

SHOW INTRO

[00:00:00] Barb Patterson: Welcome, everybody. This is Barb

[00:00:03] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And this is Melissa.

[00:00:05] Barb Patterson: We're so glad you're here for the **REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES** Podcast. And today, we're going to get into our imaginations.

From different angles, Melissa and I have been talking about how we're really exploring what it means to tap into and just what a powerful creative force imagination can be.

We talked a few weeks ago about how imagination and insecurity can create pretty, you know, uncomfortable. Loop. Scary experiences inside ourselves. But today, we want to take that in the direction of creativity, and wanting to experience new parts of ourselves requires that maybe we get into our imagination in a very different way.

And so I'm going to turn it over to you, Melissa, to kick that off more.

[00:00:57] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Thank you, Barb. Even as you say the word imagination, it just sounds fun. Like. Kids. They play imagination games, make stuff up, and it's a fun space to be. There's something key that I think we need to look at, right?

When we're in the space of imagination, things are possible.



I'm going to give a specific example. A couple of weeks ago, I was at a pharmaceutical company and spoke about bringing our whole person to work. And how I describe that is we have our head, our thinking. We have our heart, our feelings, our gut, our intuition, and then we have something called imagination.

And the imagination is really where we get to play. When we're thinking of creating something new, we play a game. Which sounds strange. Right? Because they were executives, and they were like, you know, proper grownups. We played a game called I wonder. So have you heard of this game before, Barb?

[00:02:04] Barb Patterson: I think so. Yes. But go ahead. yeah.

[00:02:07] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Okay. So we had a particular issue, and of course, it was complete confidentiality. So I'm not going to share any of that, but it was an issue around a process. And we couldn't gather alignment. We couldn't get alignment on the process between the different functional areas. And this was a cross-functional meeting, and we needed alignment within the functional areas to achieve very high performance.

And this company did incredible work worldwide and needed a little support. And so we got the grownups in the room, and I played. They looked at me like I was crazy, of course, because who has time for that? I wondered about a severe pharmaceutical company, but as we started doing it, it was fascinating to see the energy shift in the room.

And, you know, we wrote down all of their wonderings, if you will. Then after the, I wonder exercise, we kind of had them all over the room. And so, people got to look around the room and then choose what potentially might form a solution.

Guess what? They came up with several solutions from which they

could choose.

But as important as that, and we've discussed this before, the being is as important as the doing. And so when they were in the imagination, childlike, curious, wondering, they're being shifted into fun. And things are possible when we're in that feeling, that beingness. And so, as they looked around the room at the possibilities, they had a lot more fun together.

They got to play together with this company that did bad things in the world and had, you know, issues like everyone does improve. They used their imagination, and it was mighty.

[00:03:52] Barb Patterson: I think it's a great example because, in businesses, we're trying to be innovative. We're trying to problem solve.

And our minds will go to the files of what we've done before, what's worked before, what we've seen other people try what we've read about. But often, there's this whole resourcefulness in the realm of imagination. So I love that. I wonder if it's like a way to open up your mind and get your creative juices looking in a whole new direction.

I think it's so powerful. And you know, I think about this because I know from kind of. Personal effectiveness and people want to evolve and step into their leadership presence in a new way, or entrepreneurs want to try a new thing in their business or teach a whole new way. Start a new position somewhere that can feel scary when people don't have a frame of reference.

And yet what you're saying is that's the objective.

[00:04:57] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:04:57] Barb Patterson: No frame of reference, right? No, no.

Let's. Step into, and just the mind is designed to be creative and offer ideas. So if we can keep ourselves looking in that direction and keep coming back, it's like, what don't I know, oh, what haven't I tried and listen, I think one of the things that happen is we have these nudges and these ideas, but we're so quick to, you know, poo poo them.

We're so quick to say that it won't work that we never give it life. That, you know, it could, where it could show us and take us a place we haven't known. We could go. And that's what imagination does. And I, you know, putting in that realm with that group, I could see how it's like, oh no, no, we're going to let, we're going to be unreasonable.

We're going to look at something that even though we think it won't work. The piece I want to say to this too is that often when we want to step into something new, as a business, as a leader, as a woman, a man, you know, all of that, it requires that we're drawing forth something that is not familiar, right. It is not familiar to us.

So those new capacities. Get drawn out when we do what you're saying when we're willing to go and give plenty of room, time, and space to hang out there. Because that's the other thing, I get. So sped up in my mind. I like one idea comes I'm like, Nope, won't work. And then I just stop. Right. Versus just like, no, no, hang out there.

What. Next next.

[00:06:31] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah. You know, when we think there's a lot on the line, I believe that my thoughts, my head is the safest place for me to go. And when I've worked with people, when I ask them, which place are you spending the most time in your imagination, your thinking, your heart, your intuition, most people spend most of their time in their thinking.

And I love the way you spoke to it, their computer files are, yeah, hugely important and useful for things that we already know. When the

variables are all known, I want to say analytical thought. And I think that's hugely valuable in daily life, especially in business. And if we're creating a new product or coming up with an insanely cool creative idea, that doesn't work.

[00:07:14] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:07:16] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Ain't going to work.

[00:07:17] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:07:18] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So where do we go when we want to do those? And then, on top of that, how do we create an environment so that we can? We talk about the future of work a lot because I know you and I are both so interested in it, and I'm particularly interested in it because I love creativity.

It's like a fun space for me. And we're seeing companies do new things in this space, starting to encourage. They even call imagination time or, you know, a creative time where people go on a walk and go to a museum. They get to do all different, fun things that maybe in the past would've looked down upon as not productive time.

And I think that it's a perfect spot for people to continue looking in their imagination. Yeah, and I just, I had a thought, and it was brilliant, and I'm trying to see what it was. Oh, I know what it was. It was about when you were talking about the unfamiliar. So I've always had a corporate job. I know how to lead corporate companies.

It's in my DNA almost. Right. I know how to do it. And since I've started my consulting and coaching practice, this is new. and a lot of the time, it's uncomfortable and unfamiliar almost every day. I think I just need to go back to doing what I've always done, and I love what I've done.

And for today, that's not what I'm doing. So why not be in the

unfamiliar and allow me to play the I wander game instead of going back to the computer files in my head of what I do? And this is for anyone out there. Who's doing something new? I share this because I know that when I'm in the unfamiliar, my head gets very active in its thinking.

And it's looking for things it knows because I'm uncomfortable. And what I'm saying to myself and you are, that's a good sign. It's a perfect sign to be uncomfortable because you are creating something new that is coming forward, fresh, and exciting. So allow myself and you to sit in that deliciousness and lean into it.

Do you know what I'm saying, Barb?

[00:09:47] Barb Patterson: I do. I do. I relate to and resemble that remark. Yes. You know, that idea of leaning into what's not familiar, playing with it, leaning into your imagination when it looks like we only have two options. That's your first clue that you're in a little mind, that there are more options.

Now we can argue for that. Like, no, my company would never accept it. No, I don't have it within me. No, the money, you know, like there are all sorts of reasons why we can argue for the limited mind. But if you just look at it from a pure understanding that our minds are designed, To be creative that they're designed to help us problem solve, to see new, to see fresh.

What it requires at times is for us to hang in there to see when I start buying my thoughts about yep. I only have a and B; that's it. That is a red flag now to say, oh wait; I'm, I'm losing my mind. I'm not opening my mind, you know, and to see, and by the way, if you haven't done this much, you are cultivating something new inside yourself, even around this, even this is potentially new.

You know, I can be pragmatic and reasonable, as we've talked about

before, sometimes to my detriment. I've had to learn and still to learn to say, oh wait, no, if I don't see a new way, it's just that I haven't seen it yet. It's not that a new way doesn't exist. Right. If I haven't seen something that matches what I'd love to create and what I'm moving into, then I just know it's a matter of time.

It's not a matter of if and so how to your point, how do I ride out that uncomfortableness sometimes, or my impatience? I can be impatient around this stuff and think it's urgent. And, you know, even today, I was conversing with somebody who is a brand director and helps with brand strategy.

And he shared a story about how he was working on something, and they were the company. I was getting ready to compete for, you know, one of those things. Right. Creative agencies do at times. Right. You know this.

[00:12:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Sure.

[00:12:08] Barb Patterson: And he said that his partner kept saying to him, have you worked on it yet? And he's like, well, I'm working on it.

But he said what he was doing was like going for a hike. He was, you know, looking at the water. He was fiddling around his office like the day before it was due. And his partner's like, you don't seem committed to this at all. And he's like, oh, I'm very committed. And then, at some point, he sat down to do it because he knew, based on what we were talking that to have it be fresh and new, he was, it was going to require that he, for him in his way, have more space internally and externally.

He was going to let the usual ideas pass through and just wait to see what else might come. And then, you know, sure enough, they, I think, won that contest. And not that I know, right? I love that story, but his point wasn't to tell me that he won. His point was how his trusting that and knowing that has changed how he and his partner move their

business.

[00:13:13] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I love that story. I do. And it's just the cherry on top that they did win. Right. It's not about that.

[00:13:18] Barb Patterson: Yes, exactly.

[00:13:19] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: But I also think it's important that that is the result.

[00:13:21] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:13:21] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Because it very well can be the result.

You know, one thing I've been talking to leaders recently about is creating space in their day.

Right. We get very caught up in doing right. And great leaders have to spend time with space.

[00:13:38] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:13:38] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So that they can ideate.

[00:13:41] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:13:41] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Right. Visionaries come up with their visions and their imagination.

[00:13:44] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:13:45] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And if they're too busy, they will not have time to do that. And that's why I see burnout with leaders.

They're in the doing, doing, doing, and they need to recognize creating space in their day, and I've done it differently. You can call it strategy time. You can call it visioning time. You can call it whatever you want, but make the time it's important.

[00:14:08] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:14:08] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: You know, we talk about one thing that I just wanted to say is, you know, I hear this word mindful a lot mindful, well, there's a play on it, right?

When our mind is full, ain't not much coming out of that. Right. So creating the space so that we can be mindful. And for me, that just means present.

[00:14:24] Barb Patterson: Yeah,

[00:14:25] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: it just means that I have access to all my faculties of my imagination, head, heart, intuition. So just wanted to share that little note.

[00:14:35] Barb Patterson: I love that. I love that.

And you know, I think there are other examples. It's like, you know, a client has to do a reorg. Has a lot of really talented people. And she, thought is sitting with and letting, getting beyond the kind of normal first responses that her mind does. You know, she just, on an intuitive level, doesn't feel good about it; it's not a good solution.

So rather than thinking she has to settle for that, we've been exploring with her imagination. Like to permit herself to imagine across the board, to just take the urgency out of, I have to decide today, right? Take the feeling of pressure out of the equation. Right. She does have decisions to make, has to make decisions, but she doesn't have to show up to this image with that internal pressure.

So giving herself the internal spacious. The freedom to be imaginative and not shut it down too soon. She's had some fresh thinking about people, opportunity, and what to do. So again, it's as simple as that, or maybe you're trying to, you know, eat differently. Maybe you're trying to help your child think about schools differently.

You know, there are all sorts of places every day where if we can lean into our imagination and cultivate that part of our mental capabilities, ss rewards for it.

[00:16:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah. As I hear you, what comes to my mind for me, Barb is slow down.

[00:16:11] Barb Patterson: Mm. Mm

[00:16:12] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: That's what it comes to. And let's be very clear. I don't mean like slow down and do nothing.

That's not what I mean at all. I have this term slow down to go fast. Yeah, because if I'm slowing down, I'm picking things up that I normally wouldn't, I'm hearing. The message is beyond words when someone is talking to me, right? People say things, but there's something underneath people's words.

And if I'm slowing down, I will pick something up. That's going to be helpful for me. And when I slow down, I'm just, I; I can see more of what's possible when I'm sped up in my head, I have like, what are those blinders that they put on horses blind?

[00:16:55] Barb Patterson: Blinders.

Pretty sure they're called blinders.

[00:17:04] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: When they put those blinders on

the horses, they just run straight in one direction. That's how I get.

[00:17:11] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:17:12] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So it's like, okay, slow down. So I can take the blinders off so I can see around, you know, what's, what's going on here. What's available to me? Right. I love that they're called blinders.

That's amazing.

[00:17:22] Barb Patterson: I'm pretty sure. I could be wrong about that. Fact check. Fact check.

So, everyone, I think this week's invitation is to live in your imagination. What would you add to that, Melissa?

[00:17:33] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Oh, I just, when you say that, it makes me feel so good. Imagination is fun. Yeah. Let yourself have some fun.

How's that?

[00:17:40] Barb Patterson: That sounds good.

[00:17:42] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Have some fun and enjoy your imagination. And we so appreciate you being with us. We do. If you like this or love it, please give us a rating, write a review, and send us an email. We would love to hear from you about what's on your mind. What's in your heart at **realwomenreallivespodcast@gmail.com**.

I'm impressed that I remembered that without looking because I slowed down. So yes, we appreciate you. And if there's someone you think can benefit, please share this. It helps us get the word out and help us all be real, more real, real women's lives.

Sending lots of love.

[00:18:22] Barb Patterson: Thanks, everybody. Bye-bye.