

**[00:00:00] INTRO**

**[00:00:46] Barb Patterson:** Hey, welcome everybody. Thank you for joining us for REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES. This is Barb.

**[00:00:53] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** and this is Melissa.

**[00:00:54] Barb Patterson:** So today we're going to talk about the impossible. And if I could remember the words, you know, I might sing just because Melissa sang recently, you know that 'To Dream the Impossible Dream' but I'll save everybody from that and just turn it over to you to kick off our conversation today.

**[00:01:14] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Thank you so much, Barb.

I do want to hear you sing because I've seen some recent posts of yours where you share a lot of the different skills that you've exhibited over your career. So

**[00:01:27] Barb Patterson:** Yeah!

**[00:01:28] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** I think one, one episode, we might want to do a little karaoke, but...

**[00:01:32] Barb Patterson:** Okay. I'm in. I'm in anybody who



knows me. It was like, what do you mean? It's like, can't usually help myself, but... yes.

**[00:01:39] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** I think it might actually be related to the topic today of doing the impossible, perhaps.

**[00:01:45] Barb Patterson:** Say more.

**[00:01:47] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah. I am super jazzed about this topic because I'm a person who in my life has always been a problem-solver. But not in a way that maybe was the most effective problem-solver. And what I mean by that is I looked for problems, and then I solved them.

But when I looked for problems, guess what? I found some problems.

**[00:02:12] Barb Patterson:** Yep..

**[00:02:13] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Wherever I looked.[I dunno why I get that accent when I talk about that. But, hey, I do.]

This week, we were presented with what looked like a really big problem.

I am on the board of a local theater company here in New York. And we are putting on a production of Seussical Jr.

THE THINGS YOU CAN THINK is one of the big songs, actually, and we are going live on Friday, Friday, and Saturday. We have three shows with a full cast and whatnot, and on Tuesday, we lost our venue.

**[00:02:42] Barb Patterson:** Oh, oops.

**[00:02:43] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah, it really is not ideal by any means. And as you and I were talking about—it doesn't really matter why we lost our venue because that is not something that we have control over in this moment.

And I noticed myself and others feeling angry, feeling hopeless, feeling like this can't happen. This just can't happen. And you know, we scrambled for a little bit and thought of all of the injustices and things that we had no control over.

And then I was on the call with a woman who's also very active in the theater company, a wonderful woman.

If you're listening, you know who you are.

And she and I sat on the phone, and we thought, "Well if we had to put this production on, on Friday, what would we do?" And again, those thoughts came in, and the doubt came in. Well, you know, we just have to find another venue and, and then again, we paused, and we thought, okay, if we had to put this production on, on Friday, what might we do?

And then the ideas started flooding in. We could do it at the studio where the classes and the rehearsals are, although not ideal for many reasons, it was possible. And then, so we thought, "Okay if we're going to do it at the studio, what do we need?" And then we started thinking about, "Okay, we need to stage, we need chairs, we need a concession stand."

And so we started making a punch list of all of these things that we needed. Without very much time passing, frankly, we had a plan in perfect, maybe. Not ideal, maybe, but we had a plan. And so we got into motion. The people that were on the board and the

people that were in the production of it.

Here's the interesting thing.

This is a children's theater company. So the performers in this show are children between seven and eight years old, first and second grade. And so, we needed to talk to these children about the change that was going to impact them. Now, these children had been so excited about performing in the specific venue because it's a theater and it's very cool.

And they had worked so incredibly hard and are working so incredibly hard on this performance. And so we thought about how do we explain to them what this is?

And I will share a particular story that I had with one of the children who was very, very disappointed about it. By the end of the conversation, I saw the look in the child's eyes, which the woman and I also had, which was, "How can we look at this? How is this perfect for us, and how can we actually make this as much fun as possible?"

And this child was communicating that message to the other children, which was f-ing incredible to see, to see the resilience in action in an eight-year-old child.

And it made me think of so many times in business of when we were, we are, constantly presented with what looks like impossible situations, perhaps around very aggressive sales goals.

I've been working in marketing departments where they feel those are unrealistic sales goals. We can't possibly make those sales goals. You know, when we spent some time spinning about that,

the injustice of why it's wrong. And then one of us would say, "Well, if we had to hit that sales goal, what might we do?"

We don't have control over so much in life, but if we ask ourselves, "What do we have control over, and what might we do in those situations?"

Here's the truth. The ideas start flowing. And I don't know about you, but even when the ideas start flowing, I doubt them. I think, well, this is too hard. That's not going to work. That's just a silly idea. And then I remember all we have to do is try it. And we talked recently about giving ourselves the freedom to fail. So we'll know pretty quickly if the idea is going to work or not.

What's the alternative? What was the alternative on Tuesday when we heard that we didn't have a venue? To sit there in the injustice and the hopelessness and not have a venue for this program that goes up on Friday?

I don't think so.

So I am just reminded of how can we do the impossible, or rather what looks impossible in any given moment? And that's what I wanted to share with us all today because I'm sure each of us in the world right now is facing something that is impossible for us as individuals. And maybe it is wrong. And maybe it's not just. But if we ask ourselves, "How can we perhaps move in the direction to have the movement? What ideas are coming forward about doing the impossible?"

**[00:07:18] Barb Patterson:** That story like has relevance, like you said, in so many places.

One of the first things when I started to look at and study kind of

how our minds work.

I had not really considered, appreciated, understood that our minds there is a creative potential to all our minds.

A colleague, Bruce. Bruce? Brooke. Sorry, Brooke.

Brooke Weldon- Reese. Shout out to Brooke.

[She] often talks about this, about how there are endless rabbits in the hat. And I love that. Yet, the reason at times it feels like, you know, there are no rabbits or the well feels dry is because of what you're saying, because I've just bought the thought that it's a bad idea or there's nothing there, or I'm just discouraged, which happens to us. Right?

But when we understand that a shutdown mind is just indicating to where our state of mind is. It's not really pointing to this truth that there are no ideas or there's no way to do it. It just, in this moment, it's an illusion of the mind, a trick of the mind that it looks like there's no way to do it.

And just that, understanding alone has been so helpful to me.

And the other way it shows up for me is I often find myself like— I'm down to two choices, and I don't like either one of them, you know what I mean? It's like, I'm trying to decide something, and I've got A or B, and they're both bad, you know?

And that is so like now with this understanding, "Wait; there are endless rabbits in the hat. There are endless creative. It can't be true. There's only two options. I know I'm experiencing a limitation of my mind and not a true limitation."

And so I love the way you're phrasing it around, "Yeah. What is it is possible?"

Even in that begins to open our minds up. Right? We lean away from the disappointment, the discouragement; we don't buy the idea that nothing will work. You know, we see our discouraging thought for what it is. And then in that our minds open and in a more open mind, we get ideas.

Just knowing that's how it works has saved me. And the other thing I want to say is the energy of our mind, the creative potential that fuels those ideas, is neutral.

Like you said at the beginning, you, you notice problems, right? Like if we're a hammer, we see nails.

I started to appreciate that, "Oh, if I'm looking in the direction of why it won't work, I'm going to get a ton of ideas about why it won't work." That's how the mind works. It doesn't care where we put our attention; it just brings that thinking to life.

So if I put my attention in the direction of, "Ooh, what if it could, what if we were going to do it anyway? What would we do?";

"What if I started over again? What would I do?"

"Oh, what if there isn't just two options. There's gotta be more."

And in that openness, we get ideas. I always use the example. It's like, yeah. If I'm thinking about what I want to eat for lunch, I get ideas. If I think about what I want to get someone for their birthday, I get ideas. If I think about, "Ooh, how could we make it happen by Friday?" I get ideas. And then I pay attention to, "Am I shutting my mind down, or am I keeping it open?"

Am I coming back to zero, to the potential of something? Or am I narrowing my mind more and more?

**[00:10:49] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah, I love how you speak to the universality of this. It's so helpful for me to remember because when you share it that way, I think of all of the times this happens in the day, frankly.

I'm going to LA next week for an event and the place I usually stay wasn't available.

So I was thinking to myself, "Well, this stinks. That's where I like to stay, and..."

I asked myself just because I came off of this whole theater thing. "Okay. Well, if I could find a place to stay that checks the boxes, what might I do?" And I had this idea to reach out to a group of women that I knew about five years ago, actually. I don't know why they came into my mind, and my mind immediately said, "Well, that's stupid. Why are you going to reach out to them? You haven't talked to them in five years."

I don't know if anybody else has this going on in their head.

**[00:11:37] Barb Patterson:** No, I don't know what you're talking about at all.

**[00:11:40] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** I figured I was the only one here.

I regularly have these conversations in my head where an idea happens, and then there's another voice that says: That's so dumb. Don't even do it." But I know enough to trust that nudge.



And so I reached out to this group of ladies on WhatsApp, and sure enough, one of them had a place that was actually three blocks away from where I like to stay.

And it was ideal and available and cheaper.

What that shows me is not that I always get the results in the world because I want to make that really clear. That is not the case at all. What I am simply pointing to is things happen... and this is a very small thing. I mean, I understand that's not a big thing, but it's an example.

Things happen that we don't have control over. And I have to ask myself, "What next?" And then to take the action even when my head tells me, "This is not a good plan."

**[00:12:32] Barb Patterson:** Yeah, we begin to respect more following through on those things and staying open versus looking and validating that, basically, it won't work—whatever 'it' is.

I saw this so clearly for myself when I was working on a contract with a potential client, and I kind of got a nudge that there was a misunderstanding, but I didn't really slow down enough to pay attention. And I was like, "Well, we'll work it out."

And then, sure enough, after the contract sign and we start doing some work together, I realized that that misunderstanding wasn't so small, and it was starting to impact our very first engagement in the way that it was supposed to go down.

And I got really mad at myself, you know, I was just like, "Ah, you know, better. Why didn't you listen? Now you've put yourself in this position, and it's not going to work out, and you're going to

have to start all over..." You know, all those really helpful thoughts that we have.

What was interesting was that inner voice was there. It wasn't coming with like an intensity. It was more like, sort of feeling defeated and, you know like resigned to "Now I just have to do it this way, and it's not what I wanted to do, and..."

All my options just looked like I got to just deal with the consequences, and those consequences don't look good. It's going to mean more work for me and maybe not going as great as I hope. Yet, it was at some point in conversation with a friend I realized, "Oh, I'm not open. I'm not neutral."

Even though I wasn't intensely distorted, it looked reasonable to me that things were going now not going to work out well. You know, I had a lot of evidence for that.

As soon as I saw, "Oh, I'm not neutral. So that means I'm limiting myself. I'm not as open."

And as soon as I saw that, I was like, "Wait a minute, the fact that that happened can't be predicting a particular kind of future for me now with this client."; And in that, I started to do what I could to help myself get more open, which was just, first of all, seeing that I wasn't—was huge. And then in that literally within an hour, because this is how it works, right.

It's how all of it works for all of us. I started getting different ideas of how I could move forward with the things the way they were. And then, within a couple of days, I had designed something that ended up being really valuable for both of us and didn't look like anything I thought it should have originally.

**[00:15:09] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah. The important piece that I just heard from you, for me, is knowing when I'm not in neutrality and knowing how limiting that is for me.

**[00:15:17] Barb Patterson:** Yeah. Yeah.

**[00:15:17] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** And all of us, frankly.

I think about working in advertising, you know, running advertising companies and working with clients where, you know, we may have felt that we didn't have enough time or we didn't have enough money or, you know, the triangle—time, money, quality.

And we would sit there and be like, "We need more of this and more of that."

And I was part of that by all means. And then when we took a step back and realize that, "Oh, we're actually not neutral here at all. And certainly not being creative because we're not able to access that divine creativity and innovation accessible by all of us."

We put that to the side if you will. We put that on the back burner, you know; I love that term 'on the back burner.'

And then, from there, we were able to ask ourselves, "Okay, now what?"

And I'm generally not a neutral person. Barb. I got a lot of passion for a lot of things. I'm from Queens. I'm Italian. You know, I've never been called a neutral person.

And I love that about myself, actually. I've also come to respect the neutrality around ideas, around building relationships, around accessing creativity, accessing innovation, and recognizing when

I'm not in it—like on Tuesday, when we found out about that venue, how I was in my self-righteousness and the injustice of the situation that I was serving no one.

So I love how you talked about, "Well, how do you get neutral?" Because I always want to know the 'how', and I think it's different for every single person. For me, like you said, the first thing is recognizing frankly that I'm not neutral. Just recognizing it. And then for me, maybe I'm going to go for a walk. I'm just going to take my mind off of it.

In the past, I would cycle cycle, cycle, cycle cycle, figure it out, figure it out, figure it out. And I still do that, by the way. But when I recognize I'm doing it, it's like, "Okay, foot off the pedal, let's figure out how to put that car in neutral." It definitely happens naturally, but for me, I have to take my thinking off of it for it to regulate itself if you will.

**[00:17:13] Barb Patterson:** Yeah.

**[00:17:14] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** And then the car can go.

**[00:17:15] Barb Patterson:** Yeah, exactly. I think that's true for me too. A lot of times, it means I have to step away from it.

I said the word respect earlier, and it's just something that works for me. And so I'll say it in case it works for other people, but I really don't respect the thoughts when I wake up to them. Prior to that, I'm respecting the hell out of them.

But as soon as I have a realization and awareness like, "Oh, I'm in a limited mind."

"Oh, I've decided I only have two options ."

"I'm believing this isn't going to work."

the reason I say I don't respect it is because of what I said earlier —that's not how our minds work. There's infinite creative ideas. It just might take us awhile to get there, to warm up to, you know, not by the discouraging limited thought and to keep, like you said earlier, "What's next? What's possible? What if?" And to respect that more than I was respecting my discouragement or my limited idea.

And you know, what's fascinating to me is in your story, the moment you said, "Wait a minute. If we had to make it happen, what would we do?"

You got open. And in the moment, I went, "Oh, you're not neutral. It can't be true that you're now screwed for the rest of this engagement. It can't be true." [Excuse my French]

That in those moments, then, the ideas that came through for us, even with our minds opening a little bit more, we're not there. Five minutes earlier. They were nowhere in the vicinity. Right? But as soon as we allow our minds to just get a little bit more open or neutral, we do what we can to walk away from our discouraged thought, to not lean into it because we know, we know, there's creative potential behind anything, and then we get different ideas.

And I think that's what's so fascinating to me.

**[00:19:07] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah, I'm with you. What's wonderful is to know that this is how it works.

**[00:19:10] Barb Patterson:** Yeah.

**[00:19:10] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Again, the universality of it, because when I'm feeling discouraged or despondent, you know, I start thinking like, "Well, that might work for you, Barb, cause you're a Barb Patterson."

**[00:19:20] Barb Patterson:** Yeah.

**[00:19:20] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** I love to call you that, but it's not going to work for me. But just knowing actually that's not true either.

**[00:19:26] Barb Patterson:** That's right.

**[00:19:27] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** That's not true. And not to respect that either. It works this way for all of us, and I forget, and then I remember. And that's also part of it. We remember.

**[00:19:37] Barb Patterson:** That's right. And I think that's our invitation for the coming week is just when it looks like there's no options when it looks like the only option is a bad one. When it looks like a limited future—to just not respect that as much and see what happens if you can find your neutrality within, a little bit more openness, whatever works for you, and just trust that new ideas will come if we allow the limited thought to move on.

**[00:20:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah. So I would say if you knew that the show must go on, what would you do?

**[00:20:13] Barb Patterson:** I love it.

**[00:20:15] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** We love that you're spending time with us, and we appreciate you, and we will see you next week.

**[00:20:21] Barb Patterson:** Thank you, everybody. If you know anybody that would benefit from these conversations, we hope you'll share it. And if you like what you're hearing, please go over to Apple Podcasts or Spotify and rate and review us.

Thank you.

**[00:20:36] OUTRO:** Thank you so much for listening to REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES with your hosts, Barb Patterson and Melissa Palazzo-Hart. We hope you enjoyed this week's episode. And if you did go to Apple podcasts or Spotify and follow, give us a rating and leave a review. If you know anyone that would benefit from our conversation today, we'd love for you to share it with them.

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Thank you so much for listening to REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES

A special shout out and thanks to our producer, Jenée Arthur of Peripheral View Media.

Until next time, remember, take the mask off. No filters, just possibilities.