

Episode 75: Planning for 2016 – Will you become an author this year?

Jenn T Grace: You are listening to the Gay Business and Marketing Made Easy Podcast, episode 75.

Well hello and welcome to the New Year. I am looking forward to a great 2016, and I hope you are too. Now that we're in the new year, you're probably thinking of all the new year resolutions you could be focused on, or should be focused on, and today I want to share with you a couple of the resolutions that I'm working on, but actually how that's going to parlay into my new business focus for 2016, and basically how the podcast ducktails into that focus in 2016. So for my loyal listeners, what I'm going to be doing in 2016 is slightly different than previously in the last four years that I've been doing this podcast, but it really still kind of falls in line with much of what I've been doing.

But what I want to start with today is talking to you about a couple of the resolutions that I have for 2016, and none of them are too far of a stretch if you will from what I'm already doing. So I'm feeling pretty confident that I'll have a fairly high success rate. But what I've noticed is that unfortunately a lot of people create these monster resolutions; like just completely out of any realm of possibility, and when you do that, you're creating this wildly unattainable goal, and you're likely not going to hit it, and that's not what I want to share with you. What I want to be sharing with you are ways in which you can attain your goal. And I've noticed that people create these really unattainable goals for just a couple of different reasons. Most of the time it's because they aren't in the right frame of mind to achieve them, so when they create this goal it's not even something that they can really achieve, and sometimes this is done intentionally and sometimes not. And then a lot of times it's because people don't really have the right skillsets to pull it off, and they're not really committed to developing those skillsets to pull it off. So this is absolutely going to kind of fall into place with what I am going to be doing in 2016, and what I'm going to share with you.

But to start, here are just a couple of my non-business New Year resolutions if you will.

So for example, one of them is to drink only one cup of coffee a day versus two. Like I said, I'm not stretching too much with most of mine, and I'm only going to share three of them because the third one is going to be what really kind of plays into what I'm up to. But going down from one cup of coffee- I mean from two cups of coffee to one isn't much of a stretch, although I say this now and I'm not really sure how the caffeine withdrawals will go down. But as of right now it doesn't seem like it's that much of a stretch. I've already had my one cup of the day and I'm on to green tea, so I'm feeling confident that for the last four days- because today is January 4th as I'm recording this, I've been able to achieve that goal. So fingers crossed, goal number one, resolution number one should be attainable.

Now resolution number two on the other hand is to not have- this is going to sound crazy- not have a single drop of alcohol in 2016. And I've been hemming and hawing over whether or not I wanted to do this resolution for a couple of weeks thinking it's really not that difficult for me to not drink, because I'm not a heavy drinker in any way, so I might have a drink, maybe two, three at most in any given week, and I know people who drink that on a daily basis. So to me, it's not really- I don't think it's that difficult to not have any, however I don't know that for certain. So I've been thinking and hemming and hawing saying, "Is this really worth having a resolution over because what am I going to gain from this?" It's not like drinking is a problem in my life that I need to tackle or handle, but at the same time I'm really focused on my health and I know that extra sugar from alcohol is really not helping me, so why am I going to take in additional calories over something that I'm not even really enjoying so to speak? So that is another goal. And again, it's pretty much for purely health reasons, not because I have a problem that I'm trying to curb or anything like that, but really I just want to keep continuing on the path of getting healthier as I go. And 2015 I did I think a really good job continuing my health, et cetera, that I had previously been doing since back in 2012, 2013. So I'm still on a really good path in terms of my health.

Now this is where the third resolution comes in, and it's much more of a beast, and I have not publicly shared this information with anyone yet, so you my loyal listener are the first one to hear it other than my poor wife who deals with my random ramblings, and then a couple of close friends. But 2016 is going to be the year that I actually train for a full marathon. And now for you who may

have been listening since the early beginnings of this podcast, you may recall that I started running mid-way through the first year of this podcast. And I was scared out of my mind, I had no idea what I was doing. I willingly shared all of my fears, and my trepidations with 'should I be doing this? Should I not be doing this?' And the reason I started running, and the same reason why I'm going to try not to drink in 2016, is for health reasons. So I had lost a lot of weight in 2012 and 2013, and it was about fifty pounds, and I just wanted to make sure that I could keep the weight off, and I've had no trouble doing that since 2012. So I feel fortunate that I'm going on a fourth and into a fifth year of keeping weight loss off, but a lot of it has to do with running because it's just a great activity, it's a solo activity or you can make it a group activity if you choose to. But I prefer to run solo because it gives me time to think about what I need to be doing, how to prioritize my business, and I think the best thing is that you're only competing against yourself, you're not worried about other people's time. So it's really kind of a solo 'let me try to see how good I can be and not compare myself to other people,' which I find to be really kind of peaceful in a lot of ways; and I am a very, very competitive person, as is my wife so it's a good thing she doesn't run because she would be the one person on this earth that I would be trying to compete against. So fortunately for me she does not. So anyway- a little tangent.

So tying this into the business, and tying this into today's episode, I wanted to share with you a little bit about this third resolution on my list, and it's not to run the marathon this year, which is 26.2 miles for those of you not familiar with marathon distance. But it's how I'm going about breaking down this really BHAG- as people call it in the business world, the Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal. That big monster of a goal, how I'm breaking it down to come up with a very clear plan that is attainable for me to achieve this goal. And now I won't be doing this until this time- almost exactly this time in 2017. So the race itself is on January 8th of 2017, and this is being released on January 7th. So I had to break down this goal into a variety of bite-sized chunks, and it really just started with picking a couple of races that I wanted to run this year which were half marathons; so that's 13.1 miles. And I ran two half marathons last year, and I'm planning on doing two more this year. So going back to the whole resolutions being attainable, running two this year should be no problem whatsoever, because I did two already last year. But what I'm trying to do is increase my speed just a little

bit. So I'm not trying to go nuts, and I'm not going completely haywire, I'm really just focused on something that I think is attainable to me personally.

So for me this goal is something that I have to work on the entire year in order to be successful in doing it. If I do not stick to my plan, it's going to go rogue- I'm going to go rogue and it will go off the rails really quickly. So I spent about three hours over the weekend and I put together my plan. I started off with where I'm going to be racing, when I'll be racing, how many miles I have to do every week, how many times I have to run a week, and I went to my Google calendar and I put every single one of those in there, and I time blocked every single spot. So I know that every Sunday morning at or around 9:30 in the morning, that's when I'll be doing my 'long run,' which is usually seven to 26 miles at this point. It could be anywhere in between. So I have my plan super clear, super focused for what I want to achieve for my physical fitness in 2016.

Now it's a matter of figuring out what your goal is going to be for 2016 and how you could be laser focused on it too. Because I swear to you if you asked anybody in my life, and you can still ask them now, if they think Jenn plus running equals a good idea, I'm convinced that the vast majority of them would say, "You're out of your mind. Jenn will never run, Jenn has never run," et cetera. Like I had a pretty good reputation growing up as an athlete, but I was a pitcher for fast pitch softball, therefore I spent most of my time on the mound and helping control the game rather than physically running. And my softball coach happened to also be the track coach, therefore he had us doing running exercises that I felt were irrelevant to the game of softball, and I was terrible at it at all times. So my point being, if I can run a full marathon, I swear to you there is nothing in your life that you cannot physically do, or mentally tackle, or emotionally tackle, if I can do this. I am hell bent convinced of that, and I would love to talk with you if there's something that's really kind of blocking you, and you feel like you can't achieve it. Because if you break it down into bite-sized, manageable, day-to-day tasks, you can totally do it. In the case of running, it's honestly a matter of putting one foot in front of another for 26.2 miles. Of course there's a lot of other things that go into it, but basically speaking it's one foot in front of another.

With your goal, I don't know what that goal might look like at this moment, but what I want to talk to you about is authorship, and how writing a book can be your goal for 2016. And if it is your goal in 2016, how writing a book and running a marathon are identical processes. It might sound completely strange at this moment and so early in this podcast, but I can assure you that doing both of them are very, very similar processes. And my goal in 2016 is to help figure it out for you, and make your life a hell of a lot easier in writing your first book.

So now hopefully I have your interest piqued in this whole authorship thing, and how this kind of ties back into my business and the podcast. So just for a little bit of a recap, this podcast is going into its fourth year; so I did it all of 2013, all of 2014, all of 2015, and now we're entering into the fourth year. And I have done 74 previous episodes as we are in our 75th episode right now. Each of them, they're 45 minutes to an hour long. I also had another thirty episodes that were about a half an hour each that were part of a special series I did back in 2013 called "30 Days, 30 Voices: Stories from America's LGBT Business Leaders." So this is really kind of the 105th episode if you will of content around what my business does. And my tagline is that I teach straight people how to market to gay people, and gay people how to market themselves. Much of this podcast, and much of my business has really focused on the former, with really helping straight allies market to the LGBT community in an appropriate way, in a proper way, in an authentic way being genuine. So I really focus on helping people communicate better and market better. And most often I'm working with individuals who are in some kind of service-based business. So they are an attorney, or they're an accountant, or a financial advisor; a lot of people that have longer sales cycles. So it takes longer to build a relationship, therefore it also makes- it gives you more of a window of opportunity to kind of stick your foot in your mouth, and get yourself in trouble. So I have spent a lot of time really focusing on that aspect of my business, and that's really what my two- actually three. The two print books that I have, and then the eBook that I have, all three of them really focus on communications, marketing, really tactical stuff for how to avoid putting yourself into situations that is uncomfortable, makes you uneasy, et cetera.

Now while the focus has been to help straight allies in this, I've also helped LGBT people in this process as well, because there's a lot of

things that even LGBT people are doing that weren't the most ideal thing. So while the focus has kind of been on the former of I teach straight people how to market to gay people, I've really been teaching gay people how to market themselves as well in very similar ways that I've been teaching the straight allies too. So the previous 74, or 104 if you're counting the Thirty Days series. They've all really been focused on kind of a combination, and it's all been around marketing, it's all been around how to get to your target audience, how to talk to them the right way, how to communicate to them in the right way, et cetera. So in early 2015, I think it was in February actually, I made a conscious effort in my business to say, "You know what? I'm want to focus a little bit more of my time on coaching individuals, coaching LGBT people, and working on the second half of that tagline, of teaching gay people how to market themselves more specifically than my advice that kind of crosses over to the ally community as well."

Now with that being said, I realized that there's a very clear pattern with who I work with. With the type of business owner, or the type of entrepreneur, or LGBT person that I work with. It seems like there's a very clear commonality that took me a little bit too long to see the pattern in all of them. But now that I have seen the pattern, it's very clear to me anyway that this is where I need to focus my business in 2016, and focus this podcast as well in 2016. And for allies listening to this, that does not mean in any way that you will not find really good, relevant information that is designed for you. You will absolutely still find a lot of value, I assure you of that. However I am focusing on story telling. And guess what? LGBT people or not, everyone has a story to share. Everyone has some kind of message that they want to get out to the world, and a lot of people are dreaming of being authors but they are frozen in fear with all that comes with being an author.

So while I'm talking specifically about wanting to help LGBT people share their stories, if you're an ally and you're listening to this, and you have a story that you want to share too, and you want to be an author to benefit your business, you listening to this podcast shows me that you are open-minded, that you're an ally, that you are someone who likely has a really good story to share, and I want to help you too. I'm not excluding you in any way, shape, or form, so please don't take this as feeling exclusionary because that's not my intention at all. And as I start talking about some of the books that I've been working on, helping people with,

you'll see that it's been a really good mix of helping LGBT people and allies. So there's really no exclusion there by any means, because I do love you and I adore you.

So now what I've noticed is that I have been working with a lot of authors, and it kind of happened in a very unintentional way. And I've always realized that I work with a lot of creative people. So I really like working with creative people because I personally feel like I'm a pretty good balance of right brain and left brain, so while I can get on these paths of shiny-object-itis if you will, and really excited about something, and want to try all these new things and be really creative, I'm also equal parts logical, and reasonable, and rational, and think, 'Okay is this something that I should really be doing right now?' So I've managed to kind of tap into being able to use both sides of my brain, and it's benefited- I think, and I'm sure they would say too, it's benefitted the people that I've worked with individually a great deal because I can connect with them as the creatives that they want to be, but I can also say, "Alright let's be realistic about this and figure out how you can actually do any of what you're talking about doing right now." And writing a book is one of those things that's just- it seems like a really incredibly daunting task, and you might even be thinking right now, 'Why would I want to put myself through the hell of writing a book?' And I say you should absolutely do it because it will be a life-changer and a game-changer in your business, I can attest to that personally. But I also know that to be true for those that I've worked with.

So let me just share with you a couple of the projects that I've worked on, and you'll see very quickly the patterns and the commonalities here, even though it took me a little bit longer to recognize that this is absolutely where I should be focusing my attention. So like I said in early 2015 I had reached out and said, "Hey I would love to work on some more one-on-one coaching," and as a result of just sending an email to my list I had a handful of people say, "Yes I would love to work with you one-on-one." Out of that handful of people, about 30% of them were thinking about writing a book. So I don't know if it's because I have written a book that others have just trusted in me that I can help them write a book, but somehow that's kind of evolved over time. And in 2013 I wrote my first book, and that one is, 'But You Don't Look Gay,' and I'm sure you picked up on the humor and the sarcastic things that come out of my mouth, so I really kind of started that one off

strong with, 'But You Don't Look Gay.' And there is reason for why I titled it that, it's written about in the book, and I've certainly talked about it on the podcast at great length. But it's really the six steps to creating your LGBT marketing strategy. And again it's designed for allies, but it's really applicable to LGBT people too. That was the first time that I had written a book, and I had not a single clue as to what I was doing. Literally no clue whatsoever. I've always enjoyed writing, and when I started this iteration of my business if you will, I started in November of 2012 writing blogs. And I was writing blogs addressed to people that I knew who had questions who needed answers, and I knew if I could answer their one question in email, why not throw it on the blog and educate some other people in the process? So that's really how my whole business started.

So I started writing this book when I started blogging basically. So I put all of the blogs aside, and I started to just kind of create this library of content, and then after I had probably- I want to say it was at least over 100 blog posts, I said, "Let me kind of organize this, add to it, take things away, and make a book out of it." And that was really the first book in 2013. Now I still had no idea what I was doing in terms of organizing the content, in terms of how do I get it on Amazon, how do I get a book cover designed, how do I get an ISBN number, how do I market this? Marketing is my background so the marketing piece actually was the easier piece, but everything else I honestly had no idea what I was doing.

So fast forward to 2014 when I write my second book. That one was a breeze comparatively, and it's also- it's not quite twice the length, but it's significantly larger than the first book. So it's just knowing what I know now, and knowing what I did in 2013, all of the mistakes I made because I made every mistake you can possibly hit, I think I did. But when I went to do it again in 2014 it was so easy; so, so easy. Now the hard part is actually writing the book. That to me is the harder part. So physically writing is what you need to focus on. So if you want to write a book, I can help you, I can shortcut everything but the actual physical writing part. However I do have some tips and tricks around that, too. But in 2013 I was working with a small group of other marketers, and just kind of a Mastermind group if you will, where we get together once a month, and we still do, and this goes back to about 2013. We still get together, and we just brainstorm ideas and I had shown them that I had written my first book, and one of the people

in my group- or it's a couple, so the husband and wife, two people that I work very closely with, they decided that they also wanted to write a book. So when I began helping them, it was in a very informal way, and it was really just me wanting to help peers of mine shortcut the process. So I provided my template that I used for my first book, I said, "Here it is, it's in a Word document, here's the font I chose, here's the heading font, here's the paragraph font." I had very specific reasons for why I chose those based on design principles, and I just said, "Here. Take it, use it as a template, make your own book out of it." And then of course as they were going through it, I was one of the proof-readers for it, I gave them a testimonial; like we really just kind of worked together, again in a very informal way. So their book has been out for going on three years. I think they put it out in 2013, I could get up from my desk and walk over to it and tell you exactly, but I will put a link to their book in the show notes on today's podcast episode which you can get by going to www.JennTGrace.com/75 because we're in episode number 75. So if you want to check out that book you could certainly do so by clicking on that link, and it's on Amazon. So that was kind of the first time that I helped somebody else, and it was really just me helping friends get their stories out there.

So this happened a second time within that same group, but it wasn't until earlier in this last year, in 2015. So somebody else in my group who is also a marketer; he was working on his book and we basically did the same thing. So it's the same two people in that group and him, so now it's the three of us teaching this one other person in our group what we did. So I shared my stuff with Mike and Maria; they're the ones that did the first book. And then myself, Mike, and Maria showed the other Mike in our group how to do his book. And now his learning curve was shortened dramatically as well because Maria and Mike had gone through all of the same kind of hiccups and failures and successes of what they used from my starting point when I gave them my book information.

So as you can see, the more times this kind of happens, the easier it really becomes for everybody involved. So Mike- the other Mike was very grateful and acknowledging me as helping him in getting that book done, I did a good proofread of it, I edited a little bit, and that came out in early or mid-2015 I want to say. So that book also available on Amazon which I will include in the show notes.

So now I had my two books, and their two books already, so that's four we're already at. And then I had a third eBook that I'd released in 2015 earlier this year about marriage equality. So five books already kind of under the belt.

Now the process for all five books was a little bit different, and it really just kind of varied based on the size of book, what the intention of the book was, so am I writing this to get more business? Am I writing this to become a well-known authority in my space? Am I writing this to give it to my clients to just give them something to hold them over between coaching sessions? Or between projects? So there's a lot of different reasons you might want a book, and it's a matter of kind of identifying what those are, and then creating the best book that's going to get you that end result.

So now if we talk about 2015 a little bit more, I have been working with three people in particular throughout all of 2015, and we'll be going into 2016 on books of theirs. So one of theirs was previously a guest on this podcast, Ann Townsend. She has written a book called 'LGBTQ: Outing My Christianity.' She and I have been working together for about going on I think a year and a half or so, so we've been working together for a while. She already has one book written, she's working on a couple of others, and we work in a one-on-one capacity, and just helping her just kind of shortcut the process where possible, making introductions to her to people in my network that could be good contributors. So it's again, while it's in a formal coaching capacity, I'm really kind of just sharing my knowledge and wisdom to a friend, and just trying to help as much as I can just make the process a little bit easier for her. And since she's already done one book, it's made life a little bit easier for her because she kind of already knows how the process works.

So that's just one person that I have been helping in a somewhat informal capacity. But then the two people- the two books that I have worked on in 2015 have been in a very, very, very formal capacity. And one of them just launched in November, so just a couple of months ago, and it's by Tony Ferraiolo and his book is called 'Artistic Expressions of Transgender Youth.' And his book is on Amazon now, and I helped him with the entirety of this book. From choosing a book cover, to figuring out what stock and weight of paper that we wanted to use, what size, what printer we wanted to go with, how we were going to get it on Amazon, how we were

going to market it, who the end audience is; you name it, we have worked on it together, including putting together a book signing that was in December of 2015. So his book has been really, really hands on, very, very tactical, here's how I shortcutted the process for me, but what we learned in the process is that Amazon does not print hard cover books. So if you want to go use CreateSpace which is an Amazon book creation tool, there are no hard cover options; or at least when we were looking for him, or the size that we were looking for. So we had to go print separately which just creates a whole other level of chaos, complications, et cetera. It's also more expensive, but we've been going through that process for much of 2015, and now that is down to a science. So he is going to be working on volumes two, three, and I think a fourth one; all of which are going to be as easy as can be because we've already learned from doing the first one of that type of style- that style of a book if you will.

Now it was at Tony's book signing that I knew for a fact that I needed to focus on helping people share their stories in 2016. There is no two ways around it. If I could identify an epiphany or an 'ah-ha' type of moment, it was absolutely at his book signing. So his book- and he's also been a guest on this podcast as well, so I'll put a link into that in the show notes too, and the book. But his book is a picture book, and it is art drawn by transgender children who range from as young as six to as old as I think 21. And he asks them a question, "If you had all the money in the world, what would you buy?" And they're kids, they're young people, so they just draw what they feel. And then they write what their drawing means on the back of it. So we compiled all of this into a picture book. So I think a good marketing play for us would be to be packaging the book with tissues because it is a tear jerker, I assure you of this. And it's so good, so if you're doing anything in the transgender space of the LGBT community, this book is seriously amazing, and I don't say that because I had any part of it. It's just the content of it is amazing.

So for his book we did a book signing in New Haven, Connecticut, and one of the kids who is in the book showed up with their mother, and we had a special stack of books waiting for the kids who were in the book to come and get a special signed copy of the book. Additionally Tony had his own copy where he wanted the kids that were in the book to sign their page of the book. So for Tony, this is a life changing experience to produce this book,

because it's so much of his hard work, and so much of his story, and the kids that he works with and their journey, put in a very neat package for the outside world to understand. However, it didn't occur to me- and I guess it did but it wasn't as profound as the actual physically being there for this to happen. I guess it didn't really hit me of how impactful the books would have on those who are included in them. So there are dozens of children whose artwork are in this book that is really deep and meaningful to them, and one of them as I had mentioned- actually more than one, there was a handful of them that were all there for the book signing. One of them was kind enough to be helping me swipe credit cards to sell the books which was really cute because I think he's nine. So yeah, so fun, had a great time. And one of the kids came in- and mind you they're walking behind their mother, a little bit timid, a little bit shy, I don't know this kid at all. I've run into them at a couple of Tony's events that we've thrown, et cetera. And I was sitting behind the table with all of the books, and I was watching them interact with Tony, just kind of seeing everybody's crying, everybody's teary eyed because the book is so emotional. And then I am watching them go out of the small book cafe that we were at. And as they were turning the corner to go out the front door, kind of walking a couple steps behind their mother, they had put the book which is just this very nice, hard cover- you know like a children's picture book landscape. They put it up to their chest, and I could see the biggest sigh, like you could just see their body, kind of their shoulders rise up and then exhale, like it was the biggest, deepest breath that I could see from about ten feet away, that no one else caught because no one's paying attention to people leaving, everyone's chatting. And I knew in that moment, my hair on my arms stood up, I had chills, I had tears in my eyes thinking, 'Holy shit, this book has changed that person's life.' There is no doubt in my mind that that book is a game changer for that one individual child.

Now knowing that all of the blood, sweat, and many tears that Tony and I put into getting his story out there; there is not a single dollar amount in this world that could replace the experience of seeing that one kid who's featured in that book, and how much that's changing their life. Like there is just no way of counting how incredible that experience is.

It was in that moment, like truly in that moment, that I realized, 'Holy hell, I need to use my process oriented, operationally focused

brain in helping people like Tony, and like others that I've worked with like Ann, and Mike and Maria, and the other Mike, and helping them get their stories out to the world. Because I've done this as many times as I have at this point, that to me the actual logistics, the nuts and bolts, the BS of it, the stuff that makes people want to bang their head against the wall and pull their hair out; that's the stuff that I love doing, that's where I thrive. So knowing that I have that skillset, and somebody with such an incredible story has something to share, and it's that lack of skillset that's stopping them, it was truly that 'ah-ha' moment where I was like I have to do this. I have to focus 2016 on helping you get your story out. So there's a couple of other things that kind of dovetail into this epiphany, and like I said I didn't realize how many authors I was already kind of working with. And I have another author who I am not mentioning by name yet because I'm waiting specifically for when her book is out, I cannot wait. I really- just like with Tony's book, I felt just as proud of having Tony's book released as I did my own. Like I honestly felt that much pride for his work as I do my own work, and it's going to be the same thing for this other book that I'm working on. And this one's been really different because it's equal parts manifesto, it's kind of corporate focused. There's a lot of interesting nuances to this book, and one of them being is that this particular author isn't really a fan of writing- or she's a really, really good writer actually, but she just doesn't have the time or the focus to sit down and write. And just that thought of having to write just really kind of stressed her out for a long time that she kept putting it off, and putting it off. So we found a really good solution to have her basically be interviewed by somebody, which is then the basis of ghost writing that we can use to put into a book. And now this book is being more traditionally published if you will. So everyone else that I've worked with has been down the self-published road, which at this point you're much better off going self-published because the royalties of a traditionally published book are so high that if you're trying to make money off of publishing a book, it's certainly not going to be going down a traditionally published path, or at least in my experience. I'm sure there's many people who would debate me on that, but in my experience it's just- it's really costly. So with her, we found a way to really kind of navigate her busy lifestyle, and get somebody else to write the meat of the book, but in her voice because she's actually spoken it to somebody who's recorded it, and now they're using the transcripts to write the basis of the book.

So there's that one that I will be talking much more about on this podcast as it progresses. But I think what I would say that my toughest- yeah I would probably say my toughest hurdle to cross in 2016 as it relates to book writing is that I started writing a fourth book in early 2016. It's around LGBT, around how to leverage your LGBT status as a business owner, and really finding new opportunities, all that kind of stuff. It's probably 70% written I would say, but it hasn't been a strong enough priority for me to get it through that last 30%. So it's just kind of sitting shelved for right now, that I'll get back to it at some point. What book it ends up being, I have no idea, but it'll end up being- it'll end up coming out at some point.

However what I did have is another epiphany over the Thanksgiving holiday, and I realized during Thanksgiving that I needed to write a book that has nothing to do with LGBT, and co-author it with my wife, who has no desire to be an author really because she's an educator. She works in special education, she's a behavioral specialist, and we realized that we needed to write a book about the trials and tribulations and judgment that we face as two people trying to raise a child with mental health needs. And this was truly an epiphany, and it was more of an 'I have to write this book for my own well-being,' like 'I need this book in the world because it doesn't exist.' So my wife and I are working on that, and I think that it's not really challenging so to speak for the book writing aspect because we're collecting stories from twenty to thirty other families in similar situations to ours, so I'm going to be getting a lot of content from other places. But we've been talking about how are we going to use this book to help position my wife in more of an authoritative space so she can use this as somewhat of a launching pad into potential new opportunities for her. We have no idea what that looks like right now, none whatsoever. However, we're constantly talking about it, we're just going to keep kind of ruminating on it and figuring out where that's going to bring her, but that's going to be getting her to have the status of being an author, which will be a game changer for her in her community, because authors in her community are likely far less than in the business community where- I don't want to say everybody has a book, but a lot of people have books now, so it's not that uncommon to have a book. It's almost- it's becoming more common to have books, or to feel the need to have a book, to just basically stay afloat and keep up with a lot of people, of course

depending on what niche you're in. So this is going to be definitely more challenging to figure out how to get her brain to wrap her head around how we're going to do this. So that's something that I'm focusing on in 2016 around authoring and doing more in this space.

So I tell you all of this, and I don't mean to over-simplify and try to pretend that writing a book is not a total pain, and I'm not going to try to sugarcoat it, because it really still is a pain. It totally, totally is. And even for me who I've done- I've been involved in a handful of them at this point, almost a dozen of them at this point. There's nuance in all of these basically. So what I want to emphasize I guess is there are ways to shortcut this process, and what I've realized is that I only have a limited amount of time because I am working with people one-on-one, I have Fortune sized clients, I have some larger consulting contracts; so I'm kind of a little bit all over the map in terms of what it is that I'm doing, but it's all still around LGBT; that's totally the core of what I do.

Now what I wanted to do, and what I am doing, is on February 1st I am launching a group program, and it's only for twelve people at most. Twelve people, that's it. And I've chosen twelve people specifically so I can make sure that everyone's getting enough one-on-one attention. But it's going to be in a group format, and it's going to go for ninety days, and my goal is to walk twelve individuals through the process of becoming an author in ninety days. Now the end goal for some people is to have a book done and launched by the end of those ninety days. For others it's a matter of getting them organized, and giving them the information that they need to then write their book at the end of the ninety days, and use that information to take it across the finish line. So everyone has a different goal, and I'm not trying to force people in saying, "If you're part of this program you have to have a book in ninety days." I know that's not realistic, I know that's not attainable, and I'm not going to put pressure on people in that way. So a couple of weeks ago before the holiday chaos kind of hit us, I had sent a quick email to my list, and five people responded within like a matter of an hour. And of those five people I have four of them who've already committed to the group, and I have a fifth person who is like a 95%. So I already have five people committed to this group that starts on February 1st. It's going to go regardless of the number of people who end up in it, but twelve is the cut-off.

So I have room for seven more individuals who want to put a book out there in 2016.

Now I'll tell you a little bit about what the course looks like, just so you have a general idea. And I don't have a name for it even, it's that new of an idea, and just talking with five people and all five of them saying, "Yes, for the love of God, yes I need to do this. I need to get my story out there." That validates everything to me. It validates absolutely everything, and that this is the right path to go on. So it's so new that I do not have a name for it. I'm calling it the Author Program Live right now, because it is a live program. It's not a, 'Here, log into here and just watch some videos.' It's really- it's me, it's you, and it's eleven other people learning how to do this at the same time you are. So the benefit to that is everyone's kind of at a different stage of what they're doing. So one person I talked to has about 85% of her book written, and she just needs to figure out how to get that last 15% written, and then how to do all of the dirty details of 'how do I actually publish it? Where do I go? How do I get registered with the Library of Congress? How do I get an ISBN number? How do I market it?' Et cetera, et cetera. So there's just a ton of weedy details that people hate that I already have figured out that I can just completely shortcut, you don't have to stress about.

So it'll be ninety days, so from February 1st to April 30th. It will be a good kind of first quarter, going into the second quarter project. And it's going to be kind of sharing things like the tools of the trade, how to re-purpose your existing content if you have it, deciding on what you're going to write, how to position yourself as an expert if that's what you want to do, deciding if traditional publishing is better than self-publishing for you, although much of it will focus on the self-published road. And working with an editor, how to figure out your publication date; all of these really kind of annoying details, in a lot of ways, very annoying details. And the more I guess the one-on-one component of it, is that it's going to have twelve sessions- so it's really about twelve weeks, and they're going to be sixty minutes, maybe up to ninety minutes via a webinar on Tuesday nights at 8:30 Eastern time. And I have chosen that time based on the availability of the five other people who've committed to this, and I would love for you to be able to attend live. But if you can't it's not a big deal because I am going to record it and make it available to you after the fact. It will be available the following morning, if not that night. And each week is

going to discuss some kind of topic in detail, it's going to have open Q&A so if you have specific needs that you need answers to right then, bring them to the table, we'll talk about it. We'll also do some laser coaching to get you over any particular humps and hurdles that you have. And then occasionally we're going to have some guest speakers thrown in who have already been where you are, and need that extra push to- you need that extra push from them to kind of help you get through this. So it's not just the live webinars once a week, it's also a Facebook group. And I chose Facebook because everyone's there, I'm not going to try to set up some separate site that you have to remember the log-in info for, completely forget it, and then have to be a total pain. So Facebook is a likely source that you're already on, so I'm doing a private Facebook group that will be with me, my assistant, and the up to twelve participants that you can ask questions at any time. You don't have to wait until we connect on Tuesday nights, you can just ask your peers what they think. So if you're in the process of designing your cover for example, why wait? Throw it up there and say, "Hey everyone, here's cover A, here's cover B, which one do you like?" So you can do a lot of stuff like that, or "Hey I really need somebody to look at my intro and tell me if this makes sense." Or "I just wrote the book outline, I don't think the chapters are in the right order, but I don't know how to put them in the right order. Can you help look at this?" So really it's a matter of having this- and not just me because I don't have all of the answers, I just happened to have done it enough times that I know where to find the answers. But now you have eleven other peers who are in this group, who can totally help you shortcut the process too.

So- and one of I guess the really exciting things I'm personally excited about, and this actually came as an idea from one of the people who've already decided that- 'sign me up,' is you're basically forming your own tribe of people. So now if you have eleven other people in this group with you, and your mailing list has maybe 200 people; so it's not a lot of people, but for your business it's a healthy size and it's great. But you also have somebody in your group who has a mailing list of 20,000 people for example. And they're really excited, and engaged in what you're doing, that they can- when you're doing your book launch, you can reach out to them and say, "Hey can you share my book with your list?" And you can figure out a whole bunch of different affiliate marketing types of things, and commission, and there's a

lot of things that I'll go into in this course. But just from a general standpoint, you now have eleven people who have audiences who may have a connection to what you're writing about, that can then amplify and magnify your reach exponentially, and to me that is so amazing. So you're getting actual support in the weeds of getting it done, but then when it comes time to launch the book, you can shoot yourself to best-seller status on Amazon very, very, very easy by having this amplification of other people's tribes to help you get there. And I'm really excited about that, because I got both of my books to Amazon best-seller status, and it was not an easy feat, there are ways to do it I think more efficiently than I did it, and I know this is one of those ways. So it's just a lot of stuff like this that I'm just really, really excited about, and this is why I know that doing this is the right path for me personally.

So I do want to point out really quickly who the program is not for. Honestly, because there's a couple of types of people in here that I don't want part of the group, and I do want to have a conversation with you first prior to you joining. So if you're looking for a magic pill to just snap your fingers and all of a sudden you have a book, it's not going to work. I assure you of this. Or if you're resistant to changing your ways, it's also not going to work. So we're really going to- you have to be willing to shake things up. You want to be reaching outside of your comfort zone, and say, "This is a priority for me, I can make these certain changes in my life to accommodate this priority." And then if you're just comfortable and complacent, and you don't really have any drive or desire to be kind of reaching higher heights and peaks in your business, this probably isn't going to be for you. So I wanted to point that out because I'm not allowing people who don't have the right chops if you will to be in the program. Because having somebody who's kind of lackluster about it, it's just going to kind of be a wet blanket on the rest of the group, and I really want to protect the sanctity of what we're out to accomplish here in this particular group.

So if any of this sounds interesting to you, the only website I need you to remember other than you can just go to my website and contact me there, is going to www.MeetWithJenn.com, and that brings you to my calendar, and you can schedule a time to talk to me between now and February 1st and tell me if you would like to participate in this program. And it's just really a matter of me- for you and I getting to know each other, just for thirty minutes or so,

to find out if you're a right for this program. And if you are then hop on in and we will make sure that you get your book in 2016.

So that my friend is the lay of the land for 2016. So really my commitment to running a marathon is going to be similar to your commitment to writing a book if that's what you so choose. So if that is one of your goals, I want to help you achieve that goal. If writing a book is not part of your goals, there are plenty of things in this podcast throughout this year that are still going to absolutely be relevant to you. For example one of the- actually the next podcast on January 21st is going to be with Dorie Clark. So if you don't know Dorie Clark, she is a marketing strategy consultant. She writes for the Harvard Business Review, Time, Entrepreneur, the World Economic Forum; she's kind of all over the place, and she's a recognized branding expert. So she has two books. One is called 'Reinventing You,' and then she has a second one which is called 'Stand Out,' and it was named the number one leadership book of 2015 by Inc. Magazine. And I don't know about you but I love Inc. Magazine, and I love Entrepreneur, they're two of my absolute favorite magazines. And she also happens to be an out lesbian who's making a huge impact on the world. So she's the first interview that I have in 2016, and it's very kind of my standard interview format that if you're a listener of this podcast you are very familiar with. But we talk a little bit about her book and writing content. So to me a book is just one more form of content creation, and that's the one I'm going to focus on, for me helping people in 2016. But all other forms of content creation are absolutely going to be coming up in this podcast, so don't think that I'm only going to talk about book creation on this podcast, because that is likely not going to be the case. It's going to be likely similar to what's been going on in the past, where I bring to you information that I think is going to be relevant to helping you market to the LGBT community, or market yourself within the LGBT community. So either way there's going to be plenty of information for you, I promise.

So as I mentioned, all of the things that I talked about, links to certain places, links to my calendar, past interviewees that have been on the show; you can go to www.JennTGrace.com/75 or you can just go to the website and click on the free podcast link in the navigation bar. Either way, you will find yourself to the page with all of the information. So if you are looking to share your story, and you think what I've been talking about makes sense for you, please

reach out to me. For me personally, having a tangible outcome from somebody that I'm working with is honestly the best feeling, reflecting back on that experience with Tony at his book signing. If I can be the conduit to creating more opportunities like that in 2016, it would be an honor, truly an honor to be part of that journey no matter how big or small, part of that journey with you. Honestly, seriously can't wait. Cannot wait for 2016, I'm really excited about this.

So anyway, until the next episode, I hope you have a great week, keep your head held high, and go out and just kick some ass in your business, will you? Have a great one, I'll talk to you soon.