West Side Rag
News about the Upper West Side of NYC

Neighbors Who Write: Robin Landa

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Photo courtesy of Robin Landa.

By Nancy Novick

Long before Robin Landa called the Upper West Side home, she viewed the neighborhood as a community that drew creative people. On visits to her father's apartment on West 72nd and Central Park West, Landa recalls, "We would see John Lennon in the neighborhood [among] many other artists relaxing on benches at the entrance to Central Park."

As an UWS resident herself for the past 26 years, Landa has made her own mark in the community as an author, artist, creative consultant, and Distinguished Professor at Kean University. With a focus on graphic design, advertising, and idea generation, Landa has written more than 25 books for both professionals and lay people.

Her picture book, *The Dream Box*, grew out of a more personal experience, finding a creative solution for her daughter's recurrent nightmares. Her latest title feels like the natural evolution of her work. *The New Art of Ideas: Unlock Your Creative Potential* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers) offers an innovative way to jumpstart your thinking. In it, Landa introduces readers to her original approach to generating great ideas, ideally those that will have a "triple bottom line," yielding not just profit, but also benefits to people and the planet.

Landa also serves as a speaker across the country—as well as closer to home—on a range of topics relating to creativity and careers, with a recent engagement taking her to the Columbia campus where she spoke on personal branding. Her connection with the university extends to another title in the works. Together, with Greg Braun, retired deputy global chief creative officer of Commonwealth/McCann, Landa is writing *Shareworthy: Storytelling for Advertising* for Columbia University Press.

When she's not writing, consulting or teaching, Landa looks to the cultural hubs in the neighborhood for inspiration and pleasure, including Lincoln Center and the Museum of Art and Design. She's also an avid dancer, together with her husband, and on her own. A lifelong student of dance, Landa notes, "My goal as an adult was to learn jazz and theater dance. However the famous dance school on the UWS was intimidating and catered to younger dancers and aspiring professionals." Instead she found what she was looking for at the Marlene Meyerson Jewish Community Center, which offers adult group dance classes with Broadway dancers and choreographers. The availability of this option serves as a perfect example of how Landa advises individuals and corporations to bring ideas to life: by responding to the *goal* of students like her, seeing the *gap* in what was available, and creating a *gain*, access to dance for community members.

More on Landa's work, including links to her numerous articles and podcasts can be found at: robinlanda.com.

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