

[00:00:00] SHOW INTRO

[00:00:46] **Melissa**

Palazzo-Hart: Hi, welcome to REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES with me, Melissa,

[00:00:51] **Barb**

Patterson: And, Barb,

[00:00:53] **Melissa**

Palazzo-Hart: Barb and I were just talking about what's in our minds and in our hearts today. And we'd like to have a conversation about what's in our power to do when things in our lives and our businesses and the world seem really big and maybe overwhelming. And so, Barb, I'm going to hand it over to you to start the conversation here today.

[00:01:18] **Barb Patterson:** Yeah. Thanks, Melissa. And hi everyone.

Just to put a little context, we're in the week where there's been a mass shooting in Texas at a school, and just a couple of weeks earlier than that, there was a mass shooting in a grocery store in Buffalo.

Melissa and I, in kind of the style of this podcast, is that we always try and speak to what's present for us and what we're seeing for ourselves.

And so in that spirit, we can't show up today without sort of, you know, this is what's present for us, and I'll just share that for me when these things happen when both of those heartbreaking situations happened, my mind, you know, can't make sense of it. Right. But then I theorize, right? Like all of us, our minds go into theories about it, but you take this, and when you look at it more in a human level, it's like right now



in our country, there's a lot of discord, and maybe in your country as well, or maybe in your business or in your home, there is a lot of discord. Whether it's on different sides of an issue. Whether it's about decisions and choices that are being made in the business that you work for, or perhaps it's politically what's happening.

You know, there's a lot of things out there that matter to us, but often we get paralyzed because we don't know what to do, or I'll speak for myself and say, I can follow a trail of so many potentially broken systems that my mind gets into overwhelm. And I don't know what to do.

Yet, like all of you, I can imagine, I want to do something. I don't want to feel like I'm just at the mercy of other people's choices or when people experience pain, you know, I've had a good friend lose his wife, watched friends and family members have really tragic things happen to them. Forgive me. I'm not trying to bring the energy down, but just to share with you in a very real way, I have a niece fighting cancer.

Like all of you, we have these things that go on in our life. And I often find myself in this position of trying to figure out what to do. Trying to figure out how we change it. And yesterday, I was driving, and the thought just came to me, "What's mine to do? Maybe I need to go simpler. Maybe I need to really just bring it home because I don't know what to do about the bigger issues."

I know I don't want to ignore them. I know I want to take action where it makes sense, but the only way I can do that is to come back inside of me and just the simple question of, "What's mine to do?"

You know, when my friend lost his wife, who was one of my best friends, and I was getting ready to go to their house. I was feeling into this, "Oh my gosh. With the kids, what's it going to be like?" and I was starting to feel a little anxious about it. And then I just remembered. I'm

like, "Oh yeah, you show up. That's what you do. You get your body in that room, and you show up. That's it."

When I was thinking about my niece, who is going through this right now, and it's heartbreaking to watch her have to do this. I want to feel my feelings, accept them; I love these people, you know, it matters to me. But at the same time, asking myself *what's mine to do*. It's like, "Oh, I'm supposed to just love on her as much as possible."

I want to be a place for my sister to land when she needs it. I wanna be a place for my mom to land because it's really hard on my mom, her grandma.

Right. You know? [So there are things that do come to mind. I can't take away what's happening. I can't erase any of that, but in those instances, I get a clarity of what's mine to do. So on these bigger scale items, whether it's, you know, gun control or mass shootings or it's racism, or it's, you know, climate, equality, you know, these things that I know are on the minds of a lot of us and matter.

Everyone has their own position on those things. What I'm saying is, how do we take those bigger things? Or maybe you work inside a company that's going through a lot of change right now, or you don't like what you're seeing. It's like to come back and say, "What's mine to do?" And those examples for me it's, "Oh, okay. I'm going to pay attention to voting. I'm going to pay attention to those simple things. I'm going to be willing to sit with people and listen to their perspective and certain areas that normally I would tune them out cause I disagree." Right.

But I know division isn't working. So how can I, you know, show up in a place to try and understand more. And by the way, just to be really clear, I'm messy in all of this, and I can get really fed up and righteous too.

So I just want to say, just pointing to. Hopefully, our goal today was to begin to point to and maybe offer some hope and some guidance for all of us as we navigate this.

That question of "What's mine to do?"—a variety of things may come through, but something will come through, and we can trust that, and we can lean into that.

And as we all move in that direction, it can make a difference.

[00:06:45] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Thank you, Barb.

As I'm listening to you, I'm getting more quiet. And as we talked about before we hopped on here, I have been, like everyone listening, I'm sure, impacted by the events. And I love so much of what you shared.

The first step for me is to allow myself to acknowledge that I've been impacted, you know, as opposed to just pushing through and moving on.

And so we, I, have been impacted and have had all sorts of feelings ranging from heartbreak to rage, frankly, and asking myself, "Why did this happen? How?" You know, all those questions.

Those don't serve me when I'm in that place of trying to figure it out. I can tell you for me, when I thought about "What can I do?" the first thing was, "I need to talk to my daughter." Who's eight, who goes to an elementary school every day. And my husband and I talked with her today. The only thing we could do after we shared was be with her. And like you said, that's all we can do for people, truly. I used to think that I had to figure it out or fix it for them or make it better.

And the truth was I wasn't in acceptance of them, and I thought I knew better, and I need to take care of them, and it didn't work. And it didn't create that true intimacy I want in relationship.

As you're sharing, I'm thinking about what I have done so far in the past 24 hours. And you know, what's mine to do in a situation that's this big or in any situation—what's mine to do?

Because sometimes, when things like this happen that feel so big, I want to change the world. I want to make it better for everyone. And when I go that big, sometimes, I go into inaction, or I feel paralyzed. And so, just asking the question, “What's mine to do?” I had a thought about reaching out to a woman that I know who lives across the country. And she's also asking, "What's mine to do?"

And so together, we are setting up a call with other moms across the country about what's ours to do? How can we create a positive impact in our world? That's what's mine to do. And I just have to remember it's one step at a time. One action, one thought at a time.

We got some other moms, and it's growing. When we get on that call, one thought one moment at a time; we'll see what's ours to do.

] And what I have to remember is that we all have our own ways of looking at things. Every person in this world has their own way of looking at things. And I've learned that no two people see and think exactly the same. And I have to remember that because that allows me to actually hear another, as opposed to putting my point of view on them and not actually hearing what they are saying.

And I believe the only way we get through this as a country, as a universe, is to hear other different view, very different than mine. And I want to be a kind of person that is able to open up my heart to people that have very different opinions than mine so that we can do what's best for people of this world—the young, the old, the white, the black, the brown, all people.

And so I feel so powerless in doing that. And yet I know the only way to have any impact is to take it one step at a time.

[00:10:09] Barb Patterson: Yeah. And I think that's, "How do we stay the course?"

There's a lot going on right now. And I, I understand it. There are the memes that say, "Prayers aren't enough anymore."

And I said to somebody that brought that up, I'm like, "I totally agree, but I'm still gonna pray."

[00:10:26] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:10:27] Barb Patterson: And yet I can feel inside myself when I listen for *what's mine to do?* I do feel the desire to take action. Right. And so then the question is, how do I stay listening as I engage with those ideas? Where can I take action?

And listen, it's not like we're going to get immediate answers all the time. Sometimes we do, but other times it takes awhile.

You know, I think that with the murder of George Floyd two years ago, we are just passing that anniversary just yesterday. Like many Americans, that woke me up and deeply impacted me. And I'll just share that one of the realizations I had at that time was, "Wow. You know, for somebody who cares about, you know, humanity and equality and love of people, I had this idealized image of myself sort of when you see the civil rights movements that I'm there, you know, on the bridge arm, locked with everyone else. At that time when George Floyd was murdered, and all the uprising took place, I really, I had this thought like, "Not only are you not on the bridge, you're nowhere near the bridge."

So at that point, something in me was like, action. How do I align my aspirations, my values, and my actions in a meaningful way?

Listen. So much of my first step in that direction was education. My first step in that direction was self-exploration. My first steps in that was taking a look at myself, my communities, those blind spots, you

know, and it is still a journey for me two years later, kind of a checking in and like, "Am I drifting from the bridge again?" in my little cocoon here, you know, it's like, how do I stay the course? Because it matters.

And then these two mass shootings so close together kind of brings all that up for me again. And I share that all of this, just to say, I feel very much like maybe all of you do, like in that question of, I'm not always sure, but again, as what we've been saying and what Melissa just said, when I asked myself "What's mine to do?" And I hang out, and I listen; there's something there. Something comes forward—whether it's a great idea, like what you're doing with the mothers across... I absolutely love that, you know, or whether it's somebody going through something in your life, and so you get a nudge, whether to send them a note, go visit, you know?

Something's going on at work. You're seeing something that doesn't sit right with you, and it's not enough to just be an observer. Stay listening, stay listening and see what's yours to do.

You know, often what Melissa and I are pointing to is we have within us this reservoir of resilience, this reservoir of goodwill and clarity and creativity and well-being, peace.

All of us know and have had an experience where something tragic happens or chaos. And yet we find that calm, that peace inside of us to navigate it. Well, that same place can serve us now in these times. That same place within can guide us and fill us up and give us what we need to meet whatever's on our plate.

To give us what we need to have the hard conversation, to take action, right. To not be a bystander like I've, you know, was on the side of the bridge, but to actually get on the bridge and whatever that means for us.

[00:14:18] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah. Listening to that nudge and then taking action on that nudge is what's needed. Being on the

sidelines, I'll speak for myself, right. Being on the sidelines of some of the issues around these tragic thing no longer works.

[00:14:35] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:14:36] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: It no longer works. And so I'm willing to take the action on the nudges, not knowing what the results will be. But I sure know what the results will be if I do nothing.

And I think a long time ago; I would have allowed this to take me out, get behind a door, close it and not want to come out and face what's going on in the world.

And the truth is that's not helping anyone. Right? So as impacted and as sad and rageful as I am, I want to be of service. So for me, what can I do? How can I be of service?

There's the moms across America also kindness in the day. To every person I see.

You know, I was in New York during September 11th, and I remember the days, the weeks, the months that followed—there was this thing, this energy in New York city that I had never experienced before.

There was a warmth, a kindness, a looking out for each other that was palpable. And this morning, when I dropped my daughter off at school, and then I went to the local coffee—there was something, a looking in the eye of the people that we were passing by, a hello, a smile. And you never know who needs that.

[00:15:48] Barb Patterson: Yeah. And that's no small thing to offer kindness, to offer presence to the people around us. And ourselves included.

What I'm coming back to after listening to you today, Melissa, is that, yeah, how can we take care of ourselves in these times?

You know, I was sharing with Melissa before we hit the record button that I'm intentionally choosing to take in small bits of the news at this time.

Even though a part of me is really curious, and I don't mean that in a voyeuristic way, but I know how impactful this is, and I can feel my inner wisdom nudging me. And the answer of what's mine to do is not to get so consumed by the news that I go down a path that is discouraging.

Right now, there's no time for my discouragement.

Take that with a bit of a grain of salt, meaning I want to feel my feelings. We're going to have feelings about it. Right? But how do we, during these tough times, whether it's something going on in our family, our work, or in the country, right? How do we maintain an inner climate? How do we maintain our wisdom? How do we maintain clarity so that we can continue to change things? So we can respond in a way that's helpful, whether it's a family member, again, an organization, or this country.

So, I have grown to appreciate that maintaining an inner climate that allows me to be creative, thoughtful, responsive, agile, and resilient is critical in these times.

So we want to encourage all of you to have an eye for and a feel for what would also help you nourish and take care of and allow that inner climate to be a source of support for us versus taking us further down rabbit holes that aren't helping.

[00:17:55] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah, I think that's so important because we have to put the oxygen mask on ourselves before we help another.

And you know, when you're talking about taking care of yourself and having that clarity—for me, what I know I need is I need space and time, even if it's a couple of moments to center myself, to get

grounded. To ask my head, my heart, my body, "What is it that you need right now?" And to listen to that, to not push that to the side, to not push through.

Yeah. To not push through, to really allow whatever is needed to be supported.

I was on a call with a client earlier today and—brilliant woman, very successful. And she was speaking so brilliantly, and I just had this sense that she needed to breathe.

So I asked her if she'd be willing to take a couple of breaths. And as she did that, tears started falling from her eyes.

And so whatever that is for you, whatever that is, allow it.

[00:18:51] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Thank you so much, everybody, for being with us in this journey. And you know, we're sending you our love today and always.

[00:19:01] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah, lots of love. And, and thank you for being with us.