

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - Aug. 4, 2016

Dr. Angela Lauria with Jen Dalton, author of *The Intentional Entrepreneur: How to Be a Noisebreaker, Not a Noisemaker*.

"Books are really powerful." ~Jen Dalton

Angela:

Well, hey, everybody! It is another episode of Book Journeys Radio. I'm so excited to have you all with us. Every episode of this show, we talk to an author who made that journey from wanting to write a book to crossing the finish line and publishing it, and we will learn from them what it was that helped them to accomplish their goal. You know, the New York Times says eighty-five percent of people have a book in them, and yet fewer than one percent of people finish those books that they dream of. So, what is it that makes the difference? That's what we're gonna look into today, we have an amazing author with us, Jen Dalton is the author of *The Intentional Entrepreneur*, Jen, welcome to the show! Thanks for being with us!

Jen:

Thanks for having me, I'm excited to be here!

Angela:

Awesome, well, let's just start off by telling people, what is *The Intentional Entrepreneur* about, who did you write it for?

Jen:

Sure. *The Intentional Entrepreneur* is a personal brand guide for entrepreneurs and executives, and the whole idea is that we focus so much on the company brand but we really don't leverage the reputation of the founder and the executive to grow - to grow the business, and accelerate more quickly as they launch their business, whether they're a solopreneur or as you grow and lead it if you're a Fortune 500 CEO.

Angela:

And why did you want to write this book, and when you answer that, Jen is actually - Jen is actually the CEO and founder and a reputation strategist for executives and entrepreneurs, so I'm thinking that's part of your reason. The website is brandmirror.com, and so, tell us what that background and that experience - what made you wanna write the book?

Jen:

Sure, so, when I started my company four years ago - ... obviously, entrepreneurs and - and business owners think about revenue. I had another number in mind, which was number of people to impact.

Angela:

Mmm.

Jen:

And I found that - that ... really worked with clients over the last two years, and every year, ... - in - in 2014, my goal was a thousand people and in 2015 I wanted to help ten thousand, and a lot of that I did through speaking and working one-on-one, but I knew, if I wanted to hit my goal this year of helping a hundred thousand people, that I really needed to share the process that I used with my clients, and so, what's really fun about this book is, I got to highlight not only the process I use but also a lot of the entrepreneurs and executives I work with, and so, you have real case studies and exercises, so by the end of the book, you really know why you started your business, how you wanna bring that story into it, to connect with your customers better, and then really leverage your self-leadership to convert clients faster and have the impact you're looking to make as owner.

Angela:

Love it. So, obviously, running a business like this, having a number of clients you've had, the experience you have, the training you have - there are a lot of things that you could have written about, and one of the challenges, I think, that stop people from finishing their book is that they have so many different book ideas. So, I'm wondering, for you, was it difficult to focus in and choose ... this specific piece of what you've done, and if so, how did you do it?

Jen:

Well, I think you're right. ... We all get a little bit - shiny object syndrome, where we follow all of these great ideas that distract us from moving forward, and so, the easiest place for me to start - I'd been thinking about writing this book for about two years - was really to get pragmatic and say, "What will be most useful," and if I'm not in the room, someone can pick the book and it's almost like they're working with me. And so, at first, I wanted to write a book for everybody, 'cause everyone does have a personal brand. But when you write for everyone - ... as you ... through this and I discovered myself, as well - you're really not writing for anyone, and so - ... for me, I had to get very clear on whom I'm writing it for, and the majority of my clients are entrepreneurs and CEO's, and so, although this can be read by anyone, and many of the exercises will be useful, the case studies and a lot of the exercises I have are extremely relevant and focused for entrepreneurs. So, I did have to get clarity and focus on my - my really - my ideal reader -

Angela:

Mm.

Jen:

- and whom I'm writing this book for, to make it more meaningful.

Angela:

And what was so - I'm just curious about this. What - why *The "Intentional" Entrepreneur*? What - what did you mean by the word, "intentional?"

Jen:

Well, that's a great question, I feel like naming your book is like naming your child, it's such a hard thing to do. I knew it was for entrepreneurs, and so, I needed to have that in a title. The "intentional" piece - ... I find, when it comes to life, we're all so busy, and we fly by the seat of our pants, and we're multitasking and ... we're remembering things as we're doing it, and you get pretty chaotic, and you don't get a chance to be strategic. And for entrepreneurs, eventually, you get stuck in the business and not working on the business, and so, from a personal brand standpoint, it's even more important to just press "pause," back up a little bit and think, "How can I be mindful and planful and intentional with ... what's the business I'm trying to build, how do I complement the company brand to grow the business," and so, the "intentionality" is really important.

Angela:

Mm.

Jen:

Intentional when you start your company, the why behind it, or intentional when you go to write a blog, or go to speak at a conference to represent your company. What are you saying, what do you need it to do for you, because I find, if you're not intentional, you can waste a ton of time and really no be as productive and as impactful as you wanna be.

Angela:

All right, well, speaking of wasting a ton of time, lots of people wasted time writing their books, and so, I'm wondering, what is something that you wish you knew before you wrote your book that you think might have helped you get it done faster or easier, so - something that you ... learned afterwards and you said, "Oh, right! If I had to write another book this is what I would do."

Jen:

Yeah, I think that's a - that's a great question. ... Writing a book is like - you're creating something, and creating something always sounds glamorous, ... let's start a business! Let's have a kid! Let's - ... do all of these things, right? And - and then, you don't realize that's just the beginning, and so, writing the book was really hard, in that - ... I don't know if I was fully ready for that. But ... then along came the book, and then -

Angela:

Mmm.

Jen:

- continuing to market the book, and I think - i know I underestimated - ... it is a creation, but you have to continue to nurture it and - and keep it moving forward, it's not just you write the book and you're done.

Angela:

Yeah.

Jen:

If you really want to make a difference, you got to put even more effort into it as you go on.

Angela:

Yeah, I think people think ... ninety percent of the effort is in writing the book -

Jen:

Right.

Angela:

- and that's probably ... the reverse of what it actually is, surprise! So, how about while you were writing the book, did you experience writer's block or procrastination or moments where you weren't sure what to say?

Jen:

Yeah, I think - the beginning was tricky, ... sounds like it's easier than it is. I remember, after I wrote my first chapter, and it just wasn't that great. And you and your team were ... "Yeah, you might need to rewrite that." And so, it took me a little while to figure out my voice, but also to figure out what's really the right content in the right order that takes people on a journey in the book. And so, I think that was - ... that was tricky. Once I got into it, it was easier, and - and I think the biggest thing is, if you love what you're writing about, it is much easier to write it. And it comes out, but - but sometimes, just getting started and figuring out ... how does it actually work and then starting into it. It's much easier, but that first chapter, for me, was tough.

Angela:

Mmm.

Jen:

I think, working with a group of authors - ... I knew that I needed ... accountability partner to move me through quickly and not get stuck. And so, I think a lot of people ... try to do it on their own, and the reality is, there's very little in life you can do on your own, and it's that - ... that's even more true, I think, when writing a book.

Angela:

So, what surprised you about the process of writing your book? What was easier, for you, than you thought it would be, and what was harder, for you, than you thought it would be?

Jen:

I think, organizing - organizing my thoughts at the beginning. ... I thought, going in, ... there's a certain way you write a book, and you - you do an outline, and you do this, and as long as you do that, it'll all happen, and I think that actually constrains creativity, and so, I think that the process of just really just - what do you need to communicate. And putting that all out then on Post-it notes and paper and really thinking through what do I want people to be at the end of the book, how do I want them to be different? And it really helped - really helped me move through that. There were certain chapters that were harder than others and - where I would go back and I would condense them or scratch a chapter or - ... for me, and this sounds a little bit - a little bit funny, but for me, I have ten chapters in the book. And I actually wanted to have five that were about discovering yourself and what that meant, and five that were about, now, what's the action you go take, because the - the logo of my book is a reflection. The logo of my company is a reflection.

Angela:

Mm.

Jen:

And ... perception versus reality, so - not that I was as intentional in the writing of it, but I found, as I went through, that I tried to really reinforce the same values and the same approach that I have in my logo and in my branding and my story -

Angela:

Hm!

Jen:

- as I did in how I wrote the book and how it flowed from the beginning to the end.

Angela:

Hm, that's fascinating. You did a great job with case studies, and there are a lot of business owners that we get to know, reading your book. How - how did you pick those case studies, and how has the reaction been, from the people that you featured in the book?

Jen:

A lot of them, ... - because I've worked with dozens and dozens and dozens of people, it was hard to pick which ones to include, but ... if we were talking about the power of a name and how the name came to be because of the owner, or the power of a point of view, or the power of writing content, or living your values, personal values, and how they show up in the company, I

really tried to find clients that fit each of those pieces to the puzzle that were most exciting and really compelling. And so - ... as we go through the book, I don't just stay with one person, I really go across industries and across company size, and ... all of the people that I reached out to were really excited to be in it, most of them had never been highlighted that way, I think entrepreneurs are a lot of unsung heroes -

Angela:

Hm!

Jen:

- and even when we did the big book launch, ... I had them all come and sit on a panel and talk about what it meant, and what does "intentional" mean to them, and - and they are all very intentional, so - ... I think it was a little bit nerve-wracking, being in a book, but I talked them through it, and I obviously let them review it and - ... before anything was published, but I think they were excited. Excited to share - share their learnings themselves, excited to share what worked for them -

Angela:

Mm.

Jen:

- and so, the other thing I'll say is, there are ten more books I could write with similar case studies, ... there are so many amazing entrepreneurs. ...

Angela:

... maybe you will!

Jen:

I -maybe I will -

Angela:

Hm!

Jen:

- I might have another few books in me, we'll see!

Angela:

So - okay, you - you write the book, you get it done, you get it published, you've done a bunch of things. When was your book published?

Jen:

My e-book came out in January, and then my print book came out in March, at the end of March.

Angela:

Okay. So, it's been ... six to nine months since your book came out, tell us what the last six to nine months have been like for you, what sorts of opportunities have you had or have you created with your book, speaking, book signing, tell us a little bit about what you've been able to do.

Jen:

Yeah, there are definitely a few examples I'll pull out. ... The book launch, I went a little bit overboard, but it was really exciting, and what I ended up doing was having all of the proceeds from the book launch to to a charity I support in my area, and so we had it at a really nice location, we invited a ton of people, entrepreneurs, executives, and impromptu, I asked nine of my case studies, nine of my clients and friends, to get up and - and - and sit on a panel and speak, and we videotaped it, we had a photographer there, so I think sometimes people forget to - to find evidence of the things they're doing,

Angela:

Yeah.

Jen:

Becomes a joke, if there wasn't a picture, it didn't happen, and so, I think, for anybody doing a book launch, be really mindful of, how do you create an experience, not only for the people there but for other - everywhere else. And so, I think ... the video work I had, I had her - the clients do interviews after the book launch, so I got a lot of content that I can use to showcase the book, but also to showcase the clients that I've worked with, and how amazing they are. So the book launch was really an important one for me, and also we got to give back and - and do good. I think one of the other opportunities was creating a panel of executives in this area ... at a location where they agreed to pay for it, and it was fairly expensive, but it was about intentional leadership, and so, there were a lot of executives there. And so, it's that next articulation of what does it mean to be an intentional leader, and just ... in this case all of the people were executives and CEO's, and so, I think ...the book takes on another life once it's published, there's more that comes from it. And so, creating opportunities like speaking or panels or ways to create value can really give your book more life, and so, at any speaking event, I always have books, ... I have bookmarks that were made, I had very specific ... made that really worked with the books, and ... I think that's been really good, but you have to set a budget, ... you have to think about what you're trying to do with it, the results you need, to get it to work for you. ... It's not a - insignificant investment, but you can be really efficient about it, if you're mindful and intentional.

Angela:

Love it! What are - are there results that you can track from having a book, ... if you've gotten clients or expanded engagements or things that have happened since the book has come out, that it might have influenced?

Jen:

Yeah, I think most of the clients - any speaking engagements I've done, where you can say that you have a book, and it's a tangible - ... mine - i love my hefty book, it's nice and - and luxurious feeling.

Angela:

Mm!

Jen:

A lot of people believe that that says something about your credibility and that it opens doors that you may, ... in the past, may not have been able to open. And so, there are speaking engagements that have come from having a book, it's an easy way to talk about what you do and how you can help people, and they can see it, and it's tangible. So, ... I got a - I gave a talk in April, in Cincinnati, where having the book really helped make that possible, I have a talk in Idaho in September, and then I do, of course, three or four locally, every month, in D.C. and the D.C. area. And it's opened a lot of doors to entrepreneurs, to CEO-executive groups like Vistage, for example -

Angela:

Right!

Jen:

- where it makes a big difference, if you have a book. It's - ... the - the bar is higher now, people need more evidence of their credibility, and I think a book is a really powerful way to do that.

Angela:

What are some of the most common questions that you get about being an author of that book?

Jen:

A lot of people wanna know how long it took me to write it, 'cause I think so many people -

Angela:

Mm-hm, and how do you answer that one?

Jen:

Well, I tell 'em, thirteen weeks, and then they all freak out and they're ... "What?" And I'm ... "I know, it's crazy." But the real answer is, I had the book in my brain for two years, I just didn't do anything about it.

Angela:

Right.

Jen:

... And that percentage earlier that you quoted, I think it's so spot on. But I know how I operate, and I knew if I didn't join a program, it wasn't gonna happen. And so, for me, thirteen works with - thirteen weeks was a perfect answer that worked. ... Each to his own, but - but yeah, most people are surprised - that's really the number one question. And then, the second one is ... "How's it going?"

Angela:

Yeah!

Jen:

But I think the ... - that seems to be a big hurdle for people.

Angela:

So, you said that there's a little bit, but I'll just ... ask ... in to see if anything else comes up for you is, there are lots of people who struggle to get their book finished, you've mentioned a few things, but maybe just recap the highlights, why do you think you were able to finish, and finish so quickly?

Jen:

Well, I - I'm a very pragmatic person. ... My book is wha - what I call "inspired action."

Angela:

Mm.

Jen:

So, there are stories to inspire, but then, there's practical exercises. And so, the reason The Difference Press process worked for me is because I wanted to process. And so, there are steps you take every week that move you through it, and you're not alone, and ... peer pressure worked in middle school and high school and college and it works as adults, so I can - can't underestimate the power of doing things as a group, and hard things, and so, that - that sort of weekly check-ins was huge for me. I also think that the process is huge, and so, having somebody guide you through it - 'cause it's a whole lot of unknowns.

Angela:

Mm.

Jen:

And ... there's so much more unknown now than I knew in the beginning and there's still stuff I don't know. So, in those three, not knowing how to get started but having someone to help you, with the expertise, pressure groups, then I think a real process. Those all really resonated and worked for me, and it was a journey that you didn't do by yourself, so it was a lot more fun to do, even though it was super hard.

Angela:

Yeah, it's interesting, I think people think of writing as this lonely and miserable activity, so when you say, "It was a lot of fun," ... "That's great" - also, you mentioned that it was really hard, so what do you think the difference is between the image of hard that people have and the kind of hard this was?

Jen:

Well, I think if you - ... if you envisioned going to some remote cabin in the woods to write your book, that's a lot of pressure on yourself, and you're alone, so there's no sounding board, there's nobody to say, "Hey, I don't think you're coming at it from the right angle or perspective." And so, it's important ... to have a group to know that it's like a relay, you're all going around together, or my favorite sport, which is rowing, right? You're all in the boat together, you need to get to the finish line, and if one of you isn't doing it, it messes it up for everybody. And so, ... when you go through it together, it lessens or diminishes the - the pain a little bit, 'cause, okay, if they can do it, I can do it. And you're not in the cabin by yourself, where everyone's expecting you to come back from the cabin with a book. In this particular case, it was really - ... I didn't tell a lot of people I was writing a book, and I joined a group, did it and finished it there, I was with that group and committed.

Angela:

Mmm.

Jen:

So, when you do something with a group, it makes a big difference, that's why people run marathons in groups, ... can you imagine running the Boston marathon by yourself, it probably would suck. So -

Angela:

Alone on a Tuesday afternoon! Right.

Jen:

Here I am, running! Yeah, no, it's a group effort, it's a good thing, a group is good.

Angela:

So, what advice would you give, or have you given, to people who say to you that they wanna write a book but they just haven't been able to get focused or make the time, what do you tell them?

Jen:

Well, the first thing I tell them is that, the longer they wait, the harder it's going to be to stand up. ... More and more people - granted, it's only ... one percent of the ... write a book, but more and more people are realizing they need to write a book, they have it in them, and so, the sooner

you just say, "Let's go do this" and take the jump, the better. The longer you wait, the longer it will be before your message is out there, the longer it will be before people get to hear about you, ... I tell my clients telepathy is not a good strategy.

Angel;
Mm-hm!

Jen:

If you want people to ... to you, you need to write about it, you need to speak about it, and a book is a really great way to do that, and it shows commitment and perseverance, so, number one, just get started with the idea of, "I can do this." Number two is - this is a really big one for me, who are you writing it for, and you need to think of it very specifically. I think your process helped us really do that very well, and the third is just, ... really think about, how do you want somebody to be different by the end of your book. I - I think books need to be meaningful. They need to be valuable, and when I finish reading it, I've given you my time to read it, so I need to come away from the book changed. And so, think about where someone is at the beginning of the book and where you wanna move him to by the end. And those - those three, I think, are really important, Get started, who are you writing it for and just think about what you want your book to be able to do for the person, but also for - for your business, too, but how do you want to transform somebody, ... books are really powerful.

Angela:

Love it. So, in our last couple of minutes here, tell us what's next for you and for Brand Mirror? What's going on and - and how can people get in touch with you?

Jen:

Sure! So, ... the big things that are coming up I'm working on - as a lot of people are, working on Ted Talks, but we're really working on what are some groundbreaking concepts that I can think about and speak about and write about in my next book as well. One of the things that's really come out of the book as - and also, just in speaking with the executives and CEO's, is this idea of ... when - when companies need team to perform - sales teams are a really good example of a leadership team, a personal brand plays a really big role, so I have a - a lot of clients who have come to me to do personal branding, but with a team, ... 'cause the - the sum needs to be greater than the parts -

Angela:
Mm.

Jen:

- so, how do you help individual CEO's, COO's, CIO get clarity on the value they bring so they can perform better together, so they're client facing, right? They're very visible, same with the sales team. So, that's a really cool trend that I think is co - is coming, companies realizing their people are their best assets and they're underleveraging them. And so, ... I've got some

engagements there that are really exciting and fun. The best way for people to get in touch with me, ... of course, they can e-mail me directly at [jendalton@brandmirror](mailto:jendalton@brandmirror.com), they can - I do complementary consults, 'cause sometimes people just need a sounding board for a few minutes and they'd be really helpful, they can sign up for that through my website. I do have an e-letter where I send out unique content that nobody else sees, so ... it's just for - just for folks that subscribe. And, yeah, those are probably the best ways to get started, and of course, they can go to Amazon and buy the print book, they buy the e-book, they can download the workbook that goes with it and print that out, but those are ways to get started!

Angela:

Awesome! Jennifer Dalton is the author of *The Intentional Entrepreneur*, it's available on Amazon, you can learn more about Jen at brandmirror.com. Jen, thank you so much for being our guest today!

Jen:

Thank you so much! I have a book because of you, so thanks!

Angela:

You're welcome! So, every week on Book Journeys, we talk to another author about how they crossed the finish line in writing their book. Maybe you're thinking about a - a book for yourself, maybe it's time for you to cross that finish line for yourself. If you are thinking that that is something that you wanna consider, I encourage you to go to theauthorincubator.com and you will see an offer for my book, *The Difference: Ten Steps to Writing a Book That Matters*, you can buy it at Amazon or you can get it for free on my website just because we like to say, "Thank you" to our visitors. So, check that out if you are thinking about writing a book, and tune in to our future episodes here, as well, we'll wr - where we will continue to examine what holds people back from getting their message out into the world, so that we help change the world one book at a time.