

[Book Journeys Author Interview](#) - Apr. 20, 2017

Jenn McRobbie with Sarah Richardson, author of *From Sidelines to Start Lines: The Frustrated Runner's Guide to Lacing Up for a Lifetime*.

"You really don't have to know all the answers, it'll come out in the process, and you're so worth it." ~Sarah Richardson

Jenn:

Well, hello, hello, everyone! Welcome to another episode of Book Journeys Radio, where we speak to accomplished authors who've gone from just having an idea for a book to a finished book, out making a difference in the world. Today's author, Sarah Richardson - and I'm super excited to talk to her because it's April and I don't know where you're listening from, but here in the United States, spring has officially sprung and Sarah Richardson is a running coach. Her book is titled *From Sidelines to Start Lines: The Frustrated Runner's Guide to Lacing Up for a Lifetime*. So, I'm sure Sarah's gonna have some amazing insights to share with all of us who are really hoping that we're not frustrated runners anymore. So, welcome, Sarah!

Sarah:

Hi, Jenn! Thanks for having me.

Jenn:

Thank you so much for being on the show and for being a springtime show person, because I think it's the perfect time to talk about your book and your experience.

Sarah:

Yeah, it is the perfect timing.

Jenn:

So, I always ask our guests to first tell the listeners, what is your book about and who is it for?

Sarah:

Alrighty. My book is all about how to ditch your frustration if you're a runner who's been trying to get back into the sport and it just isn't working. And it's really - it's just trying to ... a roadblocking you for - ... we talk about yo-yo diets, but I talk about the yo-yo running program where people start and stop and start and stop and they hate it. It's this love-hate relationship. They know what running used to bring or they know what running can bring but they find themselves stopping and starting and stopping starting, never getting to the full benefits that running can give to you.

Jenn:

Because, honestly, you have to do it consistently in order to get the benefits that we all hear about for running, right?

Sarah:

You do! You do. It's - consistency is where the magic happens, It takes awhile to get into that, and we really need to be patient with ourselves, and ... I've gone through it myself and worked with so many clients who've just experienced the same yo-yo effects ... and it does a number on your - your self - your self awareness and ... your self-esteem, really. So, I try to help folks to do that.

Jenn:

So, is more of running or not being a frustrated runner - is that more in our minds or in our bodies?

Sarah:

It's a combination. What I have found is that, in the running industry, in the running world, it's really easy to come by what I call "aspects of the outer game." Lots of people put training programs out there, lots of people tell you what to eat, how far to run, how fast you should be going. They teach you maybe form, what shoes you should have, all the gear. I call that the outer game. That's pretty easy to come by, yet that's where people turn, and then they sign up for a race and they're ... "Wait a minute, I didn't even make it halfway through the training, what am I doing?"

Jenn:

Right!

Sarah:

... injury. And so, that's what I find, over and over, is that these frustrated runners get caught up in the start and stop cycle and often it has a lot to do with injuries, because they're forcing this outer game but they're not tapping into what they really need as a person, as a human being, what their unique needs are.

Jenn:

That's so true, Sarah, I'm - I know that as a - as an occasional frustrated runner myself, I'll get so excited - especially at this time of the year, ... it's so beautiful ... today.

Sarah:

Yeah!

Jenn:

So, why shouldn't I go out and just run ten miles? Right?

Sarah:

Right! Right. It seems so easy, and that's the - that's the misnomer, is that all you need is a pair of sneakers, it's just like getting on a bike, just get out there and do it. But when it's not easy,

then we have a tendency to blame ourselves and things that we're - ... that we're at fault, there's something wrong with me, which is ... "I can't do it." So, what I do is, I really help runners tackle not only the outer game, by customizing it for what they need, but I work with folks to really curb the inner game and shape it in a way that it fosters a loving relationship with running and exercise versus the torture, the - the "no pain, no gain" philosophies that we hear so often.

Jenn:

I love that idea of a loving relationship with running and exercise, ... it gives me goosebumps to even say that phrase, it sounds like such a wonderful place to be.

Sarah:

It is! It really doesn't have to be It doesn't have to be a torture device used if you ate a coupla extra calories. That's the thing, a lot of people, ... with exercise, ... "Oh, I have to run because I ate X, Y or Z."

Jenn:

Right!

Sarah:

... be a different relationship ..., "I can't wait to get outside and breathe that fresh spring air. I can't wait to feel the sunshine on my face. I can't wait to ... meet up with my best girlfriend this afternoon." And yet, those things, ... looking at it from a totally different perspective.

Jenn:

Yeah ... that makes so much sense and - and it really is, in some ways, a small tweak, but one - I imagine that we'd need to practice.

Sarah:

Yes. Yes.

Jenn:

Yes. So, how did you come about writing a book about - how'd you become a running coach, and then, how did that turn into deciding to write a book about it?

Sarah:

Wow. That's ... a long story, but I'll give you the Reader's Digest version. I've been ... runner my whole life, and I was faced with an injury in 2014 which sidelined me. And at the same time, I was getting remarried, moving to a new state, new c - new job.

Jenn:

Oh, boy.

Sarah:

I was ... at the time. So, I had a lot going on, and I was ... "This is perfect. I will take my break, let my body heal, and I'll get back to running in a little while." But "a little while" turned into about a year. I gained a lot of weight, I was put on anti-anxiety medicine because I couldn't stand the way that I looked, and then, every time that I tried to run it was so hard! And I'd gone through hiatuses before, but this one was different. And I didn't know what to do, so, long story short, I changed my career, became a health coach and - and as I started working with people I was actually attracting in runners.

Jenn:

Interesting!

Sarah:

... thing. Yes! And I - as I figured it out for myself, I was ... "This is what I really want back in my life," and it - clearly, other people do, too! So, I started shifting my business, I became certified to teach Chi Running, which is a specific form technique that is all about injury prevention and energy efficiency. It changed my life, got me back onto the - at my start lines, and I wanted to help other people do this, but what I found is - the Chi Running was a tool and it's fantastic, but it was only a piece of my four-year journey back from

Jenn:

Mmmm.

Sarah:

And what I wanted to help people do is create their own custom training plans, their own custom running journey, per se, so that they can take it from the frustration to ... the love of it, the therapeutic part of running, ... how do they get from A to B and really receive the benefits that running provides.

Jenn:

Oh, I love that. Because it seems ... in the - ... the health industry, I guess we'll call it, there's so much "one size fits all" out there,

Sarah:

Yeah.

Jenn:

Everyone's - I don't wanna call names, ... let's talk about weight loss, stuff that we all know about, ... there's the Jenny Craig, and the - the Weight Watchers and stuff like that, and in many ways, those are "one size fits all." But what you're talking about is being able to talk to one person and finding out, really, what works for them.

Sarah:

Absolutely. And I think it's - it's a hundred percent necessary, if you're gonna be in it for the long haul. ... there's a lot of programs out there like, "Train for this 5k." But then, wha - what about when the race is over?

Jenn:

Right!

Sarah:

What about if they miss a coupla days? ... wha - what about longevity? So, my theory is more ... how do we make running accessible for the rest of your life so that it's more practice than a check on the "to-do" list? ... we think of yoga as practices, and ... "Oh, it's so great, we relax." Running can be the same thing.

Jenn:

And - and that makes so much sense, when I hear you say that, but then, ... I'll lapse into my - ... I just came back from vacation, for example. And so, getting back into exercise after a vacation is like a flog!

Sarah:

Yeah. Yeah.

Jenn:

So, is all of it ... - do you teach techniques for how to ... reframe that -

Sarah:

Absolutely.

Jenn:

Oh, okay. Got that.

Sarah:

Absolutely. There's so much patience involved and so much - ... and that's the inner game of running. It really is ... working from the inside out, how do you invite yourself to be okay with really thinking of running, ... when you know you're gonna have a bad day, how can you still be okay with - with that run? But - ... honest to goodness, a bad run is better than no run.

Jenn:

Boy, that's so true. That is so true. Did any of this mindset work then, that you did over the four years, and that you now do with clients? Did it help you while you were writing your book, or was that ... a totally different animal?

Sarah:

No, i - it totally was very similar, and actually, writing the book helped me really frame what I was doing this whole time.

Jenn:

Nice!

Sarah:

Honestly, it I kn - I knew what I was doing, and being a former special ed teacher, ... I help people move beyond their limitations 24/7 for fifteen years, ... that was my whole thing. So, I just transferred it to running, but I never really had words for it until I had to sit down and get the chapters out.

Jenn:

Oh!

Sarah:

So, I count writing the book to be such a blessing, to really bring me clarity around my process.

Jenn:

So, that's really interesting, Sarah, because I think a lot of people believe that they have to have it all figured out before they sit down to write a book.

Sarah:

And I thought exactly the same thing. I really was terrified, going into this. I didn't have an idea in my head. I knew I wanted to write a book. I knew it would be great for me, personally - it was ... on my "to-do" list but I really didn't have an idea. So, I was scared going into it, but I knew that I had the right support system in place.

Jenn:

Yes.

Sarah:

And that made a huge difference for me.

Jenn:

So, what was the process like, to going from idea to, really, clarity on what you are gonna write on?

Sarah:

Well, we - in the program, "Idea to Done," we really focused on our ideal reader, and that was significant. I knew who I was writing to, but then, actually have to, again, put it into words and have somebody else understand who my ideal reader was, was great. ... I had it rejected a few

times and I was getting frustrated, but the minute I had it done, I could write the chapters so easily. It flowed out really, really nicely, so that was a - that was a huge benefit to - to have the ideal reader so clear.

Jenn:

And that's interesting because, ... Angela talks a lot about how your book is a love letter to your ideal reader.

Sarah:

Yeah. Yeah.

Jenn:

And so, you're saying that that really helped you focus yourself while you were writing.

Sarah:

It did! And ... I had concerns going into it because ... running a business, you want to appeal to everybody.

Jenn:

Yes!

Sarah:

That's what I always wanted to do. "I could help anybody." But, really, when you write it to one person, it becomes so much more touching, so much more relevant, and that was absolutely true. I was concerned because my ideal reader was a woman and, yes, I work with lots of women. And then, what turned out happening was, my first client from the book, the day my book went live - I got a male client, and I was, ... "See, he was ... anything she."

Jenn:

Really?

Sarah:

It was so great! It was just an affirmation that, it's the message, it's the wording, it's the clarity focusing on the one person that love letter, they can really feel it with their heart.

Jenn:

Right. Yeah, they're not - they're not so focused on how your examples might be women or ... how your ideal reader was a woman, it sounds like the - this client of yours was more focused on, "Wow, this woman really can help be get from frustrated to finished."

Sarah:

Exactly. Yes.

Jenn:

Yeah. I love that. So, like a race, you ... start the preparations in earnest, right? And you're really excited about it. And then, when you hit about the middle point, you think to yourself, "Oh, my gosh, what am I doing?"

Sarah:

Yeah.

Jenn:

Did that happ - did that happen to you?

Sarah:

Yes.

Jenn:

When you were writing your book?

Sarah:

Yeah. And what - ... how it - how it transpired, for me, is, a few weeks in, I had a few chapters done, and of course, I told you that it took me long to do my ideal client, and I had to resubmit it a few times. But ... I started writing, I got to ... the third or fourth chapter and we're told to keep writing forward, and your immediate tendency is to - "I need to perfect Chapters One, Two and Three before I can move forward," and I did not look back. It was really hard, ... I had to walk away from my computer so I didn't look back. And I never looked back until I submitted my last piece and they went through it, and I never looked at it again until I have some editing to work on, with -

Jenn:

Love it!

Sarah:

In hindsight, was the best advice I'd ever heard and it was the scariest thing, because I was ... "How is that gonna work? How is this gonna work?" But what I was able to do is not go off message, because it was coming through me versus my - I've always struggled with the intellectual self versus the heart-centered self.

Jenn:

Yes.

Sarah:

And I always write something and then change it to a textbook.

Jenn:
Yup.

Sarah:
And then keep writing, 'cause the voices were different. And this way, I had the heart-centered me writing the entire time, and that's made all the difference in the world.

Jenn:
... it's funny how much our brains can really get in the way when we're trying to do something really loving and good.

Sarah:
Yes! And the same is true for running, yes!

Jenn:
It is! But it - but at the same time, ... if you're running, let's say, a 5k, you're not gonna look down at your pace at the end of Mile One and then say, "Wow, that was slow, I'm gonna re-run that."

Sarah:
Oh, my gosh, you're so right! ... true.

Jenn:
Right? So - so, maybe, instead of "Keep writing forward" tatoos, you need "Keep running forward tatoos" to remind your clients.

Sarah:
Yes! Yeah, I love it.

Jenn:
Because - I don't know about you, I'm not gonna turn a 5k race into a 4k race, no ... into a 6k race, no matter how much I enjoy running.

Sarah:
No. Agreed.

Jenn:
Yes. I think - I'm pretty sure everybody listening can probably agree to that, too, so -

Sarah:
Yeah.

Jenn:

Gotta - gotta love that. Did you - other than - than just ... driving forward, did you have any time when you ... experienced any blocks, or you didn't know what to write about?

Sarah:

It actually happened during my editing.

Jenn:

Oh!

Sarah:

When I - when I got the first editing piece back - because I really had to focus on not making it a textbook. It's because it's not what I wanted to write. I really wanted it to be personal, I really wanted it to help people, and as academic as I've been in the past, I learned more from ... "Tell me, tell me it straight." And that's what I wanted. So, when I went into my editing phase, I was getting near to my deadline and I needed to spend a weekend - I think I did three and a half days, my husband and I went down to a cabin with electric, no running water, and we just holed up there for three and a half days and I went through the entire editing process there.

Jenn:

Wow!

Sarah:

And that was really a nice - I just burned a candle and I would go for walks in the woods when I needed to clear my head, and that worked really well for me, but I was getting anxious about the - the tone and voice that I just wanted to maintain, that it came from my heart. So, going into the woods was a good - was a good thing for me.

Jenn:

Right. I love that idea of taking the time, when you're stressed or frustrated, to reconnect - well, first with yourself, right?

Sarah:

Yeah.

Jenn:

And why you're - you're engaging in this writing in the first place, and then expanding that to your ideal reader and why you think it's important for them to read ... what you're writing. I - I think we forget that self-care bit, that - that part that drove you to write the book in the first place.

Sarah:

It's really easy to just keep push, push, pushing, but we need to understand the expense that that brings into our lives. Does that make it better or does that keep us from actually getting to where we wanna go?

Jenn:

Right. I would imagine it's pretty much the same with running, too, right?

Sarah:

It is. It is.

Jenn:

It's funny how many parallels there are between writing a book and running a race, or - or - or running for life.

Sarah:

I know. Yes.

Jenn:

I love that. So, so far, is it - when did you publish?

Sarah:

I published January 19th.

Jenn:

All right. So, what, in those ... ensuing four months - 'cause we're almost at exactly four months - what is the best thing to have come out of you having written a book?

Sarah:

Oh, my goodness. One, ...?

Jenn:

Well, we can talk about many of them. What's the first one that comes to mind?

Sarah:

The first one that comes to mind is that the clients that I've - ... I've been working with since then - the transformation that they've been able to achieve, just by loving themselves more and being okay with taking it ... from a different angle. That's been so rewarding, just the - the working with clients has been phenomenal. I'd say that's - that's first and foremost, just watching them shift from the super frustrated to ... "Wow, I got this, and guess what? Look at this picture! This is where I ran the other day, this is my -" The pride, the sense of accomplishment and - it's like the anxiety goes away immediately, when they start having more confidence - when they

show up for themselves, that's what I see happening with my clients, is that they just start showing up in a whole new capacity.

Jenn:

I - I can't even imagine how rewarding that is. ... that sounds so ridiculously rewarding that ... it - everybody should run out and write a book, where they can do that.

Sarah:

I agree.

Jenn:

Maybe not about running, 'cause ... we have the expert here on - on the line, people, but whatever you're an expert in, go out, run out, write a book on it so you can experience this amazing epiphany in your clients.

Sarah:

Yeah.

Jenn:

Well, I'm sure that many people listening, Sarah, before we go on and chat some more. They're probably wondering how they can get in touch with you, because, if they're like me, they're ... staring at their shoes sitting in the corner, thinking, "Boy, my shoes look pretty lonely," so, I don't wanna run out of time before we give people a way to get in touch with you.

Sarah:

Yes.

Jenn:

So, what's the best way for people to reach you?

Sarah:

I would say, the best way, the quickest way, would be to e-mail, and I'm so open to you guys just e-mailing me. It's sarah@riseandshine.run, it's s-a-r-a-h at riseandshine.run, all spelled out. And then, my website, if you wanna visit there and just learn a little bit more about me and what I do, my website is riseandshine.run.

Jenn:

Perfect. The great place to find you. And so, everyone, just so you know, go on Amazon right now, while we're still chatting, and look up *From Sidelines to Start Lines*, and you can download it right off of Amazon, but right before we started the show, Sarah told me that she'd be willing to send you her book for free

Sarah:

Yeah! Yeah! I just wanna get it out to you people! It is that time of year, where you're feeling frustrated. I don't want you to be in that head space, so if you're interest in getting my book for free, please just e-mail me at sarah, s-a-r-a-h@riseandshine.run, all spelled out, and just, in the heading of the e-mail, just put "Free Book," and I'll know that you're requesting the free book and I'll e-mail it right over to you in a .pdf form.

Jenn:

See? Look at that, folks. ... immediate - ... immediate response, right here. You'll get a free book from Sarah, and Sarah is also getting ready to start a ten-week program, right?

Sarah:

Yeah! Yup. It's "From Couch to Consistent," it's ten weeks long, and it's all about getting you off of the sidelines, back onto the start lines and not necessarily in a race form, but I'm getting you back onto - ... onto the road, getting you into your sneakers, and with the law of gratitude, pride and confidence in your abilities to stay committed to yourself and your practice.

Jenn:

So, that - that actually raises a - a question. ... we talk, a lot of times, ... in fitness circles, or in running circles, about ... being in race form, or whatever. But for those of us who just want to run to be a little more healthy, or because it clears our head, do we really need to be in race form? ... what does that mean?

Sarah:

No. No! And actually, that's such a great question, because one of the - a huge portion of the book is about the four pillars I - I created four pillars around running, and so, for me, it's never really about the race, it's about making running therapeutic. I wanna feel better after my run than when I went for my run. I want it to be therapeutic in any way, shape or form I can - I can make it. So, I always want my runs to be therapeutic. I want my runs to be experiential. I want it to be memorable. What about ... - was there an animal I saw? Was - What was it that made it experiential? And then, making it customized to you, your unique needs, and then communal. And communal being more than just running with other people, ... my in-laws pick up garbage, they're in their seventies, still walking and running, so ... - there's such a larger aspect of running that touches other people. When you run, you're impacting the rest of your family because you're improving your health, you're staying ..., you're putting yourself first. So, I believe those four pillars - the therapeutic, experiential, custom and communal - are the keys to making your running sustainable, not signing up for a race. That's an external validation and external motivation. So, I - I work on helping people come up with the internal reasons that they wanna stick to it.

Jenn:

And that makes so much sense to me because, so many times - ... I've signed up for a race and then you - you run it or ... you prep for it because you ... feel you have to, and then, afterwards, you have no drive to continue on.

Sarah:

Right! And if it's part of the experience - so, if you went into the race experience, making it an experience, ... I did five half-marathons last year, and ... one was in Puerto Rico, one was in ... Carolina, it was so much fun, and so, I made it a special experience for each of the races, and that's what I help my clients do, is, how do you make the best situation out of what you're choosing to do instead of it being ... - and it's interesting, because I think Angela says that with the red carpet launch for the book.

Jenn:

Yup. Yes.

Sarah:

... write the book, and then what? It - it goes live and that's it.

Jenn:

Right!

Sarah:

... event out of it that you can't help but fall in love with the process.

Jenn:

Well, and you end up - y - you're right, you remember it so fondly - ... I can see this working with running, that when you remember that experience so fondly that you want to recapture it, or enjoy it again.

Sarah:

Yeah. Yeah.

Jenn:

Well, we're unfortunately drawing to a close, Sarah, and I - I so enjoyed talking to you about this, but I like to close with this question, and I wanna give you plenty of time to answer it. If there's someone out there listening to us talk, and they know they have a book inside them, about something that's really gonna impact people's lives, like not being a frustrated runner anymore, but they can't bring themselves to put pen to paper. What's a piece of advice you could give them to maybe get them started on the right direction?

Sarah:

You don't have to know all the answers. You really don't have to know all the answers, it'll come out in the process, and you're so worth it. Who would think that running would be worthy of a book? But I've received so much positive feedback, and I didn't know all the answers. I hardly knew any of the answers going into it, but it was a process that brought out the magic and the goals and - and you have that, too, so it is possible. If I can do it, you can do it.

Jenn:

Oh! And there's nothing more to say after that. Please, if you're listening, send Sarah an e-mail, sarah with an "h," @riseandshine.run. Get a free copy of her book or, ... if you feel like spending your money, go ahead. Go onto Amazon and download her book.

Sarah:

There you go!

Jenn:

Reach out to her, join her ten-week program, get yourself motivated, and if, in the process, while you're running, you're thinking about running a book - writing a book, well then, you know where to come. Thank you so much for joining me today on the show, Sarah.

Sarah:

Thank you for having me, Jenn!

Jenn:

And join me next week with another episode of Book Journeys Radio.

