

# BOOK MARKETING MENTORS

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## **AUTHOR MARKETING: Speaking To Sell Books Doesn't Have To Be Hard! Interview with Eileen McDargh**

Susan Friedmann: Welcome to Book Marketing Mentors, the weekly podcast where you learn proven strategies, tools, ideas, and tips from the masters. Every week I introduce you to a marketing master who will share their expertise to help you market and sell more books. Today my special guest mentor of the week is speaking guru and master storyteller Eileen McDargh.

In addition to being one of my favorite National Speakers Association colleagues, Eileen is the author of 12 books and the recipient of numerous awards, including the National Speakers Association Council of Peers Award for Excellence, Speaker Hall of Fame, which is a lifetime award for speaking excellence and professionalism. She's listed number seven in the world's top 30 communication professionals for 2016, and many more awards.

Eileen likes to call herself a connector, who joins head and heart to create action. Instead of giving lectures, Eileen teaches and tells stories. She speaks with humility, humor, in places of pride and pretense. School is never out. Eileen is constantly researching, reading, writing, developing her knowledge, in leadership, resiliency, women, and work-life integration. It's a true honor to have her here today. Eileen, welcome to the show.

Eileen McDargh: Susan, I wish I had recorded this. I need this on the days when I feel like chopped liver. I want to hear what you just said! That's great. Thank you!

Susan Friedmann: Thank you for being this week's guest expert and mentor. Eileen, you're an expert speaker and storyteller, but what advice would you give to a first-time author who wants to add speaking to build their author platform?

Eileen McDargh: That's a wonderful question. Let me use my first book as an example, because I had that book out before I actually entered speaking. The title of the book is *Work For a Living and Still Be Free to Live*. What I realized when

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I did that, and I actually ended up speaking because I did want to move the books, is a couple of lessons.

Number one, when you have a non-fiction book, what you have to decide is, if you only had anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour to present some key concepts, what you don't want to do is, you don't want to give a book report. You want to give people an idea of your wisdom that would entice them to buy the book. If you give a book report and tell them what's in the book, they have no reason to buy your book.

One of the first lessons is to look at what you have crafted, your non-fiction book, and if you had to pick out three key learnings ... I say three because an audience can't remember more than three, particularly if you only have an hour to present or less. Then what are those three key learnings that you would offer to an audience, and how can you craft, around those three key learnings, stories and examples that will help people integrate those ideas and say, "This was a great start, I need more, and oh my goodness, I need to buy that book"?

Susan Friedmann: You talk about developing stories, you're a master storyteller, but how do you go about developing those stories so that you can include them in your presentation?

Eileen McDargh: I think that all speakers and authors, if you really want to be good, is that you have to be constantly searching, looking. Looking in the most unusual places, for stories, for examples, for metaphors. You go, "You know what, I can use this. I can use this."

Let me give you an example. This just hopped into my head. When we talk about learning a new skill, a new craft, I got an idea for how to position it the first time that I learned to snow ski. When I took the snow skiing lessons, they tell you what to do very clearly, and you talk to yourself, and learn how to make a snowplow. I can still see this ski instructor saying, "You make a wedge, and you push the back of your skis out," and I found myself talking to myself. I was consciously incompetent. I didn't know what I didn't know, particularly after I took god knows how many falls.

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As you develop your learning you go from consciously incompetent to consciously competent. Then I would begin to talk to myself as I was coming down the slope. All of a sudden, after a number of times on the ski slopes, I realized I was no longer talking to myself. I had become unconsciously competent.

I use that example, and I act it out, about this whole thing about learning to ski, is that's the way, when we grow in skill, you first have to realize you don't know what you don't know. Then you have to find somebody who's going to help you, and then you really think about and talk about practicing it, until at some point in time it becomes automatic. Just having that experience on the ski slope, I thought, "I can use this. Oh my goodness, I can use this. This is a great example." I think that you constantly are looking for ideas.

I'm always looking for things that are also related to humor that I can add to my programs. "This was relevant, I can use that." The other day someone was talking about lima beans, and of all of the things that could eat in the world, lima beans would be my least favorite thing to eat. I realize that when we talk about what gives people joy, everyone has joy in different ways. Mine would never be lima beans. I could look at an audience and say, "What is one food that you absolutely do not want to eat?" Well we have to acknowledge that some people love lima beans, and some people do not. That sounds silly right now, but I fit was in the context of a speech it would make sense, and the audience is nodding their head thinking about lima beans, or beets, or whatever it is that they hate, acknowledging that we all have different tastes and flavors.

I just throw that out, and that happened the other day when I was moderating a conference. That's really what we look for.

Susan Friedmann: One of the things that you're brilliant at is using your own experiences. I know it took me many years before I felt comfortable using my own experiences, but you seem to do it so naturally. Talk to us a little bit more about that.

Eileen McDargh: There are people who I have seen do not do well on the speaking circuit. Because the story that they tell is, "My story," and I'm the hero of my story.

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That does not engage an audience. If you want to use something from your own life as an example, I think you have to come from a place of vulnerability, and invite the listener, invite the audience, to connect with places where, in their lives, they felt vulnerable.

Let me give you an example. Last summer I was speaking to probably the largest group I've ever had, it was 15,000. These are people who are all entrepreneurs, primarily all women. It was a multi-level company. One of the things that happens, I think, for us as entrepreneurs, is that we become very insecure, and we remember the little girl or the little boy who didn't quite have all the confidence. I tell them, I'm the runt of the litter, I'm the one that was the smallest one in my class. I'm the one that got the pimples first. I'm the one that had to wear the thick glasses, because, little did we know at that point in time, I was almost legally blind. I had the orthopedic shoes. By the time I got to high school, my self-confidence was about the size of a thimble.

I can look at that audience and I can say, "Have you ever felt that way?" I'll guarantee you, Susan, almost everyone in that audience has had something. I say, "Now that I've grown up, there are times that little girl comes back again, and I have to say to that little girl, "Honey, that was then. This is now. Turn the page." I gesture when I say turn the page, and I look at them and say, "Are there times in which you need to tell that little boy, that little girl inside of you, 'That was then, this is now, turn the page.'"

Susan Friedmann: I love that example. It made the hairs on my arms just stand up as you said that, because you're absolutely right. Because we've all had some kind of negative experience. As we segue from there, what's the toughest lesson that you had to learn in your speaking life?

Eileen McDargh: I still keep learning them!

Susan Friedmann: Don't we all.

Eileen McDargh: How do I answer that? I can give you many examples. One is, learn when you need to say no to a speech. No matter how much you need the money, you learn to say no. One of the biggest examples I learned was, early on in

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my speaking career, I'd been training, and surviving and thriving with difficult people. The person who heard me said, "I want you to come to," was it, Unilever. I couldn't even say that. It was Unilever, it was a huge conference, and it was to be an after dinner speaker. I said, "You know this topic, this isn't for after dinner." "Oh, yes, yes, yes, this will work." It would be the biggest client that I had, oh my goodness, they were going to pay a lovely amount of money.

I agreed to do this, Susan. I did not listen to myself. Let me put it this way. They had an hour and a half cocktail party, they served wine with dinner, and the president spoke boringly for 45 minutes before he brought me up. I wanted to just say, "Beam me up Scotty, and leave the clothes." It was just horrid. I had no business doing that. I am not an after dinner speaker. After dinner speakers are required to be funny and quick and witty, and they had asked me to do a really hardcore communication training thing.

I think you need to know when to say no, regardless of what your pocketbook or everybody else tells you. That to me was a great lesson.

Another lesson that I learned is, because I always go in early and I speak to the attendees and I find out things. This one gentleman, early on again, told me how his wife helped put him through law school, and this was a legal group that I was speaking to, and that at some point in time he was going to move on so that he could put her through med school. I did not get his permission, Susan, to tell that story. I didn't know what I didn't know. I used him as a story, and I said, "Now John over there, well I've got to tell you ..." When it was over, John had not told his manager that he was going to be leaving. I pulled the rug out from underneath that young man's foot, unbeknownst to me. I will never do that again.

Never tell someone's story without permission. I always now ask, "May I know what you told me?" Sometimes they'll say, "Use my name," other times they'll say, "Don't use my name." That was a really horrible lesson.

Susan Friedmann: Especially to lawyers, oh my goodness.

Eileen McDargh: Oh my gosh. We won't even talk about that. That was not good.

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Susan Friedmann: What are some of the tools, or resources, that you would recommend to authors to get started in the speaking business?

Eileen McDargh: It's interesting that you asked me that, because yesterday I took on a young author to coach her for her speaking profession. I think that people do not realize, number one, that this is a profession; number two, again, they're unconsciously incompetent. They don't know what they don't know. I think if you're not accustomed to speaking, you must get help. Toastmasters, obviously, is a marvelous resources and tool. It can be found in almost any city throughout the United States and probably the world. There's an international group where you actually practice the art of speaking.

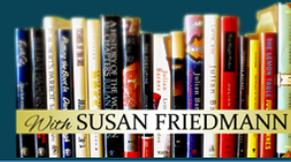
The other resources is the National Speakers Association. If you have any of these listeners, Susan, that are located outside the United States, there are speaker associations out of the UK, in Africa, in Germany. We have them in Asia, down in Singapore. If you really wanted to be serious about the business of speaking, I think belonging to one of those national organizations is absolutely a must. Of course you can also seek out a speaking coach. Before you do that, be real clear as to what you're wanting to do. In the case of this one client that I've accepted, we need to work on the craft as well as the delivery of what she wants to do.

That brings up another point about what an author can and cannot do, or should or should not do. My recommendation is that you actually need to look at speakers' websites so you see what they look like. This client had posted up a video of her speaking on a website. Videos are now the primary tool that people look at, "Do you want to hear me?" It was a horrible video. It did not show [Pacer 00:14:56] well at all. Susan, you and I both know that a video will get you farther down the road; a bad video will kill you. Hopefully by today she's taken that video down, because it does not support her at all. Everything from the clothing that she wore to presentation style, it just wasn't time. Be very judicious about, as you learn at the resources, what you put up, and what you do when.

Susan Friedmann: Yes, that recommendation, obviously, of the resources, the Toastmasters, National Speakers Association, and knowing, as you rightly say, that they're all over the world, including Australia and New Zealand, France, Germany,

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yes ...

Eileen McDargh: [crosstalk 00:15:42]. Absolutely.

Susan Friedmann: Let's talk about some mistakes that you believe that speakers make.

Eileen McDargh: Being inauthentic. When you're unauthentic, when the authenticity does not come through, people will know it. I have observed speakers who behave one way when they're off the stage, and a different way when they are on the stage. No, no, no. Remember, people are always watching you. I have watched some speakers behave, frankly, very poorly on airplanes, as though they are entitled to goodness knows what. That behavior sticks with me, and guess what, there are members of their audience who are riding that same plane with them.

I think authenticity matters, I think that speakers make an error when they do not know the audience well. I believe in really doing a lot of investigative journalism. When it comes to who sits in that audience, what are their concerns? Why did you hire me? What is it that you want me to deliver? Susan, you and I have both heard speakers that, by the time they finish we say, "That was very interesting, what the heck was that for?" Don't become concerned about you, be concerned about the audience. What is the gift you want to give to them? It's never about us, it's always about them.

I say to all of my audiences, wisdom doesn't reside up here on the stage. Wisdom really resides with you. I'm but a catalyst to create and and tap into wisdom that you already know there. Because you know Susan, none of this stuff is rocket science. We're not teaching people how to go to the moon. We're really crafting, I think, in most cases, particularly these nonfiction authors, we have a window, and we want to open a window to our readers, so they can get our view. How I present work-life integration will be very different from how somebody else presents it, how somebody else presents it.

Which, by the way, brings up another thing. Particularly if we have first-time authors, or people who are looking at getting into the speaking

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profession, make sure that every story you tell is your original story. That's another failure that, over the years, I know Susan, both you and I have had experiences where people have said, "That's a great story, I can tell that." No you can't. That story belongs to that individual over there. It happened to them. It did not happen to you. The more you craft examples from your own life, the more authentic you become, and do not take what comes from someone else's life and claim it as your own.

Susan Friedmann: That's so important. As you know, as you rightly say, we've heard so many people who take other people's stories, or tell something like the starfish story.

Eileen McDargh: Yeah, Susan, for your listeners, you need to tell them what the starfish story is.

Susan Friedmann: I'll let you do that if you want. Or they could look it up on the internet.

Eileen McDargh: I'll see if I can say it in 25 words or less. When they're old stories that have been around for ever and ever and ever, and we act like it's brand new ... The starfish story is literally, the young man, the young woman, who goes down on the beach, and the beach is littered with starfish, and he picks one up and he throws it back in the ocean, and a guy walks by and says, "Hey, don't you know you can't make a difference with all these starfish here?" He says, "Yeah, I know I can't make a difference with all of them, but I made a difference to that one."

Susan Friedmann: You did so well.

Eileen McDargh: You've heard it over and over again, that it's actually become a joke at the National Speakers Association. The more they come out of your own life, the more they come out of your own experience, you know that they will be original. Children will give us stories. I find stories from my grandchildren. For example, when my firstborn granddaughter was three, four years old, we went up to visit her, and I will act this out. I talk about the power of language, and what we say. I must have been in that house for, I don't know, an hour, before I used the word "hate" in a sentence. I said, "Oh Holly, I hate peanut butter." This little child interrupted and said,

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"Don't say hate!" She made it a four-syllable word. Sounded like a child from the deep South. It appears that she came back from daycare and had used hate in a sentence, and my daughter, a far wiser woman than I am, said, "Honey, that is a strong word. Don't like, don't care for, but we don't use the word 'hate'."

Well Susan, I will bet you at least half a dozen more times in that long weekend outside Portland Oregon, I sued the word "hate" in a sentence, and this little child interrupted and said, "Don't say hate!" I thought, wow, I'm a wordsmith, and I was using, so casually, an incredibly potent word. And don't we do that? When I use that as an example, it was an example for me, I look out at my audience and they're nodding their head yes. Because children can make us aware of things that we are not aware that we do, and they hold up a mirror to us.

Susan Friedmann: We've got chimes in the background.

Eileen McDargh: That must be that it's 9:00 my time. So sorry about that.

Susan Friedmann: That's okay, that's okay. It sounded a bit like Big Ben, I thought that maybe you were in London.

Eileen McDargh: No, I am located in southern California. That's interesting that you could actually pick that up, because I have my headset on. But perhaps those chimes were also ringing to say it is true that children will give us stories, and we can learn from them.

Susan Friedmann: That's beautiful. I love the way now that you weave that in, because that's just showing your masterfulness ... I just made up a word.

Eileen McDargh: There's another example. I have, I don't know, there's a word for it, Susan you're going to know the word because it skips out of my head, where you take two words and you blend them together and they make a brand new word?

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Susan Friedmann: A hybrid.

Eileen McDargh: I do that. Unintentionally, I do that. I can use myself as an example, of how we get so caught up and we're not really clearly thinking. I walked into the bank one day and I was really tired, and I had a check, I wanted to cash it. I put it down on the teller's counter and I said, "I'd like to check my cash, I need some funny." Check my cash? Funny? What is that? Well it was funds and money. Together in my head it came out "funny," and "check my cash." I was on a talk show and I said, very importantly, "It is necessary that we assess our skillents." Skillents? What the heck is that? Skills and talents. I created a totally new word.

I can have fun with the audience about how we all have these little foibles, and you have to laugh at them, and stop and say, "Oh my gosh, what was I ... Slow down Eileen, you're moving too fast, and there's no such thing as skillents." Even though I created that word.

Susan Friedmann: That's funny. Then that also shows your authenticity. As you said, it's just to be authentic, to be you, and people relate to that. That's what endears people to you. I know for you, particularly ...

Eileen McDargh: Here's another thing I would say to first time authors. Speaking is different than writing. When we speak, we can use a different language. We use pauses, we do inflections, we make gestures, that are not captured on a written page. Some people say, "Do you write out your speech?" I write out the beginning, I write out the end. The middle is more like a skeleton, in which there are perhaps the three or four max learning points I want. Then the flesh that goes on the skeleton are the stories, the examples, the metaphors, the pictures, that support that bone of the skeleton. It's one thing to write, and there are people who can be fascinating writers, but if you tried to read those words out loud, they don't work as well. Two very different skills.

Susan Friedmann: Very true. How can our listeners get ahold of you? What's the best way?

Eileen McDargh: There's a number of ways. They can go to my website. I'm going to spell my name. it's Eileen, the Irish spelling. E-I-L-E-E-N, McDargh, is M-C-D as in

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David, A-R like rabbit, G like go, H like happy, dot com. EileenMcDargh.com. Which by the way, even with my name I can have fun. Because the G-H is silent, and my father always said it's because we were Scott-Irish, and somebody offered our distant ancestor two letters for the price of one, and we took them. They can go to my website, there's a form on my website that you can fill out. They can email me, Eileen@EileenMcDargh.com. Or my direct line is 949 496 8640. That is Pacific Standard Time in California. If I can help them, and I have the time to do so, I'd be more than happy to.

Susan Friedmann: That's beautiful. If you could leave our listeners with a golden nugget of information, what would that be?

Eileen McDargh: It's something that a colleague of mine said early on when I started speaking. She said, "Eileen, what gives you the right to speak about that?" I thought about that, Susan. What gives me the right? You see, you own the right to speak about an area, because you have experienced and lived it, or you have done all of the research that you possibly can, and constantly are growing in that topic area. Otherwise you do not have the right to speak about it. I think part of being authentic is to constantly say, "What gives me the right to speak about this?" I think that's a really important thing to constantly hone. That we earn that right by the way in which we are constantly educating ourselves, and using our own experience as a way of elucidating what for us might be a universal truth.

Susan Friedmann: That's a great title for your next book.

Eileen McDargh: Wait a minute Susan, tell me, of all the things that I just rattled off, what did you hear as the title?

Susan Friedmann: Just encasing that beautiful statement, because there's so much behind that, it was beautiful. Thank you. Thank you so much for being my guest.

Eileen McDargh: It's my pleasure, and just make sure I have the link to this podcast, because I might make my husband listen to your introduction of me.

Susan Friedmann: Thank you all for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this

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interview, and I sincerely hope that it sparks some ideas you can use to sell more books. Here's wishing you much book marketing success.