

Interview Questions with Lisa Turner

Dream Take Flight

June 9, 2019

For our listeners who don't know anything about the book, tell us about *Dream Take Flight*.

In the 1990's I built an airplane in my garage. Then I flew it to Maine from South Florida and back – a 4,000 mile solo journey. After I made the trip, I began writing about it, because I had a spiritual awakening on that trip that made me want to share the experience with others. I didn't know where to begin, and I kept putting it down, thinking others really would not be interested. Years went by, and I wasn't able to forget the lessons I learned on the journey, so I picked it up again. That went on for about 18 years, until my husband, who I didn't even know when I made my solo, got tired of me talking about it. "Please finish the book," he would say. That encouragement propelled me, and I finished the book.

In a nutshell, what would you say the book is about?

It's about a shy girl who defies conventional female roles and ends up finding confidence. It's about a girl who refuses to go to school, but holds her mother close, as a friend, and will do anything for her. When she loses her mother, she makes it her life mission to fulfill a promise she made to succeed in school.

Did the book start out as a memoir?

No, it didn't. It started out as adventures in building and flying an airplane. After I realized all the threads that created the fabric of my enlightenment, I knew I had to begin the book with the flying dream I had when I was a child. I had to explain to the reader why I wrote the stories. That's when it became personal and emotional, and suddenly it was a memoir.

There is a self-help section in the back of the book. Why did you put that in?

Right, quite unconventional. I put that section in because the path I followed went through an inspirational seminar I attended when I was in my forties about goal setting. They said that you can't set goals until you figure out what your values are. It sounds simple but it's not. Why don't they teach these things in school? Once I figured out what my values were, figuring out the goals was easy. So I put a tighter process together for my readers to use.

What were your main reasons for writing *Dream Take Flight*?

The first was to get the memories out on paper for myself. The cathartic relief allowing these emotions to spill out onto the page provided both closure and appreciation for the experiences.

The second is the hope that others will read it and decide to do something they've always wanted to do. It doesn't have to be building and flying an airplane, it can be anything they really care about.

The third reason is to give voice to a woman persevering inside a man's world. A tomboy at heart, I never understood why I couldn't take shop class, be a mechanic, or build an airplane. Loving working in a man's realm was also populated with difficulties I never would have encountered if I hadn't wanted to pursue the unconventional.

You've had a lot of different careers in your life, from high rise construction carpenter to business coach. Was this on purpose?

No, none of it was planned. At first I felt like a failure, because I was supposed to teach English after leaving college . . . and ended up rejecting that career path to explore more hands-on jobs like construction and mechanics. It was a conflicted time, because I was trying to do what I thought my family wanted me to do. I was wrapped around the axle worried about what people thought of me. I continued to be dreadfully introverted. It really wasn't until I decided to build the airplane, at age 45, that I realized my happiness was dependent on me, and not others. The solo journey in the airplane confirmed that, and I felt as if I'd finally delivered my promise to my mother.

With regard to the #METOO movement, I see that in your book you had to overcome a lot of bias when you were applying for men's jobs, like mechanic. What would your advice be to today's young women?

I'd tell them to persevere. If you've figured out your values, what you care about, and set your goals, then you can overcome anything. That passion will shine through and open doors. I'd also say to be direct with men. Men appreciate that. The minute a man thinks you have an ulterior motive or aren't sure what you want, he assumes there is a different agenda, and that introduces problems.

Who did you write the book for?

Growing up in the 1960's and wanting to be an engineer, construction worker, and mechanic, I encountered a lot of shock and rejection from men until they realized I wasn't playing games. You would think that we've come a long way since then, but we really haven't made as much progress as I would like to see. So the book is for women – of all ages – telling them that they can do what they want, and be what they want.

The book is also for people – men and women alike – who enjoy a good story, and for people who love aviation and personal flying, because they will get a kick out of the stories. I wrote it so that the technical descriptions don't interfere with the story for someone who doesn't understand the aviation lingo.

What are your favorite parts of the book?

I really enjoyed writing the stories at the beginning, where the truancy officer came to the house, and hooking the self-propelled lawn mower to my red cart. I laugh when I read them.

So they are true stories?

Absolutely, right down to the debris spewing out of the lawn mower deck as I sped down the street.

What is your advice to others who have always thought about writing a book but don't know how to begin?

Start writing it down in snippets, as you think of things. Get a notebook and just start writing. Even if you never publish a book, the stories getting out will be a therapeutic experience. If you keep on writing and the project gets bigger, you know you're on the right track.

All of us have stories to tell. Stories are fundamental to our lives; telling stories allows all of us to share the emotions that drive both difficulty and triumph. Stories remind us that we are not alone. Stories are a vehicle for us to reach out and to grow. Stories plumb the depths of consciousness and allow us to revel in

shared experience. Stories allow us to heal when we realize we are not the only ones to feel afraid, shy, or uncertain in a complex world.

I see that the book ends with you finishing your 4,000 mile solo flight from south Florida to Maine and back, with a sort of epiphany at the end. That was over 20 years ago. Will you write more?

I'm seeing my writing going more to practical how-to advice now. The world is so fast paced and there are so many distractions that get us off track. We have a limited amount of time on this planet so my writing now tries to give people tools to fully enjoy the time we have here. I'm adding free tools and articles to my website monthly that will help readers live a less distracted and more mindful life.

Why did you decide to self-publish the book?

Two reasons. The first was that in my impatience to get the story out, I didn't want to wait for publishers to read and reject submittal after submittal. I have a lot of respect for traditional authors who are patient through this process until they have a publisher. I just wanted to get it out. That's the ADHD in me.

How difficult was the self-publishing process?

Well, it's not easy. But like everything else in life, it's a process that can be mastered. If you've never done it, I'd find a coach and get some help. Those who have navigated this maze can give you shortcuts that will save you a lot of time. I'm actually thinking about doing some coaching around what I call, "getting the book out." Of course, you can pay someone else to do it, end to end, but that's expensive, and not nearly as much fun. Amazon doesn't charge anything to list and sell your book.

I see you have already written two books that are on Amazon, and that they are quite different. Tell me a little bit about those books.

Early in my engineering career I became certified as a quality engineer. I learned that teams of employees do the best problem solving for a company, and are the most creative when it comes to product development. But the instructions for the teams were awful. They were complicated and boring. So I rewrote the process for our teams, and we saved millions of dollars. It's called *The Team Steps Guide*.

And the second book?

In between engineering positions, I spent three years as a home inspector. I'd crawl around underneath homes and shoo away snakes, and get in hot attics. I learned so much about what builders do wrong, and how to find mistakes that I had to write the advice down for home owners and builders. That book is called *House Keys: The Essential Homeowners Guide*.

That's very unconventional, a female inspector. Do you think that women make good inspectors? Are there drawbacks?

I think women make excellent inspectors. Women tend to be detail oriented and very conscientious. I actually trained with a female inspector! I was impressed. As for drawbacks, they are the same as for men. Crawlspace are not always fun to inspect, and none of us enjoy chasing snakes to the other side of the crawl, but it goes with the territory.

What are you working on now?

Next I'm going to write a biography of my husband, who restores antique airplanes. He's done that for 70 years. I think that's amazing.

Will you self-publish again through Amazon?

Yes, it makes sense. It's not about the money. It's about having others read it and get fired up about reaching a special goal in their own life. If just one person is influenced in this way, I consider my work worthwhile.

What is the one big takeaway that you want the readers of **Dream Take Flight** to get?

It's that all of us have a story, have hardship, have growing up experiences that were difficult, even tragic. Rather than having these things serve as an excuse for where and who we are now, they can be used to elevate our thinking, and prompt us to reach for the untapped potential that each of us has.

When we blame the past for current action, we are taking away from our power; when we acknowledge it, when we own it, we add to our power. This leads to positive action, and a much happier life.

So, choosing and taking responsibility are part of the equation?

Absolutely. They are fundamental. In our choices, we can drop off the baggage that is anchoring us against change and growth. And taking responsibility means we don't have to spend so much time trying to figure out what went wrong and who to blame for it. Suddenly we have our best life in front of us, and we can live, love, and thrive in the moment. After all, that's all we really have.

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