



## Publish Your Purpose Episode 4

Jenn: Here we are again for another episode of the podcast. Last week we talked a great deal about planning. We alluded to your concept of planning. We talked about mindset. There's definitely a theme going through our show. We're really focused on the holistic being of being an author, as well as all of the little steps and the many steps that have to be taken to be successful. We covered a lot about success and today I want to dive into planning. I think that planning... what is that expression? Failing to plan is planning to fail.

I am notorious for butchering sayings. My most famous one to date is "the greasy bird gets the wheel." [Mark laughing] yeah.

Mark: You know, since we are talking about planning, I shouldn't have cleaned up the office as well as I did. I should have kept it so people could see about the planning.

Jenn: The reality?

Mark: The sticky notes. The giant post it notes.

Jenn: At some point, I am sure they're going to be on the wall as we're recording. I'm all about post-it notes; all about the big white sticky notes; so I think it's incredible.

I think it's such a good conversation to talk about planning. If you don't plan, especially for publishing a book, I don't see how anyone can get it done without having some kind of plan in place. It doesn't have to be concrete. It doesn't have to be "type A" extremist ways in which you do things. All the ways I do things. But I think there are things we both do that others listening to this can totally kind of cherry pick out and say "that's something I can implement in my life."

Mark: Absolutely.

Jenn: In one of our episodes, you were talking about being able to plan for where you thought you were going to fail. I want to talk about, first your planning process and then I want to get into the mindset of how you knew where those opportunities were. Where you might actually hit those road blocks. And how you came up with a plan around them. I think that's such a critical piece of this entire process. Why don't you just take us through your planning process.



Mark: You make it sound like I'm going to turn to page four and I'm going to have it all here for you. No. But seriously, I can't imagine how people could do this without having a plan planned. I planned to get the supplies you need. I mean just you gotta have plans. Even if, let me start and say, I don't think there's any right or wrong way in developing your plan. Developing your plan is just that. What I do is I knew that I'm a pretty smart guy and I have to play tricks on my smart mind to make sure that I'm ready. It's exhausting in and of itself. I don't want to bore you with those details. For example: Sundays, Sunday is the day, I looked at... sometimes I talk about the battle space... so I looked across the battle space and figured out where I can I fit in just my time to spend with the course work. In doing the course work. In addition to that, it was just easy enough to add another hour to plan the rest of the week. Whether it was for work; whether it was for grocery shopping and the errands and whatever. I planned to have that done on Sunday. Well, the mind plays tricks, because Sunday is the fun day to either go out and have Sunday fun day; go to the movies; there's all these distractions. Then I had to play these tricks on myself. Well, what am I going to do? Well, that's going to have to be Saturday. Anyway. What I also decided to do is, went on Amazon, got the post it notes, I got all kinds of different colors of post it notes, I got the giant post it notes that are usually plastered all around the walls behind me. I got real fancy with the color coding of the yellow ones were for this topic, then I just started and then I, I think that once, half the battle is at least just getting started.

Knowing that you need a plan. And then get started. And then you're going to adjust accordingly. I don't know does that kind of answer the question? You have to have a plan.

Jenn: It does, however, I want you to go deeper. You're talking about how you can fit the academy into your life. And so I know from personal experience working with about twenty five authors to the academy at this point, I know that a lot of them, in the final weeks, right now it's fourteen week program, I know usually in week twelve, thirteen, fourteen, it starts to be that trigger of "how am I going to keep doing this without this program to help me; without that accountability" and many of them just say, can you send me a calendar for this block of hours that I've already put out there, because they've been routinely showing up for 12 weeks at that point. Right now, that 2 p.m. Tuesday, Eastern time.

And so, in terms of planning for you, what's the minutia of it? Was it putting something physically on your calendar that says "Mark needs to write right now?" or was it telling Mr. Wonderful that you couldn't be distracted or you couldn't watch Game of Thrones when it was coming out? What were the real granular things that you were putting in



place that were setting you up for success that was also helping you stay along that path of the plan that you created?

Mark: I think that it's a combination of all of those. The day in the life for how did I set up and trick my mind or set up reminders? I did a lot of those things. I typically jump out of bed, I have a lot of energy, and I'm ready to go. I wanted to make sure that "okay I know that about myself"; I have a lot of energy in the morning. My office is right next to my bedroom. I went right into my office and I've got my white board. [Interrupted by phone call]

I went ahead and I would review that day what I had to do. Whether it was an off day from the academy or for work, I got into a habit of doing that for general. It was pretty easy for me to take into account for how was I going to plan to do this next project. Served in Silence. It is just like some of the other skills and tools that I've learned in the past with regards to competing in a triathlon. I can't just show up the day of the triathlon. That was a year and a half of planning. I would set some things up on my calendar. Set reminders on my phone, buzzers and beepers going off at all times. I also marked it on my work calendar... not necessarily during work hours, I would do it at 7:30 in the morning, I would get my personal calendar, would then also trigger my work calendar to remind me of all the things I was going to be doing that night, or in preparation for the project.

The thing I found that is really helpful is when you're working on a project like this, there is some fundamental things you have to do. Writing a book, you have to write. You've got to figure out a time to write. But then you're going to quickly see that there are a lot of other things that have to be done. And your task list, unless you're keeping track of it, and you're a person like me, that could interfere with... it's going to take up too much space up here [indicates head], so I've got to have it someplace else. I always have a running task bar next to my task bar.

For example, I'm writing but I know that at some point, either I heard it in the academy or I know that I'm going to go out and get my official photos made, I'm going to need to start tweaking my bio and stuff like that... if I let all of that come crashing in at once, it's insurmountable. I can't even look up. So, if I just have those as a running tally then at least I know... If you think of plates in the air and we're all really good at it, you want to keep them spinning, you don't want to pay attention to it when it crashes and then you have to put it back together. As long as you can keep the plates spinning, then I'm able to stay focused on the major task at hand (which was writing). Now.



Today was a good example. I spent some time for me and my photo. It's going to be getting my uniform together. Was I missing a piece or parts of the ribbon? Those types of things. I worked on that for a little bit. Now I can move on to what else I need to do to stay on task for the writing process.

Jenn: You just brought up something that so perfectly ties into this, about your ribbons. I know that you shot over a picture of them. There's quite a significant amount of them. Looking at that and thinking of the perhaps tedious task, you didn't say that, I'm putting those words in your mouth, you have to piece these all together exactly the way it needs to be done.

Mark: No, I think I said it was a pain in the ass. It was really a pain in the ass to get it done. That's very nice of you.

Jenn: We're talking about making sure that your military ribbons are the way they need to be, your medals, everything is displayed the way it needs to be displayed. Very precise way of doing it. However, that is still part of the publishing process because it is a piece of the larger whole. You need the ribbons to be on the jacket, to be in the photo that's on the back cover. So it all ties together. I think that a lot of times when people are working on their books, they're thinking that if they're not writing, they're not working on their book. That's not the case at all. It's really anytime you're thinking about it; it could be in the shower, you're thinking about "ah – I know what the title of chapter nine should be." Or you're out running and now you have to stop to record a voice memo. All of those things that's still working on your book. We all have ebbs and flows with just how our energies are. I have a really clear sense of when I am most energetic. Which happen to be Thursdays, which is the day we are recording. So, yay for everyone because today I have lots of energy. I know for me, that I need to do things that are more maybe extroverted or more communication related, talking with people, on Thursdays. I wouldn't necessarily want to set myself up for failure by saying "Today's Thursday and I'm going to sit down and write today," because energetically it doesn't line up. But today would be a great day to be fussing with putting together ribbons in the proper order. I want to point that out – that there are all these little things that you have to get done that is going to greatly impact the book itself, the success of the book, that are all part of the process, it's not just the writing. And I think that's where a lot of people get tripped up. How long, or maybe it's a recent revelation to you, realizing that there are two tracks that have to be pursued at once. There's the writing over here and then there's the everything else over here.

Mark: I'm kind of a visual guy. If you can envision a railroad yard and can you get in your mind all of the different railroad tracks and different cars, that's how I feel this process has



been. The end goal is bringing those cars together onto one track into one station. For me though, is I learned early in this process that in order to plan this, and to actually be successful, because I made a commitment to myself that I'm going to do this in fourteen weeks, and I am going to have from, not zero, but from my sticky notes, napkins and pieces of paper to a draft manuscript by the end. That was pretty hefty. That was definitely... doing it. But in the meantime... you touched on real important parts there... there are all these other facets that you have to do.

I know that for me, if I have too much going on, it will be overwhelming. It will inundate me and I won't get anything done. You have to take those "aha" moments and write them down. In the shower. Write on the fog in the mirror. Or whatever you have to do. Or sometimes I wake up, I got a notepad that I just jot down notes. Because if not it will drive me crazy. Can't go back to sleep. So, whatever you have to do, but [the other thing that was dressing me] while you were talking about it. Those are wins. Get something done.

For example, Thursdays, you have a lot of energy, I was trying to do this, my ribbons and my medals, and I was trying to do this at night. When I was all done. I had finished making dinner, in those hours, that's just not going to work. Mark is much more productive in the morning. And so, this past week, I was doing it at night. No wonder why... Now what happens? I feel ... "Oh jeez I didn't get it done." I feel disappointed. I'm like that's just silly. Why don't you just bang it out in the morning? Sure enough, I did it this morning. And it took half the time! I was able to put a win in the win column. A check in the box. I got it done. It is very tedious.

I shared the photo after it's all done because it's quite an accomplishment to go through a 20 year career and you've got to double check, triple check, make sure it's right. Send to somebody else to verify. It's going to go on your uniform and that's going to be on the jacket of my book. All of those things. If you just keep that mind. Keep it in the mindset of trains on the track, all of them on different tracks, one lags behind, pay attention, bring that one up. Another lags behind, pay attention, bring that one up. And then continue to try to bring up to the finish line. I think that is how I'm able to maintain a little sanity in this process.

18:00 – [commercial break.]

Jenn: This is so common for everybody. I have so many thoughts at once. One of the things I know that is a good hack for a lot of people is to actually... you have your to do list... I have a paper to do list that's not really ideal but I have it in my Google calendar, I have a



calendar in the calendar that's to do. Anytime you and I talk, "I have to get that to Mark", and I put it on the calendar because then I see it and I cannot rest until it has been taken care of, on whatever day I set to be taken care of. But, what a lot of people do, is actually make really, really micro to do lists. You have the bigger one, for example your head shot. Part of the process. You have to have an author photo on the back cover of your book. You don't HAVE to, but it's important to do it. You want it to be a recent photo. You don't want a glamour shot photo from the 80's to be how you're presenting yourself. It has to be current. [Mark: grow grey hair (?)] We're talking about authenticity here. If we looked at that, the to do item could just be "Mark to get head shots" but the reality of that is so many more pieces that involve getting a haircut perhaps, getting hair dyed, having a suit tailored if it's too big or too small. There are all these things that are pains in the asses but it's just the process. If you want to trick your brain, which we've talked about before, having to trick ourselves, this is one of those opportunities. Because you create the "get head shot" and then have those sub-bullets of all the pieces that are needed because it feels so good when you can say "Check".

Mark: Yes!

Jenn: I've got that stupid thing done. Check! My hair is cut. Check. You feel victorious by just checking that you got a haircut! It almost seems ridiculous to some degree that this is a victory as it relates to your book, but it's celebrating those little wins. And it's really feeling like wow, I accomplished something today. It might not, in the big picture, it might not to the outside, to a spouse, to a co-worker, to an employee, it may not seem like it's a big victory, or it has anything to do with the book, but you know it does because you're keeping track, keeping a tally, of what that task list looks like.

Mark: It's almost exhausting. [Jenn agrees]. I mean really. Because when you think about all the sub-tasks just to get the main task done, that is exhausting. But it's a good thing that you have that mindset so you understood when I sent that photo to you today, and the rest of my team on Served in Silence, although they're like "yeah, good job Mark, it's your ribbons, it's a picture of your ribbons," I want somebody to give me the gold star for the day. I did it.

Even just my cup of coffee. Stupid cup of coffee. Right? No. Because so vain, that teeth. I got the teeth whitened for the photo. Gotta drink the coffee through the straw.

Jenn: See, that's exactly it. This is such a prime example of the micro things that go into the larger picture. We're talking planning. Any time I work with a new author... We will talk about this in much greater detail down the road when you're really in the thick of it... Is



that when we talk about publishing a book there is the publishing process, so there's the publishing track. There is the marketing track. And then there's ALL the other stuff. And so, all three of those things have to be moving forward, generally at the same speed. If we're looking at your train station analogy, it's really hard to let one of those cars get too far back. They really need to be inching along. What happens is that I say "Hey Mark, it's time to design the cover." And you might say, well I don't have my head shot done yet. Or, we didn't figure out so the head shot is in the other track. Or you might say "we never figured out the sub-title" that's in the publishing track. So they all have to be moving together, so that way, when it's time to design the cover, we have all the pieces together. This is why planning is so important.

We really focus on managing the emotional overwhelm of our authors because it really is an overwhelming process. We do everything in our power to reduce that level of overwhelm by not stressing you out if we can avoid it. If we can take something off your plate, we'll happily take it off. Doing something like head shots, that's something that only the author can do. But there's a lot of other things that we can take over to us. You just put the blinders on, you just need to focus on editing right now. Or, you just need to focus on getting all the pieces together for the book cover. And that's why planning is so important if you don't have a team supporting you.

There's a lot of ways that we have teams, if someone's working with us, you obviously get our team of experts. But, if you are piecing this together, yourself, which can totally do, a lot of people decide to self-publish and they're kind of gathering their own advisory board even of people that they can ask for support without the plan for how those people are going to support you I think that's where you can get completely off the tracks.

Mark: Yeah. It comes to, "who called this week? What are we doing here?" And the other thing that I thought was also beneficial to me anyway, I want to be forward thinking and I want to anticipate the command. I'm a good military guy. I want to make sure that I am preparing and making sure that my caboose is not on the [right train near.] I felt it was also very helpful, is pinging you, and drafting up a note, hey I got these things are weighing heavy on my mind, what do I do about this, this, this, and this? It's nice to get it back compartmentalized. It's like "don't worry about that right now. Yes, get this done. You need to have your photo done." Then I could focus on what I really need to do and that I knew that there was stuff coming up and I'm prepared for it. But I didn't have to use so much brain power and space to do things.

Jenn: I wasn't planning on asking this, thinking about the Academy itself. I don't know if I've said this yet in our podcast or not, but I know that every conversation with me is like



drinking from a fire hose. It is what it is. I'm a wealth of knowledge and I like to share that knowledge. Not one to keep quiet on... If you have a problem, I want to do everything I can to help you, whether we're in a formal working relationship or not, that's just who I am.

Thinking about how, the first Academy I ran back in early 2016, I had crazy levels of fire hose action, and then Lisa, who we've brought up in every episode so far that's on the PDP team, she was one of the first students that went through it, and Fern, who is also on the PDP team also went through it, I'm seeing a theme here. Lisa is like "Girl, there is so much. You need to slow it down. What I did is re-piece it together to only hint ahead at what's coming. Just for what you are saying... you just need to be prepared for what's going to come hit you next. Because all of these pieces of the publishing process can be daunting and overwhelming in and of themselves. So if I can broach it slowly and gently to say "hey, you might want to be on the lookout because we're going to be doing the cover next. Let's start to get mentally prepared for that."

Was that your experience, going through the academy, that it was pacing it out where you felt like you knew what was coming next? And, second question, do you feel that kind of knowing what is coming next has prepared you better for the overall publishing process?

Mark: Yes. Let me go back to the fire hose approach. If you could see my desk, oh, you can't really see the notes, these are just extra notes, these are the Jenn notes that she just bleh during the calls. I write those down fast and furious. I think those have been very helpful and very beneficial. I think that it's been at the right pace. I think that you're also really good at managing the expectations of the information. What I mean by that is "All right, I'm going to mention this right now, about websites and URL's, and domain names, don't worry about it right now but it is going to be coming up [someday], there will be something to think about. And that has been super, super helpful for when you have a lot of pieces and parts. There's a lot of things in motion to get this done. You're going through it yourself. The biggest thing is obviously the writing. That is the heavy lift here. And if you don't make the plan and the time for that, it's going to be quickly and easily derailed. If you're preparing for that, and that's the nice thing about the Academy too, is that it's the compass, it's the road map, and you really put me at ease, in realizing somebody else is on watch, somebody else is in the lighthouse, not going to crash, I'll just continue to paddle away and get closer, so that part has been really valuable in the planning process.

Jenn: I feel like this is such a good conclusion to talking about planning. One of the things I absolutely wanted to cover today was about writing rituals. And what that looks like for



certain people. We will save that for a future episode because I think that's a whole episode in and of itself. Thank you again Mark. I am just so excited about all the value we're bringing to the listeners.

Mark: Absolutely. Thank you.

Jenn: All right, we'll talk to people soon.

Mark: Okay. See you next time.