

Getting to know Julienne B. Ryan!

Author of The Learned-it-in-Queens Communications Playbook: Winning Against Digital Distraction!

[Book can be found here!](#)

Julienne B. Ryan

1. When did you first realize you wanted to write this book?

The book's concept emerged from a humorous keynote to 500 senior executives at a National Conference a couple of years ago. The conference producer and team had "discovered me" through a series of introductions. Then based on two phone conversations they asked me to present an "out of the box talk" about our digital communications

My theme was simple and straight forward. We (yes, all of us) were contributing to our communication challenges because we were making assumptions based on our internal dialogues coupled with poor listening skills.

So, while the audience members were attending because they wanted to buy and sell digital technology, I was sent to the event to complain about what we were doing wrong – and what they were selling. I just did that in a very unique way and made Queens my sidekick in the process. Fortunately, they loved the talk.

After that I was asked to give the same keynote a few times. So, I decided to convert the theme into a book that would serve as a guidebook. This project became an interesting creative writing exercise because what worked on the stage did not convert to the written page. I had to figure out a way for the readers to "meet me" while maintaining the essence of my concept.

So numerous rewrites and reformatting versions ensued or as we say in Queens "do – overs." The COVID19 lock down and the disruptions it caused, provided an unexpected writing prompt" If not now? When?"

2. Name a time you realized that smart devices are ruining communication and connection.

I owe my "aha moment" to Metro North, the MTA and NY commuters. I was always people watching, and at a certain point I realized that the human species had mutated. We had become a "heads down living in a bubble

species." Because everyone was staring at their phone, and no one was communicating in person. The mutation was showing up everywhere during my commute, at work and even at home.

In addition, my work in Human Resources provided me with many opportunities to witness countless examples of communications that ran amuck. I kept seeing how much time, money, and energy got wasted. And I saw how miscommunication impacted morale and productivity. Every situation could be traced to simple root causes – People had stopped listening and communicating.

3. Your book is filled with great advice, would you mind sharing one of these points with us?

- "Take a pause" – If you find yourself getting agitated. Save your email in draft and put your mobile phone down. Don't worry, it will be ok without you for a few minutes. You, on the other hand, will spare yourself a lot of mis-steps and regret, if you give yourself a break. Do something else for a bit so you gain a fresh perspective.
- Create "front stoop moments" where you can have live conversations and gain context and understanding.
- Do more listening than talking.
- Take the time to learn from others who are different from us
- Learn the art of story sharing