

Ep #383: A Conversation with My Publisher



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Stacey Brown Randall

Stacey Brown Randall: Hey there, and welcome to the Roadmap to Referrals podcast, a show that proves you can generate referrals without asking or manipulation. I'm your host, Stacey Brown Randall.

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I teach a science-backed methodology and framework that generates referrals without asking. This podcast and working with me is all about taking control of your referrals on your terms. Join me every week as I break it down.

So the countdown is on. Technically, it has felt like it's been on for a really long time. But the countdown is really on because my next book, *The Referable Client Experience*, will be available in all formats, that is printed, e-reader, and the audio version next week. It's crazy.

You can follow along on social media, of course. We will be talking about this, let's be honest, pretty much non-stop for the next few weeks on LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook.

We are also offering some great options and bonuses for those of you who plan to purchase the book. I mean, if you're gonna get a copy anyways, maybe you wanna get a bonus with that. So you can find more information at ReferableClientExperience.com.

But just to give you an overview of some of the cool things that we're offering, if you're gonna buy a single copy and you're willing to leave a review, well, you can then score a free version of the Digital Companion Workbook.

If you're also thinking about buying copies of the book maybe for your office, maybe you have a team of realtors or financial advisors or attorneys, or maybe you want to give them away to folks that are in your organization or association, we also are going to be offering 25% off discounts.

So 25% off for bulk purchases on the book as well. And of course, there's all the information you can find on the page, ReferableClientExperience.com.

And the one I'm most excited about, even though I'm excited about them all, but what I'm most excited about is being able to be live with the folks who want to actually take not only what you read in the book, but then work

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with me to make it live and put it in place, put it in implementation mode before the end of November.

I am offering a Referable Client Experience Masterclass, where I'm going to teach you live what's in the book, but also help you implement to get it done.

So you read a book. Right? Maybe you do some of the work. Maybe you read. You say, I'll come back to it. Then you don't.

Well, join the masterclass as your way to make sure that not only do you read the book or not, I mean, technically, you could show up to the masterclass and not have read it, but you can show for the masterclass and then actually have your Referable Client Experience in place.

And we're going to do that over three sessions in November. And you can have a seat in the masterclass for free as long as you purchase a certain number of books.

Again, all the information, all three offers, and the information in these three offers are available at ReferableClientExperience.com. You can also download a free chapter as well, too.

Alright, for this episode, I have asked a very special guest to join me. I asked my publisher, Jesse Finkelstein from Page Two Publishing, to join me for a conversation on all things books, and being an author, and publishing.

And of course, we're also going to talk a little bit about my new book, The Referable Client Experience.

So if you have ever thought about writing a book, or you've just wondered what publishers look for when selecting authors, or really the difference between different publishing models, because there are definitely multiple, then this episode, my friend, is for you. Let's welcome Jesse to the podcast.

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Stacey Brown Randall: Jesse, thank you so much for joining me on the Roadmap to Referrals podcast. I am excited for us to have this conversation.

It's a little different for my listeners. It's not like I'm having a client on with me today, having one of my publishers on the show. I feel very grown up all of a sudden. I just had this feeling of like, oh, I've like arrived. So thank you for being here.

Jesse Finkelstein: It's my absolute pleasure. I love nothing more than engaging with and supporting my authors. So I feel pretty grown up too, Stacey, that I get to have authors like you. It's pretty fantastic.

And if you don't mind, I'm just going to say hooray. I'm holding your brand new, not yet launched book at this moment while we're recording in my hands and never gets old to unbox a new book. So congratulations.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes, so this will be live about a week before, so we're recording this a little before that, but this will be, when this episode drops and goes live, the book will be out like a week later, so it's like the countdown is on.

We were talking about this before we hit record, and it was one of those things that you're like, so excited and so over it, all at the same time.

Jesse Finkelstein: Classic, classic. So true.

Stacey Brown Randall: I know, it's funny, like when we did the, yeah, so I've got the book back there in the corner, but we did the unboxing or whatever.

I remember I asked one of my kids, I was like, so you think you're going to read the book? And they literally looked at me like I had 14 heads.

They're like, mom, we don't even listen when you talk about business. So why would we ever consider reading your book?

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Jesse Finkelstein: Also classic. Yes, my kids say the equivalent for sure.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. And I told my husband, I was like, should I go ahead and just put a copy in the bathroom? Because that may be where you're going to...

He would kill me if he heard me say that. But I don't think he listens to this podcast. So it doesn't matter.

Okay, so I'm so glad that we're doing this. We've been on this journey now for I don't know, 18 months. I mean, I think that's kind of maybe longer from the moment that we actually were connected.

So in true Stacey form, I was actually referred to you, which is always a fun way for, I'm sure for you to have clients like me show up to be referred to you. It's always nice, in my opinion, of being the client in this scenario of being referred in. So that is always great.

So I guess we probably, not quite two years, but I feel like it's been, I mean, it was like the beginning of '24. I think when we were first kind of connected and then I think we like inked the deal in April-ish or something like that. Yeah. So 18 months. It's a journey.

Jesse Finkelstein: It really is.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. OK. So I know one question. So I'm sure some of my listeners are going to be listening to this episode just with curiosity because they're like, oh, cool. We've never really paid attention to publishing a book. I haven't thought about publishing a book.

And then others will be listening to this because they're like, actually, this is something I'm interested in doing, and maybe in the short-term future for them or the long-term future for them is to publish a book.

So I know one question that's typically going to be like the top of their head, and the top of their mind, is really like what do publishers, and particularly

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for you guys at Page Two, like what do you look for when you're saying yes to authors? Because you don't say yes to everyone.

Jesse Finkelstein: No, in fact our list is really carefully curated. We do that deliberately because we want that high-touch experience where we really get to know our authors.

Now, you know, Stacey, the partnership is meaningful, and it takes time. It's beautiful that way in a very fast-paced world to have this kind of partnership where we're working together to craft something of such high integrity and quality over time.

So what are we looking for? You know, I can't speak to all publishers because different mandates can be very different. But I think many publishers have in common with Page Two, that we look for authors who are really changing the conversation in their field.

So people who are at the top of their game professionally, they're usually growing and building stuff, and they know how to frame things in a way that their audience immediately understands.

You're solving real problems for your audience, and you do it with such elegance that sometimes you make it look easy.

So I knew that about you from your first book, and it certainly played out in this book, the way that you frame the client experience, the way that you anchor us in referability. That's something we've always aspired to at Page Two and continue to do so.

So let me tell you that we were more than a little bit daunted working with you, thinking, we have to create a client experience for Stacey Brown Randall that, you know, she can write about us as like a positive case study in the next book, right?

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So like it very much like you who are not only contributing to the dialogue, but you're actually changing the way we think about it. That's what we look for.

Stacey Brown Randall: That's really awesome because you're right. I'm sure every publisher kind of has what they're looking for with their authors and really paying, and it's different, right? And understanding kind of like where you fit in.

And there's so many forms of publishing now that authors can like, you know, decide to go down the path of you know, from self-publishing to hybrid publishing to traditional publishing. And I have found a very happy place in hybrid publishing.

My first book was published by a hybrid publisher. You guys are a hybrid publisher for my second book. And, you know, this model works for me for a lot of different reasons.

I would say, you know, my first book came out seven years ago this month. Like, it makes me feel really old to say that.

Jesse Finkelstein: Seven is so young, so young.

Stacey Brown Randall: I know, but it feels so old. And for it to have taken so stinking long for me to finally get around to doing the second book.

And I have lots of like, I have all the reasons in the world for what, none of them probably should be true, but they all were, as to why it took so long for me to write this book.

But I think also the industry has changed. Just in those seven years, just from my limited viewpoint as an author, of what that looks like.

So I do think it may be beneficial for the listeners to just get an understanding of the difference from your perspective of traditional hybrid self, because there's a right fit for everybody.

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And so for me, going traditional wasn't the right fit with my first book. Hybrid was. And then I was like, I kind of like this. So I just kind of stayed the course with it moving forward.

But again, for some folks, self-publishing is right. So can you give like the publisher's perspective on the breakdown of those three models?

Jesse Finkelstein: Absolutely. And know that at Page Two, you know, we launched 12 years ago. That was at a time when the hybrid category wasn't even really a thing yet.

So for us, it was the question was, how do we better serve the authors we really want to work with? And that's why we created what now ultimately is defined as a hybrid publishing company. But that sort of situates the difference in the three kind of different points in the spectrum.

So on the one hand, you have traditional publishing, which the easiest way to think about it, I think, is that it's a license agreement.

So, you know, you can work with big publishers, small publishers, it's not just about the idea of it being corporate or not, there's small independence, there's everything in between.

But the point is, the publisher is licensing your publication writes. So they're in charge, whatever that might look like. That means that they get to decide.

So they front the cost to produce the book, but they get to decide everything else. Like, when is it going to launch? What does the cover look like? You know, how long is it going to be?

All of these kinds of things are out of your control as an author. That's what you're agreeing to literally in the contract, you're signing that stuff away. And That's on the one hand the traditional.

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On the full other end of the spectrum, self-publishing is when it's totally DIY. And maybe you're hiring a partner here and there to do certain things, like a freelance editor or what have you.

But generally, it's authors who are maybe writing your book and uploading it to an online platform where you can distribute it or printing a bunch of copies for friends and family or your networks.

In the middle, and there's like all kinds of things in the middle, including Page Two, is hybrid. And typically, in hybrid publishing, it's a bit of a mix, just like it sounds like.

So typically, hybrid publishers do not license your rights. And that was something foundational to Page Two. We thought, if we take that out of the equation, ultimately, we are in service to our authors.

So Stacey, you're my author. You're also my client. That doesn't mean I just say, oh yeah, let's take your daughter's pink crayon cover and stick it on here. Nope. It's not vanity publishing. That's a whole other thing.

But this is about a professional such as yourself engaging a team to support you in the process. So you invest in us, you pay us to do the work. And then the lion's share of the earnings belong to the author.

That's kind of generally with some variation what hybrid is like. And it may be there might be some inklings in there to indicate to your audience why that felt like the right model for you. Maybe I can put that question to you. What made it feel right?

Stacey Brown Randall: It's a great question. And those who know me really well, so it may not be every listener of this show, they know I don't really play well in the sandbox. I kind of like to control and own my own world. And make my own decisions.

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This is why I own a business and I'm not someone's employee. Like, I just like to have that control factor. But, I mean, for me, I did not want to go it alone.

Jesse Finkelstein: That's right.

Stacey Brown Randall: And that's kind of where I felt in hybrid is like I wanted control. And I would say like things that I could do in my first book, I know in traditional publishing, more authors would say that they can do that now.

This was not the case seven years ago, or I guess maybe it was even eight years ago when I signed my publishing agreement before, because then it took over a year for the book to come out.

But there were some things that like you couldn't have control over that you could. And I think some things have shifted a little bit, maybe.

But for me, it was like, I didn't want to be told how to tell what I was trying to teach, particularly that many years ago, because what I taught, this whole concept of that you can generate referrals, and you shouldn't have to ask for them.

And you, you really don't need to ask for them. And I would tell you, stop asking for them if you are, um, that was different. And it's a great hook, right? People are like, Oh, referrals without asking, like that's a great hook for presentations and things like that.

But sometimes when you're dealing with things in a more traditional sense, they fall back on like old school advice and more traditional advice. And it's, you know, this is an entirely different type of thing that I was working through.

And so for me, I liked the control factor, but I did not want to go it alone. And when I picked you guys for the second book, it was, I also, though there were moments, I'm going to be honest, I kind of regretted it.

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I wanted to become a better writer. And then you gave me four editors, and I was like, I'm just kidding. I don't know. They're fabulous. I love them all, but there were moments where I'm like, I don't want to talk to them again.

Jesse Finkelstein: That's totally fair. It is rigorous, shall we say. It is.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah. It was just, you know, I look at my first book and, you know, it's, it's awesome. It won awards and I'm really proud of it. And it continues to sell it to this day.

Like I'll get my statements. It'll be like, Hey, you sold 200 and something books this month. And I'm like, Ooh, that's pretty incredible. That's amazing for seven years, eight years later, whatever it is. So I love that.

But I look at that book and I'm like, Oh God, but it could be so much better now that I know, right? Now that I'm better at my own craft, now that I'm better at what I teach, now that I feel like I'm a better writer, I still, obviously I feel like there's room for improvement.

Like I was doing the audio recording for this book and there were parts, and I was like, I probably would have written that differently now that I have like this much space from it. But yeah, I mean, but you can do that all day long, like finding imperfections.

Jesse Finkelstein: Yes, and you would. An author would absolutely do that all day long. But there's a degree, right? There is a degree of like, I really need to make a whole bunch of changes versus, eh, I might have said that differently.

But I would like to say about you, what I remember too, Stacey, is that you came in saying you were looking for that rigor.

Stacey Brown Randall: I was.

Jesse Finkelstein: And I hear you that also. It's tiring. But I love that about you. And that is also common to authors who come to Page Two. It's that

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question of, I really want to amplify my message, and I want the best possible team to help me do it in the best possible way.

So it's that level of partnership. The fact is you came in with so much market intelligence, and you were saying, you know, no matter what kind of partner you have, really, it's not just about traditional publishers versus self or otherwise.

But it's about a partner that is going to honor your level of market intelligence, given that you're immersed in this world every single day.

You know that it is a conversation changing idea to talk about generating referrals without asking, like people have not framed it that way before. That's why everyone kind of sits up and says like, Oh, I need that. And I want that.

And if a publisher is feeling, oh, that's too niche or that's too this or that, they should talk to you for a few more minutes and really lean into what you're seeing.

I think that's the most important thing in choosing a publishing partner. It's not just buying into a vision wholesale. You always want that kind of a degree of challenge and engagement.

At the same time, you want to start from a place of believing that your publisher really honors and respects your expertise, and then you honor and respect our expertise in our areas, too. And that's very much how it felt working with you in collaboration.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, it was definitely rigorous. And there were moments where I was like, this is great. And then there were moments where I was like, this is awful.

Because I don't know how else to say this, and they told me this doesn't work. But it was what I asked for. I mean, I invited it into my life.

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I mean, at the end of the day, it's in service. You guys are in service to the authors, and the authors, we are in service to the people who buy the book and read it. So it's got to work for the reader. But there were definitely moments I was like, oh, my gosh. Yeah.

Jesse Finkelstein: Well, maybe you're a glutton for punishment because you can't get enough of content creation. I think your listeners are going to want to know about your workbook as well.

You are in service to your audience. We've really learned that, to what degree you are. And so all the way along, you've been saying, I really need the workbook as well.

It's not enough to just leave the ideas. You need people to be able to implement them. So I don't know, maybe you could talk about that a little bit.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, that's new for this book. I didn't have it with the first book. I'm sure it could have used a workbook. I mean, it didn't even come into my mindset in terms of an option with the first book.

But with this book, I don't know if you probably remember the very first version of the manuscript you guys got when I was first referred into you. The book was written like the workbook was included in it.

And then we had some editorial conversations and kind of working through like, is that the right format or should it be different? And it should be a standalone workbook. And we landed on the idea that it really should be a standalone workbook.

And my workbook isn't one of those where you can buy it and then be like, oh, I can get what I need from this without reading the book. That just wasn't what I was going to write from a workbook perspective.

So if you're reading the book and you're like, OK, yeah, here we go, another exercise. She's telling me to do something else.

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I think having that one place that you can go and be like, yes, I can digitally, or I can print it like I can go in, and I can do this exercise and do this work, I think is really important. I think it lends itself really well to this message.

I'm not married to the idea that every book I ever write will need a workbook. But I think this one, because we're so close to our client experience.

We're so close to what we think it is and what we think our clients feel that I think from that perspective, this workbook, like I say in the book, I'm like, OK, you got to pause and you got to do the workbook work or get a piece of paper if you don't want the workbook.

But you got to do the activities that I lay out in the book because they help you think about your client experience differently and they help you frame what your clients may be experiencing, which sometimes is very different from what we think they're experiencing.

Jesse Finkelstein: So true. So true. For example, we thought all of our authors have a great time in the editorial process. And now I've learned that it's different.

Stacey Brown Randall: Let me talk to you about your client experience there. We can have that conversation offline. No, just kidding.

Jesse Finkelstein: Well, I have told you, and I'll tell all of your audience, that for us, this has become required reading for our team.

And the workbook companion is going to offer such a great way to just really allow ourselves, our team, to see themselves in it directly.

It's that extra step and layer of engagement you can facilitate with your readers. And I'm pretty excited about it, I have to say. Thank you for that masterclass and client experience.

It's really nice being a publisher, right? We get to learn from all the experts and just share this wisdom on our team.

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Stacey Brown Randall: Yeah, it's funny, too, because I was looking back like, you know, you get to the point where the book's almost done and then you're doing the audio recording and then you're like, it's done and like. okay, let's get it out there to the world.

I started going back to all the stuff and I was like, well, what didn't make it to the book? And then I was like, oh my gosh, I had forgotten all the things that we cut and trimmed and shortened.

I remember there's one paragraph in the book where I was like, that needs to be a chapter. And the editor was like, no, it doesn't. It needs to be a paragraph.

And I was like, no, I want that to be a chapter. They're like, no. And it's always bringing you to that place of getting better at what you do and seeing it from that reader's perspective.

And I think the workbook was just really a part of that. I think it'll be instrumental for the person who wants to do the work.

There's plenty of people we know who will pick up the book, read it, take one or two nuggets, and that'll be great. That's what they want.

And then there'll be others who are like, OK, let me dig into what this looks like. And obviously, the workbook is perfect for them in that regards too.

Jesse Finkelstein: So good.

Stacey Brown Randall: Well, I enjoyed, despite anything I may also say to the contrary, I really did enjoy working with you guys.

I thought that you did bring to the table what I was looking for and really that ability to just become a better writer and just to kind of take that the way I think about my knowledge to the next level.

And I know we're having conversations about, you know, the first book and second editions and how it fits into my body of work with other books that I

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may, may, has a big asterisk by it, right? I'm not locking myself into anything yet.

And I think that's really important, too, is like, for me, it wasn't just finding a publishing partner that was going to help me publish this book.

But I knew there was that ability to have, do I feel like I've got a strategic partner who can help me think about this and the like the whole part of how this fits into my business and my body of work and what I want to be able to produce coming from that.

So I do appreciate everything that you guys and your team are. It was it was a wonderful, long, but a wonderful process.

Jesse Finkelstein: It's an honor, and we appreciate you so much. You're someone, I suspect, like a lot of your audience, someone who really, you know yourself, you know your audience, you know what you need and want, including what you need out of a partnership.

And I can't stress enough, in any publishing arrangement, no matter what the model, is that you're in to really make sure that you're putting on the table what's important to you, being clear about that all the way through so that people can step up and do their best work for you.

That's what it's all about. And we have experienced that all the way through. So let's do it again.

Stacey Brown Randall: Not right now.

Jesse Finkelstein: Let's get this baby launched first.

Stacey Brown Randall: Yes, most definitely. Well, thank you for taking the time to just have this chat with me.

I just thought it was such a different kind of opportunity for my listeners to kind of listen into a little behind the scenes, understanding a little bit about it.

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Granted, I know this is a short episode. We probably could have talked for hours and still probably wouldn't have hit on all the things that we could talk about from a publishing perspective or from like my book being published from that perspective too.

But I do want to make sure if any of my listeners are like, hey, I actually want to learn more about Page Two. Where should they find you?

Jesse Finkelstein: Yeah, [PageTwo.com](https://www.pagetwo.com). We also have a submission form on the website, which anyone is welcome to fill out. It actually will bring a lot of rigor to your own exploration process.

We've been told it takes a while to fill out, but please feel free to fill it out and inquire with us. We're really responsive to those inquiries.

And put Stacey Brown Randall on the form, for goodness sakes. That's the referable experience we're trying to generate. See, I've learned a thing or two.

Stacey Brown Randall: You're getting there. Yes, definitely. It's funny. I've had conversations with the folks over time. And they'll talk to me about their book. And I'll be like, oh, maybe you should talk to Jesse at Page Two.

And a lot of times, I'll hear the, I'm not ready yet. And I'm like, well, that's OK. When you are ready, I can certainly make that connection.

But I do think that form you fill out, it's a lot of questions. It's not like, you know, why do you want to write this book and who's it for?

But if you're going to take writing a book seriously, you should want that type of form to have you thinking about the questions, right? Of what the book is that you want to ultimately write. That's important.

Jesse Finkelstein: Thanks, Stacey. I think it is too. I really appreciate this opportunity to connect with your audience and to connect with you. Thank you.

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Stacey Brown Randall: Well, thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Stacey Brown Randall: I hope you enjoyed this conversation that I had with Jesse. When I asked her to come on the podcast, I was like, I don't really want this to be where I'm just asking you a bunch of questions.

I really wanted it to be where she could ask questions too. Anything that we thought would be beneficial for you guys listening to this podcast. And of course, for those who also be readers of my new book, the Referable Client Experience.

If you are interested in connecting with Jesse or you want to actually learn more about Page Two, of course we put all of the links in the show notes page for this episode, including the transcripts.

You can also download the transcripts for this episode as well and find a link for the book website where you can get that free copy or start paying attention to all the free bonuses or cool bonuses that we are offering.

You can find all of that on the show notes page for this episode at StaceyBrownRandall.com/383.

Alright. Thanks for making it to the end. Until next week, my friend, you know what to do. Take control of your referrals and build a referable business. Bye for now.