

[00:00:00] INTRO

Here we are. Here we go. Take one.

Welcome to **Real Women Real Lives**. Where wit and wisdom collide.

Seriously, who knew that French fries could be a catalyst for shifts of consciousness. So clear to me in this moment, how I get confused about it. And then we remember how can we create a life that allows us to step into our work and our expression, just being who we are.

But also funds our dreams. Yeah. What is my husband doing right now? Am I successful enough? But do you have faith that you're okay. No matter what happens?

[00:00:45] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Well, hello everyone. And welcome to Real Woman, or Real Women, rather, Real Lives—our podcast. I'm Melissa.

[00:00:52] Barb Patterson: And I'm Barb.

[00:00:53] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: We were just talking, Barb and I, about what really important topic we could tackle on today's podcast. And I think we have a good one for you. It's really serious, really deep. There's a lot of meaning here and I'll just give it a headline if that's okay, Barb, before I hand it over to you.

[00:01:11] Barb Patterson: Absolutely. Go for it.

[00:01:13] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Okay. Yeah. We're going to be



talking about french fries. And I think it's going to help us out now, a lot of people out. So Barb, I'm just going to hand it over to you.

[00:01:24] Barb Patterson: Seriously, who knew that french fries could be a catalyst for shifts of consciousness and transformation? I mean, I kind of like it, I, it makes me love them even more in some ways, you know, and I always say, and I've always joked that french fries, you know—if that question—if you were on a island stranded on an island and you can only have one food. Mine would be potato.

[00:01:48] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Really?!

[00:01:48] Barb Patterson: Yes. Yes, absolutely! Think about all the variations.

Fried potato, big mashed potato, french fried potato. I could go on and on.

[00:02:01] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: You've clearly given this some thought.

[00:02:08] Barb Patterson: Yeah. So it is just a beautiful segue into today's topic. So earlier this week, I, uh, well, let me just back up a little bit and say. You know, at the start of the year, um, I was sick and, um, and after kind of recovering from that, you know, my body and everything was just craving greens. It was like, just wanted clean and healthy and all this. And so I had been doing that and doing that, you know, like with a lot of grace and ease. And then this week I decided to have french fries.

[00:02:47] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: You went for it.

[00:02:48] Barb Patterson: Yes. I decided to have french fries. Now, anyone listening that is going to relate to this sharing today already knows, may have a hint of where I'm heading this way.

And if you aren't there yet, just hang out with me for a moment. So.

They were fantastic, by the way. Perfect.

[00:03:08] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I want to hear more about what kind of french fries you had.

[00:03:12] Barb Patterson: They were perfectly crispy on the outside and warm and tender on the inside and I enjoyed them very much. Now. What's interesting is what happened over the next 12 plus hours. After I have them and enjoyed them. I noticed the insistent, and s-e-s-s in the—that word. A lot of chatter.

[00:03:36] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Incessant? Yep.

[00:03:37] Barb Patterson: Thank you. Incessant chatter of my mind going, "Wow, you were doing so good. You kind of blew it. Oh, wow. You just ate that. And now you're, you're off, you got off track." And then I just, I mean, I won't, I won't bore you with all the many places that my mind went, um, with, with this, but later that evening kind of, and this is just like me moving throughout my evening and just catching myself constantly.

In this barrage of thinking and judgment and critical thinking about myself and the fact that I ate french fries. And before I went to bed, I was like, "You have got to be kidding me." And I might've used other words. Sometimes when I talk to myself, I do.

[00:04:31] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: We can't use those words, Barb. We can say these things here.

[00:04:35] Barb Patterson: Exactly, exactly. And I'm like, "Would you just stop thinking about french fries? Seriously, just stop thinking about these fries." And I went to bed and the next morning I woke up. And as I was kind of starting my morning and moving throughout the house and doing all that, I just felt this sort of inner strength and just kind of

this revolutionary spirit inside of me around french fries.

But let me tell you what was happening. And I, what I saw inside, it was literally like ""No more, no more. Stop it. The fact that you spent most of your mental energy last night in the direction of french fries is ridiculous." It's understanding don't don't don't get me wrong. I do have compassion, but again, sometimes my inner voice is very firm with me.

[00:05:33] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:05:33] Barb Patterson: And it was like "You, the amount of time, energy put towards good food/bad food. Good for you. Bad for you. Good habits. Bad habits. Good Barb, bad Barb. Aligned, healthy Barb — unhealthy, stuck Barb. You know, all around the identification of a good food, healthy for me, a bad food. Now don't get me wrong. My body does well with certain foods and not so great with others.

You know? And that changes and flexes. And so, you know, like I'm not denying that certain foods may have a certain reaction within me. What I'm really pointing to is the habit of mind. And in a very honest, transparent and humbled way that morning, seeing the amount of mental energy, emotional energy, life energy, I have given those variations on the same theme.

And to see, like through this understanding and seeing it's like, I understand like good food, bad food is a made up construct. Good Barb. Bad Barb is a made up construct. Aligned, healthy Barb, and the, then the idealized image I have of myself in that direction. Is a made up image. A made up construct. And yet I can put myself and start internally comparing myself to that idealized image that made up false image of who I think I should be.

Or if I were healthy. If I were evolved. If I were connected, I would be these things. And I know it sounds extreme, but that's why I wanted to talk to it today because of the ridiculousness of it actually helped me

see something —FREE something. I've seen before that I think too much about getting my food and body and all that in the right direction.

I've seen that before, but what I really saw differently was the sort of —'ridiculousness' is my word, right? Of the fact that I, I gave that much energy to french fries. To french fries. They're french fries. They're amazing. They're food. They're amazing. They are not anything other than a food. Yet I have turned that I turned that in that night to so much more than a pleasurable meal, I turned that into years of, you know, over, over conditioned thinking about it.

I turned that into making myself wrong. I turned that into a problem to solve, you know, there was so much I did with that. And yet to really see. I was, you know, that morning I was like, "No more. I am sick and tired of judging and assessing everything I eat." Now, I'm speaking in extremes now and I want to be transparent that I'm so much further along than I was years ago.

I don't really judge everything I eat now, but you can see there's room for even more freedom inside myself around this. And I used to think the freedom came if I got the routine, right. If I got the diet, right. If I got the body, right. I thought freedom was there. And yet what's true is no matter what I eat, no matter the size I am, I have watched my mind behave the same and get caught in those kind of loops and patterns. And so, that morning it was like in a real kind of hopeful, sincere way and just like "No more." I am. I choose the journey of doing my best to stop categorizing food and my body and choices and all of that and a good/bad, and just see when I catch my mind doing what we both know it will do. This isn't a one and done, but to really see that that's the direction of more liberation in that area. So that's my french fries story.

[00:09:46] **Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Wow. I so appreciate you sharing so vulnerably and so transparently about that because I really hear it's not about the French fries. I really hear it's about the freedom that you allowed yourself to experience around it. And I just hope that people

can hear that. Right. French fries itself, it's so innocent. It's so innocuous. It's so...it's really insignificant—french fries. And that's what I love so much about it because we can take something like french fries and make them to mean so much.

And how much time have I spent on my french fries, right. For me, they're not french fries. There's "What is my husband doing right now?" "Am I successful enough?" There's "Why did they do that?" There are so many things in my life that I have allowed to take me out of the present moment. That I have allowed to take my freedom away where I thought my freedom like you... it was so, it was revelatory what you said, because I think sometimes that freedom exists outside of me in some new way of doing something a new way... A new way. Other than what's available to me in this moment. Right? And anytime I believe that, I'm a little, I'm a little confused. And so I'm going to hold that with me.

And then I have this beautiful visual of these french fries . And what I love so much about it is that dichotomy of it, it's like so innocent and fun, and yet it could really impact us so much. So thank you for sharing that. I just really, really. I appreciate that. And that's going to stick with me and I, and I hope that people can relate.

You know, I could talk about the large bag from Costco this week that I ate of Pirate's Booty and the amount of time that I spent thinking about it. And the truth is I did, like I did. For me though, what gets tricky for me is my success. Those are my friends fries, and those have been my french fries —and what is success? Right. And having it look a certain way, you know.

You know, and we've shared on this podcast, that I've made a real big change in what I'm doing for my profession. And I've never worked for myself in my entire life. I've always worked for a larger corporation. And so it's been really clear what 'defined success' looks like.

And so now that I'm creating my own business, and really creating the

definition of what success is, there are many shades of gray as to what that could be. And when I start thinking that success looks a certain way and it's different than the current reality, I could very easily —and I do, and I have —think I need to be something different. And it actually brings emotion when I say that, because it's so innocent.

It's my french fries and my little french fry has taken so much time from my life and it's stolen so much joy in the moment of enjoying what IS, as opposed to what is not. And, so the good news today, like you, is that I can see that and I have seen it. Right? But there's always more on offer. There's always access to more freedom, to more insight of what's possible for us.

And so I got to see that this week—again, and what's so interesting about that is, I don't know if this is related or not, Barb. But the second that I saw more clearly, more success in the physical world. Right. And, and I don't share that because it's not necessarily a trick or a tool, but that's just interesting for me to observe.

And the funny thing about that is, when that material success (and I'm putting air quotes for those who are listening and not seeing this), I wasn't as attached to that outcome. It wasn't, I didn't need it to feel successful. And I just thought, "Oh, that's cool. That'll be fun." And I thought, wow, that's so interesting.

That's so interesting because I'm just not as attached to it because I see the freedom that's on offer in any moment, not attached to any external circumstance.

[00:13:58] Barb Patterson: Yeah. I, I love that. And I do, I do think it's related and really what we're kind of drawing out together here is those places where we have all of us have more opportunity for inner freedom and more freedom of mind.

And in that freedom of mind, we naturally feel our okayness. We, I think to your story—in a freer mind, we do see possibility in potential.

That's natural. You know, if you think about it in a very simple way, when we're ruminating or rehashing the French fries or how to be more successful or how to, you know, our whatever those garden variety things that we all have that get us locked in our mind and constrict our mind. Any time our minds are more constricted, it narrows what we see. It activates and brings to life the very thing we're, you know, worried about and seeing the lack in, or for me it was, you know, seeing the, oh yeah, all the, all the old tapes and stuff around good food/bad food, good Barb/bad Barb, healthy Barb, not, you know, like all of what the implications of that are, you know, all of that is old conditioned thought and there's no insight. There's no fresh air in that direct. Right? And there's no freedom and in the same way that you're talking about.

Yeah. I love that example. It's like the idea of being successful and getting our business right. And getting our parenting right. Getting, you know, whatever that you said, the relationship, all that, what that brings to life then is that kind of rumination, that habitual old thought. And there's nothing new there..

But as soon as we see it, just do our best in that moment to back away from it, you know, all thought moves through. Right. As you, as we know. All experience shifts. Thank God. Then in that when our minds clear, we see with broader vision, we see with more perspective. So I think what you're saying that connection feels magical, but it's actually really common sense.

You know, that possibility and opportunity is always there. It's just, where are we looking? You know, where are we putting? And that's why I said it was like, "Wow, do I want to keep putting my mental bandwidth towards this old construct?" Totally made up ridiculousness about good food/bad food. Could I be radical enough to never think about, you know, what I ate after I ate it?

[00:16:31] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: That's radical. Even chocolate cake is what I'm hearing you say.

[00:16:36] Barb Patterson: Totally! Another staple. Chocolate, dark chocolate. Yes.

[00:16:41] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Just so you know, that's probably what I would take on the islands. No offense to your potato, but I'm thinking chocolate would be what I...

[00:16:48] Barb Patterson: No. No. I get... That would probably be a number two, you know? I get it.

Yeah. But yes. And, and for, in what you're saying, like, what if we look in the direction of a free mind? Of a liberated internal state. And what is the potential in that space?

[00:17:05] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: You know, there's, uh, there's a story that I told a friend this week. Cause you know, I was in it. I was, I was in the swirl of my thinking this week and I likened it to, I was in my car, the snow was coming down like it does here in New York a lot more than I like it to. And it was sleet ing and the radio was playing loudly. My GPS wasn't working . We don't even have all wheel drive on our car because we're from California. So we have front wheel drive, which means you really shouldn't be driving in the snow to begin with.

And as this is all going on, I'm thinking "I'm going to get somewhere in my car," and it's such a metaphor for how I am sometimes. When I'm in the thinking of the problem. And I'm trying to use that thinking to get out of the problem. It's like me being in that car. And I said to my friend, "Get out of the car, just get out of that car."

And it was so helpful for me because sometimes I'm in that car and I'm pushing and I'm trying to get somewhere, and it's not going. And I can't hear, and I can't see, but I'm just going to push my way to go. And so the idea of just getting out of the car...opening the door looking in a different direction.

That to me is so helpful as a visual, because—I, like you, that morning, I just want it to be done with trying to solve the problem with the same thinking that actually created the problem to begin with.

[00:18:31] Barb Patterson: Yeah. I love that analogy. I'm going to use that too. I think that's a brilliant one. It's like, yeah, we're in the car and our head in the same, going in the same old direction thinking we're going to get to a new destination. Right. You know? And so I love that. It's like, "Oh yeah, let me just step away. Let me step out of the car and see—open the door. Get some fresh air."

[00:18:56] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:18:57] Barb Patterson: Yeah. I love that analogy. Yeah.

[00:19:00] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So I just, uh, I feel like I've stepped out of the car and it's much brighter outside the car. I can actually walk. I found out—to where I needed to go. I didn't even need the car. We can walk. Yeah.

[00:19:16] Barb Patterson: Yeah. That's the funny part. And I think that's why the word 'ridiculous' is so prominent in my mind that next morning, because once you see and you kind of get back into the fresh air and, you know, like out of that cloudiness and, you know, looped thinking, you do really see, like, that's the great part.

It's like this natural big breath and this like, "Oh yeah, I don't have to do that." "Oh yeah, there's another way to move through and, and to experience more of that liberated free mind."

[00:19:51] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Can I just tell you one other thing.

[00:19:52] Barb Patterson: Yeah, please.

[00:19:53] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So last week, um, well, when,

when everything sort of happened with pandemic and whatnot, you know, I was on these Zooms all day long, very closely, like squinting my eyes, trying to see.

And my vision actually got really bad and I couldn't see. And, um, I got some glasses and didn't have access to Botox at all because we couldn't go to the doctor. So I had a very furrowed brow. I couldn't see, I was squinting all the time— —and it was really uncomfortable and glasses worked for a little bit, but then they didn't. I needed a new glasses cause it was getting progressively worse.

And you know, this understanding, I had forgotten it for a little bit, which also just, you know, I just have so much compassion. That was my experience. And then I remembered. And I still forget. And then I remember—right? Because I am human, very, very, very human. And I went to the eye doctor this week and my vision actually got better.

Now, this is another one of these things that's—I'm very curious about it, right? Because for today I do feel I am 'seeing' a little more clearly about how my thinking impacts my reality and how this understanding shows up in my life. And apparently I'm actually seeing more clearly. And so I don't know if that's related or not.

I share that though, because I have no idea what's gonna happen. I couldn't have predicted that. And so I'm just going to enjoy that to your point of what's possible when we look in the direction of what's possible, more things than I thought were possible. That's for sure.

[00:21:18] Barb Patterson: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I think holding curiosity and you know, like about those things is...is fun and creative and, you know, will show us. what's meant for us, you know, that's what I love about that kind of holding a freer open mind and getting kind of curious and assuming there's more you don't know than you do know or that your mind, like you said earlier, you know, we're trying to step into a new sense of ourselves. Yet looking in the direction of old conditioned ideas of ourselves and what we want, and what's true for

us.

And so to really see, it's like, "Oh yeah. How can I just in a light way, take my foot off the gas pedal of all my old ideas and distractions and where my mind goes?" And just when I, when I catch it, when I see it, take a step back inside and get open and curious about what life wants to show us.

[00:22:15] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:22:16] Barb Patterson: That we don't know.

[00:22:17] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah. There's so much we don't know. And that's actually the really good news.

[00:22:24] Barb Patterson: Yeah. That's freedom, right?

[00:22:26] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:22:27] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:22:29] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah.

[00:22:29] Barb Patterson: Well, thank you everybody.

[00:22:31] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Thank you everyone. Just remember freedom...french fries are freedom. Let's leave you right there. French fries are freedom.

[00:22:40] Barb Patterson: Yeah. And let us know what you're wanting to, you know, where you want to experience more of that internal freedom. What's showing you the direction of freedom? Who knew french fries would show me that, but they have.

[00:22:52] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah, that's great. Thank you Barb.

[00:22:55] Barb Patterson: Thanks everyone. Thanks Melissa.

[00:22:57] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: See you soon.

[00:22:57] Barb Patterson: 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.

[00:23:19] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: What topics do you want to hear about in future episodes? We'd love to hear from you. You can email us at realwomenreallivespodcast@gmail.com

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.