Ep #22: Owning Your Truth



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Rosie Aiello

Ep #22 : Owning Your Truth

What happened to me? Where did this vibrant woman go? Have you ever asked yourself these questions?

Answering those questions can be revealing. They also can affirm that underneath all the confusion and emotions, that amazing woman is still there. Today our guest shows how she picked apart what her husband was telling her, and realized she was none of the horrible things he was telling her. She began to own her truth.

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.

Our guest today on the podcast is Suzy Prudden who gets vulnerable sharing realizations during and after her marriage to her narcissistic husband. She made some tough decisions during her freedom journey to discover and own who she was.

We're going to talk with Suzy Prudden in a moment, and first a mini masterclass…

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In this Episode of the V to V podcast, my guest and I discuss many topics of course. I've decided to focus on the topic of Owning Your Truth. When you've been chipped away little by little by little by your partner who is telling you who you are and who you are not, you begin to lose a part of you. You start to doubt yourself, and to begin to believe what he's telling you. Your reality gets distorted. And You lose your own truth. Sounding familiar?

For this mini masterclass, I'm not covering any single Freedom Fulfillment Pillar because the topic of Owning Your Truth touches upon so many of them.

I'm going to share 3 ways your Truth can get sabotaged and 3 steps to Reclaim your Truth, your voice and your value—to get back to and really create the new 100% YOU.

You'll hear in this Episode when my guest Suzy shares the times when her husband would tell her who she was. Later when she dated she had similar experiences. She realized that one man who she'd been dating had rules about how she should be, do and act. Feeling empowered, she boldly challenged that man on who it was he wanted to date. Be sure to listen how she models it, and what his answer is. It's a great example.

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To get to Owning Your Truth

First, I'm going to share 3 ways Your Truth can get sabotaged.

1. You're Demeaned, threatened or attacked daily or on a regular basis.
   Getting picked apart day in and day out would diminish even the strongest person. When I say picked on, I mean they insult you, they belittle you, they demean you, they put you down. They threaten you or worse. You are in frequent states of fear and hyperalert. You may feel like you're walking on eggshells. I felt like I was walking around landmines because I never knew when he'd blow up.

2. They validate their behavior behind the veil of love or claiming that you made him do it.
   They come up with what sounds like valid reasons for their behavior. They'll say things in the name of love. If you didn't do that, or say this, I wouldn't have gotten so angry. If you loved me, you wouldn't act this way. I love you so much that I have to do this to you. When you're not in the moment like now, you can tell how ridiculous these sound, but in the moment it's actually happening, you're not thinking. It's not your fault you're not thinking. You're in survival mode. Your brain is burnt. The Fight/Flight/Freeze part of your brain has become overactive. But it wasn't built to sustain that continuous onslaught. The prefrontal cortex, the new part of your brain that allows for executive thinking, analyzing and decision making shuts down. You feel like you're in a fog. And you are. Even if you've left the guy. Because you are now traumatized.

3. And that leads to number 3. You begin to rationalize his abusive behavior.
   If I weren't wrong. If I were enough. If I did it the way he wanted, he wouldn't get so mad at me. So it must be me. We not only rationalize his behavior, we take on the responsibility for his behavior. We make excuses that his behavior is justified and that he's right, and so something must be wrong with me. Have you ever done that? Even if you're out?

   Each time you gave in, you gave up a part of you. You've lost yourself. You've lost your own truth. It got buried while you were in survival mode. And now it's the time to peel off those layers covered the real you.

So how do you shift to Owning YOUR Truth and standing in your power?

Well let me say that it's not an overnight shift. How long it takes will depend on each person. But you can shift.

There are many ways to create the shift, but I'm only sharing 3 today.

1. First thing, make sure there is no contact with the person who is sucking your emotional energy, and spewing insults and demeaning you. If you haven't done that, it's going to be extremely difficult. As much as you're working on yourself, and I highly advise you do that all the time, because he'll be pumping garbage into you. Your brain won't be able to keep up with his onslaught. That's why separation from anyone who is pulling you down is critical so you can rebuild your internal systems. No contact is often easier said than done, so if you're not yet out, don't beat yourself up. I was in 25 years before I was able to get out. Lots of reasons it was that way. But the sooner you can do it, the better for your overall psychological health. Remove yourself from those who don't support you.

2. Practice new thoughts. No matter what, start practicing new thoughts and challenge what he says to you (in your mind): Just because he says that, or said that doesn't make it true. Even if it's in the past. You're smart, right? But he just seems so knowing. He says things with such self-confidence and assurance. There's no trace of doubt in his mind that you are stupid. He sounds so convincing. Keep repeating, just because he says it doesn't make it true.

   I didn't know that. I started to believe him. I lost myself.

   When I landed back in the United States after my escape, my young adult daughter was with me. My husband and his friends were constantly trying to get in touch with my daughter and me to convince us were wrong for escaping. Everyone had an opinion about him -He's a good man. And of me –I was wrong, and of us as a family—you were the perfect family. It drove us crazy. I told my daughter, "Look, you and I are the only ones who know the truth. We were the ones alone with him. We aren't crazy. We know what we heard and experienced. Hold onto that truth." We had to repeat over and over. And you will too. "I know the truth." Just because he says something doesn't make it true no matter how convincing he sounded.

3. Get qualified support. Qualified is important. To this day I get opinions from good intentioned family and friends, but the truth is they really don't understand the dynamics of abuse and trauma nor the psychology. And there so called advice can actually harm you. So if you listen to them, they may tell you, "go back, or it's all in your head, or snap out of that depression, or you're hurting the family." Their remarks can often become self-serving because they don't want to accept the reality of what has happened. That's not your problem though. They love you, but they cannot and should not be telling you what to do or not do. Let them love you. Get good, qualified support. Therapist, counsellor, life coach or transformation coach like I am.

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Let's review this topic Owning Your Truth. This is the core of who you are. It creates the foundation to reclaim your voice, value and confidence.
The 3 ways Your Truth Gets Sabotaged

1. You're Demeaned, or worse on a daily or on a regular basis.
2. They validate their behavior behind the veil of love.
3. You begin to rationalize his abusive behavior.

3 ways you can shift to Own Your Truth.

1. Remove yourself from the abusive person. Their onslaught of toxic behavior destroys your psyche. The human brain was not designed to handle abuse. Period.
2. Practice new thoughts to create new beliefs affirming yourself and denying the reality of what he says about you. If you've left, you will most likely still hold onto false beliefs.
3. Get qualified support. It is nearly impossible to recover on your own. You don't want your recovery to take decades. The earlier you get support the sooner you can create a life you love and deserve.

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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 meet Suzy Prudden, business coach and publisher, who get vulnerable as she shares the difficult decisions, her realizations and her steps to growth so that you can empower yourself, believe in yourself and create a life of freedom after narcissistic relationships.

Suzy Prudden 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 to Suzy Prudden Business coach and publisher…

Let's go from Vulnerable to Valuable with Suzy Prudden.

Rosie Aiello: Well, welcome my dear Suzy. I am so happy you are with me today.

Suzy Prudden: I am too, Rosie. Thank you for inviting me.

Rosie: Yes. So before we get started, I want our valuable listener to hear on the Vulnerable to Valuable podcast all about you. You are an internationally acclaimed author, speaker and seminar leader. You're also a transformational business coach and publisher, and you help business owners position themselves as experts in their field and help them transform their belief system into success. Wow, that is just so beautiful.

Suzy: I want to get to know her.

Rosie: Exactly. And I know her, and I've heard her speak and she is super dynamic and a ball of fun and brains and everything you would want to have in a business coach. But it wasn't all peaches and cream. I mean, you have a very successful life for a very, very long time. But there were moments in your life, even when you were starting off, when you had this relationship that just made you think twice about what was going on. Tell us a little bit about that and what was going on with you.

Suzy: Well, it's an interesting thing, Rosie, because when you're in an abusive relationship, you don't know you're in an abusive relationship, and you believe that you're the wrong person and you're wrong. And an abusive relationship in my experience, and I've talked to a lot of people about theirs, because you're told that it's your fault, and you look at this person whom you love and who supposedly loves you, and it must be your fault that he hits you because he loves you. If he didn't love you, I mean, if you weren't wrong with whatever he accused you of, then why would he hit you? So he hit you because you're wrong. So you take on the "I'm wrong all the time."

And then you begin to believe it. And you don't realize because basically you're tilted. It's like, you're not right in your mind. How can you be right in your mind? If you consistently believe

that the person you love hits you, you must be doing something wrong; and accuses you and accuses and accuses and accuses. Then the abuse happens, and it's not just physical. It's emotional, it's psychological, it's sexual. My experience was in every way.

Rosie: Yeah. And even financial too.

Suzy: Well, mine wasn't financial because I was the breadwinner.

Rosie: Yeah. So tell me about that a little bit more.

Suzy: It's so funny. I look at it now and I go, well, I didn't know that I could just leave. I didn't know that. And I had the money. It was my money. I made the money and I inherited money. I had a lot of money. And I didn't know I could just leave. And then one day, the abuse went on until four in the morning, instead of six, that last year and a half that... I was married 18 years and I have one son, and I had what looked like the perfect life. I had the condo on the Upper West Side of New York. I had a house in East Hampton, Long Island. My son went to private school. He went to summer camp. We had one car. We didn't need two cars because we lived in Manhattan. I had a very successful business on the Upper West Side. I had a television career. I had a writing career. It looked like I had everything and I was completely miserable because I lived with someone who basically got angry with me every single day. Every single day.

And eventually, the last year and a half that we were married, my ex-husband... And I learned something very important later, which I'm going to mention after this because people need to know this. My ex-husband would start a fight every evening at 11:30.

Rosie: 11:30 in the evening.

Suzy: At 11:30, every night, last year and a half.

Rosie: Wow, clockwork.

Suzy: Yeah. I would look at my watch and I'd go, “Okay, five, four, three, two, one.”

Rosie: You can't see her, but she's looking at her watch.

Suzy: “Go.” And it would be no matter where I was. I could be in the bathtub. I could be in the kitchen. I could have already gotten into bed. The fight would start. It would last exactly an hour and a half. And I used to look at him and say, “What is the matter? What is...” It didn't matter what it was. I don't even remember what it was. At one o'clock, it would stop. We'd have sex. He'd go to sleep.

Rosie: Yeah.

Suzy: And one night, it went to four in the morning, and I landed and I thought, "You know what? I cannot be more miserable alone than I am right now." And the next day I left and I went to California. I flew to California. I just had to get far away. And I eventually called home and my husband put my son on the phone. My son, I think, was 11 or, anyway, young. And he said, "Mommy, mommy, please come home. Daddy's crying." And I went, "Oh, I forgot the kid." I was so desperate to leave.

Rosie: Desperate. Yeah. It's interesting that you get to that moment where you just crack and your brain has already been cracked, but you don't even know that, right? You're not even aware of it. And it's so interesting, no matter how successful you were on the outside and the dream life of everyone. "What do you mean? You guys have the best life. Look, you have this." And behind it, you're just being mentally and emotionally demolished.

Suzy: Yes. Completely demolished. And so what I did that night was I said, "Okay." That was the shortest hotel stay I've ever stayed. I mean, I was there for four o'clock in the afternoon until 10 o'clock that night. I took the red-eye back to New York, and I went first-class both ways. And I have to look at it now. And first-class was what it costs now to go coach. But anyway, this was... When was this? 1980. It was 1980 and... or 80... yeah, 80. And on the way back, I thought, "Okay, if the promise is kept and things get better, I'll stay. But if the promise is not kept and things continue to go along the way they were, I have to leave."

Rosie: Was that something you said to yourself in the plane or you hadn't yet expressed that to your husband?

Suzy: I never expressed it to him.

Rosie: Okay. Go ahead. All right. Just want to clarify.

Suzy: Yeah, no, I never expressed it. This is what I'm talking to myself. And I had been married 17 years, total 18. When things were good between us, they were really good. I mean, he and I wrote books together and there was a reason I married him. And it just got less and less and less. And I got so many funny stories. And I was on my way home, I thought, "Okay. So, when will my son be safe? When can I leave without him being caught in the middle?" And it was the 25th of June when he goes to summer camp, because once they're in summer camp, neither parent can take them out. They have to both be there. They can't take the kids. The kids are protected. So I got home at about 5:00 AM, got into bed to sleep. At nine o'clock, the fight started. And I thought, "Okay, this is an indication that things are not going to get better."

And so from that, that was October 1980. From October 1980 to June '81, I planned my escape. And I did escape. I mean, I literally was in hiding for two weeks. I did not know because I was threatened. I was sure he was going to kill me.

Rosie: Yeah, we have, because they get so violent. Like in my case, my ex-husband was never... It's not true. I shouldn't say he was never physically violent. He was not very often physically violent, but even if, you know. Well, I had learned that at the moment you start telling him, if you tell them that you're leaving, if you do, that's when the violence can even accelerate. So somebody who's never laid a hand on you, you can all of a sudden become vulnerable to being physically attacked and really harmed. And I too was scared to death. That's why I left. I mean, I was scared to death and I was scared to death for a long time, even after I left him.

Suzy: Me too.

Rosie: Right? And these fears that we have are real because we've seen their behavior, even though others haven't.

Suzy: Right. Well, the interesting thing that I learned, Rosie, is that my ex-husband was a rageaholic. He was addicted to the neurochemical that created in his system when he got mad. So in order to get that high, and it was for him a high, even though it was insane, he had to get angry and then the neurochemical of rage would.... And so when you have a behavior that repeats and repeats and repeats, it creates a neurochemical response in the body and in the brain. I didn't understand the brain function in terms of neurochemicals at that time. I've learned since.

Rosie: Yeah. Me too.

Suzy: So the neurochemical of rage is released. And then in order to cap it, then there was sex. And that was every night. It was like, this is not lovemaking. This is just playing sex. And--

Rosie: The volcano blew up. I called my mind, I was like, the volcano blew up. Now the lava was cooling down. And so it's released, and it does that for the sex. That was a really typical thing for me too.

Suzy: I was young. I was 19 when I got married. I didn't have any experience with anything. I mean, I went from home to boarding school to college. So I was in dormitories for six, seven years. And then my mother told me... This is funny. My mother told me I couldn't date the boy I was dating, which was my ex-husband. So I married him. Don’t tell me what to do. And what's interesting, there was some good stuff, obviously, that came out of that marriage. We created a persona of Suzy Prudden. I was a household name for a while with my business and my books

and my TV. And so we did some good stuff here. He and I worked very, very well together. We just didn't relationship well together.

Rosie: Is that the whole Jekyll and Hyde, that whole, just that flipping back. And that's what screws you up too. And you talked about the neurochemicals in him. But the same thing happens in the woman where you're all constantly in that fight or flight or freeze, in some cases, and your chemicals are also firing off the brain. The brain is not meant for it to be in that constant state. If you're in the fear and fight phase, it's to be released. If you can't release it, things start to bubble up. And now your prefrontal cortex doesn't start to function anymore. And that's why it's so hard for women to leave. You're just burning at the ends, on the amygdala.

Suzy: Yeah. I honestly had no idea how damaged I was. And I remember dating a guy after I left my ex-husband, and he said to me one day, “Suzy, I can't continue with you. I didn't realize how damaged you were.”

Rosie: Oh, dear. He said how damaged you were.

Suzy: How damaged you were, and I went on... It didn't sink in really as damaged. Am I damaged? But as I look back, I was severely damaged. Severely damaged.

Rosie: And so what did that look like when you say you're severely damaged. Although that's how you felt, you really weren't.

Suzy: And I healed.

Rosie: Yeah. And so how does it look like for you? What did being damaged look like for you? What was your thinking, your behavior, belief?

Suzy: The interesting thing was that, here I was, I was... How old was I? 37. Okay. I was beautiful. I was thin. I was rich. I was a celebrity, and I was completely out of my mind. And I looked back on it and I was completely out of my mind.

Rosie: What did that look like? Being out of your mind, what did it look like?

Suzy: This is so funny. I went crazy shopping, and I just shopped and shopped. I couldn't sleep. During my marriage, I was addicted to Soma and Valium. And as soon as I left my husband, I started to get off those. I dumped the Soma and I cut back on the Valium. It took me a couple of years. And so I didn't drink, but I was wired. And I didn't sleep. And I got very, very thin. I loved a divorce diet. I think it's the best thing I've done. I literally got down to a size, two jeans, when sizes meant something. This was in the eighties. So I was about 102 pounds. And of course, I

didn't realize that I was anorexic and bulimic. I mean, there was so many things that I did to myself to damage myself, to bring down the feelings of wild... I mean, it was wild.

And a smart thing my mother did was, she saw that I was out of control. And so she sent me to a program called Silva Mind Control, and that was in February of '81. And I thought, “Wow.” Maybe it was 82. It doesn't matter, one of those two years. I divorced in '81. Yeah, it was '82. And I realized that I could take control of my life with the power of my mind. I had no idea that I could do that before. And that's when I became a workshop junkie. And so from February... then I went on tour with a book. I'd never been on tour by myself. Before, my husband had always gone with me. I'd never been alone before.

Rosie: Yeah. This is a fear a lot of women have, right? They've been in relationships for the majority of their lives. And then all of a sudden, they're left alone. They don't realize that they can do it. And that's why sometimes women don't even leave because it's like, “Oh, I can't be alone.”

Suzy: I didn't have that. I really didn't have that. I was so sick and tired of him. I was never alone. And it was like, “Good Lord, give me a moment. Peace, please.” Now I was alone. My son and I shared the apartment. He was in boarding school. The second year, he was having a really hard time in school. And so I talked to him about it and I said, “Look, I am not a responsible mother right now. I knew it.” I said, “I can't give you the guidance you need. And when the divorce happened, you didn't get a new mother, you got a teenage sister because I really regressed.”

Rosie: Interesting. And you were aware.

Suzy: I was aware of it.

Rosie: That's pretty amazing. Good for you.

Suzy: And I found him a really good school and we got him in and I applied. He was on probation because he was flunking 10th grade, 11th grade. He went back into 10th grade and he's told me that was the best decision I ever made for him. He's living in China right now with his best friend from that school.

Rosie: Wow. What an impact.

Suzy: And that was in the eighties. So what happened, my son was in therapy, and my husband and I went... We were divorced. We went to the therapy session together. My son was flunking out of school and I said, “We need to send him to boarding school because neither one of us can

raise him at this point. We're not capable of it." And he said, "If he's going to fail, we'll send him to public school and not have to pay for it." And I said, "It's not about not paying for something. It's about him succeeding. It's not about not supporting him, sending him to public school so we don't have to pay for his failure. It's about putting me in a position where he can succeed," which my husband decided that he'd become a deadbeat dad, and he did. And so I paid for it and I would do it again in a heartbeat.

Rosie: Yeah. That's what moms do. That's fabulous. Well, you've come a long way and I love the lessons that you've learned. And just again, the total lack of awareness, you're not expecting it. It didn't matter how successful you were. It was how fortunate you had, a mother there who could see and guide you into the personal development world, and that you were open to that. And you were open as well as you realized that you weren't able to be there for your son. And I think it's easy for other people to judge, "Oh, why are you sending your son away?" But you made that decision out of such love because you knew what you were going through. You knew you couldn't be there and what's worse for a child, but for somebody, a parent to be there, but not be there. Not to be there emotionally for that. What a fabulous decision and a testament to your strength, your courage, to make tough decisions that were for the betterment of everybody.

Suzy: I also made some stupid mistakes.

Rosie: We all do.

Suzy: Oh yes.

Rosie: But that's part of the human experience, right? It's a big part of the human experience, but to really understand you did do this and you did it out of love. Sometimes we have to make these decisions. And I want women who are listening and like, "Well, maybe that's a possibility for me. I never thought about that before, when I'm like flailing here. Maybe that's something I can do." Even during these times, there are other possibilities.

Suzy: There are options.

Rosie: Right? There are other options, rather than having to take on everything themselves.

Suzy: Yeah. There are options. I was very lucky. I was really very lucky in that I was financially... I mean, when I came out to California with a friend, and on the way driving up to stay with another friend in Carmel, I'm driving up the coast and it's like six o'clock in the morning and it's absolutely gorgeous. Now I'm a New Yorker, so I'm used to big buildings. Now, all of a sudden, I'm on Highway 1 and the sea is sparkling and the sky is cloudless and the mountains are gorgeous and the air is... It's breathtaking.

As I'm driving up, I said, “Okay, we were together for 18 years. And there were times in that marriage when he saved me and he took care of me and he really partnered with me. And then there was all the insanity.” And I said, “Okay. So for 18 years, this man was my partner. I'm just going to split everything in half and give him half of everything.” My family was mortified. But when I talked to the lawyer about it, he said, “Well, you can fight this.” And I said, “How long will it take?” He said, “About five years.” I said, “Uh-uh. No. I want this done by the end of the year.” And that was in June. And we were divorced on the 31st or the 30th of December of that year.

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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 the delightful Suzy Prudden,

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Rosie: So, what were some of the steps, and of course, not at all the one time, but just some of the things that you experienced during your healing process that really helped you? Did you start to have a new vision for yourself of what your life could be, or did you--

Suzy: Not in the beginning. In the beginning, I really had no clue.

And so it was really good that my son was in a boarding school because I was a loose cannon. I was a lot of fun to be with. I was a lot of fun. And I didn't drink. So, that was another very good thing, because if I did, then I don't know what. That could have gotten out of hand. So, the most important thing for me was to make sure that I kept my business going. And that's where I put my focus.

Rosie: So, that was good that you had your business to truly have some center of attention for you to keep going. I mean, this is really common too. Some people drink, some people overeat,

some people overwork, right? We bury ourselves into something just to keep us standing and keep moving forward. Did you start to learn, though, over time how to create some healthy boundaries, and what did that look like for you?

Suzy: It took a long time to learn how to create boundaries, but I am... There's a fortress around me basically and I have very, very strong boundaries now. And I make it very clear that I have very, very strong boundaries. And so I have boundaries I probably don't even know about that I've created around me. I don't know if it's that healthy, but I'm very, very careful who I spend my time with.

Rosie: Yeah. I think this is such a key one too, is that you realized when we've been in these relationships that, "I don't need to be around anybody who brings me down, who is toxic, who's abusive. I don't need their energy. Man, woman business, not business, whoever it is, I have no time for that." Right? So by those choices, you maintain a healthier lifestyle in and of itself. And it's so important because we were mentally destroyed and had to piece it back.

Suzy: And I learned how to claim myself. So I was dating a guy for a while. What year was this? '83. And we had some really fun times. And then he would start to say things like, "You laugh too loudly." And then he said something else to me. So we were confirming a date. And I said, "I have to have to ask you a question." I said, "You tell me I laugh too loudly. You tell me I do this and that I shouldn't do that, and that I shouldn't do this." I said, "So what you're telling me is that the me that you're talking to is not the me that you want to go out with. You want to go out with the me that you want me to become. But that's not who I am. So the question is, do you want to go out with the me that you want me to become? Or the me that already exists? Because if you want to go out with me that already exists, I'd love to see you. But if you want to go out with the me that you want me to become, I don't think it's going to work out. Are we still on for dinner Thursday?" And he said, "No, I think not."

Rosie: What a wonderful example, Suzy. What a wonderful example. I hope you are listening. What a wonderful example of standing in your own power. I often tell women, every time you give in, you give up a part of you.

Suzy: Absolutely.

Rosie: And I just love that example. It gives me goosebumps because it's just such an empowering way to be. And the easiest thing is to be yourself. And yet, constantly, we're trying to, before, twisting yourself into a pretzel to please the other person. And it's like, that doesn't work.

Suzy: No, it doesn't work. He and I remained good friends. We were not meant to be as partners because I'm sure that that's a pattern for this man. And having lived that for 18 years, I was to this, I was to that, I was not good enough, I was stupid. So I have a funny story, and everybody who hears this is going to cringe when I'd say it, but it has a happy ending.

Rosie: Okay.

Suzy: So, as you know, my ex-husband verbally abused everything. So, I was standing in the kitchen one night and I remember the year, it was 1976. I was standing in the kitchen, washing dishes, cooking dinner. I don't know what I was doing, but I was in the kitchen. My ex-husband comes barreling in furious for something. And he looks at me and he goes, "You're fat, stupid, ugly..." I can't remember the fourth thing. And so I looked at it and go, "Well, I weigh 115 pounds. I'm not fat. I've always been pretty." I can't remember the third or fourth. I'm good friends with a lot of women, but I'm not interested in them sexually. And I went through the fourth one, and the fifth one was stupid. And I went, "Oh, maybe I'm not stupid."

Rosie: By deduction.

Suzy: By deduction. I went, "Well, I'm not this, I'm not this, and I'm not this. Oh my goodness. Wow, I'm not stupid." And it was a wonderful moment for me, privately in the kitchen. And then I said, "Dear God, I have to get out of this." And I heard a voice. And the voice said, "You owe him five years."

Rosie: Oh, interesting.

Suzy: And I went, "I do?" And the voice said, "Yes." I went, "Okay, we'll do five more years." I don't know where that came from. And it was almost five years to the date that I walked out.

Rosie: Wow. Interesting. Yeah. Again, you have these moments of really clarity, "I am not this. He's telling me this, but I am not this." It's so hard. We get wrapped up in this. It doesn't matter. I've talked to women who've been in relationships less than a year and just get sucked in almost immediately, and yet, you are able to just like step back for that moment and have such clarity that, "I'm not what he tells me. I am..." like you were talking about that other story about the guy. You're not this, you should do this and you should do that, and all of these things. They tell us over and over until it becomes a core belief.

Suzy: It becomes a belief.

Rosie: Right? And it's hard to break that belief because you've been... In my case, for 25 years or for 18 years, and it's hard to break that belief. You think that's true. I mean, my ex told me for

ages, “Oh, you're a terrible mother. I'm sure you love your daughter, but you're a terrible mother.” It was a core belief I had. It took me a long time--

Suzy: That's a hard one. That's a hard one because no one has to tell us that for us to believe it, because, yes, you make mistakes like, “Oh, I don't believe I did that. Oh my God. I don't believe I did that. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.” But yeah, the thing that's most challenging, I think, is that when you get into a relationship, you love that person and you believe that person loves you. And so you must be a terrible person for that person to get so mad at you because he loves you so much. There is no basis of reality in there, but that's how the mind gets so skewed. I must be a terrible person. I must be wrong. He would never hit me if I weren't wrong because he loves me. He would never yell at me. I must be wrong because he loves me.

Rosie: This is a real common thing when we make excuses for the relationship and we blame ourselves and we take on the responsibility of their feelings and their behavior. If anybody is listening and you have had this experience, when you said those things to yourself, step back and really challenge yourself and that it's not true. What things did you learn are keys to a healthy relationship now that you had experienced that and you've had some interesting things?

Suzy: What did I learn? I learned that I'm important and that no one can... that my life is important. I'm important. And if somebody comes into my life who tries to denigrate me, they're out of my life in millisecond. Millisecond. Don’t even pass Go, don't collect $200. You're out. I also learned what I like and what I don't like. And if I don't like something, it's not about... And the most important thing that I learned is that people are who they are. Period. Number one, they're not going to change. And number two, they'll let you know who they are very, very soon. And if you think that's not really them, it'll change over time, it won't.

Rosie: I can love them into changing.

Suzy: Yes, no. or the real person's going to show up. I mean, you've got your first three months in a relationship, which is known as a honeymoon stage, and then the work begins. And your partner, even your friends, anybody in your life, they are who they are. You can trust them to be who they are, not who you want them to be. So if you fall in love with someone and they have issues about certain things, if you're not okay with those issues about certain things, don't continue the relationship because it's not going to change. People can promise.

My ex-husband would hit me and apologize. It’s your fault and I'll never do it again. Uh-huh. Right. That's the work. They are who they are. You can trust them to be who they are. I could trust my husband to come into the... wherever I was at 11:30 and start yelling at me. I could trust him to make me wrongful for anything. I could trust him no matter how little I weighed to tell me I was fat all the time.

Rosie: Well, this brings up another topic. You talk about trust. What about now trusting, how long did it take for you to now trust your own decisions and maybe trust other men, trust other relationships? Did that become an issue for you?

Suzy: It was not an issue for me, which was probably stupid because I made some mistakes, but they weren't bad mistakes and they were just stupid mistakes. But I learned about trust really from a business partner. When we separated as business partners, it was actually worse than my divorce. Very, very ugly. And we became friends afterwards. And my sister said, "But you can never trust her." And I said, "Actually, yes, I can. I can trust her to be who she is when she's wonderful. And I can trust her to be who she is when she's not wonderful."

Rosie: Your business partner or former business partner.

Suzy: Yeah. Both those aspects of her personality will show up, and I just have to be prepared for whoever shows up.

Rosie: Yeah, exactly. So, what are some of the things you do for self-care? This is always such a hot topic for women that they don't take care of themselves. I know you used to have exercise programs and everything else, but to get through this, it's so draining emotionally and it takes such a huge toll on us. Women put themselves last and then they make sure... Already we put ourselves last and then you've got somebody who makes sure that you're crushed down so you're at the bottom of the priority list.

Suzy: I am very selfish with my time. I'm very selfish with my time. I'm very, very busy. I have two companies right now. I'm 77. I have two companies, and one is a publishing company and one is my hypnosis/coaching company. I'm a workaholic. And my coach is so sweet. He said, "You have to take one day off a week." That was the hardest thing for me to do. So now I take Mondays off. And yet--

Rosie: But you work Saturday and Sunday?

Suzy: Yes. I pretend that I'm going to take the weekend off and then I ended up working because somebody needs me for this. And now I'm doing a certification program for inner mind coaches. And so I worked Saturday and not always Sunday. And then I thought, "Okay, so take Monday." It's made a tremendous difference. It made a tremendous difference. And then I take two hours during the day off because I start my day at 10:00, I finish between 6:00 and 7:00. So I take two hours in the middle of the day. Very often they get taken away. Like today, I'm doing interviews straight through my time off time, but I'm getting better at it.

And then I have an assignment. This is so sweet. I have to take three days away every six weeks. I have to go away because, before COVID, I was traveling 10 days a month, minimum. I'm in conferences. You were too probably. conferences, workshops, all these, because that's where I market. And presentations, sponsorships. And I came back from a conference on the 14th of March, was supposed to leave the following day for Santa Cruz, then go to San Jose, then go to Las Vegas, then come back to LA. So my travel time for business was also my time-time, was the time with myself.

So now all of a sudden, I don't have that because on the 15th of March, we're now in shutdown. All my conferences have been canceled up to next year. I think the next one that I have, maybe in April next year. everything else is online. So my coach said, “You have to go away for three days every six weeks.” And I did that recently, and I came back feeling really good.

It was just a quiet drive. I was down for a workshop in San Diego and I just hung out at the hotel, took walks, pampered myself, and came home. And so I'm doing that again just after Thanksgiving weekend.

And so I love to travel and I love traveling alone. So I've gotten really comfortable alone. And it's almost like people are intrusive sometimes to me. I live a very, very quiet life. And when we get back to conferences and all that, I'll live. Now I live a public life on Zoom.

Rosie: Right. Many of us do.

Suzy: I was on two interviews already this morning and I have another interview that I'm conducting this afternoon. Oh, I have my radio show now, too, which is really exciting.

Rosie: Yeah, I heard about that.

Suzy: WBAI FM in New York, and it's just... I have a fun story. When I first married my husband, we came, we went, moved back to New York because I was in school in Pittsburgh, and moved back to New York, and he went back to school. He went to NYU and I worked. funny thing that, right? So he goes back to school, I worked and he asked me to take a film course with him. So I said, “Yes, happy to.” And so I took this film course, and one of the assignments was to interview someone in the media. So I interviewed the Program Director of WBAI FM radio in New York. And now I have a radio show. That was in 1964.

Rosie: Oh my gosh, what a turn--

Suzy: And now I have my own radio show on WBAI FM in New York. And because of Zoom, I can be in my home in Los Angeles and be live on air in New York.

Rosie: That's fabulous. Well, Suzy, this has just been wonderful for all of your shares and really helping women get a perspective on how to be empowered, what they can do. And some of the warning signs that these have been happened to them no matter who they are. So how can women get ahold of you? How can people--

Suzy: So, you can email me at suzyprudden@gmail.com. You can text me at (310) 640-8885. Please put your name in there. And easily, you can go to my website, ittybittypublishing.com, and there's a section there where it says, "You want to talk to me?" And I will have my appointment setter call you and set it up so that you can talk to me.

As a hypnotherapist, through hypnotherapy, you can change what's running you right now. You can release the baggage. You can let go of the pain. You don't have to carry that around with you. And the sooner you let it go, the better you'll feel, the stronger you'll be, and the better your life will be, and the better your relationships will be with the people that you love, that you haven't been able to–I'm speaking directly to the abused woman right now–you haven't been able to be fully yourself with the other people that you love. And once you heal, you will be able to. And yes, you will heal. You have to make some choices and they're not easy.

Rosie: Final question: What does Love Is Kind mean to you, Suzy?

Suzy: It's a different feeling than any feeling I have ever had. And when you ask me that, I go into a place of, "Oh, thank you." It's like leaning back into the arms of someone you just absolutely cherish and you know who cherishes you.

Rosie: Yeah. Beautiful.

Suzy: And the word cherish is very important. It's bigger than love... to cherish. When you have a baby and you hold that baby in your arms and you look down and you just cherish that little being. So, to back into someone's arms who cherishes you, man or woman, is a blessing, and that is kind.

Rosie: Thank you. That is beautiful. Love is kind by Suzy Prudden. Thank you so much for your time, Suzy. We know you're busy and we appreciate you spending it with us. I really believe that this episode is going to help many, many women.

Suzy: I hope so. I hope so because when you're in that place, you can't see it. You just can't see it.

Rosie: Thank you. Well, thank you for being with us.

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