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with Pat Iyer



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Radio

Inviting a Camel to a Book Launch Party

Doreen Cumberford

Everyone has a legacy, the sum of their unique experiences and the lessons learned from them. Doreen Cumberford, an expatriate for over 60 years, shares how she turned her legacy into a book, *Life in the Camel Lane*, a memoir about her 15 years in Saudi Arabia. Learn from her how you can write and market your legacy.

- Does starting your writing career with a collaborative book have value?
- How can you share your legacy through a book?
- How has marketing changed in the era of COVID?
- What's involved in a virtual book tour?
- What's the value of simultaneously writing your book and planning its promotion?

Patricia: Hi. This is Pat Iyer with Writing to Get Business. The focus of this podcast is on how you share your knowledge and experiences in books and how you connect that to what you do for a living. And I have with me, today, Doreen Cumberford, who I met through a group that we are both involved in that teaches us more about creating great video. Doreen, welcome to the show.

Doreen: Good morning, Pat. And thank you so much for having me.

Patricia: Tell our listener or the viewer who's watching this on our YouTube channel called Pat Iyer, where you're sitting today.

Doreen: Right now, I am sitting in a house in San Miguel de Allende, which is about three and a half hours northwest of Mexico City in Mexico.

Patricia: All right. And is that where you live all the time?

Doreen: No. We are here for a few months. We have been coming here for three years. And we are considering relocating to this part of the

world. And we've done some housesitting assignments here. So, we're here for the winter, essentially, to get away from the Colorado snow.

Patricia: Oh, boy, I understand. I'm in Florida right now for the same reason, to get away from the cold and the snow.

Doreen: Yeah.

Patricia: I know that our listener is going to be intrigued by the concept of house sitting. Can you explain your lifestyle and your business, and then we'll talk about the books that you've written surrounding this concept?

Doreen: Sure. I'm actually an expatriate, a former expatriate, but I'm an expatriate at heart. My husband was a TCK, a third culture kid. And his family, his mother was a third culture kid. And so it's sort of a generational process, I think. And so both of us, my husband and I, have lived outside of our native countries for over sixty-something years.

Patricia: Sixty, six-zero?

Doreen: Six-zero, yeah. About 67 years. We haven't done the addition recently, Pat. But I have lived in nine countries, on four continents, and am very, very much at home away or on the road, as it were. Now, when we did expatriation assignments, we were planted somewhere. And the last one that we did is the one that *Life in The Camel Lane* is based on, living in Saudi Arabia for 15 years. So now, after we retired, which is really rewired, we discovered this great lifestyle, where we could move when we wanted. It's very slow travel. And we do have a home base in Colorado, but we do travel when we can, where we can to do pet sitting.

And we are part of a very, very large network of people who put up homes in one place and are matched with pet sitters from another place. And we go sit in the most amazing, architecturally rich surroundings. And we've done pet sitting in eight countries over the last four years in our attempt to revitalize our worldview, and also to enjoy our retirement and learn languages, learn culture, learn food, and to keep that small expat awakened inside of us.

Patricia: I am just bowled over by what you shared, Doreen, in terms of your lifestyle. It raises so many questions. Let me let me pull a few of them out. You said third culture. Did I understand that correctly?

Doreen: Yes.

Patricia: What does that mean?

Doreen: Okay. A TCK is a third culture kid. And a third culture kid is usually a child that is raised like my own daughter. I'm from Scotland, my husband's American, and she was raised in Japan and Saudi Arabia. So, these are kids who are the sons and daughters of diplomats, of executives, or of anybody who has taken off and lived in another culture.

Patricia: All right. All right. That helps explain that to me.

Doreen: Good. I'm sorry, it was a piece of jargon, I shouldn't have thrown that out. Too much jargon.

Patricia: We have ways to describe people. I remember, several years ago, somebody talked about a trust fund kid. And that had to be explained to me, is a kid who basically has more money than they know what to do with. It came up in the context of the clubs in Manhattan, which, at that time, were filled with trust fund kids who paid, you know, \$80 to \$100 a night to walk in to get a cheap bottle of wine and spend their money, and spend their time, and they had nothing else to do. So, third culture kid is another variation of the kid adjectives. So, I appreciate you giving me that explanation.

Doreen: And just to add on to that, the woman who came up with this terminology, her name is Ruth van Reken, and she was an expatriate born in ... or lived in Kenya as a child. She's now in her sixties or seventies. And she has written two books. And in the last book, she actually coined the term. It's more like CCK, cross-cultural kid. So there are so many people, as you know, across the world, because I think you probably have a CCK in your house. I know that your husband was born in a different country, in India?

Patricia: He was.

Doreen: Yes. And so your children are the product, and they are cross-cultural kids. That's a CCK.

Patricia: All right. Well, one of my cross-cultural kids lives in India and is a minister there. The other one lives in the United States. And my husband did come here, when he was 21, to get his master's degree.

Doreen: Yeah, so you know this. You know this. It's just that we haven't had language for it. We haven't had language until recently, we haven't had descriptions that were accurate, and we haven't had silos so that people can have a common agreement across cross culture as to how to communicate with each other.

Patricia: Well, thank you for that explanation. That helps to put it in context.

Doreen: So that's what I write about, or this is what I attempt to write about, Pat.

Patricia: And your first book, tell us about how you got from not having written a book or written a chapter to your first project that you worked on.

Doreen: I was a health and wellbeing coach way back in the 80s, before health and wellbeing coaches were a thing. And when I came back from Saudi Arabia, I decided to pop back into the coaching and consulting world. And I was really helping people build their dreams. Now, 40 years earlier, 30 years earlier, I had been working with people to help them lose weight and build a healthy dream. So it was all very related, very natural.

And somebody said, "Oh, we're writing this book on empowering women, and would you like to contribute a story?" And I had just returned from Saudi Arabia, where I had lived for 15 years. And I thought, "Oh, this is a great opportunity to get it on paper." And I have gone from that to this point, where I'm just so anxious to get all the stories out on paper, because I don't want them to disappear with me in my brain when I go.

Patricia: And that is part of the legacy that we leave behind when we document those stories and those aspects of wisdom that we have learned from our life experiences.

Doreen: It is. It is. It definitely is. Can I insert a story here about a blog I wrote yesterday?

Patricia: Of course you can.

Doreen: I have a friend who has been suffering from cancer for perhaps eight years. It's been a long, torturous, arduous journey for her. And she recently announced, just a couple of days ago, that she had gotten a terminal diagnosis of a different kind of cancer in the brain. So it was very sad. But she was letting her community know, and preparing everybody, and talking about how she was being taken care of.

And I had this visceral reaction. Oh my gosh, it was like her stories, what will happen to her stories? Because this woman had led tours of mostly other Western women to places like Iran and Nepal, and she had hiked all over the foothills of Nepal. And she had Nepalese friends who became like family, and she had such wonderful cross-cultural stories. And I was very surprised by that reaction, that it was to protect the stories and get them out. Because legacy, I think, is really important nowadays.

Patricia: It certainly is. In fact, I'm part of a mastermind that meets every week. And one of the people in our group is a death and dying doula. And she helps families and patients record those stories so that that legacy lives on after the person transitions to a different existence.

Doreen: That's such a wonderful gift.

Patricia: It is.

Doreen: Because, you know, in all of the work that I've been involved in, which is not a huge body yet, but I think the idea of legacy is growing stronger and stronger every day, and I think that's one of the benefits of writing your book for your business.

Patricia: Were you involved in this compilation book as somebody who paid to have your material included or was there no fee associated with this?

Doreen: There was a fee associated with this. It was back, you know, maybe nine years ago. So I had been approached by all these people who reach out and say, come and be in, you know, Jack Canfield or someone else's book. But I haven't done any of those because I

discovered that if I really worked hard at it and applied myself, I can write. I'm not a natural writer. I think I like to communicate by speech, I'm very verbal. But when the verbs and the lyricism of my Scottish upbringing are available on the page, then I do think that it's a gift I've been given. And, really, I'm responding to this drive to get stories out there and connect people inter-culturally.

Patricia: And I think of the many people that I connect with, your stories of being in different cultures, having different experiences would be fascinating for people. I had a webinar that I taught last night about my upcoming program on getting your book finished. And one of my attendees had lived in 57 countries. And she was thinking about writing a book called *Don't Touch the Monk and Other Faux Pas*.

Doreen: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yeah. There's a couple of books out there on faux pas. And there's a children's book called *Slurping Soup*, which is really for children on the subject of how to eat when you're in Asia. So that's a great title. I would cheer her on, go girl.

Patricia: Yes. Well, there were several people on our webinar who were commenting in the chat box, "We want to read that book. Please, go ahead and write that."

Doreen: And you know, it's very interesting, because right now, especially during COVID, when we're culturally distant and separate from each other, it's interesting that I think I'm just seeing so many more expat podcasts, so many more house sitting podcasts, so many more people who are anxious to tell their stories. It's like we don't know what will happen, we don't know how many days we have left on the planet or how many years. But I sense a collective impulsion where more and more people want to share stories, not just for the stories, but also for the wisdom gleaned, having lived through these stories.

Patricia: Yeah, that's a great point, Doreen. You went from the compilation book to writing your own book. Tell us about that transition. What was that first solo book about?

Doreen: Well, I started writing *Life in The Camel Lane*. And it was about my years lived in Saudi Arabia. And it's really, it's called *Life in The Camel Lane: Embrace The Adventure*. So, I've come to the point where I really believe that we all need to live our lives as bite-sized

adventures, and we need to look for adventures, seek it out, take bite-sized risks in order to develop and promote a life that's really energizing and worth living.

And so, I started this book, and I was, you know, it took me about six years to write it. And, in the midst of that, I had an opportunity, with two other gals, to write a book. And that interrupted *Life in The Camel Lane*, which is one of the reasons it took so long. And that is an e-book which has become a really fun read for people who are in the midst of repatriating from overseas to go back home again, because there are many challenges.

And we, three coaches, came up with the idea of, "Oh, let's do an anthology." So, we did a short anthology with five experts who all had lived overseas and come home again, many of them bounced back again, but not all of them. And it addressed all the issues that one is faced with when you're returning home to your native country. So that interrupted this process, but that got finished. And after that got finished, I had more momentum to complete *Life in The Camel Lane*.

Patricia: You know, what you just said made me think about some of my husband's Indian friends who face that issue in a different way. Some of them who raised teenage girls, specifically in the United States, then wanted to go back to India to protect their daughters from the dating scene, because they wanted them to undergo arranged marriages.

So here are these kids who grew up as Americans, who maybe have visited India over the years but never lived there, who now, in those teenage years, are uprooted and sent back. Maybe their parents come with them, maybe they live with grandparents. It's an aspect of being part of that culture that is different if you've always lived in the United States and you just accept that dating and having love marriages, as they're called in India, there's either arranged marriages or love marriages, those are the two choices. The love marriages are on the rise in India. The arranged marriages still exist, although they can be done by the internet very effectively now compared to local advertising, parents who are looking for matches for their kids.

So, I've seen that issue and I've thought about it from the perspective of the American kids going back to India, or going to India to live, as

opposed to people from other countries, people who are Americans who go overseas and then come back to their home base.

Doreen: But you know, it's the same, repatriation, if you've grown up as a TCK in another culture and you're repatriating, or your parents are repatriating, and they're going through one process, you're going through another process, then that produces its own results and its own dissonance. I've seen this time and time again, of course, with Saudi women who were sent from a very, very closeted Saudi culture to America and they got their degrees. I had Saudi women friends who were nuclear medicine docs, and I had a Saudi woman who was my OB/GYN.

And many of those women undergo the same sort of situation, because they come, they get their education, they're expanded, they see what's possible in the West. And then they're expected to go back and wear an abaya and not drive, back in those days, and not drive and not be confident and outgoing, and to kind of cloak themselves again. I mean, it's fascinating, and it was a fascinating journey to watch their trajectory.

And it's with great pride and joy that I can say that there were more, over a number of years, I don't know if this is still true, but there were more Saudi girls being educated at university level and going on to the professions than there were Saudi men, which is not the way we think it is.

Patricia: Yes. We could talk for hours just on that topic, Doreen.

Doreen: Sorry if I got off topic.

Patricia: That's okay. I have a sense that that happens easily with you, Doreen. Because one thought sparks a memory and a story and an experience. And if I could sit down and say to you, "What's life like in Mexico?" we could talk for hours about that.

Doreen: Yes. Yes.

Patricia: So, you started. You interrupted that for *The Rising Well*, you came back and finished *Life in The Camel Lane*.

Doreen: Yes.

Patricia: Are you working on anything now?

Doreen: I am. I am. And you know, this is the big thing when you are naturally creative and you have to focus on a book. I have started writing a book, which the title was *When the Music Stops*. And it was, basically, supposed to be about repatriation, and going home, and all the things you have to deal with. Because I have so much material and about five years of coaching involved in that. And that will need to be written. But then I'm also really enjoying this fun, fascinating life in the house sitting lane. And people ask questions about that all the time, "How do you do that?" And, "Why do you do that?" And, "What are the pitfalls?"

And so, it's a question of answering which call. And right now, I'm doing a little bit of both, and I'm actually in the middle of a virtual book tour. So I'm writing a lot of blogs, which gives me the opportunity to sort of chuck things out on the page and experiment to see which lane will I take.

Patricia: What is the virtual book tour related to right now?

Doreen: The virtual book tour is on *Life On the Camel Lane*. And I have about 18 or 20 stops, which means that book bloggers, which is a whole different country that I never knew existed up until now, will take *Life in The Camel Lane*, read it, write a little bit about it. And on many of the blogs, they interview you as a writer, and they either send you questions that they want addressed and answered, or they give you a slate of suggested questions to answer, which is very, very helpful. And some of them, it's a question of going looking into the blogs and see who their following is, and what those people are looking for before I write the blog. So, it's a wonderful experience and it's a way to grow and widen. Have you ever done one?

Patricia: I have not. I have heard of real book tours and people who sit in Barnes & Noble in previous times, not when we're recording, but would sit there and some of them had lines of people waiting to buy their book and sign it, and some talk about the loneliness of sitting in Barnes & Noble with nobody coming in, or in an independent bookshop. So, I have not participated in a virtual book tour. How did you find the people, or how did they find you for participating?

Doreen: Great question. I had hired a gal to help me with a little bit of marketing, because I was an absolute newbie. And my book was ready to launch just as COVID hit. And I was planning on going back to Colorado, and I was going to do a book launch, a traditional party, and have a camel, and have little people come and do henna on the ladies' hands. And I had this great magical experience planned in my head, but COVID had other ideas. And in the end, I did a book launch online. I had almost 90 people attend from eight different countries, which would not have been possible if done in-person.

So after I did that, this gal pointed me in the direction of this woman who does virtual book tours. And I got connected to her. And I did one and it was really helpful in getting reviews for the book, Pat. Because once you write a book, you're only a third of the way there. It's having the book take legs and serve people and be read that counts. And that's a whole different skill. Marketing is quite different. And so, this was a way that I could handle marketing. It was the way that I could share my book in other avenues. And I also do a guest blog on a couple of sites as well regularly. So that helps.

Patricia: Tell me about the virtual book launch. How did you structure that? What did you do? You said you were planning to have a camel in Colorado. Was that a live camel?

Doreen: That was my dream. I have all these toy camels, et cetera, and I thought, "Oh, I'll be in Colorado, I'll get this person," and the camel had actually moved to Wyoming. I was still pretty determined. But the camel did appearances. And you could sit on this camel and ride this camel. So that was my vision of my book launch, because it's a strange story.

When COVID happened and I had to do it online, I was like, okay. So I just created invitations, and sent them out to friends all around the world, especially to many people who had lived this experience with me. So I was fortunate that a lot of our alumni from this experience got on the call. And what I did was I brought people, everyone was on camera, zoom like this, but there were almost 90 people there. So pages and pages.

So many people that my daughter came on, and she is in the book, but I didn't even see she was on the call so I didn't bring her in to talk to

her about her experience of having a mother who turned author, and her experience of how I had handled writing about her, because I was very, very, very sensitive that I didn't impose my beliefs and my story on hers, because hers was a different story.

And so, people visited, people said, “Oh, I haven't seen you in five years.” And my best friend from university was there. I brought them on camera. And I said, “So how do you know me? Do you know me as an author?” And, you know, “Have you read *Life in The Camel Lane*? Actually, I got a box of books. They've just been delivered to Mexico, and I opened it on camera.

Patricia: Nice.

Doreen: So, people could see my delight and I could see their delight upon the book arriving.

Patricia: And did you smell your books, Doreen?

Doreen: No.

Patricia: It's a tactile sensation. A lot of people smell their books when they like, they love that sense of opening up the carton of books and getting the aroma of your book in their face. Yeah.

Doreen: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I get that. So, the virtual book launch was, for me, very energizing and successful. But then one has to go on and market a book, especially if you're going to be in business and you have a mission and a business to run.

Patricia: Absolutely.

Doreen: So, it was quite the pivot for me to dive into marketing. And I have to own the fact that I'm not always good at this, and I have a long way to go. And I would say to any other new authors, or people who are writing their book for their business, to prepare yourself along the way, so that you have parallel tracks, you're writing and you're doing your marketing, you're writing and you're marketing. And if you do it in the parallel, like on a railway track, and you have connections between those two tracks, then, I think, it makes the journey much clearer and simpler.

Patricia: I interviewed a man named John Saunders who shared with me that he got about 250 people to act as beta readers for his book.

Doreen: Yes, yes.

Patricia: And then when the book was done, he could turn to those people and say, “All right. Now, help me promote this, write a review, tell your friends.” That was all the way along, as he was writing it, he was connecting with those people.

Doreen: And I wish I had done that. I mean people knew I was writing the book. I had my community help me create the cover, but I did not do such a good job. So good on him.

Patricia: Yes.

Doreen: Learned from my mistakes.

Patricia: How can our listeners get a copy of your book and find out more about what you offer?

Doreen: It's on Amazon. My book is on Amazon. So the best thing to do is to go to amazon.com and look for *Life in The Camel Lane*. And I have a website, and the website is simply my name, doreenmcumberford.com, which I'm sure will be linked somewhere in the show.

Patricia: And I'll spell Doreen's last name if you're listening to this. It's C-U-M-B-E-R-F-O-R-D, Doreen M. Cumberland. Actually, one of the more easy names to spell, Doreen. Although, I would imagine people have figured out ways to misspell it.

Doreen: Occasionally. They misspell the first name more than the last, actually.

Patricia: Doreen's first name is spelled D-O-R-E-E-NMC-U-M-B-E-R-F-O-R-D.com. And yes, I'll put it in. If you're watching this on YouTube, on our YouTube channel, it'll be below Doreen's picture. If you're listening to this, I've just spelled out her name, doreenmcumberford.com. So, you can go to her website, you can go to Amazon to get a copy of the book. And what was your subtitle? You held that up. It was Embracing?

Doreen: Embrace The Adventure.

It's about breaking life down into bite-sized adventures, and living life as an adventure, not just a rote experience that you do every day.

Patricia: Fabulous. Thank you so much, Doreen, for being part of the show. I appreciate that.

Doreen: Thank you, Pat. I loved it.

Patricia: And I hope Doreen has inspired you to take some adventures of your own within the capabilities and the opportunities that exist in your life. You don't have to be able to leave your house to have an adventure, to learn, to grow, to be stimulated, to connect with people in new ways. Just before we got on the show, Doreen, I was reading a book that I bought on creating wonderful virtual experiences. And the author has made the point that there's been a lot of changes in 2020, and one of them has been the ability to connect people from all over the world.

Doreen: Yeah.

Patricia: My husband and I had a 50th wedding anniversary. And we had my mother, my son's mother-in-law from Australia, she connected in Australia. We had several people from different time zones in the United States. We had our relatives in England, and we had relatives in India all connected by Zoom when we celebrated our 50 years of our wedding,

Doreen: Isn't that great? And wasn't it joyful? It's like my book launch, you know, it sounds like it was a joyful experience that lit you up.

Patricia: It was.

Doreen: Yeah, that's great.

Patricia: I had done a PowerPoint when we had our 40th wedding anniversary, we were in a restaurant. And I showed scenes of our lives growing up. And I took that PowerPoint, and I brought in pictures of the people who were on the call with us so that everyone watching saw themselves at least one time. And we went through that PowerPoint, and I talked about the pictures, and then we shared and at the very

end, our one of our Indian relatives said, “Can we do this again?” So we'll plan on doing something in the future.

Doreen: Yes. It's a great way to stay connected.

Patricia: It is. Well, thank you for paying attention to this podcast, being with us for the last half hour or so while I've been talking with Doreen Cumberland. Be sure to go to patiyer.com. and check out the free reports that we have available. I have just released a new one called *Capitalizing On Your Book: How to Make Big Bucks from Your Book*, and that is on all of the financial opportunities that are available once you have your book, and how you can attract people to you with your knowledge. And we'll be back next week with a new guest, new topic, be sure to check out *Writing to Get Business*. Thanks so much.

Patricia: This is Pat Iyer with Writing to Get Business. And I have just finished an interview with Amy. And we've talked about among many, many, many topics. We talked about a chapter that she added to a compilation book. Amy, can you share some of the highlights from your perspective of this podcast?

Amy: Well, first, I have to say, Pat, we covered a lot of material. So if anybody wants to go back and listen to nursing, book writing, concussions, all kinds of stuff. But most importantly, I hope they walk away with the thought of I was somebody that never wanted to write and felt the cathartic outcome of writing, and have the desire to do it again now. And I hope that that comes through for them.

Patricia: That's such a great point, Amy, because in my podcasts, I focus on the process of writing and the type of writing. But you're stressing something that I want our listeners to remember, is that there can be a catharsis. You are sharing what you know, and it's also helping you to be able to put it down on paper.

Amy: And in a subtle way, it gives you that legacy. I now have a little bit of a legacy in where I've been, what I've gone through, and that's important as well.

Patricia: And it's one of the main reasons why people write books, is they want to be sure they've got a legacy.

Amy: I wasn't aware of that, Pat. Thanks for that little bit. I thought it was only me. No, I'm kidding. But I do feel that. I do feel that way. My kids have read the story, and they see it from my perspective, and that's awesome, too.

Patricia: Well, thank you so much. And be sure to check out Amy's podcast to get a perspective on a compilation book and some of the outcomes that it can bring, as well as two nurses sharing some very funny war stories that you'll enjoy. Thank you.

Amy: Thanks.