Chris Velardi:

It's a 'Cuse Conversation with award-winning podcaster and author, Stacey Simms, a 1993 Syracuse University graduate who's been sharing stories, advice, and news about diabetes on her Diabetes Connections Podcast, through her blog, and in now, two books highlighting her, we'll call them adventures as the world's worst diabetes mom.

Stcey Simms:

And I got into an argument with somebody online about how I raise my son, which I can't believe how sometimes these arguments go on social media. I don't engage in them anymore, but back then I was. So he said, "You're really going to hurt your son." He was really nasty about it. And I said, "I must be the world's worst diabetes mom." I slammed the computer down and then I went, "Oh, that's it. That is it."

Chris Velardi:

You'll hear more about Stacey's approach to raising a son with diabetes and how she's found professional success as a trusted voice in this space. Stacey also shares some strong thoughts about the business of broadcasting, including some very pointed advice for young women in the industry. Stacey spent several years in television news and talk radio. She also talks about her lifelong connection to Syracuse University and the relationships that she's made with the people she met at the university. But we started our conversation with the interesting career evolution that's led her to where she is.

Stcey Simms:

It really is interesting to think about and look back on. And thanks so much, Chris, for this opportunity to come and talk to you and share these stories. I'm excited about looking back, although I'm a little nervous about looking back.

Chris Velardi:

Well, looking back to the easy part. Looking back, you know what happened there. There's no twist and turns. There's no [inaudible 00:01:41] twisting and turning.

Stcey Simms:

No, that's true. That's why we enjoy nostalgia. So just to answer your question, I won't go rehash the whole thing to start, but I was working in radio. I had what I considered my dream job, doing mornings in Charlotte, being part of a very successful morning show team. And then a lot happened, as happens to people in radio, that was unsettling. We were sold a billion times. I worked at WBT, in Charlotte, and the last people we were sold to while I was there, paid an enormous amount of money for us right before the crash of 2008. And then they were left with a very niche couple of radio stations that they knew they could never sell for the amount of money that they paid. So it became a game of cost cutting across the board, even more so than radio had been for many of us who'd been in the field for many, many years, and for many reasons, which I'm happy to share.

I decided to leave. I decided to leave on my own account. I was very tired of getting up at 2:30 in the morning. I had done that for television in the past too, as an anchor, and I wasn't quite sure what to do though. I just knew it was right for me and for my family. I had a daughter in middle school, who I was trying to stay up with. I was trying to stay up until 10:00 at night. It was very difficult, things like that. And so, when I was taking some time for myself, I listened to a lot of podcasts. This was in 2011, 2012, 2013 when podcasts were around certainly, but they were not as popular as they are and they weren't

native on your phone. I'd love to talk more about how podcasts got more popular, but you had to download them, you had to put them on your iPod, obviously that's where podcasts come from.

And I would do that. I would download lots of podcasts and walk my dog and listen to podcasts. My son has Type 1 diabetes. He was diagnosed in 2006, right before he turned two, and I listened to a lot of diabetes podcasts. There are a bunch, but most of them were not what I really wanted to hear. They weren't news focused, they were stories. They were first person, this is what happened to me. Which is great and fun to listen to and very interesting, but nobody was doing a news podcast. So that's what I did. I said, "This is going to be fun. Let's do it." I had no idea how to do a podcast, after being on somebody else's podcast.

I emailed them and said, "How do you do this? I know how to do the talking part. How do I do the taping part and the distribution part, and all that stuff?" And he was so kind. He sent me basically, step by step instructions, which is embarrassing to say now, but again, this was 2014 and I launched my show in 2015, not really expecting much other than, this will be interesting. And here we are, 500 episodes, seven years later. It's how I make my living. It's fully sponsored. I've actually branched out into teaching other people how to make money with their podcasts, and it's been a phenomenal experience. So that's a kind of quick answer to your question.

Chris Velardi:

And this is not a professional development podcast per se, but I think there's so much there and certainly part of it very much I can relate to, having done morning television for many, many years and the 2:00 alarm clock does and having children of the same age when I got out. It does certainly hit you. But I think the idea that is so valuable when it comes to talking about people who are considering career transitions. And look, it's a scary thing.

Anytime you leave something that you've always done and you feel comfortable and confident doing it, for the great unknown, it's a scary thing. But you knew how to be a journalist. So the newsy part of it was something that was already in you and you had a very personal connection to diabetes and a passion for learning more about it and understanding it more. So leaning into your skillset and your passion led you down this path. And it seems to be the kind of thing that can be difficult to do if you can't necessarily see clearly, "Oh wait, I know how to do this. I like this, I care about this."

Stcey Simms:

Yeah. I think the other factor that I don't talk about too much, but I think is important to share is that, I was fed up with the opportunities I wasn't getting. And much of that frankly is, and listen, I may be disillusioned. If you ever hired me or didn't promote me and you have another perspective, feel free to email me. But I think, Chris, a lot of that came from being a woman and working in talk radio. When I was hired at WBT, I was 32 years old. I was 31 years old. I hadn't learned 32 yet. I was 31. And that's relevant, because news talk radio, what's the audience? What's the age for that? It's a much older skew. It's probably when I was... We used to joke, 12 plus in radio is really like 55 to dead. It's probably 75 to dead now.

It's just a different audience. My cohost and much of the on-air staff, most of them were 20 to 25 years older than me. So I don't know why they hired me. I'm thrilled they did. We had a blast and it was a fantastic experience all around, but it became apparent pretty quickly that, even with some staff changes and some opportunities, those opportunities were not going to go to me. So I had to decide, and I was actually told by somebody, "You have to keep your head down, you could work here indefinitely and make a lot of money."

We were all very well paid for the time. I don't know that that's still the case. As I said, that company came in, Greater Media, and needed to make up the difference. They're no longer the owners. So I could have kept my head down and done just fine there. But after a while, you look at that yellow legal pad, you draw the line down the middle and you say, "Here's why I want to stay. I love this. This is what I always wanted to do. It's what I meant to do." Radio people know they're radio people. We all know, if you've been to Newhouse, you know. You can't stop talking.

Chris Velardi:

Right. It's something that you were afflicted with at some age and it never leaves. It's always-

Stcey Simms:

You're either talking into the tape recorder that you got when you were six years old, or you're building a news set in your house, like somebody in my class did. You just know. So you're writing this on the piece of paper and you're saying, "Okay, I'm making this amount of money. I've got great health insurance. I love my listeners. Radio is my dream. This really has a good job. And on the other side, what are my chances for advancement? How much longer can I get up at 2:30 in the morning without getting really sick and ruining my life? What is my family balance looking like right now? What are my ultimate goals?" And so, when I looked at all of that, it was very difficult to leave, even knowing it was the right move, but part of wanting to go into podcasting was, I wanted to work for myself.

I wanted to give myself the opportunities. And I wasn't really thinking of this as a big business at the time. I just knew that I had more to say and I wanted a bigger microphone. So interestingly, I chose a very niche audience. And I probably get fewer listeners overall. I know I do get fewer listeners overall than you're working at WBT, this huge station that goes up and down the East coast. But although, I don't know if anybody listens to over-the-air signals anymore, I'm making myself laugh. They have podcasts too. Y

Chris Velardi:

You're right. It is radio in 2022.

Stcey Simms:

Right, but at the same time, my audience is super loyal, super engaged. They really want to hear this stuff. So it makes a big difference to do this show. I don't know, it was a tough call, but I did know I could do it. But at the same time, especially in 2015, I didn't really know what podcasting was going to bring me. I knew it would scratch... Like you said, you don't stop talking. It's this affliction. I knew it would scratch that, but I wasn't really sure if I could make a long term go at it.

Chris Velardi:

But it worked. Things fell into place. You were able to develop that audience. How long did it take you until you felt like, "Okay, this is working." This is something that I can say is my "Job"?

Stcey Simms:

That's a great question. When I first started on my first episode, I think I had about 125 listeners, per episode for the first month. And I'd had a blog that I had been writing for a couple of years. And that blog was really very much a side, I wouldn't even call it a side hustle, it was like a side lazy, but I just did it because I needed to get some thoughts out of my head about diabetes. I never made any money. And

that blog had many, many, many more readers than the podcast is. So at first you're thinking, "Oh my gosh." And then you have to tell yourself, podcasting is a different game. Podcasting is a different medium. So it took a while to get to, I have thousands of listeners now, which I'm very grateful for, but it felt like a job because about three months in, my husband said to me, "You could make this a business."

And I said, "I have no desire to make this a business. Leave me alone." He had a great job. He had the health insurance. We were in this wonderful place where I could just play. And he said, "No, no, really, You've got to look at it. You could." So I said, "Fine." And I wrote a business plan on a little piece of paper for podcast sponsorship, because coming from news talk, I knew how to do live reads. I knew about specialized audiences and things like that. So I pitched it and I got my first sponsor. I think I'm the first podcast ever sponsored by Johnson & Johnson. They had a small division called Animas Corporation, which made insulin pumps. And I was really lucky, because I worked with the marketing people and they got a signed agreement. We got it pretty quickly, which seemed a little odd.

Something was definitely up, but I was happy to sign it. And then I realized what was up, because then legal got involved and my contract came back and said, "All right, we have a signed contract. Legal doesn't want to do it. They're terrified of podcasting, but here we go.": And I said, "Okay, you were very smart." And we figured it out. And from there I got other sponsors. Yeah, she was very good. And that's what made it feel like a business. And then, to be invited to speak and to do conferences. I think very gradually, within the first year, which was pretty quick, but even still, it felt very gradual. And now, we're seven years later. It's much more of a well oiled, and I say that loosely, operation.

Chris Velardi:

But is something that you now know how it works and how the sponsorships work and the content that needs to be there. You've got the loyal listeners, that kind of thing. And you've also been able to shift out of the exclusively audio area. You did have the blog, but now you've gone to print, you've got a book out, you've got another one coming out. How did you become an author in addition to being a podcaster?

Stcey Simms:

Oh, thank you, Chris. Yes. Well, it's funny, because there was a local group here in Charlotte, a publishing group, and they said, "You should put your blog posts together and just put a book out." And a lot of people do that. So either they put Facebook posts out now as books, we'll just gather enough up.

Chris Velardi:

It's words somewhere, right?

Stcey Simms:

It's words somewhere, repurpose that content.

Chris Velardi:

That's right.

Stcey Simms:

That's go. Then a couple of years from now, they'll have TikTok content in books. People will be dancing and pointing to words within the books. I love it.

Chris Velardi:

If they could figure it out, I'm sure it could be there.

Stcey Simms:

It's coming. So I didn't like that idea, because I felt like the blogs were much more stream of consciousness, here's what I'm feeling at this moment. And I wanted to have something to say. A lot of wonderful people have the terrible experience of their child is diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, and then a year later they write a book. And I have read most of those books, and some of them are good, but I felt like I really, not being a medical expert, not being a healthcare provider, I want to be very careful and I wanted to truly have something to say. And I got into an argument with somebody online about how I raise my son, which I can't believe how sometimes these arguments go on social media. I don't engage in them anymore. But back then I was. And he was arguing with me about, we're very loose in terms of Type 1 diabetes, which I don't really think we are.

But we let our son do lots of... He's very independent. We send him on crazy trips, We let him do stuff. And many parents are more concerned about how much freedom they give their kids, because it's a very scary condition and you've got to be managing it every hour, sometimes every minute. So he said, "You're really going to hurt your son." He was really nasty about it. And I said, "I must be the world's worst diabetes mom." I slammed the computer down and then I went, "Oh, that's it. That is it." And I screenshot all the conversation and then I deleted my post, because I was like, "I don't need his trouble. I don't need this." So I do have it, but it's gone on the internet, I hope. So the book is all about making mistakes, what we learn from mistakes. And in parenting, as you know, you have to make mistakes. You can't be perfect and it's-

Chris Velardi:

It's trial and error.

Stcey Simms:

It's better to make mistakes, because you and your kid learn from doing that. So that's what the book was all about. It was very well received with a bunch of awards, very happy about that. And so, I decided to write a second one, and that'll be out this fall. I wanted to call it the World's Worst Diabetes Mom Rides Again, but that was shot down. So it's called Still the World's Worst Diabetes Mom.

Chris Velardi:

Now, this was born out of an argument about your parenting of your son. You said the feedback to the book has been obviously really good, its won awards, but did you get pushback? Were there people who said, "You are the worst. Nobody should be like that."

Stcey Simms:

I do get a little pushback still because, and this is kind of a happy thing. There has been a wonderful change of technology since my son was diagnosed. He was diagnosed in 2006. We don't have to talk all about Type 1 diabetes, but he did have an insulin pump.

Chris Velardi:

That's for your podcast.

Stcey Simms:

Okay, yeah, that's fine. Listen to Diabetes Connections wherever you get your podcast. But he got an insulin pump six months later, but he got a continuous glucose monitor seven years later. And this is the stuff you see in commercials, it's in people's arms. You don't have to poke your finger anymore. That actually has changed the game in an incredible way. I don't get so much feedback like, "You're a bad mom", but I do get, "Well, it's different now." And so, the second book actually has a lot to say about that, because it is different now.

And these are great tools, but we need to use them in ways to help our kids really thrive. The second book also is a little bit more, "I think you should do it this way or don't do this." Because one of the things on, and I'll just spend a little bit of time on this, one of the trends I think is horrible is, there's a lot of pictures now. We all post pictures of our kids. Some of us are more judicious than others, but there's this trend in diabetes, and without, of posting what I call, pictures of children in distress, "Oh no, my child is sick today. Here's a photo."

And it seems like this is common sense to post this, because I want your sympathy. I want your help. Those likes make us feel really good. Studies show it releases the same kind of serotonin that we get when we eat something yummy or we hit a great hand in Black Jack, brains giving you those feel good things. So that's one of the chapters is, all about sharing those photos in the hospital and when your child is sick and why you really can't leave a... And you can't leave an electronic healthcare trail either these days. Got to be really careful.

Chris Velardi:

Interesting. I am curious, obviously your son is very centric to this whole thing. How does he feel about-

Stcey Simms:

He thinks it's the greatest thing. He's fabulous. He's very open. I do approve everything. My daughter, who's three years older, we approve everything together. I don't share every story. It looks like we are very open. We are to an extent, but I'm very private about certain things, very careful not to name his poor healthcare providers who are fantastic. They don't get real names in the book. That's none of anybody's business. We don't share specific numbers. And I am careful. I'm probably not as careful as I think I am. But he's terrific and he's very open. He comes on the podcast every once in a while, and I'm told that younger people, like teenagers and kids to listen to that. I'm always mortified, because I'm like, "Tell people you do it right." He's like, "Well, I forgot to do this and I forgot to do that. It was fine." And I'm like, "No, tell him I'm a good mom." So it's funny.

Chris Velardi:

It's transparency, it's authenticity. We like those things.

Stcey Simms:

Authenticity, yes.

Chris Velardi:

Those things are important. All right, so let's go back a little further. Let's go back to your Syracuse story. As we talked about, your career started in traditional broadcasting, in television, and then in radio. Was that always the thing for you? Was that always the big dream and is that what drew you to Syracuse?

Stcey Simms:

Yeah, I was one of those kids. I grew up in suburban New York City. Well, I grew up outside of New York City, so West Chester County, which is 30 minutes north, my dad went into Manhattan all the time. So he worked in Manhattan. And I don't know why that came out a little garbled. My goodness, I grew up in suburban New York, outside of New York City, let's put it that way. And I listened to Howard Stern and Don Imus, because that's who was on the radio at the time. And my parents, they didn't care, "Whatever you want to listen to is fine." And I just thought, that's the greatest. I'm going to grow up and be Charles McCord or Robin Quivers, the sidekicks, the news readers. That's what I wanted to do. I just thought they were brilliant. I really enjoyed them, especially Charles McCord was such a big influence on me. And kind of weird as I'm looking back, for a young woman to think that way, but that's what I wanted to do.

Chris Velardi:

And I know I can hear our Midwest and West coast audience is saying, "Oh, this New Yorker, it's all the East Coast bias, whatever." But look, I grew up in Connecticut. And so, I also listened to Imus, and McCord was the news straight man, had the funny line that just because he was always the straight man, delivered it in a way that it was funnier, it worked. So I get that. I can relate, obviously. I had that similar experience as a child too.

Stcey Simms:

Yeah. I think the difference for me too was, we also listened to a lot of the FM stations and they all had the same kind of morning show, two guys and a girl. And the girl was always laughing and giggling, the giggle girl, and she was a secondary character. And I knew I didn't want to do that. That was really imprinted on me. So in middle school, our middle school, I have no idea how this happened. I think it was just a question that we had the space, we had the "TV station" for our community college. Now this was in the early '80s, so this was amazing. We had TV cameras in the middle school. And if you got to school early, you could take the high school bus in and get to school an hour early and you could fool around the studio. They gave us once or twice a week, they gave the middle schoolers a chance to, thank God there's no video evidence of any of this, but we got to do newscasts.

And I just immediately fell in love with that. So when I got to high school, there wasn't a TV studio or radio station, but I wrote for my school paper and I knew that's what I wanted to do. So of course everybody said, "Go to Syracuse, go to Syracuse." So I said, "Oh, hell. I'll go to Syracuse." I was thinking of majoring in policy studies and I actually got a scholarship from Maxwell. I got an academic scholarship from the other school. So I was a dual major for a little while. I actually was a dual major at graduation. I'm sorry, Maxwell, I totally abandoned you. I did not pay attention. I did not do as well in those classes, because once I got to Newhouse, it was all over. I just loved it. And I went to Z89, I went to UUTV, I went to the Daily Orange, all in the first week. Citrus TV now, I guess is what it's called.

Chris Velardi:

Citrus, yeah.

Stcey Simms:

Sorry, yes. But I went to all three in the first week and I was like, "Well, I'm going to do them all." And of course you can't do them all right. And I did a little bit of the news at Z89, but I found, which is so funny because that's where my alumni love is now. But I didn't like it. I found that, I felt like the giggle girl. I did

the news, but I just didn't fit in. It wasn't my cup of tea. Maybe it was the personalities that were there at the time. I have no idea. I wasn't treated poorly, I just didn't do the role I wanted. And then, I went over to UUTV and did whatever I wanted and had a great time. And again, thankful that there's no video evidence. I don't know how kids do it with. YouTube.

Chris Velardi:

That's right, exactly. It's all digital now. If somebody happens to have the-

Stcey Simms:

No, no, I will-

Chris Velardi:

VHS tapes, please.

Stcey Simms:
I will write you a check, but do not. But I also stayed writing for the Daily Orange for about a year or two, and that was fabulous. And after college, well during college I was very fortunate. I got an internship at WSYR Radio and became their weekend reporter. So my whole senior year, I worked weekends at WSYR, being the worst reporter. No one trained me, no one taught me. I showed up, I didn't know how things worked. I missed a lot. But it was very, very good, very valuable. And I also interned at the NBC affiliate. So when I graduated, I got a job in Utica and then I came back and got a job doing mornings at the station where I had interned at W... I don't even know what it's called anymore-

Chris Velardi:

[inaudible 00:23:29].

Stcey Simms:

... WSTM at the time.

Chris Velardi:

Yeah.

Stcey Simms:

Oh, okay. It still is, that's great. That's my whole Syracuse thing. So I'm happy to talk more about it, but that was the lap I did.

Chris Velardi:

Well, when you do look back at that time when you really are taking it all in, trying to figure out, where can I get experience? Where can I have fun? At the time, maybe you're not... You are thinking a little bit about the experience, but you're also thinking about, where is this fun? Where is it fun to be and to experience this college thing? But when you look back, what stands out as the things that you were able to get out of that experience, that you still find yourself leaning into now?

Stcey Simms:

It's funny, if you had asked me 10 years ago to answer that question, I think I would've had a very different answer. The lens that I now look back on my entire career in broadcasting is tinted, I was almost going to say tainted. I don't think that's the right word, but it is tinted by knowing so much more and having a better vocabulary to talk about being a woman in broadcasting. I have to say that, one of the best experiences I had was at WSYR, because it literally was, "Get us stories for Monday. We just need stuff. We don't really even care what you cover over the weekend, but you better leave stuff in the Monday file." And there wasn't much guidance and there was no GPS. And I drove around looking for stories and making stuff up and I was sure I was going to be fired every Monday. That was an incredible, it really was. I miss-

Chris Velardi:

I do feel the need to say, making stuff up. You mean finding things, right?

Stcey Simms:

Yes.

Chris Velardi:

From a journalistic standpoint.

Stcey Simms:

Enterprising stories, right. Here's making stuff up, it's a sunny day and the car wash is busy. So I'm going to do a story about the car wash and how people are desperate to get their cars clean. Yes. Not making stuff up.

Chris Velardi:

That's enterprising, we love that.

Stcey Simms:

Thank you for clarifying. Yes.

Chris Velardi:

That's the Newhouse adjunct in me right there.

Stcey Simms:

Yes. I got another making stuff up for you. I missed... This couldn't have been on the weekend, or maybe it was, but I missed a jury decision. I had no idea how courts worked. I thought it was like business hours. I really didn't know anything and no one was teaching me. It was one of those really interesting experiences where, of course that's how it works, but you don't think about it. And I completely missed it, so I missed the story. But I called an attorney that I'd had as a contact at home and got his analysis of the verdict. And so, that was the story I "Made up". And actually, it was the first time I got picked up by the AP. So that was really exciting for me. And it was a real lesson in, "Okay, you missed it, now what do you do? You messed it up. How do you fix it?"

So those were the invaluable lessons I learned from WSYR. I also learned that some men in broadcasting are real jerks. And you've got to be really careful that you're not taken advantage of, that weird things

aren't happening at work, that you're protecting yourself. And that's unfortunate to say, and I hope it happens less. This was in the early '90s. It never even occurred to me to tell people. I don't want to be... Nothing criminal, but uncomfortable. I'm 20 years old and comments about my looks. Can you put my microphone on for me? Creepy stuff that now, you would say, "Are you nuts? Back off."

But at the time, I don't think we even realized, at least I didn't how to manage through those situations. I knew that it was creepy and I knew I didn't want to be alone with him or him. And if the newsroom was deserted, I was going to take a lap around the building and hope somebody from Y94 was there. And I'm laughing as I'm talking about it, but it is a serious topic. And I have, I've looked back on a lot of my career like that. It's really been eye-opening.

Chris Velardi:

It's a serious topic that, as you mentioned, in the early '90s, was happening but not being talked about. Do you feel like, looking at the industry now, it is being talked about more than it was? Should it be talked about more? If you were to give advice to a young woman entering the field, would you look at some of what you experienced and say, "Just be aware of this, watch out for this?"

Stcey Simms:

Yeah, I-

Chris Velardi:

Or do you feel, maybe there's more awareness of it because of what we've seen happen in the industry?

Stcey Simms:

I think there's a lot more awareness about it, but I think that the conversations still need to be happening. And I do talk about it to women all the time. When we come back for the Z89 alumni weekend or for other things, I'm always talking to young women. The advice I try to give them is all about being a better negotiator for your salary and your place of work. It took me a long time to figure that out. And if this is happening, if this kind of stuff is around, here's a better way to deal with it. But I also talk to the guys about it, because sometimes the best behaved "Men" sometimes don't even think about it, because they would never do it. So they're not going to be aware of it and they're not going to look out for their coworkers. So I do think it's getting better, but I also think it's because we talk about it, but especially in local television, that's all run by women.

At least it was when I was there. There was this whole thing in the late '90s, where are all the men? And part of that was because the pay was so lousy, they were all leaving and a lot of the women were staying because, different options, different schedules, different things, but it's Google-able, that you can find that kind of stuff. So I'm hopeful that it's getting better. I think it's also, there's always going to be jerks out there and there's still guys in the business that refuse to leave. They're 110 years old, Get off the radio, give somebody else a chance. We all know those guys.

Chris Velardi:

Yeah, they've been comfortable for a long time and-

Stcey Simms:

You know what it is, they're comfortable, but they also have no life off the microphone. They are afraid to leave because that's all... I don't want to... And I'm not talking about anybody specific. The guys I worked with were fabulous.

Chris Velardi:

Just broad generalizations. You talk about coming back, you do come back to campus. You've talked about WJP and Z89. Obviously I have on this podcast, talked to people from it and talked about my own affinity for that organization. But what does it mean to you, when you think big picture and think about being a part of this O range family that continues to stay engaged with each other and with the university? What does that mean to you?

Stcey Simms:

I think it's the most amazing thing. I just absolutely love it. And as I said, I was not as strongly involved during college. My senior year, I hadn't been at JPZ since the end of my freshman year probably. And my roommate was Beth Russell, who's now Beth Gore, and she just kept taking me to the radio station and kept taking me to social events. I wouldn't say we were competitors, but we were, how do I say this? We thought we were hot stuff. I was working at SYR, she was working at Y94 in the morning. We were still going to college, so we were like, We got this figured out." So we were very simpatico and we're still dear friends. But then I moved to Utica, so it was easy to come back for events. And that's really what happened. I started coming back for the banquet and things like that and just kept in touch.

And then I moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where I am now. And it's far, and the Orange is different. There's like Clemson Orange here, maybe Tennessee. It's not the right orange. So it's nice to have that connection. And I also, always felt that, if I needed something, if I needed a job, if I needed advice, and I've done this over the years, many, many times, I have called the people that I know from that organization. I've needed PR help, marketing help, podcasting stuff, questions about this or that. How do you move through this industry? And even stuff with sending our kids to college now, which, unbelievable. Talking to the people that have been through that and have shared this experience, getting into voice over work. I did a lot of that and I had a lot of people to talk to and ask about it.

And I think there's also something about, I mentioned I like to talk to the young women about what's going on with them. There's something fun about doing that too. And last time I went back, there's a young woman who has the same job I had in Utica. And it's like, "Oh my gosh." Tegan is her name, and I was like, "This is so cool." And we commiserated about the job and the weather and where the station is even is. It's at the top of this hill and there's the snow. It's been an amazing connection to have sustained all these years. And I know it's been incredibly helpful and valuable to me. I hope I've given back something as well. It's just been fun too.

Chris Velardi:

Well, that's it. Yeah, it's lifelong friendships, but it's the friends that you do call, because they've got experience in marketing or podcasting or broadcasting or accounting or whatever it is that you may say, "Wait a minute. I actually know someone who does that, who I knew in college, but I've actually known for a decade or two decades", or how many ever decades that we don't want to talk about anymore, because it's been a little while.

Stcey Simms:

And you've mentioned it already, so many of us are reinventing ourselves, leaving broadcasting and trying other things and knowing that, while we joke around it like, "Oh, we're so old." And that we have a long way to go and a lot more to do. And I think that having those friendships and those people sharing in those experiences, we're doing things that, if you had told us when we were 19. We'd be like, "No, no. I'm going to be in television forever. I'm always going to be a reporter. I'm going to be a radio show host until I'm 110 and won't leave the microphone." But the industry has changed a lot. And that's another topic for other time. I think that's really unfortunate. But when we have these kinds of connections where we can talk about the changes and the things we want to do in different industries we're all in, I think that's pretty cool too.

Chris Velardi:

Yeah, without a doubt. It's such a powerful thing, and you're right, you don't think about it when you're 19. You're thinking about what's next, what's next? But you're not thinking about the people who are around you now, who really can be around you throughout that entire journey, which it's a pretty powerful thing. And it's special, you don't want to take it for granted. So let's look forward. We've done a lot of looking back. You've mentioned one book is out, the podcast is going strong and another book's on the horizon. So tell us where we can find these things in the world.

Stcey Simms:

Well, the easiest place to go is probably diabetes-connections.com. That's the website that has all my stuff recently. I'm on social media as Stacey Simms, S T A C E Y S I M M S. And I've got some other stuff coming up next year for the diabetes community. I got to be honest with you, Chris, every year I say, "Am I going to keep doing this podcast? How much longer am I going to do this podcast for?" Because it's been seven years and I think I'm good for another year, at least. At least I will be when I start selling my sponsorships next month. So I've got to stick around

Chris Velardi:

When the sponsors expect to be able to get out there in the world, yeah.

Stcey Simms:

Right. And you can't sell your sponsorships in January of the year you want them and you've got to start early. I think it'll be fun to see what's next, because I'm not quite sure. My kids daughter is in college. My son will be a senior in high school, this fall. So it's like, "Well, what do I do next?" I did 10 years in TV, 10 years in radio. I'm on... Well, coming up in year eight in podcasting. I'm thinking of doing something new. I just have to figure out what it is. So I'm interested to see what happens next too.

Chris Velardi:

It's exciting, right?

Stcey Simms:

It is.

Chris Velardi:

And because you've done the reinvention thing to a large degree, does that give you a little more confidence in wherever this journey goes next?

Stcey Simms:

I would say, yes, but I will also say that it's so funny, 30 years, which I think is what it is since I graduated, goes by in a blink. But I think almost everybody who comes into Newhouse has that confidence. We might be a little unsure. I'm not exactly clear on how this is all going to work out, but stick with me. Like I told my father when I got my first job out of college, I worked at WUUTR, in Utica, I was a reporter and I made $12,000 a year. And he was so upset, "I paid more for one semester of college", blah, blah. I said, "Dad, stick with me. We're going to make it happen. It's going to be great." And even though I don't always have that exuberant confidence in everything, I do feel like it is going to be great. It's going to be just fine.

Stick with me. We're going to figure it out. We're going to take the next step. And I meet so many people in broadcasting who are like that, because as we have this affliction, I think if you don't have it, you cannot move forward. It's so difficult. There's so much competition, there's so much seris all around the business and trouble and things like that, that you have to have that little voice inside you that is really helping you along. So I don't know what's going to happen next, but I am optimistic and [inaudible 00:37:13].

Chris Velardi:

Our thanks to Stacey Simms for her time, for her stories. You can find her podcast, her books, her blogs, and much more online at diabetes-connections.com. There's a link in the description of this episode. You can also find the 'Cues Conversations Podcast in all of the popular podcast places. So tell your friends, subscribe so you don't miss an episode. And as always, thanks for listening. I'm Chris Velardi, go Orange.