

## [00:00:00] INTRO

**[00:00:43] Barb Patterson:** Hi, welcome everybody. So glad you're here for the REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES podcast. This is Barb Patterson.

**[00:00:52] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** and Melissa Palazzo-Hart.

**[00:00:53] Barb Patterson:** So today I'm going to turn it over to Melissa right away. Let's talk about courage.

**[00:01:00] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** As you said that I saw an image of the Wizard of Oz—the lion, of course. Sometimes I feel like I'm a lioness with my courage.

Just want to share a little bit of a personal sort of story today, because I think it's so important. For my entire life, I remember being afraid, even though I didn't look that way on the outside. I just remember always having this feeling of fear. And I've been recently reading a lot about fear and anxiety in pretty much every publication I read.

And there's this term that I've seen a lot of, which is 'high functioning anxiety'. And I don't know if you've seen it Barb, but it's everywhere. And, you know, I like to read, I like to learn. And so there's usually like, "Do you have high functioning anxiety? Here are 10 of the possible symptoms." So then I'm thinking, check, check, check, check, check and double-check. And so, you know, I could probably diagnose myself as someone that has high functioning anxiety and I'll share some of the symptoms because I kind of wear them as a badge of honor.



I work. I'm a worker. I'm highly successful. I can probably outwork anyone. I'm the one who people come to. I have a very positive attitude, you know, the list goes on and on.

And for so long, I was so, so proud of all of those things. And at times it came at the expense of my wellbeing. You know, I got very, very sick. I was diagnosed with an immune deficiency disorder. I wasn't sleeping and the list goes on and on. And, you know, that's how I came upon this understanding because I pretty much tried everything and I was not willing to let go of my success and my "high functioning"; in quotes.

So I needed to find another way. And so when I came across this understanding that maybe there was another way that I could be successful, I was really curious. And so my anxiety and my fear have gone from what it used to be was I just lived in it. Like I lived in oxygen. I lived in fear, not even realizing that's what fueled my life.

To now where I live in the regular oxygen and there's whiffs in my air conditioning and heating system of fear and anxiety.

And you know, the heat's been on this week, Barb, it's been cold here in New York, so the heat's been on and the fear that's been seeping in, and so I've just gotten really curious about, well, "Hey, what's this courage thing. As opposed to thinking about fear and anxiety, what's this courage thing?"

And for whatever reason, I believe that courage was something that some people had in some people didn't. And sometimes I had it and sometimes I didn't. And so this week I've been waiting for that courage to come into my heating system

and I've kind of been sitting and thinking about courage and fear. And when I could exchange one out for the other, and then for whatever reason, I remembered something someone said to me a long time ago, and it was, "You can't really think your way into acting. You actually can act your way into thinking." And I liked that. And then I remember I used to say this to a couple of people that I worked with many years ago.

I said, “Sometimes you have to do the (bleep) you don't want to do so that you can do the things you want to do.” So that was also floating in the atmosphere this week. And so for a couple of days, I sat in my no anxiety and checked boxes and I just decided to take an action. I decided, [Ooh. And I even get chills thinking about it] to send this email about a project I was really, really excited about. Something that just gets me so darn excited. And then I thought, okay, I'm going to press send—and I press send. And I felt courage. And I thought, “Well, isn't that interesting?” It was actually after I did the action that that feeling came about. And so sometimes the courage comes before. Sometimes it comes during, and I guess sometimes it comes after.

And the reason I'm sharing all of this today is because I don't want me—and I really don't want you who is ever listening to not take an action that's in your heart (what's in my heart) because I have fear, because I have thoughts of fear. Life is too precious for me and for you to not take the actions that are in our heart, because we're afraid of what the results may or may not be.

And the truth is I have no idea of what the results will be. And I have not heard back from that email, but here's the honest truth. I actually don't care as much about the result. What I care about is showing up for myself and what's in my heart. And the truth is the rest is up to the Powers That Be. But here's what I do know if I don't show up to that freaking plate with my bat and swing, I sure as heck am not going to hit that ball.

I got to get in the game or the ring or whatever other metaphor we want to talk about. And that's the invitation today on courage for you. To get up with that bat and swing. And you know, there's so many stories about Thomas Edison and about how many times he failed with the light bulb or how many times Michael Jordan didn't get that ball in that basket.

But that's not what we remember. We remember the time that they did. And so human nature potentially, but I'll speak for myself— I sometimes can have a tendency to look at what I haven't done as opposed to what I have done. And that's okay. And I want to leave it there, but I do have one other, one other thing I want to mention it. And I'm just going to say it's called 'dumpster diving'.

**[00:06:53] Barb Patterson:** Um, and you going to leave them hanging. Now they have to listen to me to get to the good stuff? That it's like...I'm the meeting before happy hour, you know, that's where you just put me.

I'm that one last work call before you can put the laptop down. Yeah.

Alright. I'll take it.

I think it's cool that your pointing—what I hear in what you're saying and resonate to is I) courage isn't required to take action at times. Sometimes, you know, I don't feel courageous. Sometimes I feel afraid. Sometimes I don't, but to really see that we can step into action regardless. And I think confidence isn't required, you know, it's all those things. It's just really cool to realize, like we can be in any place and take action and step into something. And I think the other thing I heard in what you're saying is it feels so much more alive. It feels so much more alive to be in the game rather than watching it, right? To be in the activity of what I'm curious about versus thinking about it.

You know, it's more alive to be in my life versus thinking about my life from the sidelines, you know, and that dance to really appreciate the feeling of coming alive does something for us. Whether we're feeling insecure or we have our stuff together. Whether we feel like we're courageous or not, it's like, I can so resonate to that.

The amount of times I've thought about something for eons before I hit the go button. Right. Or there's that funny? I know everyone relates to, right? Like that thing that you think it's on your to-do list for months, and then you finally do it and it was literally ten minutes.

You know, but that's true for what you're saying too, for those places that feel more vulnerable to us, like the thing we really want. You know, whether it's the call to a loved one to share something or it's to take something that feels risky and bold to ask for a job or to ask someone to support you or work together.

And, you know, there's all places where that vulnerability to step into the desire, to step into the place we're drawn. To step into action, like you're saying.

As I'm saying this Brené Brown comes to mind. And, you know, she, I think has done such an amazing job of articulating that courage and vulnerability go together.

**[00:09:28] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah.

**[00:09:29] Barb Patterson:** Sometimes courage and vulnerability isn't the big things we think of, but it's stepping into a conversation that feels scary, or sending an email that feels like we're being bold. So many moments in our days, I think where that courage, vulnerability is sort of there, but I really love that you're saying take the action regardless. Take the action regardless.

**[00:09:56] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah. I have a friend Kathy, who she's just at a TEDx talk and uh, I've always wanted to do a TEDx talk. You've done a TEDx talk.

**[00:10:04] Barb Patterson:** I have.

**[00:10:04] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** It's fantastic. If you haven't seen it yet.

**[00:10:07] Barb Patterson:** Thank you.

**[00:10:08] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** I thought, well, I'll do a TEDx talk when [dot, dot dot] someday. And some day is another made up thought. When is someday? And so I am doing a TEDx talk, but that's not what I wanted to talk about. I wanted to talk about dumpster diving.

**[00:10:22] Barb Patterson:** Yes. Talk about dumpster diving. We're all waiting. Yes.

**[00:10:26] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah. Yeah. So it's a term that someone gave me a long time ago about how I gather evidence. And there's another expression. There's two wolves in the forest, right? There's a red Wolf and an orange wolf. Which one is going to live?

And of course the one that we feed—that's the one that lives. Of course, I tried to figure that question out for a long time with an Excel spreadsheet before realizing it was just a metaphor.

And so when I think something's not going well, I will gather evidence on all the reasons why it's not going well. Or better yet something that I want to do, I will try and figure out all the possible outcomes before I take an action. And so kind of like diving in a dumpster, right? If you're walking by a dumpster, we have dumpsters here in New York, you smell it.

It doesn't smell good. Most people would continue to walk by the dumpster. Right. So if I have a feeling that doesn't feel good, you would think maybe, okay. Walk on by. But what I've done in my life innocently is I've opened up that dumpster put my head inside, jumped on in, and started looking through all the garbage.

**[00:11:37] Barb Patterson:** Very visual, very visceral.

**[00:11:39] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yes.

**[00:11:39] Barb Patterson:** This is not a good idea, people. This is not a suggestion.

**[00:11:45] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** This is why it's dumpster diving, because it's absolutely not a good idea for me to jump in a dumpster and go through garbage. And yet someplace in my thinking, it looks like a good idea to figure out all the possible things that could go wrong before I take an action, because that's someplace actually seems like a good idea, right?

It seems like I'm planning and whatnot. And of course I've never jumped in an actual dumpster, but honestly, sometimes dumpster diving into my potential

negative future outcomes, a lot more painful and disgusting than jumping in an actual dumpster.

But here's what I thought on my walk today. My future self will know exactly what to do in any situation. My current self has no idea what to do in a future situation because I'm not in the future situation. I'm here now. And in this moment here now, there is always an idea of what I can or cannot do. I've gotten into trouble, Barb, in trying to figure out what I was going to do in the future.

I took, um, statistics and quantitative analysis in school. And there were a lot of if then analysis— and that's what I was doing in my life. I was “if/then”-ing and trying to plan for a future that did not yet exist. And that goes back to courage a little bit, because if I'm doing that, if I'm doing, if/then about the future, I'm not able to actually make a move in the present because I'm dealing with things that don't yet exist. And so Future Melissa, future you who are listening, you'll know exactly what to do in each present moment. And that again, gives us more freedom to make decisions about this moment, because it's really all that exists.

So don't go in the dumpster. Don't be like, Melissa. Don't go in the dumpster.

**[00:13:26] Barb Patterson:** Yeah, no, um, I might have to join the Dumpster Diving Club because I can totally relate to what you're saying. And I do. I think it's funny because logically it could make sense to do the, 'what if' scenario planning and the thinking it through to try and avoid the unknown or getting derailed.

When we realized, like you're saying like, “Oh what if I can handle it no matter what?” you know, and to your point, and then in the moment we get ideas on how to respond to real-time though. It's in real time. Right. Because until that point, we're living in a world of imagination.

That's it! It's just imagination. So yes, sometimes thinking that through might help me feel like, “Okay, I could do it.” But what's interesting is to realize, do we know we're just in a world of imagination?

**[00:14:26] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah.

**[00:14:27] Barb Patterson:** You know, and also do we know we have what it takes to just step in and take action. And I've like been obsessed in my life for many, many years about finding my purpose and because I have my purpose linked to happiness and fulfillment. And it just looked like if I could find that, everything would be smooth sailing. Right. And I was like curious, it was like, "What's my big, special ..." It had to be special too. Right. Couldn't just be ordinary. And then I felt it left me in this feeling of somehow I'm not living up to my potential. Like this feeling of that I'm not quite getting it right. And that would bum me out. Like, you know, literally it was a place I lived in. When I started to see what you're saying and still today, again, I think hopefully people know we're sharing kind of our journeys. But, you know, there's no arrival in the human experience. There are things right now that if I just allowed myself to step into them, I would see something and things I'm overthinking to this day. Right. But, that said, when I let go of the angst of trying to figure out my purpose, and started to just be more willing to be in real time, like you're saying, and to try new things, to see that I really was okay, no matter what, that I could step into life and then figure out what to do. I didn't have to plan it for, you know, ever. I started accessing new parts of myself that I'd spent years wondering why I wasn't living up to my potential.

**[00:16:13] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Wow.

**[00:16:14] Barb Patterson:** Because I wasn't stepping in, I wasn't engaging in a lot of ways. I was overthinking. I was preparing and, you know, that's not the complete truth.

Like there were places where I was adventurous and daring and trying, but there were also places that I just was more afraid and over-thought as a result. And it wasn't until I started to see thought and get more willing to be messy and vulnerable and step into life without having all the information, that I started to wake up to new parts of myself.

**[00:16:48] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** I love that. A long time ago, I took this graduate program in spiritual psychology and they talked to us about three-foot tosses. And the idea is that to get across a field, some people think they have to go in these very long stints, but the research shows that if



you plan three-foot toss after three-foot toss, after three-foot toss, you will always get to some place.

And the idea behind that is kind of like a lily pad. A frog when it jumps to the next [ I'm not a frog, but] when they jump to a lily pad, they only can see the lily pad right in front of them. And so I have to remember that my job as a human on this planet is to jump to the next lily pad, not think about the lily pad after that or the one after that.

[And so that's what I'm going to remember about courage and action today—to take that three-foot toss, to jump to the next Lily pad and know that the next Lily pad will present itself.

**[00:17:43] Barb Patterson:** I think that's a perfect place to end our conversation today. I love that. Thank you for that.

Thank you everyone for being with us today.

**[00:17:51] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Thank you so much, Barb. Always love hanging out with you

**[00:17:54] Barb Patterson:** Yeah, you too, Melissa..

**[00:17:56] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:** Yeah. Thank you all for joining us.

**[00:17:59] Barb Patterson:** Bye-bye.

**[00:18:01] Melissa Palazzo-Hart:**

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

**[00:18:22] 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](mailto:realwomenreallivespodcast@gmail.com)**.

Want to see the show notes or read a transcript of this show? You can find it on [melissapalazzohart.com](http://melissapalazzohart.com) or [barbarapatterson.com](http://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.