
Full Transcripts For
**Writing To
Get Business**

WRITING
TO GET BUSINESS
with Pat Iyer



C-SUITE
Radio

From Fighter Jets to Publisher

Dr. Tracey Jones

This podcast represents the end of our first year of producing weekly shows on the processes involved in writing and publishing books. Meet a special guest whose energy will inspire you.

Dr. Tracey Jones shares with you the experience of working as both a publisher and a writer with a clear vision of her purpose. Her father, known on speaker circuits as Charlie Tremendous Jones, founded a publishing dynasty to which she brought what she'd learned in the corporate world. Her experiences taught her that publishing is poetry and plumbing. Find out why.

- What factor should you consider when choosing books for a publishing company?
- What is the key reason your book will never go out of print?
- By doing this, you will succeed as a writer.
- With the right perspective, what can you do with a PhD thesis?
- The growing revolution in publishing makes both print and digital publishing easier and more affordable than ever before.

Patricia: Hi. This is Pat Iyer with Writing To Get Business. And I have with me, today, Tracey Jones, who is a person that I connected with through the C-Suite Network. She has an unusual background and is the daughter of a man who is well known in the public speaking world, named Charlie Tremendous Jones. And we'll get into a little bit, as we talk, about where that nickname came from. Tracey, welcome to the show.

Tracey: Thank you, Pat. It's tremendous to be here.

Patricia: So let's talk about that "tremendous" word. I knew of your father when I entered the National Speakers Association. Unfortunately, I entered it in the last year of his life, and people always would refer, at the annual conferences, to Charlie Tremendous Jones. Where does that "Tremendous" nickname come from?

Tracey: Well, my father flunked out of school in the eighth grade, so he had a very limited formal education. He always said that when he'd meet

people, because of his lack of vocabulary, of course, that was back in the old days before he read hundreds of thousands of books, he would just say, whenever somebody would come up to him and say something like, “Charlie, we just bought a home.” “Tremendous.” “Charlie, we just sold a million-dollar life insurance policy.” “Tremendous.” “Charlie, my mother-in-law just passed away.” “Tremendous.” You know, he always had the light mother-in-law jokes.

And he always said, “Whatever words you choose to use, make sure it's a good one, because it's probably going to stick.” So, then he wrote *Life Is Tremendous*, which came out in 1967, by Tyndale Publishers, and it has never gone out of print since then. So, that really became his mantra, that life is tremendous, and enthusiasm makes a difference. So, tremendous just became part of the legacy, the little kicking man that you see became part of our iconic visual of the brand. And it just is an exuberance, a resilience that no matter what comes your way, you can overcome.

Patricia: Let's pause for a second and absorb the fact that a book that came out in 1967 has never gone out of print. That fact you just kind of slipped right in there, but I want to make sure that our listener got that. How does that happen?

Tracey: They call them the seminal thinkers. And that means you've got legs 50 years or longer. This is the Aristotles, this is the Platos, these are the greats from before, the timeless truths that are still in our canon of knowledge. And that means that, and I just talked to Tyndale last month, that there is still demand for the book. And it's never gone out of print. They told me, “We just had another order.”

Now, of course, part of that is because his legacy is so far-reaching, but it's also because we are still pouring out to people his love. He was a bibliophile of epic proportions. He was a book pusher, he adored books; books were the answer to everything that ailed you. So, we really continue to push that legacy out there, and encourage people, and introduce a whole new generation of people to him. And that really keeps that existing body of knowledge of him at the forefront.

Patricia: Amazing.

Tracey: Thanks, Pat. And it is very unusual for people not to go out of print. We're a publisher and a book distributor, too, and I have people call up looking for great authors, and it's like, "Oh, gosh, it went out of print." Not that it can't be resurrected once it gets into the public domain phase, but I'm quite thankful and proud that his book has never gone out of print.

Patricia: Now, were you always involved in publishing?

Tracey: No. I came back to publishing, actually, this Friday will be the 12-year anniversary of my father's home-going. And so before that, I was in the military, I was in defense contracting, I was in the semiconductor world, an engineer by training, a project manager. I worked on fighter jets. And it wasn't until my father passed away that I actually came back into the wonderful creative world of entrepreneurship, and kind of boutique publishing in the personal development world.

So, I went from very process-oriented, bureaucratic, big organizations to the beautiful creative space of small business, which is the backbone of our economy, and getting to really change the world, not through products or defending our rights, as I did before, but through the transformative power of books. So, it was an incredible switch. And I got to turn on the right side of my brain as I dialed into that side, and no, just floored it.

But with publishing, I always say that publishing a book is poetry and plumbing. You turn the creative juices on and you let the muse happen, and you have these beautiful things happen. But you also have to have pipes that literally get that product out to people. So, I enjoy bringing my structural side, my engineer side, my project manager side to the whole creative process of getting a great book out there, getting it launched, and logistics, all the resources you need to bring your dream message out to people. But also to really be in the world 24/7, great people with great thoughts that have a message they want to get out there. It's just been the best job of all.

Patricia: And you've certainly had some unusual jobs that are completely different than publishing but prepared you for the business of publishing, because of all those factors that you just identified. You have to have budgets; you have to have projects seeing their way

through; you have to focus on the marketing piece. Did this company exist before you got involved in it?

Tracey: It did. The company was actually born in 1965. So, coming back, I also, in the back of my mind, was aware of the mortality rate of second-generation businesses. It's about 60%. But being resilient and enthusiastic makes a difference. I'm like, "If that is how it goes, that's how it goes. But I'm going to give it my best." My father had started the company back in '65. He was a life insurance salesman. And he left the life insurance field after becoming incredibly successful, and that's a story in and of itself, how he transitioned into becoming a full-time speaker, writer, publisher, and lover of all things books. He started that company in 1965 to share what he had learned as a father and as a businessman and as a Christian with other organizations. So, it was born out of necessity, and it matched his gifting and his personality. And if you've ever watched any of his stuff, you understand why.

Patricia: Was he alive at the time that you became involved in the publishing company, or was that after his death?

Tracey: Two days before he passed, I sat down, and I talk about it in the book briefly, I came back and I said, "Hey, I'm going to come back and take over the reins of the company." And he squeezed my hand and he said, "I know you'll take it places I never could have." Pat, that was our succession planning. And then I didn't actually come back because I had to go back to my old job and wrap things up in the project I was on. So actually, I didn't come back until actually three months after he had passed. So, that's when I came back.

I will say this for the listeners looking at second-generation businesses. We had talked on and off throughout my career about coming back. And there are times where I had stepped into it, but founders have a very interesting perspective. And it's sometimes tough for second generation unless you really have it set up with the personalities and the processes to do that.

But it was more of a family business. He employed a lot of my brothers and sisters. And so, I'm very business-oriented and process-oriented. We would touch on it, but it never really happened. And we both agreed that the time to make it happen would be after he was

clearly out of the picture, and I would come up and pick up the baton. So, he knew I was coming back when he departed this world.

And there are times I think, “Well, I wish I could have worked side by side with him.” But, as you mentioned, from my background, I was really outgrowing my experience bag, because I knew if I was going to run a company, I was going to try and learn as much as I could about operations, people, budget. I got my MBA and learned everything I could so when I came back, I would be well-equipped.

Pat, he was a salesman like no other. He had this charisma and was born a salesman and a natural gifted orator. That's what he brought to the table. I knew I was coded very different, and so I wanted to make sure that I had as much in favor of what I had to bring to the table as possible, as he did. So that's kind of what I was doing while he was still in this world.

Patricia: What you're touching on, I think, is something that is important to consider in any business. You have the creative side, you have the operations side.

Tracey: Yes.

Patricia: Did he have, in the publishing company, somebody who could provide the operations part while he was on the road as the orator?

Tracey: Absolutely. He really had a team that was there. And we published hundreds and hundreds of books. And then this is before Amazon and everybody had their own publishing company. He would go out and sell, just lift up a book at these huge stadiums and sell hundreds of thousands of books. They weren't only his books; he was a big promoter of other people's thoughts and inspirations, too. So he would have people back in the home office in, at the time, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, while he'd be out on the road. It's the old Michael Gerber point, the entrepreneur has to be working on the business, but then you have to have the managers and the technicians working in the business to make it happen. We shipped a lot of books all over. And whenever he'd travel, I would meet him at events, and I'd work the table in the back. And it was just so much fun, so much fun.

Patricia: You made me think about something that happened when my son was about six. We were doing bulk mailings, marketing letters, and you

had to peel off these little stickers and put them on the stack of envelopes and you put a rubber band around. And he said to me, “Mommy, when you were a little girl, do you do bulk mailing with your mother, too?”

Tracey: That is precious.

Patricia: And I said, “No, I didn't. My mother didn't have a business.” “Well, why not?”

Tracey: I love that. Pat, I mean, he would take us, our family vacations, he had a Volkswagen RV camper with a pop-up top. And he would load up six kids, books, and my mother, and himself. And one summer, we traveled from Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, down to Mexico City, Mexico, stopping all along the way at campgrounds, where he'd let the kids camp. And then he'd go speak, we'd work the book table, and then off to the next place. And he obviously had a speaking engagement down in Mexico City, and right back up.

We really grew up understanding the entrepreneurial thing that work and fun are often very much meshed. And so, we'd go on vacations, but that was how he spent time with us. And it was cool, because I got to understand customer service; I got to understand cash; I got to understand putting labels on books; packing books in power packs, sticking cassettes in cassette boxes. And he was really ahead of his time in so many of those things, and it was so much fun getting exposed to that as a young person. So, it's kind of funny that I went into big bureaucracies after that, you know what I'm saying, and didn't jump right into entrepreneurship. But it was a wonderful experience.

Patricia: Well, you saw both worlds.

Tracey: I did see both worlds, I needed to see both worlds. Because I think growing up in one world, I thought, “Okay, that's cool.” But if there are structures, and there are budgets, that's where stuff really gets done. And so, I got to see both sides of it, to see the pros and cons of both.

Patricia: Now, I know at some point, you got your doctorate, and you prepared your doctoral thesis, and you've mentioned your book. Let's make sure that I hold this book up for the people who are watching this on

Zoom. This is *SPARK* by Dr. Tracey Jones. And it is a hardcover book with a book jacket. Tell our viewers, who are watching this on YouTube or our listeners who are listening to this on our audio channels, about how you got a doctoral thesis into a book, because often they're not connected to each other. They're written in very different ways.

Tracey: Well, they absolutely are. And how I approached the doctoral journey as a speaker and as a putter-outer of leadership blogs and material, I noticed I was having more and more people in my audience that had a PhD. And I thought, "You know what, if I'm going to count myself as a leadership expert," you talked about the continual thirst for knowledge. I thought, "I really should have the terminal degree."

And it's called a terminal degree, and that makes me laugh because you know, there are times when you think, "Lord, will I make it through this process?" And I had always, as a little girl, it had always been a dream of mine to get a PhD. I don't know why, I just I loved learning. I wasn't a particularly good student; I almost flunked out of school several times. So just remember, you can become a better reader, you can become a better thinker.

And they say PhD stands for Piled High and Deep. So, there you have it. So, I was studying leadership. I love leadership. I loved getting a PhD because it taught me how to think. It taught me how to be a wonderful, critical thinker, not a critical spirit. But I now tell people if you can't cite it, don't write it. So, it made my writing much more content rich. It made me figure out what I knew, what truth was, because you really get to drill down and find out, and you separate the wheat from the chaff. You separate the emotions and the narrative and the opinions from whatever leadership is or isn't. There is foundational research on leadership and the theory of leadership. And so, I wanted to add just one little tiny kernel into that beautiful sea of knowledge. So, I did this.

Dr. Ken Blanchard was my second reader on this. And I always loved Ken Blanchard. And Dr. Blanchard and Dr. Henry Cloud are two of my biggest mentors. And when I look at them, I look at the fact that they are very academic great thinkers. But Ken's situational theory of leadership made him known as a scholar, first, and then he went into one-minute manager and all the leadership stuff. Same with Henry

Cloud. They were great thinkers, but then they took the great knowledge they had, and they transcribed it, in layman's terms, for the rest of us mere mortals that need to know the theory behind leadership.

But we're in the trenches where the rubber meets the road. So they put it in very experiential, pragmatic terms. And so that's really how *SPARK* was born. My dissertation was on the intersection of crisis leadership, followership and how that affects leadership, and then the theory of motivation, which is self-efficacy, which is a \$10 word for just how motivated, how all in are you. So I was just fascinated by that, and I said, with the book, you know, and the book is kind of a hybrid. There are a lot of my citations and footnotes in there. But it's written in layman's terms.

But I love when I hear somebody speak and tell me their personal experience. But when you have the content, the backing, the research to back it up, that, to me, is where you get book smarts and head smarts or street smarts together, and that is the most robust type of knowledge. Because I can know it's knowledge that has been researched and borne out in practice. So that was really what the book I wanted to do.

And then I took it and came up with the acronym, SPARK, which is a construct for how you ignite the greatness within. So my whole thesis was on the theory of self-efficacy. And like I said, what is the spark that ignites in you that when the going gets tough, you either get going, or you run away, okay? How you adapt, or you unlock your intrinsic resilience. And so, SPARK is a construct that I built around my doctoral research, my findings in it, to help give people a diagnostic construct about how they can take what I found and apply that in their life.

The beauty of a PhD is in the body of knowledge, but you want people to be able to take it and apply it. Knowledge isn't truly learned until it's actually applied and put to use. And so, I looked at the greats like Ken Blanchard and all the great situational leadership theory things that have come out as a result of that, and help leaders become leaders. And I thought, "No one's going to read my dissertation, maybe my chapter four and five kind of thing." But I wanted a book where people could see the findings and apply them to their life.

Patricia: So, it sounds to me like you took all of the research that you did, put it into a big blender in your mind and said, “All right, here are the pieces that are going to be most directly applicable to people, that are going to be most understandable. And here is a model that I can use, using the word “SPARK,” to pull out the key pieces as part of resilience.”

Tracey: That's exactly what happened. And that's the beauty, anybody that's out there, that's a writer, and anybody that's curious or inquisitive, you are, at your heart, a researcher. So, like you, Pat, you connect me with people, you ask questions, you talk to me, you tease things out of me, you draw threads. And so, if your mind works like that, you are an intrinsic researcher, scholar. And if you haven't written a book, you probably have several books already germinating inside of you. You can't have motivation without creativity. The whole purpose of this is the Bruce Springsteen song, you can't start a fire without a spark. There has to be that creative point of ignition that gets you off and going, and then you've got to fuel it.

The book is really about how do you dial in, or drill down to find that one thing where you're going to go, “That's it.” The epiphany, the bubble above your head. And then, number two, is what externally has to come into your life to keep the fires burning, because otherwise, it burns out. So, it's kind of this dyadic intrinsic and extrinsic thing called life that that's why we can't go it alone. And that's why nobody can do it for us. We have to bring our part to the table, and other people have to come in to support us. And that's where true greatness happens. And it happens in a sustained way.

Patricia: Well, with that background, you could have gone in many different directions. And it sounds like what you've been able to do is to channel your passion into the publishing company. Does that influence the types of books that you will take on that you publish?

Tracey: It does. There's a term in motivation called value congruence. And you want to make sure my convictions are my convictions, your convictions are yours. Don't mess with somebody's convictions because that is their value system, okay? And everybody has earned the right to have their own values. So, when you have a value congruence, where people fall out of love with work or spouses, whatever, churches, ministries, there's something that you hold dear to your heart that the organization does not.

So, I really make sure with the company that was Executive Books, then it became Tremendous Life Books, now it's Tremendous Leadership, that there is a value congruence in that anything we publish helps you create a more tremendous life. Sometimes, it's biographies, autobiographies, poetry, but a lot of it is personal development, people that have accepted their own personal agency and they want to become the best version of themselves, be it through sales, communication, ministry, nonprofit work, leadership, you name it. So, as long as there's that thread of helping other people achieve the greatest version of themselves, we absolutely would love to talk with them about publishing their manuscript.

Patricia: What advice would you give somebody who's in the process of writing a book based on what you've gone through in writing your own book?

Tracey: Do it daily. Every day, I don't care what it is. My first book was four years of my blogging 400 words every week. And all of a sudden, at the end of four years I saw the common threads. And that was my book. Actually, my very first book I co-authored with my first rescue dog, Mr. Blue, and I wrote *The Top 10 Principles of Leadership, True Blue Leadership, Top 10 Ways to Lead the Pack*. So wherever your muse comes from, that's another thing that I love dogs as much as I love books and God. So, why can't I write books with my dogs?

So, I think when you're in the creative space, you get to bundle this tremendous blend, however you want to do it. I would say write every day, even if it's just a paragraph. Four hundred words you can knock out in five minutes. You can. And if you're stuck, be sure as much as you're writing, you read 10 times that, okay. So, if you're watching TV an hour a day, you better be reading two hours a day. The more you read, the better a writer you are going to become. Because you're going to see things that are inside of you that you never even know were there that are going to resonate and be called out by what you read.

The greatest writers are prolific readers; the greatest leaders are prolific readers? The greatest givers are prolific readers, too. So I would say really read as much as you can. If you say you don't have time, then you're not serious, I don't think, about writing a book. Because for all the time we waste on the nonsensical, non-value added

things and all the crap we put in our mind, I'd also be sure and really examine your motives for writing a book.

A lot of people come to me and say, "Well, my mom really wants me to write this book." It's like, my dad never told me to come back and run the company, because I would feel compelled to have to do it. So, I really get clear with people on it's the old Jim Collins, Good to Great hedgehog principle. What is the message that you have that the world needs to hear? Focus on that and just drip it out every day like a faucet. And then read prolifically because it's going to make you a better writer, it's going to make you a better thinker, you're going to learn new words, and you're going to get in the flow of what a good book is subconsciously, and that's going to come out when you write.

Patricia: And one thing that I wanted to ask you about, before we finish this up, is the book that I held up for the people who are on our YouTube channel, which is Pat Iyer, is a hardcover book with a jacket. Tell us about the options for softcover books, hardcover books, because in my experience, hardcover books with jackets are way less common than softcover books.

Tracey: Thank you. This is the first hardcover with a jacket I've done. Some of my children's books are board books or wrap-laminated for little kids to hold and put in their mouths and, you know, get icky stuff on. I did this. Actually, my cover artist actually designed the dust jacket before I even thought about a hardcover. But now that I look at it, I love the fact that it's a hardcover because it's a beautiful gift book and it's a very special book. It's like a little bolt of lightning.

And so, I also have the book on Amazon. So I do logistics, too, as the publisher. So, I know all sides of this. So I have KDP doing the softcover. So, a lot of people order just directly off Amazon KDP. I had the e-book on Amazon, beautiful. I have the audiobook on ACX. I also recorded the audiobook myself on our website because ACX lately has been taking about six months to get something through the pipeline. I guess they're just very backed up. And then you really have to be with somebody from a good sound technician standpoint that understands to keep all the P's low and the breaks and stuff like that. So, I did that.

But I ordered, through an offset printer in the Midwest, 10,000 copies of my hardcover, okay? And so those are specialty gifts, and I sell them through my site. I also sell them through Ingram, and then Ingram sends them to Amazon and to bookstores. So I cover all bases. I have it all different ways. And I tell our authors that.

The beauty is, there are so many digital short run printers now. I just found one in New Jersey. You want to do a digital short run of 500 hardcovers, you can get a pretty good price. So that way, if you are a speaker, or you want to gift them, you can do a short print run and not have 10,000 books sitting in your garage, like so many of us have seen people going through. So there's so many different options. It's just that KDP won't do a hardcover, but that's okay, there's other people that do it. And it used to have to be to get a great price point you had to print thousands and thousands. Not so, the printing world has completely changed for the better.

Patricia: Do you think it's changed because of the print on demand putting more competition into their world?

Tracey: Oh my gosh. Absolutely. And you even look at Lightning Source, which was Ingram's print on demand, and they're wrapping it up. So I love disruption. And I love when people come in and find a better cost-effective way to do it. So, I absolutely think, just like publishing, there are so many people now that started their own publishing houses. There are companies that if you have enough followers, why go to somebody else, it's like for all our project managers out there, there is a science to publishing a book. It's not mystical. And I know sometimes people come to us with their already self-published book because they want to re-release it. So it can be done. It just takes time to figure it out.

I think there are just so many other options now with the printing press, the inkjet printing, the colors, it's just technology is a beautiful thing. I love what it's doing because it's giving us so many more options.

Patricia: You've shared great points today, Tracey. I have been enjoying our conversation. I know that our listeners are going to want to know how they can find out more about you, the publishing company, the book. What's the best way for them to be able to reach you?

Tracey: Thank you, Pat, for that feedback. Best way to reach me is to go to our website, www.TremendousLeadership.com. And you can contact us about publishing, you can contact us about our YouTube. We have a Leaders On Leadership podcast. You can even sign up for our email list and get two free weeks of Tremendous e-books. So, we have all kinds of wonderful resources on there. And like I said, there's a whole little banner on publishing with us. You can see all our new releases. And you can either get an autographed hardcover of *SPARK* through tremendousleadership.com, or you can go over to Amazon, and you'll get one that's not autographed. It's still nice, but it's not quite as nice. But either way, I would just be thrilled.

Patricia: Absolutely. So, you can get the e-book, the audiobook, the softcover, or the hardcover?

Tracey: Correct.

Patricia: All possible ways.

Tracey: Yeah, however you want to serve it up. Because I love that people sometimes are working out or walking and they want the audio. And that's why we started doing podcasts, too. Because, you know, people want to have something going on. It's such an intimate thing to have somebody actually talking in your head or speaking to you. And I love all these Zoom calls where I get to see my heroes like up close and personal rather than way back on a stage. It's really cool. It's a different kind of community.

Patricia: Tell our listener the name of your podcast.

Tracey: Tremendous Leadership, okay? And it's on iHeart, Stitcher, Spotify, Anchor, everywhere, and it's the Tremendous Leadership channel. And we have Leaders On Leadership, where I interview leaders from all over the world about what it took them to pay the price of leadership. I also have books that I recommend that would really up their game. And then, lastly, we do Throwback Thursday, where we go into my father's archives, and we break something out to reintroduce the world to Tremendous.

Patricia: Wow. And you do all that, and you're married, and you take care of two dogs.

Tracey: Three dogs.

Patricia: Three dogs?

Tracey: Three dogs and four cats. Yeah.

Patricia: And four cats. Wow. Sounds like a busy life, Tracey.

Tracey: It is. It's a busy and a blessed life. I like being busy.

Patricia: Well, thank you so much for being a guest on the show. And thank you to you who has just spent a half an hour with us, with Tracey Jones, the author of *SPARK*, a book that will inspire you and motivate you. She sent me a copy to read and I got nuggets from every page, and I know that you will, too. Be sure to tell other friends about Writing To Get Business Podcast, and encourage them to listen, and stay tuned for our next show.