

In life we all have a plan...well, most of us do! The message of Jasmine Daya's book, *Law Girl's Bump in the Road*, is that you can achieve anything, even if things don't go according to that plan.

Angie Seth: What made you write this book?

Jasmine Daya: I was in my last year of law school, my last semester. I was on the annual New York Law School trip and it was a lot of fun, all my friends were going and I decided at the last minute to go. It was on that trip I found out that I was pregnant. I was feeling nauseous and everything. This was not part of my game plan. I had been in school at that point four years in undergrad, three in law school—the whole plan for me in my mind was to work in a downtown Toronto law firm and my thoughts and dreams suddenly came to a screeching halt. That night I considered my options and in the morning I woke up rejuvenated and thought, I have to make this work, there is no reason for this not to work. I am married, I am going to be done law school, these things happen and I am going to roll with it. But was a tough time. Here I am pregnant, my friends are partying and enjoying their last summer of freedom, I am getting fat, my clothes are not fitting... I was just getting sad. This was all 12 years ago, my son is now 12. For the first time in my life I felt I wasn't positive and I needed something to occupy my mind, so I decided to write a journal. At first it started chroni-



Jasmine Daya: Overcoming odds

cling what I was going through. It was all pregnancy related and sort of therapeutic. I was never a journal writer, so this was all new to me. I found that this was the first time during my pregnancy I was really happy and happy to write...it was bringing out my positive energy in life. A couple weeks before my son was born I looked at what I had written and I saw I had basically written would be the perfect book in my opinion. I smiled and I said to myself I am going to make this happen one day. Fast forward—I divorced my husband, re-married, had two more children, my career was flourishing—to a year-and-a-half ago when I said I am going to find an editor and I am going to make this happen.

AS: This book is a combination of true life events and fiction, right?

JD: My editor told me there a lot of missing parts and that is where the hard work started, at the editing stage. I had written a journal and

there were a lot of missing pieces to make this a story and that's where the fiction came in. I mean at that point I couldn't remember what the hell happened 12 years ago, so I had fun with it and created things in my own imagination. It was also difficult because my writing style had changed, but in the end it all worked out and it got published! I am so excited. It's a sense of accomplishment and I view the book as a passion project. For me it's really become a way to inspire young people, particularly young women, with the message that there are going to be bumps in the road, hence the title, *Law Girl's Bump in the Road* and how you deal with those bumps and continue to forge ahead that will make you successful in life, so basically it's to pursue your passion.

AS: How has the book changed you and your outlook?

JD: Initially it was therapeutic. And I don't know if I intended

that or what, but I just needed to do something. At the most I thought maybe I would show it to my son one day. I didn't start out thinking it would be a book. Looking back, I realize how difficult those early days were, I had forgotten that. Young mom, new mom, new career. I am reminded of that and of how grateful I am now, how thankful that my parents instilled such a strong work ethic in me. Had they not, who knows where I would be? My parents are my greatest cheerleaders to this day.

AS: What are you hoping readers will take away from this book and not just your female reader?

JD: The book is an entertaining read. It's a breath of fresh air, a break from the day-to-day craziness that life can be for a lot of people. I hope readers enjoy it and are entertained by it, but also embrace the underlying message.

AS: Are you hoping your son will read the book one day?

JD: He has already read a couple of chapters—when I got my author's copy, I took it home to my son and I said I wrote this for you. He had the same smile that I had when I received that first copy. I was beaming from that sense of satisfaction and excitement. When he is reading it he has this permanent smile on his face because really, he is reading about his life. Even though he wasn't born yet, he can essentially hear my voice and he is happy reading it. He has come to me a few times while reading those first two

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chapters and he has asked “did that really happen?” He is trying to figure out what is fact and what is fiction. The one day he actually read a chunk he had come to my office which is walking distance from his school, and asked me did this really happen? Did Grandma actually say this and I said, yes she did.

AS: What was your parents’ reaction to the pregnancy and the book compared to your in-laws?

JD: It’s very interesting because the reactions were so different. My parents are both of Indian background, but in the book I made my father Caucasian because I wanted a bigger contrast between my family and my in-laws. The pregnancy news... my mother was greatly disappointed. She was so upset. In reading my book she asked if she was that mean to me and I said yes you were. “Did I say all those things to you?” and I said, yes, you did. My

mother has always been hard on me my entire life but it’s out of love – she wants the best for me – so she was like what about law school, how are you going to finish law school being pregnant, how could you let this happen? There was a lot of anger from my mom. Actually, more disappointment, and that disappointment was almost worse than anger because I don’t ever want to disappoint my parents. My father was concerned, but once I assured him I was going to finish law school and I was going to make this work, he was more at ease and he was excited for me. I actually told my father I was pregnant before I told my mother, because I knew he would be okay and I needed him to be okay. That way I would have some support facing my mom. With the in-laws, they were ecstatic. They did not care about law school. My mother-in-law wanted to tell everybody. She was so excited and I was really touched by that.

AS: What it like telling your first husband you would be publishing your journal?

JD: That was not a very good conversation. My ex-husband is a very nice person. He is a people person and loves to be around people and honestly I don’t know of any man who will love me the way that man loved me. It was young love. I’ve known him since I was 14 years old, we started dating when I was 19. I think he still has a soft spot for me but we are such different people and anger and emotions are always

running high with us just because our pasts are so different. There is a reason we are divorced. We cannot get along for any length of time. His immediate reaction? He knew I was writing this journal, that he was in it. He knew I wanted to make this a book one day, but he did not know what would be in it, or actually thought this was going to be published and I would have a book sign-ing, etc. He has since re-married. When I told him over the phone, he was, like, okay. But when I told him at a school parent cocktail reception that the book was going to be published, he was, like, okay, am I going to be upset? I told him I don’t think so and I told him what his name is in the book. He seemed okay with it but since that conversation he has not been okay with it. He has been very upset, but I know he has not read it. I asked him if my son would be at my book signing and he sent me an email saying he could not support anything to do with this book and my son would not be at my book signing.

AS: Are you planning on writing more? What is next for you?

JD: I have a food and lifestyle blog called JD in the Kitchen. Those are my initials, but it is also a law degree, so it’s like Jasmine in the kitchen, lawyer in the kitchen, it’s a play on words. If you go to jdinthekitchen.com, you will see my website has simple recipes. I have a series of India cook books coming out. I have been working with my mom. My first cook book is called *Appetiz-*

ers Chutney and it should be out in the next few weeks. I also have a spice line coming out to compliment the blog – they are mini spice packages for convenient cooking. I am planning a launch party in September with a Bollywood Nights theme. It’s a really fun project. It allows my mind to get away from the day to day.

I have plans for a second book. I am hoping to start that in the summer. It will all depend on where I am with the cook books, but I already have an outline for book two for *Law Girl* so we will see if I can make it materialize in the next little while.

AS: Speaking directly to the South Asian woman, what will this book mean to her?

JD: Culturally, I had issues. My in-laws, my parents – they all had different ideas on what was right, what was wrong. I hope that women are inspired by the fact that I was able to overcome some of those issues. If I can do it so can they. I also recognize that I can stand up to my parents and to my in-laws, but I in some situations that is easier said than done. Even if I can inspire women in small ways to get something they want for themselves – maybe it’s not going to law school or whatever, but the big ideas in their mind. I just want women to know they can do what they want and be happy. Life can be difficult at times, culture clashes happen, but there is a way to work it out. I want women to feel inspired by my story.

– ANGIE SETH



with **Angie Seth**

Angie Seth is the 6:00 pm weekend anchor/reporter with Global News.



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