

#184 3 Years of Self Care with Leigh Stein

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SPEAKERS

Michelle Glogovac, Leigh Stein

M Michelle Glogovac 00:00

You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 184. Welcome to the my simplified life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present. Don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life and start taking action today. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, and I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you will taking you on my own journey. This is my simplified life. Hi, friends. Welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Today, I am so excited to get to introduce to you one of my good friends who we almost missed connecting each other. I am talking about Leigh Stein. Lee is a career coach for writers. She is an author. She is queen of book tock tick tock. And if you don't know what that is that is going on to tick tock but it's really focused on books and authors. And she is the master of that. Lee and I had been following each other on social media, and did not know that we were in the same room at the same time in New York City for Andrea Dunlops book launch. Women are the fiercest creatures. When I found out that Lee had been in the room after I got home, I sent her a DM asking if we could connect since we missed each other. And as they say the rest is history. She has a book which is celebrating its third year this week called self care. And it is not her debut book. You'll hear about that in our conversation in a bit. But it is an awesome read. It is so much fun. And you'll hear how she describes it. But it's a really fun read, especially when you consider all of the things that are going on in the online space with wellness and self care and all of the the buzzwords that are going on right now. So sit back, enjoy our conversation as friends as authors and get to hear about Lee's book and what she's doing and what she has coming up. Hello, my friend Lee, how are you? Hi, it's

L Leigh Stein 02:30
good to be here. Michelle?

M Michelle Glogovac 02:31

Oh, I'm so excited to get back to you. You are like this treasure this light this. I just feel like you give so much and I so appreciate you. So I am so excited to get to introduce you to all of my listeners. I'll say the world because the world knows you. Thank you. Can you take a moment to introduce yourself, please?

L Leigh Stein 02:51

Sure. My name is Lee Stein. I am a cultural critic, the author of five books and a career coach for writers and I think today we're going to be talking about my novel self care, which is a satire of the wellness industry and Girlboss feminism.

M Michelle Glogovac 03:07

Love it all. culture critic. I like that. I haven't seen that. That's not on your website. Is it because I was stalking you the other day.

L Leigh Stein 03:17

I write a lot of cultural criticism. I was having a DM conversation with a friend and I told her I was hate following someone on Instagram. And she was like, that's the difference between Gen X and millennials. She's like you guys hate follow. And I was like, I'm a cultural critic. So I have to be critical for my job.

M Michelle Glogovac 03:32

I love that you need to, like, trademark that and put it everywhere. That is. That's an awesome title. Yes. Yeah, keep that. And I loved self care. Thank you. Yes, I am so excited that I got to read it. Get my hands on it. Now. I need you to sign it.

L Leigh Stein 03:50

We need to meet IRL we almost met IRL. We were in the same room. Same room same time. Yep. Didn't. It was fate. It all come back together. Yeah, I'll fly back out to New York or you come out here. Yes. Yes. So how did you get started? Like, let's talk about what did you think you were going to be when you grew up? And then where did that turn? Well, I actually wanted to be an actress. I was a theater kid. I love singing. I love musical theater. And I moved to New York City to go to acting school and become an actress when I was 19. But at the same time I was writing and I was publishing writing on the internet. This was the early 2000s. So I was on a website called Live Journal that was like an early blogging site. And I was publishing short stories and poetry on my Live Journal. And while I was in acting school, I realized that my scene partners would say to me, Lee, did you read the whole play? And I'd be like, Yeah, I read the whole play. And they'd be like, can you tell me what happens at the end? And I realized I was the nerd in acting school that actually like read and enjoyed reading. And that year, I got my first short story published in a literary journal, and I was like, oh, maybe this is actually the thing I'm supposed to be doing. Unlike maybe I'm the nerd that likes reading more than I like

performing. So I decided not to go back to acting school I just went to one year and I started working in restaurants so that I could have time to write during the day and I decided to become a writer. So that's what I pursued. And my first my first two books came out in 2012, when I was 27, something like that.

M

Michelle Glogovac 05:21

Amazing. I love that what a great story of like, you're like the movies. I went and 19 and moved to the big city. And you know, I wanted to be an actress, and then forget that. And then I waitress and I wrote, and it's very like, now you need a movie.

L

Leigh Stein 05:37

Yeah, it does sound it does sound like a very clear arc. But I think what I say is I owe a lot of my success to the internet. A lot of my peers have MFA degrees and creative writing. So they go on to higher ed to study writing. They spend years you know, working on their manuscript. I don't have an MFA, I just kind of am self taught. I'm an autodidact. And I just use the internet to really publish my work, share my work, grow an audience and grow a network. I mean, really, you and I met online, we were in the same room physically, but you sent me a DM on Instagram like this is how many of my friendships and relationships start it's like, it starts online then it could become an in person friendship or an in person, business relationship, but I'm very comfortable. I think I'm unusual for a writer and that I'm almost like an internet extrovert. Like I'm very comfortable on social media. I really genuinely enjoy it. It doesn't feel like a chore or a pain. To me. I just love talking to people online because I'm a writer, I'm a verbal communicator, it's easy for me to communicate in words. And so being on social media like Twitter, very natural for me, or Tik Tok or tick tock, I'm also on tick tock now to you

M

Michelle Glogovac 06:43

are purely the only reason that I got on tick tock like I had an account. It was sitting there, literally just sitting there and you're like, Yeah, you should totally do this. And now there are actually videos. Yeah, I'm proud

L

Leigh Stein 06:55

of you. It's it's intimidating to get on Tik Tok. I think for anyone who's like over 23 years old, it's like very intimidating. And there are a lot of stereotypes about what tick tock is, you know, it's associated with dancing and lip synching, because that's what blew up during the pandemic. But now, it's so much more than that. And there's a whole community of readers on Tik Tok, which is why I'm so excited about it. And just seeing what see what other people do online is what inspires me and gives me ideas. It's like, if I can copy not copy directly, not I'm not plagiarizing, but if I can see the kind of content someone else is making and say to myself, like, I could try that. It's like, just rip, you have to take a risk of looking stupid, which I think is scary for a lot of millennials and Gen Xers. They're very afraid of looking stupid online. But if you can get over that fear of looking stupid, you can have fun and and find find a new audience.

M

Michelle Glogovac 07:43

And you don't but it's not even looking stupid. I mean, I the videos I've posted. I've sent them to you and you're like, yeah, it's natural. It's great. I'm like, Yeah, I didn't even do my hair. There's absolutely no makeup. Like, but that's

L

Leigh Stein 07:55

what that's what's like, legible on that platform. Like that's what looks good on Tik Tok. It looks natural, it doesn't look like you don't look like a salesperson. I think once you start looking too polished and professional, it's a turn off because it looks like an ad.

M

Michelle Glogovac 08:08

And I think that's for anything. Like we were talking about this before of, you know, a lot of what I share is common sense. But apparently it lacks, you know, not, not that everybody's lacking common sense. But a lot of the the tips and stuff, they're just normal things and sort of show up and just share that knowledge versus coming off as salesy.

L

Leigh Stein 08:28

Absolutely. And I think we're at this interesting tipping point, because it's like my novel self care. So it was in part inspired by this experience I had being not for profit Girlboss from 2014 to 2017, I was leading this feminist nonprofit organization, I was organizing conferences in New York and LA, you know, I was having my photo taken standing next to celebrities. I was like living that Girlboss life except I was broken in credit card debt. And when I resigned from that, I started writing this novel self care, which is about a kind of girl bossy wellness startup company, but I was really writing about a very specific era that I think all your listeners will be familiar with, which is like this kind of polished Instagram perfectionism, right? It's like women with blowouts and their Rent the Runway dresses like smiling and clinking glasses with their BFF it's the wellness influencer lifestyle, like everything looks very polished. And I think we're pivoting away from that era right now. So I think self care is capturing a very specific moment in time and an Internet culture and the Tick Tock aesthetic, the Tick Tock vibe is so much more chaotic, unfiltered, confusing, strange, you know, it's like young women who just got it out of the shower with like their hair and a towel and like pimple patches on their face, like crying on camera, like it's so different from the millennial Instagram aesthetic. And so I'm really interesting, interested now in this kind of shift to that I'm noticing.

M

Michelle Glogovac 09:57

Isn't that funny though, to think that someone is just gotten out of the shower. They're like, you know, I don't look my best. But let me put on a video and record this for the entire world to see what's on my mind. And just how, like, are we sharing too much then? Right? Well, I



L

Leigh Stein 10:14

don't think I don't think they're thinking of the entire world when they post these videos, I think they're thinking of their community or their audience like their The Tick Tock videos that I think really work it they, they are like facetimes with a friend. So it just feels like your friend is just holding up her phone to her face and telling you a story. I think those videos do very well. But the women of Instagram are still really fixated on creating these really composed, posed, like static posts to show that they're living their best life. And I just think those, I just think we're, we're heading away from that.

M

Michelle Glogovac 10:49

I think a lot of us I know for me personally, when I see these ones, and oftentimes if I get to know some of these individuals in real life, and then I can recognize that no, that's not, that's not really who you are, or really what you do, or what you say, or, you know, there was one who claimed on Instagram, like, I stopped drinking, I haven't been drinking for like six months. And like, your trunk texted me and margaritas, like two weeks ago. Oh. So I think that we're recognizing, like, why I don't get why you would put this out there. You know, if it's not true, but we want real we want I hate the word authentic. We want just be you just show up and, you know, be who you are, whatever that may be.

L

Leigh Stein 11:36

Yeah. And I think that's really scary to imagine that it's scary for me to imagine that kind of double life, that you would be leading one life away from your phone and then leading another life in the kind of posts that you curate for your audience. And how far how far would you take that? I mean, this is my novelists brain working. It's like how far would someone take that to compose a life that's different from their own? Oh, you

M

Michelle Glogovac 12:00

should write a book.

L

Leigh Stein 12:02

But it's also like, you know, I was, like I said earlier, like, I was a weirdo. I was an early internet adopter, like I got on AOL in the late 90s, and started making friends on AOL in the late 90s. So I've been online for an extremely long time. And when I was a teenager on the internet, that was weird. When I met my husband online in 2011. That was also weird. Like, you could start talking about online dating, but it was still a little strange. Where today, if you don't meet someone on the internet, that's strange, right? We assume that people are dating online. So I have watched this shift from people telling me oh, the internet isn't real life. I've heard that my whole life. And I feel like something happened in the pandemic, where we can finally admit that like, our online lives are just as real as our offline lives, right? Like things can happen on Instagram or Twitter that that changed your life for the better or for the worse, like people's lives have been changed by things that have happened online. And I I'm happy that we're

finally able to talk about our lives online, as our real lives because like, my life online is not my fake life. Right? That's my career. It's how I earn income. It's where I stay in touch with my friends and family. Like that's real to me.

M

Michelle Glogovac 13:12

I love that. Let's talk about self care, because I am so just in awe of the research that you put into this. And I told you this upfront, because I was like, holy shit. How did you figure out all of these, what they're drinking and these rituals or doing these wellness programs? I was like, I've never even heard of these. But these are also people that I wouldn't be following because it's too much for me. But you did so much research. It's absolutely incredible and admirable.

L

Leigh Stein 13:42

Well, thank you. I remember early on when I was still writing the book, someone asked me what I was writing a book about. I didn't even have the title yet. And I said, I'm writing about sickness in the name of health. So I just became obsessed with these women who took their, their fitness and their diet regimens to such an extreme that it becomes obsessive and they become unwell. So like one of the characters in my book, Deb and one of the main characters, she has orthorexia. And orthorexia is like a form of disordered eating, where you become so obsessed with eating clean, that you're managing your food, food, just like someone with another eating disorder would, but you think you're doing it for quote, unquote, wellness, right, and she's also addicted to exercise. So she's selling her followers, this idea that they just need to follow their intuition and practice intuitive eating. But meanwhile, she has created herself as the poster child for this healthy lifestyle by following a very restrictive diet and exercising all the time. And so that's what I was interested in the kind of hypocrisy of these wellness influencers who have to control what they're eating and how they're exercising to an extreme degree, much more extreme than normal people. And yet, they're, they're giving us the message that like, all we need to do is like, go for a walk and meditate. So that kind of mixed messaging that women get and I think women get mixed messaging from like every corner of the internet imaginable, right? We're told like to wear contouring makeup. We're told not to wear makeup at all to just work on our 10 Step skincare routine. We're told, Oh, that 10 Step skincare routine is bad for the environment, you should really not use soap at all. Like we're getting so many mixed messages all the time. It's exhausting to sort through everything and figure out like what really works for you and what you even want. It was funny too, because it's like, another trend is like diet culture like you. And I remember when you would go to the supermarket and there would be a magazine that would say lose 10 pounds for bikini season, then that's passe. Now that's not feminist. So now we don't talk about lose 10 pounds for bikini season, we talk about like build your butt for bikini season, like it's just changed. And then we started talking about like gut health. Now everyone's obsessed with gut health. And I did a I did an event for self care. It came out during the pandemic. So all my events were on the internet, but I visited a book club, I made this joke about how everything's about gut health now. And one of the women at the book club said, I'm a gut health coach. I was like, I'm sorry to make fun of you. But like what is a gut health coach? Like I had never even heard of a gut health coach before. So it's, it's just it's, it's irresistible to me to make fun of this world. There's just so much to make fun of so you asked about my research. So I did a lot of research on Instagram. I learned the term social listening. I think this is a term that brands used to listen to their customers on the internet. But I think I use this as a novelist. So I use social listening to kind of

eavesdrop on the way women talk on Instagram. So I was following wellness influencers on Instagram. I was also reading like the cut is a website where they do a lot of like, what like how she gets it done. So there were these like profiles of these female entrepreneurs, and it would talk about what their morning routines were I loved this content. I ate it up. There's like a classic Amanda Chantal bacon, what she eats in a day. She's the founder of this company called Moon juice, which is in LA and it's like, courses ashwagandha it's like nootropics all these powders and elixirs that you can take and like her diet of what she eats in a day. It's just like a little bit of powder and a little bit of tea and a little bit more powder and you're like does she eat solid food ever? It's just incredible. Also, Gwyneth Paltrow Taffy Broadus, or actor did like this great magazine profile of Gwyneth Paltrow. And so I like cut out the picture of her face. And I had that on my bulletin board while I was writing the novel. So obviously, goop was an inspiration. But also just like women's media. There's a women's website called bustle that was founded by a man named Brian Goldberg. And so just the idea of like, male entrepreneurs thinking to themselves, like I know how to sell things to ladies, like, we'll start a website for the ladies and then put makeup on it. And just that kind of cluelessness is something I saw from my vantage point, you know, adjacent to the New York City media scene that I wanted to also skewer in the novel is hilarious and yet sad at the same time. Yeah, totally. You said that it's changing, but it feels like it's not going away. That's interesting. Yeah, I mean, I think, I think if we can laugh about it, like, that's my own coping mechanism, it's like, I think a lot about a lot of darkness and dark things, but I keep a sense of humor. So that's how I cope with it. And like my favorite feedback to get about the novel is from people who read it who are like, this made me really uncomfortable, like people who can see a little bit in there that they're familiar with, or they're like, oh my god, am I that character? I hope I'm not that character. If it just makes you feel a little icky inside that to me is a high is a high compliment because I think we're all there's a little bit of all of us in in there. You know?

M

Michelle Glogovac 18:51

Yeah. If you look at me, I am not Devon I could not relate to her and cycling and the yoga and that this and that that and she had no alcohol. I'm like, What? No, I was more Marin.

L

Leigh Stein 19:06

Oh, totally. I'm a Marin too. But I that's that's actually fun research that I did is I went to this exercise class that's in the book. So it's called the class. That's what it's called in real life. In my novel, I think I call it feel P H. E. L. Yeah. But it's called the class and you go and you do the same exercise for an entire song. So you might be doing like lunges or burpees for an entire song. And when I went, I thought I was gonna throw up, I had to lay down on my yoga mat because I thought I was gonna be sick. And I'm like, I'm like a person who exercises you know, like I had done exercise before. The teacher is wearing a headset, and she came over next to me on the mat to try to like speak into my ear to like, revive me into getting up, and then they keep turning the music up louder and louder and louder until everyone screams in unison to try to trigger some kind of like cause sardick experience. It's very, a lot of women really. Like, it does feel cathartic to them. To me. It just felt like I was in this like strange cult. And I was weird. I was so it was just exhausting. It was so extreme. I can't imagine people doing this more than once a week it was it was the most probably the most extreme exercise I've ever done.

And the teacher started it because she was in yoga teacher training, and she found her yoga teacher training not to be strenuous enough, so she had to invent an even more strenuous form of class exercise. That's sick.

M Michelle Glogovac 20:35
That's just it's not right.

L Leigh Stein 20:37
It's a service. That's what I'm saying. Sickness in the name of health. It's like so intense. It's so intense.

M Michelle Glogovac 20:42
And who I I feel like you have to be a certain person to want that kind of intensity. Like, none of that appeals to me what you just described. I'm like, No, thank you. Oh, the yoga wasn't strenuous enough. Sign me up for that.

L Leigh Stein 20:57
Right. Exactly. With

M Michelle Glogovac 20:58
a glass of wine afterwards. I do not want to be like, screaming like, who's the powers? Remember that short, blonde haired woman who she was an exercise fitness when she was always like, on Susan powers? Was that her name? Oh, I don't remember her Mikey blonde hair like bleached blonde hair. I can see it. She was just like, loud. And that's what it reminds me of. And she I never took a class. But I remember seeing it on TV. Yeah, yeah. Like craziness.

L Leigh Stein 21:30
Yeah. I mean, exercise is another thing that totally goes through trends and fads right. There was like aerobics in the 80s with the when you couldn't eat any fat and you were just supposed to eat carbs all the time and snack wells. You know, now weightlifting is so weightlifting is so big. I'm a weightlifter but I go to the gym and I see all these teenage girls weightlifting. And I'm like, that was not a thing when I was a teenage girl.

M Michelle Glogovac 21:50
Yeah, I don't think that we were even. I don't know if we weren't allowed to weightlifting in PE but like the weight room was for the guys in high school. Yeah, I think there was the idea that

you would get too big. Yeah, right, that women would get too big. If they lifted weights. I yeah, I lifted a very tiny bit in college when I rode because that was part of our routine of you know, you got to lift something, we got to be strong, but get in high school. That was definitely like, no, no, let's don't go into the weight room. Now. Doesn't it was stinky anyway. So who wanted to go there? I love it. I love it. And so what do you do now you're a career coach for writers. That's a new one that I have not heard as well. And I love this because I think there's a lot of careers out there that we don't know that our careers, nor do we know that their resources, you know, to find people like you.

L Leigh Stein 22:39

Yeah, well, it's like, this is something that I've played around with in terms of just branding and marketing what I do, but I previously had called myself a book coach, because that's really what I do is I work on books. But I think coming up with the name career coach for writers is just I'm trying to communicate that if you're a writer who wants to earn an income, so it's not that you just want to publish a book, because you want to say that you published a book, but like you want to have a career doing this, you have to understand how the publishing industry works. And I don't think there's enough education about how the book publishing industry works, especially in MFA programs, which I talked about at the top of the show. But there are over 200, creative writing MFA programs, some of these programs can cost 2030 \$40,000 A year to go to. And if I invested that much money in my education, I would expect that at the end of that I could sell a book that I'd written in the program. But a lot of writers are disappointed when they emerge from these programs, because they've been told that they shouldn't think about the market at all, while they're working on their craft, as a writer, they should avoid thinking about the market, because that will taint their art. And so then they come out with this 200 or 300 page manuscript and they come to someone like me, like, how do I get this published? And I'm like, Well, do you have a platform? No, they haven't been taught about a platform. Can you make it a memoir instead of an essay collection? Because a memoir is Mark more commercial? Oh, no. But my advisor told me it could be an essay collection, you know, so there's just a lot of ignorance. And I just tried to help writers understand more about marketing writers are so afraid of marketing. There's just so scared of it. And yet, every writer dreams of like being in an auditorium and there's an audience of 1000 people who have read your book, like they want to be Margaret Atwood, I want to be Margaret Atwood. That's why I became a writer. But in order to reach that audience, you have to learn marketing, because you have to think about who your audience is, aside from other writers. And so people who are ambitious and driven and want a career in this competitive industry. I love helping them I love helping them troubleshoot, you know, problems with their platform, or people come to me with issues about finding an agent, maybe they're pivoting from one agent to their second agent. I help them pitch I help them query agents. Yes, I don't ghost right. But I do book editing, coaching and like publishing strategy. And it's so needed. I had a book coach when I wrote my first few chapters of my proposal, because I was completely clueless in. How does this even work? i Yeah, you know, and luckily, I had already started building my platform because I had a business that needed a platform. Yes. So I had already gone down that path. But there's so much that goes into it. I mean, when you're pitching, as you know, your proposal has to do with how are you going to market the darn book? Yeah. And nonfiction book proposals are such a mystery, because there's no way for you to see them, right? Because they're hidden. They aren't public, you can see the books, but you can't see the nonfiction book proposal that became that book. And so working with a coach, I think, is a great idea. Because they they're more familiar with nonfiction book proposals. And for anyone listening who is working on a nonfiction book proposal, Jane Friedman's website is a great free resource resource. I think Jane

Freedman is really smart. And she has a blog post all about what goes into a nonfiction book proposal, because it can be very ambiguous. Yeah. And it's very long. It's very long. It was like 75 pages. Yes. Totally normal.

M Michelle Glogovac 26:09

Yeah, it was absolutely crazy. I think it was probably harder than writing the actual book.

L Leigh Stein 26:14

Yeah, I can spend six months to a year on a book proposal with a client, I once had a call with someone who was interested in my services, and I got to know, you know, what she was looking for. And I said, you know, usually takes, you know, three to six months. She was like, Oh, I actually needed in six days. Like, I'm not, I can't it's like cramming for a test, you know, I can't like you can't do good work and such, it does take time, it does take time to really flesh out your idea for a book. I mean, it's a book, you know, like, you have to, you have to be able to answer the question, you know, why should this be a book? Why? Why shouldn't this be an article or a substack, or podcast was all different kinds of media, that you could explore this idea, and why should it be a book?

M Michelle Glogovac 26:55

What is the difference between a nonfiction proposal and a novel proposal? Well, it's a

L Leigh Stein 27:03

great question. You can't sell a novel on a proposal, you have to write the full book. Ah, so a nonfiction book proposal is basically like a business plan for the nonfiction book. And if you're trying to sell a nonfiction book, as you know, Michelle platform is critically important. So part of the reason your book sold is because you have built a platform and a brand as a podcasting expert. And you I'm sure demonstrated that in your book proposal, a novel is selling really on the strength of the novel and the storytelling. So the editor needs to see that you can stick the landing that you pulled that you pulled it off, I had no idea that the whole thing had to be written. Because there was somebody I can't remember who it was, but somebody was like, Oh, I'm just gonna write like the first couple chapters and see if that'll sell. I was like, oh, that's all you have to really write. And then you can kind of move on or do something else. Sometimes you could do like, I bet Colleen Hoover could say, Hey, guys, here's the idea for my next novel, maybe like, we would love to give you money for that idea, Colleen Hoover. So if you're if you're a certain kind of novelist, if you've achieved a certain level of success, you can probably sell the next book on a partial. But for most people, including myself, you have to finish the book. So right now, I'm 65,000 words into my next book, which is setting a Tiktok. Hype house. I'm hoping to finish it this summer so that my agent can sell it. But I do have to write the whole book. So I don't know if it will be published. I'm I'm in the same boat as all my clients. I'm like, I've got to write the best book I can write, and then help my agent come up with the pitch and then she's going to take it out.

M

Michelle Glogovac 28:38

That's exciting. Like can't wait to read this one. Because it will, it'll get picked up. We know it well. It has to know it will I love self care. So I'm already there. I'm a fan. Oh, and something else I want to talk to you about because you posted about this the other day, and I was like, oh, poetry, like you've written a book of poems, you were promoting another book of poems. And I was like, Well, I really have never gotten into poems. And maybe I need to, and I need to buy that book of yours. So I can get into poetry and see what that's about. So my favorite compliment

L

Leigh Stein 29:11

to get is when I read poetry at a bookstore at an event and a stranger comes up to me afterwards and says, I don't even like poetry and I liked your poems. So I pride myself on being a poet for the people who may be find poetry inaccessible or difficult or boring. I tried to write poems that anyone would enjoy. I've written two books of poems, and I stopped writing poems for almost a decade, and I thought what had happened was that my brain had just switched to prose. So while I stopped writing poetry, I wrote fiction I wrote a memoir, I wrote opinion pieces, I wrote personal essays. I wrote all their kinds of writing. And then at the beginning of the pandemic, and 2020 I was struggling with how much alcohol I was drinking, I decided to just take 30 days off from drinking and See what would happen. I thought like, I was very scared of the idea. I know you're a big, we both love wine. But I was very scared at the idea of like being sober for life. Like I thought that was my only choice was like keep drinking or be sober for life. Those are my two choices. And then I read this book by Annie grace that was like the 30 day alcohol free experiment. And I thought to myself, like 30 days, I think I could do 30 days. So I did this experiment and 10 days into the experiment of not drinking, I started writing poetry again, for like the first time in almost a decade. It's like the poems like flooded back to me, it was an incredible, almost like a miraculous spiritual experience. So I started writing all these poems down, and I was emailing them to my agent, my book editor of self care. And it was the beginning of the pandemic, when everyone was working from home and my agent, my editor, were like, Oh, my God, these poems are giving us life, like, please continue sending these poems. So I was like, I'll start a sub stack. So I started a sub stack and started sending out these poems almost every day. And my agent was like, I think you're writing a book, I think this is a book of poems. And so this is really unusual. But my agent sold my book of poems on a proposal, just like a nonfiction book. Ah, so I hadn't finished the book I just had, you know, maybe 20 days of poems written I wrote a proposal for it. And she sold it to an editor at soft sculpt press, who is a friend of mine who had been following my work since 2012. When my first poetry book came out this editor, Sarah had bought it at her local Barnes and Noble, so she'd been following my work since 2012. And in 2020, she had the opportunity to acquire my second collection of poetry was like the perfect editor for me. And I spent those six months of 2020 from March to September, writing this collection of poetry. It's called What to miss when, and it's similar to self care. There's some there's some satires of influencers in the poetry collection. There are poems about me binge watching Tiger King and love is blind during the pandemic. And yeah, that's my poetry story.

M

Michelle Glogovac 31:52

Okay, now I gotta go hit Amazon again, and go get that one. I love the what you said, too, that this was my editor who was following me since 2012. And now publish my book like balls. This is

tnis, your editor was following you since 2012. And now publish, you know, like, neilo. This is where we have the platform's like, you're the perfect example of showing up. And you never know who's watching.

L Leigh Stein 32:15

Yes. And it just shows how much of this industry is a relationship industry. You know, yeah, like, I had a relationship with Sarah because she bought my book in 2012. Then she came to my conference, when I was a nonprofit Girlboss, she came to my CROP Conference in LA, probably 2016. So that's when we met in person, we stayed in touch on the internet. So this was like years in the making this project coming to life. My memoir, also my memoir, sold to an editor who had been my college classmate. So again, it's like another connection. And my self care editor Margo, had been following my work since my first book of poetry in 2012, she had tried to acquire my memoir in 2016, but she couldn't get approval from the higher ups to acquire that in 2016. And so it took until 2019, that she was able to acquire my novel. So it really is a long game, you know, to be a writer, because you're going to have highs and lows along the way. And it's just a matter of staying in the game. Like I've just stayed in the game longer than some people. That's all because self care was really my breakout book. And that was my fourth book. And some of the press, when it came out was like this sparkling debut novel, but it wasn't my debut novel, it was my fourth book, but it just took me that long to really write something that hit the culture at kind of the perfect moment with the perfect subject matter.

M Michelle Glogovac 33:32

Yeah. I love it. Such great stories like this. And you know, and it's not just writing that relationships are bad. I mean, podcasting, too, but it's like, this is life. In life. It's all about the relationships. And if you're showing up and being there and putting the time and the effort in then who knows what can come of it all, totally. And

L Leigh Stein 33:53

I think I have a good memory. I think this is one of my other skills. And maybe you have this too. I feel like I have a good memory for interactions I have online like I remember people like if someone is like a frequent comment or on Instagram, like I remember them or they're in my DMs, you know, I remember, it's like that old saying, you know, people remember how you made them feel, right. It's true online, too. It's true across the board. I remember those little interactions, and they accumulate over time, that kind of goodwill. It's like putting deposits in the bank of goodwill.

M Michelle Glogovac 34:23

Oh, I love that. Oh, that's a good quote.

L Leigh Stein 34:27

Put that in Instagram graphic. Michelle?

M Michelle Glogovac 34:29

Yes, we will. We will and it will be branded and sent to you in a couple of weeks. Oh, I love it. How can everyone find you and follow you because you are just so knowledgeable and you share your knowledge just so freely? It's so refreshing. And I love it. I love your tic TOCs I love your Instagram. I love you. I'm on Twitter with you like I'm everywhere Lee is I'm like

L Leigh Stein 34:57

well if you are a writer, you might end Join my free newsletter, you can find that at my website Lee stein.com. I'm on Twitter at rhymes with B. I'm on Instagram as Lee Stein and I'm on Tik Tok as Lee Stein. Thank you so much

M Michelle Glogovac 35:13

for sharing your yourself and everybody go get self care, because it's a really fun read. And you'll either feel like, oh shit, that's me or he'll be like, thank God. It's

L Leigh Stein 35:23

not me. Yeah, so it's like, it's like, you're free to judge all the characters. You don't have to worry about hurting anyone's feelings because they're imaginary. It's a perfect, perfect read by the pool. It's short. Yes, you'll you'll gobble it up quickly.

M Michelle Glogovac 35:37

Yes. Thank you so much, Lee. Thank you, Michelle. All right. I know you are all looking for your summer beach reads your pool reads. So make sure that you add self care to your list. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to Lee because I also learned more about the whole book proposal process when it's not a nonfiction book. So that was great for me to hear as well. And to know that you don't have to have an MFA to become a published author. And just to get to hear what Lee's journey was like, it was really fun to get to listen to her. It gets to know her better and to hear what she thinks about with all of this going on in the online space in the online world and how she's been around it for so long. Because it does feel like it was just yesterday that it all came out. So friends, go get some self care. Put that into your life, but make sure you don't go overboard and be like Devin in the book. I'll read the book and you will understand what I mean.