

NAME

2023-01-18 Pit Stop Melissa Moran.wav

DATE

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DURATION

1h 7m 47s

3 SPEAKERS

Karen

Anne

Melissa

START OF TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:00] Karen

Well, here it is, the top of the hour. And I want to welcome you all to the pit Stop, your fortnightly midweek rest area to refuel your drive. I'm Karen Commins. I'm an audiobook narrator and chief cartographer for NarratorsRoadmap.com and your host for Pit Stop. And with me in the copilot seat is my good friend and award winning audiobook narrator Anne Flosnik who hosts the narrator Uplift Show on Clubhouse. So how are you today, Anne?

[00:00:28] Anne

Wonderful. Thank you. Karen. Very excited to be here with you and Melissa.

[00:00:31] Karen

Yes, And every other Wednesday, we'll be getting together to talk with audiobook narrators who do more than narrate, and they'll pull into the pit stop and they are sure to inspire you to follow your interest and use all of your talents and gifts. And I want to let everybody know this conversation is being recorded so you'll be able to relisten or catch parts you missed. And I'm just so excited to be here. And I appreciate you all joining us today. I'm thrilled. We're going to be talking with audiobook narrator and certified life coach Melissa moran. Melissa is an accomplished audiobook narrator with over 300 titles, and she's been an Audio and Voice Arts Award finalist and the winner of an audio file magazine Earphones award before her narration career. Melissa enjoyed 20 years in the radio industry and has won a Country Music Award and Academy of Country Music Award for Best On-Air Personality in a Media Market. When she's not behind the mic, you can find her on stage in front of a camera creating art or on a Zoom call with a life coaching client. Yep, she is a certified life coach, and that's a big reason I wanted to talk with her. And if you're going to APEC in March in New York City, look for Melissa as a panelist in the session called Read Our Reviews Maintaining Your Mental Health in an Isolating Career. She and the other speakers will provide tips and tricks to avoid negative thoughts, spirals, as well as a perspective for those struggling to break into steady work. That sounds like a great panel right there. Melissa lives in central Florida with her husband, her ten year old son and a dog and a cat. So welcome, Melissa. I'm so thrilled you're here. So excited we finally get to talk. So you were in radio before you were an audiobook narrator. How did that happen? How did you or did you just go from radio to narration? Tell us what you were doing before you were a narrator.

[00:02:34] Melissa

Yeah. Okay. So I originally went to school, college for film and animation straight out of high school because I thought that's what I wanted to do. Like on paper, I really enjoyed drawing and I loved watching movies and I was like, Put the two together. What do you got? Animation. So it's a school for that. And I didn't realize how tedious it was and how much I didn't want to do that as a career. So whoops. So I left after a year and I noticed that while I was working or not working on projects, I was procrastinating. Usually I would always have this great Philadelphia radio on. And it just dawned on me one day that I could do that. Why not? And when I went back home after my failed year of art school, I got an internship at a radio station and I just kind of went from there. And I kept getting jobs and jobs and jobs moving around, living a sort of, you know, gypsy life up and down the East Coast. And eventually one of my colleagues in my now final job as an on air personality, one day he mentioned to me, Have you ever thought about audiobooks and being a narrator? Because he knew that I really enjoyed theater and I knew how to work the equipment, You know, I knew how to edit and work the mic.

[00:04:16] Melissa

So he said, What about that? And I have to say, I had never listened to an audiobook before, and I thought, okay, well, let me listen to one and see what it's all about. And my first listen was the beautiful and lovely and talented Tanya. Eby and I always remind her of that. And I thought, Wow, this people do this. This is awesome. And I started narrating, and it was so funny because. I started in my like production room of the radio station because there was a mike and there was a computer. It was all right there to me at the time. So that was my unfair advantage, you know, if you will, getting into the industry. And I started off with a children's book and then I moved on to romance and spicy romance, and it got to the point where I was really uncomfortable doing some of the books I was doing in a public space so that I inevitably got the equipment in my own home. And that's that's how it all started.

[00:05:34] Karen

So how long were you doing that? Concurrently. So you were still working at radio, right? And then you were doing audiobooks at the station. How long did that last?

[00:05:45] Melissa

Yeah, I started my first book was in 2014 and. You know, like I said, I started it out in the production room and it took me probably, I don't know, 4 to 6 months to really say, okay, like this could be something. So then I bought the equipment, set up something small in my bedroom. I mean, it would be embarrassing to show you what I was using back then, but it worked. And. I decided in 2017 that I would officially go full time. And what that looks like was because I enjoyed a 20 year career in radio. So that was my life. And also at the time I had a five year old. So to go from. What some would say. I know radio is not considered a stable job, but I also worked for a family owned radio station, so it was really a steady job for me. You would basically have to punch the manager in the face to get fired at that place. So I wasn't going anywhere if I didn't want to. So I always told myself if it ever got to the point where I out booked my radio job, like I literally couldn't do both. I would then leave my radio job. And it all came to kind of a crescendo when I went to my first AIPAC Audio Publishers Associate Association Conference in New York City in 2017. And I met publishers and I met people from the community from all over the place. And it it was like I met my tribe, like I finally met my people. And it was at that point where I was like, okay, this is it. And making the leap wasn't easy still, because I still had to go to my boss and say, Hey, I'm leaving you after ten years at this station.

[00:08:01] Karen

Well, you could have just punched him. And that was an easy out.

[00:08:07] Melissa

He was a nice guy, but but yeah, that was hard. And it was like jumping off a cliff. But here I am. And I have zero regrets.

[00:08:23] Karen

Well, that's the best part. And the thing is now you are doing life coaching, too. And so. So you were narrating and then when did you get the bug about life coaching and how did that come about?

[00:08:40] Melissa

Hmm. That was in I would say it started in the spring of 2020. So we all know what happened in 2020. And I, I think it was it was a bunch of things that had to happen. Well, first of all, I want to say that I've always loved self-development and motivational speakers. You know, the Tony Robbins, the Mel Robbins, the. Oh, gosh. There are a million I can't think of right now. Marie Folio. I loved reading the books and watching the YouTubes, and it was always something I had enjoyed. But I, I think in 2020 it was the lack of. He's the human touch, the the communication, the confusion. The people just need to be heard. The the high stakes emotions and trauma we were all going through at that time that made me realize that connection was the most important thing. And. I believe we already do that as narrators. We we are storytellers, which is the in my opinion, it's the highest form of art. You can you can perform. So it made sense to to make that switch. And there were other personal things in my life that were going on where I started to really question how I was starting or how I was listening to people. Was I really listening? Was I wrapped up in my own world? And there's nothing wrong with that. We're all wrapped up in our own worlds, but. But I think there's no greater gift than really listening to someone. And so I kind of put all those things together, and I found this thing that people did called Life Coaching, and it blew my mind. I knew about the motivational speakers, but I didn't know you could do that with it, like on a one on one basis. So yeah, it just kind of broke open this new world that I became obsessed with and, and eventually became that.

[00:11:12] Karen

Well, you you had some sort of official training and curriculum. And because I know you said you're a certified life coach, so who does that certification and what was the training like? And I guess even backing up before that, I mean, I love self-development. I'm I look at these things and what made you want to develop that interest further into something that is actually now a second career?

[00:11:43] Melissa

Wow. Hmm. What was it that made me want to take it on, actually, as a career? Well, yeah, because I suppose, you know, you could just be a good listener. You know, you. You could use what you learn and you could improve your own life. You could become a better wife, a partner, a mother, a family member, a friend. Which is great. And I think. The reason why I chose to do it as a career was because in addition to all of those things. I saw that a lot of people in my own community and the narrator community and voice over and beyond were were struggling with a lot of things also. So I thought, okay, well, maybe I can help them. So to. To turn it into a career? I don't know. I, I suppose it just kind of made sense to offer it up to other people. And in terms of the training I went through, it was like an eight month training and you'll learn a lot of the the technical things because I know a lot of people are concerned about, well, is this therapy in like it is not. We we learn what is coaching and what is not. We understand what we need to do if those lines are crossed by the client unawares and we know how to direct that conversation. So there are ethical things you learn. You also do a lot of one on one coaching within the group. There are tools and methods you learn. And that being said, I think. Coaches are. Also, you can be a coach without the training. You could just be a super curious listener. And no. What to look for in the right questions to ask to get someone to the point of transformation. I think there's a lot of intuitive work that goes into it as well. So it's really just learning what to do, what not to do, and and then it's all hands on after that point. I feel like I'm talking a lot.

[00:14:21] Karen

Okay, well, you're the guest. We want you to talk about it.

[00:14:26] Melissa

Like. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay.

[00:14:29] Karen

That's why we're asking you the questions. So you talk a lot.

[00:14:34] Melissa

I'm like, me, me, me. Yes. Well, thank you, Karen.

[00:14:38] Karen

You know, I'm always curious about signposts that people get along the way. Like, you know, How long did it take you to realize this was the thing and you were going to do it? Because I think a lot of times our own inhibitions hold us back or we think of, well, what will they think about us? Or, you know, we allow things to hold us back and maybe miss out on doing something we would really like to do. So did you have those kind of moments? Like did you have some time between the time the idea came to you and the time you actually took action toward fulfilling it?

[00:15:20] Melissa

Oh, yeah. I mean, I'm still having those moments, so. Of course. So I think when you're. Offering something like this or like whatever you're pursuing that's new to you, there's always this initial excitement that goes into Wow. Like, think of all the possibilities. I could I could take this and I could really help people. And maybe this will lead to public speaking and, you know, how can I work this into my career? But, you know, how can this thing grow? And so you get so excited and then you learn the things. And then comes the point where you're like, okay, well, I'm I'm that now I know the things. So. How do I tell people this is what I do? Without sounding like, Hi, I'm no longer a narrator. Now I'm doing this. Like that was my fear. Like, you can do both, right? Then there's the. Who does she think she is? Because I think there's a lot of like misinformation and a lot of bad coaches out there that people don't necessarily take it seriously or they think it's a scam or they think it's unnecessary or they think it's people pretending to be therapists. You know, there's all of this external stuff that you think about that you think people are thinking about you. But what you want to ask yourself instead is. How can I help the person? Like, how can I talk to the person who really just needs help? Like, they just. Really want to talk to someone about this, and I can offer that to them. So. It becomes less of a. How do I do this? And like, how can I help you, if that makes sense? Because when you're not making it about yourself and you're just. Offering an empathetic. Year. It's those worries tend to disappear a little bit. So. Yeah.

[00:17:51] Karen

And obviously, Ann, jump in here any time you want. I don't want to monopolize all the questions.

[00:18:01] Melissa

Oh.

[00:18:01] Anne

I was just going to say, Melissa, I have listened to, I think high the most of your podcasts. And I got the impression from when you kind of spoke about this issue on those that really your listening kind of thing. And then usually the the query and has the answer within themselves. Is that kind of on the right lines?

[00:18:24] Melissa

Yes, you always have the answer. So I think one of the misconceptions about a life coach is that we're there to dole out advice and and that couldn't be further from the truth. You as the client or whoever is the client, has everything they need inside themselves. No one knows you better than you. So who am I to say this is what you need to do? A life coach is a mirror, you know, to put it plainly and simply and just asking the right questions. Like how? Like I'll ask you, how many times have you just been in a conversation with someone and something came out of your mouth that you're like, Huh? I didn't realize I thought that, right? Is that huh? You know, so it's like speaking the things out loud carries so much truth. It's like it's crazy. So, yes, people have all of that inside of them. And it's just knowing the right questions to ask.

[00:19:35] Karen

Right.

[00:19:37] Melissa

Now.

[00:19:38] Karen

And that's so true. What you just said so many times I've been saying something to Drew or an or another friend, and then it's like I solved my own problem because as you're saying, just because I was mulling it through out loud to somebody who was interested in what I had to say helped me. Channel that energy and focus in the right direction and come up with the answer I was looking for. And it is it's freaky how much that happens.

[00:20:05] Melissa

Yeah, yeah. And it's just it's having that conversation because generally what what we do is like we're all living inside our heads and we have 16,000 million whatever thoughts a day. And so you could have a moment of truth for sure at any given point of the day. But then your thoughts will just absolutely destroy whatever truth you came up with in that moment. So and and so I think when you're speaking with someone, you're speaking those thoughts in real time and we're there to challenge you. Like, how true is that? Does that force serve you or is that is that a thought you want to think? You know, are you being kind to yourself because our our brains are liar, liar, pants and and it's nice to have someone point that out every now and then.

[00:21:13] Karen

And one thing that I'm really curious about is how you divide your time between being a narrator and being a life coach, because obviously your clients on either side of that fence are not going to coordinate your time for you, and they could both be equally demanding. So how do you make that happen?

[00:21:36] Melissa

Yeah. So I have a calendar set up. Where where people can choose the times. But but based on the availability that I have because. As a narrator. Of course, you know, if you have an eight hour book, it's impossible to do an eight hour book in 4 hours. So. So you want to make sure that you've allotted yourself a good amount of time to do what you need to do during the day. Stick to that plan as much as you can, and anything outside of that, I can make myself available. And I say that with the with knowing that my kid now is ten so I can schedule hours when he's home. Back in the day, I couldn't do that. So as he gets older, I have a little bit more freedom when I'm not in the booth, which is nice. As long as he is on his computer, he's good to go. But that being said, I do make sure I, I give my family my as as much time as I can. So yeah, when everyone's in school and working, those are my narration hours because it's the absolute quietest time. And then outside of that, I can, I can coach.

[00:23:03] Anne

What would you say would be? I know it's kind of like how long is a piece of string, but for the average person both to open up to what their issues may be, to themselves and to you, and to get some kind of direction. What would the kind of average be, Melissa?

[00:23:23] Melissa

That is a long string. Yes. No, I mean, it depends because listen, I mean, you could come to me and we could have an hour conversation and you could get transformation in one conversation. You could you could say something that absolutely blows your own mind. That that helps that situation in the moment. And and then at that point, if if it's one issue you came to me with, then then it could it could be as quick as that. However, it's the maintenance of of that thought that's important. Right. So as an example. I'm not using names because, you know, privacy. But but there was someone that came to me and said, I, I really just want to rid the need of external validation. Yes. And I remember, like we all have that problem, I think. Problem?

[00:24:34] Karen

Yeah, we're actors. I mean, that's perjury.

[00:24:39] Melissa

Yeah. And and I, I think the what the transformation was in that conversation and it was just one question was why is external validation bad. And and I think just because we all have an idea of like what's bad, what's good, I'm wrong for thinking this, I'm shaming myself for this. What if it wasn't bad? I mean, there's nothing wrong with needing or like wanting external validation. It's it's the needing, you know, in order to feel good about your work. But it's easy to confuse the two. I think. So sometimes it's just one question. And like, I remember seeing this person's face like, Huh, that's not bad. And so it's just, you know, it could be as simple as that. That kind of opens up possibilities. And that's that's really the key is just knowing that you have choices of of how to think of something.

[00:25:53] Anne

Yes.

[00:25:54] Karen

So, yeah. And I love what you said about the maintenance of the thought, because, like, when I've had conversations with people and I'm always talking about thinking better thoughts and I have to be vigilant about what I'm writing and saying and speaking because it can be very easy to get into a negative spiral, which is why I think your panel at AIPAC is going to be a fantastic success and well-attended. But it's. It's so hard to maintain that thought. It's hard to maintain that level of where I want to be. And it just requires, like I say, for me, constant vigilance. So I love that you said that that it's not just having the thought, it's the maintenance of that thought.

[00:26:40] Melissa

Yeah, it is, you know, because and I think that's why I don't necessarily offer like one off sessions because you can you can have that like, oh, okay. I don't have to make myself wrong for that. Okay, done. But then it's, you know, other thoughts come in to replace that. So it is like. It is. It's like a part time job to manage your mind. But I. But I think to. To ease up on that a little bit because it just sounds like so much work and it doesn't have to be you just have to be mindful of your thoughts and just not believe them. The ones that don't serve you, you know, you just have to constantly remind yourself like that. No, that's not true. No, that's not true. Yeah. So it is like staying on top of it and just knowing to catch yourself if you are spiraling, which, which again is difficult because when you're self-employed and you're working from home like we do, you don't always have that person to check in with. Like, you know, this is how I'm feeling right now. And sometimes you don't, even though you have people there, not necessarily the support you need in that moment. So it's knowing how to like, be gentle with yourself. That's that's key.

[00:28:22] Karen

And I want to ask you also, do you have because you're talking about help. So that brings to mind, do you have an assistant or some other kind of help, whether you know, somebody like a virtual assistant or somebody physically. And if you do. How did you decide you needed help and how did you acquire the right people? Acquire not the right word, but you know what I mean.

[00:28:45] Melissa

Yes, right.

[00:28:46] Karen

People, the question is not totally the wrong word, but how did you find the right people to help for the situations you needed?

[00:28:56] Melissa

No, I actually don't have any kind of assistant. Just because I mean, there are ways to, like, automate some things. I think as far as scheduling goes, I when I first started out, it was very like, oh, you want to schedule a session? And then it would just be a back and forth like, how's Friday at 215? No. So there are apps for that, you know, So I, I just use calendar or whatever to schedule and they send out automated reminders to clients. So I don't necessarily have to stay on top of that. So that does make my life easier. Just making use of the technology that's available is helpful because like there are so many days and this is getting into a dangerous territory. I don't mean this when I say this, but sometimes you wish you could just clone your voice. So like, like I don't feel like narrating today. I need to do this. So I just clone my voice and get that done. That's not possible, at least for now. But yeah, like, whatever.

[00:30:05] Karen

Makes the acting choices you do.

[00:30:08] Melissa

Exactly. Exactly. But yeah, like, a lot of what we do and what I do is so, like one on one. And so just like in getting in the dirt, I don't know if I said that right, Just. I mean, like gardening. Planting the seeds. I mean, like. I don't mean like, going through people's diets. That's. I want to be careful about that. But yeah, it's so one on one, it's it's hard to, like, get assistance for certain things, but, you know, maybe. Maybe I can explore more positive possibilities with that, too. So.

[00:30:49] Karen

Yeah. And as if you're not already doing enough in your life between being a narrator and being a life coach and a mom, a wife, a friend, and all those other roles. I see. Now you're in a play. You're actually physically in a play. And then you're also doing photography for your Chamber of Commerce. And I mean, I'm really interested now, you know, what's an average day for you? How do you split that up? I mean, if you're going to clone anything, you might need to clone yourself to be in multiple places at the same time.

[00:31:26] Melissa

Yeah. Well, I mean, I could ask the same of you. You know, you have this wonderful website and you blog and you narrate. And so, listen, I think the way we are as as multiple passionate entrepreneurs, where we're always seeking out like artistic, fulfilling projects, we can do that, keep things interesting that feed our, ah, creative side. Like, as much as I love narration and I consider that like my number one career, I don't think I could rely on just that to sort of feed the creative monster like you also want to get out and well, at least for me and do a play. And I think for me the dangerous part is that if I have no filter. So if I was on Facebook one day and I was scrolling and these auditions come up for this play like a month from now, and I was like, Oh, you know, I haven't done a play in like a year. And then my, my fantasies start going in my head. I'm like, What if I got a part? That would be fun. I don't know. I could, like, make some friends. And like, you think of all the possibilities of this, this thing. And it's basically done like I knew as soon as I got excited about it, I was like, I guess I'm doing it. So it's that initial excitement that I'm like, I guess I'm doing this now.

[00:33:08] Karen

Well, I was going to key on that because that excitement pulls you along. I mean, you mentioned me as an example, but see, I have help. Drew helps me with the website and he directs my narration. So he's fully involved in all parts of my business. And plus I'm sitting in my house. I'm not going out to a theater. I'm not going out to the Chamber of Commerce. I'm not out and about. All of this activity is just taking place in the house. And so that's why I was curious and I really admire what you're doing, but I love what you're saying about that, that flash of excitement that comes to you and it kind of pulls you along and that's how you know it's for you and I guess. It's hard for me to know when is this just an interest, a mild interest that's going to go away? Or how do I make something bigger of it? Or does it want to be something bigger? And is that something you can speak to?

[00:34:10] Melissa

Sure. And I also want to acknowledge that you totally, like dismissed yourself through that whole thing. So.

[00:34:18] Karen

Listen, I appreciate you saying that, but I, I it's not that I'm being dismissive. It's just that. It is a totally different situation because you're out and about doing all these things that require you alone to do them. So going back to the question of how do we know it's not just a simple little interest and it's going to work into something more?

[00:34:44] Melissa

Yeah. So with the play, I realize it's a commitment and that the initial excitement might wane as we're approaching, you know, Tech week or like things get hard. I know. However, I've had experience enough on stage where I realize, okay, but once you do that first show like it all, it's such a payoff. Like, you'll be glad you did this. So I can I can work that out in my brain. Like when it gets hard. I know that there's that satisfying, like, reward at the end. So when it comes to other interests like this photography thing, like, came out of nowhere, First of all, I do want to mention that I use photography very flippantly. I am a complete amateur. I just got a nice camera and now I'm like, I want to do all the things. I want to take all the pictures. So.

[00:35:51] Karen

I. I lost you. Are you still there? Or is it me who's lost?

[00:35:57] Anne

I hear you, Karen.

[00:35:58] Karen

Oh, thank you, Ann. Well, Melissa, now you're on mute.

[00:36:02] Anne

Yeah.

[00:36:02] Melissa

Amateur or semi-pro or pro photographer who's available Saturday? I didn't even think about it. I was like, um. And I'm raising my hand because. I don't know. I guess I just saw it as a sign and I'm like, Well, maybe this is something to explore. So I guess when when you don't have a clear end, like you don't have a clear goal in sight, that's where it gets a little like, where could this go? Where do I want this to go? I don't know. In this case like of it being just a fun little thing I'm doing. It's okay if it fizzles out. I have no attachment to like one day being the next. Whatever famous photographer. So I'm just going to let it ride and see what happens. And if if things start moving in the direction of like, well, maybe this is something like this, this could be another passion. Then what? You know, again, it goes back to being a creative freelancer and having that entrepreneur heart. The challenge comes in of. Okay. How many things can you physically do? You don't have to turn everything into a career like that could be a hobby.

[00:37:36] Melissa

And that's okay. Not everything has to be monetized. Just because you enjoy something doesn't mean you should turn it into a business. Well, that's a refreshing. These are the things I have to constantly remind myself and the things that are truly meant for you. You will. You will want you have a deep desire to continue doing it until you don't. So. There's just so much beauty in the world. And why would you? Keep yourself from doing those things. Now you also have to, you know. Keep your family in mind. Your loved ones and minds, you know? You know. I mean, you can do whatever you want, but I personally want to give my time and attention to them first and foremost. So I think anything that satisfies me creatively while also maintaining balance in my home, is what really is what I really value in life. So it's knowing where to. Where to pull back and when to pull back. That's the challenge. Did any of that make sense?

[00:38:58] Karen

Well, yeah, it does. I mean. I feel that way. And has this happened with you?

[00:39:04] Melissa

Where you. Oh, I can't hear you for some reason.

[00:39:07] Karen

Oh, well.

[00:39:09] Melissa

Uh oh. Okay, hold on. My volume went down. Okay. I was wondering and you said this.

[00:39:21] Karen

I relate very much to what you were saying. And I wondered, Ann, if this has happened with you or you get this spark of an idea and then you're like, Well, I just have to keep. Seeing what happens here.

[00:39:34] Anne

Yes, but not to the same way that Melissa does, I sense. And I admire you very greatly, Melissa. I sense a fearlessness in you because I know for me, when I have an audiobook, there's an awful echo, so I'm just stretching myself, hearing myself. But once I have that audiobook, that's my commission and it's like the portcullis goes down and that's all I focus on until I get to the end of that. And then I'll look up again, up the air and see what's going on in the in the world. But I admire that you have a much broader focus than I have developed.

[00:40:15] Melissa

Well, I can say that I don't I don't know that it's a a fearlessness. I think it's just. I don't know what word to put on it, but I. To turn that around, also admire how you can put your focus on one thing and give that your 100,000%. But that's not to say like, look, when I'm in the booth and I'm narrating something that has my complete and utter attention, I'm not doing like, you know, I'm not emailing clients on the side or like, like that is for sure that that's my attention. But to me, like, I admire that discipline that it takes. And, you know, the. The balancing act with being like multi passionate and doing a million things is you're always thinking that you're sacrificing one thing over another. Like, because I'm doing this. Is this hurting my chances of of, you know, potentially. Raising my you know, I'm losing my words. Karen. I know you know what I'm talking about.

[00:41:38] Karen

It's an opportunity cost.

[00:41:40] Melissa

Yeah.

[00:41:41] Karen

That if I'm doing this, then I can't be doing that at the same time. And so you have to weigh your opportunity costs.

[00:41:50] Melissa

Yeah, but. But do you I guess is, is the question that I have to ask myself and and put this out to you. I, I think, yes, If you're focused on one thing, you will excel at a much greater pace than I ever would when I'm doing a couple of different things. And that is something that I, I wish I could do.

[00:42:18] Anne

Not necessarily, Melissa, because kind of it's like my world shuts down, whereas yours is is opening up, which kind of has to feed your artistic or your artistic bits and. No, I honestly, I do admire that openness that you have.

[00:42:36] Melissa

Oh, thank you. I love you. We all love each other. And what we do, I mean. Yeah, but I just feel like. Yeah, there is a question of is this suffering because I'm doing this. And I just think that you. You can give yourself permission to do whatever you want and you can put your 100% into what you're doing at that time. Mm hmm. And I don't think you should feel bad about it. You know, if if you lose. Okay. So I think in a case where you actually start losing jobs because you're missing deadlines and that's that's where you need to have like a come to Jesus with yourself and ask yourself, is this okay, so what do I really want? You know, what is the end goal here? And if I'm missing out on gigs or missing deadlines, is that because I want is this not for me? Or do I need to sacrifice this over here so I can. Really start focusing on what's important. Yeah.

[00:43:44] Anne

Right, Right. And when you have a book is that you're doing all these other things, but how much time per day would you say you spend on the book and then include the other things as well?

[00:43:59] Melissa

I have quiet time when my kid is in school and my husband is a schoolteacher. So mostly I I'm in the booth from like 9:30 a.m. to about 1 p.m.. So I listen, I in the beginning, I put a lot of pressure on myself because it was always said that a professional narrator can get 2 hours, two finished hours per day. And for me, like, I'm a slow narrator, just. I don't know why. It takes a lot for me to hit one hour. Like. Like I would need to for every one hour I'm in there. Three. Like, I was never a 2 to 1. Right? So I had to be honest with myself and say, do I want to be a two hour narrator to two hour a day? Narrator Which is going to put me in that booth at least 6 hours. Or do I accept my, quote, unquote, limitations? It's not. It's just what I. It's how I work. Mm hmm. Do I accept that and schedule around that? And so in the end, I was like, you know what? One hour a day. That's what I can do.

[00:45:19] Anne

Right now. That's excellent, because it's all about to thyself be true. Right. That's how you live your life. And that's perfect.

[00:45:26] Melissa

Yeah. And I've never shamed anyone for doing for being less than that three and a half hours to one, 4 hours to one, whatever gets the job done.

[00:45:35] Anne

Right, Exactly. Exactly.

[00:45:38] Karen

I love hearing that, too. Is I. I could do, too. And one day I actually did two and a half, and that was like a banner day. But more typically, it's an hour. And on this last book, some days it was just 30 minutes. And it's not just me because like I said, Drew's working with me and so he has some things scheduled. And then our little dog is at a senior citizen now and he's needing more accommodation. And so that time has been fluctuating downward for me. And I did feel bad about it, like, well, I'm just getting much done. This book is taking forever. And so it's so refreshing to hear you acknowledge that, that you do what you can do and then that's the best you could do. And you can't expect any more of yourself than that is to just do your best.

[00:46:31] Melissa

Yeah, absolutely. Because I think if you push yourself, you know, things are going to maybe the the work is starting to suffer, your voice is going out or or whatever. I mean, you could always work on productivity. What can you do to improve if you want to like if you want to work up to that 2 hours a day, if you really feel that's important. Because I also want to acknowledge that we all have different financial situations, family situations where sometimes like we can't just do one hour a day. We need to get those hours done so we can get paid, right? So, you know, fortunately, I'm in a position where I can comfortably do one hour a day as long as I have like X amount of books a month and so many hours a month, as long as I can get paid on based on that, I'm good. But depending on where you live, what your situation, you need to do more than that. And. You know, at that point, it's just knowing what you have to do to get there.

[00:47:45] Karen

And our time together is coming to a close. And I just want to encourage people I know Ann has been posting in the chat that if you want to talk with Melissa, come on up. You just have to raise your hand in the app. So I did want to put that out there one more time. But in the meantime, I have a couple of questions for you in what I call the Pit Stop hot seat. And the first one and this is one of my favorite questions of all time is what is your most trivial, useless or flat out counterproductive superpower?

[00:48:22] Melissa

Trivial, counterproductive superpower. Ah, give me an example. Like what would yours be?

[00:48:29] Karen

Well, mine is that I can hear music playing in a store before Drew even knows, and I can name that tune before Drew even knows there's music playing.

[00:48:41] Melissa

I mean.

[00:48:42] Karen

It doesn't help anybody, but it's definitely a thing I do.

[00:48:48] Melissa

Um. Ah. Gosh. I can.

[00:49:00] Karen

Well, maybe I'll give you an easier question. If you maybe you don't want your superpowers known. But here's one that you might think is easier if you went into the witness protection plan. What identity would you like to assume? And for you, this might not be as easy a question as I thought.

[00:49:20] Melissa

Hmm. Oh, so I've always had this weird obsession with, like, Uma Thurman, like a la Kill Bill motorcycle chick. Kind of bad, eh? You know, I. I've always had this secret desire to be like this killer. Not. Not literally, but, like. Like I could fight you, you know, kind of personality. Even to the point where this was a. I want to say it was in 2014. My life was in an upheaval in 2014, but I took motorcycle lessons and the first time I got out on the road and I was actually licensed, totaled the bike got a rod in my leg.

[00:50:10] Karen

Oh, my God.

[00:50:12] Melissa

Yes. Thank God for helmets. That's all I have to say. Wow. I will never get out of bike again. But I just to prove that I have that in me, that I have a strong desire to be a biker girl. It's just I can't do it.

[00:50:27] Karen

Well, maybe you should look at scooters.

[00:50:30] Melissa

I expect even, you know, anything motorized. I think I'm just going to have to avoid. Like, I don't even know how I have a driver's license.

[00:50:37] Karen

Well, I. I have a scooter for a little bit, and I love the look of them. And Drew taught me to write it. He had a motorcycle for a long time. And I don't really like riding with him because I he goes fast. And it's not that it goes fast, but it scares me. And yeah, because I can't see what's coming. And the motorcycle is loud and everything, but I love the scooter and he taught me how to ride it. But when I actually took it out on the road by myself, people didn't respect me. They passed me on the right in my own lane. Oh, and that scared me too. And really, I'm just not an outdoorsy girl unless I'm in the pool or by the pool. And so we sold the scooter, but I still have a fondness for them. And but I don't know that it quite meets with your bad girl image, you know, that you'd be on a twist and go, Scooter.

[00:51:34] Melissa

Yeah, it's kind of anticlimactic a little bit, but, you know. No, I. I see people on scooters and I think, like, maybe. But I think my husband would kill me. And honestly, I know I shouldn't either, so.

[00:51:49] Karen

Well. And what I've got one more little question for you. What fictional character do you wish was real and why?

[00:51:58] Melissa

Fictional character. Goodness any like any of the Marvel superheroes.

[00:52:07] Karen

Goodness that goes with your bad girl image, doesn't it?

[00:52:13] Melissa

What is going on today? Yeah, or anything like magical. Like I'm trying to think of like a a female, like a sorceress. Because I. I want to believe in magic so bad. Like, I think it does exist in the world, or that we. We have the ability. We just haven't figured it out. Like, we just haven't unlocked that part of our brain yet.

[00:52:40] Anne

In that vein. Melissa What genre do you like doing most now, and maybe what one would you like to do more of to put that into the universe?

[00:52:51] Melissa

Yeah, I, I always love thrillers. I would love to do more of those and. You know, I was I was encouraged by a casting director. He said to me a couple of months ago, you know, you should try nonfiction. And when I think about it, I actually love listening to nonfiction, and I just don't do it a lot. And I think it's just I, I never really did that in my career. I don't put it out there that I want to do nonfiction, and there's not a lot on my audible list. So I don't know, I think like fun nonfiction and anything to do with mindset, of course. But most of those books are narrated by the authors themselves. So yeah, I don't know, maybe more nonfiction. That might be interesting.

[00:53:42] Anne

I think he'd be great at that, of course. Yeah.

[00:53:45] Melissa

Do you think you.

[00:53:46] Anne

Could have some magic going now?

[00:53:48] Melissa

Woo, woo, woo!

[00:53:54] Karen

Well, we're coming up on the end of our time. So I wonder, Melissa, is there anything else that you would like to share with the audience? Anything less thought?

[00:54:08] Melissa

Gosh, that's wide open. I just. I just like to remind myself every single day, if I can, if I remember too, that A everything is made up. If you just woke up every day and thought everything is made up, and by that I mean like the thoughts in our head are all made up. They're not necessarily true. It's all made up. Rules are made up. I don't know. A couple of people got together and said, these are the rules. This is what we do. They're all made up. So I say that to to say whatever you want to do and whatever you want to tackle. No one is saying you can't like no one. And you don't actually need permission from anyone. You just there's there's there are no rules. Everything is made up. Just do what you want and don't feel guilty about it. Don't judge yourself for it, even though we do anyway. Everything is made up. And and I guess my other one was just like, yeah, there were no rules. So if you think you can't do something because like ABC, eliminate those.

[00:55:29] Karen

Those are great rules. I would maybe amend the one or ask if we could amend the one of do what you want to say as long as it doesn't hurt somebody else. And I think that's.

[00:55:38] Melissa

Oh, yeah. Yes. Yeah. Don't. Don't. Yeah. Don't hurt yourself. Don't hurt yourself. Don't hurt others. Yes. Thank you for reminding me of that.

[00:55:47] Karen

But but I love those rules and I love your view on how it's your thoughts and how we're letting our thoughts control us and keep us from the good that's coming for us.

[00:56:03] Melissa

Yeah, it's if we didn't have like, just just think if you had no fear or like, no self judgment or judgment of other people, like, what do you think you could accomplish? And like, I have to remind myself of that every day, because there are still a ton of things that I want to accomplish. And I'm like, What are they going to think? And, you know, like we had the conversation earlier of like, well, if she does this coaching, like people are going to think like, I'm no longer a narrator or, or okay, because I said like, Oh, I guess I'm doing photography now. Or like, guess what? I'm a life coach. And guess what? Here's a painting. Like. If you think people are confused, they're not. They're probably thinking, Wow, that's so cool. That's just you saying you're confused.

[00:56:58] Karen

Well, that's a great point. And any last thoughts or questions for Melissa?

[00:57:04] Anne

Jennifer has one, and I brought her up to the stage here. Another button to press or you just go, Hey, I'm here.

[00:57:11] Melissa

Hi, Jennifer. Hi, How are you?

[00:57:14] Anne

I just wanted to say hi to Melissa because I don't think we've actually talked before, but I know that we're coming to the end of the hour. But, Melissa, I wanted to first thank you for the love letters idea, and I wanted to see if you could share a little bit about that, how you came up with that and if you've ever planned that.

[00:57:34] Melissa

Before.

[00:57:36] Anne

Or organized it before, You know what I mean?

[00:57:38] Melissa

Yeah. Okay. So thank you for that, by the way. And I. I have a lot to say about that. This, this all goes into the the thought work as well. So Jennifer brought up something called love letters. So. I'm part of a women's group and I don't know, I was walking my dog one day and I thought to myself, you know. It would be so cool to have other people remind you of how beautiful and special and wonderful you are, because we often forget that. And like so many times I see on social media, like someone posts a picture of flowers or chocolates or whatever they get in the mail from from a colleague or a loved one. And it like, made their day, like their week, their month that someone else set aside the time to think of them and send them something like physical. And so I put together this love letters exchange. So kind of like a secret Santa, where if you wanted to, you could be matched with a fellow sister. It's a female only thing, and it would be all anonymous. That sister who got you would then research you on social media or whatever they know about you. They would write you a physical, like an actual mail, love letter, love letter, quote unquote. Basically how amazing you are and the light you shine upon the world and you would get that letter in the mail. So so I came up with this idea.

[00:59:29] Melissa

I said, Hey, guys, wouldn't it be cool if dot, dot, dot? Everyone loved it? So I start getting the I had everyone send the letters to me because it's all anonymous. They send the letters to me and then I go and I distribute them to the recipients. So I don't know if you're aware of this, but narrators are a little bit like like you have to, like, wrangle cats, like herding cats because so I got to like so many. And there were there are like three or four letters I was missing. God love him. I mean, they have busy lives, stuff happens. I get it. But there were three or four women who couldn't do it, which kind of like messes up the entire chain because this person writes to this person and then this like it's it's a chain. And so that kind of flipped me out and sent me into a panic. And I'm currently still spinning in this panic because I've now had these love letters in my possession for a long time. And. I'm getting ready to send them out this weekend. But because I thought to myself, I have to write these extra letters myself because I couldn't get them from the people that sent me into a tailspin. And because it didn't work perfectly and the way I wanted it to. And now I'm putting all of this on me. I haven't sent them out yet.

[01:01:08] Karen

So.

[01:01:08] Anne

Melissa, first of all, I want to just say thank you again. I mean, that is so much work. And also, please don't feel bad. None of none of us are like expecting to have done perfectly. I think just the thought it was so beautiful. And I thought, I feel that everyone who wrote a letter, it was very therapeutic for us as well to write those letters. You know what I mean? So, you know, I don't want you to feel bad, and I wish you didn't put it upon yourself to write the three that didn't that didn't come to you, because I know there was a bunch of volunteers to do it. You know, I wish you would have received those volunteers.

[01:01:50] Melissa

I know, I know. Right. And it's just, you know, and then, like again, it's the thoughts, like, but then, you know, I'm giving them work and like, I should have had this taken care of.

[01:02:02] Anne

Yeah. You're already doing so much. So much. I know it's something that we have to practice, but we do need to practice receiving. Right. And yeah, but yeah. And if it's not too late, I say please ask for help, because what you're doing is a beautiful thing. And we don't want it all on your shoulders. And we don't want this to be something stressful for you as well. But I just want to from the bottom of my heart. Melissa, I just wanted to say thank you.

[01:02:29] Melissa

That's very lovely. I receive that. Thank you so much.

[01:02:33] Karen

And I'm so glad you brought this up, Jennifer, because I missed out on this completely. This is the first I'm hearing about it. And Melissa, I would love to write one of these letters for you. I would love to be one of the three missing people.

[01:02:45] Melissa

Oh, okay.

[01:02:46] Anne

And I'll be another one. So you got to now.

[01:02:49] Melissa

Yeah. That's wonderful. Wonderful.

[01:02:53] Karen

An inspiring and lovely idea. And I'm so glad you brought this up, Jennifer, because like I said, I'm not. I didn't know anything about it. No. So, yeah, you've got two volunteers right here. Do you need more?

[01:03:08] Melissa

I mean, like maybe one more.

[01:03:11] Karen

Serena Shaw just said in the chat, I would love. I would write a love letter. So I got three.

[01:03:19] Melissa

Oh, that's so sweet. That's so sweet. I'll be. Yeah. Message me or something, Serena.

[01:03:26] Karen

Was this something you posted on on your account on Facebook?

[01:03:31] Melissa

It was not I can't like I don't want to say where. Oh, okay. But. Okay. Yeah. No, because it's it's a private group.

[01:03:38] Karen

I don't know if you know what they're going to show us or there's so much stuff that people say and you never see it because Facebook didn't deem it necessary for you to see. So there's a lot of things in all these social media channels are the same way. You don't necessarily see the whole picture from anybody.

[01:03:56] Melissa

Yet.

[01:03:57] Karen

And, you know, excited to hear about it now.

[01:03:59] Melissa

Yeah. And I kept it to that group because it it was kind of like a a beta test of something that could be, you know, something big that I would love to develop further because I, I think it is kind of a special idea. I don't think it's original. I'm sure someone else has done it, but I just love the idea of women empowering and uplifting other women. And we just we need those reminders and having something that you can hold in your hands. And just knowing that someone took the time to think of you is is so wonderful. So yeah, yeah, maybe it's something to expand on, but. But I have to get over my crap first.

[01:04:50] Karen

Well, you might have to wait a little longer than this weekend. Now, for the the three of us to get our.

[01:04:57] Melissa

Well, you know, and people were so generous because, like, I was very upfront about it. I'm like, guys, this is what's happening. I'm so sorry. And people are like, you know, Valentine's Day coming up. I think if you waited until then, that would be the perfect time.

[01:05:11] Karen

Some things happen for a reason.

[01:05:15] Melissa

That's so crazy. So yeah. Yeah. Thank you.

[01:05:20] Karen

Well, I think that's very exciting. And it's a wonderful note to end on. If you or an have anything else to say, now's your chance. Now's our audience's chance. Oh, Serena has it. I'll bring her up. She has raised her hand, so. Sorry. You have to. There you.

[01:05:39] Anne

Go. Yeah. Hi. No, I just simply raised my hand because I thought Melissa said something that.

[01:05:47] Karen

I missed.

[01:05:47] Anne

About being able to write a love letter. Or if we're going to do that.

[01:05:52] Melissa

How it's going to happen or something. Oh, okay. Yeah. If there's a way to. To message me, I can give you more information about that. But but I think like in the future, that would be an interesting thing to organize on a on a wider scale. Okay. But yeah, but I need to handle this in a smaller group first and and just work out all the kinks. But no, I appreciate that question. And yeah, and I encourage you to, to even take that idea and bring it to your own like church group, women's group, whatever, and, and use the heck out of it because I think it's something we could all use.

[01:06:35] Anne

Oh, yeah. Great. Yeah. Thank you. I just have a lot of noise here. A carpet's being put.

[01:06:40] Melissa

In, so she's missing part of it all. Okay, I hear you. Thank you. Thank you. As sirens go by. Sorry.

[01:06:56] Karen

Well, it seems like we've come to the end of our time. It's time for everybody to get the show back on the road, as they say. So I'm going to wrap up today's Pit stop, but I want you to know the recording will be available on narrators, road maps, dot com, and I hope everyone in the audience will take another road trip with us in two weeks on February 1st, when we'll be speaking with Sarah Puckett, who's the owner of Pink Flamingo Productions. In the meantime, I hope you all find joy in every journey and are living the life of your dreams. I want to thank again our marvelous guest, Melissa Moran, for this most interesting conversation to my dear friend Anne Flosnik for your excellent questions and support. And to all of you in the audience for spending time with us today. So thank thanks so much and have a great afternoon.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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