

## Transcript

00:00

You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 249. 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.

00:25

author of How to Get on Podcasts, 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.

00:45

Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Today I get to introduce you to one of my newer friends, Jonathan Conyers, whom I met in New York back in June. His book, his memoir is called I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here, and it is his life story and really all of the moments and times in which he wasn't supposed to be here and how he got through all of those moments.

01:14

how he got through those struggles that are absolutely incredible. And here he is not even 30 years old yet. He is amazing. And I am so excited to get to share some of his story with you and what he's doing to literally save lives every single day, figuratively and literally. And he is just an absolutely incredible human being. And we're gonna talk about all of what he's been through.

01:42

what he's doing today and his incredible memoir. Hi, Jonathan. How you doing, Michelle? I'm so good. I'm so happy to talk to you. You bring a smile to my face. Can you introduce yourself to everyone, please? Of course, of course. I'm Jonathan Conyers. I don't know, I go by many titles. I'm a respiratory therapist slash neonatal pediatric specialist at NYU Medical Center. I'm also an author. My book is titled, I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here.

02:11

And I'm the co-founder of the Brooklyn Debate League, which is a nonprofit that help at-risk kids learn more about speech and debate throughout New York City. And I think I do like 70 more things. We won't name all of them. And most importantly, I'm a husband and I'm a dad to three amazing children. So yes. I read your memoir, which was absolutely incredible after getting to meet you in person, which was even better.

02:38

And then I was actually just reading your website and your bio and I went, oh, I didn't know all of this too. There's so much. And the title of your book really says it all from literally the moment that you were conceived, you weren't supposed to be here and your story is, it's so incredible it's because your life could have been totally different than what it is today.

03:07

Can you share just a bit, we don't wanna give the full book away because I want everybody to listen to the show and then go buy your book. But can you give them a synopsis of what it was? What is the book about? What has your life journey been like? Yeah, so overall, I think, like you said perfectly, the title speaks for itself. So I found myself in many places where I felt like I wasn't supposed to be here. So I was born to James and Majeane Kyrus.

03:34

I always say I'm the fifth and unwanted child. I know that sounds bad, but my parents fought addiction. They were, you know, the history of the 80s in New York City and how crack took over a lot of communities. They were a product of that. They already had four kids, was homeless, and I was the last one. My parents, they didn't know what I was going to be, but they just felt like they didn't deserve to put more kids in the world. They tried to abort me early on.

04:03

due to a hernia, thank God for hernias. The doctor said no. And it's funny, I always tell people Bellevue was the last place to say no, Bellevue Hospital. And Bellevue is two blocks from NYU Medical Center. So I always, when I park, I always walk past that hospital to go on to work and I always say thank you. Whatever man is in here that said, no, we're not doing this. Just, no, we

can't abort this baby. Thank you. So, you know, even from the beginning of my book, I just tell my...

04:31

A little bit of my origin story, like I really wasn't supposed to be here. And then throughout my life, I just kept finding myself in spaces where it was just like, how did you get access to this from going to MS Square, which is a big time math and science program for average kids at Phillips Academy and over, which is the number one boarding school in the country. Like how did I get here from competing on a national level in speech and debate world at Harvard, Yale, and all of these elite colleges and high schools? Like how did I get here?

04:59

from getting in trouble with the law and just ending up on the positive side of it and not having to spend time in jail and being able to get a second chance. It's like, how do I get here from ending up at Stony Brook University and becoming a top student there and humans in New York and all these things that just kept happening to my life. It's like, how do I get there? So a little bit of this, my journey, and it's a lot more things that happen, as you know, if anybody read the book.

05:25

You know, there's a lot of highs and lows, and it's this rollercoaster adventure of my life. And I think it was just important to share my story. A lot of Black and Brown individuals, especially men in my age, don't get to tell their story. And at 29, I was like, I was 27 when I got my deal, but it was like, why do anybody want to hear my story? I'm just living life. I'm just learning life. And I didn't realize how much I even meant through and how much I had to overcome just to get to this point.

05:52

And unfortunately, there's so many people that look like me that had that same story and some of those same traumas and battles that they have to go to just to get to this spot. So, it's a little bit of my book there. I know. You're a baby. Wait until you hit your 40s and then you have another memoir come out. One of the things that I love that you say quite often outside of the book and in the book is that it takes a village. And you truly were surrounded.

06:20

by incredible people who helped you get to where you are and believed in you and pushed you. They really did. And I know that the one was the principal or the teacher in your first school passed away before you could say thank you. And I know that I teared up at that part of the book because I know you wanted to thank him for believing in you and for pushing you. And so-

06:45

What do we do for people who don't have a village? How do we become that village? How did you find your village? And how are you being a village for others? That's a lot of questions in one, sorry. That's great, it's great. I think one of the toughest things, and I talk to people all the time, and one of the most powerful moments in my book, and I say it's the most powerful moment because the world told me it was one of the most powerful. I've done so many speeches.

07:12

been on so many stages, I've had to do an awesome book tour and everybody was like, the homeless man with a tie. And it wasn't strategic. When we wrote it, I was like, it was just something that I wanted to say, this guy was part of my village. And this guy don't know his name, don't know if he's alive. I don't know where he's at. I can't even trace him if I wanted to. But in our 20 minute interaction, he taught me how to tie a tie on my first day of high school. My dad worked construction, never really wore suits. He was battling with his addiction. So he never...

07:41

really had any type of professional jobs. So I've never been around people with suits or had to tie ties every time. And when this man taught me that, I think the power of that moment was even something I do every day, something I get to teach my son, tying ties and going to gallows and doing all these events. And I think back to this one homeless man who literally yelled at me in the bus on my way to Harlem who taught me how to tie my tie. And I say, it doesn't take a lot to be a village. So many people who want it, there's so many people out there who want to help, but...

08:10

have so many things going on in their lives. They're so busy, whether they're trying to create a company, whether they're writers, whether they have a nine to five, no matter what's going on, it's like, how do you constantly show up for somebody and pour into somebody when the world is just difficult at baseline? And I always tell people, it doesn't mean giving all your resources. It doesn't mean giving all your time. It's just simple acts of kindness that can get somebody over the hump. I was so nervous on my first day of high school. I was going to an area where I know just,

08:39

from a community standpoint that I've done things that I wasn't proud of in those communities. I didn't know if my life was gonna be in jeopardy. I didn't know if I was gonna run into a different gang member. And for somebody to just ease me just by teaching me how to tie a tie and telling me, you know, you're gonna have this good first day of high school was more than enough to get through that first day when my anxiety was already taking control. So I consider that person an honorary Village member of mine. And as you speak, as you talked about Village, that is the main theme. Mr. Marshall, who passed away,

09:10

When I was in high school, who was my middle school kind of like social worker and counselor, I really, you know, one of the people I didn't write in the beginning, but I should have, I should have dedicated this book to him also because one of the things I promised myself for my life is that I'm always going to say thank you and give grace to people who have helped me, who have believed in me, who have showed up for me. And it's because of him. It's because of that regret I will hold on forever. And I hope that he's in a better place. I hope he's watching over me and I'm making him proud.

09:38

I always wanted to tell my mentors, teachers, professors, anybody who poured into me that I love you, you're appreciated, and thank you because you don't have to do the things you're doing. And yes, I gave you a synopsis of what my book is and what the little details about my life, but the main takeaway of the book is that every chapter is dedicated to somebody. Every chapter is me telling somebody, thank you. Without you, I don't get through what I'm going through in that chapter.

10:06

And I'm thankful I got to write this book and talk about so many amazing people who do this work every day freely, expecting nothing in return. And they never knew that they would have this moment and somebody in my position to say, I see you, I appreciate you and what you've done, I don't take lightly. And you know, that was one of the main reasons of my book. And I tell people being a part of somebody village, it doesn't mean you have to give all of yourself. It could just be a simple deed.

10:33

and kindness. And sometimes you don't know what that can do for a person in that moment when they're going through something difficult, painful. Let's talk about your debate coach who is still in your life today. It's Dico, right? Did I say that right? Dico. Okay. Yeah. Let's talk about this person because the story, the bond from the very beginning, and then he left your life and came back in and there's a love, a genuine love there.

11:03

that still exists today, which is so special and sweet. And it brings us to the debate aspect too, because I want to get into how you got into debate and what you're doing to help kids today. Yeah. So it was funny. One of the things when I got into high school, which when you read the book, it wasn't something I wanted to go to, and I won't give too much details away. But when I got into this high school, I had this rule with Dr. Hodge, who was my principal at the time. And it was...

11:29

You had to do an after school activity. We didn't want you running back to the Bronx or doing anything illegal or ruining your life. So he wanted his students to go to these intense schools. You're taking APs, you know, even though it was a public school in a very poor area, we had access to a lot of things because of this man believed in black excellence and wanted to pour into the students. And he fought so hard for us to have these things. We had fencing, we had like kids going to Japan. That was not the norm for poor public school in Harlem.

11:58

And he also had to be brought these activities and he expected kids to take advantage of these opportunities. And he would say things like, Hey, I'm going to tell the judge and all these things because of things I've done in my life that you can read about in a book that if you don't go to

after school, then you're going to get in trouble, which was false. I don't think that's true now that I'm an adult that couldn't happen, but I believed it at 13, 14. So for a while I wondered a whole, I'm like, Oh my God, what am I doing?

12:24

I have a Southern background, so I'm like, there's no football here. There ain't no space. What am I going to do? I'm 5'5", I can't play. I'm not joining a basketball team in New York City. These are some really good basketball players. So I didn't know what I was going to do. I grew up with a bunch of brothers who were jocks, so I'm like, there's nothing athletic I can really do here. And one day I was walking through the hallway and I seen this individual talking to all of these upperclassmen, mostly seniors, about what's your why and why do you do the things you do? And they were talking about...

12:53

world and how do we change the world? How do we create community and all of these wonderful things that just resonated with me? And I just asked, hey, can I sit in the back of your classroom and due to numerous other reasons, I didn't want to be in the cafeteria. So I would take my lunch breaks and sit in the back of the classroom. And eventually there was a moment where somebody was talking about, you know, welfare and how, you know, people on social security just gets everything for free. And it really bothered me. And as a kid who needed food stamps, who...

13:22

family was on social security, but still living shelters and all these things. I didn't understand how this person thought that my life was easy or that anything was given to me when I was, you know, in my opinion at that time, living through some very, very horrible conditions and I spoke and I guess, Deco, a trained speaker and debate coach, seen something in me and asked me to join the debate team and I did that and this individual became a mentor.

13:49

and somebody very important in my life. And they took me all over. They took me to Harvard. They took me to Yale. They pushed me to be great. They taught me that I can be something and give back to my community, but not doing the wrong things by doing the right things. And it was such an amazing journey. And at that time, you know, I know now that I didn't realize I was

pouring into that person also, you know, you're the student, you think, you know, you're an adult. I can't do nothing for you, but DECO was transitioning at that time and how bold and how-

14:18

courageous. We were as students how we walked onto these campus and we just took demanded attention even though our shirts wasn't ironed and we had only a couple of pants to last us for the weekend and we didn't have tuxedos and briefcases like some of the other kids that was at these tournaments. We still was comfortable in our skin and we think it pushed him more to be comfortable in his skin and announced that he is trans and he identifies with pronouns as he him.

14:48

It's funny because every time I read that in my book or in the Honi story, everybody's like, oh my God, it's crying. But in that moment, I was just like, I don't care what you identify as. And I say that respectfully, you're just an amazing person and you're a human and you're my person. So if you want us to call you he, him instead of she, we will call you that. If instead of saying Ms. Deco, if you want us to call you Deco, we will do that for you. Why is it such a big deal? And I think that's the beauty of kids and innocence. And I'm happy that I was introduced to-

15:17

their community that way because in my community, those things wasn't accepted. You know, you have to be masculine, you know, you have to be tough. You can get hurt or taken advantage of if you're not a strong man or a strong figure in there and things like that wasn't allowed, but there was nothing nobody in my community, my dad, my family can tell me because I knew who Dico was as a person. Um, and you know, we ended up creating this amazing bond and then due to Dico's transition.

15:46

There was a lot of people in our school who didn't agree with it. Teaching at an all-black school in Harlem, the community was different, especially at that time, how people seeing that community was frowned upon. I won't even say that, Tom. There's still so many just hateful, ignorant people who still treat that community with disrespect, but it was really prevalent in that community. There was a lot of things that I was unaware of as a student, and then DECO decided to leave. That was a very, very, very turning point for me.



16:14

as a kid who already felt a sense of abandonment, who had issues at home, it was like the icing on the cake, but in a negative way. If you read the book, you know what kind of happens after that. So much.

16:30

Because there wasn't enough before. And it's crazy, right? I just said it mouthful, so somebody listening is like, I probably don't need to read the book you don't know to have. Read it. Oh yeah. There's so much. This is just the tip. There's so much that you went through. So much that, you know, and then there's a baby that comes along. Yeah. My Emily, she's getting out of school right now. And she's absolutely adorable.

16:58

there are challenges with that because now you're a teen dad and to be with her mom and we all know there's a happy ending because you're here today and you're married and you have another one and you got through all of this and it wasn't easy by any means financially or emotionally.

17:24

You're incredible. This is why I was like after we met and then I read your book, I'm like, oh, Jonathan, you're an incredible human being. I think anyone who reads your story is going to not only feel the same way, but think, wow, you really have gotten through so much.

17:48

And I know that one of the questions I had as I was reading through the book and I told you, I'm like, I don't wanna ask you until I get to this part to find out if I can answer my own question. But you have this relationship with your parents as well. While they were addicts, while they were still homeless, while your siblings and you were asking the questions of like, why can't you put me first, your child? Why can't you prioritize this?

18:15

And my question had been, you can answer this for everybody else, you know, how do you get past that with your parents? And I loved the interview that you had to go to school in which your dad went with you. And you gave him these looks of like, stop embarrassing me, don't do this. And the dean, I guess is the right word to call him. He chewed you out and was like, no.

18:42

Do you know how many dads did not come in here today? Yours is the only one. And to have that respect that he did do it, he was there for you, and yet there was so much baggage behind it as well. Yeah. It's a great question. And it's tough because I talk to so many people and I'm like, oh my God, how are they going to view my parents? And even just from the first three pages, you know how.

19:12

brutal the first three pages. And like when you read the first three pages, you have to say, hey, this is gonna be a heavy read. He came out with just what the story is. And I tell everybody, I hope it's not for me to say, this is your perspective. I can't talk to thousands and thousands of people and say, hey, this is what I want you to get away from the book that will take away from the beauty of writing and the art, right? And, but I do hope that people don't come out saying, oh my God, his parents are horrible people. My parents was addicted to a drug.

19:41

I can sit here and tell you how amazing my parents was. My mother was a junior in nursing school when she got addicted. My dad graduated high school with a 4.0, was a Golden Globe boxing champion. These were not people who wanted to harm anybody or do anything intentionally. I think they were amazing people who got caught in this horrible, I would say, epidemic at that time. My parents never missed a parent-teacher conference.

20:09

There was plenty of times where people wanted to put me in special education and a mother who can't feed her kids, who probably can use that check for their addiction, never ever allowed for me to be in the system and always told me I was going to be somebody and I was going to be the best. They spoke that into me. A lot of times when people hear like, oh, there's an addict

in my family, or my son's an addict or my parents an addict, we automatically create these stereotypes. I understand why. It is a...

20:37

addiction does cause harm to family. And I'm going to sit here and say that, yes, my parents did cause harm numerous times due to their addiction, but I was able to see past them. I was able to learn their ordinary story. And I was able to see how society has set them up for failure and their past generational curses from my grandmother coming, you know, being born in the deep down South and her story, both my grandma's being in the deep down South.

21:02

and how redlining and all these things affect you and this pattern of behavior affected them, which ultimately affected us. So I wanted to give them grace and I wanted to still show them throughout the story, like, yes, I'm gonna tell my truth and you guys made a lot of mistakes, but I also see you. And I understand that there could have been a million things that went wrong. You didn't have to show up to every parent-teacher conference. You didn't have to still try to...

21:26

make things work for me. You didn't have to do the things you did do. All of my siblings went to college. All of us stood together as a family. We were never in an ACS case or things like that. So even though there's plenty of times we probably could have been, but my parents did the best they can to try to protect us in the best way they could. So my mother turns 59 this week, Saturday, and I'm excited to take her out. I'm excited to go out with her and the grandkids. So they're doing better and we have a great relationship.

21:56

Yes, there's still a lot of questions I ask. There's still some days where I'm like, why? Why did this happen? Or why me? Or I can say, hey, I'm appreciative that you are amazing grandparents. And at least I can get that. At least I can watch you guys in the second half of your life be better and pouring to my children. So addiction is complicated. And I think that's why I always talk about the prison system and justice and how do we rehabilitate people because

22:23

If done right, if you open your hearts, people can change and you can see their true potential. My mother always says, if I didn't get addicted, I think I would have been a CEO, but now I get to watch my kids be CEOs. And I know that deep down inside of your genetics, I'm a little part of that, even though I hope you guys forgive me. And that always resonates with me because I think about their lives and their stories and I've seen how much talent they have. And I'm like, what if? What if? And listen.

22:52

is me and five of my siblings, we have the same exact parents. All of us are homeowners. All of us are educated. That means they did something right in that house. None of us are in jail. None of us are all the statistics that what I will upbringing with the communities and the zip codes we were born into should be according to the data. So I'm very, very thankful for them. I'm hard on them. I think that...

23:20

In order to change, we have to have tough conversations and we have to do the work and we have to be accountable. And it's a tug of war. To this day, it's still a tug of war. But I was just talking to Columbia Law School. I was doing a speech and somebody asked me about forgiveness and I told them I didn't forgive them for them originally. I forgave them for me because constantly holding all that baggage and that pain deep down the side, it made me a worse parent.

23:47

It affected my mental health, it affected my physical health, and I had to realize that if I was going to be the best I can be, I had to forgive them for my peace and my mental health. And I think that allowed me to start the journey to actually forgive them for what they have done and not just to protect me. And I know it's complicated. It was a very complicated conversation when I was speaking at Columbia Law School, but I think the art of forgiveness and how we look at it and how we view it is such a, such an important topic. And I could talk about it for hours, but...

24:17

I think one of the things that helped me get to that was first forgiving them for me and taking care of myself and then being able to mentally have the space to actually realize how the things they did affected me. When would you say you started that process? Was it before you started

writing the book? During writing the book? After? Because I feel like that would play a significant role in being able to write your book.

24:40

It was both. I tried to start that process a lot. I tried to start it in college, but if you read the book, you realize that I stopped talking to them for a long period of time while I was in college because there was just so much I needed to do. I knew I finally had this moment to change my family's life. I knew I couldn't have a distraction. Unfortunately, I hate to say it, they were a distraction for me at that time. Then more towards my graduation, when I was walking across college and my whole family came out and my parents was there.

25:09

And I think my mother just walking through the college and seeing my name and face everywhere was like, you did this. Like you really did this. And just her being so emotional was like, how did you do this without me? Like I set you up for failure and you still made all of this happen. You know, I started to normalize it and I was older and my daughter was four and you know, I was a dad and I just tried it to, I tried it to say, how would I feel?

25:32

if Emily in this moment felt like I was not a part of this, but she, you know, and I was trying to process at the same time and I was just like, hey, the hard part is over in my opinion. Now we can try to create a new life together. And then when I started to write the book, there was a time where I wanted to stop writing because I started to hate her. And I hate to use the word hate because I feel like I hate nobody and I think it's just a dangerous word and everybody deserves forgiveness and grace, but.

25:57

I guess that's the feeling I was hating when I was writing the book because I was forced to relive those things. I was forced to look at the old buildings where this happened or an event where I was violated in a way. I'm just like, why? Like, why? And as an adult, I'm like, oh my God, I'm healed. Oh God, I have a great salary. My kids want for nothing. They're going to be able to go to college and do great things and never... And then I realized as writing the book that I lied. I lied to myself.

26:23

And so many people come to me and was like, Oh my God, Jonathan, you must have so all this perspective on life, how was you able to process these emotions and write about it so beautifully? And I'm like, nah, that's not true. Yes, I had this perspective on it and I understand what happens to me, but that doesn't mean that I process it and handled it the right way. And I had to really spend a lot of time to do the work after the book. I think the book opened up a lot of things for me and it forced me to be better, to seek help, to seek therapy.

26:52

And I'm very thankful for it. And I really, really pray that the book is saving people, that it's helping people, that it's making people more courageous about telling their story. But selfishly, I think it saves me more than anybody. And I don't really see it as a product to sell. I see it as a manifesto for me and a guide to me every time I look at the book to say, you did the work young man, you should be proud of yourself. I love it. And for the rest of us that read it, we can build empathy and that's a gift that you can give us.

27:21

I grew up over in California and it wasn't Harlem and I've never been homeless. There's all of these things that I've never personally experienced that I have the chance to see through your eyes and your experiences and to get somewhat of an understanding of what that is like. That's a huge gift to me and I appreciate you for sharing that of yourself.

27:49

and to share your story so openly and candidly, you know, you don't have to do that. And that's a gift to all of us that you did do that. Speaking of saving lives, you literally do that for a living and in the debate foundation that you founded, which I'm like, you're standing in front of me in New York, like you save lives of babies every day. You're saving the lives of teenagers every day.

28:17

I mean, you're quite incredible, my friend. It's funny. It's like people tell me that all the time and I tell my students and you guys, there'll be a documentary coming out soon. I tell my students all

the time and I get emotional. I cry to them. I'm like, you guys think I'm saving you and you're saving me. I get to watch my whole world full circle. I never thought that being able to pour into your cups will satisfy me so much, will keep me going.

28:44

As you know, in my bio, I do so many things and everybody's like, how do you do it? I'm like, everything I do is a necessity. Working with the kids in a nonprofit, the Brooklyn debate league, we have served over 600 kids last year to be able to pour into those kids, watch my kids go to some of the top schools in the country that come from similar stories like mine, who some are in shelters, some is hurt by the criminal justice system. Some of them are in broken families and dad is in jail or never met their dad. And for me to go.

29:13

in today and be that role model for them and be a part of their village. Like so many people were for me, it's just breathtaking for me to go into the hospital and be a lung specialist. My mother suffered from COPD and multiple sclerosis and being able to help other people, children. And my daughter, that didn't make the book, but my daughter was born two pounds and was in a NICU for quite a long stay. So now to be able to hug mothers and hold dad's hand and say, I know what you're feeling and I'm going to treat.

29:42

your baby like it was my Sophia when I sat in his chair and I felt helpless, even with my degree and even I was already a trained, trained, a respiratory therapist at that time when it happened to my daughter. Um, it's just, I am blessed to do the work. You know, so many people say they're blessed to know me and thank you. It's like, I am honored that God has put me on this earth and allow me to survive everything I've been through and have my freedom to help people. And um,

30:08

I think it's just something you got to want and something you got to love. And I cherish it every day. I enjoy it every day. And it's tough work, you know. I'm a lung specialist. So you can think about my last couple of years dealing with COVID and being in the center of it in New York City and how tough that was on all of our mental healths from losing friends, from losing coworkers, from not sleeping in hotels, not being able to see your family and your kids as they're growing

up. Because you have signed the oath and you have sacrificed your life for the greater good. And I don't...

30:37

I wouldn't change it. This is my calling and I'm good at it. But I give those patients and those families more thanks for even trusting me and for believing in me to do the work. So I am thankful, man. I am appreciative that there's tons of people in New York and tons of people who donate that believe their hard-earned money should be with my organization. And yes, the results speak for itself.

31:07

I don't take that lightly. I don't take that lightly. Service is, I think, all of our's job. And even you, for giving a platform, for allowing people on their drive to work, to be able to hear these stories and putting these beautiful stories together, I commend you too. I think we all have a part in this world that we have to serve and we have to do it well. We have to truly put our all into it. Thank you. You're such a beautiful person. You truly are.

31:33

You say that, I'm very mad right now. My barber, he's like, I'm spending time with my daughter today. And what can you say? You got to commend him for that. I look crazy right now. And this is going on YouTube, but it's okay. No, no, no. I told you earlier, I was crying. So it's okay. I'll be puffed-eyed. Good luck to everyone who wants to watch instead of just listen. Please listen. Don't look at me. I look crazy right now.

31:59

I'm so excited to see what the next 29 years are going to bring you because you've lived and loved and shown your purpose in this short amount of time that most don't get to do an entire lifetime. So I just know, no pressure of course, but there's just so much that I know is yet to come that you're making your mark on this world in such an incredible way and taking everything you've been through to help other people.

32:28



It's such a gift. We're so blessed to have you. Yeah, I think that's how the world works. So many people poured into me. I hate the idea of self-made. Scientifically, that's not possible from a medical background. And I think nobody is self-made. We all need each other. I think that's the beauty of the world. At some point, everybody need to rely on somebody. And even if somebody.

32:51

Was it not always the best to you? There's lessons we can learn from anything and how we process our emotions and how we deal with these things, I think make us who we are as people. So, I deserve no thanks. I think so many people did it for me and it's only my job to do the same for others. And I'm just thankful that I'm in a position where I can do it. And that's the most thing that lets me sleep good at night. That I know when I wake up, I have so many people who support me, believe in me.

33:19

and it's going to put me in a position to help so many people, especially throughout New York and throughout the world. Well, I am thankful to you. No matter what you say, I'm still thankful and grateful to you. Can you share with everyone where they can find you, follow you, and get your book, please? Yes. You can go to [www](http://www). I spell it J-O-N-A-T-H-A-N. Pretty much everything about me is on my website. If you want to just find the book and...

33:47

or bookstores, you can go to [www](http://www). and that you can buy my book, you can buy anywhere you feel like purchasing it. If you wanna know more about my nonprofit or donate to the Brooklyn Debate League, you can go to [www](http://www). And yes, I am also on Instagram, Twitter, TikTok X, or at I am John Conyers, so at I am John Conyers.

34:17

I live in New York City. I think I just heard a helicopter. I'm sorry if that interrupted. I'll say it again. It's at I-A- You can follow me there. And also, I do have a podcast. We're coming back strong. Don't worry. So, John Conyers Network on YouTube. You can follow me there. Most of my content will be there.

34:43

We're going to do some, we got some revamp and we're coming back strong. Excellent. I can't wait for that. Michelle may be a future producer, right? Michelle may, you know, with her amazing book, *How to Get a Podcast*, that's number one everywhere. I see it, I see it popping up all over my Amazon. I know you won't say it, but I see it number one everywhere. Uh, and this amazing individual who makes podcasts amazing for so many different podcasts. So. Thank you. We'll be calling you soon, me and my partner. Thank you so much. Of course.

35:13

Of course. Friends, you need to go pick up. I wasn't supposed to be here. It is just as incredible as Jonathan because his story is breathtaking. You will be so amazed at all that he has gone through, all he has accomplished, and what he is doing to truly pay it forward. He is that definition of what that means to pay it forward, to give back.

35:42

to make your mark in the world and to truly leave it a better place than the way you found it. So I encourage all of you, do something kind today, be there for somebody else, and do me a favor and go purchase *I Wasn't Supposed to Be Here* because this is a book that will have you in awe and reach out to Jonathan, tell him how much you enjoyed it and what you've learned from him because he is truly an incredible person.