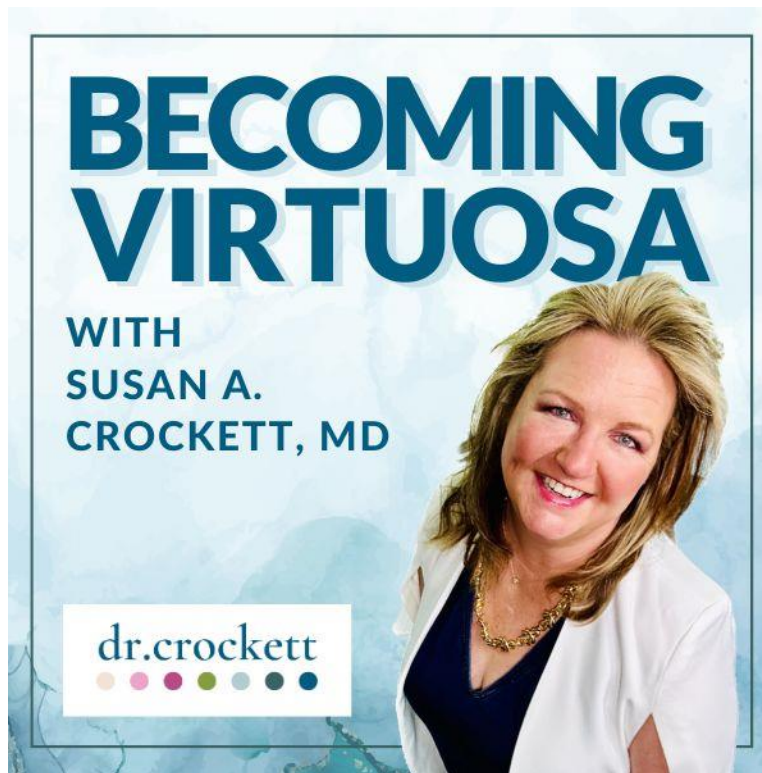


**Ep #85: Create a Life You Love:
Grit & Grace with Lacey Agüero**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Susan A. Crockett, MD

Ep #85: Create a Life You Love: Grit & Grace with Lacey Aguero

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to the podcast. As we go through our busy lives with careers, families, and our health to take care of, it can be easy to get overwhelmed and then beat ourselves up for it. We all need a reminder that while grit and hustle are important, so is grace. So for your reminder this week, I'm resharing an episode all about seeing where you're being too hard on yourself and giving yourself the grace you so deserve. Enjoy.

Lacey Aguero: I have three daughters now of my own. So I'm definitely trying to take that mindset of you know baby, the world's a tough place. People are going to constantly tell you no, and people are going to tell you, you can't. But if you want it bad enough, and if you have that vision and that drive, you can accomplish it.

Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa*, the podcast with Dr. Susan Crockett. You're listening to episode number 42 Grit and Grace, an interview with licensed first surgical assist and badass military veteran, Lacey Aguero.

Welcome to *Becoming Virtuosa*, the podcast that encourages you to become your best virtuosa self. Each week Dr. Susan Crockett goes where the scalpel can't reach, exploring conversations about how to be, heal, love, give, grow, pray, and attune. For the first time ever, she's bringing the personal one on one teaching that she shares with individual patients to you on this broader platform. A weekly source of inspiration and encouragement designed to empower you.

By evolving ourselves as individuals. We influence and transform the world around us. Please help me welcome board certified OB-GYN specializing in minimally invasive GYN surgery, internationally in the top 1% of all GYN robotic surgeons, a certified life coach, and US News top doctor, your host Susan A. Crockett, MD.

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Dr. Crockett: I have a very special guest on with me. She goes with me where the scalpel reaches every week, twice a week. She's my first surgical assist. I wanted to introduce you all to Lacey Aguero.

Lacey: Hi, how are you guys?

Dr. Crockett: Thanks for coming on the show today, Lacey.

Lacey: Thanks for having me.

Dr. Crockett: We are going to talk a little bit about stuff that doesn't have to do with a scalpel though.

Lacey: That's fine. Let's talk about it.

Dr. Crockett: Because, you know, we were talking in the bar the other day a little bit about what it's like to be working in this man's world and kind of the grit. Like you're really known for having grit. You showed up a couple of days lately where I'm like the men are staying at home sick and Lacey's there. Lacey's there.

Lacey: Commitment. Gotta have that grit. You really do.

Dr. Crockett: I'm so grateful for you showing up.

Lacey: Good. Thank you.

Dr. Crockett: So I wanted to start by you telling us a little bit about your background. How you became a first surgical assist. You got some other really impressive background as a member of our armed forces. I thank you for your service, but also just wanted to give you a chance to tell our audience a little bit about yourself.

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Lacey: Okay, so I will start with I am not an original Texan. Don't get upset for me, but I am definitely, I feel like I have been initiated in. I've been here for about 18 years now. I started out, I joined the military while I was in high school.

Dr. Crockett: Where did you grow up?

Lacey: I grew up in Mississippi. Yeah. Oh, yeah, right there on the coast. So coastal girl. I joined the military pretty early. Then I got to travel a little bit and got stationed here in San Antonio, Texas. From there is kind of where my medical career took off unbeknownst to me that that's the direction it was heading. I had no clue what I was getting myself into.

Dr. Crockett: As so often happens in life. Right?

Lacey: Right. So 18 years later, here I am exactly where I think I should be first assisting. I get the pleasure of helping you.

Dr. Crockett: Thank you and a lot of other amazing surgeons in town. We really depend on you as our right hand woman.

Lacey: Yes, yes. I'd like to think I'm an extra set of eyes and ears that benefits you guys and the patients so.

Dr. Crockett: Completely. You're pushing the boundaries on the licensing and the development of for surgical assist. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Lacey: So not a lot of people know what a first assist is. But I guess in retrospect, if you think about it, your surgeon technically needs more than two hands to help with surgery. I mean, there's a lot of people involved, and we get the pleasure of coming in and helping you and making sure that that surgery is successful.

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Dr. Crockett: Yeah, so talk with me a little bit about I know, I've heard this. I know how this goes, but our listeners don't know. How did the position of the first surgical assist develop? Where is it right now? Where is it going? Where are you helping to push it?

Lacey: So traditionally when it came to surgery, a lot of surgeons were using each other during surgery. That's excellent. You always want more hands, more eyes to help with surgery. However, it was taking away a lot of time in clinic. So I was initially a surgical tech. Because I got to be there and present over the years, we developed more skill set with you guys. We were learning from you guys. So institutions came forward and decided to do secondary training. Those that could would go back and get retrained and requalified to be a mid-level provider and doing so we get to help you guys perform.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah. So then they kind of grandfathered in people that were starting to just operate and then there became a certified program. Now there's a higher level of licensure.

Lacey: There is. So there's grandfathered in first assists, those that have been doing it long enough to where it's just naturally they have been what you would call secured in their position. There's certification for first assists, which shows that you've gone back, and you've received some sort of certificate showing that you've received training to do our position and help. Then there are few states, but we're trying to expand. There are a few states here in the US where they give you licensure or registration.

Dr. Crockett: The licensures are actually under the Texas Medical Board in Texas I think.

Lacey: Here in Texas, it's through the Texas Medical Board alongside the surgeons.

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Dr. Crockett: So the licensed first assists, like you, are now at a level that's more like our mid-level providers, like a PA would be for a clinic.

Lacey: Yes, correct. So we get to function alongside of you and independently within reach and within scope with the license.

Dr. Crockett: You have your own responsibilities. So you and I have been through thousands of cases literally together in the OR. The main thing I wanted to talk with you about today was grit and grace. That's kind of your thing.

Lacey: It is.

Dr. Crockett: Grit and grace.

Lacey: It's my thing. Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: So tell me just a little bit, tell our audience a little bit about some of the instances where you've had to have grace under grit. When you and I were talking a little bit before the show, we were talking about the grace is not just to extend to others. It's like the grace to ourselves because we're so hard on ourselves, right? So tell us a little bit about how the military taught you grit and grace.

Lacey: So growing up, I always kind of knew that I was going to join the military. My father was in the military and then one of my siblings, she has cerebral palsy. So that took not a lot of time or attention away, but it was just, I knew if I joined the military, I was going to be able to provide I guess better for her and my family. Well, so I made that decision early on. I enlisted my senior year. I got to travel and experience all different kinds of cultures and people from all kinds of corners of the world.

Dr. Crockett: What a great experience, especially at that young age.

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Lacey: Very young. So honestly, that was my first time away from home. I'd never traveled before. I'd never been on a plane before. Then I just kind of threw myself into it. So I guess with the grit, it came early on with the mindset of if I wanted it done, I knew I was going to have to be the one to do it.

Dr. Crockett: Very self-aware and capable. You got your own back as well as other people's back.

Lacey: Yes. So then getting to experience all these different people with different backgrounds and different cultures really gave me a sense of okay, well, I'm not alone in this thinking. I'm not as alone as we tend to get in our head.

Dr. Crockett: Right.

Lacey: So taking that mindset, it's always just kind of been like okay well, regardless of whatever the circumstance may be or the problem, the mindset will be there's always got to be an answer. Is it going to be an easy one? No, they're not always easy, but there can always be an answer. You usually can always get the answer you want.

So the military has kind of taken that perception for me, and put them in context. I've been able to take it and translate it over to a civilian mindset. Within that, it's giving me a little bit more grace because not everyone gets to get the exposure.

But you really do kind of go from an extreme mindset of a black and white, this is the mission. This is what it's got to get done. Oh, by the way, you're a female. It might need to be altered a little bit for you. Then you get on the civilian side. It's like but wait a minute, I have all this exposure and all of this training, and I can. On that, on the civilian side of things, you see a little bit less grace, at least from my perspective.

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Dr. Crockett: So as we're sitting here talking, I'm thinking like I wonder how I would really define grit. Like I know when I think of it.

Lacey: How do you think of it?

Dr. Crockett: I'm thinking of it kind of like when you and I are in a case, and we're tired or things are going long, and it's just hard. The grit is the, just put your head down and get it done and do the excellent job anyway and push through. It's kind of that even under pressure, you just do it. You work the 36 hour shifts when you're training. I don't do that anymore.

Lacey: Thank goodness.

Dr. Crockett: But yeah. You do the six cases on the day because they just have to get done. Or you work when you don't feel great because it just has to get done. What are other examples in your life where you had that?

Lacey: I would probably say on a home environment growing up. Everyone has their obstacles. Everyone has family history. I would definitely say, it was me and my two older sisters for the longest. Then about 14/15 years later, my brother came along. Primarily the family dynamics was me, my siblings, and my mother. So there was a father presence. It wasn't always present. So the grit there of knowing that okay well these are the things that my mother's doing. You just naturally in a home setting want to contribute or help. So there was that grit. The grit of trying to help maintain the family.

Dr. Crockett: So was that something that your mom required of you? Or was it just something that you were like I've got to help out?

Lacey: It was never required. No, actually, it was just a mindset, which is kind of weird because you want to know where that mindset comes from initially. That drive.

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Dr. Crockett: Yeah. Where did it come from?

Lacey: That's a good question. I'm still trying to figure that one out myself.

Dr. Crockett: How can we instill that in our next generation?

Lacey: You know I have three daughters now of my own. So I'm definitely trying to take that mindset of you know baby, the world's a tough place. People are going to constantly tell you no, and people are going to tell you, you can't. But if you want it bad enough, and if you have that vision and that drive, you can accomplish it. I don't think there's been one thing that I haven't set my mind to that I haven't accomplished. Now, it never happened overnight. But.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, wow. That's stunning.

Lacey: Yeah.

Dr. Crockett: Not very many people can say that Lacey.

Lacey: Really?

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, I don't think so. I think people give up, and they find other pathways. So there's some tenacity as well as grit.

Lacey: You know and looking back at some of my home setting too, and I remember certain situations that would play out. Like the father presence. He could have been present and chose not to, and that's okay. No resentment there, really. But I would always take that situation and want to analyze it and be like okay, well what would I do? Do I want to do this when I get older, or is this something that I can change? I've looked at every situation like that. Is it something I want to do? Is it something I can change?

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Dr. Crockett: Wow. That takes some self-awareness at a young age to do that.

Lacey: Yeah, it does.

Dr. Crockett: The other thing that I'm seeing, and we see it in the OR with the younger techs that come in.

Lacey: The younger staff.

Dr. Crockett: Yeah, the grit and the determination thing is something that I'm not sure I had it when I was their age either. I think it's something that comes over time when we're able to see that they're really great things in life. Like even like this. The studio took a tremendous amount of grit to get to where it is.

Lacey: You've done such a great job.

Dr. Crockett: Well, thank you, I appreciate that. But I thought it was just gonna go up, and we're gonna go live in a couple of weeks. The failures, the number of failures, like joking that we're failing forward. Like fail faster to get to the right place. Just to get to this place where everything was set up right and we're able to have this conversation and share it with an audience. It took like four months of grit and just not get discouraged and pushing through it and just it not working and finding somebody else to help and figuring it out. That's interesting.

Lacey: I had heard a quote not too long ago, and I wish I could give credit to where it came from. But it was I might not always win, but I never lose. I learn. So that's like a really good way. That's kind of how I've always looked at things. I don't think I lost. I definitely learned something. Then now it's just let's throw it on my resume. Let's add that to my next experience.

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Dr. Crockett: To your next thing. So where are you going next?

Lacey: Going next. I really want to push for LSAs to be a little bit more noticed, definitely regulated. The licensure is, I think it's a must in the OR. I mean I would hope that the patients and you guys think so too. Right now, that's kind of my goal is just to bring more awareness to the profession.

Dr. Crockett: I think that's admirable. I'm going to add that I want to see as training more of them. I think there's a real need for them to have the higher level of training. I'm hopeful that you and I will be able to work together to build that.

Lacey: To build it. Yes, absolutely.

Dr. Crockett: So.

Lacey: So you mentioned how grit and grace is kind of this theme. So the backstory for me right now and what the backstory is.

Dr. Crockett: Oh, I love a good back story.

Lacey: Is we all kind of pick quotes and we have our own motivational phrases and stuff that get through us. Recently been going through self-evaluation. We all get there at some point.

Dr. Crockett: That's a good thing. Yeah.

Lacey: My sister-in-law actually had given me this hat.

Dr. Crockett: It's a cute little hat.

Lacey: Right, isn't it? It's so adorable.

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Dr. Crockett: Oh my gosh. Look how cute that is.

Lacey: She'd given me this hat, and it says grace and grit. When she gave it to me, unbeknownst to me, she's like, "I just want to let you know that I've been watching you, and you give yourself so much grit. You're full of it. Don't ever doubt that you have the grit. But I do think you should work on giving yourself just a little grace."

Dr. Crockett: Lacey.

Lacey: I know. When she said this, of course that brought me to tears. I was just, it really hit home. So I was like thinking, we all need to give ourselves just a little bit of grace.

Dr. Crockett: We do, that compassion. We all work hard as moms especially, and we're so hard on ourselves. I was raised in that mindset too of perfectionism or very hard work ethic, and you work hard to get what you want and all of that. The downside of that is not giving ourselves the compassion and recognition, grace for what we've done. But that's the flip side of it, isn't it?

Lacey: Yeah. As women working, momming. If you're married, I mean, it's so easy for us, I think, to want to do it all and to want to be perfect at it.

Dr. Crockett: Well, it's sometimes when we're sitting and resting or taking a bubble bath or whether we're thinking oh, I ought to be doing. I ought to be doing more. I think we miss that, the receiving. The resting, restoring, receiving that feminine energy is doing. It's a different kind of doing. Unless we do that part where we're resting and restoring and sleeping and taking care of ourselves, we can't do the...

Lacey: It's a very important part of us to function. I just don't think we, we overlook it a lot.

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Dr. Crockett: Yeah, we do. Well, maybe we should remind each other over the OR table a little bit more often.

Lacey: Yes. Give yourself some grace Doc.

Dr. Crockett: Thanks, Lacey. You too. Thanks. Thanks for being on the show.

Lacey: Thanks for having me.

Dr. Crockett: It was awesome.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *Becoming Virtuosa*. To learn more, come visit us at DrCrockett.com, or find us on YouTube for the Dr. Crockett Show. If you found this episode helpful or think it might help someone else, please like, subscribe, and share. This is how we grow together. Thanks, and I'll see you next week. Love always, Sue.