



## Our Diary

*Yeah, we got one, too.*

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### Clients Crushin' It: Michele DeStefano

*Madison Utley speaks to legal professional, professor, and published author **Michele DeStefano** about what her writing process has looked like thus far, and how the next writing challenge in the pipeline will be different.*

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**Q: How did your previous experience as a marketing executive help inform your subsequent legal career, and what it is you wrote about in your books?**

A: I believe that marketing and law are very similar. What you do as a marketer is try to understand how your target audience thinks and what they believe, both of which drives their purchase behavior, and then you attempt to convince them to believe and think something different so they'll behave differently. That's very similar to what litigators do with a jury, for example. Or what regulators do in trying to get people to behave in a certain way. It's also very similar to what law professors do; my job is to figure out what students are thinking and feeling and then to convince them to think and feel and behave a different way. That's been my calling in life, in fact: to get people to change the way they see the world and the way they behave.

**Q: When and why along this journey did you decide to write a book(s)?**

A: I've always wanted to write a book. I've kept a journal since I was seven. I wrote my first poem when I was 13, and it got published in *Young Miss* magazine. I was paid \$25 which was a pretty big deal in the '80s. So I've always wanted to be a writer. As a professor, we write articles, but I always wanted to write a book that was more accessible, that anybody could read. So even though my three published works are professional services books, I kept my writing style very conversational and not professorial.

**Q: What did you find most challenging and most beneficial through the book writing process?**

A: The actual writing of the books, the first draft, isn't that hard. It's just time consuming. You've got to get it out there. The revising and organizing is the challenge. It's the number one reason why I adore and rely on Stuart. I always write too much which means it was really important to find someone who I could trust. When he said "cut," I'd just cut. I didn't have time to go back and really review. I trusted him like you can't believe. But I knew I could because Stuart had taken the time to read the whole thing through first, learn my voice, learn my goals, learn about the legal profession. Having a person to help me do that, to bounce ideas around regarding organization, to help me see and eliminate repetition, wow. I found all of it extremely, extremely helpful and I couldn't have done it without him. Wouldn't even try to do it without him, to be honest.

**Q: Do you envision writing any more books in the future, or is three enough?**

A: Writing a book is like having a baby. It's so much time and care and attention to detail, it's not necessarily something you want to go do again next week. That said, I have already started on my next book. I'm a couple of chapters in to a fictionalized take on my life, so not a true memoir but something similar. It's a coming of age story about loss and learning how to let go. The shift in genre definitely makes this feel different. It's way harder for me to figure out how to organize. Way more challenging to figure out how to deal with tense and timeline. And it's also going to be much more emotional. There's some of that with the other books, but this one is much more personal. I will definitely be reaching out to Stuart eventually to help me, as he's helped in the past.

Filed under: *Clients Crushin' It*

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