

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - Nov. 10, 2016

Jenn McRobbie with Christine Erickson, author of *The Mother Within: A Guide To Accepting Your Childless Journey*.

"Don't go at it alone." ~Christine Erickson

Jenn:

Well hello, everybody! Welcome to Book Journeys Radio. It's November tenth, 2016, and if you're listening from the United States or have been near the news at all, you know we are two days post- our big election results, and as a result, I'm super excited to talk to our author today about her book that's titled *The Mother Within: A Guide To Accepting Your Childless Journey*. As you know, we speak to authors every week to talk about what it was like to go from an idea for a book to a finished book to making a difference in the world, and our author today, Christine Erickson, talks about how we can come together as women, whether we are childless by choice or by circumstance, or if we had children, and I think it's a really important message for us today. So, without further ado, welcome, Christine!

Christine:

Thank you Jenn! It's great to be here.

Jenn:

I'm so happy to have you on here. Christine and I published our books around the same time, in 2015, and we realized we haven't really talked to each other since then. And so -

Christine:

I know!

Jenn:

Exactly! So, if we get a little too chatty, listeners, accept our apologies now. It's old friends coming together.

Christine:

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Jenn:

So, Christine, I always ask people in the beginning, if they can just tell the listeners a little bit about their book and who it's for.

Christine:

Definitely. Well, I really wrote this book to focus on childless women - women who are childless by circumstance, or not by choice. There's - there's a lot written about the process of IDF and different processes about women that is more acceptable to talk about or it's becoming - there's

more literature on it, but there's also about those social areas of - ... not having the right partner - choosing very consciously about circumstances in one's life and then not having that happen - not having children. Oftentimes, we think that that's something that's just - that choice is always there and it's a matter of making it, and our lives evolved in different ways and suddenly we're at a point of either having to make that choice or not having the opportunity to make that choice in ways that we couldn't have imagined.

Jenn:
Right!

Christine:
And so, it really was coming to share my story from that perspective - perspective and to reach that audience, but also speak to all of us as women, ..., where - where does this division happen in this conversation, where shame has shown up around this, women without children, a - across the spectrum, by choice or by circum - not - or by circumstance, not having children. And so, I really think it's beautiful portal for us to have a new conversation as women, to not be divisive and to look at where those commonalities are, not only in our lives as women but in - in so much - a perspective of a maternal heart.

Jenn:
Yes.

Christine:
Our maternal hearts don't go away, women who wanted to have children and didn't. That is very much a presence in our lives.

Jenn:
I love that, having a maternal heart. That - that is such a lovely concept, because it is true of all of the women that I know. They have maternal hearts, whether they have children or not.

Christine:
Yeah. And it's - ... - the pain, the grief comes in that unexpressed connection or love. It's that way of being or feeling or that lands on life, how we treat people, how we hold our relationships, it's still alive, a - and it sustains, ..., without having children, and that's the real pain stops.

Jenn:
Yes. Yes, I can imagine. I - I feel lucky, because I have children, and I wasn't diagnosed with a circumci - ... I had cancer, and before all of my treatments my doctors ... said, "You have to decide, ..., what you're going to do with your fertility," and luckily my husband and I had already decided that our family was complete, but I have so many friends with - that wasn't the circumstance, and you're right, the pain runs so deep.

Christine:

Right. And there are those crossword - crossroads, too, women who do have children, who maybe wanted a larger family. Or who have gone through miscarriages, or a child that came to term and passed, There are so many phases where women, we come together with that - ... that really deep experience of grief and love, that is not so different. How we get there is very different.

Jenn:

Yes, I agree. I agree. Well, without - and you don't have to divulge any personal information or anything, but you could have mentioned that you came to this topic from a personal experience. So, why did you come out wanting to write about this topic?

Christine:

I reached a point in my life where I realized it was - I was probably not going to have a child. And going through my own grief process of that brought into it a really poignant moment, where I was sitting in this comfy chair - big chair in my home office. And I just started crying, and it was - with just an overwhelming love, and I thought, "But I have a mother within me, I am a mother within me!" It literally ... like that. And I thought, "That is so beautiful, how could I give that up?" And the decision - the choice point in that moment, ... to say to myself, "I don't have to, this is who I am, ... have a child or not," whether I bring the child or not. This is a beautiful part of who I am, in - in my instance, and

Jenn:

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Christine:

And I bring that to my way of being in the world, and so, being able to im - embrace that was really part of the beginning of my journey of acceptance.

Jenn:

I love that. I absolutely love that. But because it's such a personal topic, was it hard to write about it?

Christine:

Parts of it were. I was - there were parts of my surprise in the writing process, "Oh, my back just went out!" "Oh, wait, my neck hurts really bad,"

Jenn:

Oh, no!

Christine:

Yeah, actually, my back was up for a long time, and it was always correlated to what I was writing about, ... know this, right? From my coaching and my ... learning, but this is happening to me now, So, there were parts, ..., the - the choose - telling pieces of how to say things in honoring my experience of it, and respecting the other people involved, ... whether it's my family or it's someone who had said something to me, ..., how to be open and put it out there to support other people going through this, but really doing it in this way that was not damaging,

Jenn:

Right!

Christine:

Yeah. And ... - I think, whenever we choose to write something down, we - at least, for me, ... I really have to look at it, ... difference in letting a psycho in your head, over and over again, and that's its own issue.

Jenn:

Right!

Christine:

But really down and getting - getting it out, it's - wow, ... it's a release, and it - but before the release, for me, there was a lot - there was a lot of physical pain.

Jenn:

Wow.

Christine:

Yeah.

Jenn:

I'm so glad you brought that up, actually, because ... I'm sure that a lot of people that listen to Book Journeys Radio are in ... the self-help field because ... - primarily the types of books that we write at the Author Incubator, but I don't think they all are, and - and I think it's so important to acknowledge how our bodies respond to the release of information as we write book.

Christine:

Right. Yeah, with - beautiful. And then, I also knew that I was hitting on my truth, I thought - it was something I was holding onto very tightly here.

Jenn:

Wow. So, how did you work through all of that, ... you had coaching tools, how could someone without those coaching tools work through those pain points?

Christine:

... well, maybe with a coach. ... But I - I think it's really - what helped me - ... I'll come back to the tools, 'cause there were many things that I did. But the - the process - because the process was efficient, I didn't have to stay in it. I moved through it, and so, I think breezing through that process of, okay, I've met this now, my back has jammed up, okay?

Jenn:

Right!

Christine:

What's next, ...? How do I keep moving with this? How do I acknowledge it, and it was by continuing to write! It wasn't the right - that didn't create the writer's block, it just meant that I had reached that point, or that's how I learned it, as I went through that. So, all kinds of things, from meditation, breathing, and visualizing it, visualizing the truth of it, the expression of it, who I wanted to serve, who I wanted to reach with this was a big one for me. I think a lot of the - the process, the tools, the different ... tools that Angela had, ... for me were really important, by focusing on that one reader, Focusing on who - who do I really want to write this to? It - that kept me going in a large way, because it's not so much than just about, "Oh, this is an exposure of my truth," it's a sharing of my truth, it's a connection, it's my creating the possibility for a connection that may work for someone else. So, yeah.

Jenn:

So, a lot of it is - is - is letting the process of writing and following the process - letting it get you out of your own head.

Christine:

Yes. And - absolutely, I kept thinking about that, what's today is, what works? Why did it work for me? I'm - I overanalyze and procrastinate, I do all these crazy things. And I can recycle ideas in my head for ... decades.

Jenn:

Oh, yes.

Christine:

Yeah, and it's what I love about - ... I coach primarily with horses, working with horses with people, and so, it's the same thing that I love about that work, it's so efficient because it gets me and my clients out of their head, ... you're in the present moment, and that's what this process kept bringing me back to, it's ..., "Well, I can hang out there, but there's a deadline and the desire to really finish this." I really never didn't want to not - not finish it, And ... - and it was messy. And it was messy, ...? Had a developmental editor, ... bless her heart, I was ... "Yeah, I don't write straight chapters, apparently," ... But trust me, I did want - I am going to get this done, it's not gonna look like that, So, I learned a lot about myself and the process, and I

was ... “Oh, I’ve been trying to make it work a certain way for a long time.” And that’s just not how I write. But having a container allowed me to do that, even though it didn’t match the process necessarily exactly, ..., so that was a really ... great help.

Jenn:

So important. So important to understand that - that the process of writing a ... revealing your truth on paper, that it really brings us around to who we are, in a bigger way.

Christine:

Yes, definitely. Definitely.

Jenn:

So, you mentioned writer’s block, did you have writer’s block at any time?

Christine:

No, Jenn, it was really

Jenn:

Did you ... Christine? ... I have had authors on here who that ... - oh, I’m so jealous of you, that would be so lucky.

Christine:

Like you said, yeah. ... It was that - ... that really spinning process of - I think what - what I learned, I mean, a lot of what I just mentioned was about figuring out how I write best, and how that was, was allowing it to come. “Oh, okay, this is my idea, over here.” But having the tool of the inline organizational tool up front is what kept bringing me back to it, as opposed to, “Well, now I’m all over the place,” and “not all over the place” goes over here and I can come back to it, or if my energy’s on that right now, I’m gonna develop that more.

Jenn:

Right.

Christine;

Yeah. So, that - that really helped.

Jenn:

So, that helped you work through the writer’s block.

Christine:

Yeah! Yeah. And also, ... not staying in the perfectionism or the whole vision in terms of ... - really taking it piece by piece and not - ... I think, leading up to choosing to write this book in publish at that time. ... I look at the whole picture of things, so I hold that, ... “I must write the book today.” And when I stopped doing that, and stopped holding on to ... this product or

package and really looked - focused at - at the pieces of what I was sharing, it just - it did become more fluid, and it made more sense to me.

Jenn:

It's so interesting to me, because everyone is so different, Some people need to visualize that finished product in their hands in order to really connect with it, and you needed to connect with the process. I love that.

Christine:

Yes. Yes. 'Cause that's what I learned about myself, ...? ... writing, it was ... "Oh, okay, this is - this is how I process this, this is what I need to do." Yeah.

Jenn:

So, now that you know that about yourself, have you applied that lesson to other things in your life, like your coaching, to further writing?

Christine:

Oh, absolutely, I used the ... I know, the timing, even just working through - it can be an article!
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Jenn:

Wow! That's great!

Christine:

Yeah, I absolutely use that. When I start writing and I get stuck and I start thinking about the whole thing again, I more easily back it up, definitely. Definitely.

Jenn:

Okay.

Christine:

Giving myself permission, that space, has probably been a life - or, not giving that permission has probably been a lifelong pattern, so also giving myself less time to do things? ... when I was in college, I could write - if I wrote a paper three weeks ahead I wouldn't edit it until it wasn't even recognizable.

Jenn:

I didn't even think it was possible to write - I didn't think it was possible to write that far ahead.

Christine:

Not necessarily better. Yeah, so I - it just - it wasn't worth - it was more stressful. It wasn't much ... stressful to me. But it took me a long time to figure that out, and not because I had several papers done.

Jenn:

That's interesting, that it was more stressful to have more time, and that, when you give yourself very defined, short deadlines, it actually decreases the stress.

Christine:

Yes. For me, it a - it absolutely did. ... it doesn't mean that - that the process wasn't messy and it wasn't stressful and you can't have blocks - I had all of those things, but also an end in sight, and that was really valuable to me. And it was ... all or nothing, I'm either gonna do this or not.

Jenn:

Right.

Christine:

It wasn't in-between, well, maybe, or, what I kind of like doing is.... - ... I was all in, So, that made a big difference, I was ... "Oh, three months." And then, I started thinking, "Well, what else have I not done?" ... have done in three months?

Jenn:

You could have done it in three months, exactly!

Christine:

Yeah! And I know some people who write in a weekend or three days, But I get it, I get that focus, it's ... - also, when I was in school, ... my undergrad ..., I think they called it J-term now, like an ...? Where you just focus on one class per month, and I realized that I really loved that, I love focusing on something intensely, like that, getting through it, so it really worked for me.

Jenn:

Oh, that's so great. What - what's the best thing that's come out of having written your book?

Christine:

Oh, definitely the connection with other women. And really even learning more about what I wrote and where women are and how they're living with this, I have my own experience, and I have my understanding from what I was wrote, but to really have those personal exchanges and - ... I do retreats with the horses also, we did one last in August, and it's been wonderful to connect with other authors who have written in this space. And part of why I decided to write was to contribute to that. This wasn't what I was going to write about first or at that time, and I thought, "Well, this is so present for me right now, and this is what i'm living, this is what I'm observing." It's a part of ... what I'm looking at, but it's an important part, and there aren't so many voices in this space, and so, connecting with women who are writing on the spectrum of women not having children, has really been beautiful, too. And so, I've collaborated in that space.

Jenn:

Yup. Oh, I love that. I love hearing that putting yourself out there actually resulted in more connection and not less. Because I think sometimes there's a fear, when you're putting such a personal story out there, that - that you will be ... rejected.

Christine:

Yes. Yes. Absolutely. Or that ... - and in this space, I do think there is a lot of warranted ... sensitivity of how we got there, What our different journeys look like. What are the diagnosis versus the decision, what are ... - I get that, it's really sensitive, ... it's like how, so often, just as a gen - in general, we compare pain, and I think, "Well, if you believe your pain, then ... believe you." ... So, is my experiences worse than yours, or ... - that's how I But - but there's that ...

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Jenn:

Not a competition, right?

Christine:

Yeah. Yeah. How you I - I recognize your grief. I may not be living with the same, but I recognize it.

Jenn:

Right. Do you feel that those connections have helped you nurture your mother within, your maternal instincts?

Christine:

Absolutely. ... this retreat that we did in August, that was so special, it's a special collaboration with a woman who's really a pioneer in this space from the UK, Jodi Day, and runs a beautiful online community and she has for, I think, I forget how many years now. And watching, seeing that's not just the grief but that love come out of the women and how they connected with the horses, I think it's one of the most beautiful things that I've ever observed. ... it was - it was so humbling and such a privilege to observe it and to facilitate it and really be in that without with other women that could see each other, ..., and understanding in that safe container of, "Okay, we all got here differently," as I said, but we - we understand this, and you get to be that, in that space, I remember one woman, she said, "Well, why is this happening, or why is the horse always coming to my heart?" I forget what the exact situation was, ... because you're extending that maternal expression, ... that's who you are! And I just - those moments just give me chills, and I think this is so honest, it's so heartfelt. Yeah.

Jenn:

It's funny you say that, because I was just covered in chills while you were talking about that, ... it sounds like such a fantastic experience, for the listeners who've never experienced equine coaching, or don't even know what it is, can you give them ... a little trimmer on it?

Christine:

Sure. Yeah, the coaching work with horses, or learning with horses, is really about the opportunity to see how we're showing up - how our energy is showing up, what we're expressing at a given time. And horses, because they are so in the present energy - they're aware, they're bright animals, and so, they rely on their awareness, extending out ... from the immediate environment out to the horizon, and what is going on for their safety. So, they - they bring ... into the present. So, sometimes, ... maybe in a coaching session, let's say, you wanna work on something or address something, but what really underneath that comes out much more organically with the horses. There's not a judgement - the horse is just responding to you out of the way a horse is.

Jenn:

Right.

Christine:

They're not saying, "I don't like you," "I don't love you," or "Now, I really love you," and maybe later, "I want -" ... it's not about that assessment that we do with humans, it's about a connection, are you connecting with your truth? And they assess that in different ways than we - we might, in that your truth doesn't mean you're all aligned in a way that everything's pretty and it's wrapped in a nice bow, it's about, are you angry right now? Are you grieving right now? And showing up with the truths of that. And that's what's connective for horses, because if you are expressing that truth, then you're taking care of yourself and your space to be in their face, and in that herd.

Jenn:

And then, after you've had this experience you then can translate that into how you interact with other humans?

Christine:

Absolutely. Your communication, your presence, how you enter a room or not, how you - how you greet somebody, how - ... how is your energy influencing things and not, first for yourself, and then in your relationships, and then in the larger environment that you operate and live in, ..., in business, or - yeah.

Jenn:

It's such a valuable thing, and something that I think - in particular, women don't always evaluate about themselves, ..., how they're just ... existing in the world, how - the energy they're putting out.

Christine:

Right. Right. And - and primarily, starting with what energy are we giving ourself, ..., I - I tend - as I did in the book, I tend to get things in the horse work as well as from the perspective of self, other and then the world or your environment. And - ... me, I - I grew up really orienting myself

toward other ... - how to appease to avoid certain consequences, and I think of many - many of us do that. And so, coming back to that orientation of, first, how am I being with myself, and how am I supporting and honoring that, ..., what I really feel, what I really need, how to speak that, and then moving into the relationship space of, "Okay," or - or the service space, as so many of the Difference Press authors are, ... serve.

Jenn:
Right.

Christine:
How showing up for that other from us, a space of having taken care of yourself looks very different, and horses require that of us.

Jenn:
That's interes - that's fascinating.

Christine:
And then, ... from an organizational perspective, or your business, then the larger environment, are you interacting with others you - your clients or vendors or whatever it might be, what does that look like, ... what ... that, and how is that ... in alignment with you,

Jenn:
That - that's - I think that's so important, that it's all about alignment, right? Alignment between our heads, our hearts, and then where our feet are taking us.

Christine:
Right! And just giving ourselves permission to choose that, to learn what that feels like, pay attention when - when we feel that, and how to keep recreating that and expanding that. And it's not ... perfect line or ... the right - the right action, it's just about honoring that - that journey and - and paying attention to that.

Jenn:
Right! Well now, your book obviously is - is aimed at - at women, but have you heard from any men that have benefited from your message also?

Christine:
I have, actually. And I wasn't - it's not that I wasn't expecting that, but it was a pleasant surprise. Men actually, in this space, are not even counted in the statistics. I think ... - one country that is starting to do that - I forget who it is, ... UK or Australia, and I could be wrong in both of those, And it's less spoken of, and there are ... - they experience very similar things and very different things. Their age ... to reproduce and their opportunities are different, but their ways of organizing in themselves and - or among themselves, One man who has a blog, an older blog about it, and - but it's really an unspoken space,

Jenn:

I imagine!

Christine:

And it's - yeah.

Jenn:

You know, men have that desire to nurture within themselves, also.

Christine:

Yes, absolutely, there's - there's grief, there's a similar process, and yet, there's different social feedback around it, which is why I focus on women, ... being a woman - but also, it's very - ... the push back and the assessments are really different, which is also interesting. Yeah. But not to minimize their experience,

Jenn:

Right!

Christine:

It actually shuts down the - the expression of that experience when it's not acknowledged in other ways. Yes.

Jenn:

Right. Right. And - and in some ways, worse for men than for women. Well, we are withdrawing to a close already, and I - I have ... a million things I'd love to talk to you about, but I always like to ask our authors if they have any advice for someone who's listening, who just isn't - completed their book. What advice would you give to that person?

Christine:

I def - I definitely, definitely, out of this process, would take - don't - don't go at it alone, and work with the process, ... and it doesn't have to be a decade long, Even if you utilize this process to - to get a - a - the framework done, that'll be a lot for ... - I think that would be a lot, and you can get it done. But just - not going it alone, ... I'm a real do-it-yourselfer, ... I'll learn things out of frustration for ... programming or whatever, I don't wanna do this, Find somebody that does back end that knows what they're doing, focus on what you're good at. You take it piece by piece, ... - and then there will be a book at the end. But, yeah, and be kind to yourself in the process.

Jenn:

Aw, be kind to yourself. ... with that message, we're gonna close down this episode of Book Journeys Radio, thank you so much, Christine, this has been both enlightening and warming for my heart, to talk to you.

Christine:

Oh, thank you, good to speak with you, take good care.

Jenn:

I will, and for all of our listeners who want to find Christine, you can find her book, *The Mother Within: A Guide to Accepting Your Childless Journey*, on Amazon. You can also find her at the motherwithin.com or on Facebook, and her coaching website is onelegacycoaching.com. Thank you for listening and please join us next week when we speak to another author about how they've gone from idea to finished product to making a difference in the world. Thanks so much.