BOOK MARKETING:
How to Be an Authorpreneur and
Live an Intentional Life
Interview with Catherine Walker

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 is an author, professional speaker, business coach, and entrepreneur. Catherine Walker spent 19 years as an executive leader in the direct sales industry, training and mentoring thousands of team members. In 2016, she started her own training and professional development company called The Success Walk. Her passion is helping people create the best possible life by balancing work and family. In a world overwrought with stress and depression, she strongly believes in finding your joy and sharing it with others. Her book, Boosting Your Joy, shows you how to do just that by living an intentional life.

Catherine, not only are you an Aviva author, which I absolutely love, and a professional speaker, welcome to the show, and thank you for being this week's expert and mentor.

Catherine Walker: I'm so happy to be here. Thanks for having me.

Susan Friedmann: It's excellent. I mean, you wrote to me telling me that you were going to start a podcast, and I was like, "Oh, great, I love having podcast people on my shows. Great." Tell me again what your podcast is called.

Catherine Walker: My podcast is Joy Break, and it is just fun life hacks in order to become a more balanced, better you where you are kind of seizing all the happiness you can out of life.

Susan Friedmann: I love it. And that's really a great segue into me asking you about balancing work and family life, especially as an entrepreneur. It can be really, really challenging, and I know I faced it bringing up two kids, having my husband be a rock when things didn't go well. Tell me, how can we balance our lives?
Catherine Walker: Well, I really feel like every day, you gotta strive to be a better you than you were the day before. And that's that stretching, growing, constantly making sure that your life is fitting the values that you're wanting to put forth. I always kind of talk about it in terms of what's your best self-look like? And when you're talking to entrepreneurs, that does mean being successful while not sacrificing relationships around you. A lot of times, I just say, "What is it that makes people successful? Gosh, are they smarter? Do they just have better backgrounds? Do they work harder, or do they just have rich friends that are willing to support them no matter what they've got going on?" Right?

So what is it that makes some soar to the top and others hang back? And I think a lot of times what's happening out there is that people are putting how they feel a certain day, the mood that they're in, sort of decide for them how they're going to act and who they're going to be. And I think it's in particular when you have people that are in charge of their own business, they're their own CEO, if you will, "I just don't feel like it" will kill a business faster than anything will. "I just don't feel like doing that" is kind of a really bad way to run a business because you're putting your feelings in charge.

And so it's much, much, much better to decide who you want to be, and then from that becomes the actions that would follow from who you want to be, and then that kind of ends up with better feelings, because that will stem from who you are and how you're acting and the feelings of success, and the confidence that would come with that is going to come along the way, so-

Susan Friedmann: I love what you were saying, yes, about sacrificing. I think that's an important part. I remember when I first got involved with the speaking business and I went to speaker meetings and I saw these speakers who were literally on the road 200 days a year and sacrificing their personal life for their professional life, and they were miserable at home, and so they sort of had to get on the road to give that ego a boost because they weren't getting it at home. It's a tough one. Yeah.

Catherine Walker: It is a tough one. A question I ask a ton of parents when I speak to them is, "Would you want your kids to grow up and be rich or grow up and be happy?" And most every parent would say, "I would my kids to grow up and be happy." That's why I almost feel like happiness is the new rich. That's what people are striving for more than just a fat cash in their bank account. It's they want fat stacks of memories and wonderful things that make them smile and laugh and moments of them feeling
very grateful for what they have. A lot of stuff like that. I think that's what's being rebalanced in the world is it's not all about money because there are perfectly wealthy, wealthy people out there that are very, very miserable. And they're divorced and their kids are estranged and don't talk to them, and their friends never see them and when they do, they think that they're kind of a jerk. You know, so it's ... you gotta be careful about what you're building and what you're creating and that it isn't something that you don't regret down the line.

Susan Friedmann: Very true. I love that phrase "happiness is the new rich." That just says so much. That's really a rich sentence, a little rich phrase. I've got a friend who says, "A phrase that pays," so I don't know if you use that one, but it's a good one that you might want to think about using, if it's-

Catherine Walker: Yeah.

Susan Friedmann: Not out there already, so that's lovely. Yes, you're right, I know friends who've sacrificed going to their children's performances, and games, just to be on the road. And I know, I've done it too. And the kids give you grief about it, they still do, my kids are grown and with kids and they still give me grief that I wasn't at a certain match, or at a certain performance because I was on the road. It's a tough call.

Catherine, a question that I often get when I'm working with authors is how can I use my book to become a keynote speaker? And I know that you've been booked as a keynote speaker at several large conventions, and you did that in the first year of releasing your book, and that's pretty unusual. Talk to us more about how you did that.

Catherine Walker: Well, I have to be honest, this last year's been a true blessing. Because I have gotten a fair bit of highly touted jobs where I'm bringing in some money, which is exciting. But I was referred to a couple of these conventions by people who had heard me speak elsewhere, and then said, "We've got to get this girl to come and talk." And I just have to say that word of mouth referrals are pure gold. Because they end up with bigger payouts, because they're finding you versus you trying to source it and come to them. Not that we can't do that, we need to do that too, but they're easier to convert into a contract because they're warm leads. Because so and so connected the two, and that's the power of connector people. It's really, really good to make sure that you're in front of a lot of mouths, because you want those mouths to them speak up and be an ambassador for you at some point when there's a need for
a speaker. And that gets you speaking, so that then you're selling books in the back of that room, and that's really exciting stuff. For sure.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah, I love that relationship connections. In fact, amusingly enough I recently interviewed another author and he talked about exactly that, that there is ... that's such a gem having those relationships, because one person tells another person and this whole word of mouth, I mean, there's nothing stronger in advertising than word of mouth sales. And I know like you said, I've had people call me and say, "So and so referred you to do some training." I'm like, "Great." And you don't even have to try and sell them-

Catherine Walker: I know.

Susan Friedmann: Because they've already converted, I mean, it's almost like a hot lead that's come to you-

Catherine Walker: Yeah.

Susan Friedmann: And they've done their own conversion because the right person referred you.

Catherine Walker: Yeah, it's just so much easier. But you've gotta be in front of enough people in order to get those connector people talking for you. Yeah. You do a good job when you're there, the first ... whatever they're seeing you at, and then it bounces from there. I always call it lily pad jumping because from every event you want more events, and that's how you build your business. And I've always said that if you can replace a speaking engagement with one speaking engagement, that's just a replacement, it's just a tit for tat, but if you actually get three or four, now you're growing your business because you took one and you multiplied it. That's kind of always my goal, is to get the other speaking opportunities out of every event. That's been kind of a good thing to focus on, because it's sort of like your own goals of beyond book sales the day of, you're looking for future opportunities for book sales.

Susan Friedmann: Well, of course, that's begging the question how do you do that?

Catherine Walker: Well, I will tell you that I've had really good success working with questionnaires. I follow up any speech that I do, of course I ask the event ... the meeting planner whether I can put a questionnaire at every seat, and then I have them fill out the information, so not only does that capture information for my database, which is good, because then I'm
building my database up to a nice little healthy number myself, but I also am asking for the sale. I'm asking for the things that I'm wanting. And so of course I'm asking for their name, and email, and phone number, but then I'm also asking for their feedback from the day. So I write on there, "What's your biggest takeaway from today's presentation?" And that tells me what's radiating, what's getting to them, what is something that's rising to the top out of what I'm saying so that I keep saying that. Then, "How would you rate Catherine as a speaker?" So that then I'm getting a feeling of did they like me? Where did I stand according to a scale of one to 10? And then any other comments, criticisms, or compliments, just allowing sort of an open forum there for them to share.

And then I go into asking for what I would love to be a part of their life to continue the dialogue. I ask whether they would like to host an author house party, I ask what groups they would know that would benefit from a presentation. And then I have school, club, company, charity, and church group and they can circle one of those. And then I actually have a place for them to put the contact name and information and phone number for whatever group they're sort of referring me to. And so I get lots of referrals from people, and that's been really good and really helped me bounce into new arenas from different people that this was from a meeting, from a meeting, from a meeting from a church group, from a house party, from a this that I can kind of track back my lily pads, if you will, how I jumped to be here in this moment is from earlier opportunities.

The last two questions on the questionnaire is asking whether they're interested in a 30 minute complimentary coaching consultation. And I call that Joy Coaching. And then they can say yes, or no, or maybe. And then I have, "May I use your comments for a printed testimonial?" So I go ahead and get authorization that if they said something on here that's just a nice little sound nugget, a nice little sort of well worded testimonial, that then I could go ahead and load that on my website if I need to.

The questionnaires have been a really good tool for me in order to find out who do the people that just heard me talk think I would be good for. And it's introducing me to some new groups, and different opportunities in different areas of my city that I normally would've worked in. That's been really good for me.
Susan Friedmann: I've got a lot of questions based on that. First of all, congratulations, that is a great idea, I've seen it done very successfully, I've done it not quite to the extent that you've done it because it sounds as if your questionnaire is pretty long. How many questions do you actually have on there?

Catherine Walker: It's a total of six. I do it where it's a half a page, half a sheet of paper.

Susan Friedmann: The incentive then is for them to get the coaching, or do you offer them another incentive to actually fill out the form?

Catherine Walker: Sometimes I'll give away a free book, sometimes I'll give away a lunch date with an author. I've done a fair number of those. I had a couple like certificates made up. Coaching, book, and a lunch date, yeah. I've done that. Oh, and a dinner, that's what the other thing was, I've done a dinner.

Susan Friedmann: That you would offer and it would be sort of a draw.

Catherine Walker: Yeah.

Susan Friedmann: A lucky draw.

Catherine Walker: Yeah.

Susan Friedmann: Of those people who complete the questionnaire.

Catherine Walker: Yes.

Susan Friedmann: Okay. And what about getting permission from them to add their name to your database? Do you ask them to agree that it's okay? You get that permission to have you do that?

Catherine Walker: Well, what I do is since you know there's going to be a lot of people that don't fill out all the top part about themselves, the email, the phone number, if they do I assume that they know they're giving it to me, and what I usually do is after an event, I will send a email to that group that says, "Thank you for being part of this, the day, yesterday, I really appreciated being in front of you," and usually I do some sort of thank you for being a part of the day. And then, usually it's at least continuing a relationship with them, they know who I am because I spoke to them yesterday. That tends to help kind of bridge the relationship and just keep it going forward.
But, I mean, yes, they can unsubscribe if they want to. But I've found that most people won't give you the email if they don't want you to email them.

Susan Friedmann: Okay, so there's sort of a built in, they're agreeing by just giving it to you.

Catherine Walker: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. I know we have to be careful of that with all the new rules and regulations, so I was just wondering if you felt you had to get special permission by saying, "By filling this in, you agree to be part of Catherine's list."

Catherine Walker: Yeah. And I don't do a huge amount of email marketing, I really just don't. I haven't had too many people unsubscribing either, so ... that's just how it's working out.

Susan Friedmann: Yeah. So it must be good stuff that you're sending them because they want to keep getting it.

Catherine Walker: Well, I just don't think I'm sending as much probably as I should.

Susan Friedmann: And I know that if you send too much they unsubscribe, and that's okay too. It happens if you're doing a launch, I mean ... which I'm going to be doing shortly, and you send several emails, and some people don't like it, some people don't mind, some people don't like it. So they'll unsubscribe.

I know you talked about earlier something called author nights at peoples' homes. What's that all about? Talk to us about that.

Catherine Walker: Oh my gosh, well, I have to tell you, it wasn't even my idea. This idea started fairly organically when my dear friend that I've ... we've been friends for 20 years, my friend Vicki, hosted a book debut party at her house and she invited 50 people to come and listen to me talk about my book. And it kind of feels like ... I think on the east coast there's a lot of people doing these private concerts with bands that are being paid to do stuff in smaller, private venues. I kind of took this whole idea that he had of just doing these author house parties, and added that to my platform as something that I offer.
And usually it's women that are hosting, and they invite their friends and family, and then I do a 30 minute keynote address, or speech, and then afterwards we have a discussion about it. And what's funny is I was in direct sales for 20 years, and I really feel pretty comfortable in this setting, in this home setting with people that are friends and family, and a nice hostess. And I sold scrap booking supplies, and home décor, and jewelry, and now I feel like I just go to these house parties and I'm selling joy. And it's what everyone needs to be buying.

And I will say that as far as book sales go, they're really great, because I'm selling close to 85 to 90% of the guests in attendance. It's a really high closing ratio that they've come because they're interested in this topic matter, and so then it's created this pretty great little experience and they're fun nights, and they're kind of deep and meaningful. And I'm getting great leads for other opportunities. I've gotten a ton of speaking leads by asking all these people at the house parties to fill out my questionnaire.

And I will just say it's really developed some really close connections, and they think they're really lovely, honestly. So I would recommend that people try to find some friends and family to start with, that's where you'd start in direct sales, so this is the same thing, same premise, you've got your book, now who might be interested in it, and then who could invite a handful of people to come and hear you talk about it.

Susan Friedmann: That's excellent. I mean, it's so funny that you should say that, because I'm involved in Rotary here in Lake Placid and we're doing a house concert on Saturday night. And-

Catherine Walker: Yeah.

Susan Friedmann: It's exactly that. I mean, it happens that the person who's the entertainment is one of our members, so he's not charging us, and all the money that we raise goes to the Rotary Foundation, but it's still, the whole idea of these house parties, or concerts that are, people love them because these small, intimate environments that are just fun. And I can see developing these relationships in these places, so good for you, I love that idea.

Now, do you give your host some kind of thank you gift? Give them a copy of the book, or what do you do for your host?
Catherine Walker: I do a little sussy for them. And I don't know whether you know what that is, but down in Texas we have like just little lovelies, just something I saw that I thought was beautiful, and pretty, and a lot of times it’s in the same colors of my book. And then I will just gift them with a gift in a nice little gift bag. Because most of these people have already purchased my book, and read it, and now they want to kind of get their friends and family together to share it with their friends and family.

Yeah, so I generally don't give them something they've already gotten ... bought from me, but yeah, I just do ... just something lovely, and whenever I'm out shopping and I see something that I think works, I mean, anything with the word joy or happy on it is good for my purposes. So you can find stuff that sort of segues with it. And as funny as it is, in my book I talk about having a blessings jar, and it's a jar that you collect, you write down your gratitudes, and you put it in there. I think I'm going to work toward developing a joy jar, which is just the same premise as a blessings jar, really, because those are pretty heavily linked. But I might be doing that going forward. So think about what might be tied into your book that would be kind of a one, two kind of feeling, that it's mirroring it, or holding its hand at least.

Susan Friedmann: I love it, sharing the joy.

Catherine Walker: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Susan Friedmann: One of the things that you told me earlier too, Catherine, was that in the first 11 months of your book being out there, you sold 800 copies. And most authors around the globe don't sell more than 250 in the lifetime of their book, so doing 800 in less than 12 months, you've got to tell us your secret.

Catherine Walker: Well, I would just say that I can blame that on my beautiful friends, and family. I feel very, very supported by the people who love me, and known me for a long time. And so I've had a fair number of friends host these house parties that got things rolling. I've had a friend buy cases of books that then they go and resell for me, on my behalf, they buy them from me and then resell them.

And then they've connected me to tons of these speaking jobs. So I feel blessed by a beautiful network, that's been really special. But I do have an agent that is acting on my behalf, who is actually researching different groups to gather information of whether I'm a good fit to speak for them, and kind of building some connections, and doing some
e-mailing, and sending some letters on my behalf, and then what I've agreed to do is pay her 20% of any speaking gig that gets books. So she's been just a huge help to me in building my network out into new arenas and ideas that I'm not thinking of, she's following that path.

I do think working out a special deal with someone who might ... you know, I'm a little more of the better in face personality, and she's more of a dig down into the nitty gritty of what's behind the scenes and who might be ... how to get in front of the contact person and that kind of stuff, the details. So that's been really a good little marriage.

Susan Friedmann: Very much so, when you can sell somebody a case of books, I really like that.

Catherine Walker: Yeah.

Susan Friedmann: Catherine, share with our listeners more about you, your services, how could they get hold of you, find out more about you.

Catherine Walker: You bet. Well, my website is TheSuccessWalk.com, and that's my company's name, The Success Walk. But I would absolutely love to connect and further my relationship with you guys out there. You can get my book, Boosting Your Joy, it's available on Amazon, or I have my new e-book that just rolled out in January, and that's on Kindle, and Barnes and Noble, and a ton of other outlets as well.

And then I also have my new podcast that is called Joy Break. And it's available on iTunes, and Podomatic. And I'd love for you to check that out and maybe subscribe, and you know, I'd just adore it if there was some further connection down the road with you guys.

Susan Friedmann: Lovely, thank you. And if you were to leave our listeners with a golden nugget, what would that be, Catherine?

Catherine Walker: I would say that remember there's a difference between goal setting and goal getting. The goals setting might be deciding how many books you want to sell a month. And then goal getting would be deciding how to get in front of your target audience in the amounts necessary to meet that goal. So for instance, if I wanted to sell 50 books in the next two months, I needed to speak to 150 people in order to do that. That could be 10 groups of 15 people, or five groups of 30 people. Where would these groups be? Are they at churches? Are they at companies? Are
they networking groups? Who's my audience? Who do I need to be in front of, and how do I get in front of them?

Just keep doing this, any time you set a goal, then also be thinking about how do I get that goal. And I think that just helps you dig down and dial deeper into where you're going to see the book pile go down.

I do love this quote that JFK said, it's, "Things do not happen, things are made to happen."

Susan Friedmann: Excellent, oh, what wisdom. Well, listeners, you really have got a lot of information here. Catherine, I really thank you for sharing with us today. And thank you all for taking time out of your precious day to listen to this interview. And I sincerely hope that it sparked some ideas you can use to sell more books.

Here's wishing you much book marketing success.