacity.

I think that it does make your life easier. I know for a fact that the manuscripts that Fern has worked on for us, that when Heather has received them, it has made her life as an editor a lot easier.

Heather is our Director of Editorial Content. She oversees the team of editors. We can't just have Heather doing everything... as much as I would love for her to. She can oversee all of the other editors that we work with too. I do think that you have an advantage because you've really blown the lid off of the entire process that I originally put together in 2015, have modeled, and replicated and improved, etc. You've just blown all of it to bits of going higher, going faster, going further, typical Mark style. I expect that when we debrief, after we have the kick-off call, for the listeners, it will be interesting to see how you're feeling about this now vs. how you feel after it's happened. I imagine it's going to be probably the excitement, and then there's going to be the relief, and then somewhere between our episodes, you're probably going to have that "oh shit moment" and then we can talk about that too. It's going to be a beautiful thing.

Mark: HUUUH. Oh yeah [nervous laughter]. Watch Mark as he spirals around and fizzes around the room like a hot air balloon.

Jenn: Sounds about right.

Jenn: What are you expecting? What is your base level of expectation? And, actually (I'm going to be somewhat self-promotional here) we were talking about this when we weren't recording and I have no idea when, we were talking about the emotional piece and how you wouldn't get that type of support from another publisher, potentially not. I'm not damning all publishers by any stretch. There's plenty of great ones out there. Just thinking of what your expectations are, working with us, and how you feel that could have been drastically different had you pursued that other path that you were looking at.

Mark: Let me go back to (I can't pinpoint the week of it), but something happened and it was the ebb or the flow, the down and the doubt, and I told myself that you've got to be honest with Jenn, and you've got to be honest with Fern, and you've got to let them know that, I guess what I needed, was the reassurance that it was okay to let you know that I



was going through this. Because if not, then I think it was going to be kind of fake or going through the motions and I didn't ... I just knew there was going to be a problem, if I was not honest. I'm a pretty upbeat guy and I'm ready to go out and conquer and kick some ass but the reality is, there's going to be times, and I knew it, that if I wasn't honest with you, like "I don't feel like playing author today", "I don't think I can do this." No, No, No. I just wrote you a quick note and you replied back to me and you said "Yes, I want you to be this honest. I warrant it, I expect you to be this honest." Fern was the same way.

Moving forward to my expectations for Flame, is uhm, your team has been so incredibly warm and welcoming and I get the fact that it's not going to be easy. It's not going to be all butterflies. We're not going to be at my level of "CHARGE" all the time. But I also feel very confident and comfortable, that my baby, *Served in Silence*, is going to be in a good spot, and going to be okay; and that you're not personally trying to hurt my baby. Trying to make my baby better. I think that's hard. When we were talking about that Saturday morning, when you and I first met, is my preconceived notion, my preconceived idea of a publisher, so I'm going to do battle. I'm going to interview this publisher and I'm going to ask all the right questions. Boy I hope she gets it right. Because my experience, what I was talking about in another episode, we didn't even get to the title. We didn't even get to what my book is about. "how many words is it?" "how many words do you think you can produce?" "How many words? How many words?" I felt "this doesn't feel right." I'm just like "really? You don't even want to know what my book is about?" that just wasn't a right fit.

That day that we had met in June, it was a Saturday. I was prepared. I had my coffee. The house was no distractions. I'm going in. I'm going to ask all these tough questions. It wasn't like that at all folks. It was a very easy conversation. Jenn is very easy to talk to. Very active listener. And afterward, I was talking to my neighbor, "I think I found a publisher." I really, really like her. I like the whole construct. It's very regimented. There's schedules, and I just love the whole thing. I interviewed her and I asked her tough questions. She kinda laughed. She said "Really? She was probably interviewing you! It wasn't that you were interviewing her." [Laughs] So, I feel very excited and energized and I'm very comfortable. There's different levels of comfortableness here. I'm just confident that we're okay here. That we're in good hands.

[18:00 COMMERCIAL BREAK]

Jenn: I want to ask you about Aaron, Mr. Wonderful. I love that you have a confidence level and a comfort level. We've been talking about the pitfalls of this whole process but I do



think that by people watching this and listening to what we're saying, I genuinely feel like them hearing this, just by hearing this process, will make theirs so much easier. Because now you have that expectation that's set differently. "Oh, that's what I need to know to go into this process and be successful." And we're only giving such a glimpse, of a much bigger picture, but one of the things that I think is most important is that support behind the scenes. So, you were just talking about (I'm thinking we should make this a whole episode at some point) is that you have, with us at least, you have the support. We're here. You get a whole team of us. We're all here to make *Served in Silence* the best book it possibly can be. To push you outside of your comfort zone to get it done and do it well. That's us.

You're paying us. And that's our job. Our responsibility is to you. That is how the arrangement works. Our customer service, we're way higher, I'm all about customer service, making sure that everyone feels comfortable at all times and is getting exactly what they're supposed to be getting, etc. My reason for bringing this up is, in the publishing process, whether you go to the traditional publisher or the self-publishing route, or another hybrid publisher like we are, that doesn't mean that you're going to have that same level of service. I recognize that that's our defining difference – is really focusing on that service level. You have us built in.

For someone that's listening to this, and we've talked about your built in, like your neighbors know, your partner knows, your friends know, Facebook knows... you're very vocal about the fact that you're embarking on this journey. Now for someone who's listening to this and maybe they're writing about something hard, and it's not to say that we don't publish just hard books, we have a few things that are of a lighter topic. However, we tend to publish a lot of stuff that's harder topics. It is what it is. Someone's got to do it and we have the skills to help you do it. Talk to that person who's listening and thinking "I don't have a support system."

You know what I find actually? I'm in a lot of Facebook groups for writers. I'm constantly trying to get a temperature of what people are doing and what resources they are looking for. I'm a very active participant in this one group. And over and over and over again, I see spouses not being supportive for that person who's embarking on this journey. If somebody has an unsupportive spouse or they don't have a spouse at all, what can we tell them to get them to realize they should still be actively pursuing this? It's not just writing the book and telling your story, but it's everything that comes after that. It's being a speaker. It's getting business. It's getting consulting. There's a whole host of things. We're really focused on the emotional piece throughout this whole podcast but there's a much bigger picture there. For everybody. You're writing a book to be the



beginning of your platform to advance yourself, advance your career. So how do we talk to that person who might now have support? Because I think it might be more common than we think. We both just happen to be married to very amazing people who are supportive. But I don't think that that is necessarily the norm.

Mark: Yeah. I'm just trying to think back, as you're posing that question, to take that safety net out of what I just went through. It would be very difficult. Just the writing alone, as you alluded to, that is a major, major task in our already busy lives. Then, on top of that, you have the mechanics of publishing the book. And although I might not be the expert in each one of those mechanics, it was clearly evident that I needed to be keenly aware of what goes into and then my role and my responsibility in that.

In the meantime, there is doubt around every corner. You walking down the street and boom, "where did that come from? What the hell?" You're driving down the road, everything's great, you're happy, you're smiling, "now what are you doing this thing for?" It's like wait a minute. You go through all of that. I honestly don't know. I don't know if I could have done it without that support system. So that doesn't really answer the question, because I have it. I think what I would do is encourage you, the budding author, or somebody that wants to venture into publishing their works, I think it's vitally important that you establish some sort of support system.

My friends and family they're going to be watching this, and they're going to be thinking I'm doing these psychological ops on them. I kind of force them to be my support. I told them, and I live a pretty high quality life, I brought them to my starting line. My neighbor, for example, she's a very successful business woman here in Atlanta and I made her one of my champions. I just really kept going back and forth to her telling her what the process was and what I was doing. She was just fascinated by the whole thing. As a matter of fact, that day in June, she was one of my first phone calls. I said "hey, I got this opportunity and what do you think?" She, right away, kicks right into support mode. Anytime you take education value you, better your life.

What do you do? If you have a friend or family member that is not supportive? I guess you have to compartmentalize it and maybe they don't see your vision clearly. Maybe articulate your goal and your vision a little bit better. Like you said, we have very supportive spouses. Aaron in this particular adventure (we have lots of adventures in my house, but this one in particular), he knew this was weighing very heavy on my heart, weighing heavy on my mind, and I'd like to think that he enjoys the heart and mind I have already. He just wants me to be a better person and knows that this was going to be



a stepping point for me to become a better person. I don't know... does that really answer the question?

Jenn: I think you're talking about some really important things. As we're close to ending this episode, there are some tactical things. I don't want this podcast to ever seem that it is straight up you have to work with PDP or have to go through the Author's Academy, because there's a lot of resources out there. I think if you don't have a supportive person, finding a Facebook group, or starting a Facebook group of like-minded people. Starting a Mastermind group. I am a huge proponent of Masterminds. I'm usually in always at least one. I swear my business would not be where it is without the people in those groups. [From Fern: Do you want to add find a local writing critique group? They're at libraries and book stores and colleges. It wasn't said in podcast but could be helpful for new authors.]

I started one after the NGLCC conference last year. You would know from our introduction episode, Sam, who is the reason why you and I even know each other, worked at the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, and I went (I've been nine times in previous years) and met some really friggin' awesome people. I said we need to convene on a regular basis. And so, we have a Skype Mastermind group. One person in our group is in Budapest at this point. Someone's in Portland, Oregon. Someone's in Chicago. Someone's in NY. We're all over the country. It's that space where it's safe, it's sacred. You can layout whatever you're working on; whatever your challenges are. And even, I'm going to give Bernadette in my group, Publish Your Purpose was her idea when we were talking about how am I going to bring this brand to the conference? What is my unveiling going to be? She just blurted that out as an option. Brilliant. That's exactly ... it's a matter of having that supportive group of people around you.

It doesn't matter what it is. You might be needing help for your business, or you might be needing help for the writing process. Whatever it is, there are plenty of people who are like you, who need what you have, and you [they] have what they [you] need. It's a perfect marriage but you have to be proactive in my opinion. Especially when you don't have supportive people in your life. Being really proactive and saying "Listen Mark, I know you're working on a book... let's be accountability buddies." Or (I think we talked about this in a previous episode) let's find the time that we can actually get together in person.

I know a couple of PDP members are in their own writing groups that they've started. That's what we do. We have to be thinking about what is going to ensure our success. I



know for me, external accountability. I'm accountable to myself internally way harder than anyone else could possibly be. Way harder. But having that external accountability to say "this is what I'm doing." It's amazing how many people will come out and support you. One time during the Author Academy, I challenged all of you, oh yeah, to go to Facebook, to Linked In, to everywhere and say "Listen, I'm working on a book and it's coming out in the Fall of whatever year."

Mark: Let me just say, right when you tasked us to do that, I'm like, "there's no way in hell. I'm not doing it. There's no way!"

Jenn: And yet you did.

Mark: I did! You're right. The response that I got when the Facebook landed, and across the country, people I was stationed with years ago, chiming in, and it was pretty rewarding. But boy that, talk about naked, exposed and raw... it was "Oh my God!" [laughing]

Jenn: My wife and I have a whole host of personal situations that are occurring that are not fun. Family dynamics, right? There are very few people that know the real deep behind the scenes of our personal life. I'm very much an open book. There are a few things that are tricky to talk about publicly. There are people in our lives that know it and they get it. And there are a lot of people who don't and that's okay. But it's going back to that support system. Because you have to find that person that's totally going to get it and they're not going to be judgmental. They're not going to be like "Mark, why the hell would you write a book?" So, it's a matter of finding those people.

My wife and I had a recent experience where I was thinking, "I'm just going to write down all the people who know what's going on and who are supportive. I'm going to make a list." And just seeing that list of names, even if it's just somebody that I know from a friend of a friend, who knows a piece of the story for whatever reason. Just seeing all of their names in one place was such a wave of "Wow! We are held and we are supported!" Even if people in our immediate proximity are not those people. You know what I'm saying?

Mark: Yeah.

Jenn: So maybe putting together a list of people who you know are supportive; even if they're not close. You can put me or you on that list. Why not? Because we would totally be supportive. I'd be happy to support anyone on this journey. I think there are small steps and ways to do this. I think finding that Facebook group, making that list, finding



somebody that can hold you accountable. Publishing it and posting it where people are going to pop out of nowhere and it's going to be scary as hell...

Mark: WhoOOOO

Jenn: "Are you freaking kidding me? You're asking me to do... I don't have the thing friggin' written yet and you're asking me to tell people it's coming?" Oh yeah. That's exactly what I'm asking. And it works because now you have all of these other people that you totally weren't expecting, that popped out of nowhere and are like "Go Mark!" You can put those names on that list of supporters. Because they are out there. You just don't know where they are. They can't support you if you don't know.

Mark: Oh, absolutely. To your point you were just saying, if you don't feel that you that in your immediate, in your house, or in your community, the technology is a wonderful thing. The simple things, they don't even know it, they'll know it if they watch this podcast... "Go Mark Go" or "I'm proud of you!" or "I'm so excited!" I really started to feel a lot nervous. Some people that I worked with or worked for me, when I was in the Air Force, they want a signed copy. I'm like "Oh My God, what has she done! A signed copy?" A signed copy of what?

Jenn: I love it. I threw someone else out of their comfort zone. This is what I do. I threw another author out of her comfort zone, saying "We're going to sell your books at this conference." And she's like "It's not even in the editing stage yet!" And I said "I don't care. It's coming. And you know what you're writing about, you know what your story is. It's called pre-orders. People do it." She was "So, what are you asking me to do?" I'm like "you just show up and I'll take care of the rest." Life is good. You have to really find that balance of pushing yourself but not pushing yourself so hard that you're going to crash.

Good Lord. I feel like this was another good episode. We're getting really close to the kick-off party "Flame." I'm hoping that when we talk next time, we should have some feedback as to what that experience was like. I can't wait to debrief live for everyone to witness.

Mark: No pressure for you folks at PDP. This is game changing for the book and life changing for me, so my expectations are very high. I'm also very comfortable and confident. I can't thank you enough. This has been unbelievable!



Jenn: Well, you've been quite enjoyable to work with and so we'll wait to debrief so we're doing it while we're recording. That way I want the good, the bad and the ugly. We said this early on in the podcast – we're talking about good, bad and ugly because they're all there.

Mark: Oh yeah.

Jenn: We got to talk about them. Because that's going to make you successful. And, ultimately, we want success and we want bodies and lives impacted by your work and the work of those who are listening. I'm excited and can't wait to come back in a little bit and see where we go.

Mark: Awesome.

Jenn: All right, bye Mark.

Mark: See you next time.

[Concluding music and commercials]