

[00:00:00] SHOW INTRO

[00:00:48] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Hello, everyone. Welcome to **REAL WOMEN REAL LIVES**. This is Melissa

[00:00:53] Barb Patterson: and Barb.

[00:00:54] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Hi, Barb.

[00:00:55] Barb Patterson: Hi, Melissa.



[00:00:56] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Today, Barb and I were talking about how sometimes when people look at other people's lives, they appear linear, like there was this magic moment when they just realized their purpose and everything was a straight line from one place to the other.

And how in reality, it's pretty different from how it appears. So Barb, how about you talk to us about what we were just talking about?

[00:01:22] Barb Patterson: Yeah, I had the pleasure last night of speaking to a gentleman out of Vietnam. He does these YouTube interviews where he speaks to different leaders and people, and his questions were about my life journey and the connection to where we end up and what we're up to.

And it was funny because I shared a story. He asked; he started by saying, what did you want to be when you were a child?

Well, I was that girl that fantasized greatly about being an actress.

[00:01:57] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: What?

[00:01:58] Barb Patterson: Oh yeah.

[00:01:59] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I did not know that.

[00:02:00] Barb Patterson: Oh yeah. And I did a speech in grade school and used to win blue ribbons, and like theater was always kind of, should I be doing that?

And you know, like it was always something that brought me a lot of joy and

[00:02:14] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: wow.

[00:02:16] Barb Patterson: As you know, I did not go in that direction.

[00:02:19] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Wow.

[00:02:19] Barb Patterson: But I shared with him another story that I have this memory of; I think I was like 10, 11, maybe. And my mom took me to a Leo Buscaglia speaker event or a workshop. I don't know what it was.

He was one of the first kind of self-help authors and speakers. And so he talked about family order, and he spoke of love.

Well, you know, my mom took me even at that age because I was reading his books. Like I was fascinated like already. Right. But...

[00:02:53] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: wow.

[00:02:53] Barb Patterson: ...I remember sitting in the audience and just laughing and smiling and loving what he was saying and the energy in the room. We were driving away. I told her, "That's what I wanna do when I grow up."

[00:03:08] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Wow.

[00:03:08] Barb Patterson: I said, "I wanna make people feel that way."

And it's so funny because in sharing that story, it looked like, wow, he says, "So you knew early, and look at you."

And I was like, "Yeah, no. No, not at all." It was not that way at all. Now I see.

Right in hindsight. I see. But no, I spent my teens and my time in college lost. You know, unsure of my... I changed my major like five. Times I was everything from a dietician to deaf education, you know, I tried business, and then I took an accounting class, and the first day I was like, "This is boring. I'm leaving."

You know, like it was like, I just had no clue.

[00:03:57] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Oh my God.

[00:03:58] Barb Patterson: And so I struggled. I worked in school, in college, and, you know, and then I left, and I went and volunteered, and that was sort of random how that happened. And I went to Africa for a while, and that was amazing. And could tell stories for hours about that.

And then, when I got back, a mentor of mine offered me a position at the student center where I would lead retreats. And conversations that were around, you know, like...

[00:04:28] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: sure.

[00:04:28] Barb Patterson: ...self-help we did community outreach stuff, you know, and I started to see how, "Wow, I'm thriving here."

[00:04:36] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm.

[00:04:36] Barb Patterson: I did not thrive in school. And so I did that for a while.

And then what happened was I got into personal developments stuff and teaching adult education, transformational experiences, and that ultimately led to working inside of corporations and doing organizational development and leadership and talent management. And to where my last position, where I was the head of a global function, living in Paris, you know, and getting to do a lot of really cool things and travel around.

Now you hear that, that all sounds logical, doesn't it? It sounds so logical and linear and correct. No, no. Let me tell you what also was included in those years. Two different attempts, one in my 20 and one in my thirties, to start my own business. Failure. The second one failed so much that I had significant debt and much financial shame around it and felt like, you know, really bad about myself.

I moved back in with my mom in my thirties to try and get my finances, uh, back on track. I struggled thinking that I was, you know, I made sales at that time. I worked in a furniture store. I did massage therapy.

[00:05:51] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Wow.

[00:05:52] Barb Patterson: Yeah. I waited tables in those years at a couple of different places. I taught little workshops sometimes.

And the thing that would cause me the most pain was when I thought I was off track. I feel like a failure and like I'm off track, and it's not working yet. In hindsight, I can see how every step, including waiting tables, including living above a garage.

[00:06:16] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yes.

[00:06:16] Barb Patterson: Helping take care of care for kids, so I didn't have the rent. You know, like, including moving back in with my

mom, including the two attempts at business, which were great and didn't work out.

Right? All of that has served my life. It has helped my evolution, growth, and where I am today. But in the midst of it, I had a misunderstanding. In the midst of it, it looked like I was off track.

[00:06:41] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yes.

[00:06:42] Barb Patterson: If I just could figure out what I was meant to do or get my shit together, excuse me. That life would be working out differently than it is.

And that was a misunderstanding. Life was happening through me. All of this was life. All this was a journey, and I began to see it's like, yeah, the illusion is that somehow we figure it out, like you said, and then it's all smooth sailing. No, no, it's a very crooked path. It's a very convoluted path.

And yet all of it serves our evolution, growth, growth, our growth, humanity, and service. And so it's like what I've come to see is 'off track' is an illusion, and the struggle to try and find the right track and the right path ends up. I think having us miss some of the scenery, having us miss opportunities along the way.

And thankfully, at some point in that journey, I had the thought because I had been trying hard for years to figure out my purpose. Even though I told you the Leo Buscsallia story, it's pretty clear as a 10-year-old.

What I realized was, what if there's no purpose? But how am I in this moment living on purpose?

[00:07:54] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Ooh

[00:07:55] Barb Patterson: What if I'm right where I'm meant to be? And not because I I'm a failure, and I have a lesson to learn, but

because there are gifts, there's opportunity. There's a connection. There's growth. There's love right here, right now. Right, where I am and taking on path/ off the path track, right path/wrong path out of my vocabulary.

Right. And I was just starting to see like, oh yeah. Oh yeah. Okay. What's on? If I know it's crooked if I stop worrying about where I'm at and just start seeing what is on offer right here, what would I see?

[00:08:30] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: I cannot tell you how much I love hearing about that, Barb. I just love it so much. And it's hilarious that you and I have a similar path.

I also wanted to be an actor.

[00:08:44] Barb Patterson: You did? That doesn't surprise me. I could see it too.

[00:08:48] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: But like, I mean, I was, that was my passion.

[00:08:50] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:08:50] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: But you know, my parents told me, "Well, that's not practical at all. So, you know, don't do that."

[00:08:55] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:08:55] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And just like my dad told me not to be happy because the other shoe would drop, you know, I, I got a lot of, a lot of enriching advice as a kid.

It's amazing. I can walk and talk about it.

[00:09:05] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:09:06] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Also, when I was about 20 years old, I found a book in my, at the time boyfriend called ERRONEOUS

ZONES by Wayne Dyer. And it was one of the first books that I understood of its kind. And I just was so interested in what he was sharing. And I was like, oh, this is what I want to do.

And then, of course, I got a degree in accounting and became a public accountant, you know?

[00:09:31] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:09:31] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: As we discussed, it couldn't have been. Not what felt right, but it served a purpose because I grew up poor, and I wanted to get something that was going to afford me to be able to pay and take care of myself and, you know, hopefully, one day my family and it has served that purpose very, very well. And I know how to run a business because of that.

There have been things along the path, breakups. Right. They move from New York to LA for a year. That was so miserable. I was engaged to a guy. It didn't work out, and I hated LA. I can't tell you how much I hated LA. And then, after my dad passed, I wanted to get out of New York.

It was just too much, you know; I thought, well, what about LA? And I went back there. I wouldn't have gone there. Had I didn't go there for that year. And then I spent 15 years of my life there and loved it. When my husband and I reconnected 18 years after the first time we dated in college for three months, I broke up with him because I wanted to take over the world, and, you know, I got pretty close to doing that.

Only to realize, like, Oh, I actually would like a partner to share my life with who has all the values that I have, and he popped into my head 18 or so years later. And on our wedding day, when I walked down the aisle, there's a song from Rascal Flats called a broken road, like what you're talking about.

And so, all those things in my life led me to that moment. Had I not dated all those wonderful people up until that point.? I may not have

realized and appreciated how incredible my husband is. Cause I just didn't know at the time when I was in college. I love that story. Yeah. So I love what you're saying.

I also, you know, I've heard this analogy so many times, but it's beneficial. I fly back and forth between New York and LA all the time. And apparently, I'm always off track. Planes are continuously off track, and they're constantly redirecting. And each time I've gotten there just. I also waited tables. And so, I learned how to be of service and how important it is to be grateful for the people providing service.

I have been poor, and I appreciate what it's like to grow up in specific zip codes and not have resources that, you know, I do today. So it's given me a spectrum of experiences and opportunities so that I can get to show up in the world to be the person I am. I feel as comfortable talking with someone at a bus stop as I do with the board chairman because I've been all those people.

[00:12:18] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:12:19] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: So I love what you're saying, and it could look like a straight line for me too. And it is not.

When I was 10, I was at King Col in Queens, carrying packages offering to get tips, right? It has not been a straight line. And I guess the truth is I'm grateful for all of it. I may not have liked some of it at the time.

And I also love this thought that nothing's wrong, right? In each moment, nothing's wrong. Because when I get into much trouble in my head, there's something wrong with what's happening. And then I just spin, you know, the direction that I look. That's what I find. So if I'm looking for what's wrong in a situation, I'm going to gather a ton of evidence about what's wrong instead of being in the case and seeing, oh, what's, what's on offer here for me.

[00:13:02] Barb Patterson: Yeah. And I think it's like when we look in hindsight; it's why, you know, people will say, oh, I get why that didn't work out. Or I get why it took the amount of time it took. And I think it's like if we could bring that hindsight to the right into the here and now, and it's like, yeah, in school, I. I didn't thrive, but I succeeded in so many other ways during the college experience with friendships, my growth, and my personal growth with the people I got to meet and be connected to.

So again, it's just interesting how we will come amid things often. Under appreciate what. It's bringing us and over appreciate what it's not getting us. . Yes. Yes. And I think realizing that some things that could look off course or path off track show us more of who we are. Show us more of what matters to us. Wake us up, maybe just something new and fresh. And I think there's so much opportunity and possibility in that direction.

But I like what you're saying; so much of that internal suffering or self-doubt question comes because we assume there's a problem to be solved. And so what if there isn't, what if there isn't a problem with where you are and how it's going?

What if it's going down perfectly at the ideal pace?

[00:14:26] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Yeah, I think there's real power in that. If I believe what's going down is what's supposed to be going down and perfect, I become grateful perhaps for what I have and find the good. And it's also a place of power because I get to choose.

If I'm in this place of gratitude and acceptance for what is, I am not in a position of desperation or neediness to change. And there, for me, there's no power in that needing to make a change because something's wrong. Right? I'm usually going to make a harsh decision. One that, and by the way, I have done this many times

Instead of pausing, you are being grateful for what is, and then having some elevation from the situation to see from higher ground. That's

what is helpful for me to know at the moment, you know, I have a friend Stephanie, she's like, you're always in the middle of a miracle. Sometimes I want to punch her in the nose when she says that, because you know, things look hard or, you know, a situation is tricky, but what she's telling me is that on the other side, there's always wisdom to your point when you look back.

Right. Be like, aha. I am so having trust at the moment at this moment that we will have that hindsight.

[00:15:36] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:15:37] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: it's helpful for me to know.

[00:15:38] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Yeah. And what if we just drop the idea that it's linear?

[00:15:43] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm mm-hmm.

[00:15:44] Barb Patterson: like, you know, life is not linear,

[00:15:47] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Right.

[00:15:47] Barb Patterson: That's an illusion. That's a trick of the mind, you know, it's not. Everyone can look at their life and see it.

We just recognize that it's a crooked path, and that's more than okay. It's full of richness, life, messiness, and all life has to offer us.

[00:16:05] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Mm Hmm. I love it. It's not linear. It's a crooked path.

[00:16:10] Barb Patterson: Yeah.

[00:16:11] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: We will get wherever we need to. Just like that plane goes from New York to LA. We're going to arrive. It might not be precisely the time we thought, but we will get there.

[00:16:20] Barb Patterson: Yeah, that's right.

[00:16:21] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: And enjoy the ride. Enjoy the snacks.

[00:16:24] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Yeah.

[00:16:24] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Enjoy all of that.

[00:16:26] Barb Patterson: Yeah. Thanks so much for tuning in and hanging out with us. We're so grateful for your presence. And if you know anyone who would benefit from this conversation, please share; we appreciate your rates and reviews on Apple Podcast or Spotify.

And if you have something on your mind, something you're seeing for yourself that you'd like to share. Or something you'd like us to talk about. You can email us at realwomenreallivespodcast@gmail.com and let us know.

Thank you, everybody. Have a great rest of your day.

[00:17:11] Melissa Palazzo-Hart: Lots of love.