Ep #023: Love Yourself… So You Can Soar Part 2



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rosie Aiello

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When was the last time you did something kind for yourself?

Our guest, Melinda Wittstock who you met on Episode 2—make sure you listen to that amazing podcast--is a 7 figure entrepreneur was forced to make self-care a priority before she could soar.

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 coming up in the podcast, we have our returning guest Melinda Wittstock for Part 2. Where she gets vulnerable and real her journey of transformation. From a successful woman in broadcasting, to losing her voice and then soaring again as she learned to love and value herself. Stay with us till the end to discover her strategies to transformation.

We're going to talk with Melinda in a moment, and first …

… to the 11 Pillars.

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In every episode I share my insights into one of the 11 Freedom Fulfillment Pillars—This is the path I followed after escaping a 25 year narcissistic relationship. I became an international award-winning entrepreneur, best-selling co-author and speaker, and now experience daily joy with the love of MY life.

It took me years … so I CAN NOW shorten that path for you.

Go to Episode 1 or 2 where I identify all the 11 Freedom Fulfillment Pillars. These too can be your path to a new empowered you, to reclaim your voice and value, and to be ready to receive love and kindness so that you can create the productive, prosperous and joyful life you desire.

Today, I pull from one of them today to discuss the importance of Self-care Pillar #2

I have it way up on the list. And I have it way up on the list because it's usually at the bottom of yours. After everybody's needs are met, then just maybe you might put yourself on the list at all.

I want you to really look at your life, and what you are doing, what choices you're making. And this is the key here. These are all choices. And if you don't think it's a choice, I want you to step back and write down everything you'd like to do to make you feel good for you to create that joy.

What I believe to be true is your cup, which is probably pretty empty right now, that the goal is not to keep a cup full. You need to have your cup overflowing. Because once you start to do something for somebody else, and then it just builds to another person and for another organization, your cup starts to just get depleted and depleted. And before you know it, it's half empty, three-quarters empty. So how do you keep it overflowing?

You keep it overflowing by constantly filling it up. It's not like, "Oh, I'll take a break when I'm just so beat and then you end up laying on the bed because you're just exhausted. That's not the point. You want to get there before you are exhausted.

There is a high cost to avoiding self-care. One I just named, just total exhaustion. You're under high stress. Stress causes more health issues. It may lead to overeating, over-drinking, overindulging in social media. Things that really don't create joy in your life. They may fill you up, but they don't create joy, because what they're done from a point of view of, "I got to get away, I just need a break," that is coming from a point of negative energy, rather than a positive energy.

I get to go on a walk by myself, listen to whatever I want, in my air pods, my earphones, just I get to be. I get to do yoga, or a stretch, or a dance. I get to paint, because that makes me feel good. That fills me up. And when you fill yourself up, you become happier, you become more joyful, you become more resilient, and you become more thoughtful, not only of others, but of yourself, and start to recognize that, "Oh, taking care of myself is not selfish, as maybe society and religion and family and social mores may seem to indicate to us to the contrary."

To become a strong, empowered woman, self-care must be at the top. That is how you become strong inside and out, and how you can show up better for others. And as you do this, you are becoming a model, a role model for others around you.

Imagine your child is watching mom, and she's doing the shopping, she goes to work, comes home, makes dinner, reads to the kids and helps them with their homework, put them to bed, cleans up, and then flops on the chair, exhausted. Your children are observing that. Is that what you want to teach your children?

How you show up matters. They're going to be watching you. They may not say anything. They may not even understand it at a young age. But it's getting into their system. It's getting into their psyche. And they're going to say, "Oh, well, I guess you just have to work really hard and never

do anything for yourself." They're not thinking that, but that is what is happening. So is that the message you want to give to your children? So then, maybe you get sick more often. So they'll get sick more often.

And with your partner, if you have been in an abusive relationship, which most of the women here are listening to this, it's a common trap because they make you feel guilty. My ex-husband made me feel so guilty when I tried to do anything for myself. "Oh, you're abandoning me." I mean, he would use those words, "You're abandoning me." And it took so much effort on my part and telling myself over and over I deserve this. I need this. This makes me be a little bit stronger, to be more resilient, to withstand his verbal onslaught until I got out. So it strengthens you.

Sometimes it's reading the book. Sometimes it's listening to a podcast like this one to inspire you and tell you, you matter, your life matters. And it's up to you. It's only up to you to put yourself as number one. Number one, not selfish, but from the point of view that when you are kind to yourself, you become empowered, you become the role model. You teach others how you want to be treated. You become healthier, stronger, more resilient. You can't give from an empty cup. It just won't work. You know it won't work.

Make time. I can just hear you say, "I don't have time, Rosie. I just don't have time." Find the time. Make this choice for you. This is your life. You are in charge of your life, even though you may not feel like. This is something that you can have a choice over. Figure out something that will work for you depending on where you are. And this is where it helps to get some support.

We're so wrapped up, we think of, "Oh, there's just no other choice. I have to do this and I have to do that." So we want to shift from "I have to" to "I get to" because then you're coming from a position of power where you're making positive choices in your life. There are always ways. It's just a matter of figuring it out.

So take a moment and write down what you would like to do, what brings you joy, what makes you feel good. Walk in the woods. Maybe it's going to a gym or something that brings you joy, just for you. It's just all about you to strengthen that inner core.

You deserve it. You deserve to be treated with kindness, and it starts by being kind to yourself.

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The only way to move forward and create an impact in your life is to know where you're at, where you want to go and what's holding you back. Get started by taking the Freedom Fulfillment quiz. In 4 short minutes, you'll discover where you are, where you want to be, and

what you'll need to do. 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: FreedomFulfillmentQuiz.com

Today we're going to rejoin Melinda Wittstock, a 5 time serial entrepreneur who put self-care first "who lived through all these phases … and is now out the other end. She shares what it was like to rise from the bottom mentally, emotionally and financially so you can tap in, take on, and take off to soar in your life.

Melinda is a 5-time serial entrepreneur and the CEO-founder of Wings Media, the first interactive, social and "gamified" podcast network and audience engagement platform. Melinda also hosts the fast growing "Wings Of...Inspired Business" podcast named by Entrepreneur Magazine as #8 of 20 of the top business podcasts for 2020 as well as creates transformational retreats for women entrepreneurs Wings of the Empowered Woman.

Melinda 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 impact 100 M women worldwide who have lost their voice, value and authenticity in narcissistic, controlling and abusive relationships. Will you help us achieve that goal?

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Now back to the inspiring Melinda Wittstock, a smart and outstanding woman who got emotionally whipped by a narcissist only to rise up stronger than ever before.

Let's go from Vulnerable to Valuable with Melinda.

Rosie Aiello: Welcome, Melinda. I can't believe you are actually here with me, with us going to be sharing your incredible story. And I so appreciate you taking the time to be here today.

Melinda Wittstock: Thank you, Rosie, and thank you so much for doing all that you're doing in the world. It's so important and, obviously, very close to my heart, given my own experience.

Rosie: But first, before you share with the audience about your own personal experience, let's let them know where you are today and all the incredible things you are doing in the world today.

Melinda: Well, thank you. I'm an entrepreneur, I've always been an entrepreneur, and I'm on my fifth business and I'm super excited about it because it feels like everything is in alignment. I've launched a lot of businesses in the past where it felt like pushing a boulder up a mountain because it just wasn't quite aligned.

I've created a podcasting network and an audience engagement platform that is really the first of its kind.

For the first time, podcasters will be able to share in the revenue of the network and have real insights into who their audience actually is - their demographics, their psychographics, their habits, their influence, all of this - and be able to engage them on topics that they're really interested in around shared circumstance, shared interests.

Rosie: That's so beautiful because as we go into this world, and our listeners, you're listening through a podcast format, and it's that shift, as we go from vulnerable to really being out there. I know this is being vulnerable right now with me, just stepping out there, but that's how we make that shift.

Tell us a little bit about your background before you shifted into this super-empowered state, helping others with their voice.

Melinda: Oh my goodness. I had a very successful career for many years. To join the Times of London as a journalist at age 22, to create a show for the BBC and grow that audience to 20 million, to launch a whole series of successful businesses, but somewhere along the line, I got married to the wrong man. I didn't really realize it at the time, although I sort of did, when you look back, with 2020 hindsight, and you can see all the signs in retrospect. But at the time, I didn't and I'm highly empathetic and empathetic women, particularly successful ones, have a tendency to attract narcissistic men and I ended up marrying a combination of my own parents.

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Every episode I offer a mini masterclass on the 11 Freedom Fulfillment Pillars. You can get the guidebook to all 11 Freedom Fulfillment Pillars right now. Simply go to VulnerabletoValuable.com and hit the subscribe button to get your copy.

The only way to move forward and have an impact in your life is to get awareness of where you're at, and discover what's holding you back. Following the 11 Pillars I was then able to develop strategies to create my business, become an international award-winning entrepreneur, speaker, and author, find the love of my life and I use these pillars every day to create a fulfilled life. These are the same ones that I use with my clients. And now they are yours free. Go to VulnerabletoValuable.com and subscribe.

And we're back with Melinda Wittstock, CEO and founder of WINGS Media, and the creator of Podopolo, the first interactive, social and "gamified" podcast network.

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Rosie: We're here to show women you have a choice and you're not stuck.

My story, I'm looking to go into it, but with an international escape, talking about feeling stuck, but you can create it. There are all these options to a woman's life and to take off that veil of shame and feeling like a fraud and I have to show up really well. Because there's that dichotomy - I'm looking really good on the outside, everyone thinks I've gotten all my act together, and then I feel I'm not enough, I'm being browbeaten, if I'm still in the relationship, I can't get out, and it's like there's nothing and it's like what an empty life and this is your life. This is your life.

One of the things, too - you've shared a couple of them - but maybe some of your self-care strategies that you do. Because women are givers, as a population, we're giving, but then when we have been on the receiving end of being diminished, put down, belittled, it's like there's no time to even take self-care, but, wow, it's so important to really treat yourself.

Melinda: It's actually the very first thing you should do.

Rosie: Absolutely.

Melinda: It goes in my calendar just about before everything else, other than sleeping and eating, honestly. Because I can't run and grow a business and I know this. This is my fifth one, I've gotten other ones to seven and eight-figure success, I know that it's impossible without self-care and it's impossible to be the best mom you can be without looking after yourself. You also want to teach your kids and your team

members or your colleagues or whatever. They learn from what you do, not what you say. We want to be the change we want to see in the world, so if we're denying ourselves, we're setting up and persisting a system of denial, which isn't good for anybody.

I think, right now, we're entering into a period of history of kind of like feminine energy, and I mean that in an archetypal sense, where it's a lot more empathetic and intuitive and collaborative generally. We're seeing that trend in a lot of businesses as well and just leadership styles and I think that's really great. So what better of a time for women to really be in alignment with what we need as women rather than trying to be in the hustle and the grind of the archetypal masculine paradigm, which it has been because that's how business was set up. That's how our society was set up, but I think there are a lot of profound shifts going on right now. For instance, self-care is vital.

My self-care routine is I wake up in the morning - and it's fluid, it can change depending on what's going on. We got a puppy over the summer, so that disrupted my morning routine a little bit. I always meditate in the morning, every morning. On the rare occasions that I miss that, I really can tell the difference by about 2 or 3 in the afternoon, my day is just not going as well. In my meditation, increasingly, I start to get downloads or like what should I be doing today, what's the best use of my time. I start to get a lot of inspiration and I've started to get very disciplined about acting on the inspiration I get through my morning meditation.

Anyway, it's morning meditation, I do a lot of things with my dog. I have always had a golden retriever by my side. I'm on my third and Augie is nine months old and we go for walks in the woods. I find I have my best ideas when I'm in nature, and that's really true for women. We really need to be around beauty and nature. The beauty of nature is so important. Whatever that is to you, that's really important for women.

The other thing that I do that's sacrosanct in my calendar is I have a 90-minute massage once a week, without fail. Same time every week, same person, in the calendar, it is not movable. I will not move it for anything. There are these things that go into my calendar before anything else goes in and I have to be very disciplined and true to myself and sticking to it and choosing… Again, it's like valuing yourself enough to choose what you value and be willing to say no. Having those boundaries of knowing what you want, taking it without apology because you deserve it, you're valuable, it's what you need, and other people always understand. And if they don't, they're not the right people for you.

Rosie: Absolutely. Those were really great examples and I hope the people listening, it's like, "Oh, I have to take care of my kids, and I have to do this."

Melinda: And I do all of that too.

Rosie: Exactly. To realize that what I teach is that women, your cup has to not just be full, it needs to be overflowing, for it to be overflowing. Because if your cup is full and you start burning out, it's going to be half-full in just a very short amount of time.

Melinda: Yeah, you're not good to anybody. It's particularly true of women, we need to replenish. It's so, so important.

Rosie: It's a regular routine.

Melinda: Honestly, it means, for me, that I have to wake up kind of early in the morning but that's fine. I've just found that I go to sleep… My kids tease me because they're both teenagers and I can barely make it past 9:30 at night, but I also wake up at like 5:30 in the morning.

Rosie: I get that. I know exactly what you mean too. Tell us a little bit about that, because you mentioned a little bit before, about learning now to trust yourself, trust your decisions, trust you know who you're going to work with, getting in dating, deciding this is the man in my life. Because once we've been in these abusive relationships that we've been diminished, our ability to trust ourselves and others gets really challenged.

Melinda: Yeah, it does. Like I was saying at the beginning of the interview, I had, for a time, a whole bunch of I call them echoes where people showed up. And even just recently, I ended up working with a woman who was supposed to be doing my personal branding, who, oh my God, she ended up being this complete narcissist. She took my money and basically stiffed me, and quite a lot of money, and she did this to a number of other pretty high-profile women as well.

I look back now and I can see all the signs that she actually has a narcissistic thing going on. It's weird, you know that gaslighting thing, like night is day and day is night and all that weird stuff? She was doing all of that to all of us and we all got together and we all figured it out. So I still have to really watch it because it can happen, that kind of energy. It's an energy and it can find you.

Rosie: Yeah, and it's just all this, it's just the constant working on awareness and making those shifts and not blaming yourself that, "I got myself into this mess again." Do not have that kind of thinking, which is that whole negative thinking, it's like the judgment and everything else. We can just eliminate that and just get to the root

of it... And sadly - I know I probably grew up in this little bubble, my guy tells me that - and thinking that everyone in the world is really kind and nice and it's sad to say that not everyone is kind and nice, but there are a lot of people who are and the majority are. Yet, there are other people who still are wounded and as they're wounded, they are projecting that wound.

Melinda: Absolutely. The tricky thing, I think, with narcissists, in particular, is they're very good at pretending to be empaths, so they're very confusing to an empath because they do all these things - they're a little bit larger than life, they tend to be really charming, and really amazing, and you're sort of blown away by them, and they seem too good to be true. That's because they are. There are these certain things, these certain patterns that you start to pick up over a time, but it can be really, really hard.

There's an increasing body of work now that show that, particularly high-intelligence, high-empathetic, successful women, tend to attract these sorts of men because they... And I'm not entirely sure, I'm just hearing more and more and more about this, and I'm curious what that is about. Because the more we can recognize and diagnose these patterns, the more likely we can equip ourselves just to know. And the more I trust myself and really trust my own gut or intuition, I pretty much muscle test it now. If I feel drained in the presence of somebody or inexplicably tired all of a sudden, like I was feeling great but now I suddenly feel tired, or I just feel suddenly self-conscious whereas, moments ago, I felt really comfortable in my own skin, that's a signal for me.

Rosie: Yeah, it's really knowing all of those signs and listening to your body. Your body is going to really tell you. You're going to feel the tension somewhere, a lot of people in their stomach, it could be in your back, it could be in your chest. We start to feel something is off and to know who you really are and that you don't have… Just because they're known, they're this, they're that, we create this persona of them which is not really true and we feel like we owe them to be with them and to say, "I know she's really good or he's really good, so therefore, I should do that too." And when we get into the shoulds, that's another warning sign or a red flag when you start to say that and you doubt what your true value is.

Rosie: How can our listeners find out more about you, Melinda?

Melinda: Oh my goodness. They can go to my website, melindawittstock.com; they can find me anywhere on social media, LinkedIn, MelindaWittstock; Facebook, Melinda.Wittstock; my public figure, I think, is Iam@MelindaWittstock; Instagram, MelindaWittstock2020. I would love it if you all listened, downloaded, subscribed, reviewed too, my podcast, Wings of Inspired Business. I interview

amazing women like you, Rosie, who have built really successful businesses. I'm up at about around 450+ episodes, reaching almost a million people now, and Entrepreneur Magazine ranked us number eight out of 20 top podcasts for 2020, so was really, really excited about that.

Rosie: That's fabulous.

Melinda: So check out Wings of Inspired Business, and also, if you're a successful female entrepreneur, I run retreats for really wonderful women. Rosie, you came to one of them. It's called Wings of the Empowered Woman and we're taking applications now for our retreat in Costa Rica in November, so if you're interested in that, you can go to wingsexperiences.com/apply.

The other place you can interact with me is if you want to launch a podcast. I have a special free e-book to seven steps for how you can create a magnetic podcast and engage your true tribe and profit from podcasting. You can get that at wingspodcast.com/liftoff.

Rosie: That's beautiful. And listen, I know she gave you a lot. Don't worry about it, it's going to be in the podcast notes.

Melinda: Yeah, if you're driving, don't write that down.

Rosie: Yes, but it's all a lot of good stuff and you're going to want to do every single one of them. Just remember Melinda Wittstock and you're going to be able to find everything, so it's all good. Any other final words on how you transformed from being vulnerable to being valuable?

Melinda: I think it was just a deep look inside, being willing to be curious, being willing to learn, being willing to forgive, just being willing to follow the breadcrumbs to a personal recovery. I think that's it and it still evolves. It never really ends, but just being willing to do that and, ultimately, willing to forgive myself.

Rosie: What does, "Love is kind," mean to you?

Melinda: Well, I love the phrase. It means a multiplicity of things to me. I think that the first person that we have to love is ourselves and I think we're often most unkind to ourselves. Women, generally, tend to put everyone ahead of themselves, which is not an act of selflessness, it's really an act of unkindness to ourselves. I think to be able to unlock the kind of love that truly is kind from another person, we first have to learn how to love ourselves and be kind to ourselves. When we catch that judgmental or negative voice, ourselves criticizing ourselves or judging ourselves or shaming ourselves, we really, really have to work on that and let that stuff go.

Assuming that that's all true, that we love ourselves, I think being in a really loving relationship. I believe that kindness in love is about letting the person you love be the very best person that they can be and allow them to be 100% fully in their own true purpose, even if that interferes with your own whatever. If you love someone, they need to be free to be who they are. So if you want to marry a cat, don't marry a dog because you can't change a cat into a dog.

Rosie: A lot of them try to make a cat into a dog.

Melinda: Right? So know what you want and then let that person be the best, support them to be the best person they can be and you deserve the same. I think that's kindness, that's the kind of selflessness in love where you're both in it to lift the other in that sense. And little random acts of kindness is a big part of it as well and, like any plant, it needs to be watered. Water everything with kindness.

Rosie: That's beautiful. You do have somebody special in your life now too?

Melinda: Yes, I do.

Rosie: We've gone through this whole journey of being with somebody who was highly abusive, who almost destroyed our psyche and who we are, we went through different ways to come out of it and transform from being really vulnerable to now really valuing ourselves. And then still, this journey of freedom, what I call your freedom journey, is when you are constantly creating it and not taking advantage of what you have and to know that people are going to be coming out, because that's what the world is, and not to see it so naively. And to end up having somebody really who is treating you with kindness, respect, thoughtfulness, because you deserve it.

Melinda: Absolutely.

Rosie: Beautiful. Thank you so much, Melinda, for sharing your brilliance with us.

Melinda: Thank you, Rosie. It was such a delight and I'm so excited by what you're doing in the world. Thank you.

Rosie: Thank you. Have a great day. Bye-bye.

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That's it for today's episode, head on over to VulnerabletoValuable.com, and subscribe to the show. When you subscribe, you'll instantly get a special eBook.

And when you subscribe to the show and post review to iTunes, you'll be entered into a drawing to win a free consult with me. Plus, your subscribing will help our mission to inspire 100 million women worldwide to heal and move forward from their abusive relationships.

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