

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - Sept. 8, 2016

Dr. Angela Lauria with Randi Rubenstein, author of *Am I Screwing up My Kids?*

"Who am I to not write a book?" ~Randi Rubenstein

Angela:

Well, hey, hey, hey, everybody! We are back at Book Journeys Radio with another exciting episode. Super thrilled to introduce to you today the author of *Am I Screwing Up My Kids?* It's Randi Rubenstein. She's here with us and it - this is a question that you have asked yourself, I know it's a question I've asked myself. You are gonna love meeting Randi, and we're gonna talk to her, both about her book, today, and also her journey as an author, from having the idea for this book to getting it out in the world and we'll learn a little bit about what it's like since her book was published, so Randi, welcome to the show!

Randi:

Thank you for having me.

Angela:

Awesome. So, just to get things started, and so people know about ... the context of our conversation, I want you to tell people, what is *Am I Screwing Up My Kids?* about, who's it for?

Randi:

So, I wrote the book for moms, but I - it turns out that I'm having plenty - plenty of enlightened dads read it, and the subtitle is *Tools to Stay Calm, Cool, Connected and Change Patterns*, and so, I wrote the book, it - it's basically about different tools - there's eight different tools that you can use so that you can actually show up as the parent that you really wanna be and that you dreamt of being when you decided to have kids during those moments when life is not going your way and your kid's having a meltdown and you're completely triggered, and - and during those moments, you're actually able to show up as that parent you always wanted to be for your kids.

Angela:

Love that. Totally love that. So, Randi - Randi's name is actually spelled R-a-n-d-i, so it's randirubenstein.com, and if you wanna check out more about her - so, let's talk about why you wanted to write this book, obviously, one of the big challenges that people face, when writing a book, is really narrowing in on a book topic.

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

So, how did you pick this one, and why?

Randi:

So, I picked this book topic - I was teaching some parenting classes for ... starting about, maybe, ten or twelve years ago, and it was a "Conscious Parenting" program, it's basically, then, the way I've raised my kids, it's a great program, there's a lot of really good tools and information in it, and ... did it wholeheartedly. But what I was finding is that, it's really easy to learn parenting tools and how to do it differently - that's the easy part. The hard part is actually applying those tools when you need them the most, because what happens is, is - you've taken all the time to read things or attend the workshops, and you've learned all of these things that makes so much sense and you're thinking, "Wow, I wish I was raised this way," and then you're in life as a regular parent, and - and when you find yourself in those moments, basically, when the shit's hitting the fan, you start operating from all your old programs and your old patterns from the way you were raised, and you - then, you feel totally guilty afterwards.

Angela:

Mm.

Randi:

And so, I was finding, when I was - ... after someone would take my class and they were just totally on the path, I check back in with them and I could just hear the "Well, I wish I could do it the way you do it. I wish that ... -

Angela:

Mmm.

Randi:

"- ... I don't know, I just - I don't know if I'm cut out for this," and I ... started noticing that there was a gap in really being able to apply all of these amazing conscious parenting tools, and ... it's the ones that I teach and there's a lot of other great programs out there that teach 'em. But what good would they do if you can't actually use them when you need 'em? Then you just feel like a big failure -

Angela:

Mm.

Randi:

- and ... you wasted all your time learning stuff, and you know what you're doing wrong, and you know there's a better way to do it, but you ... - you're not doing it. And so - so, I was sensing a lot of "mom guilt," and - ... "I know better, but I'm not doing better," and -

Angela:

Mm-hm.

Randi:
- and it really - it

Angela:
Yes, I ... how it feels!

Randi:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
I think that's a really good way to capture it, is ... "But I do know better."

Randi:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
... It's really cute to say, "If you know better, you do better," but ... I know better, and then, when it's eight fifteen and we're supposed to leave the house at eight ten, suddenly everything I know is no longer working anymore.

Randi:
Right! Right, and - and - and - and so - and so, I really wanted to help people, ... I - I - I fall in love with everyone that I work with, and when I was ... teaching classes, I was just so hopeful for all these families and I wanted to share this thing that I had ... found and - and what was making my family so much better, and me feel better as a person. I wanted to share it and really build a community, and then I was just sensing this hopelessness and I thought, "I've got to do something that is ... graduate level work, basically, for the parenting classes" -

Angela:
Mmm.

Randi:
- so that people can really apply these things in their lives. And so, that's why I wrote it.

Angela:
Mm. Absolutely love that. So, let's talk about how you envisioned the project being complete. When you got the idea, what were you imagining, and how is it similar to or different from what you ended up with?

Randi:
Hm. You mean, when I - when I first signed up to si - to write a book with you?

Angela:

Yeah, when you thought - 'cause I think, a lot of times, people think, "I wanna do a book, I wanna be a New York Times best seller!" ... they have these ideas.

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

So, how was the idea of being an author - ... how was that ... different from what it actually looked like? A lot of people picture writing alone for two or three years - ... people have an image of what it's gonna be like to write a book, what it's gonna be like to get it out in the world. What - what surprised you about your process, that was different from when you started?

Randi:

Okay, well, now, I'll just totally stroke your ego, because it was totally different. It felt like a very daunting task, but yet, there was some fire within me that felt ... I - I just - ... I had people over the years saying, ... when I was on whatever, soapbox at the moment, "You should write a book! You should write a book." And I really felt ... "Okay, but who am I to write a book? I'm not even a writer."

Angela:

Mm.

Randi:

And - and - and then, I just kept ... getting that call, and - and I just thought ... "Oh, I guess I can write a book," and then I read a little bit about ... - I'm ... a fact finder, as you know, and - and I researched you and talked to you multiple times, and I felt ... "Okay, maybe this is doable!" And so, when - I really was so ... "Who am I to write a book? I don't even know how to write," once I joined with you, it really broke it down in such a simplified process, and it was about just finding my own voice and being able to write the way I speak, and - which really can't be taught, it's just a matter of tapping into that, and so, when I sat down to ... start doing the process and really writing - writing, I followed your process exactly, it was not just doable, it was joyful. And ... -

Angela:

Mmm.

Randi:

- to the - joyful to the extent that I would have to turn it off when it was time for me to ... attend to my people and do all my mom stuff, because all I wanted to do was sit down and write. So, it was just - the whole process, for me, was really ... - it was - my first time in my life that I experienced that sense of flow, and - and it was intoxicating, ... I told my husband that, the only

thing I can compare it to, which is really sad, and I probably shouldn't be saying this on a podcast, but it's like doing hard drugs when I was a teenager.

Angela:
Yeah!

Randi:
... It was a high, so I loved it.

Angela:
I'm sure there is some sort of endorphin hit, or there's some sort of hormonal thing that happens.

Randi:
Mm. Mm-hm. Because it - yeah.

Angela:
Especially when you're in that state of flow and you're not struggling to write. So, I wanna talk ... super - ... it's super mundane, it's so mundane, I've never talked about it on a podcast before -

Randi:
Mm.

Angela:
- but I remember, when you were writing your book, you actually had some physical challenges. I think you had some neck issues and maybe a headache -

Randi:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
- and we never talk about that, as writers, ... if we were football players, we'd be talking about how our knees were affected, or whatever, all the time, but we never talk about the body and writers - and being a writer.

Randi:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
I know ... when I've written books, ... it sounds silly to say it, but ... my ass is ... literally numb for days.

Randi:
Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Angela:
And ... nobody talks about that. But you had - you had some - some self-care work that you had to do while you were writing, 'cause your neck was talking to you.

Randi:
Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Angela:
Can you talk to us about that, and how you dealt with it?

Randi:
Yeah, I - I really did, I r - I had a - I had a major neck ache and it was really - ... I think it was my body talking to me, I think it was just me ... feeling a lot of stress, and - and I had to work through it because it was - ... it's easy to just ... focus on the pain and that would take me out of flow.

Angela:
Mmm.

Randi:
And so, I had to - I - I just was paying very close attention to my body and my posture, and how - and ... where I was writing, ... I couldn't be - ... I like to write in bed, and that - ... that angle was really wreaking havoc on my body. And so, for me to be able to access the words in that state of flow and really get out my message from within, I had to set myself up differently, ... I sat at a table, I was real careful about ... pulling in my core and having really great posture, and once I paid attention to my body, then my neck started feeling better and I was able to access that state of flow again.

Angela:
... That's so important, it don't - it totally does, but here's what I - okay, this is my take on all this.

Randi:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
Whatever - what - maybe it's whatever the weakest link is, but w - whatever is going to show up in your life is going to show up when you're writing a book.

Randi:
Mmm.

Angela:
So, if you have bills, you're gonna get extra bills. If you have a little neckache, you're gonna get a big neckache -

Randi:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
- and I think all those things are the reason - they're not the actual reasons, but they're the reasons that people attribute to not finishing your book. I've heard people say ... "Oh, I was writing a book but then I got carpal tunnel."

Randi:
Mmm. Mm-hm.

Angela:
Or ... "I was writing a book, but then, I got pneumonia," ... whatever all the things are that happen, and one thing I think you did really beautifully is to ... pay attention to that and listen to it, but not from a victim mentality of, "Oh, well, this means I have to go home early," or "This means I'm not gonna be able to write," but just ... -

Randi:
Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Angela:
- "Okay, here is the situation, ... my body's talking to me. I'm gonna listen, but that doesn't mean we're not gonna find a way to get this done, even if my preference is to be laying in bed, I'm gonna be sitting up at a table," or, "I'm gonna make these modifications, but it doesn't mean I'm not gonna get it done," or "I'm gonna use it as an excuse that other people - even if other people would say, 'Yeah, that's a really good reason not to finish.'" Could you ... -

Randi:
...

Angela:
- left early and had some story about ... "I couldn't write, there's no point in me being there?"

Randi:

Well - and - and now that you're saying it, I think it was actually my body telling me, "Get out of bed. ... Take action and get out of bed."

Angela:

Mmm.

Randi:

And I don't know that I would have had the same book if I - and I'm really proud of the book, I'm - when I read back over and I'm ... "Ooh, I wrote that?"

Angela:

Mm-hmm.

Randi:

... I don't - I don't even think it would be the same book if I had written it in such a comfort zone, it's almost ... I needed to be at a table and - where it felt more ... a professional situation, ... I was at a desk and I was at a table, and I think I was able maybe to even access a different voice than I would have had been writing it from the bed.

Angela:

I love that. That's just - it's amazing. So, let's talk about - let's talk about writer's block. Were there writer's block, procrastination, any sort of delays. Are there - are there delays that you were facing in writing your book or places where you didn't know what to say, and what did you do when that came up?

Randi:

Because I think you do such a beautiful job getting people into that author's feeling state, and just the way you break down writing the book - and I think, really, the format of the "Three Days to Done" worked for me, because it really kept me ... on task and accountable, every time I sat down during those chunks of time, when it was writing time, I was voracious. I did not have any writer's block. And I was annoyed, even when those chunks of time were done, and the music would come on,

Angela:

Oh, yeah, ... to take a break. Mm-hm.

Randi:

No! I'm an extremist! Yeah, I'm an extremist, so I was ... "Ugh, gosh, what is the deal here?" And - and I just wanted to keep going and going and going and so then, when the break was over and it was time to go back, I was so ... to get back.

Angela:
Mm.

Randi:
So, I did not have - ... really, I did, ... forty-five years old, I experienced the state of flow for the first time in my life. I was never ... an athlete or - ... I just never - I just - I never experienced that I can remember. ... maybe I did as a kid, but not since I can remember. And so, it was really intoxicating and it's ... addictive, and so, i loved that part of it. The only part where I would say I had procrastination was the ... - the editing part, and the editing part, I just kept ... wanting to put off, because it was - ... it's ... I write this thing, but then, it's ... - you get feedback, and you could change things and

Angela:
Mmm.

Randi:
For me, that was - that was hard, ... I kept ... just wanting to put my head in the sand and pretend that it was all okay, ... and - and so, what -

Angela:
...

Randi:
- what I ended up doing was, I copied the model that you had set in "Three Days to Done," and I went and I left my family and - we've got a place, close by, at the beach, and I went and literally holed myself up for thirty-six hours and wrote and - and edited and rewrote and did all the stuff I needed to do in two minutes - I mean, two hour blocks -

Angela:
Mm. Two hours.

Randi:
And I followed the - yes. I was ... - y - and I - and I followed that model, and I literally just worked ... almost non-stop in the same - and I was in the same state for thirty-six hours and I knocked it out.

Angela:
I never knew that! You didn't tell me that, that's fascinating.

Randi:
Mm-hm.

Angela:
I love that.

Randi:
Mm. Mm-hm.

Angela:
Because .. that it's a program, that's brilliant.

Randi:
Yeah, it really worked for me. Mm.

Angela:
'Cause everyone struggled with the editing, it's ... "Well now, it's done, can somebody else just fix it and finish it? Why do I have to finish it?" This is

Randi:
Right. Right. And I wanna ... -

Angela:
Awesome.

Randi:
- you didn't like it, I really just - ... I thought it was ... - it was ... a bruise to my ego, every time ... - and I was ... "Ooh, I don't wanna read that. I'll - I'll ... the ... 'til tomorrow. I think I'll put it off 'til tomorrow."

Angela:
Yup.

Randi:
And then, finally, it was ... "No," and I know what worked for me, and I had such a good time doing it, I'm gonna go do that. And - and that was really - and it was really ... - before I had gotten - I was on this journey, I would have never said to my face - especially after ... having been in Washington, whenever I would have left my family during the week ... when ... asked my husband to hold down the fort, again, and I just said, "Look, I think I need to do this," and he was ... "Yeah," And so, it was really cool for our relationship, too, yeah.

Angela:
Oh, I love that. So, let's talk about what's happened since your book came out. How do you think you have changed, personally, and then, how has it changed you as a coach?

Randi:

It's changed me personally, it's given me a lot more confidence, and - and really allowed me to believe in myself, I think. I finally have some awar - I have something that feels like such a big accomplishment, and it's - and - and ... - I'm not just talking about it. And - and it's really amazing to ... - i - it's one thing to have hopes and dreams and "Maybe one day," but to say ... "I did this, here it is," has been huge for me, it really has been, and I feel really proud - I feel really proud of myself.

Angela:

That's awesome. I love that ...

Randi:

... And what has it done for me as a ... - the thing I didn't - I was just telling a client this morning. The thing I didn't anticipate was how much it made - just - it would make my coaching program more successful and - and really produce bigger results for people, because I just didn't realize - ... having - so, I'm taking people through the program in the book, in a deeper dive way, and - and it's amazing to have this curriculum format where they read ... a chapter, they do a homework assignment, and then we have a coaching session and we talk about what they've learned and we apply it to their lives -

Angela:

Yes. Right.

Randi:

- and it's a super powerful way for people to learn, and I'm just seeing huge results in eight weeks, and it feels - ... it feels amazing, so I just really feel like I'm able to deliver in a bigger way.

Angela:

I think that - and that was one of the biggest surprises for me. I had been doing book coaching and editing and playing a role in people's books for about seventeen years before I wrote down the Difference Process -

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

- and I'd even said - I think I remember arguing - ... argue for your limitations, you get to keep them.

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

So, I just said ... "There is no process." What I do with every single person totally depends on the author and where they are, I'm ... "There's not way to have a process," I really rebelled against that.

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

And when I finally wrote down a process - I had a friend who was just ... "Well, let's just see, ... what are the things you say most often to people?" And when she started asking, I was ... "Oh, there kind of is a process." ... I do it differently with everyone -

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

- but there are ... ten things that I say to everyone, in different ways, with different outcomes, and once I wrote that down, it was ... immediately. It took me two hours to write it down, and it got refined, ... over time, it - it took me two hours to write down the first ten. The next time I got on a phone with a client, I was a better coach.

Randi:

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Angela:

'Cause I knew right where they were in the process. I knew what they had done and what they hadn't done. ... it was - it - having that framework completely changed me as a coach.

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

I got so much better results for my clients, that I knew what was missing, I knew what I had to cover, I knew what I had to go deeper on, and then, after the book was done, and I love - I've never seen anyone do it exactly the way you're doing it, but it's brilliant. It's ... - you're gonna go read this chapter, that's great. ... We've all read lots of books. But now, we're gonna take a week and work together and actually apply it.

Randi:

Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Angela:

So powerful. It's so different than just teaching - ...you could teach this information, and people could go home and do it on their own -

Randi:

Mm-hm.

Angela:

- but I think they don't have that accountability of working with a coach, you're probably never gonna get around to it.

Randi:

Yeah. Yeah, I - I - I think it's made me a better coach, a more effective coach, and - and that - and that just builds momentum for me to - ... I've been - ... I'm ... a perpetual learner, but I've been bringing a lot of new - ... modalities into my coaching and my life, just based on what I am learning from my clients as I take them through this process, and it's ... there needs to be more ... of that kind of energetic work, and more of them understanding that this is something bigger than just words, there needs to be experiences -

Angela:

Mmm.

Randi:

- and - and so, it's just ... - it's really been - it's really been very powerful for me, yeah.

Angela:

So, I remember your ideal reader, you talked about your book being a love letter to this one person. The clients you have worked with, what are they like, and how do they compare to the person who you imagined you were writing the book for?

Randi:

... It's funny. Client - the client that I wrote it for, she really is a distractor and she puts her head in the sand and she checks out and she numbs out, and then she feels super guilty that she's not showing up in a present way for her kids, and she - she struggles with anxiety, and recently somebody added me to a moms' group and she's in it - moms that have kids with anxiety.

Angela:

Mmm.

Randi:

And all of the posts are ... "Get by ... book on medication!"

Angela:
Yeah. Mm-hm.

Randi:
“Does anybody know ... a child ... therapist that focuses on anxiety?” ... All they wanna do is to send their kids somewhere to be fixed. And there’s no talk about doing the work themselves. And - and - and it’s interesting, she’s in that group, and - and so, I’ve been ... putting some posts out there, I’ve been pretty brazen, ... “When the mom is calm, the kids calm down.”

Angela:
Mm-hm.

Randi:
And - and just - and ... anxiety ... - anxiety talked about in this negative way in our society, but really, it could be ... of superpower, and this is live.

Angela:
Mm-hm.

Randi:
And really ... doing some thought turn around and - and - and saying ... it’s about taking action yourselves. And - and it’s funny, because I do have several clients that have been drawn to me through the book, who struggle with anxiety themselves, and they see it in their kids, and then, once we start coaching, they realize ... “Oh,” and they - ... they come forth, “Well, actually, I’ve been on anxiety meds,” or - ... whatever, for however many years, and I - ... and I - and I teach them how to listen to their body, and there’s been handful of them that ... after our would - our coaching is done, they’re - ... they’re sending me a message, “Off of my med, feeling great.” And so, I do think that that is my ideal reader, but interestingly enough, I have been having huge results with the moms who are ... on the other side of the spectrum, where they are the yellers and the more aggressive moms, and - and lately, I’ve actually been gearing some of my blogs for them, because it’s been super fun to work with those moms, because, man, they’re action takers and to just soften that aggression to a place of assertiveness is really not a very difficult thing to do, because they just get it, and they are just ... read - they - they feel guilty they’ve been yelling, but they’re also ... take charge people, so I - I - I really have been enjoying working with the yellers. So -

Angela:
...

Randi:
- and that’s - and that’s - ... and my ideal reader, she’s a closet yeller, ..., she’s the one that y - seems like the camp counselor who would never think was yelling at her kids behind those

doors, and in private, she is yelling her head off, ... she's starting ... camp counselory, and it always is ending in a power struggle and her losing her cool.

Angela:
Yup.

Randi:
So, ... I really think that that - ... what I've been saying lately when people say, "What do you do?" I say, "I help moms keep their cool during heated moments." And that's really ... it, in a nutshell.

Angela:
Yeah. All right, in our last couple of minutes of the show, I would love for you to share your advice to somebody who has a message, has a passion - obviously, conscious parenting has been a passion of yours for a long time - they would love to make a difference with it, but they're not sure how to get their book finished. What would you say to somebody who's in that situation?

Randi:
... Obviously, your program worked for me, I have a book, and - I have a book ...

Angela:
But I'm really not looking for a plug there, ... what's the - what do you think - because part of it is my program, but what do you think you did differently that allowed you to get the book finished?

Randi:
Hm. What did I do differently that allowed me to get the book finished? I think I just - ... there's that saying of, "You become like the five people you surround yourself with, so choose wisely"? I think I started surrounding myself with action takers.

Angela:
Mm-hm.

Randi:
And - and people who had accomplished what I would like to accomplish.

Angela:
Mm.

Randi:
And it's let me know that this is super doable, and ... who am I to write a book? Who am I to not write a book? If I've been called to do this, and I feel so passionate about it that I want to talk

about it all the time, ... I need to stop talking about it to people who don't wanna hear it, and get something out there so that the people who do want to hear it can find me, and I can help them.

Angela:

I love it. Perfect last words, Randi Rubenstein - stein - Rubenstein or Rubenstein? Rubenstein.

Randi:

Rubenstein. Yes, you got it.

Angela:

Yes. Randi Rubenstein, I just forgot who you were. Randi Rubenstein, the author of *Am I Screwing Up My Kids?* You can find it on Amazon or at randirubenstein.com, thank you so much for being our guest!

Randi:

Thanks, Angela, thanks for everything.