

What To Do About Things You Didn't See Coming – Rachel Hollis with Dave Asprey – #763

Announcer:

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Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today, I'm really excited about the interview because it is with a phenomenally successful lifestyle brand/author/personal development expert. I don't exactly know what to call her, but it is none other than Rachel Hollis, motivational speaker; one of the top business podcast hosts; a woman who's done a lot of work to empower women all over the place. She wrote a book during the pandemic called *Didn't See That Coming*, which is a very fast way to write a book.

Dave:

She's just a great thinker and just successful on so many different levels that she's been on my list of, "God, I want to talk to Rachel" for a couple years, and we finally got our calendars lined up. So, Rachel, welcome to the show.

Rachel Hollis:

Thanks, Dave. I appreciate it, and it's very mutual. I was really excited. I've wanted to talk to you forever; sort of selfishly just wanted to be able to ask you questions and get to hang out with you, so I'm so excited to be here.

Dave:

Where are you based?

Rachel:

I'm in Austin.

Dave:

In Austin, okay, cool.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Dave:

There's so many cool people in Austin.

Rachel:

There really are.

Dave:

I thought about buying a condo there about five years ago, and I kick myself for not doing it because real estate has become expensive since then, but I live in Canada. I mean, I never would go there.

Rachel:

You live in Canada? I don't know why I thought you were in L.A.

Dave:

Well, Upgrade Labs and Bulletproof Café are down there.

Rachel:

Okay, that's why. That's why.

Dave:

But yeah, I'm up on Vancouver Island on an organic farm, and I started and built all of my companies from this crazy place where we have sheep and pigs and turkeys and stuff. It's hard to imagine, but I guess you can do it.

Rachel:

That's awesome.

Dave:

Before we get into your Didn't See This Coming book, I have to admit, as a guy who washes my face only because a few people who I have interviewed told me, "Dave, seriously, you need to wash your face"... I'm a guy, and so I have my little vibrating facial thing, and I wash my face, and it actually makes a difference... but you wrote a book called Girl, Wash Your Face that dominated the New York Times list for 10 years! Okay, I'm exaggerating only slightly.

Dave:

Tell me, why did you name your book Girl, Wash Your Face? What's the deal with that? I'm mystified.

Rachel:

There's actually a really sweet story behind this. I was sitting with an author I really admired, Jen Hatmaker, who is an incredible author in the space that I was stepping into. She speaks to women, she's a teacher; I had admired her for years. I was at the place where I knew her, but still could barely even look her in the eye. I was so nervous to be able to get to have a conversation with her.

Rachel:

She said, "Okay, sis, what's your next book?," and I pee my pants because I can't even believe that my hero just asked me this question. What a lot of people don't understand about me now is that Girl, Wash Your Face was my sixth book, so I had written plenty of books, and predominantly in the fiction space. That's where I started and it's a huge love of mine, and I'll go back to it at some point.

Rachel:

But I start telling her the story of the book that I want to write, which is crazy. I have always dreamed of writing in the fantasy realm, and world building; it was wild. For listeners to understanding, writing was never my job. I never meant for it to be my job, I never meant for people to know me in that way. It was

just my hobby. And so, she says, "What's your book?" I start telling her this story, and as I'm explaining it, she's like, "Oh, God, no! No! No, this is terrible."

Rachel:

She's very successful in the non-fiction space. She said, "No, no, tell me what's the book of your heart?" I'm like, "What do you mean?" She said, "Okay, answer this question. If you could tell women anything, what would you want them to know?" I didn't even know that the idea was in me, but I'm like, "Oh, I just wish that women understood that they are in control of their destiny. I wish that they would take ownership of their lives and what comes next." I'm impassioned and I'm telling this story, and I'm like, "It's like, 'Girl, stop whining. Girl, stop saying you can't do it.'" I just kept starting every sentence with girl, and she, who is a Texan... as I'm saying this, "Girl, stop doing," and she says, "Girl, wash your face" as a joke!

Rachel:

I was like, "Oh my gosh, that's the title." So for me, that idea, which may not resonate with all of your listeners, but the idea behind washing your face is, you've had a good cry, you've mourned what was, now it's time to wash your face and begin again. Stand back up and go again, and take ownership of what comes next, so that's why wash your face.

Dave:

It's kind of a rising from the ashes sort of vibe.

Rachel:

Exactly right.

Dave:

Okay, I get it.

Dave:

As someone who just continuously sees the title come up, I'm like, "I'm so curious," and I admit, I'm probably not the target audience for Girl, Wash Your Face...

Rachel:

You are not.

Dave:

But I will tell you, the title stuck, so you did something pretty amazing there. How do you respond when people try to describe you as a woman Tony Robbins-ish kind of person? You have these rockstar level of events you put on, the RISE events... does that sit well with you, or not?

Rachel:

Yeah, I get why. I mean, I get why that's said, but I actually really hate the term motivational speaker.

Dave:

I do, too.

Rachel:

I don't even really like the word motivation, because motivation is fleeting. Motivation is based on sort of the environment that you're in or something that's happening. Things can trigger motivation, but I think there are so many people out there in the world who are looking for the hack, like, "Oh, how do I hack feeling motivated every day?" I'm like, "You don't. You create rituals and habits that are so consistent in your life that you don't need the motivation to do the things that you need to do."

Rachel:

So I get why people describe me as that, but I hope that as I continue to evolve and do work and do teach, that maybe we come up with a better way to explain what it is that I do.

Dave:

What about personal development? I mean, people would generally lump what you do into that field. Is that another one of those words that means nothing?

Rachel:

Yeah, I don't really love that, either.

Dave:

I don't, either.

Rachel:

I know. I don't really love... only because there's so much baggage surrounding that idea, and I think if you want to understand the baggage that surrounds that idea, you can watch *The Vow* on HBO, and sort of how people have used personal development or personal growth to kind of manipulate people who are struggling. I don't think it's that; honestly, so much of my work is... it's almost more of, I research all kinds of things. I test all sorts of things out on myself, and so all I am ever saying is what worked for me.

Rachel:

I'm telling you what worked for me, and I'm telling you my process for how I got there, so that even if what worked for me doesn't work for you, maybe by me explaining my process, you can figure out your own. So I don't think I'm an expert at anything; I really, truly am just saying, "Hey, you guys, this is what happened, and it really helped my anxiety," or, "This really helped me establish a morning routine," or, "This really helped me be a better mom."

Rachel:

Again, I think people sort of describe you in the way that is the lowest hanging fruit and makes sense for them, and that's fine.

Dave:

It's our natural inclination to tell stories about almost everything: about other people, about events and all. It looks like a lot of what you're really doing is you're telling people to tell a different story.

Rachel:

I hope so. I hope it's reframing, right? I have had, unfortunately, a lot of really hard, traumatic experiences in my childhood, and I am the woman that I am because I learned how to reframe what that story was and what those things meant, having gone through them. I really do live my life in a way where I'm constantly asking, "How is this situation something that can help me? Even when it's painful, even when it's hard, is there any glimmer of goodness in this moment?"

Rachel:

2020... what a year, right? It's been so freaking hard for so many people, but even in the hardship, there's beauty. We've seen humans doing incredible things, and our essential workers, and our healthcare workers and people are so inspiring. We've had more time to connect with our families, and we've had just this... I, personally, have had rest that I haven't had in a decade, and just all of these things... I really do live my life in a way that is looking for the goodness, and I think that that's what ends up coming out in the work, and I hope that if I could teach other people to do the same, that that then changes the narrative and the story they're telling themselves about what's happening.

Dave:

It's beautiful the way you're doing that. In fact, from a neuroscience perspective, the stuff we do at 40 Years of Zen, which is a neuroscience, neurofeedback company that I started about five years ago, and where a lot of my own personal development work has come from, even though I just said personal development... but the idea there is that when you're going through and working with trauma or stories, you have to find something to be grateful for, because if you don't have gratitude, you can't progress to forgiveness or growth or anything else because you're kind of stuck in your own story.

Dave:

So for me, getting rid of a lot of those stories has been the thing that turned me from being one of those entrepreneurs chasing, people will love me when I do this, or, I'll be happy when I do that, to kind of not being motivated by those things anymore just because, well, I kind of achieved the things I thought would make me happy, and it didn't work, and I got really pissed about it.

Rachel:

Right. Right!

Dave:

Did you have some of that going on, like, "I'll be happy when I publish my first fiction book," or, "I'll be happy when"... how much of that was in your narrative, and when did you drop it?

Rachel:

I think I definitely thought... because I grew up very poor, and financial struggles were a huge part of my childhood and a huge part of the negativity surrounding my parents' marriage, and everything always felt hard because there wasn't enough. It was very scarcity-minded. There wasn't enough. I thought, if I could just make enough money, if I could just have a million dollars, if I could just get to this place, then everything will be easy.

Rachel:

The reality is that every new level you get to... there's an old expression in church that says, new levels, new devils, so every level that you get to, you're going to encounter new hardships. Certain parts of it certainly get easier, but other pieces of it are way more difficult, so I definitely thought that money would be the thing that made it all so much easier, and I know for sure that it comes down to, can you be content? Can you find joy and happiness in this day, this moment, regardless of what is happening around you?

Rachel:

I do a lot of practice for myself in really finding joy. I'm going to sound so cheesy right now, but I truly find so much joy in the simplest stuff... so simple. I'm not exaggerating. One of the greatest daily joy moments in my life is the fact that at 5:00 AM, when my alarm goes off, the coffee is already brewed.

Dave:

That's pretty cool.

Rachel:

Because I bought a coffee pot that I could program. I'm 37 years old. I've never had a coffee pot that I could figure out how to program, and I was like, "By God, I am going to figure this out." I know this sounds so stupid, but I wake up in the morning and I can smell the coffee, and I'm like, "What? How lucky are we to be alive right now? I mean, look at this!" It's waiting for you. It's just waiting.

Rachel:

But that is a conscious choice to find joy in that moment, and find joy in moments throughout my day, that say, "Man, if I get the opportunity to do something really cool, someday when we're allowed to travel again," and then get the opportunity to do... oh, I'm going to go on this amazing vacation... that feels like you won the lottery, but every single day of my life, I find things in it that are just like, "Oh my gosh, you are so freaking lucky to get to have this moment."

Dave:

You're practicing gratitude on an ongoing basis.

Rachel:

Always. All day, every day.

Dave:

Now along your path here, do you remember what it felt like when you realized one day, "Oh my God, I have that million dollars?" What went through your head?

Rachel:

I remember the very first time. I've been an entrepreneur for 17 years, and I would say probably 15 of those years, I've had employees. It's one of the things I'm most proud of in the world, is the jobs that I have created, and health insurance, and it's a huge part of my identity and what I'm proud of.

Rachel:

For much of my entrepreneurial experience, it was sort of feast or famine. I would have quarters where we were killing it, and I would have quarters where we really struggled, and it was just a constant source of stress, because if you're a leader and you have people who are counting on you to pay bills, it's a huge load to carry.

Rachel:

I remember the first check for royalties for *Girl, Wash Your Face*. I had never made money off a book before, really; I mean, you get five dollars.

Dave:

It's hard to make money off books.

Rachel:

Yeah, it's hard to make money off books, and so, I had never gotten a royalty check in my life, and I had never... whatever... and I remember my husband at the time slid his phone across the table to show me the number that had just hit the bank account. We were at breakfast, and I instantaneously started sobbing, because I saw the number and I thought, "I will never have to worry about making payroll again." I didn't think, "Oh, I get to go buy a car, or I get some shoes." All I cared about was if that was the kind of money I could produce doing this work, I would never have to worry about this team of people that I care about so much not getting paid.

Dave:

Wow. That's phenomenal. So even then, it's service to others, it sound like, is a part of that, on top of your [crosstalk 00:15:52] that's keeping you growing the way you're growing.

Rachel:

A core value in my life and a core value of our company is servant leadership, is this idea that you care as much, if not more, about the people in your stewardship or in your responsibility or in your sphere as you do about yourself. I try truly to live my life that way, and I'm constantly looking for ways that that can be more true. I give 10 percent of company profit away to organizations that I am really passionate about, things I really care about.

Rachel:

I do my very best to take care of the team that I have, and I also see that in my online community. Some of these people have been with me for over a decade, and so, even on days where I'm tired or maybe I'm feeling discouraged about something, I truly do try and show up for them, because they've been showing up for me, right? They buy the book, or they buy the jewelry line, or they buy things to support my business, and I see my responsibility in that relationship to keep showing up for them in the way that they've shown up for me.

Dave:

That's beautiful, actually, and I love that you can just be so open about it. There are a lot of internet marketing entrepreneurs who do not have that mindset. We both know the type, right?

Rachel:

Yes, absolutely, 100 percent.

Dave:

You've got somewhere around a couple of million followers on each of the major platforms.

Rachel:

Yeah.

Dave:

What happens if you don't show up for a few days?

Rachel:

Well, I'll tell you. In the end of May, we announced that we were going through a divorce, which is one of the hardest things I've ever done in my life. I was not present on social for about two months, which I had not done that in years and years and years.

Rachel:

Normally, to be honest, I think I would feel some sense of obligation or maybe anxiety about not showing up for the community, but it truly was a situation where... I always show up as myself. Whether you love me or you hate me, I am showing up as who I am, and I want to show up authentically, and it also very important to me to be positive, to bring joy... that is who I am as a human being and that is what you will find from me in my work. But in that season, I did not have any joy to bring to the party. It was so hard. It was so painful. The only energy I had was for my children and for the team of people who work with me who I am responsible to be a leader for; that was it.

Rachel:

I was like, "I can't also make an Instagram post, and if I do, it's going to be me crying, and freaking nobody needs to see that right now." So, that was the only time that I haven't shown up, and honestly, when I did start to be present again, it was just through my email list, because those are the diehards, and it was very raw, and it was very honest, and there were some weekly emails where I was just like, "You guys, I don't have anything, but I want you to know that I'm here, and I promise it's going to get better. I promise I'm going to come back. I don't know how that long that's going to take. I'm going to let myself sit in this grief right now, but I will pull myself back, and then we will get back to doing this work. But for right now, I'm going to let myself be a human."

Dave:

Well, congratulations on your divorce.

Rachel:

Thank you.

Dave:

I love saying that, and I've said that every time someone has told me about their divorce. I was divorced many years ago. Man, it feels like crap at the time, but as you move through it, you realize, "Oh, that

was probably better long-term, because if something is not working and you keep doing it, that's actually not ideal, either."

Rachel:

Right, not healthy for either one of us, absolutely.

Rachel:

I really think that, and have believed this always, and I talk about this a little bit in the book... that when you've tried everything you can think of, and you've spent years, I think our situation was so, maybe not unique, but feels very unique to me in that we were best friends. There were so many beautiful, good parts of our relationship, and then there were pieces of it that were deeply unhealthy. You can try, and man, we did, every way, to fix those things, and at some point, the unhealthiness... it's just now manifesting and kind of making it worse.

Rachel:

So as hard as this has been, I know in the marrow of my being that we will both be better off in the long run, and that our family... because we are still very much a family, we have four kids together... our family will be so much healthier and so much stronger because of this decision.

Dave:

Wow. It's heavy to be a CEO and to be having all these other employees going at the same time, right? That's an enormous weight.

Rachel:

Right? While in a global pandemic, yes.

Dave:

And writing a book, which to me, writing a book takes a lot of energy.

Rachel:

Yes. Yeah. I actually was writing something totally different. I was writing the book that was meant to come out, which would probably be interesting just given the work that you do. I was writing a book on health.

Dave:

Oh, wow.

Rachel:

This was a conversation I wanted to have for a really long time, specifically about women and the way we are taught to view our bodies, and what health, for so many women, is about... looking, having a certain aesthetic, regardless of how you feel mentally, emotionally; regardless of whether or not you're actually taking care of your body... and so, I wanted to have this conversation, but typically, when I write, I write with a lot of humor and a lot of irreverence, and inside of COVID quarantine, I started editing the book.

Rachel:

It's already been written. I started editing the book, and I was just like, "My God, the tone... it's so tone deaf. It feels so wrong to bring out this book talking about health, and I'm making jokes and I'm being silly." Nobody can receive that right now.

Rachel:

And so, I started to think about, "Man, what would you want to say if could you"... same question Jen asked me that day... "what would you want to say if you could say anything?" I thought, "Well, I don't know how to... nobody knows how to deal with a global pandemic in 2020, but there are tools and resources and tactics that people have used to deal with the side effects of what is happening." I have a lot of experience with dealing with anxiety, grief, crisis, loss, and so could I take sort of my learnings and put them into a book so that maybe if you're going through something hard, whether it's your lost your job, you're going through a divorce, you're sick, you're navigating something difficult... or you're still carrying the baggage of a difficult thing... that maybe you could use the resources in this book to help you through.

Dave:

How much do you think your divorce and your personal situation flavored the book versus the kind of disaster in the world around you?

Rachel:

Right. Well, so I wrote the first draft of the book while we were still together.

Dave:

Okay. Could you see the end coming, though?

Rachel:

In retrospect, I wasn't conscious, but I could sort of feel it.

Dave:

It was in your body, okay.

Rachel:

Yeah, it was in my body. We had been talking about this for years, and we had publicly talked about... we did a podcast together, and we had talked about these conversations and the things that we were working on. In retrospect, I can see sort of that my spirit was signaling, but I couldn't accept it. I don't know other people who have maybe gone through similar things, but I was with Dave for 18 years. He was the only man I've ever been on a date with. I was 19. I was a child, and so I didn't even know another world, and I didn't even know how to imagine another world.

Rachel:

I had sent the book in, and by the time I got edits back, we were in this place, and then I found myself trying to figure out how in the world... if a core value of mine is authenticity and being honest about where I am, how in the world am I going to release a book about crisis and grief and loss, and people are going to know that I went through this thing, and not touch on it?

Rachel:

So, the first draft of this book is written outside of grief, and the edit is written inside of grief, and so I think it has a really unique perspective in sort of existing in both of those places, which is not something I've ever done before and not something I hope to ever do again.

Dave:

Yeah, whoa. What a powerful way to put reality into a book.

Dave:

How would you generalize the grief angle? Right now, we're in the middle of elections, and somewhere close to 50 percent of the population is going to be feeling grief in a few days.

Rachel:

Right. Right. Absolutely.

Dave:

How do you apply those really personal grief lessons towards people who are just feeling like it's the end of the world if the person they're rooting for doesn't win?

Rachel:

That conversation is so interesting. I feel like we have gotten into such a wildly twisted place. I had made a video on Election Day that I had no idea... I do this very often... where I have no idea that I what I'm about to say is inflammatory, and then it sort of explodes!

Dave:

I've done that.

Rachel:

Right. On Election Day, I made a video and I was like, "Hey, I don't know who needs to hear this, but it's going to be okay. Everyone, let's take a deep breath together. It's going to be okay." That was all the video was about, and I said, "Whatever way you're voting, have a plan for how you're going to take care of yourself emotionally and mentally if it doesn't go the way that you want it to," because people really are making this the end... it's like the end times, in both directions.

Rachel:

Man, I am the most liberal human on the planet. I am very clear about what I hope is about to happen right now, and if it doesn't, we're going to be okay, right?

Dave:

I loved your post about that. I just recently started following you. I will admit that I hadn't followed you before, just because I actually don't follow that many people on social media. You probably don't, either.

Rachel:

Well, I feel excited. Thank you for following.

Dave:

That was one of your first posts that I saw, and I was like, "Wow, this is so good." It was funny, because I also had kind of a similar vein thing that's like, "It's okay to be all right with [inaudible 00:28:05]" People got really mad about that, so then I'm like, "All right, I'm going to be a little bit real," and I posted one that said, "Does waiting for the election results kind of feel like waiting for STD test results?"

Rachel:

Yes! Right.

Dave:

Both of them made some people mad at me. Some people laughed. But the idea that we're going to survive... there aren't a lot of people out there saying that. Why do you think people get mad about that?

Rachel:

I think that the media, and there are so many great things about social media and media, but there are also really negative things, and I think that it has spun us up into a frenzy. People really think we've started hating our neighbors because they don't vote for us, and we're judging other people, and it's just gotten to this insanely divisive place.

Rachel:

The reality is, I think most Americans woke up on Election Morning and went to work at their minimum wage job, and they couldn't freaking care less who the President is, because they've got pay rent this month and they have to take care of their kids, and they're mowing lawns or cleaning toilets or washing dishes. It's like your ability to sit on social media and freak out over politics is one of the most privileged things in the world. Why don't you use that energy to go affect change that you want to affect in the world? Harassing people on Instagram isn't going to do jack, but you get to make yourself feel like you're part of some movement because you're all worked up. Man, go volunteer. Go show up.

Rachel:

I don't know. I live in Texas, and there's a lot of very conservative people here in Texas, which is hilarious. Austin's a really funny place to live, because Austin is wildly liberal, but then it's Texas! I was dropping my daughter off at preschool this morning, and there was a guy in a big old truck with a big old Trump flag off the back. I mean, he's got a flag on his truck, and my kids... I have two sons in middle school who are like, "Oh, Mom, get a load of this guy," right?

Rachel:

My first instinct... I heard this years ago, and I don't know who said this, but I love this expression... they said, "Your first thought is what the world told you to believe, and your second thought is who you actually are." And so, I saw this guy with his big old flag, and I was like, "Freaking good grief"... all the thoughts that I have in my mind, and then my second thought was like, "Man, that is a daddy dropping off his toddler at preschool. That is just a man. That is your neighbor. That guy has a name, he has a family. It doesn't make him bad. It doesn't make him evil." We have gotten to this place so that we can't even exist with people who don't vote like us, or have the same religion, or believe what we believe.

Rachel:

Whether people like it or not, I'm just going to keep over here in the corner beating my drum for... I believe this thing, but I love and accept and respect you if you don't. You don't have to vote like me. You can vote however you want. It doesn't make you a bad person. Now, are there bad people? Yes, on both sides of this line, but when we start to see people as less than human because they don't do it the way we do it, we are missing the whole thing.

Dave:

So beautifully put, Rachel. There's a different level of, we're all people and we're all kind of on this bubble. I don't mean a pandemic bubble, it's kind of called the Earth, so there's a bigger aspect. There are a great number of people, maybe I'm guessing a third of people from what I've seen on social, who just are in a place of panic where they are not seeing reality, and I don't mean one side or the other... I don't mean my reality, but they have this doom, end times, like you said.

Rachel:

Right.

Dave:

Some of the lessons in your book about grief and all apply there, but is there actionable stuff? Maybe some people listening to this right now are already getting triggered, and if so, then get a therapist. But if you have a therapist, Rachel, what is your advice? Give me the steps to let go of that, to come back into a little bit of a more centered place.

Rachel:

Well, in my own life, I like to come back to the question of, what is true? What is real? What is true?

Dave:

The Byron Katie kind of stuff?

Rachel:

Right, and for me, I can get worked up, I can get nervous about things at work. Someone will say something on social, it will just kind of hit me in the right way and it will hurt my heart. I can sort of get affected by those things.

Rachel:

What I always come back to is, "Okay, but what about your real life? What is true in your life right now?" Before we jumped on, I was recording a podcast for my podcast, which is What To Do When Everything Feels Hard, because that's something that I'm hearing a lot. Everything feels hard. I'm overwhelmed. I think that this sort of walks hand in hand with grief, in that you have to accept what is. What is? What has happened? What is the reality that we are dealing with today? Whatever that looks like in your life... you've lost someone you love, you've lost your job, you've lost your business... you're mourning the loss of what was going to happen, or you're transitioning into this new world.

Rachel:

The first thing is you have to be honest about what actually is happening, not what you are telling yourself is happening, because when I think of the question of, everything feels hard, for me, what I want to follow that up with is, is everything hard, or does everything feel hard? Those are two completely different things. Once you know what the answer is, once you have accepted what actually is, then I think you have to allow yourself to hold the pieces, the hard stuff, the suffering, the things that are painful... you have to allow yourself to hold those so that you can process them.

Rachel:

And then, I also think that you have to look for which parts can you affect. So, the example that I used in the podcast I was just recording is, one of the members of my community, I was just going back and forth with her in DM because her mom has cancer, and it's terrifying and awful and hard, and all of the things, and that is something that is so big and so massive that everything feels hard. But if she can get to a place where she can allow herself to unpack all of the pieces of that pain... so, my favorite piece of advice for people, and I give this tip so much that I feel like I'm going to start getting letters; people are going to say, "Stop saying this"... is journaling. It doesn't cost anything.

Rachel:

Grab a pen, grab a piece of paper or a notebook, and just use this prompt: everything feels hard because, and just start going. When I journal, I give myself a minimum time frame. So I say, "You have to sit here for 45 minutes." I do that because often times when we journal, just stream of conscious, just write down anything that pops into your head, you'll write for about eight minutes, and then you're like, "That's all I have to say." But if you know that you have to sit there for 45 and meditate on this question, about 10 more minutes go by, and that's when the magic starts to happen. That's when the stuff that's kind of below the surface, the true worries, the true concern, the real authentic you... that's when it starts to come out.

Rachel:

So for me, I was giving instruction to her; I said, "Unpack all of the things that feel hard about Mama being sick. You're scared. You don't know what the future holds. You want to be able to spend time with her. You want her to feel loved and supported. You want... all of the stuff. And if you look at all the pieces that are painful, all the things that are worrying you, some of those you cannot change, you cannot affect, and you just have to hold them. It sucks and it's awful and it's unfair, but you just have to hold them. But if you can unpack it, there are parts of that that you can affect. You want to make sure Mom feels loved and supported? Awesome. You can come up with a list right now of something you can do every single day. You can speak to her in her love language. You can show up how she wants it. You can get her friends involved and her church community. You can come up with a plan that will help you affect the parts of it you can touch, and in that process, in that progress, it helps you to feel more centered. It helps you to feel more calm, and it is a massive stress relief when you're facing hard things."

Rachel:

So, inside of grief, it's the same. There are parts of that that you're going to have to hold, but there are pieces that you can use tools, use tactics, and sort of pull yourself forward up out of the place that you're in, and that, honestly, is the book. It was all the tools that I could come up with that might help you do that.

Dave:

One of the pieces of advice in the book that resonated with me was the idea when you say, don't wallow. Show up for yourself and your kids if you have them. Wallowing is something that is irritating to everyone when they see other people do it, but it's hard for us to know if we're doing it.

Rachel:

That's real.

Dave:

In a recent interview, I was interviewing Scott Barry Kaufman about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and [inaudible 00:38:53] interpretation, and he said, "Dave, there's the kind of narcissism that we've all heard of, which is this grandiose narcissism that says, oh, the world owes me stuff because I'm so great, and that story, you're always unhappy and angry because I don't get what I deserve." And then, he said the flip side of that, that I had never considered as a real thing, was victim narcissism, where I have suffered, therefore I deserve a whole bunch of stuff because suffering is a virtue.

Dave:

How does that kind of thinking, which I had never heard of but really landed with me, how does that tie in with wallowing? How do you get out of wallowing and not fall into that trap?

Rachel:

I mean, gosh, I feel like this sort of splinters out in so many directions, because you say that and I think of... I tend to think are the people in my life that I tend to think of who sort of cling to that story. They cling to the hurt that's been done to them and the access they don't have and the things that they don't get, and I tend to think of those people as, this is the world that they know. This is the reality that they know, and so, they hold on to it. We'll stay inside of discomfort and pain because at least it's discomfort and pain that we know, than to try and step outside and do something new.

Rachel:

When I think of the wallowing that I reference in the book, there are times in your life where you have people counting on you that you are not... you can't. You cannot just pull the covers over your head and give up. To me, this was such a thing inside of COVID. I mean, I run a business where our number one stream of revenue is live events.

Dave:

Yeah, I had one of those, too.

Rachel:

Right, and March happened. I mean, we just had finished our event in Toronto. We were the cut-off the first week in March, and even then, I remember being like, "What is this thing that everyone is talking about?" Just so stupid, I had no idea, and we got back to Texas, and it was like, "Oh my God, what are we going to do?"

Rachel:

I had about a week where I drank a lot of vodka, trying to come to grips with what it was, but I don't have the luxury of... everyone was like, "Oh, I'm just going to watch Netflix and then reemerge when this

is all over." I'm like, "Okay, well, I have 60 employees. I do not have that luxury. I have kids who are counting on me," and I'm sure your listeners... same thing. There are people in your life who are counting on you. You don't have the luxury of falling to floor and staying there, and that doesn't mean that you don't allow yourself to feel grief or process pain, or do the therapy, do the work; cry your heart out. Do whatever.

Rachel:

Going through divorce, I have my kids half the week; so, half the week, they're with their dad; half the week, they're with me. When I first moved out, that half the week that they were with him? I cried my eyeballs out. I did my work, because that's what I needed to do for my team, and I was super low. I drank and I ate a lot of cake, and I let myself feel the things that I was feeling, and I journaled... good God, don't let anyone ever find that journal. I just let myself feel it. I did the therapy. I went to an energy healer. I did everything that I could, but when those babies show back up at my house, they don't want Mama crying. They want to know what's for dinner, what game are we going to play later, are we going to watch a movie? Can you help me with this project? That is my responsibility. That is my responsibility as a parent, to show up to the best of my ability because they're counting on me, and I think that what a blessing that I have a why that big.

Rachel:

I have a why that is that big, and I think that most people have a why that is that big, but they don't think about it. You think, "Oh, the kids are going to be fine," or, "I have help, they'll be okay," or, "Someone else is going to"... no! No! This is what you signed up for. When you signed up to be a parent, when you signed up to be a leader, when you signed up to have a team, this is what you signed up for.

Rachel:

This goes back to this idea of servant leadership for me, that I believe that it is my role to show up even on the days that I don't feel like it, and even on the days that it feels hard, because these people show up for me. This team shows up for me, and it is my job to show up for them.

Dave:

How do you know when to ask for help?

Rachel:

Oh my God, I ask for help all the time. I live in a constant state of asking for help. I stopped trying to be Superwoman a long time ago.

Dave:

You can't grow a company the way you have unless you become good at it, but how did you learn to do that? I don't get the impression that when you were young and traumatized that asking for help was your default [crosstalk 00:44:15].

Rachel:

No, good call. When I was a young mom... so, when I had my two sons, I accidentally had two sons very close together.

Dave:

Oh, that's work.

Rachel:

Those were really hard years. Trying to grow my business and have these two toddlers... and I really felt like I had to make it look easy, and I had to have the perfect life from the outside, and I had to throw the perfect Thanksgivings and birthday parties and the whole thing... and then, honestly, I'm not going to say that I came to this magical epiphany on my own; I got really sick. I got really bad vertigo. I had vertigo for about a year. The way that I handled vertigo was I thought, "Okay, you are giving 100% effort. Now you have vertigo; that's taking off about 20%. So, now you're going to have to show up at 120% every day."

Rachel:

I was a workaholic. I had no idea how to deal. I saw every doctor. "Do you have a tumor? Is it a vitamin deficiency?" I tried everything, and then I went to a homeopathic doctor, one of the weirdest people I've ever met in my life. Crystals, ponytail... it was like something out of a movie. The entire session, I was in front of him, but he talked this direction. He didn't talk to me. He was talking to the spirits in the room, but I was like, at that point, if you want to sacrifice a chicken and it will take this vertigo away, I'm here for it.

Dave:

I've been that desperate. I get it.

Rachel:

Right, right. He said, "Oh." I talked and talked for probably an hour, and then all of a sudden, he was like, "I know what your problem is," and I was like, "What?" He was like, "This is all emotional. None of this is physical."

Dave:

Did you want to punch him?

Rachel:

I did! I was like, "What are you talking about?" And then he went back over so many things that I said, sort of pointing out, "Oh, this is when this is happening," or, "This is the," and I was like...

Rachel:

I mean, it completely changed my life. Did a ton of therapy; sort of started to understand why these things were happening in my life; fundamentally changed my life forever, but that was the breaking point for me, was understanding that I was trying to live this life that was false, which is why it's so important to me to be authentic. I was trying to please everybody around me with complete disregard to myself or my health or anything, and so I just started raising my hand, and I am the first person to say... I will happily say it on your show for any moms who need to hear this... I have a nanny. I have had a nanny since my oldest... and I have four kids... since my oldest son was three months old, I've had a nanny, because it would be absolutely impossible for me to work at this level without childcare.

Rachel:

I have a housekeeper, she comes twice a week. She cleans my house. Today is Friday, which means Sherry has been at the house. I'm going to go home to a clean house. It's so exciting. Then, I have an incredible team of people who... I'm constantly looking for people who are smarter than me, who can do it better, who know how, because there's no way I hold all the knowledge. So, it was a forced thing to learn.

Dave:

It sounds like you've learned how to be vulnerable at that time.

Rachel:

Yeah, I think learning to admit that I didn't have it all together, and that I didn't have all of the answers was a huge piece of the journey for me. This maybe sounds weird, I always think that is kind of an interesting conversation to have with a man, because I don't know a lot of men who struggle with this, but I know so many women who struggle with being a people pleaser, which feels like this kind of, "Oh, that's not a big deal. Who cares? You're a people pleaser. You want people to like you." That, being raised in the way that I was and the way that many women are raised, in that your value is tied up into whether or not people approve of you, whether or not people like you, whether or not people think you're pretty, is decimating, is-

Dave:

Any guy who has been co-dependent has a meaningful amount of that. I was co-dependent earlier in life.

Rachel:

That's interesting. That's really interesting.

Dave:

Because you're responsible for another person's happiness, it's all about whatever feelings they have, so then you're always trying to please people, and yeah, that's a toxic place, but the difference with men and women there is there's more of the physical side in our culture for women. You have to look a certain way. We can be a 300 pound computer hacker, and it's okay if you're a dude; that would be me in an earlier iteration. But you still can have the same mindset, but it's just less physical, and I think knowing how much time a lot of women spend in the bathroom and getting ready in the morning, oh my God, that's a big burden.

Rachel:

Well, and even... I mean, this is a lot of the work that I'm doing right now, is how much of our capacity to think, how much of our mind we give every day to how we look, to what size our jeans are, to our weight, to all of these things... and I just think if you could just not worry about that again, if you just never again thought, "I look ugly. My butt looks weird in these pants," how much thought process does that open up for you? How many companies will never get invented, non-profits will never be started? Products that we would love, books we would love, podcasts we want to listen to will never be created because women are so tied up in second guessing themselves, in feeling like they're wrong, in feeling

like other people want to prove or they're going to fail... how many things will never exist because of this stupid desire to have everybody like you, to be the popular girl?

Dave:

Wow, so powerful.

Rachel:

Right. It's a wild, wild thing, and I think that society has tried a lot in the last decade to have conversations about what this looks like, but to me, we're still not quite getting that piece right. We're still not talking about it in the right way. I'm not going to go off on that tangent.

Dave:

It feels like we're at least moving in the right direction. I mean, when you look at the '50s housewife in corsets and stockings and high heels, and whatever they did to their hair back then, I'd like to think it's better now, but I could be wrong. What do I know? I'm wearing a T-shirt.

Rachel:

No, no, no. No, it's a million, million times better, but it's still... it's like most things, it's not where it should be, and I think it's still this... there's this weird thing. This is my soapbox. This is my drum. I'm going to beat on it forever. It's funny to talk to you about this because of all the work you've done in the health space, but for me, I want to approach health about how we feel, not how we look.

Dave:

That is at the core of what I do, Rachel. The abs are a side effect of eating to have a lot of energy.

Rachel:

Right, and that's the thing. That is exactly the thing that people... I talk about this at conference, I'm trying to explain this in books... the end result will be the same. You will just pursue it from a place of love and excitement about your body, and seeing what it's capable of and challenging yourself, instead of a place of shame, instead of a place of hating yourself.

Rachel:

I truly... all I care about in the world... I'm going to say this to you, and you're the exact person to talk to about this... my biggest focus in life is all to live in such a way that my brain can operate at the highest level. That's it.

Dave:

There you go. We can be good friends.

Rachel:

That's it, right. That's all.

Dave:

That's it. That's all that matters.

Rachel:

That is all that matters to me... what I am eating, how I'm sleeping... all of it is, how can I have the greatest ability to focus to do this work, because I'm sure you and I have similar worlds in that our schedules are packed, we have a family that we want to show up for... all of it is my brain.

Dave:

It's unimaginable to most people. In fact, the reason that... when Bulletproof started, it was called the Bulletproof Executive, because no one ever talked to us, like the busy people who were maybe carrying a greater cognitive burden, and research has come out that says CEOs, men or women, we have as much energetic output as a Super Bowl quarterback, but it's all in our brains. Man, if that starts misfiring, and for me, with chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, kind of like when you had vertigo, I'm like, "I don't know what to do here. I'm 26 years old, and my career is taking off, and I'm turning into a zombie and I can feel it happening, and it's terrifying."

Dave:

But it really just brought it home for me; man, if your brain doesn't work, who cares if you're fat or not?

Rachel:

Right, right.

Dave:

It's much less relevant.

Rachel:

100%. The side effect, then, of living my life in a way that wants my brain to be able to function at the highest level means my energy is through the roof. I have never been in this kind of shape, ever... all these things that, from the outside, you would sort of look in and go, "Oh, she's trying to pursue a certain aesthetic or she"... no, I'm not. My aim is something completely different, but I'm getting to the goal that maybe you're pursuing, but I'm doing it in a way that's so good for me, so joyful, so loving of myself, and also I've never worked like I am able to work now, because I sort of figured this piece out.

Dave:

You're glowing with energy, and your body will match. That's so cool.

Dave:

Rachel, I appreciate your work in the world. You are affecting a lot of people in a really powerful way, and you hear that probably like 15 times a day, but for what it's worth, I see that in you, and your new book, *Didn't See That Coming*, is really cool. I love how just kind of raw and real it is, and I think the way you're talking to women, especially, is really valuable, because that idea... and now that I understand more about the idea of wash your face after a bunch of shit happens to you... okay, now I get it.

Rachel:

Right, right. Exactly.

Dave:

So, thanks for doing that. For people listening to the show, Rachel's works have definitely stood the test of time, and they have... I mean, if you look, what is it, 100-plus weeks on The New York Times bestseller list now?

Rachel:

Yeah.

Dave:

That is a mark of a book that no amount of marketing, no amount of sales, no amount of internet SEO whatever garbage can possible do that. It's just because people read it and it's like, "Oh my God, this is worth it. I'm going to do this again."

Dave:

So, I would encourage you to pick up a copy of the book or follow Rachel if you like what you heard, and you can tell she's the real deal.

Dave:

So, Rachel, thanks for being on Bulletproof Radio, and just, I think you're awesome.

Rachel:

Aw, thank you, Dave! I appreciate that!