

Goodbye Journalism...Hello Baked Goods

Segment	Who	Copy
Intro	Laura Raposa	<p>I'd spent my entire career at the Boston Herald. And I don't know, I was getting tired of it. I didn't have the passion that it was a great job but I was losing my passion for it.</p> <p>And so I thought when I decided to do something different was what do I know? What makes me happy? And that was baking, cooking, and feeding people.</p>
		INTRO MUSIC
Podcast Overview	Andy Levine	<p>Welcome to Second Act Stories, a podcast that looks at people who have made major career changes and are pursuing more rewarding lives in a second act. The stories are in their own words and the words of friends and family that helped them find a new path.</p> <p>I'm your host Andy Levine. Every two weeks we bring you a new, second act story.</p> <p>Today's story is a first for me and the podcast. It's the first time we've interviewed a married couple – and a really fascinating married couple at that.</p> <p>Laura Raposa and Steve Syre have been married for 30 years. And for most of that time they have worked in journalism – working as columnists for the two largest daily newspapers in Boston, Massachusetts.</p> <p>And in August, 2015, they decided to make a change – a really big change. They opened up a bakery called The Foodsmith in South Duxbury, Massachusetts.</p> <p>I interviewed the two of them together on a Monday afternoon – their only day off – in the kitchen of "The Foodsmith."</p>

About the Foodsmith	Andy	...if you were describing The Foodsmith to a friend you hadn't seen in maybe five years or something like that, how would you succinctly describe what you're trying to do here?
	Steve Syre	<p>It's the place that you'd want to go to have lunch or have breakfast or sit down and talk with friends over some food. That's, we have two things that we try to accomplish. One is that our food is all made from scratch, and is really delicious, that the food is outstanding.</p> <p>And the second thing is this very important sense of high-touch customer service that we want people to feel like it's a fun experience walking through the door, and that people look forward to coming here because it's fun literally to be here. And if we can accomplish those two things, that's really what we want it to be.</p>
	Laura	<p>You know, it's really a throwback.</p> <p>To the old days where, you know, people gather at the general store, you know, that kind of thing. It's very, you know, personal approach. I have to say I love the sense of community.</p>
	Andy	So talk about the motivation for this change, it's a pretty major change. Laura, I get the sense that it started with sort of some of your background but talk about the motivation for this.
The Changing News Business	Laura	<p>Well, the motivation is, and speaking about big changes is, you know, the newspaper business is changing. I'd spent my entire career at the Boston Herald. And I don't know, I was getting tired of it. I didn't have the passion that it was a great job but I was losing my passion for it.</p> <p>And so, but what did I have passion for? And my passion has always been since I was a little kid to feed people. It wasn't to be in the food business, it wasn't I didn't have these grand plans of opening a restaurant or doing anything I just wanted to feed people.</p>
	Andy	Steve, do the same or, you know, in terms of your decision to do this together. Were you also at a similar point in your career of the newspaper business had been?

	Steve	Sure. I would say the newspaper business is obviously having a lot of issues in terms of dealing with technology and how that impacts the economics of the business. And, you know, I was interested in making a change at that point that it's a cycle in the news business that there's basically a buy-out opportunity once a year or so. So it's not like it comes up as any big surprise. You can think about it moving forward and, you know, I had an interest in, you know, doing something different. But my idea was not, I didn't have a passion for food and I didn't have a passion for feeding people per se.
	Andy	So I'm interested how the discussion went as you were talking about this, you know, as you were thinking about, "Well, maybe it's time to leave the newspaper business, I want to try and do this." How did it come about?
Making the Move	Laura	Well, I left first. And I left in March of 2013, I believe. And in that summer, I interned at Flower Bakery. I know Joan Chang from I'm covering her. And she very graciously took me on as an intern. I mean granted, I'm like 50-something years old, you know, it's her group is very young. So for her to say yes to me was a big deal and I did not take that for granted. And so I interned there and I didn't want to leave. I didn't want to leave, I loved it there. I love her business model, I love the way everybody was involved in decision-making.
	Andy	Laura exploring starting a gluten free bakery with a partner but that didn't work out. And she was trying to figure out her next step....
	Laura	I was just bemoaning my plight to my husband like, "What am I gonna do?" And, you know, partnerships and blah-blah-blah. And we just decided, "Well, what do you need another partner for?" You know, we have each other. And we do and it's true, and, you know, we have these certain skills and we both could do it and we did. And it's sort of amazing to me, but we did.
	Andy	Part of their recipe for success is a very clear division of labor. Laura rules the kitchen. And Steve is the finance guy.

A Division of Labor	Steve	<p>Laura is the face of the business to begin with and absolutely is the person that people identify with when they walk through the door. She runs the kitchen, she decides everything that is happening along with our employees that's happening in the kitchen, in terms of what we're going to serve, how it's gonna be prepared, how we're gonna deal with special food situations.</p> <p>My role is completely backend of the shop, that I run all the administration, I deal with all the money, I deal with other things that are related to basically just keeping the place running day-to-day as a business, as opposed to a kitchen.</p>
	Andy	I asked Laura to describe her typical day at The Foodsmith.
A Typical Day	Laura	<p>I get up at 3 a.m. I'm here...</p> <p>Steve: Says her, there are no witnesses, for that.</p> <p>Laura: I have cats.</p> <p>Andy: You don't make her coffee then?</p> <p>Laura: No. He's snoring. At 3 in the morning, I'm here between 4 a.m. and 4:15 am. I come in and, you know, immediately the ovens go on. I make coffee for myself and get right to it. And I do not stop baking until I'd say 7:30 a.m.</p>
	Laura	<p>And then I would say after that I got to start, I got to make soup, I've got to put the turkey in the oven.</p> <p>There is no downtime. I put the menu up at 10:30-ish up on our website. And those who frequent us, who frequent The Foodsmith know that's where the menu is gonna be. I put it up on our website, I put it up on Facebook, and I Tweet it. If And so we're doing constantly, constantly moving, moving, moving. There is no, you know, "I'm gonna take a 20-minute break."</p>
	Andy	I got tired just listening to her describe a typical day.
	Laura	I'm 56 years old. I'm on my feet from 3:00 in the morning. I go home, you know, say it's 5:00, I can barely walk up the stairs to go take a nap, but I do it every single day, you know. And you would think that it would get easier, but it really doesn't. It really doesn't.
	Andy	Are you working harder than when you were a reporter?
	Laura	I have never worked this hard in my life.

		But I'm working for myself, you know. This is for me. This is for Steve. It's mine. It's, you know...and that to me is just terrific.
Happiness in a Second Act	Andy	So, if you had to compare your last couple of years working as a reporter or a columnist at The Herald to today, are you happier in your work today than you were...
	Laura	Absolutely happier. I'm 110% happier.
Lessons Learned	Andy	So as I always like to ask in every interview, I asked Laura and Steve about "lessons learned" from their Second Act.
	Andy	<p>So I wanna ask you about the biggest lessons learned over the past two and a half years, you know. If you were advising another entrepreneur who was thinking of starting up their own operation maybe in the food business, maybe not, what are some of the lessons that you've learned, advice that you could share with others?</p> <p>Laura: Well, we have no life.</p> <p>Andy: Okay.</p> <p>Laura: That's really hard.</p> <p>Andy: So, be prepared for the time commitment?</p> <p>Laura: So, be prepared for the time commitment. Be prepared for it. I mean, we go on vacation. After Christmas, we always take two weeks in January because it's dead, you know. The town is dead. So, we do that and, you know, don't feel guilty about that at all. But be that as it may, there are family activities, family events, things that... My parents are getting older. I wanna take my mother to an appointment or something, you know, I've gotta have her do it on Monday because that's my day off and I can't do anything, you know, on Thursday.</p> <p>Gotcha. Gotcha. Any other lessons that come to mind for you, Steve?</p>
	Steve	I think, for people who are considering something entirely different from what they've been accustomed to, you really have to be prepared for a lifestyle in which you're confronted with a lot of new problems all the time. And that gets hard sometimes, and it becomes wearing sometimes, where you don't have the knowledge or background to know the solution off the top of your head. And it takes work and perseverance, and you scrape your knees a lot during the way, but if you're prepared for that, it's okay.

<p>Conflict in the business</p>	<p>Andy</p>	<p>Have you had disagreements over how to operate the business in your first two and a half years?</p> <p>Laura: I spend too much money.</p> <p>Steve: That would be one, yes.</p> <p>Laura: I spend too much money. It's like Amazon Prime, Amazon Prime, Amazon... He's looking at the credit card bill, Amazon Prime. Yeah, that's a problem.</p> <p>Steve: I would say, you know, we're looking at the business from two completely different perspectives and it would be, I think, abnormal not to have disagreements every single day, and, you know, that's another thing you work through and, yeah, I think it works out that way, you know. And this issue, too, about leaping into or transitioning into something completely different, I think you have to appreciate that you need to put a lot of work and effort into it. You know, I think the food service business, in particular, is really gruelling and that it just, as Laura said, sucks up your life in terms of the number of hours in a day. You have to decide what you wanna do and really commit to putting a lot of energy into it.</p>
	<p>Andy</p>	<p>I asked Laura and Steve if The Foodsmith and their new life had put pressure on their marriage.</p>
	<p>Steve</p>	<p>Steve: I don't think it's been that big a problem But you know, I think when it comes to everyday things running the kitchen, I don't pretend to have the answer. Now, I trust Laura to know what the right thing is to do that. And if she is wrong, we're both wrong because I have nothing constructive to contribute there.</p> <p>And hopefully, when I say we're spending too much money, somebody's paying attention to me. And there's also other things, obviously, that I'm involved in that I have a say in, but I think trying...having an appreciation for what our individual strengths and weaknesses are and that's how a lot of marriage works, too.</p> <p>Andy: Would it be different if you were both chefs? Do you think it would be hard?</p> <p>Laura: I would never be able to do that.</p> <p>Steve: I think that would make it much, much harder.</p>

<p>Making the Leap</p>	<p>Andy</p>	<p>I asked you advice for an entrepreneur starting up their business. This is a podcast about second act stories, people who are taking on and trying something new as both of you have done.</p> <p>Is there any advice or inspiration you would give to them?</p> <p>Laura: Well, I would say make the leap. Make the leap but have a plan. I made a leap and I really didn't have a plan. I just had to get...I just had to make the leap. So, have a plan.</p> <p>Do your research. Do all of that stuff before you leap, you know. Educate yourself.</p> <p>Andy: Steve, any advice you would offer?</p> <p>Steve: I would also encourage people to do that, but I think hard about it that it isn't something that's casual. It takes an enormous amount of effort and there is risk involved in it. But once you get over that, it's a pretty amazing life experience that I think is hard to turn down. It's been pretty exciting.</p>
<p>The Biggest Compliment</p>	<p>Andy</p>	<p>To give you a feel for the type of place that Laura and Steve have created, I asked them about the biggest compliment a customer has given them?</p>
	<p>Laura</p>	<p>We have an 87-year-old woman, Barbara, who comes in every single day for lunch. And in fact, she jokes and calls herself a trustee of the Foodsmith, and she is really. And she comes in every day. And if she doesn't come in, you know, we're concerned for her. You know, we'll call her up, "Where are you? Are you sick?" You know, "What's going on?" So, people who come in every day, sometimes twice a day, what is a better compliment than that?</p>
	<p>Steve</p>	<p>I have to say sometimes you get weird comments and weird compliments. The first time we closed for a vacation briefly, then we reopened, and one of our regulars came in. She said, "Thank God. I feel like the crack house re-opened."</p>
	<p>Andy</p>	<p>After hearing their story, I can guarantee you that my wife Felicia and I won't be opening-up a bakery anytime in the future.</p> <p>But the next time we are in Boston, we will be heading out to South Duxbury to sample the amazing food that Laura and her team make six days a week.</p> <p>I hope you'll do the same if you are in the area. Laura and Steve are two delightful people who have found happiness and joy – and maybe a little bit of financial reward – in their second act.</p>

		Outgoing Music
Thank-You and Show Credits	Andy	<p>Of course, we want to thank Laura Raposa and Steve Syre for sitting down with me at The Foodsmith and telling us about their second act.</p> <p>If you are considering starting your own second act, maybe with your spouse, I hope you will find both inspiration and key lessons in their story.</p> <p>If you know of a "Second Act Story" that we should profile, please contact me, that's Andy Levine, at SecondActStories@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you.</p> <p>We hope you'll keep listening. A new Second Act Story" is just two weeks away.</p>