

Transcript

00:00 You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 231. 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, the podcast matchmaker

00:30 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. Before I forget, I do have a favor to ask each of you. Could you please head over to Amazon and leave my book, How to Get on Podcasts, a review? I would greatly appreciate it. Getting to 25 does something with the boost. Getting to 50 or more does something even bigger for the author. So I appreciate it, and that's your reminder also.

01:12 to leave reviews for the books you love because it helps out the authors. Whether or not you purchased it on Amazon, you can still leave a review. So now that I've given myself my plug, I want to introduce you to today's guest, Darcy Guyant. And Darcy is someone who's not only left a review for the book, he has been a follower and a newsletter subscriber, and he read the book.

01:38 and he pitched me with everything he learned in the book. It was amazing to see everything put into practice. I was so excited. But you are going to love Darcy's story and what he's done for his career. He flew for the Coast Guard and he saved lives. Quite literally, that has been his job. And he is now a volunteer in his local school, helping children who have parents, many who are

02:07 overseas who are serving our country and it is so awesome to hear his story and what he's done with his career and the stories that he has how he's sharing them through children's books. So I am so excited for you to get to meet and learn from Darcy. Hi Darcy. Good morning Michelle. How are you? I'm so good. How are you doing? I'm doing great this morning. Pleasure to meet you.

02:34 Great to meet you. And I feel like, like I said before, like we have met, I feel like, because we follow each other and you've communicated to me what you're working on. And so, you know, I stalk you a bit and your pitch was the first one from the book. So big props to you for doing your homework, getting through it and applying it. Oh, good. Well, thank you. It was very, very well written, very informative.

03:02 And just to let you know, you are my first podcast since reading the book and doing the pitches. I put out a few other pitches and I do have some other, or at least one other podcast scheduled for two weeks. So excellent. Everything you wrote, it works. The proof is in the

pudding. Thank you. Can you introduce yourself to everyone before we go dive deeper? Sure. Well, my name is Darcy Guyant. I am a retired veteran of.

03:31 the Army and the Coast Guard. I spent 25 years in the military. Most of that time was in the Coast Guard as a helicopter pilot. And since retiring from the Coast Guard in 2005, I've kind of bounced around and done a bunch of different jobs, kind of trying to find my niche of what I wanted to do or what I wanted to do when I grew up. About nine years ago, I started, decided to stop working. I was kind of working part time.

03:59 and I started volunteering at a local elementary school. Started out just one day a week for a couple hours in the morning, and then it grew into more and more and more. And before long, I figured out that I really like being in a school and volunteering and helping teachers and helping kids. So it actually turned into a full-time gig of volunteering at an elementary school, and I've been doing that for nine years.

04:28 I've backed off a little bit to just half days now. I used to do full days, but now I'm just doing half days every morning. And it's all with first grade students and first grade teachers. But I'm there every morning for about four, four and a half hours doing anything and everything the teachers can throw at me. And they find all kinds of really fun ways to keep me involved.

04:53 and they don't want me to leave now. You know, I've kind of integrated myself into their team. There's five first grade teachers and I've kind of integrated myself into their team as a sixth member. So I really enjoy that. And then most recently I became an author. We can talk more about that later and how that happened, which totally out of the blue, never expected that, ever expected I'd go down that road. So that's where we're at today.

05:22 That's awesome. I can see why they would want to integrate you because as a volunteer myself, I know how much work there is to how much help the teachers need in first grade. That's where they're just learning to read and that's a fun age. When they get to third grade, then they have a little sass to them, but it's different for sure. Let's talk about, no, it's funny because your career in aviation.

05:50 matches with mine. And in your pitch, you did mention how much per gallons, how many gallons you used and then approximately how much per gallon, you know, there was in that calculation. And it's funny, I've been out of aviation for a long time and my husband, he's still in it. And he said to me the other day, he goes, you know, I had a client meeting and jet fuel is now seven to \$8 a gallon. Whoa. And I went, Oh my gosh, that's absolutely crazy.

06:20 Your millions is a lot more millions now of what you would have been paying me. Yeah. My career as a pilot, I loved it, especially being a helicopter pilot. But as you know, it's expensive to operate aircraft, especially helicopters, because they are gas guzzlers. I always enjoyed knowing that being a pilot in the military, not only was I getting paid, that was my job. I was getting paid to do something I loved.

06:49 but they provided me a free helicopter to use. They paid for all the gas. They said, yeah, go ahead and fly. And then of course in the process I got to save lives, which you can't put a

price on lives. So all those, and I like to tell American taxpayers that yeah, your money goes to good use with the ghost guard because they're actually doing a great mission to our country. So that's my point. I love that.

07:13 Preach on. I worked in Santa Barbara at the airport. So of course we're on the coast and we had the Coast Guard flying in and whatnot. One of my clients was PHI that would go out to the oil rigs. So I would, for some reason, I always went on maintenance flights. Now people don't go on maintenance flights. That's when they're testing to make sure that what they fixed works. And I would be like, yeah, take me up. No problem.

07:40 But I loved riding in the helicopter and it's so, I mean, there's an art to, you know, making sure that your pedals when you're hovering, that you're doing it the right way. I always, I said from then on, if I was going to learn to fly, it was gonna be a helicopter. Right. Yeah, I never intended to go into helicopters. When I was in high school, I decided I wanted to be a pilot. I started taking flying lessons my senior year of high school and then I realized it's really expensive. So I...

08:09 looked at, okay, who can I get to pay me or pay for my training? And of course, the military came to mind and I ended up going into the Army because they were the only ones that would take me right out of high school. And I didn't really want to go to college first and all that. So I went right into the Army out of high school and they taught me to fly helicopters. I never switched. I stayed in helicopters my entire career, first with the Army and then...

08:37 After seven years with the Army, I switched over to the Coast Guard so I could use my skills as a helicopter pilot and doing search and rescue and saving lives. And what is that like? You know, it's one thing to be a pilot. It's when you think about those flying in the air, the ones who are in wars dropping bombs. There are, you know, the fighter jets, there's the ones that like the Blue Angels, the Thunderbirds that are performing and there's a lot of skill. And here you're going out.

09:07 and your whole mission is to find someone to save them and to do it in a way that keeps your crew safe, that you're flying over oceans and seas. It's absolutely insane. You're pretty bad ass, Darcy. Well, thank you. We get a lot of training to be able to do that. And to be perfectly honest, in the Army, they taught us, do not fly over the water.

09:33 because we weren't equipped, our aircraft were not equipped to land or crash in the water, and we didn't have equipment on ourselves to survive if we did go down to the water. And so that was like rule number one, do not fly over the water, water is dangerous. And then I went to the Coast Guard and we're like, okay, we stay over the water, over the land, there's things to run into, over the water, yeah, it's flat and you know where the surface is and there's not as many things to run into. And it took a mindset.

10:00 to get used to flying over the water and then make that jump to flying out of the site of land going like way offshore and then going out on ships out into the middle of the ocean where the only other place to land was back on the ship. So it took a couple of years to really get

comfortable with that. But you got a lot of training. You have the aircraft is well equipped. We wear equipment to help us if the worst happens.

10:31 But it's still a challenge. You go out there, especially night, bad weather. That's when people usually get in trouble, is in the middle of a storm or at night or someplace like that. And then they call us and we go out to do our jobs and save them. Do you have a most memorable rescue or scariest rescue? Is there one that just stands out in your mind from all of your career?

10:58 There are several that stand out and I've actually written about some of them. I wrote a memoir. Perfect segue. I can tell you more about that if you want later. Yeah. I put a lot of those stories in my memoir and then I took some of those stories and I wrote them into or made them into children's books, children's stories. One of the stories that actually the first children's book I did was one of those search and rescue stories where-

11:28 three men caught in a tropical storm in the Gulf of Mexico, and we had to fly out. And it was at the, we had to go out to the limits of our fuel capacity, fuel endurance, and try to hoist these guys off of a sinking boat in really bad seas. And we started to run out of gas in the middle of it. And we, at one point, we weren't even sure if we were gonna be able to make it back to shore, but couldn't leave the guys because they knew they would die. But...

11:55 It was challenging and stressful, but we made it and landed with fumes, on fumes in the tank, but we saved everybody. So, I mean, that was a stressful mission, but we did our jobs. And I've had several missions like that that were challenging. But yeah, it was all rewarding.

12:20 So let's talk about your memoir. Let's talk about the children's books some more and how did those come to fruition? You've got this amazing career, you've retired, you're volunteering, where did writing come in? Okay, well, because of my involvement here in the school district, I get invitations to go and talk at other schools. And one of the invitations I got a couple years ago was to go and a guest speaker at a Veterans Day assembly at a high school.

12:49 And the theme for the Veterans Day assembly that year was legacy of service. And I think, well, yeah, I can speak about that. I'm a seventh generation descendant of a revolutionary war veteran who served with George Washington at the Battle of Yorktown. And so it's, you know, there's some history there, but then my, my family, my immediate family, we've all served.

13:14 in the military and we have all five branches of the military covered in just my immediate family. My dad was in the Navy, my son was a Marine Corps, and all that. So it was easy for me to talk about legacy of service with these kids. But as I was doing some research, I kind of realized that my grea the Revolutionary War veteran, I didn't know

13:44 He detailed his service in the Revolutionary War, what battle he was in, he was wounded, and it had some information about where he was born in England and immigrated to the United States before the revolution started, and then he retired, and he lived to the age of 84. But we really didn't know anything about him, and I had a lot of questions like, well, why did he come to the United States in the 1760s?

14:12 early 1770s. And what did he do before the war? What did he do afterwards? And we didn't have any information. And my grandparents have done a lot of genealogy on our family history. So there wasn't anything about it. And I said, well, it would have been nice if he'd wrote something down, you know, some letters or a memoir or, you know, whatever. So I thought about that as I was doing this preparing for the speaking engagement.

14:42 but I still wasn't really motivated yet to write anything down. Well, it was a few months later that my granddaughter was born. And she was born in 2020. And I started thinking, you know what? Now I have a reason why I should write a memoir and put down some of the stories so that someday she will know about her grandpa, maybe her grandkids and their grandkids. And you know, somebody like me, seven generations from now, I wanted to know about.

15:11 Yeah, that guy that used to fly helicopters, maybe not use helicopters anymore 200 years from now. But, so that was my motivation to initially write my memoir. So I picked 12 significant events from my life. A lot of it's Coast Guard, some army, and a little bit about my life prior to the military and then what I'm doing now and afterwards. So I put that all in a book. And then...

15:40 I shared the book with some of my first grade teachers. They said, you know what, you could make some of these stories into children's books. And at first I'm like, nah, I don't know anything about writing. I'm a one and done. I did a memoir and I self-published it because I didn't think anybody else would ever want to read it. But then they kind of said, yeah, you should give it a try. And I did. And they gave me a lot of feedback. My first drafts, they would read it and said, yeah, you need to.

16:10 shorten this up, you know, it's a children's. They're first graders. And remember, and then the biggest advice one of the teachers gave me, her name is Erin Wyrick, she said, you know what, you're going to have illustrations in this thing, so you don't have to describe every detail. And I'm like, wow, well, that cuts out a lot of the words if you're not having to describe what everything looks like, because you got illustrations. So I wrote my first children's book. That was...

16:38 It actually published on May 9th, almost a year ago, coming up on a one year anniversary, and then I wrote a second, and then I wrote a third, which is gonna be published in June, and I put together a children's activity book for the schools to use with coloring pages and all kinds of different things they like to use in school, that I know about from my experience at school. So that's kinda how I fell into this. I never expected it to...

17:08 and I never had any training in writing. That's amazing. I interview so many authors and some have their MFA and they've taken courses. I've never taken a course myself either. And I feel like there's a part of me that goes, well, if I just sit down and start typing and writing, it'll come out the way it's supposed to. And that's my hope, at least. And I've been told you don't need an MFA. You don't have to go to school for this. If you can write, you can write.

17:38 Yeah, in fact, a couple weeks ago, I listened to your interview with Olivia Strauss. Oh, yes. She talked about, you know, she's MFA and, and all that. And I sometimes feel, uh, uh, what do

they call it? Imposter syndrome, you know? Yeah, I'm an author, but I don't really feel like an author because, you know, I, and I never really wanted to write where you hear a lot of the authors.

18:07 That's something they've wanted to do their entire life. You know, they've grown up wanting to be an author or publish a book. And I never really wanted to do that until a couple of years ago. And then I sell, I'm self-taught. You know, I did, uh, I bought some books, you know, to read about how to, how to write, how to write children's books. I watched a lot of videos. There's a lot of great people and organizations out there that give you all kinds of guidance on how to write a book.

18:35 It's doing okay. In fact, I found out day before yesterday that my first two children's books have been awarded Mom's Choice gold medals. That's amazing, congratulations. So I can now say, and that helps with my award-winning author syndrome. Oh, I'm now a award-winning author, you know? That is so cool. How did you, with the illustrations, how did you go about finding someone that

19:04 brought your vision to life? Because that's one of my problems, whether it's, we're not talking about children's books, but like when I look at graphics and I have a hard time relinquishing that control, because I have a vision in my head that I feel like I need to get down. So how did that work for you? Well, when I decided I was going to start writing a children's book, and then I got the advice from the teacher that says you need an illustrator. So I started looking at, and I've been reading first grade books, you know, to kids for

19:34 And now I started looking at it with a different eye toward the illustrations and who is the illustrator. And so I started researching, I find illustrations in some of the children's books that are out there and I'd research who the illustrator is and come to find out that a lot of these illustrators, they're like as famous as some of the authors and they charge a lot of money for their skills. Sure. So I did a lot of...

20:01 researching on the internet and just googling and looking and looking. And I found an organization, it's the name of the organization is Get Your Books [illustrated.com](https://www.illustrated.com). Went to their website and they have a team of illustrators, artists, and they had a whole menu or examples of different illustrations. And they matched me up. They hooked me up and matched me up with a...

20:29 artists that they thought would be a good fit for what my vision was and what my story was. And it turned out to be great. His name is Sergey. He lives in Ukraine. And he's illustrated all three of my children's books now. So it was a lot of research to find him. Yeah. That's amazing. And then do you give them guidelines of, you know, this is what I'm thinking, or do you just say, here's the book and go for it? No. Because Sergey, he doesn't live.

20:59 He lives in Ukraine, so he doesn't live on the ocean, or he never spent a lot of time with the ocean. He was never in the military, he never flew helicopters, all kinds of things that are integral to the story. So I gave him a lot of ideas of what the illustration should look like. I didn't

draw anything for him, and occasionally I'd send him a picture of, okay, here's a picture of the helicopter that I flew, and here's a picture of what the ocean looks like, and here's a picture of...

21:28 things like that of kind of what I had in mind and then he would take that and and there was a lot of back-and-forth you know he'd do a sketch send it to me I go yeah let's add this or take off that and then we go through the storyboard outline of the of the book and then and then he would illustrate it or color it you know put the color to it and so that was the most time-consuming process actually writing

21:56 books because my books are based on true stories. So I didn't have to spend a lot of time writing a fiction story. I'm just telling a story of something that really happened and writing it down. And then I had an editor that smoothed it out, of course. The hard part or the time-consuming part and the more expensive part of it is illustrations. But I've gotten...

22:22 I get a lot of great comments, reviews on the illustrations also. So it's adorable. Share what the characters names are because it's so cute and what the background is on that for everybody. All right. So the the helicopter, his name is Dolph and he is a Coast Guard HH 65 Dolphin rescue helicopter. So that's where I got the name Dolph from. It's just dolphin shortened up and.

22:50 And when I was thinking about how can I write these, tell these stories to kids, I'm saying, well, first of all, no brainer, the helicopter has to be able to talk and he has eyes and he can communicate. He has a little mouth and all that. So I didn't want it to be too cartoonish. I still wanted it to look like a real, the real helicopter, so the body of it and everything looks the same, but he can talk and he's got eyes. And then his pilot, her name is Gwen.

23:20 And the reason I named her her Gwen, well, why I used her her in the first place instead of me is I wanted somebody that my granddaughter could be a role model, emulate, look up to in the story. And so I made the pilot a woman and I gave her the name Gwen, which is my granddaughter's name. Her name is Gweneth, sometimes you call her Gwen. And that was the connection with my granddaughter.

23:50 And I actually, when I did the illustrations or started the illustrations on the character, I sent pictures of my daughter and my granddaughter to the illustrator and said, yeah, when you can you make Gwen look kind of like my daughter and granddaughter or how they might look, you know, when my granddaughter's in her 20s. And he did. And the first time I showed the cover of the book to my granddaughter, and I think at the time she was only like two and a half, maybe I asked her.

24:19 Who is that? And I showed her the cover and she said, mama. So I went, yes, the illustrator nailed it. She knew immediately that that looked like her mama. So that's where Dolph and Gwen and the title of the stories, the adventure series comes from. What a gift, what a gift for Gwen.

24:41 to, you know, all of this is going to live on forever. So your legacy of writing your memoir, these podcasts, interviews of you sharing of, you know, she was the inspiration for you to start

this. And then to have a story of her recognizing her mom on the cover of this children's book. It's, it's amazing. And it's to me, it's what a legacy should be. You know, we get to hear your stories, they'll live on forever.

25:08 And now this little person in the world is going to know that she was the inspiration behind all of it. Yeah. Yeah. And that was, you know, in the back of my mind the whole time that I'm writing this and going through this project. So I love this. And I'm not done. I've got more stories in my head that I can go and keep keep doing the books. And so, yeah, I have two clients who they they have this. One of their topics is.

25:37 practicing for retirement. And they started doing this in their 40s where they took things on side things of, what do we wanna do when we retire? And I feel like you've done this almost on accident of, okay, what am I gonna do next? I wanna volunteer and I'm gonna be a children's book author. Yeah, and if you'd asked me that 10 years ago, and I said, what? No way, but it happened and I feel.

26:05 but I'm exactly where I need to be. So I love that. So we got more books coming. If you can really find what you want to do when you grow up, you know, and have something to keep you active and engaged and busy, I recommend it. I love it. I hope to get there someday to retire and to keep doing what I'm doing though. Yeah. So where can everyone find you? Where can they find these new books? I'm so excited that you have another one coming out.

26:34 And by the time this goes live, it'll just be next month. So congratulations in advance, but share where we can find these books and learn more about you and follow you. Okay, well, the books are all available on anywhere you can buy, you know, books online, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, any online retailers. And I also have my own website. It's just my first and last name, darcygiant.com. You can purchase books directly from me.

27:03 autographed copies from me. They won't be autographed if you buy them from Amazon, but I do autographed copies. Those are the primary places you can go. I've got other information about if you want me to come and speak at a school. I'm getting a lot more school events now to go and speak at schools and read my books to kids, which is my favorite thing. I just love getting in front of a...

27:29 bunch of kindergarten first, second, third graders, and reading the story and seeing their faces and listening to their questions. And it's just so much fun telling them the stories and all that, but yeah. I love the television interview where you brought your helmet to the classroom and wore it and they could all see it and ask questions. It's a hands-on experience that otherwise kids don't normally have. Right. Well, you know what? We didn't even talk about the fact, and I wanna talk about this before we wrap up.

27:58 the children and the area that you work and live in, they all kind of have a military tie to them. So before we end anything, let's talk about that some more and how you relate to these kids in a different way than other volunteers might. Right, so where we live here in Lacey,

Olympia, a Washington area, there's a military base, it's a joint base, Lewis-McChord, an army and an air force base.

28:25 We have a lot of Army and Air Force people that live here and work here. And the school where I volunteer has a very high percentage of military dependents. And I work with some of those first graders and their parents are quite frequently gone or at least one of the parents are gone on deployment for months at a time. Maybe they're away on training. They face the challenges of being a military dependent.

28:55 of having to move and pull up the roots and then relocate to a new school and make new friends and there's a lot of stresses that come along with that. So I can, I understand that because my kids were military kids and they had to move when I moved and they did well in that because my wife and I knew how to help them and help them transition to that. So I...

29:22 I make it a point to get to know the kids that are military families, from military families and try to get to know the parents if I can also. And just kind of help them through that transition because I understand what they're going through and how it's different from somebody that lives in the same community their whole life and everything's familiar to them for their entire life. So I think I bring a little bit of a benefit to that.

29:49 I love it. It's so special. So I'm glad that I remember to bring that up because it is unique and I think it's so special. And it's something that a lot of us probably don't think about are, you know, these children who are experiencing this, this lifestyle per se, and how they need that extra kind of love and support that, you know, they aren't getting and so you bring that to them and it is such a gift. So thank you.

30:16 Thank you for your service. Thank you for bringing these stories to children and to the rest of us. And I'm just, I'm so excited we got to know you better and that you reached out. I appreciate you so much. All right, well, thank you, Michelle. I appreciate what you're doing too. It wouldn't happen, this wouldn't happen without you and your book. I know it wouldn't though, so that was very encouraging. Oh, thank you. Friends, listen to Darcy's story and take a moment to recognize

30:45 that you can do something completely different as you look at your retirement. If you've listened to Mary Jo Hoffman's episode and how she and her husband Steve practiced for retirement, I feel like Darcy has done the same and figured out what he wants to fill his days with that fill him up. And it's such a perfect example of what he's doing, how he's also launched a new career as an author while doing it.

31:15 and how they marry each other and allow him so much fulfillment and fun and a passion for what he's doing every day in retirement. So think about what you can do. Take that little step today and plant that seed so that you can not only live the life that you want to doing what you want every single day, but practice for retirement while doing it as well.

31:42 Thank you so much for listening. Don't forget to leave a review for the book, please. And while you're at it, head over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review for the show. Just hit the five stars. I greatly appreciate it.