

**Blog: [From the Silicon Valley Campus](#)**

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## **HR Business Partner instructor's writing passion**

**Author Book Signing:**  
*Felicity Finds Fashion...A Gecko's Adventure in New York City*  
Saturday, May 12, 1-3 p.m.  
Kelly's Books, 838 Main St. Watsonville

We wanted to wish UCSC Extension human resources instructor Linda Gunther a heart-filled congratulations for publishing her sixth book. Linda, a long-time Silicon Valley HR leader who began teaching for us last year, will be reading and signing books this weekend at an independent book store in Watsonville. Linda just finished up teaching *Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) Excellence*, one of the UC-approved courses in our accredited Human Resource Management certificate program.

Below, she talks about being a writer and a Silicon Valley HR professional.



### **How long have you been writing?**

“One day, five years ago, I was sitting in my office where I was HR director staring at an airplane taking off at dusk from the San Jose airport. I thought to myself, *I've been working 20 years in the valley and it's been great for me I have to admit; but now it's time for me to take off and write a novel.* The next day I surprised myself. I was brave enough to follow through and actually give my notice. Certainly there was a lot at risk, but I had to take a chance. I was fortunate to transition into HR consulting so I'd be able to finance my writing. And I loved my work in HR, didn't want to give it up.”

### **What inspired you to begin writing children's books?**

During the first four years, I wrote four romantic suspense novels. Wow, it was amazing. I never

thought I'd write more than one novel. But I did. Then I adopted Toffee, a puppy from the SPCA. While we were walking along the beach one day, I wrote a children's book in my head, *Toffee and Esmerelda...A Story of Love and Friendship*. Of course, it was based on the real Toffee, but it also featured an imaginary character, a lonely little girl named Esmerelda, who finds comfort and friendship with her own adopted dog from the local SPCA. I set the book at Seacliff Beach near where I live in Aptos. Then, I found an illustrator through an art college who lives in South Africa. That is another story in itself!

Now I have a second illustrated children's book published—*Felicity Finds Fashion...A Gecko's Adventure in New York City*. The title speaks for itself. Lots of fun!"

### **What inspired you to create Felicity?**

"I'm not sure, but I'm from New York City and I was on a trip back there at my high school reunion a year ago and I love geckos. I guess it was natural to write a book about a shy, yet adventurous gecko who has her dream come true when she ends up on the high fashion runway in NYC."

### **What's the underlying message for us?**

"Dream, then just do it! It's good to sneak out of your comfort zone and do something completely different, something incredibly creative. I've always been a creative type. HR leadership is sometimes operational as well, yet you need to be quite strategic at the same time. Creativity is important in either mode! So, I expanded my horizons into writing stories with, I sincerely hope, compelling characters. I'm also a part-time actress. I guess the combination lended itself to writing juicy stories. It's all about using your transferable skills."

### **How did you find time to write six books in six years? My goodness that's prolific!**

"I just have too much energy and also craved an avenue to let out the creativity, really use my imagination. It's insane, I know!"

### **Are they self-published?**

"Yes, I self-published on CreateSpace and had all books professionally edited. That is very important for success. Now one novel is a best seller on Amazon: *Ten Steps From The Hotel Inglaterra...A Woman's Adventure in Havana, Cuba*.

It's funny because I've been doing some of my best HR work while writing. I guess using your creative gifts serves to stimulate good work in whatever you do."

### **Please tell me a little about your consulting practice.**

"I've been consulting for five years now with some awesome companies like: Driscoll's Strawberries, Huawei (Futurewei), Couch Distributing, Kerr-Hill Management Consulting, some local medical practices and even with a well-known local chocolate company. I love the variety of clients. Sometimes I'm engaged with doing HR business partner work and other times I'm developing and facilitating leadership management training programs."

### **Are there any lessons for HR students in your books?**

"Yes, follow your passion wherever it takes you. Your heart and your mind in tandem will lead your way. Do not ignore your dreams."

[Here is a list of Linda's published books:](#)

- *Felicity Finds Fashion...A Gecko's Adventure in New York City* (2018)
- *Toffee and Esmerelda: A Story of Love and Friendship* (2017)
- *Finding Sandy Stonemeyer: A Romantic Thriller Set in Northern California's Santa Cruz Mountains* (2016)
- *Lost In The Wake: A Romantic Thriller Inspired By The Magic Of Cruising* (2015)
- *Endangered Witness: A Woman's Veterinary Career Turned Upside Down With Betrayal, Abduction and Murder! A woman's romantic travel adventure in Havana, Cuba. Suspenseful and dangerous!* (2014)
- *Ten Steps From The Hotel Inglaterra: A Woman's Romantic Adventure In Havana, Cuba* (2013)

**LINDA GUNTHER, B.A., M.A., M.B.A., has over 18 years' experience in HR business partner leadership and management development. She has led HR and training/organizational development teams for companies including: Sun Microsystems, Kaiser Aerospace (now Rockwell Collins), Cadence Design Systems, Meta Software, Philips Semiconductors/NXP, and Dionex Corp. (now Thermo Fisher). Linda now consults for several industries in the human resources business partnering, leadership development, and strategic planning arenas.**