

Jenn T. Grace – Episode 84 - Build Your Personal Brand by Learning from the Experts

Jenn T Grace: You are listening to the Personal Branding for the LGBTQ Professional Podcast, episode 84.

Introduction: Welcome to the Personal Branding for the LGBTQ Professional Podcast; the podcast dedicated to helping LGBTQ professionals and business owners grow their business and careers through the power of leveraging their LGBTQ identities in their personal brand. You'll learn how to market your products and services both broadly, and within the LGBTQ community. You'll hear from incredible guests who are leveraging the power of their identity for good, as well as those who haven't yet started, and everyone in between. And now your host. She teaches straight people how to market to gay people, and gay people how to market themselves. Your professional lesbian, Jenn - with two N's - T Grace.

Jenn T Grace: Well hello and welcome to episode 84 of the podcast. I am your host, Jenn with two N's T. Grace, and today is going to be a much shorter episode than usual, and the reason for that is that I am in a transitional period, if you will, of lining up a lot of interviews for you over the next coming couple of months.

So at this moment I have a lot of interviews planned, but I don't have them recorded to bring to you yet. So we are in the second week of May at this point, and I have interviews lined up that will bring us all the way through the end of August. So it's going to be an action packed end of spring and into the summer, in terms of talking to really, really amazing people. So I figured in this episode, like I said it will be really short, but I want to at least give you a preview of who is to come on the podcast, so that way you can make note to tune in to one of these many guests that are going to be really awesome for you to listen to.

And yeah, so let's just go through the lineup I have so far of planned recorded interviews.

So I have one, two, three four, five, six, seven- so I have seven interviews planned, and it's a great mix of people doing different things, and personally branding themselves in really different and interesting ways. So I'm not going to tell you all about them, because that's going to be their job to tell you how awesome they are and what they're up to. But at least I'd love to give you a preview of who's to come.

So the first, and this doesn't necessarily mean this is the order in which they will come out, but the first on my list is Jacob Tobia. So Jacob is a genderqueer advocate, writer, speaker, and artist dedicated to justice for the transgender, gender nonconforming, and LGBTQ communities. So Jacob and I were introduced to one another through a mutual friend, and just the conversations that we've had together, I've been so excited to have him on the podcast. So that will be happening soon.

Also we will be having Gloria Brame who is an American Board Certified Sexologist, a writer, a sex therapist, and I believe she's still based in Georgia. So I'm excited about this one as well. She's written a lot of books and we're connected on LinkedIn, and since a lot of what I'm doing lately is helping individuals with their personal branding, but through creating a book, she's just a perfect fit to have since she's written so many things. So we'll talk to her.

Also we have Jonathan Lovitz who is regularly speaking at conferences, and to the media about LGBT economic empowerment, and the vital roles that businesses play in creating equity for the LGBT community. So he's regularly commenting, or being interviewed on MSNBC, CNBC, NPR, The Advocate, Out Magazine; so he is a very strong advocate and champion for LGBT equality from a business economic level. So it's going to be really interesting to hear his thoughts on kind of the lay of the land of what we're looking at in our country today, and just all the great

things of how much advancement we're making in terms of moving forward from an economic standpoint. So I'm excited to have him as well.

And then we will be talking to Michaela Mendelsohn, I believe that's how she says her last name, I'm not 100%. And she is a transgender activist and the founder of the California Transgender Workplace Program. So I'm really excited to talk to her, especially having founded a workplace program, I think that's going to be really interesting. And she, like all of the others, has a strong personal brand within the space that she works in.

And then we will be talking to Jag Beckford who is the founder and producer of Rainbow Fashion Week, which is tied to New York City Pride, and if I'm not mistaken, Rainbow Fashion Week has a lot of people who come to it in terms of- like you would any other type of fashion week. So this should be really interesting, and both Michaela and Jag I do not know personally, whereas the other few I know at the very least through emails, and some of them I've actually- I know much better. So these two folks came from Mona Elyafi if you remember her from- I don't even remember what episode she was on, but she was on one of the episodes quite a while ago, and she's a PR person in Los Angeles. So she sends me amazing people on a regular basis that she thinks I should connect with. So both Michaela and Jag were both great finds from Mona, so I'm really excited about that.

And then we have two others to go. So we have Robbie Samuels who is a speaker and a consultant, in addition to doing a whole bunch of other things. One of his known things is the Art of the Schmooze which is an interactive fast-paced and fun training that helps hundreds of people yearly gain the confidence they need for networking, and raising their consciousness, and basically just helping them be better networkers. So I'm really excited because he's really done a good job building his personal brand, the Art of the Schmooze, and he has a podcast as well, and I think he'll be really great to talk to, especially if you're listening to this and you haven't really built your personal brand yet. So you'll be getting

there but you might need a little bit of help, and you might need somebody to kind of push you out of the nest, and I feel like what Robbie will talk about will help kind of push you out of your nest if you will.

And then finally, I don't want to say I'm more excited about one versus the others because I'm really excited actually about talking to all of these folks. But the last one on my list is Lindsay Felderman, and the reason I am so excited to have Lindsay as a guest- and hers will definitely be airing sometime in June would be my guess, it's probably going to be the latter half of June, and Lindsay is one of the graduates from my recent author program which is now called the Purpose Driven Authors Academy. So she and six other amazing people started working with me in February of this year, 2016, and she is the first of the seven individuals to have a book created from this program. So the program is called the Purpose Driven Authors Academy, and you can go to www.PurposeDrivenAuthorsAcademy.com, you can go to www.PurposeDrivenAuthors.com, www.PurposeDrivenAuthor.com, or you can go to my website and click on the button on the home page.

So regardless of how you get there, you'll see what the program entails, and so Lindsay and six others just went through this program, and I seriously feel like a mother hen, or some kind of like mama bird who is just so excited to see her babies fly, and Lindsay is the first of seven who is having her book fly out into the world, and I cannot be happier. So her book is really- so the way she describes it is that she wrote this book because she wishes she had had this book when she was coming out. So that's kind of a good teaser of what this book is all about. And oddly enough I actually have the proof copy sitting on my desk right now. I just read it for her and made some thoughts, and changes, and just giving her a little bit of feedback which I will be recording after I'm done recording this podcast.

So the Purpose Drive Authors Academy is really for a specific type of person, and I changed the title- it was actually just called Group

Author Program before, which is so blah and doesn't really say much, but I still had seven amazing people come through it. And when I started to really look at the seven people who were in the group, and figure out what they were all trying to accomplish, and what they were trying to do, some of them are writing about LGBT specific stuff, some of them are writing about overcoming cancer, and overcoming obstacles, and working in the disability rights movement; so there's a big kind of spectrum of what everyone is writing about, but the commonality is that they are all so incredibly purpose-driven. So I feel like a lot of people hear the phrase of mission-driven, but purpose-driven I think is even more important. So it's great to be driven by a mission, so my mission is to help LGBT people, it's just really at the core of what I'm trying to do. But I feel like saying that I'm purpose-driven is a much better descriptor of that, because I want to help more people. So in the last- no it wasn't the last episode, it was one prior to this so it must have been episode 82, I spoke specifically about how to impact a million people, and how that's my goal, is to impact a million people. And I recognized not that long ago that my way of doing that is to help the people who are helping the people. So if we look at the seven people who were recently in this author program that ended on April 30th, all of them are people who are helping the people. They are all super purpose-driven, they are all trying to make an impact in this world, they are all trying to make a difference, they're all trying to make the world a better place, and it just gives me so much joy and excitement because of all of the authors that I've worked with in the past, most of them have had a purpose-driven component to it.

So you probably remember me talking about Tony Ferraiolo, and his book, and which is called Artistic Expressions of Transgender Youth. And he and I worked really closely on that book together, and I cannot express how much joy I get knowing that every child who picks up that book, or every parent who picks up that book, that almost everyone's reaction is some form of tears. Just some form of tears, whether they're happy tears or sad tears, there's definitely tears always involved. And it just means that it's making an impact. So if I can help more people like Tony, and more people like Lindsay who's all about making an impact, and the other people in my group, then why wouldn't I, right?

So I bring that up because I do have a second round of this program starting, which starts on June 6th, which is a Monday. The first class technically is on June 7th which is a Tuesday, and it really is going to be an action packed thirteen week program, as it was this first time, that really is the soup to nuts of personal branding, writing a book, and marketing the book. So it is not one dimensional where it's just here's ninety days, let's put words on a page. It's great to put words on a page, but ultimately you have to know exactly what your plan is for the book. So what is your vision? What are you trying to accomplish? If you want to write a book because you want to have best seller status, that's one type of way of going about it. Or if you want to write a book because you want to save one young person from committing suicide, that's another type of approach. And both of those goals are amazing, but you have to have a really clear strategy of how you're going to market your book, and how you're going to position it, and all that great stuff. So this program really dives deep into all of that, and also gives a good amount of spotlight time. I don't really have a good name for it, but we'll call it spotlight time where it's laser coaching. It's hey, alright we have ten minutes live in front of everybody, let's laser focus on what your particular problem is. Is it writing, are you blocked on the title, are you blocked on your outline? Whatever it happens to be. And there's a lot of that kind of built in throughout the program.

So I know that when I had talked about this program, I don't think it was the last episode, it must have been episode 82 when I was talking about it, I had a handful of people actually reach out to me which is always exciting. So if you're listening to this, please reach out to me, I love hearing from you. I just had a Twitter conversation with a fellow professional lesbian the other day and I was super excited about it, who said that she listened to this. So please, always reach out to me, I know that you're probably- you're a silent participant just listening to this maybe at the gym or in the car, but I always love to hear from you, and I always try to adapt my materials to be in alignment for what you're looking for. So please, if you have any thoughts or questions, hit me up.

So a couple of you have reached out to me, as I mentioned, and wanted a tentative outline if you will, of what this program entails. So I want to run through week by week, and just give you kind of a high level overview of what you can expect to see if this program is a right fit for you.

So the program title is Purpose Driven Authors Academy. I can tell you that one out of the seven people in the current group- or actually the recently graduated group if you will, that one of the seven people wasn't necessarily 'purpose-driven.' Her book is around communications tips and helping people who- I'm trying to think what her tagline is. Helping smart people sound as smart as they are. It's some kind of catchy tagline like that. So hers isn't about overcoming cancer, or working with the disability rights movement, or any LGBT focus. But the value that her book is going to bring to the world is equally as important because there are a lot of people, especially corporate people, that she works with and trains on helping them sound as smart as they are, and really kind of prepping them for presentations, and all that kind of stuff. So while the title is called Purpose Driven Authors, and it certainly attracts a certain type of individual, if you're a financial advisor, or a lawyer, or a travel agent, or anyone who has a business that's looking to write a nonfiction book to help increase their business; so whether or not you're trying to use it to increase sales, or to give it away to your customers, or to use it to build your platform which is what I usually recommend, so that way you can charge more for speaking engagements. All of those things are 100% still relevant to what's covered in this course. So while I'm trying to draw in purpose-driven people, it's really my way of weeding people out, and I think I've said this in the past as far as even calling myself a professional lesbian, it really weeds out the type of individual who would want to work with me, or give me the time of day. And that just saves me time, it saves them time. So it's kind of the same thing with this purpose-driven title.

So even if you don't consider yourself to be purpose-driven, I don't want the title to scare you away from considering this if you really are looking to write a book. So let me explain the course outline, and I'm just going to go week by week, and if you have questions,

reach out and ask. Like I said I'm going through this lineup because I had a couple people reach out after episode 82 asking me if they could have more details. So it occurred to me that when you have thousands of people listening to something, usually only a couple of people are the ones that raise their hand and send an email. And I know I'm guilty of this too, I listen to a lot of podcasts and I've never once tweeted, never once gone on Facebook, never once reached out. But yet I love their podcasts, and I listen to every single one. So I am just as bad as the next person in terms of not following the 'call to action' on a podcast, but regardless I'm doing this because it was requested and I'm sure other people out there are interested too. We'll just go through this for a couple of minutes and then we'll get back on topic, and probably close out because again, this shouldn't be too long of an episode.

So the tentative schedule begins on June 7th as I had said, and that is a Tuesday night, and it goes through August 30th which is also a Tuesday night. So each Tuesday evening at 8:30 Eastern Standard Time, we will be doing a live webinar presentation. And if for some reason you are not able to make the webinar presentations live, that's actually not too big of a deal because I do have them recorded and they are available within an hour after the session has ended, so you can certainly catch up at a later date. One of the participants in this last go-around missed the entire first month and didn't skip a beat. So she just followed along in the Facebook group, she watched the recording the next day, she was perfectly caught up to speed by the time I think the fifth or sixth week when she finally joined us, she was still completely in the loop with everyone. So it's not really a big deal if for some reason Tuesday evenings or a couple of your Tuesday evenings over the next three months are a little bit screwy.

Additionally I recognize that this is in Eastern Standard Time, so if you're in the UK this would not be an ideal time either, or maybe if you're in Australia, so I know I have a good amount of Australian listeners, so I know that the timing may not be ideal. So if that's a concern of yours, please just let me know and we can certainly talk about what we could arrange to make it easier for you.

So week one, which would be June 7th, and the theme of this one is vision and writing. So it's introductions, making sure everybody knows who each other are, and the group will not contain more than twenty participants. It's probably going to be closer to ten, but I have a cap at twenty. And even if I have- I already have four people ready to roll so even if it were just those four people, then I would just roll with those four people. So it really- the size doesn't matter too much, I had seven in this last group, I know that we could fit in more without it messing up the group dynamic at all, and I think the more we end up having eventually is just going to help everybody else because one of the big benefits is that we're building a community here. So the seven people who've gone through this already, they now have each other to lean on, so when they do launch their book- so when Lindsay launches her book in June, she has six other cheerleaders and me, so she's got seven people who are all going to send emails out on her behalf, going to put social media out on her behalf to say, 'Hey Lindsay wrote this book, I really believe in it, you have to check it out.' So it's almost like you get this built in cheerleading crowd for you, and built in sales force if you want to call it that too, because it's going to be- the people in your group are going to help you because they want to help you succeed. So I have a whole structure set up as well for the alumni's as well. So we have seven alums of the current group will be helping the people who are in this next group as well when it comes to launch time. So it's kind of cool and I want to make sure that everybody really builds a relationship outside of me facilitating it, which seems to have worked this first go-around.

So okay, back to the topic, introductions. And then we go through a program structure just explaining what to focus on, what the homework is going to be, things to remember kind of going forward. We'll talk about action items and how many we have to have per week to make sure we stay on schedule. We talk about having a contract with yourself. So I literally make you print out a contract with yourself and sign it and put it somewhere where it's visible, so when the going gets really rough, you know that you made this commitment to yourself, and that you'll keep on moving forward. And then talking about your vision. So what is your vision and how does that actually dovetail into writing a book.

So that's week one. Week two is June 14th and the theme for that is also vision and writing; you'll see that vision and writing is the theme for the first five weeks. So week two is all about starting with the end in mind, knowing what your goals are, narrowing in on your idea. So you might have a dozen different ideas of what your book is going to be, it's a matter of like really narrowing in and picking a pony and riding that pony. Understanding how long your book should be, that's a big- that was a big kind of topic last time. And then mind mapping a book outline. My mapping is the hands down best way to figure out what should be in your book.

So we go into that in a good amount of detail in the second week, but then the third week we actually do a live laser coaching for everybody on what their mind map looks like, and helping them kind of dissect it, and figure out what to keep and what to get rid of. So that's all of what week three covers.

Week four ends up putting us at June 28th and it's all about writing techniques, and what to be working on while you're writing. So this is only a thirteen week program, and we want to make sure that everything that you're doing, every day that you're focused on writing in some regard, which we identify how much you should be writing based on what you want your book to look like and all that kind of stuff. But while that's happening there are a lot of other things that you should be working on at the same time, so we cover that in week four.

Week five is themed vision and writing still, and this is individual spotlight. So at this point we are going into our second month together, and people are in various stages of the writing process. So in this last round I had someone who had 50,000 words written before we even started on the first day, and I had someone who didn't start writing until like the second to the last week. So if you are listening to this and you're thinking, 'Jeez I don't even have anything written yet, I have an idea but I don't really know what to do with it,' you would fit right in. So there will be somebody like yourself and then there's going to be somebody who comes to the table with a lot of words but no organization for what to do with

those words. So regardless of where you are in that process, this program can totally work for you.

So week six which is July 12th, it's all about marketing and personal branding, and that is understanding your personal brand, assessing your existing marketing. So we go into really deep detail on how to understand what you stand for, and I give a lot of exercises, and worksheets, and some kind of peer accountability of building your personal brand. And again, some people come to the table really clear on what their personal brand stands for, and others aren't entirely sure, or they want to transition or change the focus of their current brand. Again, regardless you'll totally fit in so it works out really well.

And then week seven which is July 19th is also personal branding. So there's a lot of homework that I assign in week six, and so week seven, part of that is an update and explaining how people did, coming up with the three ways to describe yourself, and then we go into a marketing audit about and around your website and your blog if you have a blog. This is a really big one because as a writer or as somebody who's building a personal brand, your website is the most critical resource to make sure is in check. So that is covered in detail as well.

And then week eight which is July 26th, it will be how to choose a title and a subtitle that work. And now this is a really fun- I think it was a really fun week within the program, because picking a title and subtitle that work is actually really hard. You might think you know your title, and then as you start talking about it, all bets are off and it's like, 'Wow I really need to change that.' So it's really interesting for sure.

So week nine is August 2nd, and that is choosing a launch date, reviewing our titles and subtitles, and then how to acquire testimonials and get a forward written by somebody that you admire that would make sense to write the forward of your book. So it's very tactical, very hands on, and I should have mentioned

that the theme of these weeks are all publishing logistics. So this is all the logistical stuff that is a pain in the ass, that no one tells you about before you decide to write a book, and then all of a sudden all of these things start to fall out of the sky and you have no idea what to do with them. So the whole program is just trying to make all of that overwhelm, less overwhelm.

Week ten which is August 9th is also publishing and logistics. This goes into deep detail on the cover, as well as print and eBook formatting. So there's a lot of different nuance around the print and eBook formatting, and the differences, and we cover this in good detail as well.

And then week eleven is more publishing and logistics, which is August 16th, and this is harkening back to your number one goal, making sure that we're staying on track here. It also goes into finding your ISBN number and your Library of Congress number. So that is a beastly pain that a lot of people overlook, so we talk about that. Pricing your- retail versus wholesale, pricing strategy and how to price yourself properly. Learning how to leverage your network of people when you come to the time of launching. Getting advanced readers lined up and ready to roll to help you when your book is finally available. And then generating buzz, which is kind of a preview for the final week.

And then week twelve which brings us to August 23rd is an individual spotlight week where we go in- this is the second to the last week, everyone's nerves are a little bit on high, and we just want to make sure that everything is squared away and covered. So we'll go into detail on everyone's kind of consensus the lay of the land. And mind you each week starts off with kind of a quick check-in as well, and there's a very active Facebook group where people are asking questions, and getting answers from each other as well as me. So you never have to wait an entire week to get your question answered, but it really helps to come prepared on the Tuesday nights with your questions.

And then the final week, which I was told was the most exciting week by a few of the participants in this last go-around, is marketing and your launch. So it's all well and good to have your personal brand platform built-ish and then having a book written, but if you don't know how to market or launch your book properly, it might become a paperweight and that's the last thing we want. We want your book to impact the audience in which you're serving, so we want to make sure that the launch is really carefully thought out. So in this one, it's going through kind of an inventory checklist which we cover in a previous week, and just making sure that you have all your ducks in a row for when you actually do the launch.

And then ways to generate buzz. So this was also kind of previewed in week eleven and it goes into more detail as well. And then the theme of the whole thing is getting comfortable with being uncomfortable, because when you launch anything, even including this course for me, launching it, there are plenty of times where it's just uncomfortable. Like there's no two ways around it, it's just uncomfortable. So it's a matter of being okay with that and making peace with that. And then the big part of this is the ten day book launch strategy. So pre-launch, launch, and post-launch.

So I know that that was a lot of information, but that is the lineup for the thirteen week Purpose Drive Authors Academy program, and I know that there's probably a ton of you that this makes perfect sense for, and I truly want to help you bring your message to the world, because I feel like it's so important and such a missed opportunity for you to be sitting on your story that could be really impacting others. So I wanted to go into detail on that because it was asked for, and because I think it's helpful for you to understand. So again if you're interested you can go to www.PurposeDrivenAuthors.com or go to my website, www.JennTGrace.com and on the left hand side there's something to the effect of Become an Author Today, or something like that.

That I believe wraps up episode 84. So we're probably about 30-less than 35 minutes and these episodes are usually 45 to an hour,

so it's a little bit shorter than usual. So I hope you're excited for all of the guests that I have lined up through at least the end of August, and of course I'll be working on getting other guests as well. So if you're listening to this and you think that you would be a good guest, please feel free to reach out to me. Just go to my website and you can go through the contact form, just give me a couple sentences on why you think that you would be great, and your website, and I'll go check you out and see if you'd be a good fit. But you can see that it's all about personal branding, and how to take your brand to the next level, and sometimes that has to do with writing a book, sometimes it doesn't.

One other thing before I let you go, is that I am working on a new webinar which is about personal branding specifically. So I will let you know when that happens. It's going to be probably any time soon, sometime in May is my guess that I will have this webinar up and running, and it's going to be just a ton of information on some of the foundational things to be thinking about when building your personal brand. And again, a book may or may not be part of your future. But if it is, of course I have this program that I can help you with, and if it's not I have tons of free information regardless.

So that is that my friends, I so greatly appreciate you continuing to listen to this podcast. I feel like I've been doing this podcast for a very long time at this point, and I genuinely, genuinely, genuinely appreciate you listening. And I love that I'm getting new listeners every day, and that some of you are reaching out to me. So even though I said I'm just as bad as anyone else, I would love to hear from you if you are listening to this for the first time, if you're looking for advice or information on anything, please let me know. I try to go out of my way to be accessible and I don't ever want to lose sight of that. So if you need something, don't be a stranger, feel free to reach out to me, and I will talk to you in episode 85 where we will have one of the guests that I mentioned. I don't know who yet, but we shall see. Thank you so much and I'll talk to you in 85. Have a great one.

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