

Episode 47 – Choosing Peace Amid Drama
Barb Knows Best
Episode Transcripts

Michelle Maros: [00:00:14] Hello, everyone. Hi. Friends of the pod. Welcome back to Barb Knows best. I am Michelle, and I am here with Barb. And it's another day, another week, another riveting conversation with yours truly.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:30] Yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:31] Hello, Mom.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:32] Hello, Michelle. Hello, everyone out there. I'm really looking forward to our conversation today, as always.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:39] As per usual.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:40] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:40] So we are fresh off of a vacay.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:43] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:43] So hopefully we sound a little bright eyed and bushy tailed and chipper and, you know. We went on a Disney cruise, which was not sponsored, but Disney sponsors because we loved it. It was a great time. So highly recommend. You know, if You're looking for some fun in the sun.

Barb Schmidt: [00:01:04] It was a very out of the ordinary thing for us.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:06] We had never done that before and we went with some friends and it was a fantastic experience and the people were lovely and we met some Barb Knows Best listeners along the way, which was also fabulous. But I just wanted to say how fabulous it was and highly recommend. Out of the goodness of my soul.

Barb Schmidt: [00:01:26] Yeah. And I, you know, any time I go on especially a trip like that, I get come back a little bit exhausted. But I have to say this trip in particular, yes I was tired because it is tiring to go on trips like that. But it was very exhilarating because it was so much fun and we enjoyed our good friends that went with us. And it just it was the perfect kind of the perfect way to spend what we spent six days, I think, or five days. It wasn't that long, but it really I came back really feeling refreshed and ready to go.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:58] Yeah. And I think it goes to show because we've talked a lot, you know, we're in the new year now, but we've talked in the past few episodes about holidays and family and difficulty and, you know, all the stuff that we've been going through personally over the past, you know, last year and this year and just. How much it's a lot. And it is usually the case for us to come back from some of these things feeling drained and overwhelmed and kind of agitated and just buried under it. But you're not like that at all. I mean, the day we got back, you were like, you hit the ground running, which is just not usual. And so I think that goes to show what we've been saying for so long that, like, if you're with people who get you and support you and let you be you. It makes a difference in your energy. And I really feel like we've been making a concentrated effort to do that and it's been hard. And that's kind of what we're going to talk about today. But it's fascinating for me to see the outcomes when you actually start to shift it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:07] Yeah, you're not. You're not. I love that, Michelle, because you're not drained. You actually are restored when you're with people. You know, that quote that we've used in the in the episodes previously then that you, you take on the behaviors and the energy of the five people you spend the most time with. So to be five or six days away with two people that, as you just said, they really they don't take our energy. They allow us to be exactly who we are and we allow them to be exactly who they are. And it was a truly magical experience and a wonderful time. So I think that that's really important. And and I just want to say one more thing before we dive into our episode Today is your word for 2023 is fun.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:48] Yeah, it is.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:49] So we kind of set up, you know, we're kind of setting up the new year as we're you know, a week into or two weeks into the 2023 year, we're kind of setting it up with fun.

Michelle Maros: [00:04:00] Yeah, and I love that for me, I love this journey. I feel like it's going to be great. And. Yeah, Disney Cruises is a great way to get into that. So today.

Barb Schmidt: [00:04:18] So let's get into this heavy conversation today. Michelle always says to me, Mom, all the things we talk about are so heavy. And yes, they are. And I'd like to also say they are heavy, but they're also deep. And that's kind of you're getting a bird's eye view into the life that Michelle and I live. When we talk to each other. We are. So, you know, life out there can be very fun and difficult all at the same time.

Michelle Maros: [00:04:44] Fun and difficult.

Barb Schmidt: [00:04:45] So we're trying to really tap into all of the things that come up for us day to day in life and and moment to moment. And so I think we do we do seem to tackle all of the the harder, more difficult, deeper things in life and trying to uncover all the things that we need to learn about ourselves so that we can live our best version of ourselves. So we've got one for you today.

Michelle Maros: [00:05:08] Yeah, it's funny.

Barb Schmidt: [00:05:08] Never fear. We always have something.

Michelle Maros: [00:05:11] It's funny. Our colleague Heather was like, maybe this week something light. And I'm like, Maybe. And then I'm like, Not today. Not today, Heather. But, you know, this week I really. I approached you with this concept of what we're going to dive into, and you were like, How are we what, what do you even mean? So it's it's a little different format than what we usually do. But this quote that I saw a couple of weeks ago has just been brewing in my mind. And I just felt like you and I could unpack this quote in a way that might be helpful because I shared it on my social media and I got so many responses from people who are like, I do this too. I do this too. I do this too. So it made me feel like this is something that's

going to resonate with a lot of you, hopefully. And so we're going to unpack it and hopefully make some sense of it. So the quote is. Please let go of the habit of comforting people after they have harmed you. By Liana Naima.

Barb Schmidt: [00:06:19] It's big and yeah. And just, you know.

Michelle Maros: [00:06:23] Just does a little spice.

Barb Schmidt: [00:06:24] Whenever I say to Michelle, what does that even mean? Usually it means for me, I mean, I know what that quote means, what it means. Oh my gosh, do we really want to go there? Do we really want to unpack this quote? Because this is really huge. And I know for me when she said this quote, when she shared it, I was like, wow, I was one of those people that said, oh, my gosh, that is me. That is I.

Michelle Maros: [00:06:46] Yeah.

Barb Schmidt: [00:06:47] That is what I do.

Michelle Maros: [00:06:49] Because it's been the it's been the epitome of what we've always done. But it's also the thing that we're working so hard at right now and not doing so it was like the duality of it, of like the old habit and the new neural pathway. Coming together, but it's. It's so hard. And. What also was comforting to me is I had not. Heard this quote before. And it felt so comforting to know that there are other people out there who also feel this struggle, like Liana Naima, enough to to say this. Like it made me feel like, wow, I'm not the only one who does this or I'm not the only one who struggles with this. Like it's enough for people to speak out about it in this way. So please let go of the habit of comforting people after they have harmed you. And like for me as a recovering people pleaser, it's like that has been my M.O. to always feel like I need to make everything okay for other people, and even the ones that are harmful or abusive or manipulative. And it's such a bizarre thing to zoom out and see that that's what you do. And like, why so? There's not going to be a lot of structure to this episode, but I just feel like talking about it will be really cool.

Barb Schmidt: [00:08:32] Yeah, there probably be a little bit more structure than you think. I'm sure we'll go along because with all of these episodes we share our own experiences and the reason we're sharing this is because it's so up for us. And one of the things when you read this quote to me, when I saw that you had posted it, that struck me was we did an earlier episode on cycle breaking. And for me, this this hit this is another one of those cycles. One of the you know, she called it a habit. Yes, a habit, a behavior. This is like a familiar thing that I do. It is so much a part of the cycle of my psyche and my life that I think I spoke about this so many times in other episodes. I'm a fixer. And so it's almost like I look at somebody harming me or someone doing especially now we're talking about. So if it's a stranger that harms us, we don't have we're not going to try to fix a stranger. We're not going to try to people please a stranger. If we've got someone who has harmed us that we don't really know and we don't have a relationship with, I think that's a totally different thing. We're talking about people that you love, people that you care about. Family members, close friends, friends, colleagues.

Michelle Maros: [00:09:40] Work.

Barb Schmidt: [00:09:41] Colleagues at work. We're talking about those people that we know and that we have relationships with, that we're in relationship with. And so when I thought about this quote and when I looked at it, I thought, wow, I really do this a lot. My thing is really wanting to fix my almost like rescue sometimes.

Michelle Maros: [00:09:59] Well, didn't you say when we were trying to talking about this, there is that rescuer syndrome.

Barb Schmidt: [00:10:05] I remember when I was in treatment, one of one of the things my therapist said to me, she said you know, you are a fixer, Barb. And when you think about being a rescuer, it's almost like if you grew up in a dysfunctional family. I grew up in a family with two alcoholic parents with very little money, a lot of trauma, a lot of hardships. So if you start your life as a young person like that. This idea of being a rescuer kind of fits the bill. That's kind of what I was trying to fix my parents. I was trying to fix life. I was trying to fix me. I was trying to fix others. I was trying to rescue. I was trying to help people. There's almost a part of me sometimes that could intuitively see what that person needed to do or not do so that they could be okay. And all of this. What's so important about all of this when when my therapist,

Joyce, was I was going through treatment, she said 99.999% of the time you're doing it at your own expense. You're doing it at your own mental and physical wellness. And so I remember I remember her saying that I didn't I guess I didn't quite get it. I was only 28 years old at the time.

Barb Schmidt: [00:11:16] Right now I really do get it because when I look at what my behavior is like today, when I'm trying to fix or rescue or enable because a lot of times then I then I go right to denial, I deny that I'm trying to fix or enable. I'm thinking, this is what I have, this is what has to be done. It's the right thing to do. It's the kind thing to do. And it's so it's so bizarre to me, to use your word, bizarre today, Michel. It's so bizarre to me to think that how we can our mind can trick us into making all these things okay. Like this is... Nothing's wrong with this. And that's why it hit me when you said this, quote, It's a cycle that has to be broken. And I feel like if we can break the cycle well, I can break the cycle. Then maybe you can break the cycle. And then your children or people that come after you, we could actually break the cycle in in our generational lineage here. This would be a major thing because this is a big deal and I think it's a little bit insidious. We don't quite.... We're not really quite aware of it. I think that's why that quote was such a shock.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:14] Yeah, well, what I was thinking about when I was processing it is it seems like there's two kinds of people. Britney Spears just went through my mind with her song. If you know, you know. There's two kinds of people in the world. There's the ones that are the harmful ones. And I mean, I know it's not great to just like label everybody, but in this situation, there's the ones that harm and manipulate and all of those things and there's the ones that don't. And what's interesting about this quote is that you have someone that's doing something harmful or. Abusive or disappointing or whatever it might be. And rather than letting that person sit in the space of consequence or responsibility or just the awkward silence, you are going to jump in and overcorrect for them to try to bring the situation back into some sort of state of balance so that you feel like everyone can be, "okay". And leaving the person that's done the harmful act off the hook and thinking that they can just continue. And maybe and you and I were talking about this. Not even aware that they even did something wrong because it's just normal behavior for them. And. You and I have been doing that for forever. I mean, we're in a situation right now that's we're kind of sitting in this awkward space of silence because.

Michelle Maros: [00:14:01] Some people who are very close to us did act in a harmful way and we're really working to not be the fixer. But we've noticed that like you're in this purgatory of silence. And it's so, so awkward. And it's, you know, even before we came to record this episode, you were like, you know, if you want to text them, go ahead. I'm like, Well, no, like at this point, that is, you know, it's like you're getting the more you go, the more uncomfortable it feels. And you like you kind of want a knee jerk into fixing. And it's like, no, I have to not scratch that itch and let the awkwardness ride out. But it's so hard not to just jump into that fixer comforting, you know? Everything's fine what you did. We're good, You know, You didn't do anything wrong. You didn't say anything hurtful. Like, you're great. I love you. And that's just not true. But holding someone's feet to the fire with their bad behavior is so hard because then you feel like you're the problem or like that you're the harmful one. And it's such a mind trick because it's like. Somehow the victim feels like they become the abuser. You know what I mean? Like you're made to think that you're the problem. Does that make sense.

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:33] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:34] It's just like a tangled web.

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:37] It is. And just to back up just for a second, the reason I said to you, if you want to text them, go ahead, is, you know, we're two separate people. We're in the same situation. And we were both in this in this hurtful conversation, but we're two separate people. So I always want to, I always say to you, you know, please.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:54] I know. And I appreciate that.

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:54] I know you do. And that's why I just wanted to clarify that for the for the people listening, that I have my own opinions about what she should and shouldn't do, like we always do with other people. But at the end of the day, Michelle has to do what is right for her. And I wanted to let her know that I have no judgment and no opinion about it because I'm doing what's right for me. And so I think with what you just got done saying, Michelle, for me what's been happening is looking back on all of the patterns, you know, and all of you know, I've talked about that I'm in the process of a divorce, 30 plus year marriage. And looking back on all of the patterns, not only within the marriage, but then how people, friends, family

members are acting since this whole announcement of going through this divorce. It's really fascinating to see how much I want to fix and how much and not how much You're using the word awkward. I use the word uncomfortable. It is so uncomfortable for me. And so I've really been digging deep into what is so uncomfortable. And it's been so meaningful for me to do this because what is so uncomfortable is fear. Fear of the unknown. Okay, now, what's going to happen next? I don't know. I don't. What I realize is I don't know how to live this way, but this is how I want to live because I don't want to be pretending. I don't want to be fake. I don't want to be not me anymore. I don't want.

Michelle Maros: [00:17:19] It's not in alignment.

Barb Schmidt: [00:17:20] I don't want to show up, you know, I don't want to show up in a text message or call and say, Hey, hi, how are you doing? Because that's what was sent back to a text was sent to us like, Hey, how are you guys doing? Can't wait to see you, blah, blah, blah. I'm like, Wait, what? We just had an explosion of of craziness and then like, two weeks later, Hey, how are you doing? We can't wait to see you. So I just don't want to live that way anymore. I've made the decision that I'm not going to live that way anymore, so that's really, really, really uncomfortable. But what I've determined and what I've really decided for myself, which is the conversation we had, is I'm going to live with the uncomfortable feeling. I'm going to live with feeling like a fish out of water, kind of, so to speak. I guess I'm going to live with this idea that this is really, really, really uncomfortable. But I am no longer going to be okay with people that I love dearly and deeply and care so much about and have been in relationship with for so many decades.

Barb Schmidt: [00:18:19] I'm no longer going to be okay with unacceptable behavior and treatment of me or of a situation where there is no acknowledgment of where I might be coming from or my pain or suffering. And so I think that that's why it's so uncomfortable, because I'm not used to doing this. I'm not used to living in complete alignment. I don't wish them ill will. I don't want to hurt them. I don't want to punish them. I just want to be in alignment with who I am and not be feeling like a victim. You use that word feeling like a victim anymore and feeling like, Oh my gosh, I got to fix this because this feels so uncomfortable. And what are they going to think of me and why I don't want to lose this relationship. I really, truly love them so deeply. But you know what? It's not okay to love someone deeply and accept the

hurt that they impose upon without any regard for the behavior. And I think that text message that they sent us. Hi, how are you guys doing? Going to be there for for a week? Can't wait to see you was like, what?

Michelle Maros: [00:19:27] I think because it's it's just not the truth. And I think for you and for me, it's. In a situation where someone like this quote says harms you and you comfort them, you're not living in the truth of the situation and you're not living in the acknowledgment that that even happened and in the specific situation that we're talking about. How do you live in a false sense of reality where something happened? It gets bypassed and then you're expected to just pick up, you know. Where you left off, so to speak. And I think that happens all the time with people who like to fix things. Something happens. And that's why I said the two kinds of people, because these people, you and I were talking, do they even know that they've done something wrong? Do they? Have they ever acknowledged when something that they might have done has been wrong? And it's like, are they capable of even knowing when they've done something wrong? And I think I don't know. I don't know, but. If we were to smooth things over and act as everything was normal, then that would just continue to perpetuate. And then we would be pushing down our own feelings where it would build up, build up. And I could just see both of us like exploding in some sort of rage down the road.

Barb Schmidt: [00:20:51] For sure it comes outside. It has to come outside. Anger, not acknowledging what is happening when you're hurt or abused or neglected or harmed. If you not acknowledging it, it it it it lives in the body. The body never lies. It lives in the body. So it comes out somewhere. And I know for me, all the years in my childhood, it came out in the form of bulimia. So it comes out somewhere in rage, road rage, or whatever it is. And I think, Michelle, what you were saying was so perfectly said, because for me, when you ask the question. What happens when we don't speak up or when we're when we just have to bury it and then we have to just pretend, Oh, we're good. We're good. Oh, yeah, we're we're we're all family. So it's we're good. We can't really speak up because I don't know how they're feeling. I just know what was dumped on us and the harm and the hurtful behavior that happened to us during that episode. So for me, when you were saying that is how I've been coping with it for I'm 66 years old, so what is an infant? So for for decades and decades and decades, I mean, for for most of my life, the way I cope with it is denial.

Barb Schmidt: [00:22:04] I go into denial. I don't. So if we're not if I'm not willing to deal with it and I'm not there, not, you know, whatever the whole scenario is with the other people with inside the relationship, if I'm not willing to speak up and say, look, this is not okay, I'm not okay. Can we have a discussion about it? If I'm not willing to do that because I want to maintain the relationship with the people, this is what I do in my brain. I'm thinking I can't speak up because I know that there because I did try to speak up during this, this and it it didn't go well. It got even worse. So. Whoa, know that I can't speak up. So you can't speak up. So the only other alternative from my vantage point, when I look at this is stay in denial and pretend like nothing happened for the sake of maintaining the relationship...

Michelle Maros: [00:22:57] or make excuses

Barb Schmidt: [00:22:58] Or make excuses. Maintain the relationship with the people that harm me. Who I love deeply. I have to keep saying that because this is not just a very light relationship. This is a very deep relationship. Or speak up and be with this very, very, very uncomfortable feeling that this could be the end of the relationship.

Michelle Maros: [00:23:20] Yeah, and I think it's hard.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:24] All of this is hard. And I think I'm sharing all this to say that this is I think, you know, if you look at life as we go through so many things that we have to learn and do and all that. But if you look at life as being sometimes we're we're learning things and we're in kindergarten and sometimes we're learning things and we're in middle school and sometimes we're learning things and we're in high school and sometimes we're learning things and we're in college.

Michelle Maros: [00:23:46] Are we getting a masters?

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:47] Well, we're getting a double PhD or whatever. Md Whatever the highest level, because this is really heavy duty. This is a really heavy duty conversation and this is the ultimate cycle breaker. How do we sit with the uncomfortable, really fearful feelings of someone we love dearly. And the possibility would be that the relationship is over.

Michelle Maros: [00:24:13] But two I think is being open and non controlling to the timeline of how it unfolds. You know, like as a fixer, you want to tie it up in a neat bow and fix it in the moment so that you know, it's over and on to the next thing you know. You want to make it feel okay to move past it. And, you know, for you it might be this relationship isn't going to come back into a happy place, but. A lot of times these things unfold in a not in our timeline like we I think we tend to put like some sort of. Expectation of when people are going to come back together to mend something and. You know, I'm always playing devil's advocate in these conversations, like I'm thinking about it from my perspective, and then I try to put myself in the other person's shoes and think about it from their perspective. And, you know, word processing and whatever other side is processing it. And I just, you know, you never know when it's going to unfold and, you know, really come to come to a close or come to a resolution and you can't. Put it in your timeline like. And I think trying to control the timeline is also fixing, you know, we're in that awkward or your word uncomfortable space of silence or of not a lot of communication. We're feeling certain way. The other side might be feeling a certain way.

Michelle Maros: [00:25:50] We don't know. And unfortunately, unless there was a clear, clear action that you or I wanted to take. It just has to be. And I think that's the part of life of getting the PhD or whatever level that we're talking about here is can you sit in the uncomfortable knowing that that's what's in your own best interest, that's what's sticking up for you, and that's what's the action that's most aligned for you? Also knowing that that might be something that makes the other person more upset with you, more resentful or more whatever that feeling might be for them. So it's like it's so many like prongs of a fork of a messed up situation. And it's like I feel like I keep going through and checking ticking all the prongs, like. Am I okay with them thinking a certain way about me? I guess I have to beat, which in the past is like, no, because I'm such a people pleaser and I just want everyone to like me. But am I okay with how I'm handling it and like, speaking up for my own best interest? Yes. So it's like constantly checking in with myself in the situation to see where. Like a temperature check of what I want to do and what I'm okay with. And then just knowing that it's going to be awkward in the in between and I'm not willing to fold to make it better in this situation in the past all the time. But I just feel like, at least for me, I need to see. The acknowledgment and the effort to make things right from the other side. So we're just going to sit you know.

Barb Schmidt: [00:27:45] This is so beautifully Michelle. You just lay this out so beautifully. This is for me, sitting in this uncomfortable situation. Yes. I have no idea what's going to unfold next. I have some ideas, but I don't know. So sitting in the uncomfortable feelings of not knowing the uncertainty is really hard. So you just and I don't know the timeline. You are you are so beautifully laid out. I can't even know other words for it. But that because we don't know the timeline. So we need to give ourselves space. We need to allow ourselves to sit in this uncomfortable, unknowing, very weird, very unfamiliar. I'm so used to the familiar. It's it's almost like I'm I've been trained to. Okay, this is wrong. These are people I love. Go fix it.

Michelle Maros: [00:28:34] We'll make it all right. Trained with us. You know, blood is thicker than water. You know, all of those kinds of sayings that, you know, and that's family and friends. And it's like you're not allowed to not be okay with something to a degree where it's going to cause a rift in the in the relationship.

Barb Schmidt: [00:28:51] And I think that's the beauty of sitting. That is the beauty of being with our feelings and being with what is. We have no idea what's going to unfold for the future. I don't even know what's going to unfold next. I just know what exactly what you were saying. I just know that I no longer want to play the denial game. I don't want to pretend like everything is okay. I don't want to enable. I don't want to rescue or try to fix or do those things that I used to.

Michelle Maros: [00:29:19] Coddle.

Barb Schmidt: [00:29:20] I don't want to be out of alignment with what is truthful for me right now. This is the truth right now. And then the next step that's being called of me, I will sit in my truth and see what my next action needs to be. I mean, these it's so interesting for me to be saying this right now in this moment, because for me, I don't know if you can feel this. This is the most powerful thing that I could ever imagine talking about right now in this moment. Like this is like owning our own power and being able to sit with this space of not knowing. And feeling really uncomfortable. But feeling. Like going back to what is familiar and doing all of those things that I've been doing for 50, 60 years is just not acceptable for me anymore. I just can't do it, nor do I want to do it. I want more from my life. I want more for who I am and who I

want to be in this moment. So for me, in this moment right now, the truth is I have to sit with it. I don't I don't want to say anything because I don't know what I would say.

Michelle Maros: [00:30:28] Right.

Barb Schmidt: [00:30:29] I just want to sit with the uncomfortable feeling. And the uncomfortable feelings are fear, uncertainty, unknowing. All of those things that we have so much trouble sitting with and being with. So we want to hurry up and fix it or we want to hurry up and get out of that. And so if you think about it, we've been sitting with these feelings for a month. Roughly. And now it's coming up again, roughly.

Michelle Maros: [00:30:55] I mean, depends on where you start the mark.

Barb Schmidt: [00:30:59] Yeah. Yeah, exactly. So I think this is so I love it that we're unfolding and unpacking this actually in real time because.

Michelle Maros: [00:31:08] That's why I wanted to do it Mother.

Barb Schmidt: [00:31:09] It's Really good sweetie. I really, I appreciate you. You, um, presenting this to us today. And then the last thing that I want to say on this subject of this unknowing, this I would really love for, for all of you that are listening to kind of take a breath or take a moment now or when you get done listening to this and just sit and see if there's any place in your life where you're gravitate to the familiar. Because it's not... Because it's easier to just go with the flow and just go along with whatever you've been doing than to try to take, like the road less traveled. How do I go on to that next go to that path that that is more in alignment with who I am. But it's too scary or it's too fearful or it's too unknown? I don't know, unknown. So just thinking about that I think is remarkable. I feel really empowered right now.

Michelle Maros: [00:32:02] I love that for you. And two things that came up for me. First is, the thing, too that's so uncomfortable is and it's also similar to the conversation that we've had in the past about boundaries, like when you set a boundary for the first time in a situation where a boundary has never been set, the person or the situation with the boundary is going to be like taking it as some sort of punishment or like, what? What? What do you mean? They're not used

to use standing up and speaking what's right for you or what's in your truth, or what's in your own best interest to create a more healthy relationship. So it's always going to feel uncomfortable. In the same vein, this feels uncomfortable because we are so used to jumping in to fixing situations and not letting people really take responsibility for their actions have some sort of consequence, or let other people sit in the uncomfortable space. I mean, I we can't control whether or not people will ever understand what they've done wrong or how they I mean, in this situation in particular, like you were crying, I've said what's happening is incredibly hurtful and harmful. So it's clear that that there was that we were not okay and there was a role that these people had had been in to contribute to that. So those facts had been spoken. I don't know if they're ever going to really understand that or feel like they need to take responsibility for it. But I know it'll never happen if I jump in and fix it. So it feels awkward because in these dynamics where we're so knee jerk reaction to fixing, people aren't used to having to also sit in that silence. So it's. It's interesting to create space for consequence and responsibility for people who aren't used to having to do that. And, you know, again, you can't force people to to take a take or responsibility or suffer consequences, but you can create the space for it and see what happens. Like it's you're always picking up new pieces of information that are like, again, good to know.

Barb Schmidt: [00:34:30] And not jump in to clean up the mess.

Michelle Maros: [00:34:32] Yeah,

Barb Schmidt: [00:34:32] I feel like I'm always wanting to jump in an clean up the mess

Michelle Maros: [00:34:33] Unless you're like, you know, I feel like also sitting and not knee jerk reacting is like maybe a week or two down the line you'll get a hit where like, you know, I really feel like I want to say this. I'm feeling called to speak about this or take this action, you know, But it's stuff that comes with the time and the space, you know, the powers and the space. And I think that's why you can't control the timeline, because sometimes this stuff pops up, you know, a week, a month, and you just, you know, only you can know what's in alignment for you. The second thing I wanted to say is that. Um. You know, in our personal conversations with therapists and with each other, it's it's so often you saying, you know, we have so many of these relationships, one after the other after the other that have so many similar dynamics and

similar complications and dysfunction. And why do we keep. Calling in or attracting or choosing those kinds of relationships in our lives. And I've really been thinking about that. And, you know. I think underneath all of that, too, for people who are fixers or people pleasers, it's like you're not even thinking about, does this person make me happy? Does this person make me feel seen? Does this person make me feel safe? Does this person make me feel supported? How do I feel in the presence of this person? You're just thinking, What can I do to keep this person around so that they like me? And it's like you're just pushing off your own needs and wants as a human being to please everybody else's. And it's like. Is that a fear of being alone? Is that a fear of not being loved? Is that a fear of not being accepted? But underneath it is some sort of fear that you're not worthy of relationships that are good, and so that you have to settle for these relationships that feel toxic. And I think it's only coming forward for me within this past year or so of having some really good solid relationships with people who are like, You don't ever have to explain why you're upset for them to see that you're upset or give reason to why. You know, things aren't okay or to just have people be there for you, you know, in an aligned way that feels supportive, like that exists. So we don't have to settle. But people pleasers like us tend to fall into that other side where it's like we're settling and just always wanting the other person to be okay. Does that make sense? That was like a whole word vomit, I feel.

Barb Schmidt: [00:37:23] No, it makes perfect sense, I think. Yeah, it makes perfect sense. All of you know, I'm an avid reader. I read, read, read. I love inspirational books, teachers, experiences, all of that. I read all the time. And one of my favorite authors is Thich Nhat Hanh. And I think I've talked about some of his quotes in some other episodes. So I took out his book *Fear* recently. As I've been sitting with this whole thing, what I've realized the most is. I don't. Yes, I think pleasing and just wanting everything to be OC like there's a...I love when you said, does this person make me? Is there happiness in this relationship? Is all the things? Am I getting my needs met? I mean, you're right. We don't think about all those important things that go into having a really healthy.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:10] symbiotic relationship.

Barb Schmidt: [00:38:11] Well balanced relationship. I know for me, it's just how can I make everything just okay? I just I just want peace. I just want calm. How can I make everything okay. So it's really interesting for me as I've been sitting with this and this this deep feeling of not only

being uncomfortable, but also the fear starting to bubble up. So I took out Thich Nhat Hanh's book, and I was reading this and this quote. I remember reading this so many times before, but kind of the way he's worded it is genius. People have a hard time letting go of their suffering. Out of a fear of the unknown. They prefer suffering that is familiar. And so this is everything that I've been saying here in this past, whatever 40 minutes or however long we've been on this, this episode, we I gravitate to the familiar and most of the time my familiar is suffering. So not to have to feel the fear of the unknown. I would rather suffer because that's familiar. I kind of know how to navigate suffering. I've been doing it for so long. But I don't know how to navigate the unknown, the fear of what's next or the fear of the unknown. So I think this whole idea of me embarking on this divorce of 30 plus years of marriage is so powerful because I'm really stepping into the unknown.

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:26] And you can see some of the dominoes starting to fall, which is what happens when you go through a life altering thing like a divorce. So it's just really powerful to me to look at this idea of the unknown and the fear that I have possibly of that, and that that's what's the unknown of losing relationships over this is really powerful. And then that idea that I might prefer suffering over having a healthy, happy relationship because I don't even know how to have a happy, healthy relationship in some aspects when I think about it, because I'm so quick to jump in and try to fix things or try to clean up messes or try to just make everything just okay, oh my gosh, let's just have everything just okay. So it's really important. And I know in treatment, I learned this quote from Einstein that I've used so many times over the past 30 years or so. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, expecting a different result. And this has been a bedrock of mine. But I actually no wonder I feel insane so often.

Michelle Maros: [00:40:29] Yeah, because that is...

Barb Schmidt: [00:40:30] Because that is what I've been doing, doing the same thing over and over. So what.

Michelle Maros: [00:40:33] You're comforting the people that have harmed you over and over and over again.

Barb Schmidt: [00:40:36] Exactly.

Michelle Maros: [00:40:38] And Expecting not to be harmed again.

Barb Schmidt: [00:40:41] It's expecting a different result, expecting them to get to get the message that they shouldn't harm me anymore with without even standing up and being in alignment with my own self. So it's it's very I'm just really loving this conversation and it's very, very important. We talk about it all the time, but I'm really getting it at a much deeper level that when we are out of alignment with who we are. Deep within. It can never go well in our lives. We'll be in these situations of like feeling in denial, enabling, fixing, rescuing.

Michelle Maros: [00:41:17] But also like that inner turmoil of like. Unease and no peace and just anxiety.

Barb Schmidt: [00:41:27] And that's the whole point of what Thich Nhat Hanh is saying that the inner turmoil of unease and anxiety and all of that is suffering. Yeah. And so when I look at the big picture of my life and especially in this macro situation, of this whole life change that I'm in, it's so fascinating. And this is what I love about reading and this is what I love about life, is that even though this is so hard, this is so, so hard and I've cried so much, it's also exhilarating to me to read this quote again from Thich Nhat Hanh people have a hard time letting go of their suffering out of a fear of the unknown. They prefer suffering that is familiar. It's so exhilarating to read that It's not sad. It's like that's that's the golden key because awareness is key. Wow. That's what's happening. It's the familiar. There's nothing wrong with me. I don't need to fix myself. I need to just see. Oh, Barb, you're having. You're having anxiety over the unknown. And do you see that you're suffering, You're crying, you're feeling hurt, you're being abused. You're all these things. And so is that how you want to live your life feeling? As you said, with all this unease and all this anxiety and all this and all this, you know, ill will behavior, really. So it's just it's beautiful. And I think that those are kind of the tiny joys that you talk about sometimes are the silver linings. There is a silver lining here, even though there's a lot of suffering and crying that I'm actually unearthing all of these. I'm unearthing this familiar behavior that is incredibly harmful.

Michelle Maros: [00:43:14] And I think that tiny joy are that silver lining of. Sitting in this space, as is acting in alignment with yourself and kind of sticking up for yourself in a way that you never have before and and being empowered to do that. And it's like just like with anything else, when you do something that you've never done before and it feels uncomfortable, it's awkward at first, and then the more you do it, like, the stronger you feel or the more comfortable it gets. It's like the longer that you stand up for yourself or. Stand Your ground or stick up for yourself. The more empowering that it feels and it's like, Oh, that's what that feels like. That's nice.

Barb Schmidt: [00:43:56] And it's not going to be an easy road. I'm sorry. It's not going to be an easy road. As I'm painting this whole I'm laying out what has been going on for the past three, four or five months, six months. It's not an easy road because you start to I'm really feeling empowered and like getting it. Wow, I see what I'm doing here. I see what I want to really unearth. Well, then in the next breath, or maybe in the next week or in the next two days or whatever, whatever's been happening for me, I get knocked down again because this quote from Nate Postlethwait is genius. You know, it's not like it's a one and done. Okay, I got this. Okay, now I'm on. No, there will be people who remain committed to those who have harmed you even after you have spoken up. These are not your people.

Michelle Maros: [00:44:44] That's the whole conversation.

Barb Schmidt: [00:44:46] It's the whole conversation. And so I meant domino effect. You know, people always say to me, oh, my gosh, you're getting divorce. You know, you're going to lose a lot of people. That's the first thing that everyone says, Oh, wow, yeah, you're going to lose a lot of people, but it'll all be okay. And that is a great truth. Yes. And this quote by Nate Postlethwait is so right on. Even after you've spoken up, even after people have witnessed the disrespect, the harmful behavior, the hurt, the suffering, the crying, even after people have witnessed that. They're not our people.

Michelle Maros: [00:45:21] Yeah.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:21] When they remain committed to the person that's doing the harm. So it's really tricky. And that's when you were saying, you know, you'll you'll have a we've got we

have a handful, not even a handful of friends. We've got friends in our corner that we don't even have to speak up. They can see the suffering. And they don't even need to hear the whole story because there are people. So it's been really important for me to see that, like, who are my people? And this could be a whole nother episode. Who are your people? And I think it goes back to what you said earlier, though. The people that empower you, they're the people that care about you. They're the people that don't even, they can see you crying. And that's enough. They're the people that will be there for you in any moment. Are the people that bring joy to your life, that the people that make you laugh?

Michelle Maros: [00:46:05] Yeah.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:06] You know, they're the people that make you that you can feel the happiness from the inside out, though. The people that will tell you the truth. So the people that will say, hey, you know, I know you're about ready to go down this path or I know you're about ready to go say this, but I just want to let you know I don't think it's in your best interest. Why? Because I think you're going against your own well being. Those are your people.

Michelle Maros: [00:46:28] Yeah. And I think the more that you start to release from the people that are harming you. You create the space for more of these people and it's like, think about how much time has been spent cultivating relationships with these people who have been harmful and worrying about their own needs and interests and feelings.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:51] 33 years.

Michelle Maros: [00:46:52] Well, I mean, our whole lives.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:54] Our whole lives.

Michelle Maros: [00:46:55] And releasing that creates so much space for new people, new relationships, new energy. And that's not to say that like. First that we're perfect. That we've never done anything wrong. Of course not. Like, relationships are a two way street. That's why it has to be symbiotic. You speak your truth. I speak mine. We take responsibility for our actions. But also, you know. I think that. It's just. Finding the people that like mesh with you and

those other people will have their people, you know, like, it's just not for me could be for you. Yes. Does that make sense?

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:42] It makes perfect sense.

Michelle Maros: [00:47:43] I feel like it's all very heady.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:46] It's not heady, it's deep. It's sometimes there are no words. I think that's why sometimes there just are no words. They're just feelings. They're just you just know. And I think I was talking with someone recently who said who's just kind of embarking on a on a journey of within. And he was saying, you know, sometimes, you know, sometimes I hear a voice that's not really the voice that's in my head telling me to go do this and tell me to go do that. He says, it's kind of a little bit interesting. I didn't even know there was another voice, and I want to explore that. And I go, Yeah, we there are actually two voices. And so I think what we're talking about today, Michel, and for all of you listening, we're talking about that voice within that for me, the voice within right now, the voice of my heart, the voice of my truth in this moment is screaming. Like this voice will not allow me to go against it anymore.

Michelle Maros: [00:48:42] Your body won't.

Barb Schmidt: [00:48:43] Well, my body definitely will not every time I go against my truth lately, every time I say something or I have, I start to take an action my body revolts. So it's amazing for us to sit in a conversation with ourselves because you've got the voice within that's always there trying to help you, that's trying the body is trying to teach you in every moment.

Michelle Maros: [00:49:07] Yeah.

Barb Schmidt: [00:49:08] And we just we just have to...

Michelle Maros: [00:49:09] We just have to listen

Barb Schmidt: [00:49:10] Take the space and listen and and be be in the uncomfortable feeling of not knowing in this moment what, what your next step will be or what will unfold. And as

you said Michelle, so beautifully, we don't know how life is going to I don't know how my life is gonna unfold.

Michelle Maros: [00:49:27] We just have to be present to the now.

Barb Schmidt: [00:49:28] Be present to the now. Yeah. And staying in alignment with what is true for you in this moment right now.

Michelle Maros: [00:49:37] It's all we can do.

Barb Schmidt: [00:49:38] It is. Thank you, everyone, for being with us on this conversation. More to come, I'm sure.

Michelle Maros: [00:49:44] Yeah, Kind of to leave you all with some things to marinate in on. This topic is just remembering that you are worthy and always, always worthy of relationships where you don't feel like you have this cat and mouse of harm and then you having to fix like you're you're worthy of loving kind relationships. And that's possible for all of us. And that it doesn't have to be a million people. It's it's quality, not quantity. And I think when we start to see what real trusting kind relationships look like, we can see the contrast to what we've been settling for all along. And just remembering that there is power in the space. You know, you don't always have to be reactive and fix and comfort. You can sit in the space and see what you're being asked to do, and maybe in a situation you might have to, you know. Take the first step. I don't know. But it's take the space first and see what's comfortable for you. And lastly, you know, it's really important in these kinds of situations to have at least one person, one trustworthy person who you can talk to and unpack these things with. That will be. You know, unbiased and not judgmental and really listen. And that could be a professional, a therapist or someone in your in your life that you can really rely on. Because having that sounding board makes a huge, huge difference in these kinds of situations. So just leaving those little things for you all to marinate in. And of course, let us know what you think about this topic and this quote. Please let us please let go of the habit of comforting people after they've harmed you, Liana Naima.

Barb Schmidt: [00:51:35] I just want to add one more thing to all of that. Michelle, is this all is hard. This is really, really hard. And this is really treating and looking at what what is underneath and not all the symptoms that are covering up what's underneath. And so I just want to share with all of you, please promise me that you will be very gentle and loving and caring with yourself while you're learning, while you're growing, while you're healing, while you're uncovering all of these things that, as I said, it's exhilarating, but it's also painful. It's it's such a dual, you know, there's not happiness without sadness. We all know that this exhilaration also comes with a lot of pain because it's I'm really digging deep into the the issues, what's underneath all of this. So it takes time. And you talked about this, but there is no timeline. It takes what it takes. Yeah, it takes I had a teacher say that to me once. You know what, Barb? It takes what it takes. And that has saved me so much because in this situation, it takes what it takes.

Michelle Maros: [00:52:35] It takes what it takes.

Barb Schmidt: [00:52:36] Be gentle and loving and kind to yourself. And all of this is normal. And I don't even know what that word means. But if you are feeling this way or you are going through this, there is nothing wrong with you. You are being called to uncover and become the greatest version of you by getting to the root of all of the all of the pain or the suffering that's happening that are that is causing you to be in denial or to, you know, put up with any kind of abusive or harmful behaviors from other people. So, yes, it's normal. You are you're not alone.

Michelle Maros: [00:53:10] You are not.

Barb Schmidt: [00:53:11] Alone. And don't go into that rabbit hole of thinking that there's something oh, my gosh, no one else is going through this. No one else is feeling this way.

Michelle Maros: [00:53:17] No, ma'am. Well, thank you for letting us unpack this and kind of talk it out. I hope it was helpful for all of you who resonate with this cycle that we struggle with. And of course, let us know what you think if you have questions or if you want us to unpack this even more. The best way to do so is to connect with us on social media at Peaceful_Barb, at Michelle Maros, and at Barb Knows Best Pod. You can send us message questions and other podcast topic requests. Also, if you're loving the podcast, which of course we hope you are,

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