



FLIPSIDE OF MIDLIFE®: MY CHAT WITH CLAUDINE WOLK PART 1

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Karli: I'm Karli Newman and you're listening to [FLIPSIDE OF MIDLIFE®](#), a podcast for women in midlife and beyond who want to feel connected, hopeful, confident, and more satisfied with life than ever before.

One of my greatest joys is to help you foster a positive mindset. From there, you can explore the endless possibilities on the **FLIPSIDE OF MIDLIFE®**.

Hello everyone. I hear that you're not supposed to serve a recipe to others until you've tried it for yourself, but I'm not so good at listening to that advice, so you are in for a treat today, my friend.

Here for the first time ever on **FLIPSIDE OF MIDLIFE®**, I have a guest. Her name is Claudine Wolk. She is the author of [GET YOUR BOOK SEEN AND SOLD](#). She also has a podcast with that same name and she helps aspiring writers publish and sell their books. So if you've ever had that thought, 'wow, I should probably write a book about this', you're going to love today's episode.

Not only does Claudine have her book and her podcast, she also has online classes that you can access and she does one one-on-one consulting. You can learn about all of that at ClaudineWolk.com. And of course, you know I'll have that link in my show notes and transcript for you.

Welcome to **FLIPSIDE OF MIDLIFE®**, Claudine.

Claudine: Oh, thank you so much for having me, Karli. I really appreciate it. I'm so excited.

Karli: I am so excited. I know you're going to be an inspiration for my listeners and the audience that is watching us on YouTube today, too. Which is also a first for me. Why not pack it all in, right?

Claudine: If you're going to do it, right?

Karli: Exactly. Well, I'd love for us to start today with you sharing your story and telling the audience, how did you land in this world of helping other women write and market their books? I am dying to know.

Claudine: Well, like you, I pivoted a couple of times to be honest.

Karli: Okay.

Claudine: I started out in my career as an accountant and I loved doing that for a very long time and it was a way for me to work part-time and raise kids and that was really great. But as I got older, I just had

this message inside me that I had to get out and it was about motherhood. And I'm very curious person and, my mother used to call me Curious George, it's because I ask a lot of questions.

And when I had my son, my firstborn, I couldn't believe how hard it was. I was like, 'Oh my God, this is so hard. Like, why didn't anybody tell me?' I thought going to school and going to college and getting a degree all that was really hard. And then I have this baby and I'm like, 'wait a minute, something's wrong here. Like, this is really hard.' And none of these books told me how hard this was going to be. There's a problem here.

So I started asking questions of as many people as I could find. I started getting answers from people and writing them in a little book. And maybe that's a familiar with your audience that they have these ideas that they write in a notebook and they say, okay, well, I'll get back to it later.

So, I would get all this advice and it was really helpful and I would keep it all in a notebook. And I said, 'I'm going to write a book someday about this.' Three children later, my husband has a job change across country and we go. Now I'm living in California. I don't know anyone. I literally don't know a soul. I have two kids who were in grade school, one starting preschool, and it was an opportunity for me to start to write this book. And I interviewed women out in California, too, to ask their advice on certain things.

And it started to come together. And at the time, there were a few books out there where women were being honest about motherhood. So I kind of jumped on that bandwagon. I had this manuscript written and I was ready to try to get it out there. And I did get it out there, but I got a lot of rejections from publishers who said, well, you're kind of a nobody, so, we're not going to publish this.

So I thought, 'gosh, darn it, I'm going to self-publish it.' So I taught myself how to self-publish, created a publishing company, and traditionally published it myself, if that makes sense. And the book was called, **IT GETS EASIER! AND OTHER LIES WE TELL NEW MOTHERS**. That situation went really well and I loved it.

So I started to get into book marketing for myself and then I started to get into doing it for other people. Fast forward a few more years, got into doing a little bit of radio enjoyed that, broadcasting, all kinds of ways that you can promote a book. And then one of the women that I met along the way, she also felt that with the ease of publishing these days, the way you can just upload your word document to Amazon and then publish it, there's so many people who are getting their work out there, but they didn't really understand some of the traditional marketing that you could do ahead of your book's publication. And they found out too late that they could have promoted their books in a whole lot of ways before the book published, and that made me very sad.

And I thought, 'you know what? We gotta do something about this.' So her and I put our heads together. So I have a co-author. Her name is Julie Marquette and we put the book together and it's really just a - **GET YOUR BOOK SEEN AND SOLD** is the name of the book - and it's really a guide for people who want to understand, in a really quick way, the whole publishing and marketing process so that they don't go down the road so far with their budget and their money and their time and say, 'Oh, gosh, if I had known about that, I would have done it. And now it's too late.'

Karli: Back up just a bit. When did you stop being an accountant?

Claudine: Oh, that's a good question. I continued to be an accountant the whole time, very part-time. I had two interior design clients because I was funding my new career in book marketing and promotion and authorship and writing. So I did keep it for a very long time and I got to the point where I thought, 'you know what? I can't keep wearing both of these hats.' and I decided, I'm done with the accounting and just focused on the writing, the book marketing, and now the podcasting.

Karli: I love that story. Because you're just showing that transformation of, I'm here, but there's this little itch I have inside of me. I know women with notes in their phone, pages of notes of ideas or things that inspire them, and I'm sure some of them are about ideas they have for books.

So I'm so happy that we're talking about this today. That's your jump, right? So you made that shift in your identity from a person who does this - I am a numbers accounting girl. But as you stated, you've always been curious. That's one of my favorite characteristics to hang on to in midlife and beyond is curiosity. Because it really does help you move through and find your purpose and your passion for this time of life.

So then you made these shifts in your own publishing, that's amazing and that book is still on the market, right?

Claudine: Yes, it is. Mmmhmm.

Karli: Going into the marketing side of things you learned so much, and then you saw another hole, another gap, that women were falling into about losing out on how much more successful their launch could have been had they known some of those marketing things ahead. Right?

Claudine: Absolutely. You really sum that up very well because it's, it's the absolute truth. Yep.

Karli: So your book is a really good starting point, not too overwhelming. Sounds like you've purposefully made it simple, but full of information. So if any of you listening and watching have even the slightest inkling that you are interested in what it's about,

I think Claudine is your go-to girl. She's the one to check out. And I wanna say her website address again. claudinewolk.com Yes. C-L-A-U-D-I-N-E-W-O-L-K. Again, I'll have that link in the show notes and transcript for you.

But Claudine, you heard her story. She's got the knowledge. She's got the expertise. She's got the experience of doing it alone. You don't have to, my friend. You can do it with some assistance and help and be more successful. So Claudine is a great resource for that.

Claudine. If one of our listeners does have that little spark inside of them and is thinking, Hmm, I want to learn more about this, what advice do you have for first steps that they can take to get started?

Claudine: I think the first step is to learn about the industry first. no matter how you do it, if you're, if you're gonna do it by reading, ***GET YOUR BOOK SEEN AND SOLD***, or I also have a substack newsletter that's free to join that you can get a lot of information that way.

But there's so many other great sites online where you can get great information. One off the top of my head is Reedsy, R-E-E-D-S-Y. That gentleman. has put an enormous amount of information about writing and publishing on his website.

Another gentleman his name is Dave Chesson. he's written what's called the Kindlepreneur and it's kindlepreneur.com. He also provides an enormous amount of great information.

But again, you don't want to get too overwhelmed. The first thing any author wants to do or if you're considering being a writer or an author, is to identify your goal with the book. That's always the first step. What's your goal?

Karli: That's a great place to start, because that probably leads you down the path that you should go down to do that, right?

Claudine: Absolutely, absolutely. I can't tell you how many people that I meet at certain different stages of publishing where they don't even know what their goal is and yet they're about to push the publish button on their book. It's like, whoa, wait a minute. Okay, what's your goal?

Because you really have two options. You can either traditionally publish or self-publish. And if you go the self-publish route, there's a whole lot of different options you have. But you need to understand that the traditionally published route is still out there. The problem is that right now there's only maybe five major publishers.

It's kind of like what happened in the accounting industry, where you had the 13 big CPA firms and they all blend into the big five. That's kind of what happened with publishing. So all the little publishers were scooped up and now you've got five big publishers. So now it's really hard for authors to get seen and to get contracts.

Most of the traditional publishers will only accept a proposal, book proposal from an agent. Yikes. So that means, there's a buffer between you and the publisher even. So you've got to talk the agent into taking your book before a publisher even sees it. Now, there are some smaller publishers that are still around that will take your book or that you could get a contract with.

But with traditional publishing, that means that the publisher is going to handle the actual creation of your book. They're going to handle the cover. They're going to handle the interior design and the interior, interior fire, interior, interior file.

Karli: I'm glad I'm not the only person that happens to.

Claudine: What the heck? Yeah. They're going to handle all of that like production-type stuff of your book. And the actual editing and all that. And they're going to handle a really important word coming up here for authors who are seriously considering publishing a book - and that is distribution. They will handle distribution for you.

Well, what is distribution? Distribution is how your book is going to get from you to the reader. So there are several ways. Off the top of your head, you could say, okay, well, the book needs to get to a bookstore. And the bookstore is going to sell your book.

The book needs to get to a library and you're going to pull the book off the library shelf. Or the book needs to get to all the online retailers of books. So distribution is really important. When you're with a traditional publisher, the traditional publisher is going to distribute the book for you. And you're pretty much at their mercy in terms of how that book gets distributed.

If you are self-publishing, you decide how your book is going to get distributed, and there are several ways that your book can get distributed. Amazon is not the only game in town. There are other retailers, other aggregators where you can get your book in with, and they would distribute the book.

Understanding that distribution exists and that you need to spend some time focused on which to choose, you're far and away ahead of all the other writers and self-published authors out there.

Karli: As you were describing the traditional publishing route, essentially It's your writing, and you have no control over anything else, because they're picking the art, they're picking, like, those are the things I would want to do.

Claudine: Yes.

In my particular situation, with [IT GETS EASIER! AND OTHER LIES WE TELL NEW MOTHERS](#), I did create my own publishing company and traditionally publish that book. However, what happened was I had some really great book marketing ideas. I don't say that to pat myself on the back.

One of my ideas worked. Because it worked, the sales of the book went through the roof and an agent who I wanted to publish the book originally and who said I didn't have a big enough author platform ended up selling the book then to a traditional publisher and that publisher said, okay, write three more chapters, we'll re-release the book.

Now it's going to be our book, but you're going to have the benefit of everything that we can do to back up the sale of this book, which was great. But they liked the original art design from the first book. They did take it. Publishers will work with you on certain things, but you're right, editing, that's a biggie.

If you come to a traditional publisher, and you've got a book that's way too long, they're going to edit it and you're not going to have a thing to say about it.

Karli: I'm glad you brought that up because I don't think that would ever be the first place that I would go when I would start a project like that. Which path do you want to go down?

So it's great that you have that knowledge, I know nothing about your world, so it's all new knowledge to me, which I love, but I can imagine if I were to want to do that, that would not be one of the first things I thought of for sure.

Claudine: Right. Because some people, in terms of goals, want to write a nonfiction book that's maybe a 'how to' book, kind of like [GET YOUR BOOK SEEN AND SOLD](#), but only because they want to support their professional goals. Maybe they're speakers, and they want to be able to sell the books in the back of the room after they speak, and that's really the only reason they need the books. And that's one reason. And so your publishing plan is going to be a certain way because that's your reason.

But if you want your book to be on every bookshelf, and in the libraries, and online, that's what we call a trade book. So that's your goal, you want to produce a trade book that's going to be sold all the regular ways. Well, then you do have to be aware at least of all the things that you can possibly do and then pick and choose the ones that make sense for you and your budget.

Karli: Okay. Those of you listening and watching. I think you need to go get that book right now. [GET YOUR BOOK SEEN AND SOLD](#).

Claudine: Do you remember the old Highlights magazines?

Karli: Yes.

Claudine: So I do too, and I love them. And so we thought, that the whole idea of book marketing with an author is a scary thing because they don't want to think about book marketing.

Authors want to think about writing. I'm the creative. I want to write. I don't want to have to think about it. But if you don't do it, you're not going to sell it. It's just a sad reality. And so we thought we're going to make this fun. We're going to make this a workbook and it's going to be fill-in-the-blank.

It's going to be exercises where you have to circle a yes or no. It's going to be something where you're going to have to connect the dots. So we added a lot of those things in the book.

Sometimes I joke and say, the industry probably isn't happy with us. Because for anyone else to pull in all the different things that we pulled, and have it in one place, and have it be this big instead of a Bible size, we're probably putting some people out of business. But that's okay because it really is important that if you decide to get into it, that it's a good experience and that it brings you joy.

Karli: Right, right. Well, we are going to dive into more layers of that conversation.

This is also something new for my listeners that I'm starting a monthly membership called ELEVATE, and part of that membership is going to be extended versions of the conversations I have with my fabulous guests, starting with Claudine and everyone else that I talk to, too. So you might want to go to my website, flipsideofmidlife.com and check out the ELEVATE membership.

Claudine, I want to wrap up our regular episode with a question that I will ask not only you, but all of my guests. What's your favorite thing about the **FLIPSIDE OF MIDLIFE®**?

Claudine: My favorite thing is that you are a cheerleader for women and always say, my friend, my friend. Because it always makes me feel better and it's very soothing and you give real-world examples with real-world solutions. Those are my favorite things.

Karli: Thank you.

Claudine: Mm-hmm.

Karli: Can you tell me for where you are in life, in your midlife and beyond journey, what's your favorite thing?

Claudine: Oh, my favorite thing is this phenomenon that happened to me when my youngest went off to college. All of a sudden my brain started firing on all cylinders and I could actually complete a sentence. And all the ideas came back to me. It was like they took a break for the 20 years that the kids were around. It was an amazing thing that happens. I would think to myself, 'well, this is how my husband must feel all the time. This is amazing!'

Karli: Oh my gosh. I love ending with that because I know that empty nesting is something that a lot of us that have children struggle with. And it's almost like a grieving period, but there are so many beautiful things on the other side of it.

And I am so happy you shared that. Thank you, Claudine.

Claudine: My pleasure.

Karli: We are going to wrap up this episode. Thank you so much for joining me, Claudine. It's one of my most favorite things to connect with other women in midlife and beyond and to hear their stories and to share this with my listeners because I feel a lot of times we get isolated and feel like we're the only ones going through something.

And my friend, there are many of us out there going through the same things. We might all come to this place in a different way on a different path, but we are here and there's so much to share. You've inspired me and my listeners, Claudine. Thank you so much. And remember if you want to go to flipsideofmidlife.com and check out my new ELEVATE membership, you can hear the rest of my conversation with Claudine. There's juicy stuff in there.

And Claudine, I know that my listeners are going to want to go to your website and learn more about what you do, claudinewolk.com. Thank you again.

Claudine: Thank you.

Karli: Thanks for listening to **FLIPSIDE OF MIDLIFE®**. Please reach out to me at karli@flipsideofmidlife.com to share what resonates with you most in this or any of my episodes. After all, us women in midlife and beyond? We are in this together!

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