

Episode 80 – Our Take On the Aging Conversation
Barb Knows Best™
Episode Transcripts

Michelle Maros: [00:00:11] Hello, everyone. Hi, friends. Welcome back to Barb Knows Best, the podcast. I am your co-host, Michelle Maros, and I have the absolute privilege of sitting across the table from my mom. Barb.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:27] Hi, Michelle.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:28] I do hope today that she'll know best because I'm feeling like I know sub best today, so hopefully you can pick up some of that slack.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:36] You're so funny. You know, it feels like that sometimes, especially when we're in the summer. Just kind of feels like I think the that title of The Lazy Days of Summer is absolutely true.

Michelle Maros: [00:00:48] Is it?

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:49] Yeah. Especially with all the....

Michelle Maros: [00:00:51] Doesn't feel like that this summer.

Barb Schmidt: [00:00:51] Well, especially with all the heat. I mean certainly I mean I hate to get into weather because that's a not a thing that we talk about necessarily as the weather, but with all the heat, it just feels like it's very heavy. You know, the summer's been really heavy for everyone, not only across the United States, but across the world. So, yeah, I think we're good. And I'm looking forward to speaking with you today, Michelle, and talking to all our beautiful friends out there.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:18] Yeah. Speaking of summer, we've taken a couple of weeks off of recording, so it feels like it's been a bit. Well, it has been a bit. Doesn't feel like it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:01:28] I'm ready. Especially this topic. It's. I get so many questions about this topic, so I'm very. And maybe that's why you said, Do I know best and do I have a lot to say about this? Because I really do so. This can be fun.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:41] I love that for us.

Barb Schmidt: [00:01:42] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:01:42] Love that for all of us. So, yeah, as she was saying, this is a topic that we've had lots of requests for and even I requested for myself. And I think we all could benefit from a real grounded. Loving chat about this topic.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:07] Agreed.

Michelle Maros: [00:02:09] I hope so.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:09] No. Agreed. We're going to talk to all of you about aging. That is the I would say it's probably one of the top three questions we get about how do we age gracefully? How do we...

Michelle Maros: [00:02:23] I hate that.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:24] I know. Well, gracefully, I think gracefully. For me, that word means honestly or truthfully or grounded in our own skin.

Michelle Maros: [00:02:31] I know.

Barb Schmidt: [00:02:31] I think that's what, for me, Grace means. It's like, how can we actually accept what is and continue to live our best lives? And so I think we get this all the time because I remember I said to you when I turned, I think it was when I turned 50, I'm 66 right now, but I think it might have been when I turned 50 or maybe 55, I can't remember, certainly by 55. I remember saying to you, Wow. I have fewer years left than what's in the rear view mirror of what's behind.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:05] Yeah you said to me recently, too. I'm like, this is....

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:07] Because it's really age has never been an issue for me. I started my business. I started all the things that I've done at a very, very young age. I was one of the youngest and very first female McDonald's owner operators. If you've listened to this podcast for a long time, you've heard me talk about that throughout different episodes. And so I was always the youngest, and I was a woman. And it just always I was in the natural flow of everything. So age has never been an issue. I turned 30, I turned 40, and I turned 50, but I think it was 55. Between 55 and 60, I thought, wow, I actually am in the on the last, you know, in the end and not not feeling like I have as many years left. I do have a lot of years off, but you know what I mean.

Michelle Maros: [00:03:55] The Back Nine.

Barb Schmidt: [00:03:55] Yeah, I think everybody knows what I mean. So it's very interesting when you get that deep realization and that's what I'm so happy about this discussion today. How can we it hits all of us age hits all of us. I mean, it's the one thing that we can't control. We are going to age. It is life. And so age hits all of us. So how can we, when we get that hit within us that, wow, I am aging, I can look at photographs of myself and actually see it now and actually feel it and actually know it. So how can I be in the flow of it and be not only okay with it, but thrive? Because I really believe some of the things we're going to talk about today, wisdom is everything, and we certainly are much wiser when we get older. We've learned so much, we've experienced so much, we've done so much. And I think that can be our greatest asset and most fun in closing out the last part of our lives. So I think aging is a really beautiful topic and I'm excited today.

Michelle Maros: [00:04:53] It is a beautiful topic and I think there's lots of layers to dive into of how it impacts us and how it impacts our mindsets and what we think about ourselves and our age and our place in the world as we age. There's just so many aspects of it that are really tricky. So I'm excited to chat about it because I do think that it's. It can be hard to figure out. And make sense of it all. And especially as we'll get into like the narratives that people tell us and all of this stuff, but it's just so layered.

Barb Schmidt: [00:05:35] Definitely. I mean, society, I honestly feel that, you know, society doesn't embrace aging, especially if you're a woman, and especially if you're actually still trying to live your best life. But society wants to constantly remind us, you know, you're too old for this, or, wow, that's all you've done. Or, oh, don't you know that you're too late? Or you can't possibly do that Now you're 66 years old. What are you thinking? So I think that, as always, the words and the opinions and the thoughts of other people, i.e. society, I don't know who gave them the power to tell us what to do or what to think or what's right and what's wrong. But but we've been living like this for as long as I can remember. So society really tries to do a number, I think, on us, especially women, as I said, on aging. And so I think our conversation today is going to be about how can we embrace the inevitable, which is that we are going to age and have fun and understand and feel like, wow, this are really our best days are yet to come. We you know, what's that quote? We haven't experienced our best day yet.

Michelle Maros: [00:06:48] Yeah, I love that. That feeling and that viewpoint of life, because we have to hold on to that sense of hope like you talk about or keep something beautiful in your mind, because if we start to feed those thoughts that like, oh, you know, the good old days, my best days are behind me and that longing of going backwards. Obviously it's not possible to time travel. Maybe one day. But, you know, we can't go back to those days that we think are like the best days. So yeah, what can we what can we start to tell our minds to keep it grounded in reality? And I think, you know, the one thing that's true in this conversation is like we are always in the process of aging, you know, because time is going by and we're always getting older. I mean, you can't stop time. You can't go backwards in age like that. I feel like is the one fixed variable of this conversation and it's almost like a hamster on a wheel thinking of knowing that to be true, but somehow trying to reverse it. You know, you hear the words of like anti aging and slowing down the aging process or even just being afraid of aging.

Michelle Maros: [00:08:09] But like out of every layer that we're going to talk about, the one thing that's true is it's happening for all of us. But. It's happening because we're alive. Like, if we weren't aging, we would be dead. So I really feel like the conversation and the narrative that has been ingrained in us about this has become so backwards because. Aging is a gift because if we weren't doing it, we wouldn't be here. And somehow we've made it seem like. You know, I'm getting older and that's a bad thing. And I have lots of thoughts about this from my own

personal experience because, you know, the whole concept of time has become so wonky, especially coming out of Covid years and just. How much how fast time feels like it's going these days, but. The one true thing is that. Aging is happening whether we like it or not. And I don't know if we need to, like reword it or figure out a different way to name. That because I think aging has such a negative connotation these days. But. Thank goodness we're all aging because we're here.

Barb Schmidt: [00:09:28] True. Yeah, it's so true. And I. I'm not even sure that it has a negative connotation these days. I think it always has. And I'm so happy that you said that word anti-aging, because I am anti against that word. Anti means against. So why in the world would we say anti aging? We are against aging. And so I feel like the crux of my conversation here today with you and with everyone out there listening is that we we need to do exactly what you said Michelle reframe how we think about things because the mind is our greatest asset and our greatest resource and how we think about things and what we say about things and what we say to ourselves and what we believe about ourselves and what we believe about words are powerful. They are everything and they truly are the the epitome of how we live our lives. They are at the foundation of everything we do in life. So I feel strongly that we have to start reframing. We have to start looking at things differently. We have to start really noticing what are we saying to ourselves and to say that we're anti aging or this anti-aging cream or this anti aging is crazy. It is crazy.

Barb Schmidt: [00:10:45] I am so vehemently against that language because we can't be if we're going to be against aging, we are always going to be struggling with getting older. We're always going to be struggling with how we look. We're always going to be struggling with ourselves. And frankly, I believe the foundation of everything about aging in a graceful, beautiful flow of nature, flow of life way is how we care and love ourselves. If we aren't loving ourselves, if we aren't really embracing who we are and truly understanding that aging is a gift, we are all here. Aging is a gift. We have been given the gift of life. Every single morning that we wake up and step out of bed. So aging is a gift. So I believe today, with all of you listening, that we have to begin to truly love ourselves as we are right now in this moment and make that decision today, you know, to love ourselves and not have that discussion anymore, not have that idea that we have to be against aging or that it's bad or they weren't good enough, or we're not pretty enough, we aren't smart enough, we aren't capable enough and really

understand that we are vibrant, capable beings in whatever form that we're in right now, and stop letting all these random thoughts and all these thoughts of other people in society and everything tell us what is the truth, because we already know the truth.

Barb Schmidt: [00:12:09] So I just feel really strongly about that. I think when people ask me all the time, what do I think is my greatest? Asset or what do I think is my greatest practice? And it's really just understanding the mind, being an expert in the mind. We all can be an expert of our own minds and I am very vigilant about the thoughts that I think in my mind. I don't want to ever say that I don't think negative thoughts and that of course I do. We're all human beings. Of course I'm a human being, but I'm always aware, Wow, you are saying something that is not true to yourself and now it's going to take you down a rabbit hole of of people pleasing or not thinking that you're good enough or all those things, those random negative thoughts that the mind will start throwing at you if you allow it and if you believe it. So I really think that whole idea of anti aging has to be eliminated from your vocabulary.

Michelle Maros: [00:13:03] Totally. I agree.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:05] Just remember anti means against.

Michelle Maros: [00:13:06] Because it's impossible also.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:08] Exactly. You're trying to do something you can't do. Anti means against. So every time you buy an anti-aging cream or every time you think of anti-aging, you're going against.

Michelle Maros: [00:13:18] Well, look, and I get it. Like, we all want to keep things looking fresh and we'll talk about that in this conversation. There's nothing wrong with buying an anti-aging cream.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:30] Oh, no. no. no. I didn't mean that. You're right. Thanks for saying that. No, I didn't mean that. I just mean reframe it when you buy it. Say it's not anti aging. It's pro aging. Like it's for me to live my best self, to look my best self in this moment in time.

Michelle Maros: [00:13:44] Yeah.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:45] Thanks for clarifying.

Michelle Maros: [00:13:46] No, no, no.

Barb Schmidt: [00:13:47] I'm not against any of that. I think it's all wonderful. But just remember that society or the marketing is trying to get you to buy into the fact that this, whatever it is we're buying, will keep us from aging or keep us look. And we want to embrace aging. So if you could reframe it in your mind because remember, the thoughts are so powerful, we can create our own change. I can buy a cream that says anti aging. And I can look at that and say, Wow, this is going to help me look my best in this moment. At 66 years old, instead of thinking that, oh, this is going to keep me from aging.

Michelle Maros: [00:14:19] Right. Well, and this is an entirely different conversation, but those kinds of words and language that is marketed to us is meant to keep us in that pursuit of something that's not technically possible, but. Nevertheless. So here we are.

Barb Schmidt: [00:14:39] Yeah. I mean, it's just the way it is. I think we can't. We've always talked about. We can't change the outside world, but we can change how we view ourselves and how we take in the information from the outside world. And I think that's there's no there is no I mean, I guess there's no more powerful example than this idea of aging, because this is the one thing that can never it does not ever stop. And it is the one thing that we have to embrace if we want to not be at war with ourselves for the rest of our lives as we're aging. And if we want to really be in the flow of living our best life all the way to the end, it's it's really a beautiful way to look at it. And we have the power. To really start to kick start. I think you use these words in a blog that you wrote recently about aging to kick start our own self love journey, our own powerful way of embracing the fact that as we get older is a beautiful thing because we are wiser, we are more content, we are more satisfied, we've learned so much and really give ourselves credit for the years that we've put into our lives all along the way.

Michelle Maros: [00:15:50] Yeah, hold that thought. Let's take a quick break.

Barb Schmidt: [00:15:55] And we're back because I have to say, at 66 years old, you know, I feel like I'm living my best life. I truly have not. It's been a tough few years. Which we have a whole episode. Devoted to some of those things that have been happening for me in the past few years. But it's been a tough few years. But I feel. Exuberant and looking forward to life as I wake up every single day.

Michelle Maros: [00:16:25] That's so cool.

Barb Schmidt: [00:16:26] And I think it's all about the mind.

Michelle Maros: [00:16:29] Yeah. Well, and I think even. As you were just saying, that, you know, as you get older, you get wiser and you're exuberant. But I would love to if we could just try to look at our lives through a lens of like each chapter or each period or each age serves a purpose. You know, your your youth, your younger years, your childhood like that all has a purpose and your older years has a purpose. And none is better than the or worse than the other. And. If we could just start to view like our life in totality of each plays a role and each serves a purpose and we don't need to. Feed those thoughts that like, Oh, if only I could just be go back to the younger years because those were better. Or if I could go look like I did when I was younger because I looked better or I can't wait, you know, it's, you know, it's like what they say. Youth is wasted on the young because when you're young, you want to be old. When you're old, you want to be young. And I think that's the hamster wheel that we're talking about, is we're always thinking about wanting. Aspects of our lives that it's not possible. We can't go forward and backwards. So how can we? Like we always say, be where our feet are in whatever age and moment that we're in right now. And being like, this is where I am right now. And I it might be hard. I might be going through some stuff. There might be some things that I'm having a difficult time accepting, but it's where I am right now. And obviously that's not easy. But I think for me in this conversation, it's like, how can we feed that narrative? And kind of go against the grain of like the loud, loud narratives that we hear in marketing and advertising and society and all of that stuff.

Barb Schmidt: [00:18:32] I love it. Michelle And I think it's true. It's not easy, and especially if you're going through a hard time. When I think about the past three years, it was hard. I would look at myself in the mirror. When you're going through a divorce, it's so easy to get caught up

in that, Oh, it's because I don't I'm not young anymore. I don't look like I used to look and I'll look at pictures of myself over the past few years and like, Oh my gosh, look how much I've changed. You know, all the things that the mind is trying to tell you. So it isn't easy. And so you might go through a really tough patch there. I can definitely tell you I went through a really rough patch of really trying to not believe the thoughts in the mind. And gather myself up every single day and did the best that I could. So I want people to feel like you're just doing the best you can every day. And when I look back on the past few years, many days were very, very, very rocky. Many weeks, many months. But as I look back, I look where I'm here. Yeah, like it's that pink song I am here. And so I am here. And when I think back on that, there were some days where I thought, Oh, I don't know if I'm going to make it, but I knew that I was like, my mind would say, Can you actually do this? And there was a little voice in me that said, Of course you can.

Barb Schmidt: [00:19:43] Because this is my practice. But it wasn't easy. And so I think one of the best ways to start with trying to embrace this idea of loving and caring and being okay with ourselves is this idea you know, I'm a very I'm very adamant about I write on my mirror all the time. I write on your mirror Michelle all the time. And I like to write things with dry erase markers on my mirror because that helped me so much over the past decades. But it really helped me a lot during the past few years during this divorce is that idea of the reminders we it's so hard. When we are really constantly feeling beat up in the mind and we're constantly needing needing to try to be, as you said, being better, better because we're not good enough or being trying to come back in the past or trying to go forward. How is this all going to look? Just all the things that happen. It's so easy to want to leave the present moment because the feelings are hard. The the difficulties are hard. It's just hard. Like, I don't want to be here. I don't want to be in this situation I'm in or I don't want to be in these feelings that I'm feeling.

Barb Schmidt: [00:20:47] And so having a reminder on the mirror like I put on my mirror during this three years, You are beautiful. I would walk in and see that you are beautiful, you are beautiful. So just finding that way. And so what if we said. That every single day we make a tiny little bit of effort to just be happy in our own skin. And for me that means saying to myself, You are beautiful. That reminder. Because beauty is not just. Our face or our body or our hair or whatever it is. Beauty is also on the inside. And I would remind myself what a kind and loving person that I am. And so it's very important to remind yourself every single day that you are

more than just your looks or your age or all the things you are a combination of everything. And so feeling comfortable in my own skin has been a real game changer for me in the past few years. Like I really feel good about myself from the inside out. So when the mind tells me, you know, my hair is too gray or I have too many wrinkles or what am I going to do about this deep crease in my forehead or whatever it is I just remind. I look at the mirror. You're beautiful.

Michelle Maros: [00:22:06] Well, it's you know, if you've seen the Barbie movie, you know that scene where she is at the bus stop, Barbie, and has been living in her Barbie world where everything is great and there's no, you know, societal standards or norms. And she's sitting next to an elder woman and she just looks over at her and just tells her that she's beautiful. And I've heard a lot of people talking about that scene of like. How poignant that was because. That's not how our world looks at aging in that way. And she was viewing this woman through such a pure lens of seeing her for who she really was or is and not how we think. People should be as far as the beauty standards. And that's what you're saying. If we can just view ourselves as beautiful as we are with whatever. Quote unquote faults that we think that we've accumulated over time and just appreciating those aspects of ourselves rather than ruminating over them.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:29] I love this Michelle so much because it brought me back to when you brought up that scene in the Barbie movie. That was powerful. I had tears in my eyes.

Michelle Maros: [00:23:36] I think that's a scene that they actually wanted to cut at first.

Barb Schmidt: [00:23:39] Yeah, I think I think so too. But it was just so powerful. It made me it brought me back to during the Covid pandemic days when we really weren't leaving our houses. I, you know, we weren't leaving our houses, so I didn't do anything with my hair. I mean, I brushed it and I washed it and I did all that, but I didn't get a cut. I didn't color it. I did nothing with my hair for almost two years. And so the gray started coming out and I remember asking my my hairdresser years ago, I remember saying to him, if I just let the gray because he said, You're getting a lot of gray here. If I just let the gray come out, what would it look like? He goes, You don't want to do that. And I remember laughing. He goes, No, you do not want to do that. And he said, Besides, it would take forever. So I remember thinking during during the Covid times, the pandemic times that, Wow, I'm actually now seeing my hair as the gray is growing out. And where I'm going with this story is. So when I finally decided to go to a

hairdresser and get my hair cut and and see what it is that I wanted to do with my hair, now that I had a kind of a clean slate because it had grown out so much. And I remember her saying to me it was a brand new person. I remember her saying to me, You know, this gray looks pretty on you. I don't think we really want to do much with it. You may want to put a few little highlights here and there, especially maybe around your face, but it actually looks really pretty on you.

Barb Schmidt: [00:24:58] Let's try it that way. I said. I would love that. I would love to do hardly anything with my hair, but if it would, you know, look, you know, normal or not normal natural. And so we've been doing that. And I bring this all up to say I'm like a couple of years in, I don't even know. I don't even know. But anyway, I bring this up to say I have never in my entire life had more people stop me wherever I go. And on social media and online had people tell me how much they love my hair, how much they love. Wow. We love the way you've woven some a little bit of color in with your gray. Your gray looks so pretty. And I remember the first time somebody said that to me like, Oh, wow, you really can see the gray. I don't know what I was thinking, but and I just say that because it's it's almost. It's that reminder that we are beautiful from the inside out and we are beautiful from the outside in. And it really is how you carry yourself. It's just been a big reminder to me of how much people truly can be honest and be taken with the natural way that we can live our lives, I guess is what I'm trying to say, that I would never have guessed that this many people over the past year or so think that my hair looks great because it looks totally different than it used to.

Michelle Maros: [00:26:21] Seeing what's interesting is like, I don't really even feel like it looks that different. It's just evolved, beautiful. It's just who you are. But I guess that's the whole point. Um, and the other thing that I wanted to chat about too is that idea of comparing ourselves with other versions of ourselves. I think that's a huge source of angst and. Kind of the barrier to help to keep from keeping us from accepting who we are is like, you know, looking at old photos of ourselves and seeing what we used to look like and wanting to to still look like that or, you know, for myself, I can remember when I first saw a gray hair, you know, sprout, and when I first saw like a wrinkle kind of start to form. And it's like those pangs of like, oh, my God, it's starting. And then comparing yourself like, I didn't used to have that. These aren't things that I've had before. And it is tricky to grapple with change, you know? I think, like I said, there's so many layers to this conversation because with the privilege of aging does come

change. So again, obviously if we're aging, that means that we're still alive, which is a beautiful thing. But of course getting older.

Michelle Maros: [00:27:54] Aging does present changes in our lives in a multitude of appearance of health, of course, you know, in your career and your relationships and your aspects of life and your mobility. There's change. And I think that's if, you know, you always talk about getting to the root of some of these issues. I think one of the biggest issues with aging for a lot of us is managing and understanding and dealing with change. You know, I'm so used to looking like this. How do I deal with now looking like this? I'm so used to being living my life this way, and now because of X, Y, or z reasons, I have to live my life this way. It's that aspect of change. And so if we can really grab that root issue of change age and stop comparing other phases of our lives to where we are right now. I think that also can help us to embrace aging or age gracefully, because for me, that's been one of the biggest blocks of embracing. It is like. Well, wait. I want to. I want to be like this, like I was before. I don't you know, it's change. And change is like the hardest thing I think, for us as humans to really embrace.

Barb Schmidt: [00:29:18] Absolutely. Amen. Change. We really don't embrace change very easily as a society or as a human. And I think that it's interesting when you talk about comparing to our former selves, when I think back, especially during these past three years when I've looked at pictures of myself, I've thought, Oh wow, why was I so hard on myself way back then? I look I look really good in this picture. So it's very interesting how we can change our perspectives like that. And it's so dangerous to kind of keep comparing to our former selves instead of instead of really looking at ourselves exactly as we are the beautiful human beings that we are and really start to respect. I think it's such a total lack of respect that we have for ourselves and how can we have respect for others and other things if we can't even respect our own selves? So if we can really start to have respect for our aging at every stage, Because honestly, when I think about respecting my aging at every stage, it's the greatest kindness that I can give myself. What better gift and what better kindness can we share offer ourselves than gracefully entering every stage of aging for ourselves and those we love? And it brings me back to that, that Barbie moment.

Barb Schmidt: [00:30:36] It's just that idea that aging is beautiful. The idea of being alive and aging is beautiful. And if we can actually see it as beautiful and I think people commenting on

my gray hair and how beautiful it is, they're commenting on this idea that it is beautiful, it's beautiful that I didn't have gray hair and now I do. You know, it's kind of an interesting thing. And I think people that that give us the compliments of what's happening and all of that as we're aging. It's a beautiful thing because they're acknowledging that every stage of aging is an act of kindness to ourselves. And I think we all want to be kind human beings. Kindness is just such a beautiful thing and a huge thing in our society. Can we just be kind to each other and kind to ourselves? Has to start with like the kindness to ourselves. It has to start with that and. I. One of my favorite authors is Annie Lamott. I've been following her forever. She's in my age frame and in my wheelhouse. And she wrote this that I've never forgotten, and I actually have it written down in my in my notebook. Age has given me I might cry a little bit, actually.

Michelle Maros: [00:31:47] Let it out.

Barb Schmidt: [00:31:48] Age has given me what I was looking for my entire life. It has given me me. It has provided time and experience and failures and triumphs and time tested friends who have helped me step into the shape that was waiting for me. I fit into me now. I have an organic life, finally, not necessarily the one that people imagine for me or tried to get me to have. I have the life I long for. I have become the woman I hardly dared imagine I would be. Wow. And I think to write that on your mirror, I mean, it's a lot. But I think to put it up, I have a couple little things that I've taped up to my mirror. This is it. As a woman, I find I have become the woman I hardly dared imagine I would be. I have goosebumps. And that's kind of how I feel. I'm so happy to be at this stage of my life. I never thought that I would be here. So I think it's a beautiful it's just reframing, you know, Michelle That's what we're talking about here. How do we reframe the thoughts that we're thinking about? And I think that's the whole key. How can we start to be kind and loving to ourselves and start to reframe the way we talk about ourselves?

Michelle Maros: [00:33:10] And loving and accepting ourselves as we are in this moment, because time will pass. And like you said, you'll look back and say, Oh, look how beautiful I was. I wish I could have felt that in the moment. And that's that same hamster wheel of never being satisfied in the moment, but constantly looking back and thinking, what was I thinking? So rather than. Always wishing something else. How can we start to embrace who we are and what we are now? Because this moment is always fleeting, You know, each passing moment is

going into our past and do we want to perpetuate that hamster wheel cycle of maybe tomorrow I'll feel good about myself, But it's not today. Because when is that? When is today going to be it? And that, I think, is the reframing the rewiring our brains to, okay, maybe there's parts of myself that need a little extra work in really loving and accepting. I think we all have that, you know, body issues, beauty issues, health issues, whatever it might be. But that doesn't mean that I can't also love myself as I am right now, knowing that, again, these moments are fleeting. This period of my life will be gone and change is always happening. So rather than. Feeding that mindset of yearning for something that's happened in the past or comparing who I am now with who I was in my 20s and that was what I've recently been grappling with, is all of a sudden I've never really felt weird about age, but I started to feel like, Why do I feel like I'm like the oldest person on the Internet? Or like, somehow I'm older than everybody that I speak to somehow. Obviously, that's not true. I'm sitting across from someone who's older than me at.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:14] 37 years old. It's amazing.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:17] But that's, you know, I was.

Barb Schmidt: [00:35:18] The trick that the mind can do.

Michelle Maros: [00:35:19] But that's what the mind does. And then you look for people who are younger than you to prove the point also. But I started to feel like, Oh my God, I'm the oldest. I'm just so old compared to all of these other people. And how did that happen? Because I you know, you only know what you've experienced. So I've only experienced. Quote unquote, youth. And now I'm in middle age ish territory. And it's like, wait, when did I go from youth to middle or beginning to middle and look at all these people that are still in the beginning and. I don't want to. I don't want to feel that way because those feelings were not pleasant. And so I think. Reminding ourselves like what you said with things on the mirror. Reminders on your phone. Having people who can bring you back to reality of like, No, you are where you are right now and it's perfect. Yes, you were 37 years ago, but you are where you are now and that's perfect.

Barb Schmidt: [00:36:24] And I think it's so perfect that you brought that up because it is so interesting to me how we have to constantly keep reminding ourselves, I think, how we fall into

that, that space of feeling like, Oh my gosh, what happened? I'm look how old I am now or I'm not the I'm not the young one anymore. Is that we forget that we're worthy. We forget that we are worthy of the kindness and the love and we're worthy of our hopes and our dreams. None of that has changed. We're looking at what has changed, and that's aging and that's our looks and all of those things. But what remains constant and never changes is that we are always in every single moment worthy of our hopes, worthy of our dreams, worthy of kindness, worthy of love for ourselves. And I think if we we have to just constantly keep reminding ourselves of that because we look at something and we look at change, or we look at the way we look or whatever it is, and we automatically think, Oh my gosh, it's too late for me now.

Michelle Maros: [00:37:25] Yeah, and that's the other part I want to get into.

Barb Schmidt: [00:37:28] Yeah, it's too late for me now. Oh, time has passed me by. Wow. I'm 37 years old now. I can't do this, this, this, and this. And so it's just we. We just. We forget. We forget who we are constantly. And we just have to constantly, constantly, continually be reminded of who we are.

Michelle Maros: [00:37:46] Constantly, constantly, continually.

Barb Schmidt: [00:37:47] All the C words. All the constantly, continually, forever. Just reminding ourselves that we are always worthy of kindness, of love, of hopes and dreams and all the things for ourselves. We are just as worthy.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:01] And I think to just to close out that part of the conversation again, for me, it's like, you know, we're always looking to other people who we can relate to in our own journeys of the difficulties that we're going through. And I think that's where I was struggling, is I was all of a sudden feeling old and then I was looking, you know, to the Internet, because I guess that's where we go these days for inspiration or motivation.

Barb Schmidt: [00:38:31] And sometimes validation.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:33] And validation. Yes. To help me relate to somebody. And I felt like that was the thing. Like I couldn't find what I was looking for there. I couldn't find another one

of me to validate my feelings. But then that's the issue is there's only one of you, like the Taylor Swift song that you love so much.

Barb Schmidt: [00:38:54] Yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:38:55] So I can't find somebody on the Internet that's going to validate me because I'm the only one of me. And that's the whole again, not to sound like a broken record, but that hamster on the wheel cycle. I go to the Internet to find another 37 year old, not married, doesn't have kids, still in a renting apartment, doesn't own property, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I still, you know, in the. Beginning, middle part of my career. Going through these exact specific struggles. And it's like trying to find a needle in a haystack, because why would I need to go to the Internet to find that?

Barb Schmidt: [00:39:38] Exactly.

Michelle Maros: [00:39:39] And obviously, we can look towards society, the external world, for comfort and support sometimes. But I realized my task of finding someone exactly like me who's going through the exact same things that I am, just so I can feel okay about where I am in my life is not. A good use of my time because I'm not going to find it. The comfort and support and acceptance and understanding and and worth and validation has to come from within. Obviously, like we talk about and talking to you and talking to the people in my life who really know me and understand that like, okay, wait, you're kind of you're sounding a little bit ridiculous right now with some of your concerns. Let's bring it back to reality.

Barb Schmidt: [00:40:22] I love it, Michelle And I have to keep going back to first of all. Yes, that Taylor Swift song, I think I would recommend that we all write that on our mirror. I'm the only one of me. And just right that you wake up every morning. I'm the only one of me. There is such a beautiful satisfaction with, like, I'm the only one of me. Like, how privileged do I feel? I'm the only one of me. It's just I'm the only one of me.

Michelle Maros: [00:40:46] And it's a beautiful thing. But it's a lonely thing because you're the only one with your own unique set of circumstances. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah that we always say. But it's also amazing.

Barb Schmidt: [00:40:55] Yes.

Michelle Maros: [00:40:56] So it's like when I kept like, I'm like, Oh, well, this person I found in the internet is 37 but married or she's 32 but doesn't have like,, it's not you can't do it.

Barb Schmidt: [00:41:07] You can't do it. No, you can't do it. It's not a competition. Well not just like they try to make us feel like we're in competition with everybody else and Yeah, I know. For the promotions or whatever. Yeah, of course. All that. But really, we are not in competition with someone else about our own self-worth, about our own kindness, about our own genuine love for ourselves. There is no competition. We are truly who we are and we are meant to learn and grow and become the greatest version of who we are. I can't become the greatest version of you. I have to become the greatest version of who I am. Right? And so the sooner we learn that, that we can't be someone else and we're not meant to be someone else, we didn't come here to be someone else, the sooner we can start to settle in to being comfortable in our own skin. And I think all of that starts with I want to just one more time loop back to all that starts with cultivating some kind of truth, truthful, positive self talk and really becoming your mind's own best friend, really understanding what is the mind saying to me every single day, every single moment, starting to really get familiar with the mind, its patterns, its thoughts.

Barb Schmidt: [00:42:18] What am I repeatedly thinking? You wrote a whole article on this, and I think it's really worthwhile to to to make this an assignment for yourselves. Like, can you start asking yourself these three questions Michelle that you wrote about so brilliantly? There just it's to me, it's a very succinct way to start to become your own best friend of the mind, to start to really understand what are these false narratives that my, my mind is constantly saying to me, really becoming familiar with it. So I think let's take them through the three things that that you really have become. I don't know. I think it's been genius. You came up with these three ideas of how we can start to cultivate this positive self-talk and become familiar with what the mind is saying, starting with What am I thinking moment to moment? I think every time the mind says something negative about yourself, can you just take a pause and maybe just say, like an affirmation, I'm the only one of me. I am worthy. I am always worthy. I love myself

completely. Some kind of an affirmation. After you start really getting familiar with what are you thinking? Moment to moment?

Michelle Maros: [00:43:29] I love that. It's true. It really is. Because if you can start to feed your mind with that, you can catch yourself before, like me going deep into the internet searching for validation. I can say, No, I don't need to do that. We don't do that anymore.

Barb Schmidt: [00:43:46] When I think I always label it not true because most of what the mind is telling you is not true. It truly is not true. It's just not true. It's false. But we believe it as truth. And then when you believe a negative thing about yourself as truth, there's it's hard to stop that train from running down the tracks of all the things that are wrong with you. And if you are like I am at 66 years old, it's like, oh, you're just so old. This is the problem. They're just your life is over. Like, you can't do this. You can't do that. You know, really gets into the very deep seated ideas that we aren't worthy or we're we're too old or we're not good enough, you know? And I think the second thing that you talk about a lot is, you know, what am I saying to myself? Literally breaking it down? What am I thinking now? What am I saying? Because if you're thinking it, you're saying it to yourself because you're believing it.

Michelle Maros: [00:44:38] Yeah.

Michelle Maros: [00:44:38] If you go down the hole and don't stop it and and name it for what it is, this is a lie. This is a lie. If we don't do that, we're actually saying it to ourselves. We're actually believing it. And then we got to somehow regroup later to figure out what the heck went wrong. Why am I in such a bad mood? Why am I so tired? Why am I feeling like life is not for me? It's against me, you know? And the third thing then is. Oh, sorry. You want to ask another?

Michelle Maros: [00:45:09] Yeah. I just. It is so true. And I feel like. Just highlighting that because we say it so often. But those are the big things and that's the work of all of it. You know, aging might be the thing that's up for some of us right now. But if it's career, you know, this is another aspect of aging, of feeling like you're out of time and you made that comment. Maybe we'll do a whole other episode of Feeling Left Behind of of Life and that you're on the back nine and you have less time than you started with, and that the feelings that come up with

that and aging of there's so many things that I want to do. But whatever the thing might be, the thoughts and what you tell yourself really are where you can start to break that down.

Barb Schmidt: [00:45:57] And I think it's the only way. I mean, we really can't we really can't make a change unless we know what's happening, unless we know the truth of what's going on. And it's not to beat ourselves up or to say, oh, my gosh, I didn't I can't believe that that this is what I think about myself or I can't believe that I'm moment to moment thinking this particular thing and I'm saying this to myself on a daily basis. There's no there's no beating yourself up. This is just awareness. This is just learning about what the heck am I saying to myself all the time? And when I really discovered that it was quite dark, it was quite dreary. You know, in my early days, it was it was not great. I did not think that I was worthy. I did not like myself. I had all these really terrible thoughts about myself. And I thought the only thing that mattered was what I did and what I accomplished. I didn't think I mattered whatsoever in life. And then ultimately had an eating disorder and check myself into treatment. So I think it's that whole idea, the thoughts are everything.

Barb Schmidt: [00:46:53] What we think about ourselves and what we say about ourselves are everything. And I think it's also indicative that third thing that you talk about Michelle so much, and you even remind me sometimes because I can get down a path of thinking and all of that. And we had a situation come up recently that was so fantastic. And like if you find yourself quick because you'll start to realize that you find yourself quick to react in a situation, I'm impatient. I'm like, I just say whatever comes into my mind, that makes no sense. And that is not kind and that is not in any way, shape or form good for the situation. But in the awareness of that, we can start to learn to skillfully respond. We can take a pause. Wait a minute, what's happening here? So when we talk about the pause a lot on this podcast, that's how we start to learn to take. The pause is as we start to get familiar and really understand the workings of the mind and what we're saying to ourselves on a daily basis.

Michelle Maros: [00:47:51] Yeah, the pause is everything. Not to sound like a broken record.

Barb Schmidt: [00:47:57] No, it is. I mean, it's all. It's all this. I don't want to say it's all the same, but it kind of feels all the same to me when I talk about things or when I. When I'm thinking about things or when I'm reading, I'm thinking it always comes back to the mind. It always

comes back to how do we feel about ourselves? What do we think about ourselves? What do we say to ourselves? Yeah, and do we love ourselves completely or we love ourselves enough to know that we are worthy.

Michelle Maros: [00:48:20] And just remembering that each chapter of our lives. Are valid and worthy and no chapter is better than the other. Yes, we're always going to have different things happening, different life events, different circumstances, different issues, but they're all valid and they're all part of our story. And I think if we can deconstruct the narrative that the youth are youthful, times are better or more fun or more carefree, yeah, we're all going to deal with different stuff, but we have these chapters of life for whatever reason, for a reason. I mean, I don't know why human beings have this kind of trajectory trajectory of where we are or whatever, but. Can we embrace the chapter that we're in right now, regardless of what we think, where we think we should be, what we think we should look like, what we think we need to have accomplished? How can I? Again, it's like finding the tiny joys of what's my present reality. Maybe I still like, you know, I'm writing a book. I. Would be sad if for some reason I died before releasing a book. That's something that I'm actively working on and it's a goal that I certainly hope to achieve and I feel like I will. But yeah, that's something that I think about. But I can still embrace the Michelle right now that's writing a book and hasn't yet done that. And look for the tiny joys of Michelle has done all of these other things. Isn't that amazing? And Michelle is feeling really great about X, Y, and Z parts of her life. I love that and still feel like there's great stuff to come. There's great stuff in my past and in the present. There's also the tiny joys that I actively seek out.

Barb Schmidt: [00:50:13] I love that. I love that for you. I love that. I love that, Michelle. And you are going to have that book. Heck, you almost do already have it finished. So this is really fantastic. I just want to close my piece of this.

Michelle Maros: [00:50:25] Can I just say one more thing really quickly before you close your piece?

Barb Schmidt: [00:50:27] Of course.

Michelle Maros: [00:50:28] That's the other thing, too. Like we often say, we don't know when our time is. Our time. You know, you always wake up each morning and say, thank you for the gift of this new day, because who's to say we don't know when our time is up? My dad died in his sleep, unexpectedly, had no idea. So that's why I say, you know, do I think this is going to happen? No. But I could die tomorrow. You know, that's the reality. And so do I want to spend my days, my precious time in this constant battle with myself about what was or what could be or what I don't like about myself. That was my point.

Barb Schmidt: [00:51:09] I love that. That's a beautiful way to end this whole topic and this whole conversation. And I feel like what I want to say to everyone is there are two constants in life. The first one is that change is inevitable. Everything changes. Nothing ever stays the same from moment to moment is always change. So change is inevitable. There will always be change. Nothing stays the same. And the second constant in life is that you are worthy. You are always worthy.

Michelle Maros: [00:51:45] That doesn't change.

Barb Schmidt: [00:51:45] That doesn't change. Those are the two. Those are the two constants. Those are the true two things in life that never changes. You are always worthy and change is inevitable. Everything in life changes. And so if we can remember that and start to get really familiar with the mind and start really cultivating this positive self talk, especially with regards to aging, we will we will then start to feel like we're living our one truly wild and precious life. I love all you, all of you so much. This conversation has been so meaningful to me and I love the fact that I'm on this earth, walking this path with all of you. So Michelle and I can't thank you enough. I said to you yesterday in the car driving home from a meeting that you are. It's such a blessing to be your mom. I am very grateful for you.

Michelle Maros: [00:52:38] It's a blessing to be your daughter. And it is such a privilege to be alive with all of you in this moment in time together, through thick and through thin we get through it all. And I would love, we would love to hear your thoughts about this topic. I know there's a lot of layers. We kind of probably just scratched the surface. So let us know if you have more questions on the topic and we can do a part two or dive into other aspects of it, because obviously there's much to say. But thank you so much again for all of your topic requests

because, you know, we do read them and we try our best to get to all of them and this was a big one. So thank you all for writing in. And of course, thank you so much for listening to the pod and being such a beautiful community and support to this show. We're so grateful and we do not take your support and your time for granted. We we love doing this show and we're grateful for all of you. If you haven't yet, please make sure that you are following us on social media at Peaceful_Barb, at Michelle Maros, and at Barb knows Best Pod.

Michelle Maros: [00:53:42] As you all know, that's the best way to stay in touch with us, ask us questions, request topics, and just stay up to date with all of the stuff that we're up to. And if you haven't yet, make sure you are liked and subscribed to the podcast wherever you listen to podcasts. Apple, Google, Spotify to stay up to date on all of the latest episodes of the show. Last Little Request If You Are Loving Barb Knows Best, the podcast Give us five star rating on iTunes and Spotify and leave a review that's really, really helpful for us. We appreciate it so much and it just gives us a smile on these days. So go check that out if you haven't done so yet. Lastly, we still have some merch for sale. Click the link in our show notes to check out some of our styles. We're going to be coming out with some new styles later this year. But if you're still looking for some Bqb merch, it's available. Thank you so much again for listening. Thank you, Mom. And we will chat with you next week because as we know, Barb knows best. Bye.