

Episode 33 – Picking Your Battles
Barb Knows Best
Transcripts

Michelle Maros: [00:00:13] Hello, everyone. Hi friends welcome back to Barb knows best the podcast it is I Michelle Maros. Here with Barbara and it is a beautiful day to be alive.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:29] It sure is. Hi! Hi everyone.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:30] Ain't that right? It sure is mother.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:32] It sure is. Every opportunity that we get to be in conversation together and sharing with the rest of the world is a beautiful thing. Very grateful.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:42] Ain't that the truth.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:44] So much.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:45] How's it going today, Mom?

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:47] It's going well. As I said, it's really a blessing when one life seems really difficult and hard. Showing up for this conversation is the silver lining, or is the bright sun and a otherwise possibly cloudy day now? It's really good things.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:01] Very funny because we generally speaking, record this at the end of the week and depending on what's been happening in that week, we get to the end of the week and we're like, Oh! What are we going to say? What are we going to do? Our brains are just tapped out. And I feel like this was one of those weeks. Well, also, we're in when we're recording this, we're in Mercury Retrograde. And, you know, if you don't know what that is or you don't subscribe to that, I don't I don't blame life happenings on mercury in retrograde, but certainly. Things have been trickier than usual and technology has been falling through the cracks. And it's just like, all right, I need a break.

Barb Schmidt: [00:01:46] And you're right. We do record on Fridays at the end of the week. So it's always a nice way to close out the week and go into the weekend relaxed and refreshed. But you're right, I don't you know, you're right. I don't know if it's Mercury retrograde, retrograde or what it is. Everyone in my sphere and in my orbit has said this has been the longest week on the planet, and that's how I feel. I don't know. You're right. Technology's been really wonky this week, but for me, mostly it feels like this has been a month rolled into one week.

Michelle Maros: [00:02:17] A month week!

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:17] Yeah, a month week. It's just really felt like by Wednesday I was thinking it was going to be Friday or whatever it was so.

Michelle Maros: [00:02:24] Truly.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:25] Yeah. So this is a really this is a really fun topic that we're going to talk about. And I think what's so cool about our podcast, if I could just plug you a little bit, Michelle.

Michelle Maros: [00:02:33] Oh.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:34] We don't have anything we don't want to say we don't plan because of course we plan, but we are always we are always energetically in with what's happening with us in the moment or what's happening with us in the week or at any given time in our relationship or in our individual or collective lives. And I think that really makes it makes it a little bit more challenging because we kind of show up and start talking about what we feel is up. But it's also pretty wonderful because it truly is a conversation that you and I have with each other regularly. But it's also now a conversation that we have with the world, which is what makes this podcast so special for me.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:08] Amen. Sister Barb.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:09] Yes

Michelle Maros: [00:03:10] We're very malleable. And so.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:15] We're not rigid. We're very malleable and we're not rigid, but we do have strong boundaries.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:21] Did I make you laugh?

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:21] You did. It was good. It was good.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:23] I love that.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:23] Me, too.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:24] So today.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:26] It finally is Friday.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:27] You know? Yeah. Tgif. Well, sorry if you're not if you're listening to this on a day that's not Friday, apologies.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:32] It is end of the week.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:33] Anyways. You know, you can choose the mindset of whatever day you want to be in.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:37] That's right.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:38] So usually we always say write in and request topics. And that might have seemed like just a fluffy way to end the podcast. But we actually had a few of you reach out about this particular topic and we figured, let's actually live up to our words and answer or not answer. Do do some episodes on the topics that you want to hear about because that's the whole point.

Barb Schmidt: [00:04:06] So and the cool thing about it is it's what's been up for me, especially this week, and I'll give the example further along into this episode it my personal example but yeah, first it's been up so it must be in.

Michelle Maros: [00:04:19] It is very magical how the things that you all request and the topics that are up for you usually are up for us and probably up for many other listeners, and that's what makes us feel so aligned. So today and the request was we wanted to talk about. How to and what it means to pick your battles and how to decide what's worth fighting for and what's worth letting go, and essentially how to have that level of discernment. And what that all means and what that looks like in our lives. And I think this this topic was so timely for both of us and just so important because. We are always being tested and difficult situations are constantly being put in our faces and people are going to test our patience and our push, our buttons. And like my mom messing with her computer and making those noises.

Barb Schmidt: [00:05:31] Oh, because I forgot to turn it off. So I was just trying to figure out I was getting anxious. I thought, how do I turn this darn thing off? Got it.

Michelle Maros: [00:05:36] We're good. Mercury Retrograde. Anyways. Life puts a lot of things at us. And if we're constantly reactive and always in that put in fight or flight and choosing fight in every single instance that will lead us to feeling burned out and overwhelmed and drained and probably struggling in relationships. And. Everything in between and I wanted to talk about it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:06:10] Good. And me, too.

Michelle Maros: [00:06:11] And so did many of you. Yeah. So we want to talk about picking your battles, choosing your battles and how do you decide? How do you know what's worth letting go? What's worth fighting for? And the thing that came up for me immediately when I saw this is a great sort of continuation of a conversation we've had in the past, but also a reminder of boundaries. And also knowing yourself.

Barb Schmidt: [00:06:42] And knowing what you value and what matters most to you.

Michelle Maros: [00:06:44] Knowing what you value. And then, of course, honoring yourself, speaking up for yourself and also self care. So all of our favorite things built into one. And so I'm excited about this conversation.

Barb Schmidt: [00:07:03] Yes, me too. Because it it truly does for why it came up for me so much. When you read the the request by so many people was that wow. I really do sometimes get dragged into conversations just because it's a habit or just because I feel like I need to use my voice or I got triggered in somehow and I'll talk about that example later. But it is truly the whole thing about awareness is key. It really made me aware this week in particular of how often lately with all the the drama and trauma and change that's happening in my life, how often lately I get dragged into just about every single I don't want to use the word fight, but every single obstacle or every single confrontation or every single question or just everything. And I'm commenting on everything and I'm dragging myself into things that I don't really need to be dragged into. And I don't necessarily have to have my opinion shared, nor do I really want to, if I think about it. But there's been a habitual thing inside of me lately, and I think it got triggered by a certain incident that happened that we'll talk about. But it's just it's always fascinating to me, Michelle, because we talk about this so much about awareness being key and just you bringing that up to me that this was a topic that many people had requested, I thought, wow, that is really up for me.

Michelle Maros: [00:08:31] Definitely. And something that I picked up on as you were just talking is the word trigger. You were triggered and things triggered you. And that does seem to be the root of this conversation is how do we manage our triggers? You know, life is constantly triggering us and we all have different triggers. And that's what's interesting, too, and I think in this conversation is what might trigger you or bring up a strong feeling or reaction in you. I might not even give a second thought to and I think that's also part of part of this conversation with people is like getting to a point where you're not reacting, but then communicating, look, that might not have been a big deal to you, but for me it felt like this and that's why it was such a big deal. But triggers are big. And I think, you know, you hear that word talked about all the time, like, are you triggered? What is the trigger? And do we even really know what what like what triggers us? If someone were to say, what are your triggers? It's a weird word when you say it over and over and over again, do you even know? Because again, like you were saying, awareness is key. And so if you if you know the things that will make you feel that reaction. You

can start to prepare for those reactions. And, you know, when you're in certain periods of high stress or drama or trauma, like you were saying, you're also on high alert. It's like you're already in that fight or flight and it's like you're just almost waiting for that one thing to set you off.

Barb Schmidt: [00:10:07] Well, and I think, too, Michelle, that's why this conversation is so important in connection with boundaries, because as I thought back on what triggered me into jumping into basically the lion's cage, if I think about it.

Michelle Maros: [00:10:23] Yeah you did say I went into the lion den.

Barb Schmidt: [00:10:25] I went into the lion's den. So basically what triggered me was me not enforcing my boundaries or me not saying, wait a minute, do I actually want to make this telephone call? Because I have a boundary here, but now you are going to cross the boundary. Barbara So do you want to make the call? It's okay if you change your mind with your boundary and make the call, but just really understand why you made the boundary to begin with and what some of the consequences could be. And I think this is what you're referring to in talking about where we need to get into great detail about is how do we become aware of what our triggers are and we can set the boundaries then, which is what I have done in this instance. But I crossed the boundary without even questioning myself first. So it's very interesting to think about all the things that you've just said wrapped up into the idea of how do we know what triggers us? And then once we become aware of what triggers us and what's happening for us, then we set the boundary. And then once we set the boundary. It truly is necessary to take that space between pause and response. I mean, between stimulus and stimulus and response, we take the pause and I didn't take the pause.

Michelle Maros: [00:11:37] Well, it's funny because, you know, listening to you talk. I think to very many of us, you know, when I can,... Rolling it back. When I think of instances for myself, because I think it's always more powerful to speak from your own experience, like you're speaking about jumping into the lion's den this week. When I've thought about instances where I've leapt into my own lion's den, it's like, you know, in your deep inside yourself that it's not going to give you any sort of outcome that you're looking for. It's going to bring up a lot of pain and trauma and suffering. It's likely not going to be a healthy conversation. And yet, like you said, we bypass our boundaries or we bypass that knowing that it's it's not healthy and do it

anyways. And it's like. I think when we bypass that response, it's like we're addicted to chaos. And I often call you the chaos junkie because it's like, you know, we know it's going to be chaotic. But like, if you're someone that's grown up in chaos, like you've talked about in your childhood and I've talked about in my childhood or whatever, chaos is comfortable for you.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:53] So you're like, let's add on this layer of chaos. And you know, in researching a little bit, because I've talked a lot with my therapist in my life, but also in my relationship with you. And this is not any diss to you. Oh, no. About calling you lovingly the chaos stuff junkie. You know what that means. And so often we'll talk about just that. When you're addicted to chaos, it's a distraction because whatever is happening is so painful. And so you want to ruffle it up because when the water settles, you have to deal with the muck that's in the water. Lots of analogies. I don't even know if they fit, but a lot of us do that too. I think in going back to the main topic of choosing your battles, some of us want to just fight because the the silence or the subtle, you know, the the baseline of just what's underneath is less comfortable than the chaos of a fight.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:58] And I couldn't agree with you more. I would have to say that is one of the things in chaos. If people are addicted to chaos, I would I would like to expand upon that, that I wouldn't say that I'm addicted to chaos because I like the turmoil. It is the habitual it is the habitual way that I respond from my childhood all the way up until 65 years old today. So what I would say about myself is when I get triggered, I am the fixer. We talked about this in the last episode. And so this is what is unraveled for me over the course of this. This week long having had jumped into the lion's den, I started to really become aware because this is what this podcast is for. We are sharing with you our journeys and our experiences, and I really am excited about sharing this with all of you because I became even more deeply aware of how much how triggering it is for me to cross my own boundary because the little thought in the mind might say to me, Hey, we could maybe fix this this time, or it'll be different this time, or you have the power here, you could actually do something different. When I've spent a lifetime knowing that I don't. You know, trying to control something that I have no control over, it's that whole idea of being able to the definition of insanity, doing the same thing over and over and over, expecting a different result. So in this instance, and I think in most instances I'm not crazy about the turmoil and the trauma of it that I create having invited the chaos in, because I always learned something from it. But what I really became aware of this week is that I truly

have this crazy idea in my head that I could actually fix it this time or this time, I'm going to jump into that. Well, I didn't think I was jumping in the lion's den. That was after the fact that I.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:53] Didn't think you could have the conversation that you needed to have in a very easy breezy, like things are different even though nothing is different.

Barb Schmidt: [00:16:01] Exactly. Beautifully said. I thought, okay, oh, this time it will be absolutely different. Not only was it not different, it was worse. And so that. And then so maybe I should share it now. Or do we have another place where we want to we want to settle? And I'm just thinking.

Michelle Maros: [00:16:16] Well, just I think that this conversation is so interesting because, of course you don't. And I'm just speaking to you because it's easier that way. But of course, you don't want to choose chaos. I don't think anyone wants to ruffle things up for the sake of doing it, but I think it is a reaction to being triggered. Definitely to go back to the trigger conversation and triggers are built up because of long periods of time of trauma and drama and chaos. And the more we can start to understand our triggers, the less we can be in that addiction of chaos. And I wanted to just, you know.

Barb Schmidt: [00:17:13] Something came to me that I have to share because you're so right. And that idea that it could be different this time or being triggered. I remember reading something a while ago that said most of our success, meaning let's say we're talking about relationships right now, most of our success, let's just say in a relationship and I know this to be true from my meditation practice for all these years, is staying calm, is not losing your nerve or losing your cool or being triggered. So in this situation, I'm thinking, okay, if I can just stay calm, I'm in a great place, I won't get triggered. And the rest you can actually figure out along the way as you're having the conversation. This is this is was my mindset or this is what I believe to be true. But when you step in and cross your boundary in a situation that it cannot be that way. You lose your calm, you lose your nerve, you get triggered instantly. I was instantly triggered in this conversation. It didn't take like a nanosecond for me to get triggered, so there was no possible way for me not to lose my calmness or not to lose my. What do you want to call it? Energy. And so literally during the whole conversation, I literally started to fall apart. I could feel myself actually falling apart and I could feel myself literally being this 12 year old girl again.

Barb Schmidt: [00:18:31] Falling apart in a conversation and being so. So beat up, not beat up, but just the words were so, so intrusive and so cruel that I left that conversation feeling like, Wow. What is wrong with you, Barb? What is what? What is wrong? It was it was the most mind blowing stuff. And you start blaming yourself. So that was why I wanted to share that. What happens when you cross your boundary, what happens when you become aware, but then you you get triggered and then you, you think that you can fix it. So this is me speaking, and I think that this will be different this time, as you said. Michelle Well, not only was it not different, it it didn't take more than a second for the whole conversation to implode. So that's why this conversation today, I feel, is so extraordinarily important, because I feel like this happens to so many of us. And if we can truly get it, not that we won't learn it and get it and never do it again, I'm sure I'll step into the lion's den again someday, but I have a different feeling. The layers of the onion of awareness. I have a different level of it. Like, Wow, it took a second for you to fall apart and think less of yourself when you hung up the phone.

Michelle Maros: [00:19:50] Interesting.

Barb Schmidt: [00:19:51] Yeah. So sorry. I don't know where you were going to go with that, but I just wanted to share that piece. It was coming up. That idea that you think it's going to be okay. You took the pause. You think it's going to be okay? You know, you have to stay calm in a relationship conversation, especially one that's that's a long term, 30 year relationship. And you're in the middle of a divorce.

Michelle Maros: [00:20:08] But but there she goes.

Barb Schmidt: [00:20:11] It took one second.

Michelle Maros: [00:20:12] All right. So I appreciate that. And let's get into. The nitty gritty of it. So. Going back to what I was going to say before I was doing some research about triggers, because I don't think maybe some some people have heard the word, but maybe they don't even know what it means. And I think it's kind of been meme-ified as a word of like, oh, are you triggered? Are you triggered like that? It's something that's, you know, makes you weak or less than because things trigger you. And that's such an unfortunate conversation around things

that are really impacting our mental health. But if you don't exactly know what a trigger is, according to the University of North Carolina, a trigger is a stimulus that elicits a reaction. And in the context of mental illness or mental health, a trigger is often used to mean something that brings on or worsens symptoms. So, you know. This happens when people who have a history of trauma or drama or things like that are having all of those symptoms push back in their face, you know, and it's not like all of us want to be triggered by things like that's not we don't like to base our personality traits about people who get triggered by stuff. It's a response that you cannot even control because it's based in your brain chemistry. And there's many different things that can elicit triggers. And of course, they are influenced by our past and by our experiences.

Michelle Maros: [00:21:42] And for example, according to the University of North Carolina, you know, you can have emotional or external triggers which are like senses, sights, sounds, smells, textures, like, you know, even for example, I could hear a song that I used to listen to with my dad when I was a kid in the car, and I can hear it now. And that will trigger that feeling of grief, you know, because that reminds me of him or or smells, you know, someone's perfume or cologne. And internal trigger is a feeling that arise based on past experiences. And they say, here is an example, you know, if you're going to make a doctor's appointment and I've had bad experiences with doctors in the past, you have that internal fear, even if that's not in this particular situation. Of course, there's also trauma triggers which are strong feelings that arise based on trauma. And the example that UN see gives is like, you know, if you hear firecrackers and you're a vet, those loud noises are traumatic and then symptom triggers a physical change can trigger larger mental health issues like what we've been talking about with you. Change in your normal life is a trigger. And it's a lot to take in. So I just wanted to give people because sometimes we don't know and because we've kind of made it such a.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:08] It's a buzzword.

Michelle Maros: [00:23:09] A buzzword and something that we don't think actually has value or really does impact people. It does. Those four different sections are big, big deals in our daily lives. And so many of us have them. And when we talk about them in a way that makes people feel weaker or less than or if you're triggered by something, there's something wrong with you. That's absolutely not true, because these things are a big deal. And they are things that. Impact

us on a daily basis. And I just wanted to give that little I know it's very heady and a little bit nerdy to go into some of these descriptions.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:47] No, I don't think so.

Michelle Maros: [00:23:48] But.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:50] I don't think it is.

Michelle Maros: [00:23:51] It's important. We love to define things and break things down, and I hope that that helps people have a better understanding of triggers so that when you do get triggered, you're not embarrassed or you're not ashamed or you don't be like, Oh my God. Like, what is this? Like, you can say, Oh, I'm being triggered. And that's where the awareness comes in and that's where we're going to keep going into this conversation.

Barb Schmidt: [00:24:10] First of all, I don't think you need to apologize for talking about it because I think it was brilliant. It was necessary and brilliant because unfortunately, in our world today, we tend to overuse words and we use them for everything or we they become words that are just meaningless, or they're words that people use just off the top of their head without even really thinking, well, is this person actually a narcissist or is this is this actually triggering me, whatever it is? So, no, I thought that was brilliant. I think it really helps frame our discussion today and the idea that the trigger that I'm talking about is a lifelong traumatic trigger.

Michelle Maros: [00:24:44] Exactly.

Barb Schmidt: [00:24:44] From my childhood that I had. I don't want to say that I had no control over because where where I had the control was not making the phone call to begin with. See, when you cross your boundary. And that's why I think that that this idea of the whole topic that we're talking about today, you know, when you cross your boundary that you have set in a situation that you know, that you can be triggered. So that's the key to what I feel like is important in this conversation today. I already have been triggered a million times in the past 30 years, so I already know. But I allowed the mind to trick me into thinking this time will be

different. This is important that you do it this time and it will be different. You're okay, Barb. It'll be fine. And so this is the conversation today. How do we recognize the trigger? How do we recognize that this is real? I think that's what you're trying to say, that triggers are real.

Barb Schmidt: [00:25:37] And however society has overused a word, it doesn't matter. We really need to look at words for exactly what they mean and see if it applies for us so that we can actually take action and we can control the things that we can control. So what's important about what I'm sharing is that I gave up my own power in my own control. And I'm such a person that wants to really talk about staying in our power and staying where we can control the things. I gave it up by allowing the mind to say to me, it will be different this time. Barb, make the phone call. It'll be fine. You're good. You're four. You're far along in this. You got this. It's good. And that was not true. It was not only not true, it was one of the one of the worst experiences that I've had. But ultimately, as I've gone through day after day and really, really teasing it out and thinking about, oh, what could I have done differently here? What happened here? Because that's what I do. I want to learn from every experience. And this was another trigger of a traumatic experience. And so what I realized was, you, Barb, you cross your own boundary and you gave up your own control. So it's important. And now here I am, you know, ten days later thinking, you know what? That conversation was really important because now I learned what it is that I needed to learn in this moment of something that I've had to relearn over and over again because we don't actually get it the first time.

Michelle Maros: [00:26:59] We rarely do.

Barb Schmidt: [00:27:00] Often. And so I really learned a deeper layer of what my why my boundary in this particular instance is so important and I need to honor it and why it was important for me to set it in the first place.

Michelle Maros: [00:27:12] Right.

Barb Schmidt: [00:27:13] Especially when a trigger, I just want to add this, especially when to trigger after you're done being triggered and you've done all the things and then you're sitting in your bedroom with remorse or with sadness or with guilt or whatever it is after you've been

triggered. And that happens. And if it spirals down into where you're thinking less of yourself and that you've done something wrong, huge red flag.

Michelle Maros: [00:27:35] Of course. And going back to the main question from one of our lovely listeners is. Feeling that uncontrollable aspect of life where you're just acting from a trigger and then, you know, picking up fights in every single situation when. You can make a different choice, I think, as is the whole point. And I think it's so.

Barb Schmidt: [00:28:10] Which I think is what I just said. I could have made a different choice because you're right. I'm just I'm honoring what you said. That's so perfectly said.

Michelle Maros: [00:28:16] Yes. Thank you. Anyways, so what do you is some of the ways that we can start to. Set boundaries then around things like this.

Barb Schmidt: [00:28:34] Well, I think the awareness, what you were talking about before, understanding what the word trigger means, that's why I thought that was so brilliant, so that you can start to look at the word and what it means. And if you feel like you're being sucked in into drama in the workplace, let's say, or if you're being bullied or.

Michelle Maros: [00:28:52] If you feel like you're a pushover too, or a people pleaser.

Barb Schmidt: [00:28:53] Yes, it's all of it. Or people emotionally dumping on you, I think I think you've talked about that before where people you're you're such a great listener and you're very empathetic and very sensitive person. So people like to share stuff with you a lot or any of those things. It's really all of it. It's becoming aware of where you get triggered. I think it's you and I had this conversation, too, and I loved it a while ago when we were talking about what matters most to us. Like what matters most to you, what matters most to me, what's the most important thing? So I think knowing what matters to you, but also knowing what you can and can't control and setting the boundary of, okay, I can't control this, so I'm not going to step my foot in this conversation anymore. Or if somebody is having a conversation with me about ordering something online or whatever, do I really need to be in that conversation most of the time? No, no. So it's really I think when you get triggered, like I was, I want to control everything now. I was so out of control in that conversation. Now everything. I want a control.

So I don't know if that's where you were thinking, Michelle, but I think it's what you started the conversation perfectly with the definition of the word trigger.

Michelle Maros: [00:30:09] Yeah. And so just like with so many things that we've talked about in many, many episodes here, really the first way to start to disengage from that constant habit of being triggered and getting into the fight or flight and then reacting so quickly into always needing to engage in every single situation that brings up that, you know, adrenaline of drama is to, of course, have awareness, like you were saying, and that we've said so many times, you know. When I think when I read this question from the listener of of how do I start to choose how to choose my battles? That awareness, of course, of knowing that like I can't keep having every single fight was so big, but then starting to notice, like, how do you feel? In these interactions with people, you know, because some some battles are worth fighting for. Of course. So, you know, having that awareness of like, okay, this is something that really matters to me, but maybe this is less so. This is a conversation I need to be involved in. But, you know, like you said, I don't need to be involved in something like that. Buying something online, whatever. Having that awareness first with the baseline of relying on that strong foundation that you have within yourself, again, like we've talked about in past episodes. So if you didn't listen to that, you know, go back or refresh of like knowing what you value, knowing what matters to you, knowing what you stand for, you know, knowing what is a hard line for you. And again, we'll go into this, too, with the boundaries. But like when you know what matters to you and what doesn't. You can then set up. You know, guidelines for your life to live within in those boundaries and.

Michelle Maros: [00:32:10] I think if we don't take the time to actually reflect on what matters to us, we will become very reactive because there are things happening to us all day long and. Just like with everything else, I think too, it becomes a practice where. You know, you have to recognize the trigger in the moment. Take a breath. Have that space between the the situation and your response and say, okay, this is something that I would usually leap into. You know, what immediately came to my mind is like I get very triggered by like road rage and people honking their horns and like, I want to, you know, whatever. Flip someone off if they do something crazy. I don't need to do that. That's not a battle I need to be fighting because people's emotions are on high alert these days, especially on the road. And so lately, for me, when I'm in the car and I'm behind someone and, you know, the light turns green and they

don't go right away. And I'm sitting there and it's a, you know, a left turn light. And if they don't go, you know, we're not going to make it. And, you know, my immediate instinct would be to just honk my horn and be like, come on, you are so inconsiderate. Go. I just take a moment and I don't go into that reactive place because I can feel when I honk on the horn and I'm like, Oh, that person is just such a jerk. I get amped up. And so that for me is like something that I'm working on as a different instance. I don't need to fight that battle.

Barb Schmidt: [00:33:55] And I think what's so beautiful about that example is in one of your blogs, you talk about protection of what's precious. Which really just came up for me when you were talking about that in your blog, it was like, what do you value? Your energy, your well-being, your loved ones, your inner peace? And it's so amazing that. You value greatly your patients because you're a very patient person, your inner peace, your energy, you value all that. So for you to get triggered by road rage is really up for you if that happens. Because you don't, you're you're giving away your energy. You're giving away your inner peace, you're giving away your well being and you're allowing yourself to get triggered like that. And I think it was a perfect Segway or a perfect lead in for what I've been talking about, just to give another added layer to it. Maybe, as you always say, could we go back for a second? What happened in this instance when I jumped into the lion's den was I was just going to call him up just to ask him if he would please not do something, because it was something that he had said that he wouldn't do. And that's all I said. Could you please not do whatever?

Michelle Maros: [00:34:56] So, yeah, can we just set that up? So the situation was for you. You made a phone call. You were there was a situation at hand that you needed to address.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:04] Yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:05] It was something that you needed to set a boundary for something. Your boundary.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:09] It was an agreement that got broken.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:10] Yes. Your boundaries were being crossed.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:12] Right. It was agreement that was made between us.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:13] You needed to vocalize the situation. So you decided to make a phone call to the person who had crossed the boundaries as a way to try to amend the situation.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:23] Yes. And the person said.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:25] That was jumping into the lion's den.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:26] I was jumping into the lion's den because he basically said, no, I can't do that. I can't do that.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:32] And kind of made you feel a little crazy for even asking.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:35] Right? How could you even ask me that? And so instead of me saying, okay, because I know that, you know, I'm not in charge, I can't control it. And me taking whatever action I could take after getting off the phone based on his answer. I went into this whole idea and mindset of, Wait, If you hear my whole story, you will change your answer. And so that's why I wanted to lay that out. I'm glad that you went step by step, because that's I think, what we do sometimes when we get caught in these really, really heavy duty relationships, thinking why this was so crazy and so triggering was thinking that I had had any control over him changing his answers. So truly, had this gone as I thought it might, if it were a relationship where things usually go in a smooth way, which they do not so.

Michelle Maros: [00:36:29] A healthy relationship.

Barb Schmidt: [00:36:30] A healthy relationship. I would have said it. He would have said okay and we'd have been done. So I think why I'm doing all of this is it goes back to what you were saying is we can't... We need to know what it is that we can't control. I think then that's the idea of protect. So I need to know what do I value and what is precious to me. That's why I went to your the blog that you'd written recently. And what's precious to me is my energy, my inner peace, my love for my life, the way that I'm choosing to be in charge and controlling and

loving my life in the ways that I can. So I have to. I could have honored that boundary that I had already set and had that protective barrier. I think that you've talked about in protecting the precious valuables in my life. And the precious valuables are, of course, my loving, caring, great relationships, my inner peace, my calm, my sense of knowing what I can and can't control. Those are all valuable things to me. So I just went to that idea of the protection because then I don't need someone else's permission to choose differently. You know what I'm saying? Because I think if we don't know, what you say this also in the blog, if you don't know what we stand for, if what our boundaries are for, and if we actually don't know what we truly matters to us and doesn't matter, then we jump in as this person said, how do we decide what battles we're going to choose? We jump into everything.

Barb Schmidt: [00:38:00] We fall for everything if we don't know what we stand for. So I don't know if this made any sense, but it really was coming up for me when you were talking about how your road rage that we can. We can fall for anything. Yeah. And that's what the, the listeners that we're sending in the request for this topic. So how do we choose our battles? We choose our battles by knowing which you started this really this I think this conversation up with what is important, what is our deepest sense of self, what's important to us, what do we care about? And had I taken the pause even deeper and thought about, by making this phone call, I could be losing my sense of calm, my integrity in terms of what I value most in my life. And it could turn into a real a real deep dive into all of the triggers and all the traumas that I've been feeling for all these years, which is exactly what happened.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:59] Of course, and.

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:02] And losing my sense of confidence and the fact that I do care about myself deeply. It kind of all got eroded. So you unpack all that, sweetheart?

Michelle Maros: [00:39:12] Well, because you are engaging with someone who doesn't. Deserve to even be in your sphere and your energy. And so you are putting yourself back in the chaos. And, you know, I think if hindsight were 2020 and going back, I don't think you would have made the phone call.

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:31] Can I stop you? What you just said is perfect answer for this. The the listeners that were coming in requesting this topic, who is deserving? Maybe that's the first step or maybe that's the first way. Who is deserving,

Michelle Maros: [00:39:44] Right.

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:44] Of your energy and your presence.

Michelle Maros: [00:39:46] Well, I think that that comes from knowing yourself and knowing what you will and will not tolerate and knowing how you feel and and noticing how certain people make you feel in certain situations and noticing, you know, when I go to to talk to someone about things that matter to me, how do they react? Are they defensive? Do they make me feel small? Do they push me, put me down because I'm expressing my needs? Those kinds of people are probably not your people. You know, how how does it feel when I stand up for myself in certain situations? And what are people's reactions? It's really about starting to notice. Do people push back? You know, one of the aspects of this question was sometimes I feel like a pushover. You know, when you say something, do people push back and make you feel like you can't have those boundaries or those needs because their needs are more than yours? You know, all of these things are aspects of life to be aware of because of course, like we say so often, life is a laboratory and every situation in every instance, in every day and every interaction with people, we're constantly learning things and relationships are not like we're not born into life knowing how to deal with relationships and dealing with different people's neuroses, basically. And so each instance, you know, you take a temperature check of like, wow, how did I feel? What was my reaction to this person? How did they react to me? How do I feel based on their reactions and and starting to kind of keep a mental note or even this is a great aspect of life to start journaling about these feelings because for a lot of us, it's helpful to have it on paper so you can see it.

Michelle Maros: [00:41:35] Wow, I set a boundary with this person. This is how react they reacted. They crossed the boundary two weeks later and I still feel small. I need to do something differently or I need to set a harsher boundary. Or maybe this person might not deserve a place in my life, but it's it's not so cut and dry where it's like a one and done and then it's over. And then you never have to deal with this again. Like we say so often, this is a practice

where you build this muscle and start to really get a a really deep sense of. Who you are and what you want and what you won't tolerate. It'll start to feel like second nature. So, you know. Getting that awareness, having that temperature check, I think is always the first step. But then, like we've said, when you know what matters to you, you can start to set a boundary like with you and your instance of making that phone call. You said the boundary is no contact to me. You've said that for months and the boundary was crossed and look where we are. So, you know, you have to know the boundaries because with certain people, especially the ones that trigger you and are committed to misunderstanding you and lean towards being selfish and don't really care about things other than themselves, you know, we can think so much that people are going to react and take things in like we do and they don't.

Michelle Maros: [00:43:10] And you have to remember that you can't change people. You can't do the same things over and over and expect a different result. And you set boundaries for a reason. So knowing the people that do and don't deserve your energy and deserve a spot in your life is really important. And I think that that goes in the same vein of things that aren't aren't worth fighting for or engaging with. So you can set the boundaries with people, you can set the boundaries within yourself. You know, my lesser example of being triggered and traffic. I have to keep myself in check and realize that if I let myself just, you know, run wild with my triggers and, like, literally go off at every single thing that makes me feel amped up, I don't feel good. I get home from driving and I'm like, The world sucks. Everyone's awful people are crazy, traffic is awful. No one cares about. And I go, That's the rabbit hole I fall into. But if I can, you know, keep myself in check and stop myself from the reaction and just literally live in that space between the stimulus and the response, I feel so much better. I don't get home and write a story that like the world is going to hell, basically, because I didn't go off in that way. And for me, that makes a big difference.

Michelle Maros: [00:44:40] So knowing yourself and knowing the boundaries and then long winded answer of the last thing is like you have to be able to come up with a way to craft your communications with people about these boundaries and about the things that matter to you. And I think a huge aspect of difficult conversations, disagreements, arguments, boundaries, you know, levels of respect and confidence. It's all about how we communicate. And so often we react in our communications and say things we don't mean or say things in a tone that isn't what we meant. You know, especially with that, we can text like, I'll get a text in and I'll want to

say something really crazy and it'll come through in a crazy way. You got to take a step back. So really learning how to communicate what you're trying to say and how you're trying to say it is also super important and then also communicating the boundaries to when needed. So it's like it's so many layers, but in my mind it all makes sense, but it's a lot and it's unfortunately, unfortunately, it comes down to us like we have to do these, these things for ourselves because I can't. I can't rely on you. To. To always act in the way that I want you to. I have to do the work within myself and act and take responsibility for myself. And hopefully you will too. And hopefully other people will too. But you know, the real why they say it's the work of doing yourself is we have to do it for ourselves.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:20] I'm clapping my hands. But you can't really hear me because I don't want it to be too loud on this episode. But that was beautifully, beautifully, beautifully said, Michelle. I almost think the episode should end right there. That was so beautifully said. No, because it's everything that you said is truth and it is many layers. And I think no, I believe actually what really touched my heart so much of what you said. But what really stuck out for me was that we have to take every instant and every relationship and every situation moment by moment when it occurs. But then I love the idea of you said then maybe keep a little journal and write down like this relationship. This is what happens. What do I think about that? This relationship, this, this situation, this. So you really start to become the architect of your own life. You really start to create your life becomes a work of art because every every part of it is the creation of this is what's happening in this relationship. So so this is what this is a boundary that I need to set. So it was really I just I cannot say the word beautiful enough because I know it's one of my favorite words, because also what it said to me that I think I know you love the take aways and we love to share with you some simplicity to this because that was so well, well laid out.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:38] It said to me that boundaries are our friend. And so if we're really trying to decide what what situations, what battles do we want to step into and what battles do we want to take a pass? Nope, not for me today. I already know how. I already know how this is going to go. It's not one of my core values. It doesn't really matter that much to me. Thank you. But I'm going to take a pass. So I think it's for me, the simplicity. Of what you just said is that boundaries are the our friend. Boundaries are how we how we are able to be able to know which ones. But to back up, we have to know what our core values are. We have to know what

matters to us. We have to know. And so when you said that about this particular phone call that I made and stepped into the lion's den, it's so true. I said no contact. And so I said I was I said at the beginning of this episode, I crossed my own boundary, so I already knew what the result was going to be.

Barb Schmidt: [00:48:37] So that's how you decide what battles I'm going to step into and which ones I'm not, because I already knew what the end result was going to be. But I chose to think that, oh, my gosh. Well, yeah, chose chaos, chose that the fixer could make it different this time. So I think what I realize in this moment with what you just said, that boundaries are representative of how much respect we have for ourselves, how much we care about ourselves. It really is all about us. You said we must take our own responsibility. And so if we choose to step into a situation that we have a boundary set that we already know, that crosses the line of our core values, we already know that this person doesn't even deserve our energy, let alone anything else that we might be trying to do in this situation. We. The end result for me, I can only speak for me is always going to be low self esteem, low self worth. What is the matter with me? What do I need to fix it myself? Going down the rabbit hole of all of that, I know that when I step into a battle that I know that I have zero control and I have a track record of knowing that it isn't going to end well.

Barb Schmidt: [00:49:50] And I tell my daughter, my boundary is no contact and what do I do? I pick up the telephone thinking that I can resolve the most difficult ask or question that I could have ever asked this person to do so. It was madness. It was true insanity. And what I love about life, no matter how hard it is. And Glennon Doyle always says we can do hard things. What I love is there is always a teaching. And this really, really hit me hard in the past ten days. But the teaching has been profound. And I thank you, Michelle, for being the witness to it all these past ten days, but also to be able to have this platform, to have the conversation, to be able to share with other people. And hopefully this will inspire you or maybe open you up a little bit to seeing parts of relationships or places in your life where you can say that it rings true and be able to start to discern as you started this episode with of where I need to step in and into a battle and where I need to take a pass.

Michelle Maros: [00:50:53] Absolutely. And, you know, we created this podcast with the intention of having you all as if you were in our living room listening to our personal

conversations about life. And I think this episode is really an example of that, because some episodes we feel like we have more like structure and some are more conversational. And this one I really feel like was you and me in my house, you know, talking about these things. So it's really free flowing and and based on a lot of our emotion. And I hope that you all resonate and like that and and feel that from us because. Like we said, a lot of we're going through these things as we talk and it's messy sometimes and it's hard and it's painful and it's all of the things. But I think the vulnerability of it is what makes us all relate. So I appreciate that.

Barb Schmidt: [00:52:00] This was an emotional one. I agree. Because it was....

Michelle Maros: [00:52:03] Because now you're out of the lion's den and and every one of you and me will keep her from going back in.

Barb Schmidt: [00:52:10] And so many things were unfolding in this conversation that hadn't been unfolded before. And I just think it's beautiful because life is messy. I think if we can come with that premise, maybe that's also a premise with how do you choose your battles? Just knowing that life is messy and you may choose. I chose poorly, but it is not a reflection of my own self-worth. And it's not a reflection of my. I guess it's not a reflection of my inability to live my life. You know how sometimes you can go down that whole path of, oh, my gosh, what's the matter with me? I chose this. I knew better. You know better. You can do better. Of course, we we know all those things. But it doesn't mean that we're going to be perfect. And it means that life is messy and we are going to mess up. And so it's okay to mess up. And that's what I love about this conversation that we have and the privilege of being on a platform like this that we can mess up and we can all learn together.

Michelle Maros: [00:53:02] Yeah. And you know, I feel like life is like a bowling alley.

Barb Schmidt: [00:53:09] Box of chocolates.

Michelle Maros: [00:53:10] Well, no, Forrest Gump. Life is like bowling. And, you know, the the little bumper rails that you put in are your boundaries, and you're going to your ball is going to knock around the boundaries. And sometimes the ball is going to go into the gutter and sometimes you're going to miss all of the pins and sometimes you're going to strike out, which

is the totally different metaphor of baseball. But I mean, you have to have your boundaries as your bumper guards, and sometimes you might take an aim or have an intention and the ball is going to go differently. And sometimes you're going to get a strike and sometimes you're going to get nothing. But I think that with each new throw of the bowling ball down the lane is a new opportunity. And I like thinking about it that way. So for all of you who are struggling with with really figuring out where to place your energy, you know, think of what kind of bumper rails are you going to put up in your life to keep you in the center of the lane and then, you know, take that space before your reactions. To decide if that's within your lane. Stay in your lane and just practice that. If nothing else, you know. Really decide maybe a handful of things that you're really going to be committed to and just really practice, you know, this week, next week, let us know. Because I think like with everything, it's a practice and it's not always easy. So go bowling.

Barb Schmidt: [00:54:49] I love that. I love that analogy. I think I will end on and have... I think we've talked about this in other episodes; have a person or a couple of people but have at least one person in your life that you feel you can say everything to or that you feel won't invade you or abandon you or criticize you or judge you or think that they have to fix you or any of the things that you really feel comfortable and that you trust that's really trustworthy. And if you're struggling about, Should I enter the ring of this battle.

Michelle Maros: [00:55:21] New sport...

Barb Schmidt: [00:55:22] Call up that person. Right? Because had I called you up before I made the phone call, had I said...

Michelle Maros: [00:55:29] Or A therapist.

Barb Schmidt: [00:55:30] Or a therapist? But but I think if you've got a trustworthy friend that I just called you and said, Hey, Michelle, I'm going to call and do X, Y or Z, you would have said Mom,

Michelle Maros: [00:55:42] Back the F up

Barb Schmidt: [00:55:42] You would have said that for sure. And then you would have said, Mom, but your boundary, I thought, was no contact. And that may or may not. Who knows if I were to listen to you. It doesn't matter. The point is.

Michelle Maros: [00:55:55] We will save would she have listened to me for a whole other conversation?

Barb Schmidt: [00:55:59] The point is having another person. And then now, as I reflect back on this whole instance and this whole incident, I probably did think about calling you but chose not to because I maybe have known what, that would be the next episode, when you don't reach out to the person that you trust the most or that you know will give you the honest truth. It's not an accident. Just leave it at that. Maybe I thought you would try to stop me, and I didn't want to be stopped.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:27] We could psychoanalyze your thoughts, actions, words, beliefs, mannerisms for the rest of my life.

Barb Schmidt: [00:56:36] I know you love it.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:37] And we might not really ever get to some sort of conclusion. So sure. Next is episode.

Barb Schmidt: [00:56:42] Great conversation.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:43] Thank you. Thank you for once again letting us, you know, dive into your into your life. Our colleague Lauren calls it trauma mining. So thank you for letting us mine in your trauma. It's, uh, it's very helpful for all.

Barb Schmidt: [00:57:00] Happy to be of service.

Michelle Maros: [00:57:04] Thank you for everyone who listens to this podcast regularly and especially for joining us on this wild ride of choosing your battles. As always, we're so grateful for all of you, for all of you who write in for our topics. Again, if you have other topics

you want us to talk on, please make sure you are connected to us. At Peaceful_Barb, at Michelle Maros and at Barb Knows Best Pod. That's always the best way to stay in touch with us. If you haven't yet, make sure you're liked and subscribed to the podcast wherever you listen to podcasts, Apple, Google, Spotify and of course, if you haven't yet and you feel so called because you love this podcast so much, please give us a five star rating and write us a little review because that really helps us. That helps this community grow and it makes us happy. So we love to be happy. So thanks so much again for listening. Thank you, mom, for mining your trauma with us today. And we'll talk to you next week because as we know, Barb knows best.