Publish Your Purpose
Episode 14

[Opening Commercials]

Jenn: Hey Mark. We’re back for another episode of Publish Your Purpose. How are you doing?
Mark: Doing great. Nice to see you.
Jenn: Recording this bright and early. Typically, we do our recordings in the afternoon. It’s 9 a.m. our time and we’ve been up and working for hours.
Mark: We really have. It’s amazing. I have my coffee, so I’m ready to go.
Jenn: You and me both. Got my coffee, got my water, ready to roll.

Today’s episode, we want to talk about editing again. Editing is a very big piece of this much larger puzzle called publishing. The last time we were talking, we were talking about the developmental edit process and your reactions and your experience having gotten back the developmental edit document from Heather (that was giving you the high level, these are my findings from a 30,000 foot view.) A lot has happened since that time and today, I want to throw it to you first. How are you feeling? Where are you at in this editing process? And then I will try to dissect it from there.

Mark: Sure. Maybe unpack some things; because it’s a lot.

Since we last met we talked about the one, two sneak punch of the 10 minute punch prior to the call. “Hey Mark, here’s a little email for you to read.” It was fine. What I really liked about that part of the process is… we talked about the safety net. “You’re okay. You’ve got your book baby. No one’s going to hurt the baby so it’s okay.” But what I was able to do after the fact (I kind of do this a lot in my life anyway), it takes me another two passes to read it, digest it, put it down, pick it up, take a look. I really took some time to reflect, go back and listening to our call we had with the editor, but then just reading the summary overview. That was very helpful. Because, what I wanted to do (and I think this is awesome), when you’re working with such a dynamic team, where everybody is a gourmet chef and everybody wants to make the best possible meal we can make… nobody is trying to cause any harm or derail, those are other levels of doubt that you have to just get yourself comfortable. It’s going to be rocky. It’s going to be a rocky road. It’s not going to be fun. If anyone tells you it’s fun, I want to meet ‘em because it’s not. But it’s not bad. It’s not like root canal without Novocain. This is okay.
What I was able to do (I didn’t really plan it this way), was to go on a cruise to think about this. But I just got back from a cruise with Mr. Wonderful and my family and it was nice to unplug. I did bring that with me, I reviewed it a couple of times and talked it over with Mr. Wonderful. I thought it was very helpful from a different perspective. Because I am IN it. I am all entrenched in the kitchen. Every pot and pan is dirty at this point. And here comes this new chef that’s coming in to try things out, and it’s awesome to get that perspective.

When I got that first round of review there was some recommendations that were made in that. I think that’s very important [to foot sa] that those are recommendations. What you have to do as the author, what I’m learning that I had to do, is take in this advice and counsel, take it all in, evaluate it, critically evaluate it; just make sure you do diligence in the evaluation of it. Because it is just that. These are recommendations to add maybe some more salt to the recipe or red hot crushed pepper to the recipe. (I must be hungry this morning!) And, I did that. I wasn’t 100%. I liked everything that was in the review and I could understand where that review was going, but at the end of the day, something didn’t, it missed. I wasn’t able to fully marry up to all of the recommendations. Which is okay.

Jenn: Uh huh.

Mark: That’s okay after the fact. It took a lot of phone calls with my publisher. Text messaging. I even sent a heart-felt email to the editor. Now that I look back on it, it looked like I was being very timid and shy “Oh, I don’t really know…” Everybody came back and it was just like “It’s okay. These are just recommendations.” I think what’s really nice about it Jenn, is that you can take all of this, all of these recommendations, and the edits and the summary overview, and you can compile that with the inertia [I don’t know if this is what Mark really meant to say?? Maybe he did. Inertia and momentum? Contrary thoughts – maybe moving from inertia into momentum?] and the energy that you have for the overall project and really collect some more momentum. That’s what I’m finding right now. So today is part of this author’s momentum and rolling this giant boulder down the field.

Jenn: How are you feeling? What you’re describing… go back in case someone is watching this episode as the first one and missed the one in which we were talking about this… the developmental edit is really the 30,000 foot view of looking at the manuscript from as high level as possible, just to poke holes in the structure. Does this make sense? Are we telling this to the reader? Why is this author telling me this? Why is this important? We have to have all those questions answered so that way we are not upsetting the reader. We want the reader to have a good experience.
The developmental edit’s intention is to really look through super high level and point out things that may not be fully developed, or things that are missing, etc. We will have Heather (PDP’s Director of Editorial Content) as a guest in the next couple of episodes, which is going to be fantastic. She’ll probably be able to describe this in much better detail than I am, but then that document goes to you, the author. It’s like “Okay, we reviewed it as a team. But now it’s your job to go and do something with those recommendations and take your second crack at a draft. So, you had your first draft, that’s what we reviewed. Now it’s back to you. Here’s the things we noticed, some of them are easier to fix than others. It’s now to you. Now what? Where does that leave you?

How has that process been where, I just got rid of this damn thing? The editor had it for a week or two and now the hot potato is back in my hands. “How do I get rid of this damn hot potato? It keeps boomeranging around.” So now it’s back to you. How are you feeling about that?

I find that when you’re writing your book, you have to read it a lot of times. A lot of times. And you have to make a lot of edits, and a lot of adjustments. And there’s a lot of different processes that we’re going to continue to talk about on this podcast, but right now it’s in your hands and you have to do some significant editing to it. So how does that make you feel? How are you going to approach the editing? Or how ARE you approaching that editing? I’m curious to know just where all of that stands.

Mark: Yeah. Since this is a family podcast we will leave the [efluatives] out of it. But it is quite the storm; a flurry of activity. So how do I feel? Right now, boy am I glad that I took the Author’s Academy because each one of those tools, are in your tool kit and you have those to rely back to. You can actually use those and help you muddle through this storm. Because it is a storm. You had everything nicely packaged and (in one of our episodes we talked about afraid and naked at Federal Express where I had it all printed), so finally all of my stuff was all in one place. Boom. We’re going to send it off. Whew, that’s done.

Now it’s back and we’re going to unravel… it’s like a kid ripping through the suitcase looking for the toy at the bottom. So now I’ve got all of these things in the air. This time it’s okay because what the questions that were asked, and what was pointed out in the review, I would have never seen because I am so close to it. It might be intuitive to me because I’ve written it so many times or I’ve talked about it so many times, where the editor, first go, she’s looking at, “I think I understand what you’re saying here but I’m not 100% sure.” Oh. Well that’s a problem. That needs some attention. So maybe it’s too bland. Maybe we do have to add more spices. That part has been very helpful.

It is challenging and it can be even discouraging to an author, because you feel like “alright, I’m rounding the corner, I’m on the last bend of the marathon, but you’re not.”
You really did just pull off the course for a little bit to rejuvenate, rest a little bit and then get ready to get back into the race.

But I’m very, very grateful to PDP and the Author’s Academy and what I’ve learned there because I don’t know what I would do. No, I do know what I would do. It would still be stuck at just going, chasing my tail around and around. I’m really tired of reading Chapter One. I have read it over and over and over again. I am tired of having seven different documents on the desktop. No, no, no, this is the final version of the version of the edited final version, version. No, it’s not. I open up a new one and start inserting it.

We have talked about this before on the podcast. It really depends on where you are and … in what… would meet your needs. I’m a busy guy to begin with, but I absolutely needed and still do, my strategist. Because Fern is the one that is maintaining the Holy Grail. She has the prototype and I’m out here pulling apart the pieces to it and I can give it back and then she will make sure it remains. If not, it would just be… take a ream of paper and put it in front of a fan and turn it on high. And it would just be flying around the room all the time. So, I think that, that part has been okay. I have this sprint; this sprint is very comfortable. I feel like I’ve got great running shoes on. I’m hydrated. I feel like I’ve got my face in the right place. My head space is in the right place. And I’m ready to, in author tenacity and form, just approach it head on. Let’s go.

Jenn:  It will be interesting when we talk weeks from now, or even months from now (I’m not sure when on the podcast this will surface), but what you’re describing really is the hot potato. So, you had draft one, now you’re working on draft two, it will go through editing again. Then you’ll be working on draft three. Then it will be in editing again. Then you’ll be on draft four. Then it’s going to go through proof reading and then you’re on draft five and then it’s in layout. And then there’s still having to read it again! After it comes back from layout. So that’s at least a sixth time. And then it goes for a physical proof and you have to read it again.

I would say, safely, you need to prepare and plan to be reading your book from cover to cover, a solid eight times before you get to the final place. And then feeling like it’s free. Like I’m free from this. That’s a lot of reading your own words. I can see the (it’s not burnout) “uh, I’m already tired with my own words.” You’re like right here and there’s all this to go still of reading your own words. It will be interesting to kind of see how/where you are basically when we’re even at the proof reading stage. Because that’s… every editing stage, has a specific intention and as specific purpose for where it is within that stage.

In layout, it’s making sure that nothing got missed. And then print proof is also just making sure nothing got missed. But it still requires you to read with a very critical eye, every single word that is on that paper. The thing is you’re going to start reading what
you think is there and what is there is not actually what you think it is. And then it becomes this whole kind of confusing-ness. And maybe that’s when Mr. Wonderful will pop back in, have a read through as well, and get like a really good outside eye. And that’s why we use a proof-reader that’s completely different than the person who has been doing the editing because that’s when they can come in with a completely fresh perspective.

But it will be interesting to see how you maneuver through this process. Everyone we’ve worked with to date, has been burnt out by the end. “I just don’t want to read it again!” I just asked one of our authors (her book is coming out November 1) so she’s like “I don’t want to read it again!” I’m like “Guess what? I need you to. I’m sorry, but I need you to.”

[16:45 Commercial break]

Mark: The process [laughs]. For those of you that are watching, what you’re going to learn from this podcast is that Jenn does an amazing job at managing expectations and setting those expectations. Because you will hear early on, maybe even in the very first one, is “Oh Mark, I love your energy! I hope you feel that way when you get through editing. Oh, here comes the editing process.” And I think there’s a lot to be said for that, for an author. There’s so many things that are coming at you. Think about it. Every day there’s a multitude of… we’re very busy people and as long as you can hear this and you can kind of immerse yourself into, whether you’re going with a team or going it alone, then at least you know to set those expectations, to manage those expectations. And you know mama said there’d be days like these, but you not only sing that song well, but then it also helps me; gets me in the mindset to prepare.

And it’s not a sprint. It’s not a race. This is a marathon. This is a very long… and we haven’t even gotten to the starting line of the marathon yet. We’re still prepping and training and getting those very long distance runs in as we go through these initial phases. The true fact is that without the Academy (and there were lots of logistics talked about in the academy and the actual mechanics of “this is how you do this part of the publishing”) but all of that built on each other by the time we got through the fourteen weeks, I think really placed me in a fantastic position to be ready. To be ready to reach back into the tool kit and grab that to say “Okay I need this now at this moment.” This is what I learned; or refresher. Then go back. I think we’re going to be talking about real soon, in another episode is, keeping your mind in the correct mindset of “you gotta write”, you’re the author. You bear the brunt of this responsibility. All of the other sous chefs in the kitchen are only there to help you present this masterpiece.

Jenn: Yes. And I think going to the expectations, I think having a calm, cool and collected sense about the whole publishing process is really valuable. I can set the expectation, we have
an author who is about to have the physical proof in hand, and I was like “listen, sometimes when we get that first physical proof, it’s cut a little bit weird because it’s being run on a different printer. It’s not being run where it would typically be run. So, be prepared, that something might look funky. But that’s not how the final will look.” And just being really clear about those things. If I don’t say that, and that proof arrives, and it’s cut funky, that author is going to have a panic. And not a panic… a panic of “OMG, my baby has a bad haircut!”

Mark: There’s something wrong
Jenn: Yeah, there’s something wrong. So, it’s our job at every point in the process to say “listen, when the editing comes back, expect there to be problems. Expect the editor to have missed something. It’s just the nature of the process.” That’s why we go through so many rounds of editing. Because every time it gets tighter and tighter, so that by the time it goes to the physical proof, it’s really solid. If we just did one pass at editing and sent it off on its way, that would not be something that is suitable for the public. And that’s why there are all these things. Really setting those expectations and being clear. But we can do that all day long. It’s still has to go on author’s side of saying “I’m going to try to be as realistic as I can, to what is coming at me right now.”

I think it’s hard, especially since we do work with primarily very driven, determined type A people, successful business owners, successful professionals. We definitely have a certain type of person that seems to be around us most frequently.

I know how I am, and I would be freaking out like a crazy person over some of the things that happen during the publishing process. Because I have gone through it myself and I’ve walked so many people through it at this point, I can get in front of them ahead of time to say “listen, I know how you are because we’re the same person; do not freak out when this happens.” It’s going to happen. Just don’t’ freak out. And that includes a typo that made it into the final print that is now being published and people are reading. It happens. It happens to almost everyone.

You don’t want to hear that but, guess what, I’m the one that’s going to say it like it is; and tell you, “I’m not going to promise you it’s going to be 100% perfect. It’s going to be 99.9999% perfect but there’s going to be something that slips through the cracks.” I would rather be up front and honest with you about that now vs. painting this big glossy beautiful vision of everything being perfect and editing is fine, and you won’t hate us and “Oh, this is great.” You can’t, because I’m setting you up for failure by not being realistic and honest with you about these particular parts of the process. Because I can predict them. I know exactly when they’re going to happen. Which is why I did make that
statement to you very early on. I’m happy that you love us now, because at some point
(and I know when it’s happening) you’re not going to be a fan. But then you’ll come
back, you’ll bounce back, you’ll love us, you won’t want to hear what we have to say, but
you will love us again. That’s just the process. It’s a pain in the ass.

Mark: Yeah. But it’s so worth it though. It’s so rewarding. To the point in my own situation,
nobody else has read this. I have very few, on one hand, the number of people that have
read this; even my partner, hasn’t even read it yet. It wasn’t until that meeting with the
editorial review, that after I got, I fast forwarded to the end and I read her final summary.
I was like “this isn’t bad, this is actually okay.” It’s all right.

So uhm, before we went on our trip I gave him the printed copy and he’s like “I get to
read it?” And I’m like “yeah, I think so.” And that’s a little hard to let go of that much
control. But that speaks to your point about just the type of people that are publishing a
book or working with you. There’s a reason why they’re watching or listening. That A
personality, that over-achiever, anyway, so, if anything you’re going to take from this
podcast is manage these expectations. It’s not easy. I’m not going to say this has been an
easy process. I’m going to say the more equipped I got, the more hydrated I got, the more
I ate right to run that marathon, and that’s by fueling my mind with those proper tools and
resources that are out there, then the better time I’m going to get in the race.

Jenn: The intention of the Author’s Academy is to walk people through the entire process so
they don’t need to hire us. That’s truly 100% of the focus of that program. What the
beautiful thing is that when you do hire us, because you resign to the fact that you don’t
want to do this by yourself, you are now such a more educated consumer. (It’s not a
mandate. You going through the Academy doesn’t mean you have to hire us. You can hire
anybody. That’s not how that is structured.) What’s beautiful is that you then know
exactly how we’re going to approach things. What our process is. Which then just makes
you so much easier to work with vs. someone who may not have gone through the
academy before and they might not know how and what and where and all these different
functionalities of the process and the logistics and all that stuff.

It becomes new and different for them vs. like you - You’re like “I know that the cover is
coming up next. I know that’s going to be the next piece.” Or “I know I have to start
thinking about my website.” Or “I know I need to be doing x, y and z” because there’s so
much that has to happen. But that’s the beautiful part of the Academy is that it at least
provides you with that foundation of being an educated consumer.

If you go to find an editor on your own, awesome. Seriously, great. I have plenty of
recommendations, but if you have somebody else, that’s even better. But at least you
know what to ask them. You know the right questions. You know what you’re looking for.
There’s all of these different nuances that on the surface you might like “oh, I need
somebody to edit my book.” Ideally you don’t want somebody who is maybe an 
elementary school English teacher or someone who is teaching English as a second 
language or someone who has a degree in English. You need to find people who are 
professional editors. And that’s something that a lot of people completely overlook. 

The editing is the king. That is the king to the whole puzzle. Good quality editing. It has 
to be readable. It has to get our point across. And it has to be aligned with your goals as 
an author. To me that’s the big, big piece. Is that your goal as an author might be different 
than someone else that we’re working with who might be different than somebody else. 
But your book has to be supportive of whatever that goal is. Even if it’s different than 
somebody else’s. At the end of the day, the goals all tend to be wrapped around in the 
same general direction, so when Heather (or anyone else on our team) is doing that 
developmental edit, they’re looking of ‘does this support mark’s vision for 

__________’ that’s what a good editor I think needs to really be mindful of. And 
you being a good consumer, to be able to say, I know I need this; I don’t’ know where I’m 
going to find it. At least we have our bed of resources. 

There’s a lot of editors out there. There’s a lot of cover designers. There’s plenty of 
people out there that can help you. But I think that the Academy does a really good job, in 
my own humble statement, of making sure that you’re really being supported in terms of 
finding what you need. It’s not designed in a way of “oh now you have to work with us. 
Because I only told you part of what you needed to know.” I really try to give literally 
everything away. 

Mark: I didn’t feel that way at all, come graduation day at fourteen weeks. What you were just 
talking about is critical for us to foot stomp just a little bit. In the very beginning of the 
academy, week two, we get to work with Lisa Corrado. It’s an amazing mind blowing 
experience. Each thing builds on the next (I’m pretty sure it’s by design), then we get to 
when you’re introducing what is an editor, and you’re describing that relationship and in 
under an hour you explain from a to z what that relationship should look like. Doesn’t 
have to be the PDP editor, but what you, as an author in that relationship with your editor, 
begins with. It seems really easy, very obvious. But I did not know. 

Until I took the course, I didn’t know I had permission to ask the editor questions. I didn’t 
know that I was in position, which seems kind of obvious I guess maybe to other people, 
but I thought that you knock on their door, if they say yes, you’re like “okay, here it is” 
and you wait for the backlash. No. You walk through, ask the leading questions. Ask 
those pointed questions. Inform them. Brief them about what your goals and your vision 
and your mission is for that book. If it’s not a good fit, it’s okay. It’s not a good fit - It’s 
better to have that very adult conversation at the table vs. halfway through the editing
process and come to find out that person is gluten free and here you are making them pasta. It’s not going to work. (I guess I really am hungry this morning.)

Jenn: Definitely rattled off a lot of food analogies today.

Mark: I really think that people want to make sure that they be very, very mindful. All of our friends are wonderful (that’s why they’re our friends, right), but are they qualified? They might be a good reader. They might be a good proof-reader. But are they qualified as an editor? This is something you work so hard at and if you’re doing this as a do it yourself project (which I think that you can, you can take these tools and resources. I think you can take the Academy and you could have all of the tools that you need to go out and do it. Me personally in my life and in my schedule and what was happening I just knew that I didn’t have that amount of time. I had to make a personal decision as to what type of assistance I needed), but I think that you’re absolutely right that it is so critical that this particular relationship, choosing the right editor... spend the time. Don’t skimp on this. It has to be grade A quality for the outcome of what your product will be.

Jenn: I feel like we could talk for 12 episodes on just the editing process. We’re definitely going to cover it multiple more times before we move on to other, more things. Just because we are working with you and recording this in real time, and kind of walking through this process. I think if we look at the overall time frame of publishing a book, our time frame is about eight months. From the time we have the first draft of the manuscript, to you having the finished book in your hands, is about eight months or so. But two of those months are editing. It takes a big piece of the overall picture. That’s why we are talking about this in more detail. That’s why my hope is that people watching (or listening to) this, can go off and find that right editor for them. You can very easily get screwed over when it comes to outsourcing any of this stuff or hiring a freelancer.

You know, whether it’s the cover, the interior design, the editing, marketing, you can get screwed in many different directions. That is my goal is to make sure that that doesn’t happen. We will continue to keep chatting about this. But we are already at time for today’s episode.

I feel like that went really fast.

Mark: It’s a lot to unpack. It really, really is. If I could just leave one last nugget from an author’s perspective... During that time that you’ve dropped the baby off at the grandparents’ house for the weekend, take that time, relax, recoup, rejuvenate, rest and just get ready to prepare your mindset to be ready to receive. Ready to receive and know that if you’ve done your diligence and you’ve got that relationship with your editor, or whomever is assisting you in that next phase, you’re only in it to win it, to make it that much of a better product.
Jenn: Yeah. And if the editor’s not on that same page with you, then that is a red flag.

Mark: Danger, danger, danger. Luckily, we’re not there. I love my editor. And she is not the grim reaper. You’ll get to meet her.

Jenn: Yeah. She’ll be on soon. That way she can come in and salvage her reputation that we have continued to beat down.

Mark: If she comes in with a sickle over her head, that would be so funny.

Jenn: I hope she does. It is Halloween time. I could probably get a sickle on clearance. Hopefully she’s not watching this. She’ll know our plan. But anyway…

It was fabulous talking to you this morning. I will see you in the next episode.

Mark: See you next time.

[Concluding music and commercial]