

## Transcript

00:00 You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 229. 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. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, author of How to Get on Podcasts.

00:28 the podcast matchmaker and CEO and founder of the MLG Collective. I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you while taking you on my own journey. This is my simplified life.

00:44 Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Today, my guest, oh, she makes me smile so big, is Mary Jo Hoffman. She is an artist, photographer, and new author of the book, Still, The Art of Noticing. It is a photo book, and it is the most beautiful book I have ever seen in my entire life. It is proudly displayed in my living room for all to see.

01:12 And it is gorgeous the way her project started as something she wanted to do as a daily habit and has turned into something that's been over a decade of a habit. It's taken her all over the world. It's had collaborations with really big store names and people names, as you will hear. And it just has brought me into noticing. And you'll hear how I've started noticing things in a different light after.

01:41 reading and looking at Mary Jo's book. She is just such a delight and I am so grateful that we recorded and we got to have that glass of wine and share a meal together and become good friends. So please get excited to listen to Mary Jo Hoffman and her journey of how she created Still. Hi Mary Jo. Hi Michelle. I'm so excited to talk to you again.

02:09 Like we haven't already been talking for 40 minutes before recording this. I know. I know. Now we'll let you all in to our conversation. Can you introduce yourself to everybody, please? Sure. I am Mary Jo Hoffman. I'm an artist, photographer, and now author. I've known for this project I did where I started a photo a day and I meant it as a one-year project, and I haven't stopped and it's been over 12 years.

02:40 And I've got a book coming out with Fyden on May 1st called Still the Art of Noticing. It is absolutely gorgeous. When it arrived on my doorstep, I was like, we need to it's like the coffee table book and I'm using quotes, but I want everybody who comes to my house to see this. Like maybe it should go in the bathroom so everybody sees it. It's so absolutely stunningly gorgeous. I'm super.

03:05 pleased with it, exceeded my expectations. And most, a lot of publishers don't get, people who work with publishers don't get to say that because the publishers are so pressured these days. At every turn, my publisher, who is Monticelli, which is an imprint of Fyden, they just elevated the book. They upgraded it, they elevated it, the paper, the cover.

03:28 They even gave me extra pages. I mean, they never, they didn't say no to anything. So I'm thrilled with the book and it really truly exceeded my expectations. It's stunning. My nine year old, you've met Declan. He is Mr. Like nature lover and he looked at it and oh, mommy, this is beautiful. They, so it doesn't matter how old you are. The book is for you. No, I mean, it's nature. Come on. It's for, it's for everybody. I've had people buying it for their mothers. I've had people buying it for their kids.

03:58 So it really, I mean, it's, you know, when your subject is nature, it's universal. So let's talk about what you did to take these photos. Like where did this habit start? Take me back to that first day of, I'm going to take a walk and take a picture. Okay, okay, I will. It was interesting. So my husband and I, I turned 60 in May. In our mid forties, we...

04:26 had put our kids in the public French immersion program in St. Paul. And they were coming, it was elementary, a K-5 program, they were coming out of it, but they read French, they understood French, but they really weren't speaking French because they still spoke English with all their classmates. And so I wanted them to be fluent in French after driving them because every day for 10 years. I had to do five years for Eva and then...

04:56 five years for Joseph, and then so it was a 10 years of commuting them out of district to go to this French school. So I, we decided that in order, you know, Steve and I talked about it, that we'd bring them to France, put them in school for a semester where they'd have to speak French and hopefully then cement those language skills for the rest of their life. So we did that. We were in our mid forties, the kids, Joe was like nine, Eva was 14 maybe. And so

05:25 We were very busy at home. We had multiple self-employed businesses and we put them all to rest, put them all to sleep, hired people where we had to, to oversee stuff. So when we were in France, and the kids went to school from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., was the first time ever in our lives where we didn't have to work and the kids were in school. And so suddenly we had free time. We'd always both had creative ambitions, but...

05:54 those just got set aside when, obviously when, you know, we had to pay for a mortgage and then had kids, you know, very practical jobs. And so anyways, we put the kids in school and I said, you know, let's practice for retirement. And it came from reading a book, I was at the time doing a deep dive into personal finance, because that's what you do in your mid 40s. And

06:23 And one of the authors had recommended, you know, that you got to practice for retirement. If you just, if you work, work, work, work, work, and then one day at 62 or 65 or 68 just quit, you don't have the social network. You don't have the community. You don't have the friends. You don't have the hobbies or the interests that you're going to need to support you into retirement. And you got to start that years before retirement. So I said, we've always wanted to be creative. We, you know,

06:53 let's practice that because that's what we want to do in retirement. And so Steve had always wanted to be a writer and had dabbled in writing short stories and poetry. So he started

journaling and I'd always been a hobby photographer. And I'd also done, I really like collage, I also do visual journals. So it was always visual arts. So I, at the time, these one a day...

07:21 projects were super popular and I thought, oh, I wanna do that and be part of this online community. What could I do? And I had a two-year-old puggle. The puggle was in France with us. We brought him for the teenager. And otherwise she wouldn't go because she wouldn't go without the dogs. We brought the dog. So I was walking the dog every day and I'm one of those people like so many of us that picks up beach rocks or.

07:50 you know, feathers when you find them and they're sitting on window sills and all that kind of stuff. So I thought, well, I, a photographer, I walk the dog every day. I like to, I like nature. I like to pick up nature. We're a nature family. Maybe I can combine those and that would be my project. So I started that in France. I remember, well, you have them in California. You're in California. I'm in Minnesota, but those T, you know what a teasle is that giant thistle anyways. Yeah. We grow in California.

08:19 They don't grow, and they grow in the Mediterranean, and they don't grow in Minnesota. So I just thought they're the most exotic things. And my very first still photo was, I took a teasel head, just the top of the thistle flower, dried in winter, and I turned it upside down on my journal at that time, an open blank page of my journal, and I photographed it. And it kind of looked like a spider upside down, you know? And I liked the look, and I said, oh my gosh.

08:49 This is my project. So I posted it and started a blog called Still. And what happened is we were just practicing for retirement, but what happened is both of our little practice hobbies got a lot of attention, a lot of media attention. Steve ended up writing three letters from France. They were called for our local Minneapolis Star Tribune paper and it won food writing awards the next year. And...

09:16 Six months after I started my blog, Martha Stewart Living asked if they could do a feature. So the one year, the little six months of practice turned into two part-time jobs for the next 10 years. If this is what retirement's gonna look like for you guys, you're so good to go. I do, I feel really lucky because it is, like I said, I'm turning 60 and this is exactly what I wanted to do during retirement, right? I mean.

09:43 It did, it paid off. I have to say, but you know, at the time we're in our mid 40s, and we still had to do those really practical jobs. And when we got back in order to pay mortgage and now pay college tuition. And so, you know, we had to keep doing that. And, you know,

10:06 what's the word, like grow these little fledgling, creative side businesses. And so it was really for a couple of years there, I would say five, six years, it felt like we were working one and a half jobs and raising kids. Do you find that working the creative parts made it almost easier to work the more mundane half two jobs that were the full-time ones being the bills? For sure. As a matter of fact, we have an expression for it, which is called self-sufficiency.

10:35 patronage. So that was really what we were doing with those. So Steve now is a tax preparer, can't be more different than food writing. And his personality. I know, I know. Because

he's not a boring numbers guy to me. Not at all, not at all. But he does like order and he likes making order out of chaos. So he also has this phenomenal memory. And so like the 800 page IRS code.

11:04 is he can memorize that. It's really phenomenal anyway. But we have rental properties, which I was managing. We had a bunch of our hands in a bunch of different things. And sure, it absolutely made those so much more, like less irritating knowing they were funding the creative work.

11:33 It also allowed us to, and this is, I think, maybe important for if you're starting a creative business, is that they allowed us to not have to monetize those creative businesses right away. We kept saying to each other, we're doing this for fun. If it's not fun, we shouldn't be doing it. And so for many years, we didn't have to make money. Steve didn't have to take an article assignment on something he didn't want to write about.

12:02 So that kind of thing. So I didn't have to do a lot of asks on my Instagram feed, for example, asking people to buy prints or buy cards or buy calendars. I never did any of that. So it allowed us just to, you know, because we were willing to do tax preparation and property management, we could then buy ourselves time to do creative work without having to monetize it. I think it also brings in more followers too when...

12:31 you're not trying to hawk whatever it is that you're doing and that you're simply putting it out there for pure pleasure and joy, then people want to see it and have more of it. And then when you do have something that they can buy, like this beautiful book, they're like, yes, please give it to me. Yes. That absolutely happened. I have a fellow print fine art printer here in Minneapolis and he's always saying, Mary Jo, you have a pent-up

13:01 But Carl, I don't want to sell prints. I don't want to. And but what happened is he's right. There was a pent up demand. And so I just announced pre-orders for my book at the end of January. And it's exceeding everybody's expectations. Succeeding my expectations of sales on the book. It's exceeding my publisher's expectations by a lot. I mean, it's doing phenomenally well. And that's because.

13:29 there was a pent up demand. I had never made anything, I never sold anything. And now suddenly people who have been following me for years can have a little piece of me, a piece of still, that people really like the project. And I have six personal essays in the book, so they get more of me than they get typically, just from Instagram posts or whatever. So that pent up demand right now is paying off in spades. I mean, I think the publisher is a little wide-eyed at the interest.

13:59 amount of interest we've already gotten and we haven't even hit pub date yet. So it'll be pub date when this airs. So congratulations, by the way. Let me be the first to congratulate you on pub day today in the future. Thank you. Thank you. Yeah. I mean, at the rate we're going, I mean, I'm fast approaching half sold out of the print run. That's absolutely insane. It's insane. And we're still a month from pub day, which is May 1.

14:28 So it's like, that's what not having monetized anything for 12 years does, I guess. So let that be a lesson, everybody. Just be patient. And then when you have a beautiful book to sell, it'll just sell out. People are like, what? No. Yeah, if you're not published, if you haven't published a book, all this talk, pre-order day, pub day, it doesn't mean a lot to anyone outside. But if you've...

14:57 published a book, it means those days are very significant. Yeah. And especially when your book is so, we're not talking about a paperback book that they're selling for \$15, \$20. This is a big, thick book that is \$60, that is, to me, it's a piece, it's a work of art. It is, it's truly a piece of art, it's a work of art. It's something that you will have out for other people to look at. So, to be selling out on your print run.

15:26 That's incredible because it's not something that everybody's buying because, you know, it's only \$15. It's \$60. It'll make people think about it, you know, before purchasing. So the fact that they are purchasing, it's a value and what you create is valuable. Thank you. I, you know, it is a work of art and I attribute that to my designer, Jessica Fleischman, and to my publisher, Monticelli, who just said yes to everything, you know, to every upgrade.

15:56 Can we get this paper? Can we emboss the cover? Can we add a signature? Every upgrade we asked in order to elevate it to that work of art, you know what I mean? And not just have it be an ordinary book. They said yes to. Everyone tells me that's so exceptional with publishers. So yeah, it's thrilling. It's actually thrilling. I'm so happy with it. You should be and proud of it.

16:22 I want to talk about one of the essays because I learned something I did not know from you and it completely changed literally every day of my life going forward. And it is the 72 micro seasons. I did not know about this and I'll let you explain it, I'll put it in layman's terms, but every five days there's a new season. After reading the essay, looking through the book, I found myself looking out the kitchen window and really noticing more.

16:52 And I think that's the beautiful thing that you're bringing to all of us. Besides these gorgeous photos that you've taken, this knowledge and this more being present in the moment and paying attention to what we would otherwise just, you know, just going to drive by and washing the dishes, no big deal. Now I'm looking at this one tree in my neighbor's yard and noticing the difference every day. Yeah. Noticing when the buds swell, noticing when the leaf buds burst, noticing when the...

17:21 Noticing when that new growth green goes from, you know, yellow green to dark green and summer. Yeah, it's fun. I'll tell you how that came to be because that, matter of fact, so I had an agent reach out to me on Instagram a couple years before I agreed to work with her. And she said, do you have a book in you? And I said, I'd love to, but I don't have an idea for a book yet.

17:48 And it's interesting you said it's a work of art because I said to her, I don't want to just do a gift book. I want an art object. You know, I want a substantial book. And I don't yet know how I would structure the book. So she was just right for me. She waited six months and then checked

back in. She wasn't too pushy. She said, still thinking about that book? I said, yep, still don't have an idea. And then six months later.

18:17 Still thinking about that book. And finally, what happened is I was reading this totally obscure book called *White* by a Japanese author called Kenyahara. And the book was about the importance of the color white in Japanese society. It's very esoteric. I just happen to love Kenyahara and his work. He's a designer. And he made one of the whole book, there was one paragraph where he said that he made a reference to the 72 micro seasons.

18:48 seasonal calendar of ancient Japan, and that people that were well-cultured lived by the 72 micro seasons. It was about 1500 years ago, the Heine period in Japan, sort of like our Italian Renaissance period, the high arts, a period of high art, and high art and culture. And so apparently, if you were well-educated, well-cultured, you lived by these 72 micro seasons. And if you read the Japanese 72 micro seasons, it's just like reads like poetry, like

19:18 Haiku almost, it's just beautiful descriptions of the unfolding of the seasons. And anyway, suddenly the thing that caught my attention, like it, I almost, my heart stopped when I read it because I was starting after doing years of doing still, which is a daily photo of nature. I had come to the same realization. I hadn't formalized it as, you know, I hadn't divided 365 by five.

19:46 and got, you know, figured out that it was 72 micro seasons. But I had realized that I whenever the seasons turn, whenever, you know, something happened, the pussy willow shows up that it would be, they'd be around for about five days before the maple blossoms happened. And then that would be around for about five days before, you know, whatever, the crocuses pushed up through the soil.

20:16 hadn't come to the realization that when I first noticed something, I would have about five days. So when I see that the ancient Japanese had cataloged or created their calendar year in these five-day increments, I was like, oh my God, that's, you know, I had just, I had been coming to that same conclusion. And so I looked at my portfolio and the images I'd been taking for, at that time, you know, nine, 10 years.

20:45 And sure enough, these five day increments. And so then I had the structure in my book. So that's one of the essays, of the six essays in the book, but it's the biggest one. And I took my bio region, which is the Great Lakes North, and mapped it onto the Japanese, onto the 72 micro seasons. And it was a lot, a ton of work, way more work than I thought.

21:12 72 is a lot of things to carry in your head at one time, but I'm super proud of how it turned out. And I'm thrilled to hear it's having you look at your environment differently. I mean, that's the whole goal. I mean, the subtitled book is the art of noticing. So I mean, that's the most thrilling feedback I could get. Oh, well good, because it truly has. And I feel like in this.

21:37 We're constantly on the go and it's go, go, go, especially in California. I know the Midwest is a little bit slower. I've lived there, I enjoyed it. It was probably my favorite place to live in all of the places that I've lived in America. But California, it's constantly on the go. We're going to school and we've got so many minutes and this is what we're doing. And if we just pause for just

a little bit, because we're taking the same route wherever we're going every single day and notice it, when you're at the stoplight.

22:06 look at the trees that are next to you or the bushes and see what's different. I think it's great for us and our kids. Many of my subjects were found during parent waiting at parent pickup at school. You know, those moments when you're just sort of waiting at five minutes to kill. For parent pickup, we had to obviously park the car and get out of the car and go meet the kids. So yeah, lots of subjects were found on the sidewalk during parent pickup.

22:35 I tend to find a lot of them on parking lot edges. I mean, so yeah, I mean, yes, our seasons, I was just in California doing a workshop. As you know, I had- Yeah, you were here. We got to meet in person everybody. We had dinner with Michelle. I went to her house, met her kids. So I was just in California and I was like, oh my gosh, the amount of nature, you know, I mean, nature in quotes.

23:04 was overwhelming for someone who just came out of a northern winter, you know, where I just, where I'm, you know, I have to look really, really hard to find tomorrow's subject to photograph. And there it was just like a tsunami of options of things I could make subjects of. I would adjust eventually, but it would take me months to adjust because I would have decision fatigue if I live in California.

23:31 Yeah, it's very different. The interesting thing about Japan is that we're, Minneapolis is at the 45th latitude, 45th parallel, and so is Japan. So their seasons were actually pretty close to ours. Interesting. Because they are maritime, they have the ocean, their spring starts a little earlier and their winter doesn't last as long. But other than that, very, very surprisingly similar. Amazing. Yeah.

23:58 So I love, I'm gonna veer just a little bit, but I love that you put this out there, this content every day, you've got people who come and follow you, and then people like Martha Stewart are like, hey, let's feature you. You've been on the Hello Sunshine YouTube, you've done stuff with Target. Like these are kind of big deals. Are they? Yeah, just a little bit.

24:26 It's so incredible to me and such. It's inspirational really, because you're doing what you love. You're doing something absolutely beautiful and you're not out there. I think a lot of people think you have to go out and you have to reach for this. And I got to reach out to these people and connect with these people. And you're like, I'm just doing what I'm doing and kind of chilling as they come to you. Yes, I'm still flabbergasted. I, you know, my husband,

24:55 I drive him crazy because I say, when we meet people and they say, what do you do, my flippant answer, I mean, how do you answer? Anyways, I got a quirky little nature blog. That's what I say. That gets me really big deals. I got a quirky little nature blog. I make a photo, one photo a day in nature and I post it to a blog. And that, you know.

25:22 And then what I end up doing is saying, you know what, it's too hard to explain. Can I just show you my Instagram feed and then you'll get an idea. So, you know, because it is, but the truth of the matter is I'm flabbergasted. I live in suburb, suburban Minnesota. So this a suburb of

St. Paul, I have started this because I had a puggle I needed to walk. The puggle doesn't like getting in the car anymore. So we, we, we walk one of the same five trails every day.

25:51 every single day and I find some nature to photograph and I post it to a blog and I have followers all over the world who find that interesting and it's the same five trails all within three miles of my house. I mean it couldn't be more hyper local, right? And you know, March comes around. I mean look at Michelle, I'm going to turn, listeners I'm turning my, it's...

26:17 snow covered out there. And I saw that on your Instagram the other day. The poor people that follow me have to, it's March, it's spring everywhere in the Northern Hemisphere and I'm still posting dried stems because that's my world. And they're hanging with me looking at dry stems while they've got tulips in their backyard. So anyways, it literally truly flabbergasts me. It flabbergasts me that I have

26:47 an art book published with the biggest art publisher in the world, Fieden, Monacelli's and imprint of Fieden, that the book's available for sale globally. And I walked the same five trails in Shoreview, Minnesota with my 15-year-old Puggle. Like, it's awesome. Crazy. I mean, it's crazy because I think, you know, I obviously follow a lot of artists. I follow a lot of

27:15 nature artists, land artists, you know, Andrew Goldsworthy types. And what those artists tend to do is they start, you know, they'll do a little something, but then as they get bigger audiences, they go farther and farther, right? They go, they go to more and more exotic places and bigger and bigger scale projects. And I did the opposite, which is, and really because the dog got older and older.

27:45 You know, I went deeper and deeper into the three miles around my own home. And so I went narrow and deep, whereas almost all artists I follow in this genre all tended to go wider, bigger, broader. And I went deep, narrower, just because of the reality of my situation. The business part of it continues to get bigger. As you go narrower,

28:11 things for you are getting bigger. And that's really fascinating. You know, it's like the whole, you gotta niche down that whole, you know, saying, when you're online business, you should niche down, only target, you know, one type of person or product or service. So I find it fascinating that the audience is growing, the opportunities are growing, and you're staying in this one spot. Why do you think people are so obsessed with these daily photos that are

28:40 in the middle of winter time while it's springtime. What is it about what you're doing that's bringing so many people to just want to be, I know you've mentioned that your whole Instagram is calm and this is what you're going for. What is it doing for people that keeps bringing them back to come narrower and narrower? Yeah. I wish I knew. I mean, if I, you know, it's like a secret hot sauce. I wish I knew.

29:09 And so what people tell me is like when they're scrolling on Instagram and they see one of my photos, they feel a sense of calm. You know, so they, they'll, and people comment a lot. I was scrolling and hit your photo and it's exactly what I needed today. And it's really like a photo of a seed pod. You know what I mean? Like, but it's just was that just take a pause. Just

29:36 look at the beauty of nature just for a second before you keep scrolling. And that calm, people love it. So I think it's that. I think people like, I tend to pick subjects, but then I play with, sometimes I just profile them. I take a photo because they're beautiful and then of themselves. But sometimes I manipulate them. There's a little bit of element of surprise where, you know, this, this.

30:05 look at this, but look what I did with it. And people love the surprise element. I don't know, I wish I knew. I didn't do this intentionally. I didn't do anything intentionally, but I do have a signature style. And my images are very, they're all on a bright white or pure black background. They're very spare. That was intentional. But people recognize my images when they see them.

30:33 And that just came out of me. I just play with the subject till I see what I like. I can't explain why I like this composition better than that. I just play until I see what I like through the viewfinder. So anyways, I think it's nature, which is universal, which everyone responds to, but then I do try to elevate it a little bit, you know what I mean? To make people see the subject anew. So it's not just here's a tulip. It's here's a tulip like you've never looked at a tulip before.

31:04 Does that make sense? It does. And I think that hustle and bustle that we're going through every day, nobody's stopping to take that time and you're literally doing it for us. Yeah. And then presenting it to us of like, Hey, you ran around all day, but here's what I took for you so you can pause and take this moment to notice really what's around you. Yeah. It's a beautiful gift you're giving us, Mary Jo. Oh, thank you. I, you know, I'm also, I, we didn't talk about this, but I'm all, you know, I started doing this in my mid forties. Um, but.

31:33 part of that for 17 years I was an aerospace engineer. You took the words out of my mouth. I was like, we haven't even talked about your career. So for me, I'm nerdy. So like when I do post, say I post some Blue Jay feathers, and I will talk about why it's August and why the Blue Jays are molting and why I'm finding so many Blue Jay feathers.

32:01 there's the most abundance of food for them because it makes them very vulnerable. They slough their old feathers and grow new ones and for that, for weeks, they're super vulnerable to predators. But so the month of August, you can always find blue jay feathers. And so that, and like I'm nerdy, I like knowing that. And then I share that when I post the beautiful photo of the blue jay feather, which is blue, with black stripes, it's super striking.

32:29 on a white background, super striking. But then I talk about why the Blue Jays are molting right now. And so I do this sort of nerdy, there's a little nerdy science with the really graphic photos. So anyways, I don't know why people follow what they do. I love what you're doing. I love you. Your background is incredible that you've practiced for retirement and then you've done these two 72 micro seasons.

32:58 I couldn't sing your praises more without it coming off as like, what the heck? And then we have to give Steve a little plug too, because Steve's book is coming out and I'll have him on the show too. But the beauty I love of Steve's book is that we get to know you too. And then the two

books truly tie into each other. I'm so proud that Amazon has figured out that you should buy the books together. Yeah. I post, Michelle's referring to, I posted yesterday because I went.

33:27 to copy my URL on Amazon to send to somebody. And I noticed when I pulled up my book on Amazon, they were also recommending Steve's book, you know, when they say frequently bought together. So that was a fun little surprise. Yes, Steve, like I said, we were in France. He started writing at Caudon. He won several food writing awards and then won the big Kahuna, the MFK Fisher James Beard Award for writing.

33:56 which is the most distinguished award for food writing you can get. And the day, the night he won that award, he got himself an agent, a book agent. That's how it works. And anyway- Isn't it both of you? You're like, hey, you just dropped into my DMs. It was like, do you have a book? That was not my experience. Anyway- I want to be a Hoffman in my next life. So anyway, Steve started writing a book.

34:26 The interesting thing, so his is a memoir about our time in France with the kids. If you love, you know, expats abroad or, you know, traveling with kids or food and wine or France, if you're Francophone, this is a book for you. Lots and lots of books written about from, you know, Americans traveling in France, but as far as I know, nobody's ever done it with school-age kids. So I think it's unique.

34:55 But his is a memoir. He was at it. He's been at it for like seven years. It's, he had won all sorts of awards for his essays, essay writing about food. And so it turns out when he moved to long form, writing a 300 page book was not intuitive. And so it's been a struggle. So the irony is he got a book contract probably three, four years before me. I got one, you know, a couple of years ago.

35:25 of all coincidence and however the world works, we're launching our books two months apart. It wasn't timed. The two publishers, he's with Penguin Random House, I'm with Fieden, Monticelli. It's completely coincidental that the books are launching. But they do, so the memoirs about our time in France. So the whole time I'm in the memoir, I'm doing my blog. I'm doing still the project.

35:53 And one of my essays in my book is about, well, it's about doing still in France, but it's, you know, 20 of the images are from France. And so the two books are super complimentary, completely different ones. Totally different. But I love the two. The coffee paper book versus trade paperback. Yeah. But to read the two, it was for me to read Steve's book and see what you were doing. And then afterwards I got your book.

36:19 and got to see the fruits of your labor, and it all just felt like it came together. So I love that making a package deal. You got to buy them both. I know. And I hope people discover that. There's a lot of people on Instagram that follow us, follow both of us, and have been following us since those years in France. But that's a few thousand, that's thousands of people. And I hope that somehow...

36:47 that when people find like Steve's book or my book, they find the other one because it completes the story in a way. It does. And hopefully people will find both books. Yeah. And it allows us to get to know you guys as a couple, as a family. I loved it. I'm so grateful that we've gotten to know you.

37:08 In that realm, of course, now you're my friend. So I get to know you on a new level, but it was so much fun to hear about these inner workings and your relationship and how you guys communicate. And we all call him Steve, but she calls him Stevie. And you call him out on stuff. And I loved it. It was very real. And then to get to explore through his book, they work on a vineyard for a while and everybody in France is like,

37:37 Mary Jo here, take a picture of this. So now we get to see it in your book. So I love the two and I'll put links in the show notes for both of them to buy them together. And we will definitely have Steve on the show too. So we can get to know him since all of the French stuff I couldn't pronounce in the book. Yeah, I know. And that was, when you write a book like that, it's a discussion with the publisher, do we need to translate every French expression or just let it roll off?

38:07 So anyways, that's always a tough decision. And Steve's, hopefully he's gonna do the audio version. Yes. Because we're in Southern France and it's got a heavy Southern accent. So it's called the Midi accent and he can do it, you know. And I just hope he gets to do the book and do it with the Midi accent because it's just an absolutely charming accent, French accent. Yeah, oh, I can't wait. Yeah.

38:35 Can you share with everyone where they can find you and where they can buy still? Yes. So my blog is [stillblog.net](http://stillblog.net) and I still post one image a day if you go there. I'm on Instagram at Mary Jo Hoffman. I think, I haven't checked, if you type in still or still blog, you'd probably find your way to me, but it's just Mary Jo Hoffman one string. And yeah, those are the two places I'm active. I'm on Pinterest.

39:05 And the book is available for sale everywhere. It's called Still the Art of Noticing by Mary Jo Hoffman. And it's because of Fiden's, a global company, it's available everywhere worldwide. I can't wait. Congratulations. Yeah, thanks so much. Thank you so much for coming on and sharing all of this with us and really giving us this life lesson of what we need to really notice every day. Yeah, thanks Michelle. I loved it. I loved being here. Thank you.

39:35 Okay, friends, what is the daily habit you are going to start? I kid, you don't have to start a new habit. But what I do want you to do is look out your window, whether it's when you are washing your dishes, like I do. I take a peek out into my friend Nahal's backyard and look at what is growing on her trees. And I'm looking out my office window to see.

40:00 what's going on with the different trees there, or on my way to school to pick up or drop off the kids, what's happening to the blossoms along the way, and start noticing that. Notice the beauty that is around you and how it changes so frequently, and yet we don't stop to notice how

frequently it does change. It's an absolutely beautiful thing that you can do for yourself, and it will help you reflect and pause and take a moment

40:30 from your busy day to notice what is around you. Go out and purchase Mary Jo's book. It is absolutely stunning. I promise you, you will love looking at it. Your kids will love looking at it, mind you, because it's so absolutely gorgeous. And it is simply nature, the beauty that is around all of us.