

SHOW INTRO

[00:00:45] Barb Patterson: Hi, welcome, everybody. So glad you're here. This is Barb

[00:00:50] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: and Melissa.

[00:00:53] Barb Patterson: You know, today what we are both inspired to unpack and explore and share is—in the direction of what, if we didn't have to manage our feelings. What if we didn't even have to make sense of them, and we could just allow them to move through us. You know. Feelings are this energy source moving through.

What if we didn't have to analyze them, and kind of that deeper knowing would actually emerge by just giving ourselves permission to be in a feeling? And so, Melissa, you really opened up this conversation and this potential conversation for us this morning. So I'd love for you to start us off.

[00:01:34] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah, anytime I don't want to talk about something, is usually the exact thing to talk about. Because I do this in service so that others don't feel alone in their thinking and feeling, frankly.

And so, if I don't want to talk about it, I bet there's at least one other person out there who doesn't want to talk about this. So that's why I do it, even though it's incredibly uncomfortable.

As you were sharing that, Barb, I saw this metaphor, and I used it last night, actually, with a client. It's possible for me to hold a beach ball underwater—absolutely possible—for a very long time.

But after a little while, my arms get tired. I get tired. I want to get out of the pool, and it's the same kind of thing for me with my feelings. I can hold in my feelings, and I've done it most of my life because I didn't have time for feelings. I didn't believe I had time for feelings. I thought that if I felt it would never end. You know, once that door was open, I was afraid that I was never going to be able to close it again.

And so, for many, many years, I just didn't allow myself to have feelings. And what I did instead was I analyzed. If I started feeling something, I would start thinking about all the reasons why I was feeling this, what I could do to not feel it. And this was a coping mechanism for me. I was really busy. I had lots to do, and yet I would snap at people.

It's kind of like if you keep a tea kettle covered up, at some point, that little thing on the end of the teakettle is going to pop off. And that's what it felt like for me. I didn't understand it—why that would happen; after all, I'd read so many books and had done so much work in a development way because I value that.

And recently there's a lot happening in the world. There's a war, there's some very intense..., and even as I say it, the feelings start coming up around rights for women. And again, I went into my logical brain and thought, "Okay, how did this happen? How can we fix it?"

I kept in my analytical brain as opposed to letting myself feel the sadness that's true in my heart for us as a nation and those who identify as women. And right before I let myself feel, there was a thought, "; Don't open the door. Do something else." And what happened was that beach ball just got too hard to keep down.

And I am a private feeler. I don't like to feel in front of other people. It's inconvenient because I live with two people, my husband and my daughter. And so, my husband got to see me feeling, which is extremely uncomfortable for me. Because it's just not my conditioning. My conditioning is to be strong. "I got this; no one needs to take care of me or help me."

And I had a thought as I was doing it, as he came over to comfort me—and my conditioning, my first thought was "Stand back." And instead of listening to that first thought, 'stand back,' there was another thought that came in, which was "Why not let him comfort you?"

This is the opposite of my conditioning and yet trying a new experience. It created a beautiful moment for he and I and such a good learning for me. And also my daughter.

And this morning, my daughter and I had to go to a doctor appointment for my daughter, and she was really scared and she had a lot of feelings. And for her, it just comes naturally for her to let her feelings out.

She doesn't overthink it. And I didn't need to, frankly, make myself feel more comfortable by not letting her have her feelings. Because I realize in the past, when someone was having feelings, I was uncomfortable. And me trying to make it better in some way was not respecting their feelings. And so she got to have this incredible experience of experiencing her feelings, which were very deep and big. And then, about 15 minutes later, we decided to go to Starbucks and get a cake pop, and she was joyous. And so the things that I've believed around feelings and thinking, or my conditioning as I call it, actually do not work for me anymore. And it's in the feeling —without judging the feelings.

That's the other thing. There's no reason to judge the feelings. I would have feelings, and then I would judge them. They're really just energy in my body, and that energy just needs to come up and out. It's as simple as that. And when I allow myself to feel, my head is not as busy; the thoughts are not as loud. I'm actually on the other side, so much clearer, so much more peaceful, so much more able to make a choice or a decision about what the next indicated action is. So it's actually walking through the hallway of the feelings that I get to the other side. And the other side is freedom, frankly.

And so I share all of this because I think especially now with everything that's happening in the world, a lot of us are holding our feelings in and pushing and driving on a hamster wheel, on a treadmill, whatever we want to call it.

And I think there is an opportunity for us, right now, to allow ourselves to just let that beach ball up and let it float around a little bit and experience that freedom.

[00:07:12] Barb Patterson: I love that analogy, and, you know, I can relate to that.

My mind has in a way, like you said, been a nice coping mechanism, you know, like I get unsettled inside myself, I get nervous, anxious, upset, and then my mind goes to trying to resolve it, settle it—you know—figure it out, whatever that might be and nothing wrong with that. But I do think it's interesting that what I've discovered is similar to what you're saying—that often if I just allow myself to feel because feelings are transient, they are not fixed, you know, they're energy moving through us—in the moving through, I'll get clarity. Or in the moving through, I feel alive, you know, I think it's like that juice to life is in the feeling of life, not in the, you know, restriction or analyzation or the rational.

And I think that in business, in particular, the logic and rational mind has been the king. Right? And has been, you know, so valued, but what's fascinating is to watch...and over the last couple of years, in particular, I think we've been heading this way much longer. Still, in the last couple of years, this idea of authenticity is like at the top of one of the things that people are requesting of their leaders and of themselves. People just want to be more real. Right? And don't want all the effort of trying to be something other than they are.

I think it gets confusing because we're like, "If I let go, if I let the beach ball go, aren't I just, I can't be crazy." You know? And I don't want to look irresponsible. I don't want to look, you know, like I'm weak.

Again, if we let go of the illusion of control. If we let go of the mind needing to always make sense of things, and we just allow ourselves to be who we are as we are. And in that feeling, I think more often than not, what we discover is something really freeing and alive and beautiful and wisdom. Versus "I'm uncomfortable. So let me analyze it so I can get out of this feeling." I mean, that is like my M.O., right. You

know, and I totally understand it, but it is really interesting to invite more of just the allowing and let the feeling move through.

And the conditioning that somehow 'feeling as weak' is so fascinating to me. How can that be anything other than just some conditioned idea we've all bought into? Every single human being on this planet feels. It is a part of the design of human nature. There is intelligence to the design of nature. So there is intelligence to feeling.

To allow us to embody more of that, to embody our full self, which means we embody our feeling self as well. And then not to use the mind as much to try and analyze, prescribe, resolve. I think we then wake up more to the natural ability that we all have to reorient, to have clarity, to see insightfully. It happens in the allowing of things, not just in the logical assessment of things.

[00:10:38] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yes. Yes. And I think much of the burnout that we are seeing in business today is because we have to repress parts of ourselves.

[00:10:49] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:10:50] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And just like holding down that beach ball, that takes a lot of emotional energy.

Now I'm not saying that I'm going to go into a board meeting tomorrow and start bawling.

[00:11:00] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:11:00] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I've actually never done that.

And I'm not saying that I'm going to go into a client meeting and start raising my voice and yelling. That's not what I'm saying. And I think it's really important to understand that in terms of business and what's appropriate. Just like I'm not going to take a shower with my coworkers, but I still need to take a shower.

[00:11:24] Barb Patterson: That's a great analogy. Yes.

[00:11:26] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I just need to take a shower every day.

[00:11:28] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:11:29] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So, and I don't invite anyone from work with me.

And I think that making the space for ourselves to have the feeling is just like taking a shower, frankly.

[00:11:41] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:11:41] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: We need to do it to take care of ourselves. And for some reason that is a good thing in the POV (in the perception of people) and potentially there's a stigma on feelings, which is just as natural to taking care of ourselves as doing the other things we do.

[00:11:58] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:11:59] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So I do think there's stigma around it and I'm so grateful because the young generation that is coming into business today, demands authenticity.

[00:12:09] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:12:09] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: They demand it and I love them for it.

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

[00:12:13] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: They want real conversations. They want to understand what is happening in the business, for real, not just a pretty deck with a P&L. They want to know what's going on. You know, why they want to know? So that they can actually

contribute to the solution. And I have chills as I'm saying that, because this generation is changing the way we work—the future of work, and it's incredibly inspiring.

And they're also demanding that we have a purpose at work. They're demanding that it's not just about doing business. It's about doing good, and that comes from the heart. That desire to be part of something bigger that's doing good in the world comes when we allow ourselves to bring our head and our heart to work. And the two together? Superpowers. True superpowers.

And the more we can bring our head and our heart to work, we're bringing our IQ, which is very important. And as important is our EQ. We have to understand and have care and empathy for other people.

And here's the truth, Barb. When I allow myself to have compassion for myself, allow myself to have my feelings in private (probably near the shower where no co-workers are). I have space for others to have it.

[00:13:30] Barb Patterson: Yeah,

[00:13:31] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Because we're humans. We are humans at the end of the day. And it's the way the system works.

[00:13:37] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Yeah. And I think that's such a great analogy, because like I said earlier, you start to hear this and people are like, "Are you telling me I should cry at work?"

I'm like, "Well, maybe, but maybe not."

You know, I think what we're really pointing to is the repression or the idea that we have to dampen down, figure out, not expressing those feelings and emotions actually has implications and keeps us in our head. You know, life can feel flat. I know for me, I've shared before—things can start to feel heavy, you know? So I'm kind of walking around... it's like often, you know, people will say like, I feel uninspired or I'm not just feeling excited about life.

What I know for myself is those are usually indications in me that I've been like living in a lot of my head and not just allowing myself to drop into my body and to my feelings.

And to your point, when I allow that to move through me and the energy and the reset that comes and the buoyancy and the clarity, we bring all that to our leadership and to our businesses, you know?

So this idea that somehow we as humans should contain ourselves, you know, and again, we're not saying walk into a board meeting or a big sales call and start screaming and yelling.

[00:14:58] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I've been on the other side of that. That definitely does not work.

[00:15:01] Barb Patterson: Yeah, it does not work. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:15:03] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I will say, in my many years in marketing. Every time we've created a campaign. We asked ourselves, "What will the person who interacts with this feel after they've interacted?" Because making someone 'feel something' as opposed to 'think something' is much more powerful.

It's about the feeling and that is advertising and marketing 101, frankly. And yet we think that it's not okay to feel on the other side.

So I just think that's really interesting.

[00:15:33] Barb Patterson: Yeah. I love that. Yeah.

[00:15:35] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I remember giving a talk once about eliciting feelings in humans using marketing or advertising or something like that. And it's all about feeling.

[00:15:45] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:15:46] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And so for us, for me, to come up with great marketing ideas, I kind of have to feel too.

I have to ask myself, "What does this illicit inside of me?" A genuine feeling and making a genuine human connection, because brands are kind of like people and they need to be authentic and they need to connect with that humans that are interested in those brands.

[00:16:09] Barb Patterson: I know we talked about this in one of our earlier episodes, but, you know, I think for me, because I had lived in the world more through my thinking than sort of just being raw and real and present, not that I was trying to be something. Right. But I just was oriented towards my thinking. I was processing life versus feeling life often. And I didn't realize that that was affecting people's ability to feel me and relationships, whether it's love relationships. That's that's hard, right? Or it's with employees and teams, you know, that people can't get a feel for you, you know?

And that is an indication again, it's not so it's that I was oriented and I was quick and fast, but like taking information in, processing it, and then speaking. Being oriented more to my thinking versus kind of just being present and real and connected to the moment. So, and you're right. That's what people feel, want, connect... that's where collaboration takes on a new level, where love/partnership takes on new meaning, friendship....

As a leader, don't underestimate the power of people being able to feel you. And feel where you're coming from. And if we're constantly like me, you know, oriented to the thinking and the processing and the strategy and the rationale and the logic, it takes away from that.

[00:17:45] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yes. I've been in many meetings where the person is repeating back something that maybe they wrote on a deck. And frankly, I was bored in one minute. Whereas when someone's in the moment with you bringing their head and heart to a meeting or a presentation, it is charismatic. It is engaging and I am interested.

[00:18:04] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:18:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And you feel it immediately.

[00:18:08] Barb Patterson: Yeah. It's so true. And when people don't feel you, whether they're conscious of it or not, that distance, that aloofness, that sort of thing is people make up stuff about it, you know? And you're right. It's like, where do we have impact? Where do we have influences? It's so much of those people that are present and connected and more from their heart. We get awed by maybe the really smart, logical, strategic things. We love that. Like, it's not saying we don't like that part, but when you leave a meeting, when you leave a presentation, often ones that remain in your mind and in your heart, or that you get touched by are the ones that came with heart and availability to something else.

[00:18:53] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: 100%. And I am in the creative world, the marketing and advertising world. And I will tell you hands down that it's heart overhead in any meeting, it's helping someone to feel an experience. And so I would say in that industry, lean into that even more.

[00:19:11] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:19:11] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: In the creative/marketing/advertising, lean into that heart more and more.

[00:19:15] Barb Patterson: Yeah, I'd say really everywhere. Right? I have seen over and over again, that when a leader can connect with somebody from that kind of authentic, real place. Give feedback from there? I guarantee that the feedback is going to be heard in a different way.

Help people draw people out to, you know, so many leaders I talk to are like, "How do we bring out the best in our people?" You connect with them in an authentic way, you know?

So yeah, I think we could probably go on for hours of examples where letting ourselves be in our body and our feelingful self and our feeling self. I don't know how to say that... in that more real present, raw—has so many upsides for ourselves, for the people we're interacting with, for our fulfillment.

[00:20:07] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I will leave you with this. I recently went to a officer's training in Las Vegas for YPO, and there was communication training, and it had all the usual things that you would expect about projecting your voice and looking around the crowd.

But there was one thing that the instructor told us and she said, "Before you start, pause. Feel your body. Feel the room. And as you're talking, make sure you pause, feel your body and feel the room, because you might be inspired to share something that maybe you were not thinking you were going to share, and it helps you to be present and connected to your audience, which is key."

[00:20:46] Barb Patterson: So good, perfect place to end. So good Melissa.

Thank you everybody as always. We're so grateful to have you here. If you're enjoying the podcast, we would love it if you'd give us a rating and review over on Apple Podcast and also please share.

[00:21:02] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Sending you lots of love. We'll see you soon.

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.

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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.