

[00:00:00] SHOW INTRO

[00:00:49] Barb

Patterson: Welcome everybody to the REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES PODCAST. This is Barb,

[00:00:55] Melissa

Palazzo-Hart: And this is Melissa.

[00:00:56] Barb

Patterson: We are so glad you're here with us today. And today, we're starting with elephants, and I'm just gonna leave it at that and let you take it away.

[00:01:09] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Wow. Okay.

[00:01:11] Barb Patterson: I know who knew, right?

[00:01:13] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Who knew french fries, elephants, all these different things that we learn from.

Thank you for being with us. I'm so happy that you're joining us. And today, we do wanna talk about elephants in a very specific way. It was a learning for me, actually, to know this.

I've noticed sometimes very large elephants, very large being held by a small rope around their neck. And I've thought to myself, "Why don't they just run away? Why don't they just pull that rope off of that very small stick that it's attached to?" And then I hadn't given it much more thought, frankly, until I heard earlier today the reason why that's the case.



So Barb, when elephants are small, and I guess they're never small, but smaller. When they're young, they wrap a rope around the little baby elephant's neck, and the little baby elephant tries really hard to pull away from that rope and the stick that it's attached to.

And it can't, and it continues and continues to try until it gives up. And it's at that point that the rope is not just a physical thing holding the elephant back and down but a belief in the elephant's mind about what it can and cannot do. So by the time the elephant gets to be a young adult, even though it could easily pull and get away.

It doesn't believe it can. Now, of course, I haven't talked to an elephant, so I don't know. This is their actual process. But it's based upon actual facts. So I am making some assumptions here about the elephants process, but the reason I want to talk about it is because I really freaking relate to that elephant.

As a young kid. I remember we grew up very poor, and I wanted to play a video game at the local candy store, frankly. And it was about a five-block walk. And I used to take some quarters outta my mom's bag until I realized that that's not something you should do, frankly. That's another episode. And I thought to myself, "How can I earn money so that I can go play video games?"

And so. I walked to the King Cullen, which is a grocery store in Queens, New York, or at least it was. And I waited outside, and I asked the elderly customers if I could help them with their packages to the car. And I didn't care about being rejected by most of those customers. Frankly, I was excited when someone said yes, and I kept going and I did it for a while, and I made more than enough to play Tempest at the candy store.

And then, at some point in my younger years, I started worrying about what people thought about me or what I thought people thought about me. And I also started worrying if I could carry those packages. I

mean, what would happen to me in the parking lot? I might get run over by a car. I might break the glass jar of peanut butter and jelly. This woman might tell someone that knows my friends, what I'm doing, and all of those thoughts became a rope on my neck. And I stopped following what seemed logical, what seemed like a nudge, until I became that young adult who would no longer pull the rope, who would just stay there and believe that I couldn't pull the rope.

And so hearing and reading about this thing that elephants do was really helpful for me today to see and ask, frankly, "What ropes are still around my neck?"

And then I had a call this morning with a client, and I could so clearly see the rope she had her on her neck. Isn't that funny? How does that happens? We can see so clearly for others, but it's hard sometimes to see for ourselves.

[00:05:05] Barb Patterson: Yes.

[00:05:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: She was talking about trying something and "I know this is so random and probably a really bad idea, but..." And then we talked about what innovation is. And how innovation is random because innovation requires something new, something fresh, something not yet done before. And it was so clear for me for this client, but I still was left thinking about the ropes around my own neck.

And there are several, one is (transparently) that I still believe I have to work really, really hard to be successful, that I must hustle, that I must push, that I must drive. Now. Much different and much better than it's been in years past, but it's still there.

And when I'm coming from that space, my work feels a lot less fun, and I'm not able to be as much in service as I would like to be. And sometimes not present.

When I realize that it's a rope, I can just show up and be present and know that I have a ton of experience, a ton of insight that I can pull from. And so, not only am I being more of service and showing up as a better coach/consultant, I'm having so much more fun. Like I was when I was a kid in that grocery store at King Cullen, just happily carrying packages through the parking lot.

[00:06:28] Barb Patterson: As you're sharing, I'm just like— things coming flashing through my mind of those places, that to use the analogy, put a rope around my neck and have never examined. You know, just have decided that it's a truth about me, you know, and in introvert /extrovert, you know, I think one of the things I saw a number of years ago now was when I realized, "Oh, my personality isn't fixed."

It was amazing how often I had just assigned the fact that maybe I wanted to be alone or I was dreading a party. I would just put the, "Oh yeah. That's cuz you're an introvert," and I would not examine any further. So making choices and decisions and defining my experience based on some personality tests, , which, you know, was really interesting and kind of revealed some things, but

[00:07:23] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm-hmm.

[00:07:23] Barb Patterson: You know, I had made it an absolute, and it's our personalities aren't fixed. So there is not absolute.

But also the other thing that's coming to mind as you're sharing that is preferences.

[00:07:36] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm-hmm.

[00:07:37] Barb Patterson: So I remember years ago, having a mentee, we would spend kind of a week together.

Throughout that week, we had lots of informal, informal kind of time together. And I noticed that she would walk into a room, and she'd be

like, oh, I love that picture. Ooh. I don't like that. I love this weather. Ooh. I hate this weather now, just because of what you said it was somebody else. Right. You know, easier to kind of spot.

[00:08:04] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm-hmm.

[00:08:04] Barb Patterson: It was fascinating. I'm like, wow. And she and I talked about this. I'm like, do you realize how you are allowing your preferences to dictate your experience? You're allowing it to dictate joy or lack of joy. Pleasure or no pleasure. You're walking into a room and sorting things out by, "I like. I don't like. I wanna do. I don't wanna do."

And what would happen if you took preferences? Like if preferences became irrelevant in a way. Right. And I started to see this, of course, for myself too. And it's like, yeah, like how many things I rule out because I don't like it. But you know what? Preference is memory. Preference is historical. And if we really understand that our nature, we are constant, we are fluid.

Our moods are fluid. Our thoughts are fluid. Our experiences are fluid. Our personality is fluid. Life is fluid.

I got really fascinated, like, "Oh yeah, how do I know I don't like that?" The only way I would know is past reference. So what if in this moment, which by the way, is where pure potential sits. I might like it.

You know, I might like mushrooms more than I did in the past. I might show up for a workout, and it won't be hard. I might show up to a party and not have myself on my mind at all and have a great time. I might feel tired in the morning but energized in the afternoon. You know, it just, again, started to see these places where I had just taken a thought, an idea, a belief at face value and then was navigating my choices, my experiences based on that.

And I love what you're saying because when you speak about the

elephant-like, my heart is already breaking, and you know, I'm like, and I'm thinking about zoos, and you know, like.

[00:10:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:10:07] Barb Patterson: But coming back to ultimately, if the elephant can remember and see that it's really not tied to the tree anymore. And it could just walk and be free. And that beautiful analogy for us—if we can see that an idea we've held about ourselves, our potential, what we like, what we don't like, what's good for us. Not good for us. What we're good at—any of that? If we could see there is no tree, you know, that thought isn't tied to a tree. That thought isn't rooted—it's energy, it's, it's nothing more than—then maybe we would begin to broaden our experience and, and walk away and walk into things that just might surprise us.

[00:10:51] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Oh, yeah. No matter how long that thought or memory has been in our experience. So when you're speaking, it reminds me of when we moved to New York, and I've hated winter since I'm about eight years old. Hated winter; too cold. Don't wanna go out, complain about it all the time. And we live in New York, so there are winters. And the first winter we had was a doozy. There was so much snow, and everyone kept saying, "Oh, winter's not usually like this in New York. It's usually so much more warm and balmy." And I thought, &"Yeah, I'm not buying what you're selling me here," but we have a daughter and guess what?

She loves the snow. And so I found myself similarly to the time when she wanted me to jump in the pool, and I did not want to; I found myself thinking, "Okay, how can I go outside without being absolutely miserable?" So I got all the accouterments, and I wore a, literally a ski suit outside to keep myself warm with those little hand warmers and everything.

And we started playing; we started sleigh riding. Now I'm not a sleigh rider in my mind. I could get hurt. There's all these things. And then I

forgot about hating winter. And I forgot about how I could break a limb sledding down the mountain. And I had so much fun, so much fun. I saw what you're saying, this preference in quotes about winter versus summer versus spring versus any different season.

And I realized that none of that was actually solid or true. I could enter into the moment of that snow on my face, of flying down the hill, of seeing her joy, of forgetting how cold I was, frankly, moment to moment. And that applies in so many areas of my life. Right. There have been people that I don't like.

[00:12:51] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:12:51] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Right. And when I don't like someone, guess what? I look for all the evidence as to why I don't like that person. Guess what? I find it.

So it really does apply everywhere, and I have some larger ropes and some smaller ropes, but what we're exploring and asking you is that, can you see any? Things that we've just taken for granted are, see as truth with a capital T, is it really tied to that tree? Can you take a little step out, go on that sled and slide down a little bit. Try it on for size. See how it's feeling.

[00:13:27] Barb Patterson: I like it.

[00:13:28] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: That's what we're asking ourselves. And, and you today.

[00:13:31] Barb Patterson: That's right. So when you find yourself saying, "That's not my thing, I don't do that."

Or you find yourself saying, "I'm not good at that."

How do you know?

[00:13:41] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

[00:13:42] Barb Patterson: How do you know?

if every moment is an opportunity to experience yourself fresh, you don't know. You don't know what you like and don't like; you don't know whom you like. And don't like, you know, and to really see that if I weren't so set in this idea, I have about this thing or me or this person, what would I discover new?

[00:14:09] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah, as you say, what's fresh in this situation. And for me, that's an exciting place to be.

You know, I've always thought that knowing is the way to stay safe, knowing what's coming, knowing what I know. But what that has done is it's protected in quotes, shielded me from really living life, really living a juicy exciting, messy life.

[00:14:32] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Yeah. And we're, we're into the juicy and messy, you know?

[00:14:35] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Oh yeah.

[00:14:36] Barb Patterson: When I'm not buying into the thought, I can't handle it, or I'm fragile somehow. Right. Like, you know, I, I may not have that direct thought. I'm fragile. But when I catch myself being careful with myself or with, you know, what I think I can do, it's just another point for me, as you're saying to kind of go, "Oh, wait a minute. What's that? That's not tied to a tree. That's not rooted. That's not truth."

[00:15:04] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So as you're listening to this, if you're thinking about something that comes up, hold that rope up to the light and ask yourself, "Is this even really? True?" And let us know, let us know what you are seeing for yourself, cuz we'd love to hear from you.

[00:15:19] Barb Patterson: Absolutely. And thank you, everybody, for joining us today. And we look forward to engaging with you more in this conversation and hearing what's on your mind, what you're seeing for yourself. As a reminder, you can email us at realwomenreallivespodcast@gmail.com. Share any of your insights or ask us questions.

And you can also do that via Apple Podcast and Spotify. It helps us out. Helps us get this podcast into more homes. And cars.

[00:15:53] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And walks.

[00:15:53] Barb Patterson: Um, yeah, and walks. Um, so if you know anybody that would benefit from these conversations, please share. If you've been impacted, we would love for you to rate and review us.

And as always, we're so glad you're here.

[00:16:07] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Lots of love to you. We'll see you soon.

[00:16:09] Barb Patterson: Bye-bye.