

## Ep #006: Hiding to Shining



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rosie Aiello

## Ep #006: Hiding to Shining

Did you ever think that if you only loved him more that he would change? When a friend told her that he's not an Alpha, he's a narcissist, our guest told her, "You don't understand, he's never had the love of the right woman."

Dynamic, outgoing and confident. Cami Baker went from standing on stages teaching others how to show up and network to hanging her head down and hiding.

She fell for his virility, take-charge attitude his charm, and the tension he gave her. She didn't know then how her life would, within only six months, dramatically changed. Soon she'd be in her car with all of her belongings, wondering just what had happened. Her story will keep you on edge.

Hi, I'm Rosie Aiello and welcome to the Vulnerable to Valuable Podcast. We talk about moving forward after experiencing narcissistic, controlling, demeaning and abusive relationships. If you've been in one of those like me, you KNOW what I'm talking about. You are not alone. You've been through some painful stuff ... shame, blame, that inner bully inside you. My mission is to lift and inspire you ... give you the ways you can reclaim your voice and value, your confidence, and the courage to BE the new empowered you.

Today we meet Cami Baker. She gets vulnerable as she shares from her heart how romance packed with love bombing sucked her soul and how she came out the other end more empowered and confident than ever before. Accepting what was she decided to put her big girl panties on, learn the lessons and become a better person of it. Her story is inspiring, and her turnaround is impressive.

We're going to talk with Cami in a moment, and first ...

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I'm calling this Vulnerable to Valuable Lesson Love Bombing

First let me define briefly what is Love Bombing.

When I arrived back in the United States after my escape, I realized just how much I didn't know.

I didn't know much about the terms domestic violence or domestic abuse. A narcissist. Sociopath. Psychopath. Or Love Bombing.

Heaven's. This was crazy.

I'm a regular girl from a small town in California.

How did I end up with all of that in my vocabulary?

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Well, you could say it started with Love Bombing. Another term I had no clue about when I arrived.

He took me out for lovely dinners. Took me shopping to buy clothes. He invited me to go to Paris for a weekend. I was working in Silicon Valley in California at the time. I didn't go.

He swooned me with his words.

I got sucked in.

Did you get sucked in too? Also like my guest.

You are not alone.

It's normal to want love, attention, affection, connection.

This is NOT the time to beat yourself up.

Actually, it's never the time to beat yourself up.

Following the 11 pillars I never got sucked into Love Bombing again.

The pillars I'm going to focus on today are:

Pillar 3 –Values

Pillar 6—Intuition

I just can't emphasize the importance of values.

If women like our guest Cami and me, had known from the outset what was truly important to us, not what you had mindlessly thought what was important to us, we would have never entered or staying in a relationship.

Let me just tell you that kindness is my primary value.

You'll end up with a lot of values. Narrow them down to the top ten.

Sure I like gifts, nice dinners and vacations like anyone would. But not at the cost of someone demeaning me. NEVER.

Practicing your values takes work.

Pillar 9 covers Intuition.

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I never looked at my values and I never listened to my intuition. I'm being fully vulnerable sharing this. Because it's the truth.

How do you listen to your intuition?

1. Get quiet with yourself.
2. Meditate to get in a calm state.
3. Listen to your body.
4. Pay attention to what your body is telling you.

I'm going to guess if you were like me, even though it felt great, you also had some feeling that something wasn't quite right.

Pay attention to that "it isn't quite right" feeling. Just because it's not clear doesn't mean it's not important.

You got this.

Cuz didn't know our values and didn't have healthy boundaries.

I lived to please him.

If you want to know where you are on this path, take the Freedom Fulfillment Quiz, my gift to you. In 4 short minutes you'll discover where you are and where you want to be.

Go to: [www.FreedomFulfillmentQuiz.com](http://www.FreedomFulfillmentQuiz.com)

You can find this LINK and all other links mentioned in the show notes.

TV show host, radio personality, international speaker, and HGTV House Hunter veteran, and featured on hundreds of podcasts, media, and stages as large as 30,000 in attendance, Cami Baker has seen her share of adversity starting as an alcoholic, suicidal broke single mother, living in a mobile home on food stamps. She knows what it is like to not only fall down, but to get back up. Cami's recent experience with a narcissistic gaslighting relationship that had her start over again at 50 is an inspiring story of how it is not what happens to you as much as how you learn to put your big girl panties on and become better because of it.

Cami will be here in a moment and first...

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Thank you for downloading the Vulnerable to Valuable Podcast produced by the Love is Kind Network. We're just starting out, please subscribe. Every 5 star review on iTunes and every share will help our mission to reach and impact 100 M women worldwide who been affected by narcissistic relationships and domestic abuse. Our goal is to create kinder intimate relationships, kinder families, kinder communities, and a kinder world. Will you help us achieve that goal?

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Now to the powerhouse, Cami Baker, who took a hard look at herself and pulled up her big girl panties to create a massive turnaround in her life.

Let's go from Vulnerable to Valuable with Cami.

**Rosie Aiello:** Welcome, Ms. Cami Baker. I glad to see your beautiful face again.

**Cami Baker:** It's so nice to see you again, Rosie. It's been a long time and I'm glad that we get to share this story. I'm sure that someone listening needs to hear it.

**Rosie:** Yes. Let me first have our listeners hear what an amazing woman you are. TV show host, radio personality, international speaker, an HGTV House Hunter veteran, and featured on hundreds of podcasts, media, and stages as large as 30,000 in attendance, Cami Baker has seen her share of adversity, starting as an alcoholic, suicidal, broke single mother living in a mobile home on food stamps. She knows what it is like to not only fall down but to get back up. Cami's recent experience with a narcissistic gaslighting relationship that had her start over again at 50 is an inspiring story of how it is not what happens to you as much as how you learn to put your big girl panties on and become better because of it.

This is such a perfect lead-in to, of course, this whole podcast and what I do to give women that hope and strategy to move on with their lives and we are doing it and it is possible and you come better out of it, right?

**Cami:** I am so glad to have the opportunity to have this interview with you because, usually, my interviews are all focused on business and lead generation and business building, so to really be able to speak from the heart about some things that weren't so pretty and some things that you actually helped me through and were a part of is really a blessing.

**Rosie:** Thank you. I think this is important, as well, because we're one human being and how we are by ourselves or personally, it's how we show up in business. If we're being crushed personally, being demeaned or controlled or even the self-judgment, that's going to come out in how we behave in business.

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**Cami:** As you know, I am the author of *Mingle to Millions*, and my book actually came out two and a half years ago, just two months before I met the narcissist that we'll be discussing.

I put it down, at the time, to serve his needs. Since I left that relationship, I've really been able to tour and speak with my book, it's all about the art and science of building business relationships.

So I ended up hosting this TV show for the last almost 2 years and mentoring and teaching and coaching a lot of people, men and women. So that's what I've been up to in the last couple of years since that relationship.

**Rosie:** That is just so beautiful, and to see what happened and how you transformed yourself, which is part of the process of this conversation as well. I knew you before, during, and after this relationship, and I remember, because we were sort of starting to see somebody almost at the same time, and yours accelerated at rapid speed and mine was kind of going like a snail. Tell us how it happened. Where were you? You wrote that, "I gave myself to a narcissist," and I'm going to kind of guess that you didn't know he was a narcissist then, so give us a background on how it all happened.

**Cami:** You know, it was funny. I thought he was an Alpha that I thought I was looking for at the time, and one of the women who worked in his office said, "Cami, he's not an Alpha, he's a narcissist." I heard her but I did not hear her. My head was so in the clouds and I was like, "You just don't know. He just hasn't had the love of the right woman."

**Rosie:** Those are important words, right? What you just shared there is very important because women, this is a pattern I want women to be aware of because I see it all the time, we make excuses for them. And you said, right at the beginning, the only love. I didn't mean to interrupt, but that was such a key point I wanted to point out.

**Cami:** And I've heard it said before, if there's something - and maybe you even told me this - if there's something that you are afraid or ashamed of saying to a friend, then that's what you need to be saying to the friend when it comes to these relationships.

I was doing online dating, and let me just preface this with I could've met this guy at church. I could've met him in the grocery store, I could've met him picking up a puppy at the pet store. I do not blame this on online dating and I was on online dating and I think I'm pretty damn fantastic, so let me just say it's not about that.

But I was doing online dating and I had had a couple of relationships and I meet this guy. We are across country from each other. I'm on the East Coast, he's on the West Coast, and I think, "Well, we'll have the chance to get to know each other." But 10 days later, I flew out to meet him and, within five days, it was, "I love you. You've got to be here. You have to move here."

I remember us taking this beautiful walk and I said, "I'll fly back and forth like once a month during the summer," this was in April, and I said, "By the end of the summer, if this is working

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out, then maybe I'll move out then," and he was like, "Oh no, I've waited 50 years to meet you, to find my true love, and now that we've met, I didn't want to live a day without you." And so 28 days after meeting him online, I sold everything I owned and put everything that was left in three big duffel bags and jumped on an airplane with him, flew across country to meet my friends. Oh my God, we had a big dinner and there were 20 people there that just thought he was wonderful, he's so charismatic. On paper, he was perfect, and physically, he was perfect. He looked the part, he spoke the part, he was a business owner. What had happened was I had had a series of really beta relationships, men that were yes ma'am and wishy-washy and ho-dee-do and I had decided I want an Alpha.

**Rosie:** "I want a strong man."

**Cami:** I don't know what that really meant to me at the time, but what I do know is this person was total opposite of anything I had ever dated. He was beautifully masculine physically and he owned a company and he was in control and throwing the money around when I went out to visit and everybody in town either bought from him, sold from him, or worked for him. He owned the town. There was a couple of people that, right off the bat, as soon as I moved there, they were like, "What are you doing here?" like why are you in this little Podunk town? And I was like, "I just love him and I'd live anywhere to be with him," and it was just... I was so, so in love with not only the guy but the whole situation. He bought and sold antiques and things and it was just perfect for me. In the beginning, it seemed that way.

But I do have to say there were red flags. So for those who are listening, what are some of those red flags? Right off the bat, we were texting, the first day we were texting, texting, texting, texting, and we had decided we were going to get on the phone. Now, I'm excited - he's a new guy, he's beautiful, I want to get on the phone. But when he called me, my phone didn't ring for whatever reason, so he sends me a text that says, "I call you and you don't even answer. Geez." Now, this is somebody I've never even talked to, so right off the bat, he's irritated that he's not in control of my emotions.

**Rosie:** And this is when you were still in the East Coast?

**Cami:** This was the first day we were texting.

**Rosie:** Oh, the first you were texting, got it.

**Cami:** The first day we were texting, we were deciding we were going to get on the phone and talk to each other. When he called, I didn't hear a ring. I don't know if I was in the bathroom or if the ringer was off or whatever.

**Rosie:** It doesn't matter; you don't need to defend. That's the whole thing, ladies, you don't need to defend your actions.

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**Cami:** True. So that was the first thing and then, later that week, before I even flew out there, there was a day I remember I was standing in my kitchen and I was telling him stories about my life and I was telling him about this bar that I owned in Panama City Beach. I'm going on about this story about owning this bar and my business partner at the time was a man, so I mentioned the name and he said, "Did you F him?" and I said, "What?" I said, "I'm telling you about a story about the bar that I owned that I was so proud of," and he said, "Yeah, but did you F him?" and I'm like, "What does that have to do with anything?" So right off the bat, there was massive jealousy and control and all of that.

And then the day that we were flying from East Coast to West Coast, we're together and we're on the plane and I've got my three suitcases and I said to him, "It's so surreal. I'm 49 years old and everything I own is in three bags on this plane," and he says to me, "Angel, you've never owned more than you do right now. You own half of this kind of this company, and half of that kind of company," talking about the things that he had, so right off the bat, he was giving and it was all mine too and it was just [kissing noise].

**Rosie:** Right, they call that love bombing, that's kind of the term. And of course, I had that too, I didn't know that term, but where they just pour into you and you're almost put on a pedestal and everything is good and roses and really, it's like wow. I want an independent man, I want a man who's strong, I'm going to be part of his company, he's involving me. These are all normally really positive things. And let me tell you, I know Cami from before and when I have seen her on stage, you don't forget Cami when she's on stage, she's a powerful woman. So do you think this has anything to do with your intelligence?

**Cami:** You know, I appreciate you bringing that up because since it happened, people have said to me, including yourself, you should write a book about this because people don't expect someone like you - large and in charge, outspoken, clearly independent, even I... Like I'm an alcoholic, and when I figured out I was an alcoholic, I thought, wait a minute, I don't have the bottle in the bag and sitting under the railway and drinking. I had this image and I also, my whole life, had an image that women who get caught up in this kind of stuff were frail and meek and mousy and easy to push over. That wasn't me, but you watched and it was starting to happen, wasn't it?

**Rosie:** Yeah, exactly. I so appreciate you being vulnerable on a valuable podcast, to be vulnerable to reveal your story because this is going to help so many and to show that you did find your value later on or you re-found your value, but it also shows just how easy it is to get in this whirlwind because we're human beings and they know how to manipulate and use the situation for them. And so the other red flag was doing things super-fast. This is another red flag. I know there are people who have met and fell in love and got married and it lasted forever, but these have other signs, other red signs, but dropping everything, going to him, you were going to him, you did everything, and him saying, "I finally met the love of my life after 50 years."

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**Cami:** His true love.

**Rosie:** It was like, yeah, it feels right, so it's easy to get into this. And it has nothing to do with your intelligence, it has nothing to do with you, it has everything to do with them and how they present themselves and us being in a position where we want to be cared for, we want to be loved.

**Cami:** I've even heard it said that this type, because he was super-power, like the energy coming off of him, but it was because he was sucking the energy from everybody else, he's an energy vampire. And I've heard it said, "Of course he was looking for someone like you because look at all the energy that you provided for him that he was able to take from that whole relationship." So if you're in a relationship like this, not only does it not mean that you're stupid or incapable of making good decisions, they actually want someone that's that powerful

**Rosie:** You learned a lot through this process and we worked together, I worked with you as you were going through this, helping point out the red flags and you kind of went in and out. Again, this is a normal process. Some women can leave right away, some, there's that pull, "Oh, if I could only love him," remember you said at the very beginning, "He just hasn't had the love like that," and we have this belief that I can love him out of this behavior, which is false thinking. Were you able to express your needs and what you wanted and how did he address that and then how did that shift over time now?

**Cami:** I laugh because I can't even imagine how it all came to be, but truly, I lived to please him and he really manipulated it around so that he would tell me that our relationship came even before our individual happiness. So my role was to make him happy, was to satisfy his needs as a man, and the twisted thing about that was his needs as a man were really, really great for me, but when it was daily and it was already implied that it was required, I knew that there was going to come a point where I didn't want to do it every day. The two times that he thought I was denying him, oh Lord, the world was coming to an end, it was nasty. So I knew there was going to come a day when I was going to say what I needed and wanted, which was maybe even a break for the night, and I knew it would be holy hell to pay.

I had zero boundaries with this person, absolutely zero. At first, I thought, "Thank God! I'm a powerful businesswoman, I'm always in control, I'm telling everybody else what to do all the time. Thank God I finally have a man who can make decisions and take the reins and be in control." So the very first time, in 49 years, that I finally decide, yes, I'm going to give it all to this man and let him just be in control, this is what happens.

**Rosie:** Right, and there's a difference of just being with somebody who you know can just hold you up and take care of you and somebody who's just going to like where you become mute, you've lost your authentic self, you don't even know where she went. She's long gone and you just become this people pleaser and it's a hard job to be a people pleaser and a hard job and an impossible job to make somebody else happy. That's not our role.

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**Cami:** It's an impossible task to be a people pleaser when you grew up your whole life not being.

I wasn't allowed to go to yoga because, at first, I couldn't go to yoga because men might be in the room and if men were in the room and saw me bend over, he wouldn't like that. So when I first wanted to go to yoga and he said that, I said, "Are you telling me if I go to a yoga class and there's a man in the room that I should leave the yoga class?" and he said, "I'm just telling you you need to use your best judgment."

**Rosie:** They couch it as an implied threat.

**Cami:** He never told me that I couldn't do anything, but the implied consequences were always there and then, eventually, it was that I wasn't supposed to go to yoga because if I went to yoga, other women are at yoga, they're going to want to be my friend and take me to lunch. Women always talk about men and I'd be talking about him. This was another characteristic that whoever is listening should watch out for. He was so paranoid about me talking about him or us every day.

Well, I finally left on my own accord because what you said about disappearing and I invite you to share with our listeners and viewers what you saw of me. I felt like I was being sucked in and, eventually, I was just going to exist in him and on him and for him and through him. There came a point where I just felt like I've got to make a decision. I either totally give myself to this and just live to please him or get the F out. So what did you see?

**Rosie:** I remember when, "Rosie, he's handed me to be part of his business and I'm going to be part of his business and I don't need my business." You said you don't need your business. I'm going to talk about it in parts here, so that was the first part and I'm thinking, okay. Because you had a business, you just mentioned you had just written that book, I thought, "Gosh, this is not the Cami I know." And then you went on the road trip, "I can do my business on the road," but then it's like you never were doing it, there was always an excuse.

I'm going, "What's happening to her?" I could see you disappearing because this is not Cami. Somebody else is creating her, she's just like... Like you're evaporating. It was like the Cami Baker I knew was evaporating before my eyes and I felt a little helpless until I could... Because I had to talk to you gently for you to be open to be able to hear what was happening to you. It was a little bit scary for me because I wanted so much to shake you. I was like, oh my God, this is too fast. He's not allowing you to be you. In a healthy relationship, you can ask for what you want, you have equal rights, you can please yourself. Of course, you're going to love them, but you don't give up any part of you. There's nothing about pleasing the other person at your cost.

**Cami:** Let me just say, when you say that Cami Baker was disappearing, I was going so far as to legally change my name for him. He told me...

**Rosie:** Before you got married? We did not tell the listeners that you got engaged.

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**Cami:** Well, I can't say that we actually got engaged. He gave me his mother's engagement ring, which I ended up giving back to him, but he would call me his angel. I was sitting in his lap one day and he saw the angel wings around my head and that I was just his angel, so he called me Angel all the time and so I put that with his last name, which we won't say on here, and it made a really cool name. I said, "What if my name was Angel [...]?"

By the way, even though I was giving up my business and only doing his business, he wanted me to work because he wanted me to bring in money, but anytime I was talking to one of my coaching clients, he was always right there. He said it was because he found it fascinating and he wanted to be a part of what I was doing and self-development was so important to him, but the fact is he just didn't want me talking about him and he was so paranoid about it. So I was going to change my name to Angel blah blah and then I let it go. I said it's a business name and it's kind of hard to do. Two weeks later, he says, "So I kind of like that. If we're going to change your name to that, we should do that before we start promoting you around here," and I was legally going to change my name to that before we got married. I started referring to myself as that, I got a website, I changed the cover of my book and had the other name put on it, and all of that, and they were calling me that, all those people out there, this other name. So that's how much I was disappearing and that was in only three months of being there.

**Rosie:** Yeah, three months. That's what's so, so amazing. But then we started to have more conversations and you were saying you didn't have any boundaries, everything was for him. This is just like how we get sucked in this vortex because we think we can please them. It's like what was so desperate about us and the feeling of looking at us.

Now, you've done something that's completely different. What boundaries, like now if you're dating and you're with a man, and even with your colleagues, I want people to understand this doesn't happen, these narcissistic relationships and how you get sucked in and how you get into a controlling relationship or someone is demeaning you, can happen anywhere, just not in an intimate relationship. It can happen with your coach, I've had a narcissistic coach, I've had a very abusive coach before. This was years ago. It can happen with your web designer, it can happen with your doctor, for God sakes. It happens anywhere. People are human and there are a lot of them out there. What kind of boundaries did you create now to empower yourself that you could maybe share with our listeners?

**Cami:** I really appreciate you bringing that up because, at the time that I was with this person, I would literally just, as he would talk, I felt like I had so much to say but I couldn't say anything and I just physically...

**Rosie:** You lost your voice, right?

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**Cami:** Like literally, physically, for hours, I couldn't say anything and that made him even more angry because I wouldn't talk. I had no boundaries, it was all about what he wanted to do sexually, where we went, who we hung out with. I wasn't allowed...

**Rosie:** You weren't hanging out with your friends, right?

**Cami:** I had no friends. I wasn't allowed to talk to my friends on the phone. Now, once again...

**Rosie:** That's the isolation. They create the isolation.

**Cami:** He never said I couldn't, but what he did say was, "Why are you spending time away from me and us? It took us 50 years to find each other. What's so important about that that you need to spend an hour away from me to be talking to them? Is this about business? Are you making money?" So he would make me feel so guilty and shameful about talking to someone else that I just quit even bothering.

**Rosie:** Exactly, you just kept giving up and giving up because it was easier to do that to create the peace and to prove that you loved him. This is how you were proving it and it's like, okay, and he was dictating everything.

**Cami:** Well, I left at three months in. About a week after I left, we get on the phone and, long story short, I turned around and was heading back.

**Rosie:** I remember.

**Cami:** Now, I had to prove myself. He had me call four people that were in his inner circle and ask their forgiveness that I had left him, to make sure that I could prove to them that I was committed and that I wasn't going to leave him again. That's the kind of brainwashing, and I happily called them. "I'm coming back and I just want you to know he's my top priority and please forgive me that I made this massive mistake," and oh my God, oh my dear Lord.

I really want the listeners to hear this, I am not ashamed of any of this. The fact is I am a human being. Human beings are animals and we are given the gift, by whatever creator you believe in, of community and connection and love and the desire to procreate and the desire to be connected and love and be with someone that makes us even closer to our connection with whatever God you believe in. So the fact that I wanted love that much that when I saw something that... Like you said, it was so hard and fast, it was like, "Oh my God, nobody's ever loved me like this. This is awesome. This is what I've been looking for, yay!" But I feel like it's just proof-positive evidence that I'm a human being and I have feelings and that I just want to love, I want to be loved, I want to be loved, and I'm not ashamed of that.

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We'll find some of Cami's key success strategies and first...

I found that many women have a hard time asking for what they want. And they have an even harder time knowing WHAT to ask for. That's why I created a guidebook: *How to Confidently Ask for What You Want* and it's yours free. Simply go to [www.TheLoveisKindNetwork.com/gift](http://www.TheLoveisKindNetwork.com/gift). Start your collection of gifts as I will be offering different gifts throughout this podcast. Get your copy now. It's been a major life changer for many of my clients who've learned to ask for what's important to them, including asking for the sale.

We're back with Cami Baker, America's authority on business development through social responsibility.

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**Rosie:** Of course, nor you shouldn't. Exactly like you said, as human beings, we're meant for connection, but we're meant to be treated with kindness. That's like the baseline. You're meant to be treated with kindness and it starts by being kind to yourself and setting those boundaries to keep you, to honor yourself, which is one of the many pillars of the 11 pillars that I work with for women on this. It's so important that we remember that, but how easy it is - it doesn't matter how smart you are, it doesn't matter how rich you are, it doesn't matter anything - how easy is that we can get sucked into these kinds of relationships.

But then again, you learned a lot about yourself and I remember when you were driving down and I remember suggesting to you that the way you're going to be healthy through this is no contact. As easy as that sounds, it's very difficult, and you went back that one time and then we talked again and then you realized that no contact really is the only way because they are these vampires that suck the life out of you.

**Cami:** And they will make you feel guilty and like it's all your fault. It's just crazy, crazy, crazy, crazy.

**Rosie:** How about share with us, because this has been a journey and I like that you talked about the shame because we can get into the shames and the should-haves and everything else and it's a journey to go into self-forgiveness and self-compassion and self-kindness. What was your journey?

**Cami:** Learning to trust your judgment again.

**Rosie:** Learning to trust your judgment, these are all the same, these are all part of those 11 things that I go through. It's like learning to trust your judgment again. What was your journey on that, that you can share?

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**Cami:** Let me share how I learned to forgive myself. I went back, and in that first 28 days when I was seeing signs of the jealousy and the insecurity and the possessiveness, he would say, "I promise you, when you're here, when I know you're here and you're mine and my true love is with me, it won't be like that," but the fact is it got worse and worse and worse and I could tell you horror stories about it. I'll just say he never hit me and he promised that he never had hit a woman, but there were a couple of times that I was quite fearful and he would not let me leave the room. So if we were having a conversation, an argument, I was not allowed to leave the room. Even if I just wanted to go take a drive, I couldn't leave the room. If I went to the bathroom, I had to tell him, "So-and-so, I'm going to the bathroom. I will be right back. I'm not leaving the conversation."

So it just kept getting worse and worse. I thought, as much as he's sucking the life out of me now, if I let him sell his businesses and buy this RV with my credit, I'll never be able to get rid of this.

There came a weekend that I knew that it was going to be easy for me to get away. We lived in a little cabin in the back of the lot where his business was and people coming and going and getting money and trucks and I didn't have 10 minutes by myself. The only person that I had any type of sanity with was, every week, we went and got a massage.

This woman had been his masseuse for 10 years, she knew him through numerous relationships and, every week, I'd have an hour with her while he waited outside the door and vice versa. In that one hour, she would say things like, "You know, I've seen him do this before. Does he give you any money for all the work that you do? Do you have any contacts back home? Could you leave if you wanted to?" We would have that kind of conversation and so this weekend that I knew that I could leave, I actually sent her a text and said, "Hey, what's going on?" and she responded back, "Hey, I'm good. What can I do?" I said, "Can you help me?" She said, "What can I do for you?" and I said, "I need a ride to my car. I'm leaving him." She didn't respond and I never heard from her again because he owed her too and she didn't dare cross that line, so she just didn't even respond.

But I grabbed the truck keys and I told the other employee that I was going to go out and take a break and I got in his truck. I'm thinking, "Let go and let God. Let go and let God. It will all work out." I'm just praying all the way back; my heart is just racing out of my chest. I didn't want to pass somebody else. I get back and I grab as much stuff as I can physically cram into that car. When I got as far away that I knew I wouldn't pass anybody that we knew, I got a hotel room and I sent a text to the woman that I had left in charge and I said, "I'm sorry I left you in the lurch. Let so-and-so know the keys are in the kitchen," because I didn't want him thinking that I stole it or that I wrecked it, and I said it was the only way I knew I could escape, and that's been the word I've used ever since.

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This was right before Thanksgiving that year and, on Thanksgiving night, we texted back and forth, all the guilt. He's saying to me, "Why did you do this to us? You tore us apart," you, you, you. And then the one time that we did talk on the phone, it was 2 o'clock in the morning on a Saturday night, and he was just going on and on and I said, "I'm not there and I'm not coming back so what's the point in this conversation?" I said, "Do you want me to come back?" "Yes, I want you to come back, Angel, and I want you to prove to me that this is 1000% the most important thing to you." So once again, I was going to have to prove to him how important he was to me. Long story short, I sent him an email and I said, "I'm heading back to Boston, where people trust me and like me and respect me and are holding out a banner celebrating Cami's coming home and you want me to turn around and go back to this Podunk town where I've been proving myself to a bunch of people who never trusted me from day one and be back in the message? No, I'm good. I'm done." I left and I've never talked to him again.

**Rosie:** Beautiful. Congratulations. It takes a lot of courage, doesn't it? It takes a lot of courage and it just shows how quickly it can happen. In my case, it was a lot longer, 25 years, so I want to just give you kudos for taking that action so quickly because a lot of women can't do that so that just shows how strong you were, how strong you are. It was like you were probably listening to me and listening to the massage therapist and everybody else and it's just like little things poking holes in your own intelligence because when they re-create your reality, then it's like, oh... You start to doubt yourself.

**Cami:** There were so many things that I could see coming. I could see him wanting me to have sex with other people with him and for him. I thought I can feel myself getting further and further away from the friends and the people that I do have and the support that I do have and I thought if I wait another six months, I'm not going to have my own mind.

**Rosie:** Yes, so true.

**Cami:** "Maybe he did do that. Am I crazy? He was in a 20-year marriage. The longest relationship I've had has been five years; he was with a woman for 20 years. Maybe he does know how relationships go. Maybe this is the way a relationship is supposed to be. Maybe I am the one that's crazy."

**Rosie:** Exactly, that is just the classical pattern of somebody who's a narcissist, who's abusing, who's controlling, who's demeaning you. What you described was gaslighting, where they make you doubt yourself. They say it's one thing and you think it's something else, these are all classic symptoms. But you rose up. You rose up, you got up, you put your big girl panties on and what would you do differently now, when you're in a new relationship or even when dating? What things are you going to approach differently now because of this experience?

**Cami:** There's a guy that I'm dating currently who has said, just about verbatim, "Cami, you have no problem telling me what you will and won't do," like you have no problem setting boundaries has been his exact words, and I said yay.

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**Rosie:** Exactly, that's what I do with my guy.

**Cami:** So glad to hear that. I would like to share a couple of the beautiful pearls of wisdom that I've gotten from this and things that I've learned about myself and about all of this, because I believe that as long as you learn something, nothing is a failure, nothing is a waste of time, nothing is a bad experience if you learn and grow from it. That's all we're here for is to learn and grow at the end of the day.

Before this happened, I was such a tough, independent, take-no-prisoners kind of person. If a woman or a man, because this can happen to a man too, but if a woman were to say to me, "I can't go to that networking event with you, he won't like that," or whatever, I would say, "Girl, you put your big girl panties on. You tell him you're coming. You don't worry about what he has to say," but having been in that situation, I know what it's like to not even be able to go to... I told him one day, I said, "I used to just go to Panera's and I would just sit at Panera's with my computer and make calls and watch videos for three or four hours." He said, "Yeah? Well, I used to go to the bar and pick up women and get laid, but I guess we just don't do what we used to do," in other words, he was saying to me, well, you want to go to the coffee shop, just know what I'm going to be doing too. So he never said I couldn't, he just gave me the consequences of what I was going to do.

So number one, I have way more compassion for people now. Now I can see the other side of the street. And I felt like a bird whose wings had been clipped, a big, beautiful, exotic bird that had always flown and ruled the jungle and, all of a sudden, I was in a cage. You don't realize what freedom feels like until you're used to being free and it's taken away. And so I remember one day, when I was back, I was just riding in my car with the sunroof open and the music was loud and I was going to another networking event, because I network a lot. I was so overwhelmed with gratitude. Wow, I get to be in my car right now. I get to be able to drive where I want, listen to what I want, go talk to whoever I want, not because I'm trying to sleep with them or whatever, but like I get the opportunity to go network.

If you had somebody in your life that wouldn't let you even get in the car and listen to your own music and drive around for 30 minutes, when you get that freedom back, you really breathe it in and you love it and you really appreciate it."

**Rosie:** You sure do, you absolutely do. In a healthy relationship, you can go wherever you want, you can do this. It doesn't mean you're disrespectful and like you're never going to tell them, but they're not going to say, "No, you can't," they're going to say, "Okay. I'll see you when you come back." That's the sign of a healthy relationship.

What are healthy relationship characteristics? In a healthy relationship, they are supporting you in all your endeavors, they are saying, "Yeah, go out with your friends." With my ex-husband, and like with you, they create the isolation because if you are separated from your family and

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friends, you're in a weakened position, so it's easier for them to control you, to control your mind and your mind does get rewired. It gets rewired and we can rewire it back to make a better, bigger you because these things happen.

**Cami:** I drove all the way across the country. I stopped in Chicago and I stayed for a couple of nights at a woman's house. She was wonderful. I remember, at the time, like when I was talking to her and her boyfriend and they were actually listening to me, I thought, "Wow, they actually care what I have to say, me."

**Rosie:** Right, they're listening to you because you got your voice.

**Cami:** Right, but in just that seven months, my voice had been so taken away, when we would go to the gym, I stopped looking at people. I started hanging my head and just looking down because if I even made eye contact with somebody passing us, I would have to hear about it, "How do you know them? Why are you looking at them? Where do you know them from? How could you know that person?" so I just quit looking at people.

And when I got back, I was popping pain pills and I almost killed myself. And ultimately, Rosie, what happened was I was so distraught, I was so depressed, I was so suicidal that I finally, there was a time between Christmas and New Year's that year, 2017, that I said to myself either kill yourself and be done with it or put your big girl panties on, suck it up, and get on with life, and I chose the latter.

My first year back and doing what I do, I made \$103,000 and for somebody who was broke, busted, torn down, and treated like that for that period of time, and it doesn't take long, but the way to be able to make that kind of a comeback that quickly, I really have to say, "I could've done better and I could've done this," no. That's pretty damn good. The fact that I lived through it is good.

**Rosie:** Lived through it, learned, so much better now. You know yourself better now, you know what you will and will not accept now. The fact that you can express yourself, express your needs to this guy, whoever it is, it's so easy for us just to forget that our needs, our voice is just as important as theirs and somebody who is in a healthy relationship, it's going to come naturally. If there are times when someone says you can't do this or you can't do that, when they use the word "you can't" or they do these implied threats, like what he did to give you the consequence, these are all threats, these are all threats, it's another classic thing that they do. That's not a healthy relationship.

**Cami:** Here's one that I also want our listeners to hear. If there's something that you've asked them not to do and they continue to do it, that's a big red flag too. Whether it's patting your fanny in front of people or calling you a degrading name in front of someone. But he would drink, he would take his hands off the handlebars and I would say, "Please don't do that. You're freaking

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me out," and he would literally move it. He would say, "Yeah, but the way this machine is made, it's not going to fall over. They just laugh it off and continue to do it..."

And I want to share one more thing that I found so disturbing, so disturbing that he did two weeks before I left, and I'd like to get your input on it.

It was two weeks before I left him and we were out this one evening and we were really getting along and I was like, oh my God, I love this guy. Like I'm going to figure this out, I'm going to work it out. Maybe I'm crazy, whatever. Early in the night, he said, under his breath, and I don't even know if he realized he said it out loud, he said, "I've got you." The first time, I thought to myself, "Oh boy, you sure do. He's got me, he got me. He loves me and he's got me," the first time. About an hour later, a few more drinks in hand, he said it again. He said, "I've got you," the second time, I thought, "He's got me. Like how does he have me? He does have me. Why is he saying that?" And later on in the night, there was a third time in that one night, and I don't even know if he remembers saying it, but he said, "I've got you," and I thought, "Holy shit, he's got me. I've got to do something about this." "Oh boy, he's got me," to "Oh my God, he's got me," was a really paramount moment for me.

**Rosie:** And that's good. Probably all these little voices that were coming to you before and then when he said it the way he said it, it's creepy. It's really creepy. The first time it was like he's got me and I'm going to be taken care of and all that sweet stuff, but then it's like, "I've got you. I've got you under my thumb, I've got you under my control. I'm the winner here and I'm going to do whatever I want with you," because that's what was happening anyway. Then there was that thread, that little thread in you that still could see the light and said, "Uh-uh, not this woman." That little thread saved you, that said, "Cami Baker, she deserves to be Cami Baker 100%." Congratulations.

**Cami:** Thank you for being there for me when I needed some support when I didn't know who I was and when I needed a voice of reason. Anyone who's watching or listening to this, if any of this resonates with you at all, reach out to Rosie because you need to have that thin thread. Rosie can be that thread for you.

**Rosie:** Thank you, I'm really glad. It's just to show that it can happen to anybody, but also we can get out of it and we can create a life that we deserve. We can create a productive, joyful, prosperous life that we deserve and you have shown that fully. Before we end, tell our listeners how they can get a hold of you if they're an entrepreneur or a businesswoman, businessman who wants to get some more information.

**Cami:** well, a good author always has their book with them, so my book *Mingle to Millions*, I talk about this because the book was written before this happened, but the next book, which I will title *It's Okay to Tell It If It's the Truth*, will have this story in it. But please feel free to reach out to me, [camibaker.com](http://camibaker.com). You can find me on Facebook, LinkedIn, just about anywhere, and if

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you're an entrepreneur or a business owner, in sales, you want to show up as a contribution to the world, I've called it purpose leverage learning.

**Rosie:** That's beautiful. Cami Baker, and the final question I ask all my guests is what does love is kind mean to you?

**Cami:** You know, love is kind means, to me, that when I meet someone, to just kind of stay on this topic of relationships like this, this kind means that the man that I'm going to partner with is kind in the way that he talks to me, in the way that he touches me, in the way that we converse with one another, in his attitude about my business, my clients, my speaking, my travel. I really watch for that now. Sometimes I feel like I can't always trust myself because I am human and I do want to be loved and I can be very impetuous, but I watch and the man that I'm dating now knows and he sees me watching and knows I'm watching. I'm like I'm not trying to find it in you, but I'm always cognizant are you being kind? Are you giving me the space I need to grow and are you as much of a teacher and student of mine and can we be kind and be together, always be side-by-side?

**Rosie:** Side-by-side, being kind together, that's beautiful. Thank you so much for your time, for being vulnerable on this podcast because it's going to help so many, and now we see you went from vulnerable to valuable fabulously. Thank you, Cami.

**Cami:** Thank you.

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We started this episode talking about love bombing, and you can see how important it was and what happened to Cami. To really grow, she had to really know what her values were and listened to her intuition to trust her judgment and decisions. It's easy to get sucked into all the charm, chocolate covered narcissism, maybe that's a good way to see it, rose-colored narcissism, when you don't listen to your intuition and you don't have strong values. I hope this has been inspiring to you.

That's it for today's episode, head on over to [www.VulnerabletoValuable.com](http://www.VulnerabletoValuable.com), and subscribe to the show. When you subscribe, you'll instantly get a special eBook, *Ask Confidently for What You Want*.

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