

Janet Attwood: Hello everyone and welcome to Healthy Wealthy nWise Magazine's Passion Series Interviews. My name is Janet Attwood and I'm the Cover Editor for Healthy Wealthy nWise and author of *The Passion Test: The Effortless Path to Discovering Your Destiny*.

For those of you who are joining us for the first time, this series is an opportunity for you to learn what you need to do to discover your passions and live your personal destiny by hearing from people who have been incredibly successful at doing that in their own lives.



I like to begin these calls with a quote to remind us of the importance of passion, and I love this one from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century French philosopher Diderot. "Only passions, great passions, can elevate the soul to great things."

I'm thrilled to introduce to all of you this evening a great friend and a woman with one of the most beautiful hearts I know. Catherine Lanigan is the best selling author of 35 books, including the novelizations of *Romancing the Stone* and *Jewel of the Nile*. Over 15 million of her books have been sold worldwide and her books have been translated into dozens of languages.

Her book, *The Christmas Star*, was selected Romance Book of the Year by Readers Preference and received the Gold Award Romance Book of the Year from Forward Magazine. Catherine has also completed nine screenplays and is CEO of Mountain Zen Productions, a film production company dedicated to the production of creative works that raise the soul, mind and consciousness of spirit through powerful and enlightening stories.

Catherine, thank you so much for joining us this evening.

Catherine Lanigan: Thank you, Janet. This is so much fun!

Janet Attwood: And the fact that you're a dog person even makes it better!



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Catherine Lanigan: I'm so seriously a dog person.

Janet Attwood: I love the fact we fell in love over our Golden Retrievers. What better way to begin a lifelong friendship. So, again, thank you.

Catherine Lanigan: You're welcome.

Janet Attwood: Let's get right into talking about your passions. What role has passion played in your life, and how have your passions and the things that are most important to you in your life contributed to your success?

Catherine Lanigan: First of all, I really, really believe that anyone who is in the creative arts, especially – and I can't talk from all walks of life. None of us can, but I can certainly speak from this aspect. If you're in the creative arts, you absolutely have to access the passion that's in your heart in order to simply sit down and do the work.

It just takes an incredible amount of courage, which I also believe is part of passion, to want to put on a canvas oils, acrylics, water colors and things to create these visions you have in your mind or your soul, and put them on paper. Or, take little black dots and lines and make music out of them because you hear something in your head.

Or, to take words that are all jumbled up and give them symmetry and a song. The courage to just sit down and do it takes a lot. I can't tell you how many times and how many places I've heard people say, "You know, I had this really great life. I have a great book inside me. I've been wanting to write a book for years. I've thought about it for 20 years." But, they haven't sat down to do it.

That's where I think you're a success the moment you actually sit down, start the work and then the day you complete it. You're successful at that point. You don't have to have \$1 billion, but you have to be able to say you did it! For me, I think passion has also taught me persistence, to be honest. Every time I think that I'm done, then I wind up with another story I have to tell, or another screenplay I have to write. I just keep going on and on.

It's an interesting path to take when you choose passion as your guide through your destiny path. I really believe that it is the thing that then guides you. You don't have to make a lot of decisions. I think you make LESS decisions once you decide on that path because everything is cleared out of the way. You just walk it. That sounds easy, doesn't it?

Janet Attwood: It does and we both know it's sometimes not. You said in the very beginning that it takes great courage for people to follow their passions. To know that, you have to have had that walk yourself. So, where did courage come into your being able to follow your passions?

Catherine Lanigan: That's a good question, because I was one of the lucky ones. I knew when I was six years old that I wanted to be a writer. Do you remember the comic book Brenda Starr? I think it's still there, actually. Brenda Starr – and this is a little fun trivia – was invented by a woman who lived in South Bend, Indiana. I grew up in LaPorte, Indiana and South Bend is where Notre Dame is.

She just died last year at the age of 98. I wanted to be like Brenda Starr. I wanted to be a journalist; I wanted to be a writer. All the way through high school all my teachers said, "Yes, you write well. You should go for it. You should really try." When I got into college, my freshman year in college, I got into a creative writing class. After about the first month, we had to write a short story. I wrote my short story and the whole thing was we were supposed to put it in front of the class and they would critique it.

I was the only freshman in this class. It was second semester senior girls. Everybody had all of their college career behind them. They had a wealth of knowledge I had only begun to scratch the surface of. The night before I was supposed to present my short story to the class the professor called me to his office and said, "I want to speak with you before we go class tomorrow night."

I went over to his office and he had what I called my little manuscript. I'm sure it probably wasn't even 15 pages at the time. He said, "Come in, Miss Lanigan, sit down." I just knew

he was going to tell me how great my story was because I had been primed for this all my life. He said, "Frankly, Miss Lanigan, your writing stinks! I have no idea how you got into this classroom."

I just sat there. I was so stunned. I felt like I had been shot with a gun. The blood just drained right out of me. I just said, "What?" He said, "You have absolutely no idea what characterization is. You have no idea how to plot anything. There are just thin threads here. Nothing has become the tapestry." He just went on and on slamming this little story.

I thought for 15 pages this guy was able to critique a lot. He said, "I will give you, however, the fact that your description is nice." That's the only good thing he could say about my writing. I was 17 years old. I burst into tears. I said, "I just don't understand. I've been writing little stories and poems all the way through high school and junior high." I didn't do them when I was eight years old, but I read when I was that young.

I said, "I just don't understand. I want to be a writer." He said, "Listen, you are a very fortunate young woman because you have come to my class. You are at the crossroads of your life. Your parents are spending a lot of money on this education and there is no way that you will ever earn a living as a writer. You need to get into another field of study. You could be a nurse."

Janet Attwood: So, what happened? You had to give your story. Did you do that?

Catherine Lanigan: There was passion I had had since I was six years old. I was also very Catholic and we were also taught to listen to the voice of authority. I believed him! I changed from the School of Journalism and Creative Writing. I said, "If I can't write it, then I'll teach it." I changed my majors to English and History, and I had minors in Philosophy, Theology, Psychology, French and anything else they could give me. I was just a bookaholic, so it didn't matter.

For 14 years, I didn't write a word. That was back when *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* was a big book of poetry and

Richard Bach was everywhere. All my girlfriends were getting poems published and short stories. I didn't do a thing. I taught school for a while and I said, "I'm never, ever, ever going to believe in a dream if I can't see it, taste it, chew it, spit it out. Then, it's not real and I'm not going to believe in any of that kind of stuff."

That was the decision I made that day. I got married and had a son. My son was about six years old and the family was staying at the Four Seasons Hotel in San Antonio for a little vacation. That was when Judge Woods was assassinated by the Hell's Angels. There was this huge trial! Every journalist in the United States was in San Antonio, Texas and most of them were staying at the Four Seasons Hotel back then.

Dan Rather was there, Walter Cronkite. It was unbelievable! I never saw so many journalists in my life. By the pool, there was this group of directors, producers, cameramen and writers sitting there talking. I was NOT an assertive person at that time. I was only 30 years old. But, I went up to this group of writers and said, "I want to tell you that I really admire the work you do being a journalist. I had always wanted to be a writer."

This one guy turned around and he had a cigar in his mouth. He looked like a guy out of a movie! He said, "So you want to be a writer?" I said yes. He said, "Then, why aren't you writing?" That was a very good comeback line. I always remember that. I said, "I have it on good authority that I have no talent, so why would I waste my life doing something that I have no talent for?"

He said, "Who told you that?" So, I told him the story about the professor and he said, "You know, I'm ashamed of you because you haven't even tried. I have friends who have manuscripts and screenplays stacked up from floor to ceiling. At least they're in there and they're trying. They're really trying. They may not have gotten anything published and they may never get their film made, but at least they're trying and you haven't done anything."

Boy, you talk about words that were quick to my heart! I



went home that weekend and I thought about it all summer long. About three or four months later, he called and said, “I just sold my book to New York and I was wondering if you had done any writing.” I told him no. He said, “You need to try.” I sat down that weekend and I started writing.

In five days, I came up with a plot line and the characters for a historical romance. I sat down and wrote about 400 pages in three months. I didn’t even own a typewriter; I wrote it longhand in my son’s first grade notebook on lined paper.

I had my girlfriends who had typewriters type it up. I sent it to this writer. A month later he called me and said, “I got your manuscript and I read it. I thought it was damn good and I sent it to my agent in New York City. He’s going to call you in half an hour.”

Janet Attwood: That is so perfect!

Catherine Lanigan: So, this woman calls me from New York City and says, “Cathy, you are startling talented.” This is a far cry from “Frankly, Miss Lanigan, your writing stinks.” I kid you not I had not written a single word other than some long letters to my mother because I couldn’t afford long distance phone calls at that time. I wrote long letters to my girlfriends and that’s it – no stories, no poems. I had never plotted a book. I didn’t know the first thing about it.

This agent said, “I want to sign you with my company. I think you’re a cross between Fred Mustard Stewart (who wrote *Ellis Island* at the time that was historical) and Barbara Taylor Bradford. I think I can get you sold.” I finished the book in another month with another 200 pages. I sent it to her and in two months she had two publishing houses bidding on the book.

Janet Attwood: The bottom line is what was the lesson you learned from that whole experience that took you 14 years?

Catherine Lanigan: The bottom line was never to listen to anybody else when it comes to something else you’re passionate about.

Janet Attwood: No matter what?



**Best Selling Author  
Catherine Lanigan**

Catherine Lanigan: No matter what! You know what you're passionate about. Nobody else knows what your passion is, whatever it is. If you're a gardener and somebody says, "You shouldn't be spending your time doing that," don't listen to them! You're here to do what your heart tells you to do on this planet. That's what I believe; that's what I learned. I lost 14 years. If you figure I write a minimum of 2 books a year, that's almost 30 books right there!

Janet Attwood: You had to make up for lost time.

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, I did and I still am!

Janet Attwood: That's a great, great experience and a great story. Some day you're going to have to write that one if you haven't already. So many of us have been there where someone has said, "Who do you think you are and why do you think you could be the one?"

Catherine Lanigan: I think it's part of the human stain. For some reason, we knock other people down! If their thinking or their desires are a little bit off from what ours are, we think we're right and they're wrong. That is wrong, first of all, to be intolerant of someone and then to be judgmental. We all do it! "What do you mean you're going to sell your house, go off and you're going to start this business?" If they lose their shirt, it's their shirt – it's not your shirt.

Janet Attwood: How did that empower you? That changed your life, didn't it?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, 180 degrees. It totally changed my life. From that day forward, I have done nothing but read, write, research, write, research, write. It's disgusting, really, because I don't do anything else but write! Did you ever see that movie *Tootsie*?

Janet Attwood: Yes.

Catherine Lanigan: There is a part where Teri Garr says to Dustin Hoffman, "You see these glasses? I spent \$20 on these glasses because I needed them to audition for this part. That's all I do – spend my money on things to audition for another part

of something that I'm not going to get. I'm never going to make it. I'm never going to get there. I'm going back to Iowa."

That's kind of how I feel sometimes. I spend all my time, money and everything trying to come up with the next story that I'm going to do, or to pitch it to one more person, or to take it to one more studio. I'm tireless! I have to say, though, that it keeps me energized.

Janet Attwood: That's why you're tireless, because you're living your passion. Wouldn't you say?

Catherine Lanigan: I am absolutely. I'm very boring otherwise. I have no hobbies.

Janet Attwood: You're the least boring woman I think I know. Would you tell us the story of how *Romancing the Stone* and *Jewel of the Nile* came to be, and in particular, how your passions play a role in the creation of these books?

Catherine Lanigan: That's a very fun story and, unfortunately, it's a long one, too. The bottom line is Michael Douglas was filming *Romancing the Stone* in July and August of 1983. They had very little money for advertising back in those days. Now, the advertising budget for a film is almost what the budget is. Back then it was about \$1 million; he didn't have much at all.

So, his gimmick was "I'll have a novelization written by a romance writer about a romance writer." His representative went to the president of my publishing house, which was Avon at the time. She was my editor. She said, "Here's the screenplay. We want to have a book written, a novelization, of it done as quickly as possible. Can you get it out by the first of the year?" The film was coming out in April and they wanted the book out in January.

My editor said, "First of all, in order to do that, we only have one writer that can even write that fast." I took a 99 page screenplay and turned it into a 360 page book and I had 28 days to do it in.

Janet Attwood: Is that a world record?



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Catherine Lanigan**

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Catherine Lanigan: I think that's almost a world record. I know that Harold Robbins used to write a book in six weeks, but he had somebody deliver his food to the door and I still had to cook!

It was still on a typewriter with correct tape. It wasn't on a computer. There was no FedEx back then. We had Shipping Blue Label, which go something wherever it needed to be in three days, but that was the fastest you could do anything like that.

I got the book done in 28 days. We had phenomenal reviews on the book and the work I did, which was outstanding! My passion comes in because with my publisher at the time I had just signed to do this huge book. It took me three years to write it. It was called *Sins of Omission*. It had a tremendous amount of research and it was one of the bigger books I ever did. It spanned 50 years and three generations of two big families.

I was doing *Romancing the Stone* and *Jewel of the Nile* in the middle of writing *Sins of Omission*. My editor said, "I want you to do this because it's such a different kind of work. It's going to teach you a lot about film, action and all those kinds of things." My passion was to learn as much as I possibly could about my craft. This was a reverse of my craft.

I was overwhelmed with work. I was still working six days a week at a swimming pool company. So, I was still working days and I was writing at night and on the weekends to get all of this work done. But, I knew if I did *Romancing the Stone* I would learn something that in no way would I ever get that kind of education, a crash course, so quickly. Then, there is the fact the film, 20 years later, became a classic. It was a fabulous experience. I went with my gut. My agent said, "You don't have to do this."

I said, "I want to read the screenplay." When I read it, I fell in love with it. I said, "I'm going with my gut, I want to do it." I still had to produce the other book as well. So, that's how that happened.



**Best Selling Author  
Catherine Lanigan**

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Janet Attwood: Wait a minute. You were working six days a week for a swimming pool company. You were writing *Sins of Omission*, which was full time, and you had to in 28 days write *Romancing the Stone*. Is that right?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, that's right.

Janet Attwood: If it hadn't been for the love of your trade, no way.

Catherine Lanigan: There's no way. I was fortunate in my job at the swimming pool company in that it was not a busy job. I had a satellite store and was in sales. If someone came in, I had to take care of them. For some reason, wouldn't you know, during those three weeks I had a typewriter in the back of the room and I spent probably about five hours out of my work day that I could work on *Romancing the Stone*. So, that helped me out.

But, I literally slept maybe two or three hours a night, and then worked all weekend long on it as well. I was still doing my research and handing in what I needed to on the other book. I learned, then, how to keep my head in two different plots and two different sets of characters at the same time. I had a year in 1997 where I wrote four books in one year. But, I learned it doing *Romancing the Stone*.

Janet Attwood: This is so great. We've done so many interviews, but I tell you this is all new. It's so wonderful because I know so many of our listeners are either writing a book or have the desire to write a book. For all of you, there is no such thing as obstacles when you're following your passion. They all fall away. Would you agree?

Catherine Lanigan: I absolutely do. I thought it was funny because it was August and I'm selling swimming pools in Houston, Texas. That should have been a busy month. My store should have been filled to the brim with people. My boss wasn't happy about it, but nobody walked in the door! It was weird. I would get a few people in the early morning. The bulk, or the middle part of the day, was all mine. I was churning out page after page.

I would get a few customers at the end of the day towards 6 o'clock, and then I'd go home. Fortunately, I lived very close



to my little condo and I was able to go home and take care of my son. He was about eight or nine years old, so he was in bed by 8 o'clock. Then, I'd write until two or three in the morning.

Janet Attwood: Forgive me, we forgot you also had a son to take care of.

Catherine Lanigan: And two cats!

Janet Attwood: Catherine, you've published many novels which have been read by millions of people throughout the world. I see with *Romancing the Stone* and *Jewel of the Nile*, during those days when you were writing *Sins of Omission*, there were obstacles. Have you run into challenges or obstacles along the way with your other books? What role did your passions play in helping you overcome those obstacles?

Catherine Lanigan: I had a book that came out by HCI a couple of years ago. It was a fiction called *Wings of Destiny*. I started that book in 1987. I did not get it published until 2001 I think it was. I'm passionate about every book I write. You have to be or otherwise you would never get past Page 10. *Wings of Destiny* spans 250 years. The original manuscript was 1,200 pages. The research took me years and years.

It's about the founding of San Francisco. I made about eight trips to San Francisco for the research. But, the real passion came in when I couldn't get a publisher to buy it. The reason for that is because it's a very racially charged book. Everyone considered it too hot to handle.

My dad had a near-death experience, which you and I have talked about, Janet, in 1987. When he went to the other side, he came back and told me the thing he was told by the Being of Light was that all men are equal, we're all the same – all races, all religions. Nobody has the right answer. We're just people. We're all souls; we're all part of God. We're all a piece of that fabulous, creative mind.

I was raised that way. Nobody is lesser than me and nobody is better than me. We're all the same. We're all loved by God. We're all God's children. That's just what I believe. So, I wrote this book where the hero is the son of a plantation

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owner and a voodoo priestess. But, he is so Caucasian looking that he everyone thinks he is white. He's actually a slave and he escapes from the plantation when his father dies.

He makes his way through the Underground Railroad in 1830 and gets to Boston. He takes a whaling ship and goes around the horn of South America and gets all the way to San Francisco. He jumps ship once he gets to San Francisco and he becomes a trapper and a trader. Then, he gets a little land and winds up being one of the true founding fathers of San Francisco. But, no one knows he is an escaped slave. It's the secret he keeps all of his life.

This plotline goes on and on. There is no way I could spend 13 years trying to bring one book to an entity, a book that is actually hard cover bound and sold to people, if I hadn't believed in that story. I wrote 15 other books at the same time I was writing that one. But, I never, ever gave up because I wanted to make that statement.

There were two underlying dramatic structures in that book. One is that all men are created equal, and one is that God's retribution toward man is through natural disasters. It ends with the earthquake in San Francisco in 1906.

Janet Attwood: Did you come up with that yourself?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, ma'am!

Janet Attwood: This is a sidebar, but why was that so important – God's retribution to man is through natural disasters? Why did you want people to know that?

Catherine Lanigan: Because I believe that's where we're headed. I think with all of our global warming and all of the pollution that we have strewn through our universe here on the Earth that we're casting all of this junk physically onto the Earth. But, I also truly believe that negative energy you create – your anger, your hatred, your malice towards men, your intolerance towards other men – goes into the Earth and I think it erupts right back in your face. It's sort of the Karma of you reap what you sow. That Karma will come back and bite you.



**Best Selling Author  
Catherine Lanigan**

Janet Attwood: This is really profound though. In 1987, this is so far ahead, Catherine. There weren't a lot of people aware of environmental problems at that time. This is so ahead of the game. At that time, this was something you had a passion for addressing and getting that out there.

Catherine Lanigan: I believe that book was my destiny. There are certain books I have that I cannot pass from this earth without writing. They have to be written. One of them, that is coming out – you and I talked about it – *Divine Nudges*, is coming out this month actually – January or February.

*Tales of Angelic Intervention*, they are true stories of angelic intervention. I could not pass from this earth until that book was out there in the public. Those things that are in that book had to be said.

Janet Attwood: Your newest book, *Divine Nudges*, tell us what inspired you to write that book.

Catherine Lanigan: I guess, honestly, it's one of my near death experiences. As you know about four years ago I wrote *Angel Watch*, *Goosebumps*, *Signs*, *Dreams* and *Divine Nudges*. That was the first one. That one contained my father's near death experience.

That was in 1987, when my dad had his near death experience. Mine was in 1990 or 1991. I was told almost the same thing he was told. There was a whole lot more that went on in my near death experience, over and above what he had in his.

Janet Attwood: What was it you really wanted to communicate to people by writing that book?

Catherine Lanigan: There is an interaction between our world – what we believe is the real world – and the unseen world – the world of the dead, angels. Our ancestors, our family members that have passed on are still alive, but just in a different form. They don't have our body, but they are still working with us.

We need to acknowledge them. We need to listen to them.

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They can certainly give us good guidance, if we would only just open our minds and hearts to hear them.

Janet Attwood: Could you share with us a couple of stories which represent *Divine Nudges*?

Catherine Lanigan: Sure! Here's a good one. I haven't told this story. You are the first one to get a story, so this is a scoop.

Three years ago, in the summer of 2003, I was living in Houston. I got this phone call. There was a group of filmmakers trying to turn a book into film that were in Sedona, Arizona. The executive producer had been talking to me. He had sent me his book.

I read it and said I could carve a screenplay out of it. We were in the process of negotiating fees and all that kind of thing. Then, I met with other people in his organization, but I had not met his producer – who I would actually be working with to turn this book into film. His name was Jed Nolan.

Jed was 50 plus years old. He had never been married, never proposed to anyone, never been engaged – ever, in his whole life.

I'm in Houston. He had left a message on my voice mail at home. He said, "My name is Jed Nolan. I will be the producer who is shepherding this book to film. I've heard a lot of really nice things about you from the other members of our company. I wanted to introduce myself. When you get a chance, give me a call back. This is my number, and oh, by the way, will you marry me?"

I called him back. I said, "That's the most intriguing voicemail I have ever heard in my life. By the way, the answer is yes." I had never met this guy. I don't know anything about him. I hadn't talked to him or anything. Jed and I have now been married two years December 21<sup>st</sup>. That was pretty much a divine nudge.

Janet Attwood: Everyone's gasping. You've got to tell us a little bit more, though. Okay, so he said, "Will you marry me?" You said, "Yes." Then?



Catherine Lanigan: Then, we talked on the phone for about a month about the project. I came out Scottsdale and Sedona to meet with investors and meet the other people in the company. The project really started moving forward. We were still just a working relationship type of thing. When I got really involved working on it, Jed got really involved.

What's interesting is that the executive producer fired us both because he was losing control – he felt – of his project. Later, we learned he was just a con artist. He was conning people out of money. That part wasn't good.

Jed and I stayed together. A few more months after we worked together and got to know each other, we got a little more romantic, and then a little more. Six months later, he proposed.

Janet Attwood: Here's the million dollar question. When he said, at the very beginning, "and will you marry me?" and you said yes, did either of you have any kind of intuition at all? What was that because there are no mistakes in the universe?

Catherine Lanigan: Now he says, "I thought to myself, 'What in the world did I just say? I've never asked anyone to marry me. What am I doing?'" Then he hung up.

I thought, "What am I doing? I don't even know this guy. He could be...ick"

Janet Attwood: So, he was, "Whoa, what was that?"

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, he did. It just came out of his mouth. He was like, "Did I say that? What am I doing? Did I even say that? No, I didn't say that." When I said yes, I thought, "What am I doing? Why did I say that?" It was almost as if the angels were speaking for us to get us moved onto the right path.

Sometimes there are times when you say things and you think, "Did I just say that?" Then, it winds up being something that changed your life. That's a divine nudge.

Janet Attwood: How do we recognize divine nudges in our own life? What

would we need to look for? They are happening all the time, aren't they, if you were just aware and something you'd notice?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes. Absolutely. They're happening all the time. When you kind of take a step back and you think, "Whoa, why did I do that? Why did I say that?" or something seems a little oddball. Someone invites you to a meeting. You are going, "I don't want to go to this meeting. I don't need to be in this meeting," but you go anyway.

Once you get there, you can just feel the energy is a little higher. The energy is a little bit better. The people you meet seem to be just a little bit more intriguing, or they may say things that are the words you have been wanting to hear.

There are many times you don't want to just hear what you want to hear, you want to hear reality. Especially when you are looking for a sign or you need some guidance, you really need to pay attention.

I've always had this one thing. To give yourself a divine nudge, you can do this. Go to bed at night. You have this huge question you are trying to ask yourself. You ask your soul, or heart or angels, the question.

Over the next three days, you listen for the answer. Out of three people you meet, they can be best friends, total strangers, the guy at the gas station, you will hear the same sentence three times in a row within a three day period or less. That's your answer to your question that you asked your soul.

I just had a friend today who called me from Houston and said, "I've been trying to decide what to do. I am at that crossroads in my life." He said, "My daughter is moving to Prescott, Arizona. My business partner moved to Scottsdale, Arizona. I'm thinking of moving to Scottsdale."

I said, "I think you are going to move to Scottsdale, Arizona." He said, "I need to make a change in my life." I said, "Obviously, you are ready." He said, "You are the third person in about two days that said, 'You need to move to



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Scottsdale, Arizona.” Those are divine nudges.

Janet Attwood: Where did you come up with the three times in a row?

Catherine Lanigan: That was told to me by a nun when I was in college.

Janet Attwood: You’ve always noticed that is how it happens?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes. When I went to college, I went to a Catholic, all girls school. I’m telling you, I learned more about astrology, reading palms, and all kinds of things from the nuns I had than you can imagine. They were very wise ladies actually. That’s when I learned that and I’ve used it all my life.

Janet Attwood: Do you believe the divine is always active in our lives?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes. I cannot imagine a life not believing that. I wouldn’t want that life. The opposite of that is to think that you are in total control of your entire life – everything that goes on in your life. That’s too much responsibility.

Janet Attwood: I hear you absolutely.

Catherine Lanigan: I think, today, so many of us hear it all the time. “I’m so overwhelmed.” That’s because you are carrying too much of a burden. We do have too much to do today.

When I think of how simple my life was 20 years ago, I can’t believe it. I was working, had a kid to raise and writing two books at the same time. That seems like a piece of cake compared to now.

Janet Attwood: What do you tell people when they come to you and say, “I’m so overwhelmed?”

Catherine Lanigan: I tell them how to hand it over.

Janet Attwood: How do they hand it over?

Catherine Lanigan: A lot of it is that you have to be aware there is divine going on in your life. Once you are aware, you can surrender it. Then, it seems like not only do the answers come to you, but all the guidance you need comes to you. The right people

seem to start walking into your life. The path seems a little bit clearer.

No matter what it is, when they say the check is in the mail, suddenly, the check is really in the mail. It does help. The more you see it, you believe it. They say, "Well, if I see it, I'll believe it." The problem is that it's going on and you're not seeing it.

Janet Attwood: You said you have to be aware the divine is going on in your life. How about for those people who don't feel like anything is happening? Isn't there something they could do to create more awareness around that? How about ask, would you think?

Catherine Lanigan: I agree. When people say they spiral down and finally get to the bottom of the barrel, that's when they finally surrender. They ask for help. That's when they get it.

Unfortunately, so many people have so little faith or belief that they have to go so far down. That's the whole basis of Alcoholics Anonymous, AlAnon, everything. When you finally are on your butt, at the bottom of the barrel or well, and you finally hand it over for the divine to take care of for you, isn't it amazing how everything seems to come together?

Janet Attwood: For those people who don't really have that belief, what I hear you saying is just to ask to know. It's as simple as that.

Catherine Lanigan: It is that simple.

Janet Attwood: I don't have that experience, so please instill in me the knowledge, people, places or things that I need to have in my life to realize that the divine is always working. All you have to do is ask, wouldn't you say, Catherine?

Catherine Lanigan: That's exactly right. You just ask. Even as simple as that little thing I just told you. If you have a serious question – it can't be something fluff, but a serious question – you ask the question at night before you go to bed. You ask all the divine entities in your life – whether you believe in angels or not doesn't matter, whether you believe in an afterlife doesn't

matter.

Just say, "Whatever the divine is – the creator, whatever – please answer my question in the next three days. I will listen to strangers. I will listen to my family." You will hear the same sentence or words out of three different people's mouths within three days or less.

I now get the answer within about five or six hours actually. I'm on a faster track than most. If I was 25 years old, it might take me three days. I don't have time to wait around.

Janet Attwood: Another question that kind of goes with this conversation is, "Why does it seem that terrible things sometimes happen to wonderful people?"

Catherine Lanigan: I think that's exactly what we got through saying. Sometimes you have to get to the bottom of the barrel to surrender. When you finally hand it over to God, or divine, or whatever you want to call it... When you finally say, "I can't do this anymore. You are just going to have to handle it. I am not superwoman. I am not superman. I'm just a man. I'm just a woman. I'm just a soul on this earth. Please help me," that's the day it all starts happening and you get a lot of help. That's why.

Janet Attwood: In your book, *Divine Nudges*, will you just go over quickly what inspired you, again, to write that book?

Catherine Lanigan: My near death experience. This is the second in a series of angel stories. My near death experience was 15 plus years ago now. I had not had the courage to write about that near death experience all this time.

For this book, I feel, I have pushed the envelope because I tell a lot about what I saw on the other side. I saw a crystal kingdom, or city – whatever you want to call it. I call it the crystal city. I saw my parents. My father had not died at this time, but I was told he was going to die within a year and he did. I was told my mother would live quite a bit longer. She is now 86. At the time, she was only 70.

Janet Attwood: In writing about your near death experience, what was the

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bottom line message you wanted the world to hear?

Catherine Lanigan: Honestly that there is an afterlife. There is another life after this. I was raised a Catholic. I have always believed there is an afterlife. I've seen an afterlife since I was a tiny child. I have been talking to angels for so long that I thought everybody did.

About two years ago, maybe three years ago, I walked into a place here in Scottsdale. A friend of mine was there, she owns it. I had given her a copy of *Angel Watch*, my first book. She said, "Catherine, do you really, honestly believe there is a life after this one?"

I was so taken aback. I thought, "Oh my God, I have known this lady and I think the world of her. She's a very spiritual person. She's really into holistic healing and all that kind of stuff. She's not sure that there's an afterlife?"

I need to tell people that there is one. I saw it; I was there. I was there quite a while actually. There's a lot going on over there.

Janet Attwood: That's so they won't be afraid about death?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, so they will not be afraid of death. They will know there is something else. They will know when they see their dead Uncle Harry show up when they are dying, or before that, or see an angel, or have something mysterious happen, they don't say, "That was just my imagination," and make it go away. Or, they try to use science or something else to explain away all these miracles that are actually happening in their life.

That's what has been our problem for the last 20 years, maybe 2,000 or 10,000. We so easily want to only believe what is here, what we can touch, feel, see and taste.

When my father was dying he said, "You see this world around you," – he was in a hospital room – "You see this room. You think that is reality. It's not. This world that you are living in is the dream. The world on the other side, that's reality. This human life is only a dream."



**Best Selling Author  
Catherine Lanigan**

Janet Attwood: You've written 35 books and screenplays. Of all of them, would you say these books – the ones that were your passions – were the ones with the message, or did they all have a message?

Catherine Lanigan: Every one of my books has a message, even the slightest little romance. I have always believed that leaving a legacy of love can't be all bad. When I write about love, it's what all the great masters came here to teach us – to love one another.

Janet Attwood: Would you say that one of your passions is leaving a legacy of love and that's why you've been so successful as a novelist?

Catherine Lanigan: I believe that, yes, absolutely.

Janet Attwood: Your passion is always with you.

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, it never goes away. It is. I certainly never get tired of it. It's constantly knocking at my door saying, "Get up. Let's write another one."

Janet Attwood: Would you say that's your secret in writing a great romance novel?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes. First of all, you have to have a passion for it. There are other things that come as far as the skill and everything. But, the underlying thing that makes a great romance novel – or a great novel of any kind – are the characters.

The characters, the characters, the characters. Nobody really cares what they go through. They care about how they grow and who they are. In order for you to have fabulous, memorable, haunting characters, you have to feel their life essence in your own heart. Without your own passions, you cannot infuse them with passions. Their life would be just as flat as your life would be. Who wants that?

Janet Attwood: What are the elements of a successful romance novel?

Catherine Lanigan: It depends on how you define successful. I define successful



in the fact that it touches the hearts of my readers. I care more about my readers than I care about anything.

I have had good reviews. I have had incredible reviews. I have won awards. I have had really rotten reviews. None of that stops me. I have had books that have made lots of money. I have had books that haven't made a dime.

It's the success of knowing that when I go to a book signing and that reader comes up, she has that book that is all dog-eared, and she says, "You have no idea how this book touched me."

I have gotten letters from readers who have read my novels and have literally changed their lives because the heroine was so strong. She broke away from an abusive husband. She got the job she always wanted. My heroines pursue their passions.

That's how I am able to know that my book's successful because my readers tell me that.

Janet Attwood: What advice would you give our listeners who are inspired to become fiction writers?

Catherine Lanigan: Sit down and write the book. That's the first thing I am going to tell you and it's the hardest thing to do.

Janet Attwood: Years ago, when you and I first met, I got on the phone to you and I said, "What do you tell people when they are afraid to write?" You said, "Do it!" I will never forget that. You screamed into the phone, "Do it!" That's so great!

Catherine Lanigan: It is. You just have to do it. It's interesting, in September this year, it's the first time I have ever done this, I have a "how to" book coming out from Allworth Press called *Writing the Great American Romance Novel*.

I wrote it as a legacy for my granddaughter, who is only seven years old. I thought, "I'm not getting any younger, but if something were to happen and I was not around – or I died, or I was in a foreign country, or she couldn't get to me," if she came to me and said, 'Grandma, I want to write a

romance novel. I want to be like you,” I wanted to put down on paper everything I would want to tell her to make her path easier for her.

I lived through all these different experiences – high roads, low roads, awful ones, great ones, tragic ones. This is what I learned. There is a billion dollars’ worth of experience in that book. Unless you live it, there is no way you could learn it.

I wanted to put in it anecdotes and things. Usually books like that are so boring. After reading a book on how to write a book, it’s like, “Who cares? I don’t even want to do this.” I at least know the book is not boring.

Janet Attwood: I can’t see that you would ever put anything out that would, and I want to meet you in person because you are just a raging, outrageous, flashy, colorful, lively, bottom-lined person and I love you.

Catherine Lanigan: Thank you.

Janet Attwood: Healthy Wealthy and Wise believes strongly in the power of intention to manifest outcomes, which I know you do too. What is your biggest, current project and what intention would you like us, along with our readers and listeners, to hold for you?

Catherine Lanigan: That is a hard question because I have, literally, nine screenplays that our company, Mountain Zen Productions – which, by the way, you can get at my website [www.CatherineLanigan.com](http://www.CatherineLanigan.com)...

I want to get my books made into film. I have three or four Christmas ones right now – *Christmas Star*, *Daddy Loves Santa*, *Miracles Are Golden*. All of those legend-makers I want to see into the big screen. *Wings of Destiny* would be a fabulous mini-series.

I am working very hard to bring *Angel Watch* and *Divine Nudges* to a weekly television series where we show the angels that people saw. Now that we have computer graphics... Everybody’s angel that they see is not the same as the next guy. I want to be able to put that on television so



people can see this.

Those are some really big projects. We are meeting with some people coming up next week. I have a book, *Mr. Romantica*, that we have taken to hard cover, soft cover and film. I really want that project.

Janet Attwood: Novels to film and TV. Is that kind of bottom line of your thinking?

Catherine Lanigan: Yes, that's it.

Janet Attwood: All of our listeners, for Catherine, for the great gift of her being on today, let's intention for her novels going to film and TV.

What single idea would you like to leave our listeners with tonight? You have about one minute to share.

Catherine Lanigan: Pretty much what we've said. I really believe that we all instinctively know why we are on this earth. Whatever it is you do, it doesn't matter what it is, go for it! Do it! Embrace your life with passion. Take chances. Take risks. When you go to your deathbed, you know you made some mistakes – who cares – you will have no regrets.

That's the big thing. You don't want to be dying and say, "Gee, I wish I would have..."

Janet Attwood: In other words, go for it and do it! Right? For all of those listening, to find out more about Catherine Lanigan, go to [www.CatherineLanigan.com](http://www.CatherineLanigan.com).

Catherine, thank you so much.

Catherine Lanigan: You are so welcome, Janet!

Janet Attwood: I just adore you. You have reminded us that the divine is always with us and carrying forth no matter what is going on. We all need that reminder. We can't get it too much. Thank you for bringing us back to the divine, Catherine.

Catherine Lanigan: You are most welcome. You have a very blessed week!



**Best Selling Author  
Catherine Lanigan**

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Janet Attwood: Thank you. For our listeners who would like to get a copy of *Divine Nudges*, you can purchase it from Amazon.com. Again, to learn about Catherine's other books, go to [www.CatherineLanigan.com](http://www.CatherineLanigan.com).

As always, we have some extraordinary interviews coming up for you. Mark Victor Hansen will interview Dr. Wayne Dyer, the Father of Motivation on January 10<sup>th</sup>. On January 24<sup>th</sup>, we interview Dr. Ivan Misner, one of the world's leading experts on networking and word of mouth marketing. Dr. Misner is the founder of BNI, Business Networks International – the world's largest referral organization with over 80,000 members and more than 4000 chapters around the world.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, we interview award-winning speaker Les Brown. On February 21<sup>st</sup>, the co-author, and a great friend of mine, of *Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul*, and other Soul books, Jennifer Hawthorne will be our guest.

Be sure to join us in two weeks. In the meantime, remember your passions are your clues to your unique destiny. Choose in favor of your passions every day and you will find yourself living a passionate, turned on life.

Catherine, again, thank you with all of our hearts. We are going to open our lines and say, "Good night." Good night everyone!