

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - Sept. 15, 2016

Dr. Angela Lauria with Gina Catalano, author of *Tandem Leadership*.

"Identify your ... ideal reader ... and really make that person the most important person in your life" ~Gina Catalano

Angela:

Well, hey, hey, hey, everybody! It is September 15th, the Ides of September, and we are back in the hot seat at Book Journeys Radio. Today, we have author Gina Catalano, I can't wait for you to hear about her book and her journey. Every week on the show, our goal is for you to learn about another author who is able to go from having an idea for a book to a finished book in their hands, ready to make a difference in the world. You'll hear about Gina's book, which is *Tandem Leadership*, you could find out more about that at tandemleadershipbook.com, and right now, I'm just gonna welcome author Gina Catalano to the show! How are you?

Gina:

Great! Thanks for having me, Angela!

Angela:

Awesome, well, thanks for being here, Gina. I always like to kick it off so people have a sense of what they are listening to us talk about. Can you tell people about *Tandem Leadership*, what's it about and who did you write it for?

Gina:

I wrote it for entrepreneurs and owners of small and mid-sized companies who are growing and are thinking, "I don't know if I can do this by myself anymore, and I might need some help," and it's basically about - I ended up doing it a little bit differently, I ended up doing it as a story, and so, it's about, actually, an entrepreneur who's got a growing business, and through the story he learns how to add a Number Two, a second-in-command to his name, and have the kind of success that he was hoping he would have when he started his business!

Angela:

Awesome. And what I really wanna focus on, just to get started, is, how did you get the idea for this book? What inspired you to write it?

Gina:

Well, about nine or ten months ago, I was at a training session, and I have been working with leaders, CEO's and owners of companies on and off for the last twenty years, and I've actually been a Number Two and a Number One, and I was at this training session seminar, this awesome training seminar, I was talking to a guy and saying, "Yeah, this is what I do. I tend to work with people and help them figure this out," and he ten - he works - ... valuation for people that do merger and acquisitions. And we're talking of, "Oh, my gosh, that is such an important

thing!” he said, “Because a lot of times, we go to sell the company and their leadership structure just isn’t where it needs to be for them to move it to the next level and to just position themselves for a sale.” We started talking, and that got the wheels turning, and through a bunch of what I call “serendipitous acts,” I learned about you through one of your other authors and the book just started to come to me, and we had our conversation and I got this idea that I would love to write a book to help leaders and their Number Twos work together. Better.

Angela:

Love it. And your book has a - a very unique structure, it’s almost an allegory. How did that - how’d the structure ... come to you? Do - do you envision it that way before you start it?

Gina:

No, I didn’t at all, and - and in fact, because I knew I was writing a non-fiction book I was committed to writing ... a traditional business “this is how you do it” book, and through the Difference Press process, I wrote out my ideal reader, and I wrote it in the first person. It came to me so easily and it was just magical. And then, I also start to write the book and I could not finish a chapter to save my life, and I started working with my editor, and she said, “I think it would - I think your story would work great with ... - in a fictional or an allegory format,” so I tried it out. And once I started doing that, the book just flowed, and I was able to cover all the same topics that I had wanted to do, but that was a story that needed to be told in that format, and I’m super excited that I got to do it that way.

Angela:

Oh, I love that! Is there anything that you wish you knew before you wrote your book?

Gina:

Hmm. That’s a great question. I think - I think I wish that I would - I would have known that it’s a lot easier than I thought it would be, ‘cause I think I put it off for a long time.

Angela:

Mmm.

Gina:

I think I had a lot of stories around how hard it is to write a book, because so many times you hear - ... authors will say ... “It took five years,” or “ten years to write the book,” and with - with this process, it just didn’t, ... it went really, really well for me, it was so enjoyable, it’s a great process for me.

Angela:

Mm. Why do you think that so many people - have you wanted to write a book before this?

Gina:

Oh, my gosh, yes. I - I actually wanted to be a writer. I wanted to be an author of fiction for years, and - and I have a ton of stories - ... real stories, not just stories in my head.

Angela:

Mm-hm!

Gina:

And I had - I actually was - the other day, I found something. I found my first published piece, was a poem that got written - ... got published in the school newspaper, when I was eight, and it said, "Oh, that's where my journey started." But yeah, I did a - but I just didn't think I - I just - for some reason, I didn't think I could do it, and I think that I didn't - I needed a framework and the coaching, and I think I really needed the - the mission.

Angela:

Mmm.

Gina:

I think the mission to really impact people that are reading the book was incredibly motivating for me. I didn't want to let them down. I didn't want to let my reader down. And I - I really wanted to make sure that I could help them.

Angela:

Hm. So, for you, what do you think made this time or this effort different? Was it connecting with that reader before the book was even done?

Gina:

Absolutely. I think that knowing who I was writing for and knowing how I wanted - I - I had a ... as I said, it was super easy for me to write it out because their pain, and the pain of - ... the CEO - ... you start a business - you go start a business, because you got this great idea, and then, if you're fortunate, you got people who wanna purchase your - ... your thing or your service, and so you get really hung up on trying to deliver. And the next thing you know, things are so different, and the things that you didn't think about show up, and so I had this great vision of who I was helping, and knowing that I wanted to get him over the bridge and get him to the point where he's ... "Yeah, I started this great business, it's going well, and I also have the life that I want, and I have the business that I want. It's ... - it's different that maybe I thought it would be," and so, knowing that I wanted to be successful, it was really great, ... I think that it - I felt such a connection to making sure that - that my guy, my - my character in my book, that he got to where he needed to be to be successful, I - just like I would do if I were coaching him personally.

Angela:

Mm-hm. Yup. I think that personal connection is so important when you're writing -

Gina:
Yeah.

Angela:
- because I wanted to get into a concept that - that throws a lot of people off, which is that they question their own credentials, and the way that shows up is that often, people start writing in a very formal voice.

Gina:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
I don't know if it's the voice that you learned to write papers for in school, or it's this person we imagined who could solve that problem, but I think one of the things you said that was so interesting was that you were really talking to this one person, the way that you would talk to them in real life. And that's so different from the way many people try to write. I wonder if you could address that a little bit.

Gina:
Yeah, that's exactly what it was, because anytime I got stuck, ... I got to a point - ... and ... I'd love to say that I sat down with all twenty-five thousand words came flowing out of me and angels started singing and everything, but I - so, every once in awhile, I would go down a path and I would - ... it wouldn't exactly work, so what I would do is, I would start thinking, "Okay, if I was talking to him directly," - I start asking the questions that I would ask, ... actually, literally write out the questions, that I would be - "Okay, this person has this ... - my guy in market - sales has this problem, what would be the questions that, if I was sitting down across the table, what would be the questions that I would ask?" And finally write out the questions, and then, a lot of times, I would just go off and do something physical - take a walk, ... do the dishes, whatever, and I would go do that, and often - ... I'd say, nine times out of ten, within a couple of hours, the answers to the questions would come back, and - ... and because of the answers coming back I would be able to finish writing. And I think it was because I always felt like I was in service to getting him further down his journey, and to making sure that he was successful, or giving him all the tools to be successful, that the words would come.

Angela:
Mmmm. Hm!

Gina:
I really didn't have to ... the road. They would come as a way to make sure, because I - I was getting my brain to work on the problem while I was doing other things, and like I said, it's ... fun.

Angela:

People - people who are listening think you're completely crazy right now, just so you know.

Gina:

Thanks.

Angela:

"I didn't have to worry about the words when I was writing my book." I feel like I wanna make that a quote. It seems like the only thing to worry about - so, let's help unpack it a little bit.

Gina:

Yes!

Angela:

If you weren't - if somebody's not gonna worry about the words, I'm sure that creates a whole level of panic. This isn't gonna be good enough, it's not gonna be well-written, people won't like it, I'm gonna get bad reviews - so, how did you deal with those thoughts that I think people get so scared about how people are gonna react to the writing that they just reject themselves in advance by not writing it?

Gina:

Yeah, I did - ... I - I'd ... right, but I didn't have any thoughts, but it - ... "It's gonna be a crummy book," or "Nobody's gonna read it." But I ... - I - I can't - kept coming back to the concepts of, it's really important to save that one - not save, to serve that one person. And I knew that I kn - I always know that I can help one person. ... I may not be able to help a nation, but I can help one person, even if - if it's not pretty, I can still help that one person. And so - with anything, ... - I'm not the best swimmer in the world, but I can jump in and - and I can go save somebody. ... And so, I use that same concept, but I - but I also think it's getting out of - I - I think the process makes - made me not worry about me and what my issues were, because I felt like if I worked at a good job at - if I did a good job trying to help this person, everything else would take care of themselves.

Angela:

Mm-hm.

Gina:

And it's - I can't control, I couldn't control it if it - I can't control if somebody likes it or didn't like it. But I could control putting the best solutions on the paper to help somebody to figure this out.

Angela:

Mm. And again, coming back to that, being - having been the person on both sides to this, the desire to actually help people out, for you, did that trump the desire to have a book that you were sure every single person, every critic in the world would think it was well-written?

Gina:

Yeah, for sure, because I think that I've - in he - in being on both sides of the fence, in this position, I also know, often, that a lot of times, if you're an entrepreneur, it - or you're helping an entrepreneur, working with one, there's a lot of nice ... by yourself, at your company, you either

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Angela:

Mm.

Gina:

- ... that you have a physical company, or you're in your office, in your home office at night, or you're ... - you're in your bed, laying in bed, and you have worries.

Angela:

Mm-hm.

Gina:

And so, I think knowing that - that it's a - it can be a solitary process, even if you're the person that's going through the experience, the - I was okay with that, because, I get it, how nice is it, if - I kept imagining, ... this is the guy that goes home, ... he puts his kids to bed and he's gotta read this book because he thinks it might help him, and so, it became a really personal relationship, because I thought ... "I don't care if -" ... I - I - I - lemme take that back. I do care if somebody - if it's well written and everything, but at the end of the day, I kept thinking - I kept coming back to, I wanted that lonely - that guy, solitary guy, to read the book and say, "Oh, my gosh, I can use something in the book tomorrow. And I'll - I know it'll make - it'll make my business better, it will help me."

Angela:

Yeah.

Gina:

And I - I knew there was enough in the book to do that. I knew there was enough in the book to do that, and it was - was gonna be more getting it into the right hands of the people to make sure that it - they - the book sounded great to them.

Angela:

Mm-hm! Love it. So, I wanna turn our attention a little bit to something that you - you may not have had to deal with a lot in the traditional form, but how - for you, how and when did writer's block or procrastination or some other distraction from your goal, how does that show up and how did you deal with it?

Gina:

What I would typically do - ... I - my normal plan - most of the book was actually wrote - written at our local Starbucks. I ... got into a routine where I get up, go work out and then go to the Starbucks for two hours most mornings and get my first phase of writing done, and then, if I felt like I wanted to keep writing I took a block and - I took a break, and then I would go home and write for a couple more hours. But every once in awhile, it would get to where I could - I didn't have a sol - ... I'd - I didn't have a solution. And I didn't have that solution in my "what was the next thing?" Even if I had my - my in-line and all that stuff in front of me, and so, a lot of times I would go pick to do something completely different than writing, and I know a lot of people'd be ... "What?" But I would just go - I would go grocery shopping, I would just get myself out of my ... probably seven or eight times out of ten. Something would happen along the way that would be ... "Oh, I could do this!" ... that - ... the original example of, in my book, there was - the product was this special shelving, and I got the idea when I was writing - when I went to our little ... convenience store, and I saw that ... re-racking - re - re-racking stuff, and it just dawned on me, ... "Oh, my gosh, that's the product!"

Angela:

Mmm.

Gina:

And so, I've - after that happened, that first time, I thought, "You know what? I need to tune in to this." And at any time I got stuck, I did something completely different. And I thought, "I'm gonna do this 'cause I want the book to be a success." I left my writing table always with the idea, "I'm gonna go do something different. That's because I'm gonna regenerate and I wanna make this book successful by helping somebody."

Angela:

You actually listened to me, I love that! You totally get that!

Gina:

I - I - ... I think that was one of the reasons I selected this program was because, after reading - I read both your books before we talked, and it was so in line with my ... goals for working with clients. I've always felt like I've gone above and beyond, and always felt ... super important to be in that person's shoes, so it felt like a really good fit for me, in terms of my own values and vision on how - how to serve clients. And I - again, I think that - yeah, that ... really helped.

Angela:

Yes. So, this is one of the hardest lessons I ... people is, if you're struggling, go do something else as a gift to your ideal reader, and they're ... "Wait, how is shoe shopping a gift to my readers?" And I don't tell them very often that, "Hey, probably, if you show up this way, something magical is gonna happen," and I don't really think it's magic, I think that it's actually pattern matching, ... I think it's all science, but what happens is, if you can relax your brain and

get out of the amygdala, get into the prefrontal cortex because your ideal reader is somewhere in your conscious mind, those connections can just show up, so you could have seen that shelving on a different shopping trip and just not made the connection to your book. You would have seen it, but you wouldn't have really seen it and processed it in any way. And especially if you went shopping with the thought ... "This book has to get done, I'm behind schedule, I'm screwing everything up, I paid so much money to get my book done, ... how am I screwing this up again, I'm a terrible person." If you're thinking all that stuff, you're definitely not gonna see the shelving! You - ... for sure! You're lucky if you ... m - go walk out the door accidentally with a shopping cart, ... - so - so, I do think that's so powerful, how you made the connec - how you ... trusted me ... and made that connection, that's awesome. So -

Gina:

And I - I use that. I use that all the time, I use that whole technique all the time when I'm - any project that I'm working on now. And it's worked really well.

Angela:

I love it. So awesome. All right, so, let's talk about - your book was publi - when was your book published? June?

Gina:

July. It was in July.

Angela:

July. So, your book's been out for a couple of months, you've been a published author almost all summer long, what is the best thing, for you, about being a - a new author?

Gina:

I think that - the thing that I had stated - and I went back and I looked at my original application and just - trying to put myself back into - the list - some of your listeners out there thinking, if they're in my position, and I wasn't, seven or eight months ago - I went back and looked at what I wanted, and what I wanted was the ability to have a - a really - a - a way to articulate my platform about what I actually do. I've done a lot of different things and I have a lot of different skills, but I feel really passionate about what I'm feeling about right now, and - working with people right now, ... CEO's and their Number Twos, and to have this platform has enabled me quite a bit. ... I've been able to get quite a bit of traction for starting the new era in my business, I went from working for one or two clients with the idea of working with more clients, and so ... this is my sixth podcast -

Angela:

Mmm!

Gina:

- that I've been asked to do interviews on in the last four weeks - I think three weeks, actually! - and that wouldn't have happened without having the book. I've been able to get some - just this last week I've wrote on a blog post that, in my world, went ... viral, so that was really fun because ... were picking it up based on the fact that I haven't - I have a book now, and it's allowed me - I've been able - I've been asked to speak at a couple of conferences coming up, and workshops that I'm doing, all based around this platform that I'm bringing, and I'm being told - and this is the thing that's super exciting for me - I'm being told, "You know what? No one else is doing this, this is really important, you need to keep doing this."

Angela:

Mmm.

Gina:

Because I see this - I see this happening all the time. And - different, maybe, from some other topics, I really do think I'm shining a light on something that a lot of people haven't even been able to articulate, ... has such struggle with leadership teams, especially in small organizations, so it's - it's on the front end, but it's pretty exciting.

Angela:

Hm. Yeah, I think that's - I - I think that's the thing that comes up for people is, they really want - when they write a book, they really want to be seen, and then there's also this other thing of ... "But I don't want anyone to notice me." So, how ... something scary about speaking - speaking at events, doing podcasts - has there been something scary about that, or are there ways that writing the book prepared you for this stuff?

Gina:

I can't really ... - I think, doing my first couple of podcasts, I wasn't really nervous, and because I had a - I've been in leader positions my whole life. If you ask my family, they said I was born into one. I've been telling people what to do and helping them with that forever, but over the last few years I've worked pretty consistently and not get as much public speaking as I had use - I had done in the past, so getting back out and saying that I was an author and that I had done this, and doing it with a certain amount of confidence, that's a little bit of a struggle, but what was great about it is, the book - people - having so many people e-mail me and write in and saying, "Oh, my gosh, I'm not a CEO," or "I'm not a leader, but I can use this with my co-workers at work." "I can use this with my family." "I can use this with my husband." ... The model transfers - I - ... I didn't intend for that to happen, but it did. And so, having all the people that - go ahead.

Angela:

... - I was - I was t - I was to ask - asking a leading question. I love your answer, and ... about the answer I was looking in there, but I wanna talk about the competence that you have ,even

doing something scary, like being on a podcast or speaking at an event, the competence you have after being a person who wrote the book -

Gina:

Yes. Yeah.

Angela:

- versus the person who had all the same ideas for the book.

Gina:

Right.

Angela:

... In one way, nothing's happened, ... you had all these ideas for the book, but the only thing that happened is, you wrote it, but between the comments you get from people, reviewed, and just the act of having done it, you think you show up differently as a speaker, still being nervous, but just because you've done your work.

Gina:

Definitely. Absolutely, because it's so much easier for me to say, "I wrote the book, it's important for this reason," and to be the person that wrote the book makes it a lot easier and has given me a lot more confidence to even try things that I wouldn't have done before I wrote the book.

Angela:

Mmm. Right. Right. Totally. I think that's actually the big secret payoff from the book, ... yeah, you'll get clients and you'll get speaking gigs, but you could have gotten those same things before, they might have been harder to get. You could have gotten those same things before, but you couldn't have showed up to execute them in the way you can after you have ... climbed the mountain of writing and publishing a book.

Gina:

Yeah. And I - that was the one thing I - one thing I was gonna add after you said that, is that, the way I show up for my business now is completely different than before.

Angela:

Mmm.

Gina:

Because the act of writing the book and committing - and I think the commitment and the - to show up every day in the way that I'm supposed to, with my commitment to complete the book in the time frame that I needed to do that, to meet my - my commitments that I signed up when I signed my contract to write the book, was -

Angela:
Mm-hm!

Gina:
It's not that I can - if you ask anyone, I'm a super hard working person. Anybody that I've ever worked with, or worked for, will say there's no one. But the difference of showing up as a person that has a book - ... I - ... I used the - the stuff that you said, which was, :”You need to be the author before you've finished -”

Angela:
Mm.

Gina:
- and - and act as if you've written this book, because this book is done.” And I do that, now, all the time. The way I organize my work every week, I don't sit and work extra hours just to feel like I'm putting it in and it's not there, and I'm more productive in less time than I ever have had in my entire life. And that's been

Angela:
Mm. So powerful. All right, well, in our last couple of minutes, ... I ask you a question I ask all of our guests on this show, which is, if there was somebody who maybe was a - a friend of a friend, and they had wanted to write a book for a long time, and hadn't been able to do it, and they ask your advice, what advice would you give someone who wants to be an author, wants to publish in the way you have, but they're just not getting it done, what would you tell them?

Gina:
Two things. I think the first thing is, really understand what you want - identify your - your ideal reader, or who you want to really help and make that difference with, and really make that person the most important person in your life, and then set up some sort of accountability framework. And ... for me, I used the Author Incubator and the Difference Press to work through that, and it was amazing, but if they don't - if they have a different way to do their accountability, find a friend, another writing coach, somebody that will help them - hold them accountable, Put an investment, put something that's meaningful to them and - and have that accountability, because I think by not letting someone else down, ... whether it's your ideal reader or your editor or whoever your accountability partner is, you're not letting yourself down, and people don't get that.

Angela:
Beautiful. For sure. Gina Catalano is a business coach, she is a best selling author and a speaker, her book, *Tandem Leadership*, is available on amazon.com, and to find out more about Gina you can go to tandemleadershipbook.com. Gina, thank you so much for being our guest today, on the show!

Gina:

Angela, thanks so much for having me, it was wonderful.

Angela:

Awesome. Well, if you are thinking of writing a book, you are in the right place, we're here every week on Book Journeys Radio, helping to change the world one book at a time.