

Episode 57 – Reading For Inspiration Part 2
Barb Knows Best
Episode Transcripts

Michelle Maros: [00:00:14] Hello again, friends. Hello. Barb Knows Best community. Welcome back to the podcast. It is Michelle Maros, your co host, and I am here yet again with my mother, Barbara Schmidt, Peaceful Barb. And we are back again. And leading off from last week's episode about books and reading for inspiration. Hopefully you've been long awaiting part two of that episode. Hello, Mom. Welcome. I know you are just itching to get into it because this is, as you guys probably noticed last week, her favorite thing to talk about.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:54] It is. Good morning, Michelle. I'm so excited. I can hardly I really want to jump in. I've been thinking about this all week because I kept thinking of so many more books. But I think the ones that we're going to highlight today and the ones that we talked about last week really are a very, very, very good start. And they certainly have been a foundation, some of them older books that were written, you know, decades ago and some of them current books. So I think it's a really good list and I'm excited. I'm excited to share the rest of our list and to talk a little bit about finding people that we can walk life's path with.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:32] Yeah. So one of the things that you mentioned in last week's episode that really stuck with me is that. You view reading for inspiration as a practice to take in someone else's lived experience as a tool to help you through your own experiences, like you said, holding that person's hand through life. And. That's such an interesting way to view reading and even to view as we talk a little bit more about. Role models or people we look up to in life. That whole concept of who would you want to be there beside you, guiding you? Inspiring you? Motivating you? Who are those people? Because that's also another great way to find books that can inspire you to find the people and then see what they've put out about life.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:41] Exactly. I think, you know, Michelle, it is a very interesting way to look at reading. I agree. And I think I have my own personal way of doing that. And it's been, I think why I'm so excited to share it with everyone is for two reasons. One, certainly it has brought me to where I am today, 66 years old. Really gone through much of what life has to send at us and bend through it and come out the other side. And so what I really want to help people see is

two things. I always want to break down that myth that anyone is sitting up on a pedestal. I am really anti. I guess you can kind of feel it in me. I guess.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:26] I can feel it looking at you across the table.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:28] Because it's not just it's not a good idea to put anyone up on a pedestal. We are human beings and so we are human. So we're going to make mistakes. We're going to do things. So I think for the sake of the person and for the sake of yourself, just don't put people up on a pedestal. So that's why early on when I started reading, as I said, when I got out of treatment in 1984, early on, I had this notion, I don't want to really look up to people because what happened when I started reading is I started realizing if they can do it, I can do it. They're just like me. They weren't necessarily born with any special powers. They just found all their ways of overcoming difficulties, really using life's turmoil or life's things that were sent their way, really using it to learn to grow and become the greatest version of who they are. So I thought, Wow, this is so cool, because I had as a kid, I was putting people up on pedestals and thought that I can never be that, Oh, I can't be as good as they are. I can't be as smart as they are. I can't become the greatest version of myself because I wasn't born with all the quote, special tools or special processes that they are. And that's just not true. So I'm adamant about people not putting other people up on pedestals. So that's why I came up with that idea of holding hands.

Michelle Maros: [00:04:51] Well, I love the way that you just said that, because even I mean, obviously, this is not a visual podcast. You can't see her as she's talking, but she's very animated with her hands. And when you said looking up to people, you put your hand up like above you. And that gave me such a visual of, you know, when we say I look up to you, it's like we're elevating these people up onto a platform that's above us, better than us, more important than us. And even that term, which we say, I look up to you, I look up to you like it's so common when we talk about people that inspire us, but it's really elevating them into a place that's not necessarily healthy or realistic. So I love that you're bringing those people back down to. an even playing fields and redefining that by someone who's walking hand in hand, foot and foot. Side by side. Because just I never thought about it that way with that visual of I look up to you. So you're above me.

Barb Schmidt: [00:05:58] Yeah. And it's just not I don't think it's healthy. And I don't think it serves us and what it is that we're all trying to do on this planet. We're all trying to live the best life that we can live happy, free, successful lives. So I think if we can think about reading for inspiration and and other people as being. Inspiring forces for us to see. That they weren't necessarily born with special powers. They have just done the work to get to where they are and that if they can do it, we can do it. This has been my model. If you can do it, I can do it if it's something that I want to do. So now you have to make sure that you're attracted to and you're taking in, the the words and the messages and the life of the people that are inspiring you, that are leading a life and that have little bits and pieces of their lives, that you're saying, Wow, I want to do that or I want to be that. Or that's really something that really energizes and inspires me. So I love the visual of I use this a lot in my work. I use this a lot of my own practice. I use it a lot in my meditation. The idea of walking life's path together because unity and being one with creativity, with the universe, with the world, with people, that we all have a gift. And the more that we can start accepting our own uniqueness, which you talk about a lot, Michelle and I know when you gave me the book Big Magic from Elizabeth Gilbert, she talks about, you know, really finding that place inside of all of us. And inspiring ourselves. And she says, we need a little gentle nudge, you know, to be that person that we came here to be. So that was just a really long way of diving in. Now to the next part of, you know, part two of reading for inspiration and finding role models and people that really inspire us. And how do we do that?

Michelle Maros: [00:07:58] Yeah. And this is, like we said last week, the reading for inspiration and finding your role models or they sort of go hand in hand for how we teach this practice, especially with our high school students that we often work with. And it's always been a very eye opening lesson when we bring up the concept of role models to our young people to see. Who they come up with or who they're inspired by or who motivates them. Because I think that perhaps as generations have changed, the idea of a role model has kind of changed. And it's it's always really interesting to see who who people choose as their example of someone that they aspire to be like.

Barb Schmidt: [00:08:56] Yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:08:57] I was really trying hard to.. No I was being so intentional with my words to not say "look up to" because I'm so used to saying "look up to."

Barb Schmidt: [00:09:06] Yeah. And we can be inspired by them and motivated by them and love them and cherish them and do all those beautiful things. But I think it serves us better and it serves the other person better. If we can think about walking side by side with them that they're there to show us the way, they're there to show us their way. They're not there to show us the only way they're there to show us their way. This is what work for them. And so we can emulate and we can look and see, okay, maybe I can tweak that. And this is what might work for me, because what happens is if we go only their way and we feel like we're falling short or we feel like we can't do it or oh, I can't have that dream that I want because I can't do what they're doing. Maybe you can't do it in the way that they're doing it, but maybe if you just tweaked it here and tweaked it there, maybe you can get to where you are supposed to be. So I hope this makes sense because it really has been a huge aha moment for me for the past 38, 39 years of practice that we can all get to where it is we're trying to go, but we don't have to follow this one rigid path. We can walk with other people side by side and follow our own unique path and take the same steps and maybe take the road less, traveled a little bit, go down a little bit different way, and then come back to the middle with each other.

Barb Schmidt: [00:10:29] But I just it really has saddened me because it happened to me where there were so many times when I thought, I can't be as good as she is or I can't be the person that he is or I can't be what they are. It really is saddened me to think, Oh, then I have to give up on my dream. And that's just not true. So I love this tagline. If they can do it, I can do it. If it's truly something that is motivating me and it's something that I want to do before I die, you know, remember, we quote that that the the one thing that most people in hospice, the anywhere Bronnie, where the last thing that they say is I wish I had done what I wanted to do instead of doing what other people told me to do so. All we're talking about here mostly is really just what inspires you. And really getting that inspiration from others who have done it. But you don't have to necessarily do it in the way that they've done it. So don't put them up on a pedestal that their way is the only way. So let's jump into it.

Michelle Maros: [00:11:29] Yeah. And even thinking about this topic, I am someone who I would have said, I mean, did I have like a role model growing up, would you say?

Barb Schmidt: [00:11:41] I think you probably did. I don't know if we ever talked about it, but I certainly talked about mine. I had a lot of them.

Michelle Maros: [00:11:47] Yeah, we know you got....you're walking beside a whole row of people.

Barb Schmidt: [00:11:51] A whole bunch of people. Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:11:52] Um, you know, I just say this because.

Barb Schmidt: [00:11:55] I think you had teachers and I think.

Michelle Maros: [00:11:58] Yeah.

Barb Schmidt: [00:11:59] Yeah I think you did. You prob I think you had teachers.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:02] I think what's interesting now maybe as someone who's in the middle part of my life is that a Correct.

[00:12:09] Yeah.

[00:12:09] Middle aged.

Barb Schmidt: [00:12:10] Yeah. It's hard to hear you say that. So I have to tell you.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:14] Yeah. That was weird.

Barb Schmidt: [00:12:15] Yeah. Middle age. That means I'm old age.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:18] No, we're in a....

Barb Schmidt: [00:12:21] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:23] So we're where we're supposed to be.

Barb Schmidt: [00:12:25] Whatever. It's good. It's all good. It's all good.

Michelle Maros: [00:12:27] Finding someone who inspires me or that I can look at to as a role model in that lens of, like, an expander. Like I talked about last week. Even when we talk about it with our high school students and they ask me who mine is, I've kind of had a hard time lately in labeling somebody and. Thinking about it right now, as we've been talking about this over the past couple of weeks. I just wanted to insert into the conversation that these people can change and they can serve you in certain periods of life and then they can leave you or they can go to the back of your line of your roster. And I think that's totally normal and. Just reminding people that. I guess with my personality, it could be easy to get so wrapped up in somebody else or be so inspired by somebody else that you kind of mold your life into theirs and make your life all about theirs. And to just remember the distinction of seeking inspiration from somebody, but continuing in your own unique life, your own life path, your own interests, the unique qualities that make you you. Because as much as we can be inspired by or motivated by or feel like they're because they're doing it, I can do it. You're still going to have your own experiences and difficulties and failures sometimes and wins, and it's not going to look quite the same. So. You know, if you're feeling like I don't really know, just, you know, ask yourself, who's inspiring you right now or who's making you feel like that certain way of like if they're doing it, I can do it. Or the way that they move through life feels the way that I want to move through life. Because that's kind of how I feel right now. I don't necessarily feel because I'm looking at our list of people that we often use as example when we talk to our high school students. And certainly they're the big names.

Barb Schmidt: [00:14:52] You know.

Michelle Maros: [00:14:52] Martin Luther King Jr. Maya. Maya Angelou. Victor Frankel. Et cetera, etc.. And obviously, those are amazing teachers. But someone who was coming up for me when I was thinking about this lately is Liz Gilbert, because I feel like the way that she's, Elizabeth Gilbert, the author, the way that she has moved through life. And I think I really honed in on her message when she wrote Eat, Pray, Love, which we talked about a little bit last episode. You know, the the concept of letting go of a chapter of your life so that you can start

something new and being open to possibility and being a little bit scared and unsure, but like kind of feeling the fear and following those breadcrumbs of what you're being called to do and not necessarily really knowing what's ahead of you and being okay if it's messy and not perfect and just continuing to show up really resonates with me. So I say all that to say that it can change and just how do people make you feel?

Barb Schmidt: [00:16:08] And I think, Michelle, you just said that beautifully. I think that's why we're ditching the words role model. We're ditching the word mentor. We're really trying to replace those because you're so right. I think sometimes we get too locked into a mentor or a role model, and it does. It puts us in a box and then something happens and we get, you know, uninspired or whatever it is. That's why it's really exactly what you just said. We're talking about who inspires you. Who really touches your heart deeply. Who are you answering the call of? Wow. They're doing what I could envision myself doing. Or they're accomplishing what I would love to do. Or exactly what you said. I want to feel that way. So I would highly, highly recommend all of you listening to this. Ditch those labels. Ditch the boxes. I think this is where 2023 we're trying to come out of the box. We're trying to be free. We're trying to not label. We're really looking at how can we just live our life, live our lives to the fullest and become the greatest version of who we already are from the inside out and not try to be anyone else but be inspired by others who have walked the path. So all that being said, I agree with you. Elizabeth Gilbert is a tremendous inspiration for you. And I've watched you over the years and for me as well, and who's been inspiring me the most hands down the most right now is Viola Davis. Her memoir is my favorite book. So we can just get right into the next book on our list. Her memoir, *Finding Me*, is hands down, my most favorite memoir I have ever read.

Michelle Maros: [00:17:53] Wow.

Barb Schmidt: [00:17:54] She's just such a great inspiration for me right now. So I love that you said that, Michelle. You took us all out of the box of mentor and role model and all those things. You took us out of the box, and let's just. Who's inspiring you right now that is really causing you to feel like life is there for me to live. And life is working for me, not against me. And Viola Davis memoir, *Finding Me*, Go buy it right now. I can say that because I've read it twice now. So one of the quotes of the book that I love.

Michelle Maros: [00:18:27] She loves Viola.

Barb Schmidt: [00:18:28] I just she is such an inspiration for me. So one of the quotes that I that I took out to share with you all was my biggest discovery was that you can literally recreate your life. You can redefine it. You don't have to live in the past. I found that not only did I have fight in me, I had love. And I'm going to cry. This is such a beautiful sentence for everyone. For everyone at any stage of your life. But for someone like me who's who's moving into the mid sixties, I found that not only did I have fight in me and I can feel that when she wrote those words on the page, they jumped out and grabbed me by the shoulders and started shaking me. I had love. So it's one of my favorite memoirs of all time. She's raw, she's honest. It's how she became the woman she is today, step by step, by step by step. And that's why I say she can do it. I can do it. It doesn't mean that she can live her life. I can go live her life. It means she lives her life raw on the page right now, moment to moment. And that's how I want to live my life. And I had no idea. You know, we see a beautiful star out there. I had no idea all the trauma and hardships that she endured growing up. So I had a kind of a connection with her there. And for me, her story is a true testament to incredible strength and resilience. And I would recommend as well, getting the audio, because hearing her voice, I love hearing someone's voice tell their own his or her own story. And so I've long admired her as an actress, but now I'm in deep awe of of her creativity, her wisdom, and just the the truly exceptional human being that she is.

Michelle Maros: [00:20:21] Agreed. I have not read this book yet, but I certainly will.

Barb Schmidt: [00:20:24] Get the audio Michelle.

Michelle Maros: [00:20:25] I'll listen to it. Um. But when you were saying that, her words kind of. Shook you like put your hands on you and shook you as That's kind of the feeling that I, gravitate towards when I'm looking for somebody to inspire me, like their words can leap out from the page and resonate, but also have the power to shake me and like, Oh yeah, of course. Like that's, that's it. Or whatever the thing might be. And for you certainly Viola Davis has been that Yeah. If you. Lived in our lives, you would know that she probably brings all of us up a handful of times every single day.

Barb Schmidt: [00:21:10] Well, and I have such an admiration for her, but I don't have her on a pedestal. I think she's the best example. I mean, here's Viola Davis.

Michelle Maros: [00:21:17] E.G.O.T.

Barb Schmidt: [00:21:18] Yeah, E.G.O.T. She's one of the most incredible human beings. Accomplished. But but first but what I'm trying to share and I don't even know if this makes any sense, but I can feel it. That's why I love Michelle. You always say, how? How does it make you feel? She makes me feel like I am walking life's path with her. She has such humility and strength about her. I feel like I am side by side with her. She's not sitting up on some pedestal with all those statues. She's actually right here with all of us. And I feel like that's how she wants to inspire us. So Viola Davis, best memoir ever written for me right now, this stage of my life, *Finding Me* highly, highly recommended.

Michelle Maros: [00:22:01] I love it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:22:02] So the next book on my list would be, you know, books that I. A book that I love to reread and I haven't reread it for a very, very long time. But I actually did a whole workshop on this poet and on this book. And I think you attended when you came home from college.

Michelle Maros: [00:22:19] I was going to say this was one of the first workshops that I attended that you did as me as an adult. Yeah, listening in on.

Barb Schmidt: [00:22:27] And I loved having you in the audience. And so this is..

Michelle Maros: [00:22:29] I would love to go back to it now. Yeah. Because, I don't know if I truly understood it in a way that I could understand it now. So maybe you can redo it, you know.

Barb Schmidt: [00:22:41] That's a good idea. So this book is it's a favorite classic *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke. It's one of those books that when you first start reading it, I love poetry. My mother was really deep into poetry, and it took me after she died for me to

really understand her love of poetry. And now it's become really a big part of my life. But it's one of these books that it's letters to a young poet. It's a young poet who writes letters to Rilke over and over and over different parts. And so really, Rilke became an inspiration to this young poet, and he was constantly seeking advice from Rilke and just to read the letters and the whole sequence of all of it was kind of like it made me feel like if I would have been writing a letter to someone that I was admiring and looking up to, it just it Rilke's answers back to this young poet are gems. Every single one of them are gems, and they all resonated deeply with my heart. And one of the things that it just helps us what Rilke does is helps us live that authentic life. And why it touched my heart so deeply is because that's what I was trying to do or read this book a couple of decades ago, and I was trying to see what is my authentic life look like.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:55] And so he really addresses in all of his letters back and forth to this young poet. He really addresses all those silent questions that we have rumbling around inside of all of us, you know, that exists in the deepest chambers of our hearts. And so every time the young poet would write a letter and Rilke would write back and be like, Wow, that's what I that's the answer that I needed to that letter to that question that I have in my heart. And I think with these words, we are inspired to have the confidence to trust our own feelings in our own lives. And he says this You are looking outward and of all the things that is what you must not do. Nobody can advise and help you. Nobody go inside yourself. And then Roky gently teaches us. He nudges us to begin a search inwards. So this has always been the key part of my whole work and part of the thing that I really dove into when I got out of treatment from bulimia.

Barb Schmidt: [00:24:55] As I was trying to find myself, I didn't even know who I was. So he gently teaches us to look inside yourself for meaning, for strength, for love, for courage. And so Rilke has been a massive inspiration for me. And that affirmation that we must always seek inside. And so one of the quotes from his book for me is this Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act just once with beauty and courage, perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love. So I'm going to cry at that one, too. So it really like to be gentle with ourselves if we've got something inside of ourselves that we're not liking or that we're afraid of or that we're not proud of or that we want to try to hide, maybe it's calling us to be gentle and love all the parts

of ourselves, all the warts and all, or all the things that we feel like are not beautiful or that we feel like can't be loved. So it's just a beautiful book and it's very simple and he's very honest and very raw as well.

Michelle Maros: [00:26:16] Hmm. I love that. I feel like. Like when you said that he addresses the silent questions that exist in the deepest chambers of our hearts. To me, that evoked like a similar feeling of when Elizabeth Gilbert talks about...What was it?

Barb Schmidt: [00:26:36] Yes, yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:26:37] The universe buries strange jewels deep within us all. And it's like. And she says and then stands back to see if we can find them. It feels like that message is so similar. So maybe I need to add this to my list to dive into Letters To a Young Poet because it. Those words are resonating with me right now for sure.

Barb Schmidt: [00:26:57] And it's cool that you brought Elizabeth Gilbert in the real time and Rilke and the past time, because that's what all the all these great humans that have written these things that are touching our hearts, they all are saying that essence of that one thing is like, go inside and find yourself. Like whatever inspires you? Go there. Go there. Maybe no one else in your sphere is going there, but if that's inspiring you and touching your heart, go there. When I did this workshop, You're right, Michelle. I had like 150 people in the room. I bet more than half of them had never heard of this book, and the other half hadn't gone as deep as to understanding that really Rilke's messages go inside and find yourself and go follow that message that your heart is calling you to follow.

Michelle Maros: [00:27:42] Yes, it's very deep. And that's probably why when I went when I was really young, I went a little over my head. But I will say that this kind of is the perfect example of, you know, you have key from years ago saying this about addressing the questions in the deepest chambers of our hearts, and Elizabeth Gilbert saying, you know, the jewels buried inside of us. And that's kind of the message of Big Magic to where you can have these ideas about how you describe life that might be similar to somebody else who has said it or done it. But look at how beautifully they say it in a different way. But it evokes a similar feeling, at least for me. Obviously it's why I pulled them together, and that's that abundance of space,

of inspiration and creativity, because you can use your own words and feelings to describe the message, but the message can be the same. And, you know, that's kind of the common topic in the self-help personal development space that, you know, none of these topics or concepts are new. None of these are groundbreaking ideas. People have been talking about this stuff for decades and decades and decades. But I think the thing that stands apart is the way that you express it and share it and talk about it from your own unique perspective with your own words and feelings behind it that maybe will, you know, be that grabbing you by the shoulders, feeling for somebody else, like you said, that Viola Davis was for you.

Barb Schmidt: [00:29:21] Beautiful.

Michelle Maros: [00:29:21] So just as an example, if you read Big Magic of what she talks about with people having, you know, the similar ideas, you can see it. We all can have it. But it's unique because it's ours.

Barb Schmidt: [00:29:33] Oh, beautiful.

Michelle Maros: [00:29:34] So, let's take a quick break. And we're back. So we're on to the next.

Barb Schmidt: [00:29:44] Well, it's really. Perfect timing, Michelle, because you just got done talking about Elizabeth Gilbert and one of her friends, one of her dear friends, Cheryl Strayed. I went on a retreat with with both of them in 20, I think it was 2018. Maybe.

Michelle Maros: [00:30:03] That sounds right.

Barb Schmidt: [00:30:04] I think it's right. Anyway, so Cheryl Strayed is one of my favorite people on the planet. I just. I love her. And here's my example. Like I know Cheryl Strayed from being on a retreat with her, but I don't know. I mean, I know her from her work, but I'm walking the path with her. I'm hoping you try to see, like, I don't have to be in the living room with Cheryl Strayed. I feel like I'm already walking the path with her. I feel like I know her. So Cheryl Strayed. Her book, she's written Wild. All of you probably know Wild, especially with the movie Wild. That was a phenomenal book, but one of my favorite all time books. And the I would have

to say, this is the book that I probably gift very, very, very often as well, if not most often, because it's it's such a beautiful compilation of someone. So it's called Tiny Beautiful Things by Cheryl Strayed. And I have to say, this is also a book to get on audio because to hear Cheryl read the questions. So what it is basically it's an advice column book. It's like a Dear Abby. Back in my old day, I'm dating myself and it's.

Michelle Maros: [00:31:07] Oh, I remember that, too.

Barb Schmidt: [00:31:09] It's an advice column book. And so people write in questions. People have written in questions over the years to Cheryl. And she put these she she put some of the most favorite questions in the form of a book called Tiny Beautiful Things. I love that title. And so I frequently give it because every single question in there can resonate to every single person on the planet. She's chosen the questions that all of us at one time or another have probably thought of wanting to ask someone that question to hear the answer. She's one of my favorite writers. She is a brilliant master of her craft, of writing and. This quote from the book. You cannot convince people to love you. This is an absolute rule. No one will ever give you love because you want him or her to give it. Real love moves freely in both directions. Don't waste your time on anything else. So this was a piece of advice that she gave someone in the letter that they had written her. But it's just a very fun, deep, heartfelt, strong, strong book because we all wish that we could ask people questions and get answers. Kind of like Rilke's Letters to a Young Poet. You see how kind of all these books kind of weave together?

Michelle Maros: [00:32:25] They sure do.

Barb Schmidt: [00:32:26] So I'll close this with tiny, beautiful things. One of my favorite one of my favorite letters that was written to Cheryl Strayed and Tiny Beautiful Things is the The Ghost Ship. I did a whole workshop on this, too, actually.

Michelle Maros: [00:32:41] I think you also talked about it on the show, but I love it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:32:44] So the ghost ship...

Michelle Maros: [00:32:45] So give it to us again

Barb Schmidt: [00:32:46] Well, very briefly. The Ghost Ship That Didn't Carry Us. And I bet I've listened to Cheryl with this book. Oh, I don't know, ten, 15 times, but I've read this particular 140, 50 times. And basically the essence of this is we kind of have two lives. We may have the life that we dream you might have and maybe the life that we chose and maybe we have the life that we didn't choose. And I think she goes on and it's a very it's a it's a really beautiful, longer chapter in the book. But what I love is how she ends it. And I'll just tease it up like this for you because I really highly, highly recommend you go get this book or get the audio at the very end. Her last paragraph is this I'll never know, and neither will you of the life you don't choose. We all only know that whatever that sister life was, it was important and beautiful and not ours. It was the ghost ship that didn't carry us. There's nothing to do but salute it from the shore. And I read that last paragraph for all of you is what touched me so much and why I read this over and over. Sometimes I can get stuck into thinking, Oh, shoot, I wish I had just done that one thing. Can I just turn the clock back and do that one thing? And so I'll go to this Ghost Ship chapter in Tiny, Beautiful Things, and I'll say, That's the ghost ship that didn't carry you. Barb. There's nothing to do but salute it from the shore. It brings me such peace. I've got goosebumps now, just reading it again. It brings me back into the present moment, and it helps me get grounded in the beautiful life that I'm living right now.

Michelle Maros: [00:34:33] It's so true. You've brought up that passage to me. Personally and professionally so many times. And I love the way she talks about that. You can. Look at it from afar and honor it, but still be grounded in the life that you have currently. It's like. A simultaneous kind of longing, but honoring. But being where your feet are.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:01] Oh, my gosh, you're making me cry because I think there's such a beautiful. Simultaneous thing about honoring the life.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:09] Because I think we all have a life that we maybe thought we were going to lead. That we're not.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:15] And I think what's making me cry is the idea of honoring that life. But then when you add when Cheryl says and salute it from afar, just that I don't know if you all are feeling this as deeply as I am. When you see like when you salute something, there's a there's

like a triple quadruple honoring of that. And so I love what you just said, Michelle, when you salute the life that wasn't yours. You're actually grounding yourself back in the present moment where your feet are. It was beautifully said, Michelle.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:48] Well that's what came to me.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:49] So that's a book that I love to give as a gift, because I think it's very compelling to read other people's questions and then to hear Cheryl's incredibly powerful answers back.

Michelle Maros: [00:36:01] Yeah. Big fans of Cheryl Strayed.

Barb Schmidt: [00:36:04] Yes. And so we're moving on kind of to the last two or so. Michelle, I think.

Michelle Maros: [00:36:12] Oh my goodness.

Barb Schmidt: [00:36:13] So one of my most favorite audio books right now, I was never an audio book person, but I've kind of grown into it.

Michelle Maros: [00:36:18] Interesting how you have.

Barb Schmidt: [00:36:19] Yeah. You know why I think that idea of hearing the author read like Viola Davis reading her audio book, her memoir, is beyond beyond extraordinary. And so my new friend I met Tyler Merritt about, I don't know, a year ago I mean, certainly we've gone back and forth online on social media, but actually met him about a year ago when he launched his book *I Take My Coffee Black*, and I had the privilege of meeting him and having lunch with him in Nashville and talking about the book. And so I had read the book and I love the book. And it's just so it's so profound. When he talks about *I Take My Coffee Black*, and the subtitle of the book is *Reflections on Tupac Musical Theater, Faith and Being Black in America*. It is so I mean, I cannot I cannot recommend this book enough. And so when I got home after meeting him, I had to listen to the audiobook because his voice is so beautiful in person just to have

conversation with him. So it is so incredible to hear Tyler tell his stories about his life's ups and downs.

Barb Schmidt: [00:37:26] And it will make you laugh and it will make you cry. He's so hysterically funny and he's so profoundly deep. So it's for me, it's rare to find those two things in a book, especially someone that I just met recently. And at the heart of this book is his message of he's got such deep compassion and empathy and self forgiveness. It really struck me the self forgiveness that I was feeling coming out of his book and hearing his words and the importance this has been so important for me in my life. The importance of getting to know how people..... Getting to know people who are different from us like that is so very important. So Tyler mixes all this stuff into one incredible book. I take my coffee black that you have to get. You have to read it. And one of the sentences I took out of the book is there is something for you, something that the world really needs. And that only you can do it. Only you. And it's not too late to do it.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:34] Wow. She is getting emotional.

Barb Schmidt: [00:38:37] Yeah. So I just highly recommend I take my coffee. Black by Tyler Merritt. It will empower you. And as you can hear in my voice, it will really touch you deeply so that you can really understand how special you are.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:54] And particularly in the audio hearing him.

Barb Schmidt: [00:38:57] Hearing his voice. Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:59] Just to interject a book, an audio book that I love as a Brené Brown book, Braving the Wilderness.

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:08] Yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:39:09] Um, which is interesting. We haven't brought up any Brené Brown books, but certainly her work for me at least, has been very insightful and motivational. I think she's a genius. I just find her. Intelligence so inspiring and her commitment to research and

uncovering life in such a meaningful way. But I listened to *Braving the Wilderness* on audio. And like you said, it's just there's something really cool about being able to listen to the author, the author who wrote these words, being able to hear them speak. It is really powerful. And I loved loved listening to this book and reading anything by Brené Brown is like getting a hug from a friend. But *braving the wilderness* accesses thoughts and feelings deep within us that helps us to remember who we are and why we're here. And this is her book about belonging and connectivity, which I read this at a time where I felt like I was looking for, quote unquote, where I belonged. But she writes that true belonging is the spiritual practice of believing in and belonging to your self so deeply that you can share your most authentic self with the world and find sacredness in both being a part of something and standing alone in the wilderness. True belonging doesn't require you to change who you are. It requires you to be who you are. So beautiful. That's like a phrase that. Shook me from the page because I find myself very much independent, but also looking for community and being introverted, but also understanding the power of, you know, being with people and it's this marries the two in such a really beautiful way.

Barb Schmidt: [00:41:11] And I think you're talking about this book to me a while ago was inspiration for me when things opened up after COVID subsided in the world was back into going places and doing things. The first trip I took was to go by myself for a week and spend some time in quiet. And I took Brené Browne's current book, *Atlas of the Heart* with me. Remember I told you.

Michelle Maros: [00:41:35] That period of time you talked about *Atlas of the Heart*.

Barb Schmidt: [00:41:39] Constantly,

Michelle Maros: [00:41:39] Multiple times a day

Barb Schmidt: [00:41:40] Yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:41:41] It became a running joke.

Barb Schmidt: [00:41:43] Because I took the book with me and I also downloaded the audio and I would go for walks, long hikes. I mean, I walked for hours and hours and hours a day for that whole week. And I would listen to Atlas of the Heart and I could not stop listening to it. This book, it's incredible. What Brené Brown is extraordinary and listening to her voice was amazing for me. It was exactly what I needed on that week that I needed, you know, going through the divorce and all the things that I've been that I'm going through and still coming out the other side. But Atlas of the Heart, another book of hers, I think it really kind of is for me what braving the the book.

Michelle Maros: [00:42:20] Wilderness.

Barb Schmidt: [00:42:21] Braving the sorry, I got caught up in my throat, Braving the Wilderness. This is kind of for me it was an extension of that, so to speak, because this is a she takes us you know, she this Atlas of the Heart is a 87, a journey through 87. Emotions and experiences that divide define what it means to be a human being. So it's really amazing. And the quote from that book that I love so much is that Brené says, I want this book to be an atlas for all of us, because I believe that with an adventurous heart and the right maps, we can travel anywhere and never fear losing ourselves. And I don't know about all of you listening, but I always had a fear once I kind of started finding myself after I got out of treatment. I always kind of had a fear of losing myself. You know, that idea that I would forget who I am or that I would abandon myself, or because I did that for so much of the first part of my life. And this whole thing that there is actually a road map that we can use so we never have to fear losing ourselves. Brené Brown Atlas of the Heart.

Michelle Maros: [00:43:30] It seems like it's a common theme for a lot of us to spend younger years kind of losing or forgetting who we are. And then a second half of finding who we are and then having that fear that we're going to lose it again. So I feel like all of these books really speak to holding on to who we are while continuing to grow and become. Which, speaking of another audio book that I love is Michelle Obama Becoming. That's the same concept of you know, we're all in different phases of life becoming who we are.

Barb Schmidt: [00:44:03] Yeah. Beautiful. I think that idea of losing ourselves to can kind of stem from being a people pleaser for that massive people pleaser and a recovering people

pleaser now. But that idea that we have to please other people and we're afraid to disappoint and all that kind of stuff. So, you know, when you're in a people pleasing mode and you're afraid to disappoint others, you're you're almost always disappointing yourself in some form or another.

Michelle Maros: [00:44:26] So it's also interesting, though, because I think especially if you feel like you relate to the the narrative that you lose yourself when you're in your twenties and going through that period of life, it's almost like something that you have to go through so that you can really find who you are or know who you are or know what isn't you. And maybe it's not something that's wrong, but it's just a part of becoming. Because if we don't know what we're not, how do we know what we are?

Barb Schmidt: [00:44:55] Love it. I love it Michelle.

Michelle Maros: [00:44:56] I never thought about it that way because I always kind of judged myself kind of in a gossip kind of way of some of the choices that I made and big decisions of where I moved and where I lived and what I did and who I hung out with and who I was in relationships with, and thinking about what could have been if I didn't or if I had made different choices or maybe made the more aligned intuitive choices. But maybe it's not even a ghost ship, but maybe it's just that process of learning who you are and knowing what's not for you. We have to learn it. How would we ever know otherwise?

[00:45:34] Wow.

[00:45:34] Interesting.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:35] It is.

Michelle Maros: [00:45:38] All right. So your last book.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:44] Well, I think.

Michelle Maros: [00:45:47] I know you're getting a little twitchy, that you have to stop talking about books. It's okay.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:51] I'm trying to think. How could I wrap it up with one last book?

Michelle Maros: [00:45:54] Well, you have one, and I have one.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:55] Well, I know that we have one that we use together. So there's one other one, though.

Michelle Maros: [00:46:02] Do You see this?

[00:46:03] I don't want to stop talking.

[00:46:04] Do you see what I have to deal with?

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:04] So there's one other thing. There's one other current one that I just want to give a shout out to because it's all about therapy and this person is a therapist. And so if you are this I love this book. It's called Maybe You Should Talk to Someone

Michelle Maros: [00:46:17] Oh, I'm sorry. I leapt ahead.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:19] Maybe We Should Talk to Someone. Just a quick shout out for that one. Because if you know I've been in therapy, I feel like most of my life and talking about therapy and talking about therapists and Lori Gottlieb, this is a beautiful book. Maybe You Should Talk to Someone. She shares her experiences as a psychotherapist and shares an inside look at the therapy process, revealing her clients journeys as well as her own experience when she was seeking therapy after a breakup. So I believe people ask me about therapy all the time. It's really hard sometimes to find a therapist. So this book is a really good beginning. If you're looking for a therapist or if you want to talk to a therapist, I think you will. You'll really love this book. It's a perfect reminder that we have the power to transform our lives from the inside. Out is what I got out of this book, because I'm always about living our lives authentically and living them from the inside out. We talk about that all the time, you and I. Michelle. So and the quote

from that that she has that I really love is but part of getting to know yourself is to know yourself kind of what you just said, actually.

Michelle Maros: [00:47:20] Wow, look at how that work.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:21] Look at how that worked out. And we didn't even plan this.

Michelle Maros: [00:47:24] No, that was a mistake, actually. Wow. But it's not a mistake.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:28] Wow. But part of part of getting to know yourself is to know yourself to let go of the limiting stories you've told yourself about who you are so that you aren't trapped by them, so that you can live your life and not the story you've been telling yourself about your life. Wow. So that's Lori Gottlieb. Maybe You Should Talk to Someone.

Michelle Maros: [00:47:49] And you said that's a book that is good for breakups, too.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:52] Good for breakups, good for transition periods and life. Good for changes, Good. You know, maybe you should talk to someone. I mean, it's really if you've been thinking about that, you need to talk to someone or you're thinking about, maybe I should go talk to a therapist.

Michelle Maros: [00:48:04] You should read someone.

Barb Schmidt: [00:48:05] Yeah, it's I think it's a really good book. It's a good book. It's a really, really, really good book. I hadn't run across a book by a therapist talking about her own experiences in therapy and the idea of unknowing yourself so that you can really learn to know yourself.

Michelle Maros: [00:48:23] Love it. So now your last one. This is a book that we often give to our teenagers.

Barb Schmidt: [00:48:32] Yes. Yes, you actually, we were. Michelle talks often about the teenagers that we work with in a dual enrollment program. It's actually a fellowship and a dual

enrollment program with a university. And so when we first started this program way back in 2000, 14, 15.

Michelle Maros: [00:48:50] Mm.

Barb Schmidt: [00:48:51] Oh, no, no, no. Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:48:53] No, 14 Was your book.

Barb Schmidt: [00:48:54] 18. 2018. Yes, exactly.

Michelle Maros: [00:48:56] The years are very jumbled.

Barb Schmidt: [00:48:58] Yeah. 2018 We were looking for a book to give teenagers and so Michelle and I were talking and, and really this was your recommendation. I know you were absolutely captivated by this book as a teen. And so why don't you do the honors of talking about this book?

Michelle Maros: [00:49:13] Yippe. So The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho is a favorite of mine. It was one of the first books that I read when I kind of started this new chapter of my life and felt very unsure of where I was going and what I was doing and if any of it even mattered or made sense. It's just a very comforting, inspiring book that reminds me of my purpose and my passion and kind of the meaning of life. And just like with so many of these other books, this book opens your mind to believing that your dreams are possible, that we're here for a reason. We can do great things and just that. If not to sound cheesy, but if you can. Dream it. You can do it. Um, and a quote that of course, that we both love is. And when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:50:18] Yeah. It's such a simple, small, short little storybook. It's it's powerful and it and it really resonates with teens. We have found that when we give this book out, we give it as the first as their incoming. I think it's our first session with them.

Michelle Maros: [00:50:34] I mean, it's a great book for anyone, though honestly.

Barb Schmidt: [00:50:36] It is like, Oh, no, for sure.

Michelle Maros: [00:50:37] But I read it as an adult. But it's a great book if you're looking to give it something to a teenager.

Barb Schmidt: [00:50:41] Because people are always asking us what what of all these books that you talk about, can you give to a teenager? And this would be the one that I think both of us would recommend because it's I love what you just said about it, Michelle. It it's it's awe inspiring the passion and the purpose and that anything is possible and that we are here to do great things and that we all we all are on the same path walking in life and we can do great things.

Michelle Maros: [00:51:08] It's great I love it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:51:08] So The Alchemist.

Michelle Maros: [00:51:11] And then lastly, I wanted to throw in just an overall favorite of mine of.... This was the first book that I read. This was the first self-help book that I ever read, and it really did change how I viewed everything about life. And I know that it's a really popular book now, but back when I read it, not saying that like I knew about it before everybody else did, but it had it wasn't as well known. But The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz, you you gave it to me, right? You said you need to read this because it will benefit you.

Barb Schmidt: [00:51:56] Yeah, it will change your life.

Michelle Maros: [00:51:58] And it did. And even though these concepts, again, are things that people talk about, often The Four Agreements which are. Don't take anything personally. I like literally just had a brain malfunction. Personally don't take things personally do your best. What's the next one? Wow. Maybe I need to revisit it. I just blanked..

Barb Schmidt: [00:52:39] Be impeccable with your word. Sorry. I'm not helping you. Because I am not helping you because I'm.

Michelle Maros: [00:52:41] I literally. I threw this one in there.

Barb Schmidt: [00:52:44] Be impeccable with your word.

Michelle Maros: [00:52:45] So rewind The Four Agreements. I know. I'm sorry. I literally. We're imperfect people. It's good. Be impeccable with your word is number one. Don't take anything personally as number two. Don't make assumptions as number three, and always do your best as number four. And those four agreements literally did change my life. And the way that he talks about these agreements and how it goes into your daily life is just everything. So if you're finding yourself in a transition or unsure about things and just want an easy read to help you move through life. This book is really it. And especially the don't take anything personally and don't make assumptions. Those two in particular really changed how I viewed life.

Barb Schmidt: [00:53:45] It is. It's a life changing book. I'm sorry I didn't help you out with it, but I thought it was cool the way you kind of maneuvered that and work through that. I thought it was really great,

Michelle Maros: [00:53:52] You know.

Barb Schmidt: [00:53:52] And I think the idea of being impeccable with your word for me when I first read this book so long ago and gave it to you. The idea of being impeccable with our word, really. I think speaks strongly to our uniqueness. Like if there's something that you feel and something that is moving, you don't abandon it just because someone else might not agree with you. Like standing strong in your word and your honesty and your truth and your uniqueness and being okay with exactly how you are.

Michelle Maros: [00:54:26] Absolutely. So that rounds out our first installment of books. I know, just looking at you, the wheels are turning because she wants more and we'll do more. But this hopefully can get you all many books to put on your nightstand and hopefully dive into until we do another chapter of this. So do you want to just briefly recap the ones that we discussed in this episode?

Barb Schmidt: [00:54:59] Well, because you know, Michelle, you're right. This could be a first installment, a two part first installment, because I you know, I said I spent over a decade studying all the great traditions and religions.

Michelle Maros: [00:55:11] And I was going to say there's a few that I'm surprised you didn't include, but it's a whole other conversation

Barb Schmidt: [00:55:16] Yeah, it's a whole other conversation. And we could actually do so much more. But so in in the part two of this episode, yes, we started off with Viola Davis. The best memoir for me of all time is Finding Me by Viola Davis. And please get the audio book and hear her beautiful voice tell her story in her own words.

Michelle Maros: [00:55:40] And we'll link all these in the show notes. I forgot to add that. So you can easily find them.

Barb Schmidt: [00:55:45] And You know, one of my favorite books that I love to reread over and over is Letters to a Young Poet by Rilke.

Michelle Maros: [00:55:51] Mm hmm.

Barb Schmidt: [00:55:53] And then the book that I give often as a gift is the brilliant master writer, Cheryl Strayed. Tiny, Beautiful Things.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:02] Yes.

Barb Schmidt: [00:56:03] Um, one of my favorite audiobooks right now. And really amazing touch your heart, compassion. Uh, empathy, self forgiveness is Tyler Merritt's book, I Take My Coffee Black.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:20] And Braving the wilderness by Brene' Browne.

Barb Schmidt: [00:56:23] An Atlas of the Heart. Her current book.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:26] And then Becoming by Michelle Obama.

Barb Schmidt: [00:56:28] And then the one, uh, if you're looking to know more about therapy and understanding, uh, how you have to annoy yourself before you get to know yourself. Lori Gottlieb's Maybe You Should Talk to Someone. And then finally, Michelle Drumroll.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:44] Well, The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho, a great book for teens and just for anyone really. It's a great book to reread as well. And then lastly, The Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz. Classic.

Barb Schmidt: [00:56:57] Classic.

Michelle Maros: [00:56:58] Well, we did it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:57:00] I'm exhausted. Yeah, I know. I cried a few times during this whole thing.

Michelle Maros: [00:57:03] I think you tried talking about every single one of these books.

Barb Schmidt: [00:57:06] Actually. I know. You know, I think that's.

Michelle Maros: [00:57:10] That the point I guess.

Barb Schmidt: [00:57:12] It is the point. That is the point. So I'm just going to close out my my whole part of this whole conversation saying, I love all of you so much. Thank you for being here. Thank you for giving us the privilege of being able to every week talk to you about what matters most to us and spending two weeks talking about reading for inspiration and the the messages, really the the single message, I think from all of these books and all of the people that we've shared with you, and please write to us and tell us the books that you love and the books that are touching your hearts really is that living your life from the inside out and really getting comfortable and loving and trusting and accepting yourself completely, knowing that you are a unique, extraordinary human being. And we're all walking life's path together hand in hand.

Michelle Maros: [00:57:59] I don't think I can add anything to that because that was so beautiful and lovely. So thank you for sharing that and thank you for sharing your thoughts about all these books. I think the emotion that it brings up for you is the whole point of it. So we, the listeners, me, appreciate your vulnerability. As per usual. And of course, we appreciate all of you who listen to this podcast week on week out. We're so grateful for all of you in the community. And yeah, please let us know which books are really jumping off the page and speaking to you. The best way to stay in touch with us, of course, is through social media at Peaceful_Barb, at Barb Knows Best Pod, and at Michelle Maros. That's where you can send us questions, comments, concerns or other potential podcast topics. If you're not yet already, please make sure that you are liked and subscribe to the podcast wherever you listen to podcasts. Apple, Google, Spotify. The best way to stay up to date on every new episode. Never miss an episode by doing this. And lastly, of course, if you are enjoying this podcast and you want to help the little podcast that could out, please give us a five star rating on iTunes or Spotify. And leave us a review. It means a lot to us. It's very nice and it helps us greatly. And that is all. Thanks so much for listening again. Thanks for being a part of this community and we'll chat with you next week because as we know, Barb knows best bye!