

Ep 004 -A Story in 3 Pivots_edited

If you have ever dreamed of writing a book or wondered what it was like to become a full time mother, then this episode is for you. Hello friends. I'm Kendra Losee from KendraLosee.com. And you've tuned in to the Invisible to Invincible podcast where passionately driven business owners share their journeys from hidden gems to industry leaders. Together, we'll uncover the secrets, mental shifts, and strategies that turn hidden gems into undeniable forces. So hit subscribe and let's dive in. Our guest today is author and founder of Scotia Road Books and Your People, Lynne Golodner. Lynne writes emotional novels with compelling Jewish characters who are determined to fill their lives with passion, purpose, and love.

Her first novel, *Women of Valor*, joins a body of work that includes two poetry collections and six nonfiction books, including *Hide and Seek*, *Jewish Women and Their Hair Covering* and *the Flavors of Faith*, *Pulley Breads*. Lynne is a writing coach, marketing entrepreneur, and host of the *Make Meaning* podcast and her creative nonfiction has been published around the world.

With a BA from the University of Michigan and an MFA from Goddard College, Lynne is the mother of four and lives in Huntington Woods, Michigan with her husband, Dan. All right, welcome Lynne. You have such an interesting background as I saw in your bio and in the bio we just discussed. You have been a journalist and you've made so many transitions, so let's talk about the first pivot.

Can you tell us a little bit about where you were, what your mindset was, and what made you decide to move back to Detroit from New York and leave all the, you know, leave all the glamour of New York and D. C.? So it's not as glamorous when you live there all the time. It's just really glamorous when you visit.

But I missed the friendliness of the Midwest and a little bit slower paced from the East Coast. And I came back home. I had been away for three or four years and I started working as a journalist in Detroit. And after two years of that, I went freelance and I, I just, you know, my salary was, my salary was low to begin with and it wasn't really climbing and I wanted to freelance just to make some extra money and my editor wouldn't let me.

So I said, well, okay, I think I'm going to go out on my own. And so that first year that I was freelance, I tripled my income. which tells you two things, how little I was making and how scrappy I am. And so I freelanced for 10 years. And

I also did my, when I was in DC, I did my MFA in writing. So it's a master's of fine arts and poetry.

And that enabled me to teach at the college level. So I was a journalist, freelancer. And I was teaching college classes as well. And then, and somewhere in there, I got married. I had kids and I was doing all this at the same time. In 2007, I decided to leave that marriage. My kids were very little when I filed for divorce.

They were like one, three, and five at the time. And I was still a freelance journalist. But if you remember what was happening in 2007, 2008, lots of industries were really affected by the economic crash and journalism was one of them. And so I thought, well, if I'm going to divorce this husband of mine who was a musician, so do the math, you know, I probably needed a little bit more reliable income.

So I created Your People, which is a marketing and public relations company. And it was really driven by this need of my own to, figure out how to support these kids using the skills that I had. And I figured if I could tell stories and help with the content and, you know, navigate media but for companies that would pay me, I would have a more successful path.

And I did. So I still have that company. I did downsize it a few years ago when I decided on the next pivot, which was to really focus on my writing. Full time. And so I wanted to make my writing and writing books a priority. And so I, I let go of some clients. I really flipped my schedule so that the first part of the day, when I am most creative and most successful, I'm writing.

And then I meet with clients and teach classes in the afternoons. And so, those, that was sort of how I, I pivoted just to get back to where I always wanted to be, but I'm like, well, it was, approaching 50 and was like, well, when am I going to do that? You know, I had eight books published as they were projects on the side.

They were never my, my top priority. So it was like, Oh, I had a labor of love. I wrote a book and somebody published it. Yay. I never had any hope of making money from them. And I just, it was such a side hustle, I guess, not even a hustle that I said, no, I really want to make money first and foremost from.

writing and not as a journalist, but as an author. And so that was the pivot that I made recently. That's amazing. One of the things that I've been talking a lot about lately is that it's never too late. I hear from so many, particularly women

that, you know, as they're like late thirties, it's starting to think about like, what do you want to do?

Yeah. And what's left of your career. And that second half or midlife or whatever, whatever word you want to call it. And so it's fantastic that you'd made that decision. How hard was that decision to make? Was it easy? Was it hard? Well, you know, I've been an entrepreneur now since 1998. And so, I have spent most of my life depending on myself to earn income and I've been really successful.

And, you know, my late father was a big advisor to me about this. He was an entrepreneur as well. So whenever I would panic or worry about losing a client or what if, you know, all of those fears, he would say do the work and there will always be work, which is true. You know, just do what's in front of me.

And if I had a client that annoyed me or was difficult, he's like, take the money, do the work. Just, you know, like. Just do it. And so I knew I was good at planning and strategizing and everything I've done, you know, I've planned it out and then I've been successful. So I figured, why couldn't I be with this?

And I know, you know, lots of people will say things like, Oh, it's so hard to make a living as an author. Well, I think it's hard to make a living at anything that you set out to do. And I built a business from scratch when the economy was crashing and I was getting divorced and I couldn't sell my house.

And, you know, like. And I, I made so much money that first year that I like owed the government in taxes and my dad said, it's a good problem to have, you know, so like I knew that I could be successful. I just had to plan it out and have a strategy for it. And, you know, keep in mind, I'm not only writing that's the goal eventually, but.

That's the top priority. I figured if I don't give it my all, then I don't know if I can actually make it as an author. And so it's, you know, authors are successful when they write book after book after book. It's not just a one hit wonder. And so I'm still teaching and I'm still working with a few marketing clients, just a few, just for that bread and butter income to make that transition happen, which is what I did with the first pivot.

I kept doing my journalism. while I was building the business. And then I got to the point where the business was successful enough that I could let go of the journalism. So it's a similar type of thing. I have so many questions for you, but

my, my first question is, so I personally have gone through halfway through an MFA in creative writing.

I was working at a university and so I could take classes for free. So I was able to get halfway through it. And I absolutely loved it because I also wanted to be able to teach writing and non judge marketing at the university level. Yeah. Why poetry? So it's really funny. I when I moved to New York city, I was 22.

And there was a woman also from Michigan, about 10 or 11 years older than me, through friends of friends of friends who invited me to her apartment every Tuesday, she had a writer's workshop. And I was the youngest person there. There were people in their eighties, people who worked for the New York times.

It was like, amazing. I was like, and awe every week. And they would bring, we, we all would bring our writing and workshop it and people would give you feedback and mark it up and whatever. And I just got really into writing poetry. And so when I was applying for grad school, I thought, you know, I've always wanted to write fiction, which I'm doing now, but I do think it took me a couple of decades to develop those skills so that I was a strong enough writer to write what I think is good fiction.

Nonfiction I was doing as a career. You know, I had a degree in journalism from undergrad. So for an MFA, I wanted to get, I wanted to be in the creative writing world and creative nonfiction wasn't as big then as it is now as a, as a focus in MFAs. But I just, I wanted, I wanted that spareness. And I do believe that my journalism and my poetry inform each other.

So like my articles, my essays that I write, I write a lot of creative nonfiction now are very poetic. My poems are people have said are very journalistic. They're very like reported, you know, but there's still like poetic and lyrical and whatever. And now that I'm writing fiction, I find that both of those things are true in the fiction.

And so, that's why poetry. And I will tell you that my master's thesis was a manuscript of poems and it was accepted by a publisher before graduation. So I arrived to graduation with a box of books, which was really, really cool. So, yeah. That's amazing. That is awesome. What a great feeling that must have been too.

It was really cool. Yeah. You're like, see, MFA's can pay. Exactly. I don't really know that I made anything from that, but it was very cool. One of the things that I really think is interesting is as an author, I'm going to focus on you as a

full time author right now and we'll talk about the publishing and Scotia Road books in a minute, but how would you say you're all of that your approach to marketing and storytelling has helped you?

build a personal brand? Because one thing as an author is they need to know who you are. Yeah, yes, that's a great question and I actually help a lot of writers with author branding and, you know, strategy and everything. I sat down to think about, you know, what do I want my novels to focus on, but also what has my writing up until now been?

And there is a thread of consistency running through it. And I write a lot about my Jewish identity, which has gone through the spectrum of Jewish observance. You know, I grew up very secular going to a reformed temple. I chose to become Orthodox for a decade on my own before I married an Orthodox man. I left that.

And now I'm like in the middle of the conservative synagogue, but I don't know that I'm a conservative Jew. I say I'm just Jewish. I like pick from all and reject from all equally. And, but, but all along. Me being a strong Jewish person has been a theme. So in my nonfiction writing and my experiences, it's a lot about that, about identity.

And I knew that when I was writing fiction, I wanted to write books with compelling Jewish characters who fill their lives with passion, purpose, and love. And so that was easy for me, you know, my daughter said to me recently, cause my next book is done and I'm waiting on feedback from the editors and stuff.

She's like, you know, are you committed to that? Because you might have a wider reach if you don't just focus on Jewish characters. And I'm like, yeah, I'm totally committed to that because I think that we need more strong Jewish identity in the world. and I love writing it. So, that has become my author brand.

And I also think there's a marketing reason for that because not only is that what I like to write about, then I have a niche audience that I can market to. And even though Woman of Valor, my novel, is, is a very religious story, tons of people who aren't even Jewish are fascinated by it because they feel like they're learning about a world that they don't know.

I love reading about cultures I'm not familiar with. So, so yes, I told my daughter, I'm committed to that. That's, that's my brand and that's what I'm doing. And it helps me to market both to Jewish communities and, you know,

I'm speaking at colleges about identity. And so I think it helps with the marketing too.

Oh, absolutely. I still to this day and for, I, I cannot remember the name of it, but I remember reading this children's series about a Jewish family in New York and it was just like, you know, such a difference from somebody who was, you know, I grew up in a small California beach town, nowhere near that.

And so it just like, there's so much power and being able to write about what you know, because there's so many people in the world that don't know that. Yeah, for sure. Yeah, and there's a lot of power to that too. So what advice would you give to someone listening who is trying to decide where, where they fit for their personal brand?

So I think it's, you know, what do you write about and in what genre, but also subject matter and then what you bring to that. So there's tons of people writing in every genre, but how is yours different? And, and I think that's where you start, you know, there's lots of fiction, there is Jewish fiction out there you know, my fiction has strong Jewish identity, it has a lot of passion, so, it's not, it's not too spicy, well, it might be spicy, I don't know, but it is, there's, that's in there, it's not really pristine, and There's suspense, you know, so like, and I see that in everything that I'm writing.

And so I think it's what do you bring to the subject matter and to the genre. And that's really where you start. Absolutely. And I think that you can take that out of authors and apply that to your business as well. Right. So what is it that you value? What are those things? What do you bring? And you know, if you've replaced genre for industry, or, or even if you want to, for all of those listening who want to write a book and have that book inside of them, it's, it's there.

And, and Lynne just shared some great ways to think about it and how to start positioning yourself and your story. One of the things that I think was interesting is you mentioned Before we started about, or maybe I read it in one of your, in your bio, is that when you started to tell your own story is where you were able to start shaping more about what you wanted and more making those connections with people that are so critical, especially in today's age.

Can you talk a little bit about that and how you decided what to tell and what not to tell?

Well, you know, it's interesting because a lot of people think that Woman of Valor is about me when I was Orthodox, and I'm like, it's not. It's fiction. And

so, yes, I was Orthodox for 10 years. I have experience in that world, but the world I created, I mean, some of it I know, but some of it I had to research because it's not even the type of Orthodox community I was in.

And so I think that we all bring parts of ourselves to writing, but then we have to supplement with what we don't know by doing lots of research. And there's a lot of things in *Woman of Valor* that have nothing to do with me. But I'm very open about my experience, in that world. And I think a lot of people are fascinated by it.

I've always been a very open book. So I'll write candidly about things and I, no question is nosy. You know, when somebody says, I don't mean to be nosy, but I'm like, I wouldn't even think you were, because I was a journalist for a long time, so it's like in my blood to be nosy, you know, and I just think that it's fascinating to learn about people, and so I'd better lead by example, so, , I'll talk about my experience and my personal life not everything, but a lot, and then, you know, it's usually reciprocated, and then you get to know people on a deeper level, so I think that's really what makes life special, I mean, that's what it's all about.

Absolutely. I totally agree. And so it's one of those things when I see business owners holding themselves back and hiding behind a logo in their business. And I've been guilty of this too. I was in cannabis and an industry that didn't quite fit, although it fit my purpose and my values. And it's one of those things where when you can step out from behind that and actually start sharing more as a business owner or as an author, as you know, as yourself as a brand.

You can take it and pivot and move wherever you want to move because you're the one that's built the reputation around yourself. You're the one people are connected with. They're not connected with your business. They're not connected with your brand. You know, for you, they're going to connect with your books and connect with you through your books.

So let's talk a little bit about Scotia Rhodes first. Sorry, Scotia Road books first. Yeah. We'll talk about Morgan the Fowler. Yeah. So, and I agree with you cause I've always said people do business with people. And so even when I was working with companies, you know, it's, what's the human part of it.

That's really what you want to put forward. So Scotia Road books grew out of it was a really interesting journey because, you know, I had eight books published before this novel, they were all published by publishers and That was great. So I

know that my writing is at that level that it's, you know, is validating that people chose me and, and publish my books.

But I started to query which, you know, is to send out letters to agents and to publishers for Women of Valor. I even was offered a contract by a publisher. It wasn't a great contract, so I turned it down. And a lot of agents read the full manuscript and they loved it. They loved the writing, they loved the story, but there was always a but.

And I didn't give it that much time and I have friends who have published in all different ways. And I spoke with one really good friend who has six books. Two were by publishers in the UK and four were by a press that she started with her partner. And I asked her about it and she said to me, Well, do you want to sell a lot of books or do you want to make a lot of money?

And I'm like, well, I kind of want both, you know, and she said, I don't think you can have both. She said, if you have a mainstream publisher, you might get 10 percent of the profits, but you'll, the book will get out there more, you know, because they have a bigger platform. But if you publish it yourself through your own publishing arm you can, you know, you can make as much money as you want.

It's all up to you. And I thought about that and I thought, you know, I have like 15 years of a marketing expertise behind me and I've been accepted by publishers, so I know that I'm good enough and I've had that experience and every friend that I have that's by a big New York publisher, they have to put their own money and time into hiring a publicist or doing their own marketing.

So like, it's, it's not like they just do it for you. So I decided that I wasn't going to keep querying, I was going to put out woman of valor on my own. And I decided I didn't want it to just say, you know, Lynne Golodner books or something. I wanted a press so that I could help other women over 40 navigate this whole system.

And I decided to make it hybrid so that, you know, people come with some skin in the game. They pay an upfront amount. It's not that much. And we take care of all of the packaging and all that. And then we can coach them. We have coaching packages. To teach them how to market. You know, it's not something I really want to do for people.

I want to empower them to do it themselves. So that's how Scotia road books came to be. I happen to live on Scotia road. It's also the ancient Roman name

for Scotland. And I have this fascination with Scotland. And if you look at the logo, it's a book, but it is also like a journey. I like the idea of the road because the whole idea.

not only of a book, but of your publishing career is this journey that you're on. And so that's really where Scotia Road Books came from. I love so many things about that. I was published, I helped write or co authored Digital Etiquette for Dummies last year with Wiley Publishers. It was a great experience.

I've always wanted to write a book. I never in a million years thought it would be about digital etiquette, but it is, and here we are. And it's, but it was, I think, What I took away with it, what from it was the process one, the confidence of, I know I can do this. Yes. Right. And they gave me a clear path on how to do it.

And two, like, okay, yeah, now that I know I can do it, what, what am I going to work on next? Right. Right. And to your point, self publishing, you know, publishing, there's, there's pros and cons of both. Yes, I think that not many people realize if you're publishing with a publisher just how much work you have to do and how much you need to do to go into it to try and help sell those books.

Yes, and also the publisher can ask you to make significant changes to your story. And I really didn't want to. I knew that I had a good book. I had, I hired an editor, hired a proofreader. I was really meticulous in it. It's not like I said, I'm brilliant. This is the best thing ever and put it out there, you know?

So I'm really meticulous in that way. And I also am impatient, you know, I'm 52 years old. I want to write a book a year for the rest of my life. And I really don't want to wait. two, three, five years before a publisher is going to put it out. And I want to do it the way that I want to do it. So, that was really the ultimate decision.

And I have loved, I've loved the process. It's been so fun to do, you know, the, the layout the cover design. I worked with this amazingly talented couple in England and I can't wait to work with them on the next book. And so like, it's just been fun, you know, it's, it's just been a really fun process.

Yeah. That's awesome. That's awesome. And is it fun to help other women go through the process too? Yeah. I mean, I think that women over 40 and I'm over 50, you know, you sort of come into your own and you know, who you are, you know, what your voice is and what you want to do. And I teach a lot of those women.

And so. I just wanted to make, I've used myself as a guinea pig so that my process could help them make it easier and so yeah, it's really great. So one of the things that I think, and I'm going to read this because I think your tagline is so powerful here. The tagline for Scotia road books, bring story, bring strong stories and stronger voices to a market that often overlooks this powerful population.

And so my question is, how do you believe the stories of women? Over 40 can contribute to societal change, business change, and just challenge some of the stereotypes. Well, that's a very, very big question. It is a very big question. I'm focusing on the same audience, and that's who I'm working with as well.

Yeah. I can tell you my reasons for focusing there, and I'd love to just talk a little bit about it. Yeah. While you think about the question. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Go for it. So my focus is that one of the things from a business perspective is I've been in marketing my entire career, and I've gone to so many conferences, like I've won national awards, but when I go to conferences, and when I look on YouTube, and when I look online, there's either, you know, all men, right?

Like, I remember being at a conference in 2011. And I just found out I won the national award, but I was at a different conference and I, and they said at the conference, all right, we have the best and most brilliant marketers in the world on stage here. And then they introduced five white men who, you know, we're all five, 10, you know, and yeah, I'm sure they were brilliant, but in an audience with 75 percent women, I was.

Yeah, I was like angry texting. I mean, angry tweeting at that point. Yeah. And I see it on YouTube. I see it on podcasts. I see it on book reviews and I see it. And then when I start to talk to other women, they're like, Oh, well, that's a young person's like social media video. All those things are for young people.

I'm too old. And it drives me nuts. And so the fact that people that women can't get out of their own way to see their own value. Yeah. Set me on a journey of mindset work. Yeah. That's where I'm coming from. Yeah, I'd love to hear. I just think that women over 40 are really powerful and, and know themselves and have done amazing things, you know, regardless of what it is.

It's and women, women really do. I mean, I think women rule the world, to be honest. You know, there may be men who are in front facing positions, but it's the women who actually get things done and come up with. you know, more bridge building ways of doing things as opposed to really harsh aggression.

You know, I think the state of our world politically is because it's dominated by men who just have very big egos. And I think if women were in charge of this, I don't think we'd be in the situations we're in. But I do think that most women who are 40 and older today, were raised with these voices in their heads that said, you can't do this.

You can't do that. For me, it was, you're a really talented writer, but you can't make a living at writing. And so it's like, well, just do it on the side, nice little hobby, but do something that's going to, that's going to amount to something. And I can't tell you how many women come into my classes. I teach a lot of writing classes who say, I always wanted to write, but.

And there's some version of that voice in your head that, that comes out after the butt. And so I think that, you know, we have to, the first step is confidence building. So it is a mindset thing. And I think I'm teaching writing classes. I'm really teaching confidence and I'm empowering women to believe in their voices.

And, showing them that what they write matters and that there is an audience that's waiting to hear from them, that they have so much wisdom and insight. And so I'm really helping with that confidence piece. And then the writing just flows once they get there, but they have to get there. And so that's why, you know, I just love.

working with this population. I'll tell you also, I have some friends who are authors who are incredibly talented, who've been published by big, big presses in New York. And they're in their fifties and, and they have editors who are 30. And they're like, you know, I have one friend who was writing a new novel and the main character was 28.

And the editor had the nerve to say, I don't think a woman in her 50s can write a 28 year old. And I, I mean, you know what I wanted to say. I'll keep it clean here, but I really was annoyed. And I don't want, I want to provide an option for women who don't have to face that. You know, who can, who can be supported from step one.

and go all the way through with people believing in them. Not thinking that their age is a detriment. You know, like, it's really great when you're young. I mean, there's a lot of things you can do, but you don't have the wisdom and the experience and the foresight to like, really be strong like you are when you're at this age.

So I think it's really important. Totally agree, totally agree, and it's, it's so interesting because one of the things that I've been watching is there's a person on, a woman on TikTok and she's been putting a call out for like, I want to, I want to read books, any genre where the character is over 30.

Yeah, because that, you know, and for me, I'm like, I don't, I'm not married. I don't have kids. So when I get like the books that are overly mom books, I'm like, where am I? Right? Like, yeah, what'd you say? You may not like woman of valor. It's very mom focused, but which is great. And that's, that's the majority.

So it's hard to like, okay, how do I, you know, I don't need to see myself exactly, but at the same time, like, it'd be nice for the person to not be like finding the love of their life forever at 22 or saving the world at 24. Like where's the average Barbie? Yes. Well, my next book, the one of the protagonists is 30 and she's only just starting to figure herself out.

She only falls in love. So like, you know, there's no kids, there's no mommy, any of that. So, yeah, I know. I know. I completely just like, hopefully I didn't dissuade a bunch of people. It's just, it's, it's the like, The world's changing and there's a lot of articles now about women not wanting to get married and not wanting to do these things and make these decisions and, you know, whatever that identity is that we have for ourselves that we decide that we want to lean into and for the life we want to create for ourselves.

Yeah, it's really powerful. And if you're not seeing yourself out there, Lynne is a, you are a fantastic example of making that yourself. Thank you. Thank you. I really appreciate that. Absolutely. Absolutely. So before we wrap up. I want to give you a chance to talk about what you have going on with Scotia Road books, what you when your next book is coming out, you guys, those of you listening and watching Women of Valor is right behind and you can see it behind her.

It's now on Amazon. We'll put that link everywhere. We'll put that in the link and those links in the notes as well. Yeah. Tell us a little bit more about what you have coming up, what you're, where are they? Yeah, so my next novel is done and I've been through two or three revisions already and I just gave it to the, my two final readers that I give it to before I put it out in the world.

So I may have another revision ahead, depends what they come back with. But I'm looking for a 2024 release. And I don't yet know what month. I'm just trying to figure it out. So I learned the hard way this year that I should not do a lead a

writer's retreat, speak at a writer's conference and launch a book in the same month.

That is also the Jewish holidays. Really, really dumb. So, so I have to figure that out for next year. So I have, I always lead writers retreats. I have one in September, one in October of 2024. And so this book will come out at some point, but hopefully not in those months. And so. Yeah, I'm really excited.

And then the next thing for me is to start writing the next book. And I have like a document with books I want to write and I'll have to go back to it and see what grabs me and start planning it. I did learn from writing *Woman of Valor* I am a pantsner and I need to be a plotter. And so I taught myself how to plan out writing the novel.

I spent a whole month planning out this next novel and it made the writing so much easier and more fun, less stressful. So whichever book is next, I'll start plotting it first. That's amazing. Absolutely. If you want to connect with Lynne, all of the links are in the show notes. And Lynne, thank you so much for being here.

And, and it's just been a pleasure. Thank you. Oh, it's been awesome talking with you, Kendra. Thanks so much. All right. Thank you for joining us today. And remember at KendraLosee.com, you can find business visibility, strategy, and coaching, and our upcoming *Invisible to Invincible Lab*, a mindset marketing.

Course designed to bring clarity, confidence and consistency to how you and your business show up. We're all about passionately driven entrepreneurs guiding you to success in both business and life because it's never too late to make your business and career work for you and not the other way around.

Until next time.