

[00:00:00] INTRO

[00:00:47] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Well, hello, everyone. And welcome to REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES with Melissa Palazzo-Hart and...

[00:00:55] Barb Patterson: Barb Patterson. Hi everyone.

[00:00:57] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: We're really happy to be with you today.

Barb and I were just talking about what this episode would be, and both of us, I think it's fair to say, are a little uncomfortable with the topic that we're going to be talking about today.

And that's exactly why we're here is to have real conversations about our real lives. So I'm going to hand it over to you; Barb and I look forward to talking about what we're about to talk about, which I think is being in our hearts?

[00:01:30] Barb Patterson: That would work.

I know for me that over the last week, I had an opportunity to be with a mastermind group that I've been a part of (a personal one) for about seven years.

These people have become very dear. And we look at our businesses and our strategies, and we get creative for one another, but we also are reflections for one another and speak truth to each other.

And this last retreat, our little last adventure, seemed to really be more for all of us about a heart-opening. And we didn't do our usual kinds of things. What occurred to us in the moment was just to sit with each other and be more present, and what I am coming away, and I was sharing with Melissa earlier, is this is, sort of, I'm still in the oven, right? I'm the turkey that's like still getting cooked. I'm not quite done. So, you know, sometimes it's nice to share when we've had a realization, and we've seen the whole journey.



And other times, I think it's really beautiful to just share as we're moving along. So that's what I think we're both doing in today's conversation, just entering into it knowing there's not necessarily a nice bow at the end, or an "I" or a crossing of the "T".

What I'll say is that I saw that there is an opportunity perhaps for myself and in my work to bring more softness and tenderness and nurturing. What I mean by that is in the family. I grew up in it, was raised by a single mom, and there was seven kids. And, we all pitched in, did what we needed to do to make the family work, to make our lives work. I know a lot of other people will relate, but we were making our own lunches when we were very little, we learned to do laundry when we were really young. We like to tease our mom because unless we were throwing up on her lap, we were going to school no matter what ailment we had. You know? And there are so many things I love about what that taught me about my independence and taking care of myself. And then, over the last 10-11 years, as I've looked in the direction of how our internal climate shapes life and our work, as you've heard me share before, I started to see the downside of grit and pressure and push and effort.

And I started to see how it creates a constricted mind and often keeps us from accessing more joy, creativity, fresh thinking, you know, that might "doer" while she could accomplish a lot, often my quest for 'doing' was keeping me from finding treasure in the moment and connection and a slowed down.

And so, I've started to really see what a slowed-down internal spacious place offers us and offers my work and my impact. But something over the weekend, I could see that when it comes to my own development and growth, I still have this little bit of "Get her done. Come on. You can do this." There's a way that, like, when I'm considering myself, I'm still in this tough love, you know, and this weekend I had such an opening of the feeling and the experience of a heart opening and just feeling love, just to put it that way. It was just for a lot of different reasons. I felt the love of the people I was with.

We were in this beautiful home, deer were in the yard, and the mountains were in the backyard, and I felt the love of nature and all; everything conspired to just, for whatever reason, for me to drop into a new opening feels like. And I wondered, "What if I could do life and my own growth and evolution with more tenderness and more nurturing." You know, I've kind of come from the place of 'more is more

when it comes to pushing myself— like to grow, it's a good idea. Like, “Yeah, I'll take the leap, I'll push myself. I'll jump. I'll do all those things.”

And it was like this weekend, it's like, “What if tenderness and gentleness and nurturing could get you to the exact same place that you think jumping in and toughing it out gets you?”

And so that's what we want to explore today. Perhaps there's a way to move through our own growth, evolution, our own ups and downs, our own ins and outs of a day with more grace and love and tenderness for ourselves.

[00:06:23] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm Hmm. So beautiful. And I feel that tenderness, and I feel your heart right now, and it's so beautiful. And I am reminded, too, Barb, of how I grew up, which was with a single mom who worked two or three jobs most of the time to provide for my brother and I. My dad, you know, had his own thing going on. He loved us, but he just couldn't do what he couldn't do at the time.

And so, I made a decision really early on to never depend on anyone for anything. And that I was going to be a career girl, and I was going to take over the world, and I did.

And then, one day, I realized that I had done what I set out to do. And yet it was the pushing that you're talking about. It was the grit, and I'm incredibly grateful for that. And I am reminded that I recognized it felt like I was missing something. And what I was missing was my heart, frankly. You know, I was/am very analytical, logical, and business-minded, and I compartmentalized my heart for a lot of my life because I didn't believe it was safe to be tender.

I mean, that, that word ‘tender.’ I mean, at times, I could; it could have made me want to barf to even hear that word. Right.

“I'm not tender. I'm tough. I'm strong. I'm from Queens...” And I am all of those things. And I'm tender.

I someplace had it in my head that it was an either-or or that being tender put me in situations where I could potentially get hurt.

Well, here's the truth, Barb. I got hurt anyway, right? There is this illusion, this misbelief I had in my mind that if I was tender or if I was in my heart, that I would get hurt more. And at the time, it made sense to me, yet I still got hurt. Like we all

do with life. As I'm listening to you, I feel an opening in my heart right now, and I'm reminded of a conversation I had with my husband today.

And we were talking about finances and, you know, that's an area for me where I get very in my. And I get very pushy and gritty and all those things. And as we were having this conversation in our kitchen, a dear, cause I heard you say you saw a deer this weekend, there was a deer in our neighbor's yard.

[Now, we don't live in a place where there are deer in our neighbor's yard. There's never been a deer here. And so, of course, I looked up what that meant, right? Like what does it mean? It's a sign, but here's what it did. It immediately put me in. For whatever reason, it just kind of like shook me up for a minute to see like this creature, this beautiful creature, and the conversation completely shifted.

It went from me being frankly protective, defensive, and needing to figure things out to a place of presence, tenderness, and sharing the truth with my husband about my perceived thoughts around finances and the whole conversation. And I think about times when my heart has been broken open; when my daughter was born, my heart was broken open.

And for a woman that has protected her heart for a long time, although you probably wouldn't know that by meeting me because I'm very outgoing and social and affectionate and loving. But there's always been a little bit of armor ice. The metaphors go on and on for what I've been told about what I do to my har.

It was as if my heart lived outside of my body. And my daughter's name is Maya Heart. And that was no accident.

I realized that I could not protect my house. And that in opening my heart, I got to feel the fullness of expression of it. More love than I ever thought was possible. And the immediate thought that comes up is, oh my God, all the thinking, the what-ifs around potentially getting hurt or losing this love.

But the truth is, I don't know this quote, but it's something around it's better to have loved and lost than not to have loved at all. And that's what I am reminded. In this conversation. When I think that it's better for me to keep my heart closed, it's me believing that my well-being is at stake. And sometimes that looks really real, especially when it comes to my husband or my daughter, and also things that I really care about.

Like my business, people I care about. And yet when I have the capacity or the courage, or maybe it's just even the awareness—that being in my heart, it's really being fully present, open, a vessel to whatever wants to come forward without the filter of thinking, “Oh, I can't say that. Oh, I can't think that. Oh, that won't work.”

It's like the filter goes away because I know that in this present moment, all that I need is here. And so it's the illusion that I lived with, frankly, my whole entire life at being tender, being in my heart is a dangerous place to be. And yet when I have been in my heart, the results speak for themselves, and results sounds like a strong word for the conversation.

It's true. My relationships are so much more intimate, so much more profound. My connections with my clients, because I love my clients too. And somewhere along the line, I thought, “No, no, no, no, no, no, no. There is no love in business. Hey, no love with clients.”

And that's just not true. So when I'm able to be tender, like you beautifully brought forward, even though I am afraid to be tender—the results speak for themselves.

And I have to remind myself, or today you reminded me of the truth with a capital T for me, that when I allow myself to be in my heart, which frankly is just me putting my thinking to the side or my “stinkin' thinkin’,” as I like to call it to the side, it's just pure—connected to the infinite nature behind life.

And even now, as I share this with you, I feel so freaking peaceful, you know, and yet my thinking's like, “Can't talk about being tender. Can't open your heart. God forbid.” And yet I feel so peaceful. And in this...

[00:12:53] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:12:54] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: In this moment, I can have a conversation with anyone and contribute and bring value.

[00:12:59] Barb Patterson: Yeah, I think it's amazing or interesting, whatever—how we, our first go-to when we are looking for what's needed, whether it's in our business or in a tough conversation we're having, or in trying to grow ourselves, you know, that often we'll put things forward like discipline is needed. Commitment is needed, getting over yourself as needed, you know, like just all these things. But I think what I'm really curious about is what if tenderness and

love is what's needed? An open heart as you're, so you know, beautifully speaking into.

And when I consider myself, I've just noticed that that's not often the first thing that comes to mind.

[00:13:51] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Me either.

[00:13:55] Barb Patterson: Yeah. So of course, you know, I, it reminds me of —there's a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center out east. You and I are both familiar with it. And the first time I went there to work with the team and the staff, I was so like struck when I realized that when they sit across from somebody who comes with a rough past and maybe, you know, a long list of regrets and things they've done and their addiction and all of that, the staff or counselor would sit across from that person and look beyond their past, look beyond their behavior, look beyond their thinking and just see.

And really they sat in the feeling of love with this person. Like that was their lead. To see beyond all of that and just see to that place in all of us that is pure love.

And you would hear the clients and, you know, the patients say, “Why hasn't anybody ever told me I'm okay. Why hasn't anybody ever told me that my thinking doesn't make me who I am? My behavior doesn't make me who I am.”

It was through love and presence that they were waking up and seeing a new way forward and, you know, letting the addictions kind of go.

But again, just coming back to, for me, it's like, it's interesting how yet, when I hold myself, somehow I've thought discipline, commitment, the edge is what I needed, but it's like, what if we all try it a little tenderness, you know? And just to see if we brought tenderness into our consideration of ourselves and wherever we're at, we opened our hearts to receive that from ourselves and the people around us. To receive support from others in that way. To receive love, to receive kindness, to receive nurturing.

[00:16:00] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Sounds like a place I want to be.

[00:16:01] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:16:03] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: You know, when I think about everything that's happening in the world today... There is a lot happening in this world. There is a lot of violence in this world. There's a lot of hatred in this world, and you know, I think it's the time more than ever to break open our hearts.

[00:16:16] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:16:17] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: For ourselves, number one, because like it says on the plane, I got to put my own oxygen mask on before I help anyone else. To be tender with myself, which means letting myself off the hook for whatever it is, and then showing up that way for others. That is the only way that I think we can get through this time.

[00:16:40] Barb Patterson: Yeah. It's like we don't have to earn our love. And we don't want to make our own—like, we love to love, you know. I keep thinking of all these songs as I say some of these lines.

[00:16:52] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: “All you need is love.”

[00:16:54] Barb Patterson: Bum bum bah da da. So this idea, though, that I think we're both saying—the drop into your heart, don't contain the feeling of love for yourself or anyone else and see what you discover.

Right. Because I do think it's like, yeah, why would I withhold the love of myself other than some misunderstanding that who I am as I am in this moment isn't okay?

And to what you're saying, why would we withhold the feeling of love to others and dropping into our heart and connecting more from that place, whether they're client or lover, or friend, or stranger, like, let's see what happens for ourselves in our lives and the world if we stop putting conditions on it and allowed ourselves to just live in that feeling of tenderness and love and heart-opening?

[00:17:48] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Let's try.

[00:17:49] Barb Patterson: Let's do it.

[00:17:51] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Let's give it a, let's give it a shot.

[00:17:54] Barb Patterson: We'll be back to report part two coming soon. Yeah.

[00:17:58] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: We will report back on part two. Great. That's a great plan, Barb.

[00:18:03] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Yeah. Love you, Melissa.

[00:18:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Love you too. And thank you so much, everyone.

[00:18:10] Barb Patterson: Love you all. Yeah. Thank you for joining us.

[00:18:16] 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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Want to see the show notes or read a transcript of this show? You can find it on melissapalazzohart.com or barbarapatterson.com.

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.