

## [Book Journeys](#) Author Interview - October 6, 2016

### Jenn McRobbie with Misty Lown, author of *One Small Yes*

*"Together in unity we can produce amazing results." ~Misty Lown*

Jenn:

Well, hello, hello everybody. Welcome to Book Journeys Radio. If this is your first time here, we're so happy to have you here and if you're returning, we're happy to have you back. Every week on BookJourneys Radio, we speak to accomplished authors who have gone from just having an idea for a book to a finished book that's ready to make a difference in the world. Our goal for the show is for you to walk away inspired and motivated to write your own book, whether it's your first or your third. Today, I'm thrilled to introduce you to Misty Lown, author of *One Small Yes*. Missy holds the distinction in our little circle here because she was the first of our authors to ever surpass ten thousand downloads within the first five days of her launch. So, just to be clear, most of our books get past 10,000 downloads, but Misty did it in less than five days. So, we'll be talking about her writing process, but we'll also be talking about how she was able to bring together her community to achieve such an amazing feat. So, without further adieu, welcome Misty!

Misty:

Well, thanks so much Jenn. It's so much fun to be connected back with the author community. I went to write a book, I think... a bit into hiding and then come back out and reconnect. So I'm glad to kinda be out of my post writing, recovering and I'm back in the author community.

Jenn:

Well, we're so happy to have you here and we'll probably have to talk about what that, uhm, what that post writing feeling feels like, but before we get there, can you please tell everybody what *One Small Yes* is about and who it's for?

Misty:

Oh, you bet. *One Small Yes* is really for anybody who believes that they've been called to do something great with their life. If they... They want to know that... when it's possible and through that there are certain steps and... you can take and certain tools you can use to get there and... Just to share a bit of my background, I always knew that I was going to do something great in dance - dance is my background and I thought it would be in... a dancer. I just thought that's what I would do and it turns out that my calling was to let the classroom be my stage - not to have a concert stage be my stage and, you know... I don't really know what that would look like. I just knew it was bigger than myself. So, I just took the one small yes to say, "Yes, I'll open a dance school and here, nineteen years later, I have affiliated schools all over the globe. We have a hundred and seventy of them in thirty five states, Canada, Australia, Aruba, and Dubai and there's so many - sixty five thousand kids a week, so..."

Jenn:

Wow.

Misty:

The importance of this book to anybody is if you feel like you were called to do something more than what you're doing right now, but what that is seems too far away, you really just need to make an earnest "yes" effort in the direction, and eventually, over time, in many yes efforts, you will get to some place amazing and I never thought this would be where I ended up, uhm, but it's way better than what I expected, so that's really the story of One Small Yes, the... to identify everyone has a calling and if it's too big, it's okay 'cause you just need one small yes to start your journey.

Jenn:

Wow. Misty, what an amazing story and what a great, simple concept that all we need is one simple yes in the right direction. What was your first small yes for writing a book?

Misty:

Well, my first small yes - you're going to laugh because I, we just identified... we've seen one small yes in the right direction, well I've said yes in the wrong direction.

Jenn:

Aaahhh, what a good story! [chuckles]

Misty:

Right, my first yes was... I knew my... I'd been writing for magazines; I enjoyed writing and I felt like our community - the same schools that were listening and following what we were doing - that they would want a book from me and I thought it was going to be called 8 Steps to a Better Dance School and I was kinda playing off the 5-6-7-8 language of the dance world and...

Jenn:

Ahhh...

Misty:

I was about 12,000 words into that when I'd met publishing genius Angela Lauria, at a conference and my first contact - and you know Angela well, and your listeners might not know her very well, but she's a direct-speaking gal so I'm at the coffee station alone and she walks up and she kinda throws her hands up and says, "Uhhh, I just had to breakfast with somebody and tell 'em that they wrote the wrong book," and you know my heart just went down to my shoes and I said, "You know, I don't even know your name but are you telling me it's possible to write the wrong book?" and she said, "Oh, people do it all the time! It's the worst thing you can do when you wanna write a book and start writing a book." And I spend the rest of the conference, pretty much secretly and obsessively following where Angela would sit, what she was saying. I thought, I need to get myself a little bit closer into her circle of knowledge because I'm so... into

writing a book and I'm pretty sure that if there's someone writing the wrong book, it's me. So uhm, I scheduled... I guess the first yes was scheduling a conversation with Angela and she was so gracious, there was really nothing that she was trying to sell me. She was just telling me, uhm, this is where you are and based on what you're telling me Misty, this is the direction that you need to move, and for me that was pretty... my first manuscript on the shelf and completely changing the focus of what I wanted to write - from a how-to book to a platform-speaking book and my platform really is my life story. It's what we accomplished through those series of small yes choices and some of those detour choices but... that yes, your big calling will always pull you back on track.

Jenn:

Oooh, I love that story and I'm going to have to talk to Angela about that. [chuckles]

Misty:

And you can picture it too, can't you, with Angela?

Jenn:

She's gonna... If she doesn't know that that was the beginning of your journey, then she's going to absolutely love that story. So... exactly.... So once you've made that commitment to sort of start this new book - to start what would become One Small Yes... and did you envision your project completed before you started?

Misty:

Yeah, I just had no other choice. For me, I lined it up with what I do in dance and if we say we're producing a recital at the end of the school year, we have to picture that project completed all year long. We start, really, the same as an author should start. We identify what it's going to look like on stage - what the kids are wearing, what their formations are gonna be, what that song will be with the music at it's... and we work our way backwards. So for me it was pretty familiar to envision a creative product - project - in its completed state. Now I didn't have any idea what the cover will look like, but I knew what it would feel like to say, you know, "We did it! We have this finished project," and I think that background, producing dance shows all these years, really made that normal for me to envision it done.

Jenn:

I think you're right. Because I... What I suspect happens to a lot of authors on their journey is that they begin to, you know, they imagine this finished product and then when the process doesn't meet those expectations, they become paralyzed. So did that happen to you at all?

Misty:

You know, it did because there are parts of the journey where, instead of envisioning yourself as an author - and for me an author is somebody who's published... If you're not published, you're not an author, you're a writer.

Jenn:  
Oh!

Misty:

There were some places in my journey where I put back on the hat "I'm a Writer, Not an Author" and those were the places I would tend to get stuck. When I would find myself so in the trenches of the writing process, or kind of find my voice and I would have to kinda step out to get a few feet back from the project and say, "No, I'm an author" and I need to keep moving towards that and not continue to be mired down and that was really where my developmental editor came in closely, uhm, into my aid, just helping me, saying, "Just keep moving forward. We're going to fix it as we go and I really wanted to get my perfect voice, my perfect structure, on chapter one," and for me it was a little debilitating, you know, I spent more time on chapter one than anything. If I trusted the process a little bit more and saw myself as an author while I was writing, I think I would've gotten over those initial blocks of wanting to have that perfect... everything before moving forward a little faster.

Jenn:

Wow, that's really great advice Misty. Thank you for sharing that because I think it's so easy to forget that the purpose of writing a book is so that you can become a published author - generally speaking. So I think that, you know...

Misty:

And just to back up and clarify Jenn. I'm not saying there's anything wrong about being a writer. I was a writer for many, many years, even a published writer for many, many years, so that is not at all to discourage anybody or to make you feel less than... if you're still in a writing phase, but "author" is synonymous with, with that achievement of having gone all the way through from conception of an idea to the ideation to the iteration, to finally getting that finished product, and I know that I know without - you know without, you know, this multi-step process that Angela took us through and in my case, sometimes forced us through, I would still be ideating. I would still be writing, uhm, and I might be doing that for years.

Jenn:

Yes. I mean, when you were writing that first manuscript - when you were ten thousand words in, did you - had you imagined that being a published book, or was that more of this ideation for you?

Misty:

No, I think it was my first layer of thinking and it was really just looking at where am I right now. What do I do right now, and right now, my primary work is helping dance school owners to reach their own goals. So, I was kinda wracking my head - What is the best tool that I could give them? And when I pulled my thinking back out and had a conversation with my team who kept saying, "We just don't think this is the right book." What do they really need and what we identified was they really need permission to go after that what I call the big "C" (Calling) - What

they feel like what they're really wired to do, and that - that's going to surpass enrollment ideas or marketing strategies of 2016, or whatever the latest, greatest program idea is, and I didn't wanna put all that time and effort to write something that would be time specific. I wanted to write something that would have a timeless concept that would help, not just school owners this year, but for years to come; not just for their dance journey but for their life journey, and really anybody, uhm, you know, who would have contact with our community that would help them as well. So we have parents from our dance students who have read the book. We have dance students who've graduated and read the book. We know that most of our dance students will not become professional dancers but are going to go become amazing members of the community and pastors and preachers and husbands and wives and parents, we - we want to send them a message that is not about dance. It's about more than dance. It's about finding what you feel - you know where to go in this world and making earnest steps towards that.

Jenn:

Oh, I love that, and from what it sounds like to me is... It's almost like your focus is too narrow, interestingly enough. When you... Before you started writing One Small Yes, and I wonder if...

Misty:

I wonder if it's kind of a...

Jenn:

Go ahead.

Misty:

If it's kind of a dichotomy that when Angela and I were first talking, it's very important to have some very specific to talk about. So when I brought in my audience tasks... advanced business owners to this larger topic, I still had very... larger audience, I still had a very specific topic within the larger audience.

Jenn:

Yes.

Misty:

So, I think that's important distinction. You know... Are you..? You can go broad with your audience or you can go broad with topic or narrow with both or one of the other. So, I chose to broaden... The people that I would be speaking to... I think it's a pretty universal concept that we all wanted to do something amazing, and something that a piece of the puzzle of life only we can play, uh, but I'm going to talk specifically about what that is.

Jenn:

And that makes so much sense, uhm, given your topic that you could make it so much bigger for a bigger audience and I - I love how you were able to come about to that because, I - you're gonna serve more people that way.

Misty:

Mmm hmmm. Absolutely.

Jenn:

So what was the hardest part of the writing process?

Misty:

I think that hardest part was deconstructing my own thoughts about what it would take to write a book. As I mentioned before, I was, you know, I was several chapters into writing this first book and I took my own process for that which was unlike the process that Angela brought us through. So really just surrendering to the process and trusting that even if the pieces weren't put to me in the way that I would put them together naturally, that we would end up with a better product at the end. And if I can put this in advanced terms, my previous book was "choreographed" on the fly, you know. I had an impression, a feeling, that this was what they need and not to say that I didn't have an outline, but it was a very experiential journey when I was writing that, that first manuscript like I feel like this could be the next thing in. This is what we do and the journey that I had with Angela was much more structured and that's exactly, as a creative, what I needed. That sounds kinda counter-intuitive, but as a creative person, I needed the framework. I needed to be told, "On April 1st, you're going to do this certain thing, and on April 15th... and then you're going to have this call..." and by golly, there were days and hours that were it would come right up to the deadline and I won't have, whatever the next piece was, done. But I wasn't going to show up for my publisher empty-handed, so it forced me to stay accountable and without that structure, I think I would've kept up choreographing my own writing experience and maybe actually I would've gotten somewhere but I certainly wouldn't... would not have ended up with what I have now.

Jenn:

Oh, I love that. It's... I think it's a - an oft-ignored part of the writing process that it actually takes some structure to sit down and write, even if your book itself doesn't have that particular structure.

Misty:

That's right.

Jenn:

When I wrote my book, I had the exact same experience as you Misty. I was all over the place. I had several unwritten manuscripts, uhm, you know, just sitting there waiting, you know, for me to come back to them and meeting Angela pretty much changed my life too, so [chuckles] I can appreciate that experience. So let's move, kinda past the writing phase. So, you wrote the book, and then you entered the editing phase and I know a lot of authors that I've spoken to really had trouble in the editing phase because it was difficult for them to let go of some of the ideas that they'd come up with. Did you have trouble in the editing phase of your book?

Misty:

Well, I didn't have any trouble in the way you described. Uhm, I've been a student of life for life, so I'm still learning as a dancer; I'm still training as a dancer... training is nothing, if not that perpetually being corrected. [chuckles] You go to a dance club, you are saying, "Here I am. Correct me. Fix me. Make me stronger." So that's really part of our language here at our dance school, my other businesses... continuous improvement. So that part of it didn't bother me and I welcomed it. The part of it that I had the hardest part with, however, was my nature and background as a teacher would lean my writing style toward a how-to book for solving or fixing someone else.

Jenn:

Aaahhh.

Misty:

And what we were writing was a platform-speaking book and so I kept having to listen to my editor to pull out away from the "how" and back to the "what" and that was really, really hard for me, and even today, I've done, you know, speaking off the One Small Yes book, and I find myself still listening to my developmental editor in my head... Remember, you're not here to teach them how to do this. You're here to them them, uhm, you know, what the One Small Yes is about, uhm, why it makes a difference, what the value of pursuing it, to share stories of other people who have pursued it to light that fire inside of them. But at this point, between the book and the speech, it's not a 12-step program... gonna tell them...

Jenn:

No. Not at all.

Misty:

...how to do that. Now that could be a future series that could be a future workshop. So, to me that was the biggest challenge and when I can still hear my editor, Cynthia, uh, kind of on replay in my head, It's not... how to...

Jenn:

I was going to ask who your editor was so that I could pass this along and make sure she listens today, so that she can know that she's still a voice in your head.

Misty:

That's right, and you know, really that's what an author wants to be - it's the voice in the reader's head long before and after they've closed the final pages of the book. You'd want the publisher to be, you know, an influence to such decisions that you make well past your first engagement and that... I often reflect on that in my time in The Author Incubator - my work with Angela - and I've shared on the lessons that she's taught me with my own staff and team here. Uhm, I've certainly learned from the process about how we can make the learning process for our - better

for our own science, because we teach dance school leadership management, community involvement. I've learned a lot in her program that was so far beyond how to write a book and become an author, uhm, that was really...

Jenn:

I uh... I had the same experience which is basically why I'm now working here at The Author Incubator because it was life-changing for me too to see that this process of writing a book, of really dipping into who you are as a creative and change not only your world but the world of all the people that you interact with.

Misty:

Mmm hmmm.

Jenn:

It's amazing. So, the burning question, I'm sure, for many of our listeners right now, is how in the heck did you manage ten thousand downloads in the first five days of publishing your book?

Misty:

[laughs]

Jenn:

Do you know?

Misty:

I do. I do and that is - that is a great question. First of all - there's really two parts to this. One, we have an amazing team here at home, so I've run a large dance school and we have our dance school affiliation program. So between our people locally on the ground and affiliate school owners, we had reached out to what we call our community and said if you would be willing to me give an honest review of my book, I would be pleased to share with you an advance reader's copy and, you know, be a part of our launch team and we had a hundred and fifty people to raise their hand and say, "We would love to have that advance reader's copy and share that candid feedback with you and with the Amazon readers. So... and we had a very very high degree of participation from the people who raised their hand and actually finished through our launch date and participated in the first five days of launch and - and not just that, though... Because they became... They didn't just... I think, originally, they might've done it for me, you know, "Hey... we know you, we love you or you did something great for my kid or you helped me out and I'm going to help you... But the coolest part was and where the magic took place is once they've read the book... and I started getting emails, saying, you know, of course I'm going to write a review but I need to let you know how much this personally impacted me and the change...

Jenn:



Wow.

Misty:

...you know, that this was going to have in my life or how I interact with my family or it's going to... my interactions with my spouse, or, I'm going to take that step. I literally had someone call and say, "I'm leaving my job because I'm like, taking this career change, because I realized I had this calling inside of me and I've just been pushing it down and not making any small yes effort in that direction.

Jenn:

Wow.

Misty:

And so, when people are... feel that way about your book, they're going to share it with other people. So, I know for sure we had some great traction for those hundred and fifty committed people, who already knew me, but it was really their sharing socially. It was them taking it to their work communities, their families and saying, "You need to read this. This is a quick, direct memorable, uhm, lesson in remembering what... and... it's your childhood... What did you get excited about? What did you like? How did you play? How did you interact with are probably clues to your calling," ...things in you. I mean, I was teaching my dogs in their playhouse. I was always wired as a teacher, you know, and here I am now, teaching, not just dance students, but adults how to run their dance schools, and beyond... now, just several business owners how to transform their life... people who want to become business owners how to take that first step. So, when people are telling their friends about that - that's where the real viral power of the launch campaign came into play.

Jenn:

Mmm hmm. Yeah that makes - that makes so much sense. But what is it do you think about One Small Yes that resonated so much with everyone then? Because, obviously, like you said that...

Misty:

[unintelligible]

Jenn:

Yeah, I think you're right. That... That's... It's so simple and I think, you know, you're right. It begins with the people who love you and care about you the most, and then once you introduce them to a simple concept it's very easy for them to share what you've...

Misty:

An something, uhm... and I think this really happen when I sit with my team and that was... I knew I was writing the wrong book and I had signed up to be a part of Angela's program, but I didn't really know what the new book would be and they kept asking me, "Misty, what do people

ask you all the time? You have hundreds of school owners and beyond that you speak to thousands of people. You've spoken 28 cities last year. People come to hear your story. What do they ask?" and I said, more often than anything, they ask me, "How did you do it? You did not have any particular advantage of background. You didn't go to a fancy school. You didn't come from a family of super means," uhm, "you weren't even that great of a dancer," I mean, "You were capable, but it wasn't like you were in Cirque du Soleil and your legs did crampy tricks over your head, how did you build this local network of dance schools?" and how I would always answer that was, "You know, I just did it one small yes at a time." I felt... teachings that I'd be on a Vienna stage... So I said yes to that and then I said yes to writing for our industry magazine and I said yes to speaking and I said yes to teaching then I said yes to creating an association then I said yes to... and the building blocks are now the framework of the meaningful work that I do every day in - I remember my Director for Operations, who happen to be my sister, said "Well I think that you just answered your own question. It's not a step to a better dance school. It's " how you've built a life of meaning one small yes at a time."

Jenn:

Go sister!

Misty:

And I think what's so...

Jenn:

Yeah, always - she's...

Misty:

But I think that's going back to what you said, why do people... What did it resonate... with them? I think, because they can see themselves in the story and it's not me saying, you know, and I'm not... and I'm not, uhm, picking on any kind of, uhm, you know... I'm gonna use yoga as an example here and I love yoga. I do yoga, but it's not me saying, "Hey, if you practice yoga, you'd have a better life. Because immediately, if someone picks up that book, they might say, "You know, I don't see myself in that because I'm not flexible, I've never tried yoga," but, you know, maybe... it would just... a yogi would look at that and say, "Well, that might be for me." But I think anybody can look at what the content is of One Small Yes and see themselves in there. I think everybody has something they were uniquely created to do. I call it your God-calling. You know, if God created us all uniquely, what did he create you to do? Uhm, you know, there's a lot of talk, uhm... I just love reading God's word and talks about like, what... You're the hand and someone else's... and someone else is this. Like, we're not all called to do the same thing but we'll be function... Together in unity we can produce amazing results. So, like what is that part of this piece of life that you're called to be, you know? Are you a person who would call... or are you a person who stays home and serves, or are you a creative? Are you going to be an innovator, are you... and the list goes on. So, anybody can look at One Small Yes and say, "Yeah, you know what? There are definitely some things that I lean towards. I have a bent

towards a certain vocation or a certain line of work or this is what makes me excited. I could... I can go for twelve hours and forget to even kneel if I work on these kinds of things."

Jenn:  
Right.

Misty:  
That's what resonates with everybody and then we just talk about how it's possible to do that, you know, without losing your family and your standard... process.

Jenn:  
What two very important things to keep track of while you're making these "little one small yesses." [laughs] Well, I don't know about...

Misty:  
And... by the book by the way.

Jenn:  
I don't know about our listeners Misty but I am super-motivated now after talking to you. You make me want to want a one small yes to my next book. This is amazing and we only have a few minutes left. So, I just want to ask you a closing question that I know a lot of people want to know from authors and that is what is the best thing to have come out of writing a book for you?

Misty:  
Oh, I can tell you really fast. That is to know that I can do hard, hard things that scare me. So... Writing didn't scare me. I'd been writing and publishing articles, but the idea of taking a project of this size. I mean this is way beyond the term paper that I had to do for grad school. It's just more public. It's much longer. It's... You're really putting yourself out there. When you call yourself an author, you know, people expect something amazing. So, it was... I was able to do something that I had perceived as hard and scary and for me, that's going to be a value that's going to translate into my life whether or not I write another book. Because when I take a business challenge or a personal challenge or a relationship challenge or a physical challenge... Whatever the next challenge is, I'm gonna remember, "You know what? I've faced things that I'd pursued as hard and scary before and I learned how to do that, I can do it again.

Jenn:  
Ah, that is amazing! So, if you would like to learn more about Misty Lown, there are two places you can go online to find out about her. One is her own website, [mistylown.com](http://mistylown.com). That's M-I-S-T-Y-L-O-W-N dotcom or [onesmallyes.com](http://onesmallyes.com) and "one" is written out, not the number 1. Missy, it has been so wonderful to talk to you today. I feel like we could speak for hours [laughs] but...

Misty:

Well, I hope to meet you in person someday, Jenn and a shoutout to Dr. Angela Lauria for making this conversation possible.

Jenn:

Oh, that's... that's fantastic. Thank you so much and that... Tune in next week when we'll speak to another rockstar author about their journey from idea to published book. Thanks so much.