

## Episode 62: Conversation with “But My Speech is Fine” SLP Author, Lauren Hermann

Meet Lauren Hermann, a medical speech-language pathologist who recently published a book called “But My Speech Is Fine!” In this episode of The Missing Link, she takes us through the process of writing and self-publishing her round-up of SLP stories, and she discusses why sharing our experiences is so important.

### Discussion & Reflection Questions

1. Share with us why you became a speech-language pathologist, and specifically, a medical SLP.
2. Tell us about your book. Where did the idea come from, and how did you get started?
3. What was your favorite part about writing the book? Do you have a favorite chapter?
4. Why do you feel sharing the experiences of SLPs is such an important thing to do?
5. How can other SLPs thinking about publishing a book get started? What is the process like?
6. Do you have any more books that you’re planning to publish?
7. After all the editing and formatting, how long did it take to publish your book? How much did it cost?

### Quote of the Conversation

*“I’m so excited to hear about more SLPs writing books. You know, having other people tell me, ‘You really need to write about this. You need to just share because it’s either funny or inspirational or heartbreaking.’ But also, a lot of my friends and family members who didn’t really understand what speech pathologists did, would always tell me, ‘I had no clue that you all did that kind of thing in speech therapy.’”*

-Lauren Hermann, M.S. CCC-SLP

### Lauren Hermann, M.S. CCC-SLP

*Medical Speech-Language Pathologist and Author of “But My Speech Is Fine!”*



Lauren Hermann has been practicing since 2012 with a primary focus in the adult medical settings. After completing her fellowship at a skilled nursing facility, Lauren has worked in the hospital setting across 5 different states and is currently seeing clients through her private practice. She is also the content director for the Medical SLP Collective and recently published a book showcasing our profession through true stories. Lauren is also in the process of submitting survey research to radiology journals and is beginning a side career path to coach SLPs and other medical professionals in amplifying their services and business through storybrand marketing.

## Keep the Conversation Going

You can find Lauren Hermann at:

Instagram: [@SLP.Advocate](#)

Email: [info@Laurenhermann.org](mailto:info@Laurenhermann.org)

Book: "[But My Speech Is Fine! True Stories of a Misunderstood Profession](#)"

Thank you for listening to *The Missing Link for SLPs* podcast! **If you enjoyed the show, I'd love you to subscribe, rate it and leave a short review.** Also, please share an episode with a friend. Together we can raise awareness and help more SLPs find and connect those missing links to help them feel confident in their patient care every step of the way.

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*Do you have a question you'd like answered on the show?*

*Interested in sharing your experience as an SLP with our audience?*

*Send a message to [Mattie@FreshSLP.com](mailto:Mattie@FreshSLP.com)!*

*Not a substitute for a formal SLP education or medical advice for patients/caregivers*

# The Missing Link for SLPs Podcast Show Notes

## **Mattie Murrey**

Hello and welcome to this episode of The Missing Link for SLPs podcast. Glad you are here for part of this series where we talk to SLPs who have published a book, whether it's self-publishing or more the traditional route. Their passions are written in words. So, welcome to this episode. Enjoy. Also, when you're done or while you just listen to the episode, go find us at [freshslp.com](http://freshslp.com). Subscribe to us on YouTube. We are definitely working on building a great podcast and would welcome your support.

## **Mattie Murrey**

Well, welcome Lauren Hermann. We are excited to talk to you today. And your book is at the top of the SLP charts when I searched for it. And I went straight away to Amazon and ordered my copy. So, exciting.

## **Lauren Hermann**

Thank you so much. I'm so happy to be here.

## **Mattie Murrey**

First tell us who you are.

## **Lauren Hermann**

Yeah. So, I am a medically based speech-language pathologist. I grew up, studied, [and] graduated all in Virginia. And currently, I'm living in Pennsylvania. My husband is a radiologist. So, we get to have a lot of fun conversations. He's very aware of our roles when it comes to dysphasia. I make sure of that. I have a lot of fun with him. And yeah, I'm just kind of shifting a little bit more into the world of writing and publishing. And we'll talk later, too, just kind of about how that's even transitioning to marketing a bit for healthcare professionals.

## **Mattie Murrey**

Excellent. I too am moving into that realm.

## **Lauren Hermann**

Yeah.

## **Mattie Murrey**

So, let's see. My dad was a radiologist. So, you and I have something in common there. I grew up at his feet in the radiology room, and it's a great place to be.

## **Lauren Hermann**

Yeah. Yeah, very quiet. There's something very soothing about that dark, quiet space.



## **Mattie Murrey**

My second space, my second home in the hospital, is the radiology department. So, I get invited to all their parties and stuff like that. So, great. Now this is a question I ask everybody because I think that... So many of the students that I work with, they have these wonderful dreams on why they became a speech pathologist. And they move into their careers, and they sometimes lose some of that reason why they do what they do. Share with us, please, why you became a speech pathologist — specifically, a medical speech pathologist.

## **Lauren Hermann**

Yes. And I love that you ask that question on your podcast. I think it's so important, and everyone's story is so different. And actually, in my book — because, just like you, I find it so important — after the intro, that's the first chapter of my book, too, about how I discovered speech therapy and why I became a speech pathologist. And how this happened... I was 17 years old in high school. I knew it was time to start considering a career path or the traditional path of going to college. And I had no clue what I wanted to do. I was actually debating going into accounting, just because I was good with numbers, but I probably would have hated that. But I was working my summer job. Actually, it wasn't just my summer job. It was my job. It was at Cold Stone Creamery, an ice cream franchise. Yep, so great job. I always joke around. That was my first career. I was there for seven years. And we hired a new employee. She was a college student at our local university, and I was just kind of asking her about her life as I was training her: What's she doing? What's she studying? And she told me, "Oh, I'm actually studying to become a speech-language pathologist. I'm majoring in communication sciences and disorders. And I was like, "Oh, wow."

So, I automatically assumed that she wanted to work with children and just help the kids in the school system. Because I thought, at that time, that speech therapists only worked in the schools or only worked with children, which I'm finding — and that's why I wrote this book — many people believe that. And so, she was the first one to tell me, "Oh, actually, no, I'm not quite sure. You can work with adults. You can work with people across the entire lifespan." Oh my gosh, that's cool. I had no idea. And she was kind enough to invite me to sit in on her neuroanatomy class as a high school student. Yeah. So, she's like, "Yeah, if you really want to dive into the world of speech pathology, this is the class you should sit in on, really, because this is going to be very eye opening for you."

So, maybe a week later, I joined her on campus, and she introduced me to the professor of the neuroanatomy course. And I sat in the back of the auditorium with my coworker. And as the professor was kind of giving her lecture, she was going over just aphasia and different types of aphasia. So, this was the first time I'd ever heard of the word aphasia. And just learning about that really opened my mind into just where our health can go wrong, but how it can impact something that is so important and so many of us take for granted: communication. And so as she was going over the different types of screeners that you can include in your assessment, she started talking about generative naming tasks. And so, she wanted student volunteers. No



one was raising their hand to come in front of the class to do a generative naming task. Of course.

So, what she did was, the professor pointed at me and had me come up as the first subject to do a minute-long generative naming task. And so, [there are] all of these college students. So, I was terrified. I was just so nervous. And I went up there. And in the chapter in the book, I go into detail about what the topic was and what she ended up doing. Because after I did my minute-long, genitive naming task, she then called up an older student who looked like maybe she was in her 40s. So, she called her up to come to the front of the class, and had her do a gender naming task. And she was just going to compare how many words we each came up with and discuss. It's actually quite common for younger people — my age, 17 year olds — to be able to generate more words than someone who might be in their 40s and 50s. Also, just with a natural aging process. But then with aphasia, what we might see and how that differs. But I was so nervous, I came up with fewer words than the other student. So, she talked about how nerves can affect your verbal fluency. And just that experience — kind of being put on the spot, learning about just the normal range as we age, and then aphasia, different types of aphasia — just sparked my curiosity. That domino was knocked down, and then I was just kind of hurtling towards the path of speech pathology after that. I was just so fascinated. I was hooked. I was completely hooked after that experience.

### **Mattie Murrey**

Well, I teach that class at the campus. And so I'm thinking, "Gee, I'm starting for the first time. [In the] fall semester, I'm teaching that class." I might invite some students like you — 17 year olds, or 18 — and ask students to invite friends of theirs and see who else we can bring to this wonderful career. Because you clearly bring passion and dedication and spark to what we do. So many of the stories in this book... Now I know you have a number of guest writers, but the whole flow of your book is just from an angle of, "Look at all the wonderful things we do as a speech language pathologist." And even the title, "But My Speech Is Fine," I don't know how many times I have heard that. "I'm here to assess your speech. I'm a speech therapist." "But my speech is fine. Why are you here? I don't need to see you." And right outside of the door or right inside the door, you're just like, "Um, um, um." So, the whole approach of your book is just about passion and what we do, which is super, super exciting. Thanks for sharing that story with us.

### **Lauren Hermann**

Yeah. Yeah, thank you. I've experienced burnout, and I've spoken to other speech pathologists who have gone through burnout. And what I've learned is that I tend to feel more burnt out when I'm putting in the work and it feels like there's no meaning behind it, or that I'm not contributing anything to the greater cause. That it's not being recognized, basically. It feels meaningless. And so, that's another reason why I wrote this book, because I think we can tend to forget the meaning of our work and how we impact students, clients, patients, because we might not see them later down the road when they're just really flourishing and all because of starting with speech pathology — with your services. So, I think it's just important to remind



each other, really, of how wonderful, important, and relevant our work is across the entire lifespan.

**Mattie Murrey**

Exactly. Exactly. Later on, I have a story that I want to add that dovetails nicely with your book. It has to do with Maker's Mark Manhattan, and my kids all know why I drink Maker's Mark Manhattan on Valentine's Day. But tell us more about your book. How did you get started with it?

**Lauren Hermann**

Yes. I am trying to think. I had the first idea to write the book maybe four years ago, because prior to that, I would share just short, little, inspirational, HIPAA-compliant stories on my Facebook. If there was some memorable moment at the nursing home that just really struck a chord with me, or something really exciting, I would share it on social media or I'd share it with my friends. And people would always tell me, "Oh my gosh, you have to write a book about this, or a blog or something." And I was always hesitant because of HIPAA, right? I'm like, "Oh, I don't think that's possible." But you see so many other books out there. One of my favorite authors is Oliver Sacks and he writes all of these wonderful cases in his books, right?. And I know so many speech-therapy students, we all had to read Oliver Sacks and learn about him.

**Mattie Murrey**

The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat.

**Lauren Hermann**

Yes. Yes, exactly. I have that on my bookshelf in my office.

**Mattie Murrey**

Oh! That would be fun, sometime, to share bookshelves. Oh my gosh. You gave me goosebumps on that.

**Lauren Hermann**

That would be so cool.

**Mattie Murrey**

Would you share with us a picture of what's on your bookshelf? And then we'll collect other ones?

**Lauren Hermann**

Yeah. I'm at my friend's house now, so I'm not in my office. But once I get back home, I'll send you a little picture of the books that I have stacked in mine.

**Mattie Murrey**

Make sure your book is in there.

**Lauren Hermann**



Yes. That's always the coolest part. Like, "Oh my gosh, there's my book."

### **Mattie Murrey**

Yep. And I have written chapters and books. Mine will be in there as well.

### **Lauren Hermann**

Yeah, I'm excited for yours. Oh my gosh. I'm so excited to hear about more SLPs writing books. You know, having other people tell me, "You really need to write about this. You need to just share because it's either funny or inspirational or heartbreaking." But also, a lot of my friends and family members who didn't really understand what speech pathologists did, would always tell me, "I had no clue that you all did that kind of thing in speech therapy." So, it's really fascinating to hear these little anecdotes that I would post. So, I don't know if there was a particular moment. I remember the very first time I sat down with my computer to just start typing this book out, when we were in California. So, this was like two-and-a-half or three years ago. I was sitting down in my kitchen, and I was just staring at my laptop. And I don't know if it was something that happened at work, where it's just all day encountering patients who kept saying, "Speech therapist? But my speech is fine. Why are you here?" And then also, on the flip side, encountering doctors and nurses saying, "Oh, their swallow is fine. We won't need you." I'm like, "Well, but their cognition, their language, their communication, their voice. There are so many other aspects to our field now."

And so, at that point, I had worked... I think it was my seventh job across five different states. And I just noticed. I'm like, "This is a trend that is happening no matter where I work across the country, no matter what setting it is. It can't just be me. It has to be many other speech pathologists that get this frustration of others not understanding our scope." And also, my fear was that we weren't getting consulted for patients that would really benefit from our services, just because of a lack of understanding and awareness. So, by the time I had that seventh job and was experiencing the same stuff, that's when I was like, "Okay, I want to write a book. I want to get this into the hands of the general public, of future speech pathologists, of physicians, nurses, and other medical teammates. I just want to open the world to what it is that we do beyond speech sounds 'correction.' You know, beyond that."

### **Mattie Murrey**

So, I have your book in my hand. And when I read a book, I start dog-tagging the corners. And then I sit with a colored pen because I want to go back and capture things. And so, your book is filled with dog corners. And then I've got a bunch of tabs across the top. I love chapter seven, where it's a hole in her neck. I love that story. I love... Let me turn back here. With Maggie Doniger, "The Wedding Speech"? Oh my gosh.

### **Lauren Hermann**

So, Maggie, she wrote a separate story after "The Wedding Speech." So, hers is a separate contributor story, and "The Wedding Speech" is my chapter before her section.

### **Mattie Murrey**



Oh, okay. Excellent. There's lots. I was just going to say, that chapter right there, she writes about the client she was working with, the patient she was working with, but there's so much research at the beginning of that chapter.

**Lauren Hermann**

Oh, so you meant for my chapter, "The Wedding Speech"? That one that I wrote? Yeah. So, I added the research at the beginning of that chapter.

**Mattie Murrey**

I love the depth.

**Lauren Hermann**

Yes. Yeah. Because I was writing this, again, because I wanted it to be understood by the general public. So, when I wrote that chapter, "The Wedding Speech," and when I wrote a bunch of other chapters, I tried to incorporate a lot of data and research. But, of course, I didn't want it to be a textbook so that it was just data and research. So, I tried to tie it into the story and tried to make them relate to each other, so that it was easy to read and easy to follow.

**Mattie Murrey**

And that depth gives the following stories context, which is huge. We've got "Bobby B. and the SLP." I love Joshua Allison Burbank.

**Lauren Hermann**

Oh, yeah. His contribution. Yeah, that was really wonderful. I was excited to have him be a contributor.

**Mattie Murrey**

The SLP who participated in her own brain surgery. I mean, this is not a boring book here. This reminds me of, I don't know, just walking into a candy store, and you're just like, "Ah, look at all these bright colors. What am I going to have?" And that's the way your book is. It's just like, "Oh my gosh, look at all these things I can read about."

**Lauren Hermann**

Yeah, thank you so much. That's exactly what I was going for. For speech pathologists, especially, I wanted it to feel like that — like a candy shop, basically. Because I know so many of us can relate. That's what I wanted for this book. No matter what age group you work with, I wanted any type of speech pathologist to be able to relate, on some level, to the book. And so, that makes me really excited to hear you say that, as well. So, that was the goal. It's kind of like a little candy shop for speech pathologists to relate to, and then hopefully, for non-SLPs, to just be eye-opening, basically, and just be really kind of surprising: "Oh, wow, I had no clue that SLPs did that! I want to read more."

**Mattie Murrey**



Goal achieved. One other important part of this book is... You and I touched on it earlier. You mentioned burnout. And I have had burnout. Many speech paths who come to me for coaching have burnout. And we get burnout, like you said, because we don't feel validated. We just don't feel like we're making a difference. And we're these hamsters on these wheels. And... I try to avoid saying the word "but." And every day that I pull in a big, big day, I try to find one or two moments in that day where I'm like, "Yes. This is why I'm a speech pathologist. This is why I'm doing what I'm doing." My most recent one was a video fluoroscopy suite and autism. And the challenges... With the trials, because of the sensory issues, we made our way through it. And the family was just like, "Oh, you know, thank you." And it's like, "This is why we do what we do."

### **Lauren Hermann**

Yes. And I think that's such an important example that you shared, too, with an autistic individual and being able to understand the different ways other people might think, and the different needs or perceptions — whether it's sensory or verbal or auditory — and working with that person, instead of trying to force that person into a very specific box that has to be done this way. And I think SLPs can really be just a huge example and guide to, not just other healthcare professionals, but family members, caregivers, friends, acquaintances, on how to be more flexible communicators with others who will have different processes of understanding how things work, or why we're doing things or what to do, instead of trying to put everyone in a box. So, I think that your example so beautifully paints that picture. I mean, that's a medical procedure. Barium is disgusting. You're in a tight spot. You don't know what's going on. You have radiation, and you see your throat on the computer, you know? Yeah, so being able to work with someone else like that. That's just wonderful. I love that.

### **Mattie Murrey**

What was your favorite part about writing the book? And thank you, by the way.

### **Lauren Hermann**

Yeah. My favorite part. I'm trying to think. So, it was really diving back into the stories that had occurred years in the past and kind of reliving those moments, and then really being able to tell about it in story format, because I may have given anecdotes here and there. So, for example, in the book, there's a three-chapter spread about one woman whom I call Kay. And so, there are three chapters dedicated to her. And she is someone... I got permission from her and her power of attorney to write about her because hers was such a unique and complex story that there's really no way that I could change it without actually changing the story. And so, I got permission from the two of them and shared the story with them to get their approval and all of that. And it was just wonderful to kind of relive how I first met Kay, our time together, and how she really changed me as a clinician — because that was my clinical fellowship year, too. So she was... I mean, we met when I was fresh out of grad school pretty much. And I feel like your fears are heightened. Your self-doubt can really take over. And so, working with her really grew me as a clinician. And so, it was wonderful to be able to sit down and just reflect on that years after — you know, after working at multiple hospitals now, across multiple states — and then



being able to just sit and take the time to reflect back on my clinical fellowship year, and kind of relive all these moments where I was nervous or terrified or angry. And then [I] recognized the lessons that I was gaining from those moments early on, and then actually just reflecting on that, and being more appreciative of that, and then seeing it all written on paper. That was really cool to kind of then just read those stories, kind of read my experiences and her experiences back to me. And it just kind of put me in a really good headspace to be able to reflect like that. I think that's really healthy to do, to reflect on your past experiences in a positive way.

### **Mattie Murrey**

Do you have a favorite chapter?

### **Lauren Hermann**

Favorite chapter? Let me think. It's so funny because I've been asked this before, and I always have to stop and think because there are just so many experiences and chapters that I really do enjoy. There's a chapter where I share several experiences with individuals with dementia. And so, there's one couple I would always refer to as "The Notebook" couple, with the wife who had developed dementia, and her husband would come to the nursing home every single day. So, I share a story about her. But then I transition into another story about a gentleman who had frontotemporal dementia. He was a war veteran. And so, I was working with him, and he thought I was poisoning his tea. And so, there's a story in there about what he does because he doesn't trust me with his tea, and then it moved on to another story with some dementia. So kind of these three different experiences with working with individuals with dementia. I think that might be my favorite chapter, just because they were the experiences that were the most heartwarming, inspirational, and shocking for me as a speech pathologist, too — like things that happened that I never would have expected and was not prepared for. And so, that chapter kind of has an inspirational section and a shocking section, which is why I think I really liked that chapter. And then just the lessons about our role in the world of dementia. Because I know, when I first started out as a clinical fellow, I didn't fully understand yet my role with dementia. I didn't think we had a whole lot we could do as speech pathologists, and then I really learned like, "Oh my gosh, no. We have very important roles in the world of dementia." And I think we need to be able to help share that with other healthcare professionals and family members. So, that chapter is really important to me, just because of the shock value and the inspirational value, as well as just the educational value in that chapter, when it comes to our work with dementia.

### **Mattie Murrey**

I love these stories. I had a dementia patient... I used to work in a unit, and the older way of thinking was, "Well, we can't do anything. This is a progressive disease. Yada, yada, yada." But no matter how demented you get, whatever path your life takes, the ability to communicate to the very end, the ability to safely swallow and minimize suffering to the very end, is so important. We had a gentleman who would wake up every morning at like 5 a.m., and would



just start entering people's rooms. And the staff got so upset. They called me in, and I sat mass with him. And I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I'm just checking on everybody to make sure everybody's all right." Well, he was a physician, and he was doing his rounds in the morning. And there was another one who would get up, eat breakfast, and then go lay on the floor underneath his bed. Right? Well, he was an auto mechanic, and he was climbing under the car.

**Lauren Hermann**

Oh my gosh. Yeah.

**Mattie Murrey**

I mean, these stories still give me goosebumps. When we as speech pathologists stop, take the time, and put the patient as the center of care — and never lose the importance of who we're doing what we're doing for — that really gets our tuning fork vibrating at the frequency that it needs to be. I know that's a weird comment. But that's when we really, really shine. And I love your stories because you just shine in these stories.

**Lauren Hermann**

Oh, thank you. And your stories, too. What you just said. These are the types of stories that I just want us to be able to express more of because it shines a light on, look at the person — not this is someone with dementia. Like, oh no, this is Joe. He's a retired physician, and prior to that, a mechanic. And so, being able to understand their lived experiences. And that's interesting, actually, because in the intro to my book, I have a quick line about our roles with dementia. And I think I mention a line about someone with dementia wandering into different people's rooms. Because we had someone with dementia who did that, too. You know, he'd wander into people's rooms. Unfortunately, he was also taking jewelry. And so, we had that.

**Mattie Murrey**

Oh, no.

**Lauren Hermann**

Yeah, we had to work with that. But just how our roles can be with redirecting and trying to help mitigate that, but by also being a part of their worlds and understanding their world and who they are. So, stories like that in my book and what you just shared are so important.

**Mattie Murrey**

I was at a dinner party one time, and somebody knew what I did. And they said, "Well, my grandmother has dementia. And she just gets so upset because, you know, she lives with us. And every day at dinnertime, she's looking for Grandpa, and we have to tell her that he died, and we have to tell her this. And she cries for two hours." And I'm like, "Why do you need to tell her that every time? Say Grandpa's out in the field. He'll be back in a little bit."

**Lauren Hermann**



Yep.

**Mattie Murrey**

And the next time I saw this woman, she said, "My word. This made all the difference in the world." She said, "We now enter into her world. Her in grandpa's world."

**Lauren Hermann**

Yeah. That just gave me goosebumps.

**Mattie Murrey**

One of the books I'm working on is "The Guest of Honor: SLP Stories," where it's remembering just that. And that's where we become effective. Whatever setting we're in. Patients.

**Lauren Hermann**

I'm excited for more stories like this to start coming out. I've had several other SLPs actually reach out to me and say, "Oh my gosh, I've been working on a book similar to that, sharing my experiences. And there's one setting that I've been in." Or, "I've always wanted to write a book sharing stories of speech pathology, but I just don't know how to get started." So, I'm really hoping we see more and more books that come out.

**Mattie Murrey**

Tell us how to get started.

**Lauren Hermann**

Yeah! Well, first things first is just, write. Just sit down and just write. I mean, I tried to stick to a schedule where I was like, "Okay, my goal is I'm going to write in the morning, every day for 20 minutes with my coffee." But then, of course, that was just way too big of a goal not realistic for me. So, I would skip days. So, then I would just have kind of a chapter goal, like, "Okay, I'm going to try to just finish one chapter a week. That's my goal, I'll try to stick to it." And after, I had my manuscript ready — which took me, I think at least two years to at least have my rough draft of the manuscripts ready. So, just to have all the words out there on paper. Then just being able to find a content editor, which is different from a copy editor. So, I didn't even know that there'd be different types of editors. It makes sense. But finding a content editor who will help you organize the flow of your book, make sure things make sense. You know, do you go off on tangents? Do you lose the reader? Are there holes in your story where things get confusing? So, having a content editor will really help you tighten your story. There are chapters that I had written that never made it to my book, too. And so, just being okay with the idea that you might spend all this time writing certain chapters, and ultimately, it might be best if they just don't make it to your book, if it doesn't fit the theme or the flow of your overall goal.

**Mattie Murrey**

That's where sequels come in.

**Lauren Hermann**



Yes. Yeah, that's where sequels come in. Exactly. And so, you might do two [or] three rounds with the content editor. So, she'll send you the work back. You do your editing and whatever. Send it back to her, or him or them. So, you do this back and forth. And then, after that, working toward getting a copy editor. So, this is all the typos, the grammatical errors, stuff like that. So, cleaning that up. And what I learned about this — this is something I wish someone had told me when I was going through this process — is you might have three [people], like yourself, I had a copy editor, and then she had an intern. So, she would do a pass with reading and editing, and had Grammarly and other editing tools, too. And then the intern would do that. And then I would get it, and then I would still catch some error. So, we would do this back and forth. And then when I published it, I still caught errors. And so, learning that's actually expected from self-publishers. No matter how many times you go through editing, you will likely still find errors when you get the final product. But you can still go back and edit it with self-publishing. Which brings me to the next point. So, once you have editing done — content and copy editing...

Also, I guess I should have started with this. The first thing is deciding: Do you want to go the traditional publishing route or the self-publishing route? And I originally thought that if I tried to get traditional publishing — so, trying to pitch it to some publishing agency, and they'll give you money as an advance, and then they will find the editors for you. They do all of the editing, the cover design, all of that for you. However, I did learn, you might get 10% of royalties at that point afterwards. And then they have full control of things like cover design, layout, and even editing stuff and title. And I didn't want to give that control to someone who's not a speech pathologist and doesn't really understand what I'm trying to tap into. So, that's why I chose self-publishing. And so my process is going to be from the self-publishers' aspects, when I talk about kind of how I went about writing the book. So, after I did the content editing and then the copy editing, my copy editor also did the formatting of the book. So, formatting the chapters [and] doing the font. You'll notice in each chapter, there's a little icon — like a little drawing or icon or picture — that's with each chapter. So, she had that idea to do that. And I got to pick out the different images that I felt would best depict the chapter. So, she did that. She also helped me with the in-text citation, with all the research that I put into my chapters — so, making sure the references actually matched up with a reference list. So, having someone to really help you clean up your book and format it.

And then finally, getting a cover design. And I did that through 99designs.com, where you can basically put out a pitch of, "What is your book about? What is your book title? What do you envision for your book?" So, writing all this stuff, and then basically, these designers will come and they will, if they want to enter... It's like a contest. You have a week. And then different designers will send you their designs, and then you get to pick the winner at the end of the week, and then they get paid a certain amount of money. And so, it depends on what tier. So, if you do it a little bit more expensive, you'll get more of the higher-level designers that will submit their cover designs. And I had some excellent submissions. It was really neat seeing the different covers. And the cover that I chose, with the Rubik's Cube, that was not an idea I had. The designer that submitted that, she came up with that completely on her own just based on



my description, and talking about all the different ways SLPs can be involved in your care. And so, when she submitted that, it was just such an original design that I did not have in my head. Immediately, I was like, "Okay, this. You. We're going to work together. This is brilliant." I love what she did.

**Mattie Murrey**

Sites like that... You said 99 Designs?

**Lauren Hermann**

Yes.

**Mattie Murrey**

You can also use it for logos and any type of... If you're an entrepreneur, trademarks. I mean, all sorts of things.

**Lauren Hermann**

Yeah. So, I also use someone from 99 Designs, actually — and this is the person who worked with my husband, so I already knew him — but he also does 99 Designs. So, he came up with my logo for... I started my own publishing LLC. Because to be a self-publisher, you have to have a publishing company. So, I started my own publishing LLC. And so he made a little logo for that. It was fun. It tapped into a more creative part of me that I felt like I really never got to dive into, and so, it was just a very fun process once the manuscript was written. And I will say, too, for anyone who is looking to write their own book: I am definitely — and I know many SLPs in our field are like this, too — we're constantly learning, right? The learning never stops, no matter what. And I feel like that as a writer, too. That's how I felt: I'm enjoying my writing. I've always been strong in writing, but I know I have a whole lot more to learn about how to be a decent writer. So, I also did things like... I listened to Stephen King's book "On Writing." I listened to that when I had all these long drives. I would go on walks and just listen to it and take notes. And then I also did some online master classes from that MasterClass website, where celebrities will offer these master classes on different topics. So, I watched two master class videos. One was from David Sedaris, and then another was from Malcolm Gladwell. And just learning about their writing process, how to interview people, how to write dialogue — all of these things. So, I'm really glad that I took the time to also just learn how to write while I was writing.

**Mattie Murrey**

Excellent. Sounds like you've really honed your craft well.

**Lauren Hermann**

It's fun. It was a fun escape from my actual job. So, it was nice to be able to tap into a craft that I enjoy that I don't typically get paid for, or paid well for. It's just fun to just dive into it for fun and to spread the message.

**Mattie Murrey**



Do you have more books that you're planning?

**Lauren Hermann**

I am actually working on... This is just a fun book. It's like a picture book. It's nothing really detailed, but it's about how SLPs can be relevant across the entire body, from head to toe. So, on my Instagram — I have an Instagram account, it's @slp.advocate. I did a challenge one week where it was, "I think SLPs, our work can be tied to any body part. Let's have a fun game." So, I challenged people to comment with a body part under that post. And then I would create a whole separate post about how our work can relate to that body part. So, someone commented "toe," and I did a whole post about diabetic neuropathy, and how when people with diabetic neuropathy end up losing blood flow to the long nerves and they end up getting necrosis, their toes fall off, one thing to consider is, if it's that bad, where their long nerves are getting impacted, then we might also want to consider how their voice is with a recurrent laryngeal nerve. And you might see more vocal issues, and even swallowing issues, with people who have diabetes because the neuropathy that's happening can impact their vocal folds. So, just kind of connecting it. That was like, "Not directly related, but if you happen to see someone with diabetes, and they're missing a toe, then you might want to actually start looking at things like their vocal fold function. So, kind of what cues you in a little bit that there could be some more long nerve damage that we need to consider in the world of voice or swallowing." So, I'm working on a book where I'm kind of creating these fun little anatomy cartoons. And then, the facts and the literature and just saying how our work can be related to the toe, to the kidneys, to the liver, to the stomach, to the lungs, to the esophagus. So, it's an educational book, but with anatomy cartoons on every other page. So, it's just a fun book. A little fun, educational book.

**Mattie Murrey**

That sounds super fun.

**Lauren Hermann**

Yeah.

**Mattie Murrey**

After you did your content editor, copy editor, [and] formatting, how long did it take for you to get self-published? And what was the cost?

**Lauren Hermann**

So, once everything was set up... I mean, once my manuscript was totally ready... So, my copy editor who did the formatting, she formatted it into the KDP, which is Kindle Direct Publishing, which is the publishing portion of Amazon. So, she set it up into the KDP/PDF format, and then the ebook format. So, once I had those documents in the correct format for Amazon, you just upload it. It takes a little longer because you also have to... You need to choose which categories you want your book to go into. Any keywords. What the description is going to be. The pricing. All of that. But I mean, in just one day, basically. Once I had all the formats, I just spent maybe



an hour with my editor, who walked me through the steps of uploading the PDF ebook on Amazon. And then we also did... IngramSpark was another one. And then, Draft2Digital, I think, is another online place where you can upload books, and that will actually make your books available for libraries — so, for renting out books.

### **Mattie Murrey**

So, this has been such a great conversation, Lauren, today. And we are coming up on the end of our time. And you and I, I know, are going to be hosting another collaborative project on this podcast, where we're going to come and talk about your business and where you're going and what you offer. So, I would encourage all of your readers to go get your book, and I'll have you tell that. But I just want to share one story quickly because, like you, I so love what we do. And at the beginning of this episode, I mentioned I had my Maker's Mark Manhattan story. And years ago, I worked with a gentleman who had a stroke. New Year's Eve. Daughter's wedding anniversary. And he ends the night, goes to throw his pills back in his mouth, and throws the Pilsen and takes a swig of water. And the water just runs out. He'd had a stroke. No ability to even initiate a swallow. None whatsoever. He went to the hospital in the city. They put a PEG tube in and sent him home. He came to see me at my rural hospital — a little rural hospital — and I said, "Well, what are your goals?" He said, "By Valentine's Day, I want to take my sweetheart out, and I want to have Maker's Mark Manhattan. That's the only thing I want to do." He said, "She and I've done this for like 54 years, and she's my sweetheart. That's the one thing I want to do." And I said, "All right, we will do our very best to get you to that goal." So, we did our dysphasia therapy. And one day, I got a call from the front desk staff. It was shortly into February. And they called and they said, "Your patient just called, and he swallowed for the first time ever since his stroke." And we got the swallow back. And he was able to go on Valentine's Day with his sweetheart. It wasn't a steak dinner, but he was able to sip on his Maker's Mark Manhattan.

### **Lauren Hermann**

Oh my gosh.

### **Mattie Murrey**

And so, every Valentine's Day, I have a Maker's Mark Manhattan to celebrate the joys of the relationships that we have in our lives. For the potential of always being able to improve our lives. For the love that we have. And for just the gift of life.

### **Lauren Hermann**

Oh my gosh. That story's amazing. I love that. I'm so glad you shared that story. I think that, again, it just highlights the importance of our work. I mean, down to a relationship with someone else and a tradition on Valentine's Day. It's so important. So, I love that. That's so wonderful.

### **Mattie Murrey**



And your book is filled with the same stories. It's why we do what we do. "But my speech is fine!" And look at all the other wonderful things we're going to work on.

**Lauren Hermann**

Exactly. Yes. Yes. From the first to final breath is what I will tell people. From the whole lifespan. So, it's really important.

**Mattie Murrey**

Well, thanks for being on our show today. Would you share your contact information with the listeners, please?

**Lauren Hermann**

Absolutely. So, I know the easiest way is through Instagram, which is @slp.advocate. I try to respond to every and any message that I get from there. And then you can also email me, especially if you have any questions about the book or writing a book. I have an email specifically for that book. It's called, butmyspeechisfine@gmail.com. So, that's another way that you can send me a more personal message if you don't have Instagram.

**Mattie Murrey**

Wonderful. And you and I are going to get together in just a few weeks and do this all over again, with all the nuts and bolts on how to be an SLP author. And your marketing program! Your marketing business that you're opening.

**Lauren Hermann**

Yes, I'm very excited about this new type of marketing business for SLPs and healthcare providers, basically through storytelling. So, that'll be really, really exciting once I get that launched.

**Mattie Murrey**

I can just imagine. I love storytelling. It's sitting around a campfire with just a nice warm drink in your hand and starting to tell the stories. And that's when those memories begin to go down deeper. I'm excited for you. Thanks for coming on today.

**Lauren Hermann**

I am excited for your book, too. This is just so exciting. The collaborative work, I think, is just so wonderful. And I'm excited to see more SLPs getting more creative with their roles, whether it's through business marketing, writing books, and also just clinically, too. So, thank you for having me on here, and just for allowing me to also speak more on my book and eventually my marketing in the next episode.

