

Ep #011: The 2 Sides of Vulnerability



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rosie Aiello

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As I've spoken to women about their journey from toxic relationship to their sense of self a new realization came to me. It was also one that I personally experienced.

In this episode, you'll learn why vulnerability plays a huge part in your transformation journey and your path to freedom. I know that vulnerability may seem really scary and that's exactly why I'm going to share these 2 Sides of Vulnerability with you now.

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.

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If you want to know where you are on your Freedom Journey to 100% YOU, take the Freedom Fulfillment quiz. It's Free. It's Short. It's enlightening. In 4 short minutes you'll discover where you are, where you want to be, what challenges you're facing and what you need to do. How cool is that. If you are serious about evolving into a new empowered you, who can show up as the confident woman she once was, or wants to be then start now. Your life is waiting for you.

Go to: www.FreedomFulfillmentQuiz.com now to get started.

For those of you who are not familiar with my story, here's a snippet. After a 25 year relationship, I engineered an international escape from the Middle East to save my daughter and myself from domestic violence. Stunned by PTSD and nearly mentally destroyed, I reinvented myself after arriving back in the United States. I started my own business, and became a speaker, best-selling author and an international awarding-winning entrepreneur. And I'm with the love of my life.

I'm on a worldwide mission to inspire 100M women to release the shackles of abuse, and reclaim their voice, value, confidence and courage so that they can create the joyful, productive and prosperous life they deserve.

And today's podcast like every podcast is a part of that mission. If I can do this, so can you. That's why it's so important to subscribe, rate and review and share this podcast to the women in your life. Together we can help each other and create a difference.

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The 2 sides of Vulnerability.

Vulnerability is a hot topic these days, especially if you are into personal development. Or you're a speaker. Or perhaps you may have heard Brené Brown's fabulous TED talk on Vulnerability. If you haven't listened to it, go check it out on YouTube.

I'm going to take a different spin with this podcast talking about Vulnerability.

I'm going to address the 2 different sides of Vulnerability when it comes to women who have been in narcissistic, toxic, abusive relationships and those women who are on their journey to healing.

Vulnerability –

What does Vulnerable mean? According to the online Oxford dictionary, it means being susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm.

And why in heaven's name do you want to be vulnerable? Why are people, like Brené Brown and others making it sound like it's a good thing?

I'll get to that but first let's go to this side of the definition. Being susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm.

That's how it was right?

You're in this relationship where you're not feeling really relaxed. You're wondering what's going on. You're on the defensive. You feel scared. He threatens you. You feel stuck. He's verbally assaulting you. Maybe he is physically attacking you. That is not a safe place to be. That is not being safe vulnerably. This is the part, the side of vulnerability that I want you to really understand so that you can go to the second side of it, which we will get you in a moment.

But first, if you're feeling vulnerable, this vulnerability that gives you fear because you're afraid you're going to be physically or emotionally attacked, this is where you're going to need to do some work, and this is where it goes into the second part. But first, I want you to acknowledge where you have been and why vulnerability and being vulnerable might be a frightening thing for you. I don't want you to judge yourself. I don't want you to criticize, to put yourself down, whatever term you want to use to think that, "Oh, something must be wrong with me," which is a really common way of thinking when you have been in this kind of relationship.

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So for me, being vulnerable took on so many forms. You heard where I lived. I lived in the Middle East. So already I was out of sorts. I was out of my element. I had no one. I had nobody around me to support me emotionally. I was isolated from everybody. So just that isolation, being separated and being forced to be separated puts you in a vulnerable position. It's like it's you and him and nobody else. How can you protect yourself when you're being either verbally or physically assaulted? You can't. You have to come up with ideas by yourself. You think you're alone.

So again, you feel so vulnerable. And this is how I was. I felt it's all by myself. I remember the days so many days he would sit me down and he would stand up and he would walk back and forth screaming at me for sometimes an hour if I was lucky, but sometimes two or three hours just on and on. And he would repeat himself about what a horrible person I was. And if I just did this and I just did that, things would all be better. So I would end up apologizing and giving in just so he would stop screaming at me. And I was terrified.

That's a tough side to be when you're vulnerable, when you don't feel that you have an out. But hopefully, when you're listening to this, you're already out or you're not, maybe we'll give you some inspiration because the women on my podcast that I interviewed have been in vulnerable relationships. They've been in these abusive relationships. They've gotten out and they have created a life for themselves. That's what I've done and that's what I'm showing you - what the possibilities are and why it's so important for you to understand where you've been and why you might be hesitant to move forward in your life. But it's not a reason, because your life is so important.

I felt vulnerable when we went on vacations, I felt vulnerable when I would ask, "Oh, are we going to this museum or that museum? Which one did you get tickets for?" And he would scream at me because I asked a question. I felt vulnerable for my daughter, trying to protect her from his horrible onslaught of screaming and insults and belittlement. Kids hear it. They know it. As much as I try to protect her from hearing this or experiencing this, it happened too much to hide it from her, for her not to be aware of it. And the vulnerability that she experienced, the children experience, they may not be able to express themselves or understand it. I barely could understand it. I didn't even know what was going on. I just knew I was always on edge, that I was being attacked.

I was in a very vulnerable situation where I couldn't leave. I couldn't move. I was thousands of miles away from my family. I was in a part of the world in Saudi Arabia and Lebanon where I just couldn't go anywhere. I couldn't check myself into a hotel. It's scary. It's really scary to be on that side of vulnerability.

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I want to acknowledge you. I want you to really understand that this is quite normal, what you went through, this vulnerability where you were so afraid. We didn't think you had a way out, but here you are. But maybe that's still with you. That vulnerability has not shifted.

I want to take you to the journey of the other side of vulnerability. And I'm still going to talk to you. If you listen to Brené Brown's beautiful talk on Vulnerability, this is not going to be the same way she views it because I'm really talking to you. You, the one who has been in a toxic narcissistic, controlling, abusive relationship, you who've experienced the negative vulnerability, you who still maybe have fears, and why we need to talk about this. Why we can't keep this sheltered?

And now she talks about shame and that's the whole part of the vulnerability that gets so ugly - when we go into that shame and we make our world even smaller. We already think we're alone. We already feel alone. Many of us are we're alone or are alone because they've isolated us so much. They've wanted to break down our support system on purpose to control us.

All of this creates more and more vulnerability, more fear of what's going to happen. When is the next attack? What is the next attack going to look like? I lived that for 25 years, a quarter of a century of my life. How crazy was that? But it wasn't crazy. It was survival and how I could handle it. But your life doesn't have to be this way and nor should it be this way. But to get to your freedom, to get to your freedom to be 100% you, you are going to need to take that step to be vulnerable.

The vulnerability that I am talking about is just about you being vulnerable to and with yourself. I am not addressing you being vulnerable with others. Not at this point. I don't want you standing up on stages, talking about your vulnerability. I don't want you to be in relationships, talking about your vulnerability. You're not ready for that yet.

This vulnerability is being open to yourself, open with curiosity about yourself. So I'm asking you to consider being vulnerable for yourself, about yourself, to yourself, and to allow yourself to be curious, not judgmental about your abusive relationship or about your role, and then the abusive relationship. To know that part of your life, to heal, you must go deep and look at yourself. That's being vulnerable. That's the vulnerability I'm talking about - to have a really good look at yourself, to ask the hard questions of yourself, to ask yourself, what lessons do I need to learn? What did this experience mean? And you may not be there yet. And if you can't answer those, you need to keep looking. You need to keep asking. You need to keep being curious without judgment about yourself.

When I first left, I was so afraid, so scared of him. Even at the escape, I was so terrified of him. I was so angry. I was so upset. I was blaming him. I felt shame and blame. All these emotions and

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feelings were just tumbling inside me creating a whole tornado of feelings. And when people said, "Oh, just take the lesson," I'm going, "What lesson?" I didn't want to hear a lesson. I wasn't ready to hear a lesson, but I have learned the lessons. And I learned the lessons by being open to myself, by being vulnerable to ask those hard questions, to look at myself in a way that I never looked at before. I didn't want to look at myself. I didn't want to say, "Oh, what did I do?"

I want to make this clear. You are not nor are you ever responsible for his behavior towards you. You do not deserve, you never deserve, you will never deserve to be demeaned, belittled, verbally assaulted, emotionally charged, gaslighted, physically attacked, sexually assaulted. Never, ever, ever.

As we go through this journey, as you go through this journey and you ask yourself, "What can I learn from this? How can I grow from this?" it does not mean you accept what happened to you as okay. It's never okay. You accept it from the point of you that it actually happened. I accept that it happened, not I accept it that it was okay. Do you understand the difference here? It's really important. A lot of people get confused by that, especially when they hear it, because I know I did. What do you mean I accept it? What do you mean I take responsibility? And this is where you need to get vulnerable again. You take responsibility, not for what happened to you. Not for what he did. That's his responsibility and will always be his responsibility. It will never be your responsibility.

Your responsibility is to now lead your life, to create your life, to figure out what's holding you back. And that's what this whole podcast is about, the whole entire vulnerable to valuable podcast. It's to address these issues, to help you move forward because your life matters. You matter. Keep asking the hard questions.

Now, the other part of being vulnerable with yourself is to identify the feelings that you've shoved down, and believe me, I know you shove them down and there are still lots of feelings that you've just shoved down. And maybe you're eating your feelings or drinking your feelings or overworking your feelings or dragging your feelings. all kinds of ways to not feel the painful feelings, the ugly feelings - the feelings of blame, the feelings of shame, the feelings 'I'm not enough', the feelings like why didn't I, why couldn't I, why should I, I should have done this, I should have done that. All those feelings. So you need to identify the feelings you've shoved down, and then you need to feel those feelings.

That's being vulnerable - to be open to yourself so raw and real. That's the vulnerability I'm talking about. And it's only when you go through that vulnerability, that opens you up, that gives you then the path, the freedom to get on the path, the freedom to be 100% you. But if you don't go down, you don't open yourself up to that raw vulnerability within you to look at you deeply and hard, you won't find it. It's only through that vulnerability, that side of vulnerability.

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So where are you going to go? Where are you now? Are you pushing the lessons away? Are you pushing the feelings away? Do you not even know how to discover what the lessons are? And that's a chance to reach out and get some support. Never in a million years could I have done this by myself. And that's part of it. Remember the first part, I was talking about the vulnerability of you being a target, you being verbally or emotionally attacked.

I also told you that one of the ways when I was isolated, when you were isolated, such a vulnerable feeling, feeling all alone. And how did you feel? You couldn't reach anybody and know what they could help you. You didn't know how to help them, how to get help from somebody. And maybe that got ingrained in you. There's nobody. "I have to figure this out by myself. This is all my doing. So I got to figure it out by myself." So now you're judging yourself to hear that if you're thinking that way, but that's not useful. And nor is it useful to try to think you can figure this out by yourself.

There are great coaches. There's some way I can help you. There's somebody who can hear and holds space, but it can't be a friend. I'm sorry. They don't know how to do this right. They can just give you their opinion and it may not be the right opinion. And really you don't need opinions. These are things you need to ask yourself or have somebody ask you so that you can find your answers deep within you because you know that's where they are. They've just been buried deep, the real you.

So as you go into this journey of vulnerability within yourself, that's the path to discovering the real authentic you. Who are you? Who is Rosie? Who was Rosie? all the questions, trying to figure it out, all the hours, the days, the weeks of crying, trying to deny the reality of what it was, trying to deny PTSD, deny that all of this could have happened to me... denying what happened to you.

It takes courage, my dear friend. It takes courage to be kind to yourself. Remember what I say if you have learned this from my other podcast is that you deserve to be treated with kindness and it starts by being kind to yourself. So how can you be kind to yourself in opening up and being vulnerable to allow this new you to rise up? She's waiting, she's wanting to get out. The real her is wanting to get out. And she can when you take this path of vulnerability.

I hope this has been helpful. This is really dear to my heart, and how I've seen so many women who have been in this vulnerable state and then they get stuck. They get stuck in that past, that holding pattern.

If you are willing to be curious about yourself, to open up to yourself, to be vulnerable, curious, you'll find your freedom path to be 100% you. I'd love to hear your comments. Please join me.

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Please write to TheLoveisKindNetwork.com I would love to hear from you how you are changing, how you want to change, how you want to show up in this life, what kind of life you want to make, and that it's all possible. All of it's possible. I'm living proof and my guests are living proof. It's possible and it's possible for you. So once again, you deserve to be treated with kindness and it starts by being kind to yourself.

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That's it for today's episode, head on over to www.VulnerabletoValuable.com, and subscribe to the show. When you subscribe, you'll instantly get a special eBook, *The 11 Freedom Fulfillment Pillars to reclaim your voice, value, confidence and courage*.

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