



Unleash Your Brilliance Summit Interview

Carolyn Ellis

and

Melanie Benson Strick



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Carolyn: I am really excited to welcome to the Unleash Your Brilliance Summit one of my expert panelists, Melanie Benson Strick. She is the CEO of Success Connections. Let me take a moment to give everyone some background on you, Melanie.

Melanie has spent the last eight years working with thousands of entrepreneurs to build thriving six and seven figure businesses that are scalable, profitable, and enjoyable. With over twelve years in corporate America and eight years as a business owner herself, Melanie works exclusively with entrepreneurs who are ready for the ultimate lifestyle business. After running her own company for the last few years, Melanie realized very quickly that most entrepreneurs make a mistake in that they create a job rather than a company. They position themselves to work harder than they ever imagined and they get minimal results in return. So, frustrated and overwhelmed, they get stuck and actually never experience the freedom it is that they create. So, Melanie steps in there and helps people turn that around in dramatic fashion. Melanie's clients average 172% revenue increase while creating more time for their dream lifestyle. She does this through her revolutionary mentoring programs, easy to follow systems, and proven profit-generating tools that cause her clients to catapult into their dream businesses. You can learn a lot more about Melanie and what she has to offer at www.SuccessConnections.com.

Melanie, I first met you when you were speaking at an event and that was almost two years ago. What really struck me about you was how authentic, generous and giving you were when you were up on the stage when you were telling us all about



how to build your business. You've created some very powerful tools that help entrepreneurs and how they work with their team, how they can really be authentic

and aligned with their true essence in their business, and what I really loved when I heard you, was how you articulated that jump that we have to make as entrepreneurs. This mindset leap from essentially what we were just talking about earlier...recreating a job. It's like, "Hey, I have a business now and I'm paying myself and it's really a job" versus taking on that bigger picture of yourself. The CEO, the leader of your business and working the business, not being a slave to it. So, when I first saw you I thought, "Wow, this woman is amazing. She's so generous with her wisdom and she's so heart centered and I would just love to have a chance to get to know more about her and find out how she lives in her brilliance like that. So, voila, here we are a little while later and I'm so delighted that you accepted my invitation to be part of the Unleash Your Brilliance Summit. Thank you!

Melanie: Thank you! Its perfect timing.

Carolyn: It always is perfect timing, isn't it?

Melanie: It really is. That's what happens when you live in your brilliance, isn't it?

Carolyn: For sure! Why don't you tell us a little bit about your personal journey and what has inspired you to do what you're doing in the world right now?

Melanie: The big epiphany started when I was working with another company. I was working for Motorola at the time. I'd spent many years working for different corporations even though most people look at me and they say, "Melanie, can you be that old?" Yes, I am. I was just dying. My soul felt like it was shriveling up and I certainly wasn't really feeling authentic or fully expressed in any way. I was doing a lot of personal development work and I was learning a lot about what it meant to have a purpose and I got really clear that I could go on being safe for the rest of my life but there was something calling me out into the world to have a lot more freedom to express what I wanted to express.



Everybody that I worked with thought I was insane. They didn't get me. It was like I wanted to change jobs every eighteen months, I had a lot of creativity and I never wanted to follow the rules so I was a really bad employee. When I kind of got clear that there was a purpose and there was a way that I could take what I had learned, and I had learned amazing things through my time at Motorola, and was probably one of the best investments I made in myself. I got that I didn't have to stay there to be safe; I could actually really express myself in a big way.

Part of it was just learning every step of the way, what does it take to fully live a purposed life? What does it take to be completely aligned with my personal values? What would I have to be willing to do differently to have the most joy possible on the planet? It's funny; they don't give you the handbook for personal development that says, "By the way, the minute you step on this journey, be prepared for the wildest ride of your life." They don't say that. People say, "Learn to live an authentic life." You step on the path and all of a sudden it's tumultuous, it's crazy. It never turns out the way you think it's going to. But, it's also the most amazing journey that I've had. I can't imagine doing it any other way. To say the most amazing journey I've ever taken...it's the only one I've taken in this lifetime so it's the only one I remember.

What inspired me more than anything was recognizing that so many people live in pain. They live in pain of kind of smooshing who they really are. They live in the pain of not recognizing their own authentic expression. They don't know what their truth is. They run around and try to recreate what everybody else is doing and they end up building a business where they end up pursuing a life that's completely substandard and they're miserable the way they're living but they don't know a way through it. That's what originally inspired me and, honestly, it's what keeps inspiring me, Carolyn. I keep getting inspired to play a bigger game. I keep getting inspired to take my own path further every time I see a new crop of pain that shows up for people.

Carolyn: Can you say a little more about the crop of pain because, even the last few months have been like so many things that are changing and there's an acceleration. A lot more people are having this conversation about what is their real purpose. Even the



fact that people are having this conversation. I can't imagine even two years ago people having the conversation of consciousness that I think is going on nowadays. What's on the horizon right now that you see in this crop of pain that's sort of motivating you to keep going and evolving and living in your brilliance?

Melanie: That had multiple answers to it so I want to kind of peel them apart a little bit because there are phases to recognizing what pain is. First of all, I think one thing as I was listening to the question, is recognizing that when times are good people are not motivated to go deeper. It's almost like what we could exist forever in comfort and some form of joy. It might not be fully expressed, but if we're in a good place, most of us never go searching for anything more.

I truly believe that whatever you believe like God, universe, Buddha, whatever flavor you choose to follow in this world, I believe that there is a reason why pain exists. Pain exists to wake us up and to stop playing small. When, in our lives, we face a painful place it is a wakeup call. It is an opportunity to hear "Hello, you're playing way too small. You're missing the whole point here, girlfriend. Let's get it together because you have a much bigger game to play. You've gotten way too comfortable." Or, we're just refusing to learn our lesson. We're refusing to really truly align ourselves with our core, with our truth. I think pain is a wakeup call.

I've gone through a very painful last six months myself for a lot of different reasons. For a while I really kind of withdrew from everybody because I'm like, "What am I doing wrong? How in the world could I be in this much pain?" Every single thing I thought I was going to do this year went very differently than I planned. Some of it went into huge disarray. It was a disaster. There were some things that were just a pure train wreck.

It scared me because I've been on fire. Things have been really easy. What I realized was that I needed to crawl out of my abyss and talk to people. I have to open up. I have to feel supported. I started to share what I was in pain about. I realized, "Oh my gosh, my friends are in the same exact place. Why is nobody talking about this? Why have I spent so many months feeling like I was completely alone and now everyone's "coming out of the closet" saying they're in the same place.



I think pain becomes the catalyst to recognize that there's something greater that's supposed to be revealed through you.

What we have to do is we have to release everything that's standing in the way. Some of us get this really quickly. Some of us don't. It feels more painful because it's like a snake shedding its skin. It might be a little painful, right? It's like somebody's ripping my skin off because it hurt. Generally, when I look around at what people are hurting about, they're hurting because nobody's talking about the same thing everybody's going through.

People are in bankruptcy. People can't run their businesses the way they were running them, particularly in the information marketing and the internet marketing world. The coaching and consulting that's been done in a certain way for many years very successfully between the economy shift and between the mortgage fallout. I talked to my friends and we all really get that most people were financing their businesses and their growth through their mortgages for a long time.

When that dried up and went away and then the credit cards went away right behind it, people were not having the bandwidth to invest in these big ticket items the way they were before. I would say close to 70% of the people that were buyers dried up. It did leave the top 30% who were going to be pretty unaffected by most of the downturn because they truly are already in a state of wealth or they have enough financial bandwidth to move. The rest of the 70% were buying a lot and now it went away at once. That's what I really see happening. We're in a huge shift.

People aren't responding the same way...they can't or they won't. They're much more conservative with their investments. They're starting to become more tuned into what's a real payoff, what's real, what truly is going to deliver what it promises versus the hype and the overselling and the inauthenticity...can you really believe it? That's what I think.

Carolyn: I think you're absolutely right. It's like the rug got pulled out and everybody was like "Hey, this is great...where did you all go?"



Melanie: A lot of people were ramping up. A lot of people got comfortable. There are a couple of really big players, very famous authors and really big on the circuit, they were sharing with me that they were doing \$500,000 weekends and they were doing three or four of them a month. It basically came to a screeching halt. They had to completely change their model. Not everybody's that nimble. Not everybody can turn around that quickly. They don't have the financial or the creative resources or whatever to be that nimble. I think those are the people that got in a lot of pain.

Carolyn: Let's talk about what you see as possibly coming through this pain and maybe we can just start with brilliance, which is what we're here to discuss. What does that word brilliance mean to you? I think this is something that, certainly in this event, so many people are captivated by "Yes, it's not all just this surface stuff or the hype or the marketing tools and strategies, it's the inside that really needs to come out more fully." You just talked a little bit about that. What does brilliance mean to you?

Melanie: What it means to me is that I think each and every one of us on this planet has a set of skills and passions. There is something deep down inside of us; it's almost embedded to be expressed in the world. Like I said before, a lot of people are awakened to that. They don't know what that is so they live in a state of pain or kind of suppressed joy. They don't really have that larger than life energy in the world. They're still trying to find themselves. When you find brilliance and you find that part of you, it's like you're unstoppable. It's like the Energizer bunny; you can't turn it off.

But, there's a place in between and it's almost like maybe where people are so obsessed with getting their brilliance out there in the world they spin out of control and they overdo it. They maybe over exaggerate or they kind of lose their way. They may be stopped to be authentic with how they get their brilliance out there in the world or how they help other people find their brilliance, for that matter. This place of brilliance is almost like a sacred place. It's that place where you're at your most vulnerable raw space of truth and you're so real and you're so connected to it and it's being expressed in a way where it's almost like there's no excuses there. It's expressed powerfully, confidently, and without any hold back. Like you're not going to damage anybody in the way. That's a big distinction. It's really important, for me



at least, to express in this program that true brilliance can only be possible when no one else gets hurt. I don't mean no one else gets challenged or nobody else gets stretched, I mean you're not pursuing your brilliance to the expense of someone else's wellbeing.

Carolyn: I love that. That's a very important piece. I completely agree with you that it's offering it and I like what you said about challenging people. It's not like you say, "Oh, it may not be for you, but if you really feel there's something" but you leave the decision in the hands in the person that you're in that conversation with. There's lots of manipulation going on and lots of fear tactics. Lots of "Oh my gosh, if I don't get it now, it's going to be twice as much next year..." and where does that leave people?

Melanie: I think that there's a certain amount of that that will always exist. The most authentic marketers will be straight with you. Like right now, I'm teaching a program I'm not going to teach again. I'll just be straight with people, "You know what, I'm done. I'm not doing it anymore." I think there is a level of psychological manipulation that really good marketers have learned to use where you are basically playing to people's fears. As long as people respond to that, marketers will continue to do that because it works. That's what gets people out of their comfort zone and into action. Sometimes that action is good for you. That's why I think people do that.

Carolyn: I also wanted to recap a little what you said about brilliance being a sacred place and raw vulnerability and you're just so connected to it that there's no excuse. That's just like 'boom' there you are.

Melanie: I think you access it differently...everybody does. I was at this live event over the weekend where I was speaking. You know sometimes you have these magical moments you never planned for. I was sitting with a group of speakers and a couple of attendees and my partner was there. We were sitting around this table in a completely unplanned fashion and one of the guys said, "I want to do something totally different tonight. Tell me what you guys think. I want to hear what is your most raw, most vulnerable, most scariest place that you know you need to go." I thought, "That is too freaking cool." We took two hours, four bottles of wine, and



we just sat there and we had the most magical dinner where it was all about being in this sacred place of sharing what we're scared about in ourselves and what is it that we know we need to express but maybe we haven't known how up until now. Those are moments of brilliance when you're able to be that real and that honest.

Carolyn: That's beautiful! I know you've been in the corporate world and working with entrepreneurs for years, what are some of the challenges that you feel women, in particular, face in creating a successful business, especially in times like these? Maybe there's a personal challenge that you face in your business. How did you overcome that? What do you see for women, in particular?

Melanie: I think there are a couple of different levels. I work with quite a few women and I also work with quite a few men so I definitely see some shifts in thinking sometimes. One of the things that faces many women, particularly in some of the more male dominated niches, is would maybe be called the 'good old boys' club' where a tribe of men that have a social connection that tend to support each other in getting their businesses out there in a big way. Because some of these men have really built these amazing lists or have cultivated a strength in this little tribe, women have a difficult time breaking in and being experienced as their equals while the clients they serve are growing in women in the community and they're desperately seeking female mentors in that situation.

I've seen quite a few groups where it's just the men on stage. I hear different things about it. I'm friends with a lot of these guys and some of the guys are like, "I want women. I want them to come in. We desperately need them." Interestingly enough, I was recently invited to an event in Australia with Christopher Howard who's a mentor of mine. I was the only woman with twelve other guys in this circuit. They do have some women. Stompernet community has been predominantly men for a long time and they're changing that and there are more women involved in it, but there's only three women on facility. A good friend of mine, Simon Leung, is in Singapore and I was asking him why women aren't over there. He said because they don't know how to do the nuances of doing business in different cultures.



When I really think about why this is, I think there's some core issues. I think women and, again, I don't mean to stereotype but I've seen it happen...women tend to be pulled in a lot of different directions, particularly if they are a mother, and I think it's harder for them to focus and get crystal clear on what the right things are to do and grow their business. Typically, their family will come first. I think that's absolutely the right thing but there's often times this emotional war of "but I want to be successful in business and I have to give up time with my family to do that." There becomes an internal conflict. I think that plays in.

I think there are some women who were not taught to be confident and they were taught that it was bad to be powerful or wrong or that doesn't serve them in terms of their male relationships. They have a very difficult time being a powerful woman and being in a relationship with a male partner so they allow a piece of them to kind of get smushed. That translates to them not being willing to do whatever it takes to get their business successful. Those are some of the things that I think about when I'm working with a woman to really help her create the business that wants. We first tackle, "What are you spending time doing that is getting in the way of you managing your top three priorities?" Typically, that's making money and taking care of my family and whatever else fits in there. There isn't time to do it all and underneath that it's what do we have to do to really create a foundation that allows you to be expressing your gift powerfully and not feeling like you have to hide from anyone in your life. It's an interesting dynamic.

Carolyn: Do you think that's changing? Is that opening up? Are women really finding that deeper confidence or are we still in early days of that?

Melanie: I think it depends on the woman's community that she's involved in, interestingly enough. I think it depends on some choices. I was a woman who kind of by default didn't end up having any children so my circumstances are very different. I don't necessarily have a brood of small children that I have to consider in decisions. Someone like myself or Alexandria Brown or other people who don't necessarily choose the path of being a mother, we have a very different set of priorities that we can focus on versus a woman who does have that part of her life that is important to her, she is going to make very different choices. I think there are more women today



who choose not to have children so I think that plays in but, Carolyn, what I think is very interesting is women have been given the systems and the tools and the resources and training and the mentoring to become successful in business.

I think the second thing that's even more difficult because I think a lot of them can get the dynamic down with the kids, but I think their partners are feeling threatened. I think it's creating another level challenge for them to weed through because they may have relied on their partners to take care of them financially or for their partner to be the breadwinner and now that I'm thinking about it, most of the women whom I've counseled that were really struggling were struggling with how do I stay in this relationship and really be me...really allow myself to get real. I went through that. I was married when I started my business and my relationship very quickly unraveled because my ex could not embrace who I was becoming as an entrepreneur and as somebody who needed to be fully expressed. He was only okay with me when I was playing as small as he was.

Carolyn: It's funny because I was tweeting with some people the other day and somebody said, "Top 2 personal growth opportunities: divorce and starting your own business. I said "Yes." It is massive. A big theme of the Summit is that your business can only grow as big as you're willing to grow. Like you say, as you expanded yourself you had to do that because you were growing a big business. There usually is some fallout and sometimes it's the people who are closest to us who just don't get it or they're not ready to expand in their own particular way...maybe at the same rate as you and it can become difficult. Without great communication, it doesn't work.

I'm curious. You're obviously still in the process of evolving and digging deep inside. How do you live your brilliance on a daily basis? Are there specific ways that you keep yourself grounded? It sounds like you've had a difficult year. Here you're the one teaching people how to create plans and your own plans kind of, as you said, unraveled a bit. How do you handle that?

Melanie: There is kind of a daily practice that I find myself using, particularly now that I've reconnected to this kind of a bigger purpose that's unfolding. Meditation is probably one of the things that keeps me most grounded. Another is support. I use my coach.



I think it's extraordinarily essential to have a coach and a mentor to hold you in that space.

I will tell you a little bit about what happened for me. I think everybody would benefit and there may be some healing in me sharing. I do teach it and I got off track. It was such a great learning opportunity. I also think there are some tools and resources that many of us maybe don't use regularly like journaling. I have a cool little picture on my wall right next to my computer by my phone that says, 'What is my intention?' which basically means how am I being real? I have my 'how do I know I'm being real' statement there and, interestingly enough because I got a deeper connection to what my true intention is, I do believe that's why a big part of all of this fell away because I wasn't playing a big enough game. Part of what happened for, and it got me off track, was that I have strength that I began to reuse.

One of my strengths is collaboration. I love collaborating. Success Connections, right? Connecting with people is so important to me. It's one of my top three values but a strength overused becomes your greatest weakness. I began to overuse my collaboration energy and I began to collaborate in a way with people where I was making commitments and I was creating programs to serve my team or to serve people at the expense of what the greatest expression of me was. I didn't recognize I was doing it until I was so deep in and things kind of unraveled that I went, "Oh, wait a minute. What just happened here?" I lost my way because someone I was in collaboration with decided that it wasn't serving them, fine. It hit me in such a profound way I couldn't figure out why. What I realized was I had begun to overuse that strength and I got disconnected with what was right for me. This is the first time I'm saying this in a public forum and it's really scary to acknowledge this.

Carolyn: I appreciate you. This is your brilliance. You're being raw and vulnerable.

Melanie: I believe it happened to bring me to a place where I could share it with other people in private and recognize that they were doing the same thing and to recognize this was the pain people were in. This is where there's a pain that needs to be served and if I hadn't gone through it, I would recognize it in others. I wouldn't be as empathetic and I wouldn't know what the strategy was to get back on track. That's



exactly what I did. I turned to my mentor and I said, “I need help getting back on track. I kind of lost my way.” I had it all planned out. I had my five million dollar road map already to go but it unraveled. So now what? The coolest thing is that I began to recognize that the plan I’m creating is even more exciting and more aligned with my genius and my excellence than what I was in which really was a comfort zone. I had moved into a comfort zone. It’s exciting!

Carolyn: You created a situation where your beautiful plan didn’t pan out and, as a result of really digging into it; you’re in the process of unrolling something that’s even cooler, even more in alignment with your genius?

Melanie: Even more different. What happens for a lot of people when they follow certain gurus or experts, is everything kind of becomes plain vanilla and everybody starts saying the same. I think that might have happened a little bit. We had people telling us, “I don’t understand how what you do is different from someone else.” I knew what it was and all the people who were actually in my programs knew what it was but I didn’t know how to articulate it. I didn’t know why it worked.

I eventually realized that part of the reason why I went through this transformation in the last six months was to help me find ways to more uniquely express the energy in which I coach people. The energy in which I get these massive breakthroughs for people and I do get them into these results that are in the high six and seven figures. It’s not because I follow the same system as everybody else because we don’t. We get real results for people because we have a different way of aligning someone’s energy and their uniqueness and their own core of what’s important to them through models and systems and strategies that work out there. Not a cookie cutter...something’s that really unique to them. It’s not enough for me to put someone on a path and say “Go.” I want to be part of their life. I want to be part of what they do. It all happened for a reason.

Carolyn: That’s great. This kind of leads up to the next question I wanted to ask you. With this whole theme of shedding the skin off the snake, transition and evolution...I think a lot of people are going through that. Certainly for myself, starting Brilliance Mastery after ThriveAfterDivorce.com, that just felt like the next place I had to move into. I



was feeling that calling so strongly. You're obviously in this transition period now yourself. How do you manage that gap from where you were, who you knew yourself to be, who everybody around you knew you to be and now you're in the process of bringing a new baby into the world. Even though you may not be a biological mother, you're birthing something new.

Melanie: It's scary. A friend of mine went through this last year and she used to say, "I sleep a lot right now." There's a lot of sleep. There are a lot of tears. There's a lot of needing to be alone. That's not normally me. I'm not someone who normally is in that place. I have had a lot of tears; I have had a lot of sleep and I have had a lot of time where I've kind of gone inside myself...into self care mode.

I think when we're birthing something inside of us; we have to make that okay. When I really made that okay and I started reaching out to people to help be my midwife, if you will and that analogy of kind of birthing this new idea, what I realized was that it was okay to just know the steps that were right in front of me. That was a huge moment for me because, again, I am someone who is at my best when I know what the whole picture is. When you are really clear about your life and everything that's in it, yes, that is possible and I've been living in that space for a long time. When you're birthing something new, and this is probably the single hardest thing I've ever tried to get my clients to understand, it's very hard to accept it when you're in the middle of it. It has to be okay. You have to be willing to surrender to only knowing what's right in front of you. It's like you have to trust that if you take the step that's right in front of you, the next one will be revealed when it's time. That's how I birthed my first business. That's how I birthed Virtual Teambuilding Boot Camp the first time. That's how I birthed everything but like I said, when you're in the middle of it, it's scary.

For me, right now, I know what that first step is and I'm starting to see what's right behind it. I don't have it all articulated and formulated in a way I can be in action, but I just have to practice being okay with it. You have to just be willing to surrender to it. If you push it, that's when things start to break or you take missteps or you find that you're saying yes to things that don't really serve you. I've learned in this journey to quit pushing and to just be in the space of "I'm birthing it and the baby's



taking its time and right now here's the part I do know. I'm just going to be in the 'yes' around that." It's interesting when I made that decision, Carolyn, my energy just unleashed. I got so excited when I knew it was okay to say yes to the first step and not have to know what it all looked like.

Carolyn: Isn't that incredible. It happened just like that, right?

Melanie: Yes. I do a lot of NLP which is Neuro Linguistic Programming. I do hypnotic work with my clients to help them. Sometimes there are limiting beliefs and triggers and stuff that we've gotten sideways on. Those beliefs, when they get triggered, they're act like an anchor. They'll sink to the bottom and you can't get out. I've done a lot of that work for my clients and sometimes I get help with it as well. I have a couple people who support me. I did one of those sessions because I felt like, "Okay, I have an anchor that has to get cut here." I came out of that session and boom. I just knew within two days I said, "Yes, this is the decision. It's crystal clear." I just said 'yes' to it and the energy that's come out of every single person I've shared it with is "Oh yea, I'm so on board with that." That's it...that's what we want.

Carolyn: Very cool. It just reminds me of a time when I was ending my marriage. I'd been two years trying to work everything out. It was just a state of upheaval and I remember the afternoon when I said, "Wow, I'm going to have to leave. I don't know what my life is going to look like. I have no idea but I just know that my next step is to say that I want a divorce and surrender." The language that came to me was 'I'm going down this river and I can go kicking and screaming trying to fight the current or I can just go for the ride...it's taking me somewhere.'

As soon as I had that clarity, it was just like that sort of turned up unhappy energy and anxiety in my body literally went out my feet and into the floor. It was like this calm peace inhabited my body and it's never left. That was a number of years ago and I can still stay connected to that. I really think that point about surrender...we're all creating new things here. I think this is one of the things we've seen sort of falling apart when people are just sort of blindly modeling other businesses or other people and it doesn't have that alignment of their own purpose or their own authenticity. It doesn't stick. It can't hold. It doesn't really resonate for the people who want to buy



that service or use your products or whatever. I think it's really important that you shared that and you used it yourself to say, "One step at a time is just fine. I can just surrender and trust you that the next piece will show up."

Melanie: There's another piece that I feel like I need to share so people will leave with clarity about that process. I only got to the decision when I went back to my core. I call it having your solid still foundation. There are lots of people who teach this but there's kind of a uniqueness to the way I learned it. It allows people to rapidly access that next level. It has to do with getting reconnected to your values. It's not values the way most people think about it. It's really understanding what your compass is pointing towards. Every day we make choices of how we spend our time and what we spend our money on.

What I realized after learning this process is most people are expressing the values of the person who is the strongest influencer in their life at that moment and/or some kind of need. A neediness in them that's coming from a damaged place that needs to be filled. That doesn't mean it's a powerful foundation. It means that our actions are being compelled by a dark hole inside of us. It's something that needs to be filled up. That's why people fall prey to cults. That's why people get sucked into spending thousands of dollars they don't have on something. It's like, "Oh, that's going to fill my need." There's that kind of desperation place rather than a powerful place to saying, "Okay, my next step looks like this. My next step feels like this."

When you come from a powerful place, a confident place, it's because you are rock solid. You have that absolute strength in your foundation saying, "This is who I am. This is what I will create from a place of what I know my truth is." When I reconnected to that, everything started falling into place again. I literally went back to the basics and said, "What's the simplest thing I need to do? I need to reconnect to my values. I need to get reconnected to my priorities." That's when I know that what I'm building my business around or where the holes are will be revealed to me. That's exactly what happened.

Carolyn: That's so great. When will we see this next step articulated more publicly?



Melanie: It's either going to be next week or the week after. I'll tell people what it is. It's something really simple. It's like so simple, it's not even funny simple. I felt called to do something for a really long time and I held back on it. It was to have a radio show and when I figured out what the radio show was to be about, I went, "Oh yea, I'm doing it. I have to do it." There's no reason why I wouldn't want to talk about it every week. It's called Real Talk Radio. It's going to be creating a space where we're going to talk about what's real, give people a place to kind of speak their truth, to be supported in their truth, to be given permission to live their truth, and to kind of debunk some of the myths. I don't ever want to give harm to anybody else who's living in the minute because that's where they're at in their journey in their life, but I believe there are a lot of people who are kind of seeking out this place a 'free zone' if you will. They're kind of done with the hype and they're feeling a little jaded about who to trust and what to be. I just feel like I want to create a space where we can connect with more of what's real. I want people to have permission to be real. That's what's up. We'll have information up at www.SuccessConnections.com/GetReal so you'll find the information there for the radio show. The whole evolution will be revealed there as it comes out.

Carolyn: Stay tuned! It's an ongoing evolution. Congratulations! Again, if you look at your old business model you'd say, "That's really different" but it's where your heart is.

Melanie: It's also perfect because, again, my whole thing is about success connection. How can you have a successful connection if you're not real? It was coming more to the alignment of my truth I think.

Carolyn: Can you tell me when you are going through these moments of big change and you hit the wall of fear or you hit the wall of self doubt or people around you are saying, "What? Are you crazy. You're so good at what you do, why would you want to change?" How do you walk through that?

Melanie: I've been that person and I've challenged people on that before because I really wanted to know if they were living their truth or were they trying to escape something that's painful. There is an alignment. There is an energetic truth that resonates in somebody when you know they are talking their truth. I think when you



are in that place where people are doubting you, what they're picking up on is your lack of commitment to your truth. So, the first thing I would challenge somebody to do is to really reflect back on where am I doubting my truth?

The second thing, and this is something else I've had to deal with...and this is huge. I look for validation through people's checkbooks or through people saying 'yes.' One of the things that my mentor told me and she had to kind of deck me upside the head a little bit, she said, "You absolutely have to not allow yourself to be validated by whether or not people are saying yes. The more you are standing in your truth; people can't not say yes if it's resonating with their truth." I think too often we allow other people to persuade us. We need their validation or their approval to move forward. It shouldn't matter. What you need is your own validation and your own connection to your truth and to say, without a shadow of a doubt, that's who I am. The people who are onboard with this and who need this are going to say 'yes' to it. I think what happens is many of us haven't gotten to that place yet so we're trying to test things out on other people and get their feedback. If we're doing that, then we're not in our truth. It's kind of a weird cycle.

Carolyn: It is so true and it's so sneaky because it can be very insidious. I can totally relate to that. It's like wanting to serve people and do a great job and express myself and yet there's a little piece sometimes...it's like "Oh, I want people to still like me because I don't think that I'm good enough." You can see how these things are wrapped. I think that's what I'm really appreciating about this conversation is how you've really followed those threads inside yourself to get down to what your core values are again so you can let those things go, right? I think a lot of people relate to that people pleasing, having other people tell you what a good girl you are.

Melanie: Or our family. There are a lot of layers of it and, again, one of the things that I haven't been as authentic as I could have been over the last few years is that I've held back on some of those ways I support people and finding their congruence on the foundation. It's really easy to get into where the action needs to occur. I've been enjoying bringing some of those gifts back to that balance and are you congruent with your truth and now let's build a business or refine the business or let's redesign



the business or let's blow the business up and start over or whatever and get you congruent. I'm having so much fun with that.

Carolyn: You've been through a journey. Like you said, it's like a tumultuous thing once you say 'yes' to it. What are one or two things that you know now that you wish you would have known at the beginning when you decided to start your own business and step out as an entrepreneur and leave the whole corporate world behind you?

Melanie: That's an interesting question and I'm going to answer it kind of crazy. I don't know that I would have done it differently. What I've learned over time is that I couldn't have done then what I'm doing now. I had to go through this journey. I had to go through that pain. I had to go through the not knowing. I had to go through being broke. I had to go through with getting into debt. I had to do all that stuff that way so that I could do what I do right now. If I had known them at the beginning of my journey, I might have maybe done a few things differently but "Oh my gosh, my story would suck." Who wants to go "Yes, I just ran right out of the gate and made ten million dollars!" I don't relate to that. I can't do that.

Mike, my partner, was reading the preface to a book the other day. The book had something to do with all the things that you need to know to be a success no matter where you're starting. The whole preface to the book was 'I graduated with the top honors and I jumped out of school and I landed the perfect job and then I made my millions and then this person accepted and...'" He said to me, "I don't even want to read the book now." The next line was, "If you believe that, its total crap!" Now, let me tell you what really happened. It was hysterical because nobody wants to follow somebody who's had a perfect life. There's no rapport in that. That's how I feel. I'm really glad I've been through the trials and tribulations because I totally get how to support someone who's in their trials and tribulation.

Carolyn: For those who are listening to this call, what would you offer them as your two or three most important insights or tips that you want let people know about so that they can really live in their brilliance and unleash it fully in the world?

Melanie: I think #1 is you have to connect to a mentor or a coach who understands how to connect you to your brilliance, not theirs. I'm going to say one thing about this. There are a lot of amazing people who don't know the difference and they're going



to invite you to fulfill their destiny for you. So, #1, please find a mentor or coach, and do that because it will shorten your path, but find somebody who is very skilled and very adept at helping you connect to your brilliance and then designing a model that works from that place.

The second thing is, please give yourself permission to not have to do it all yourself. We're not even talking about this a lot on this call, but typically when I'm being interviewed about how to delegate and how to build a team around you who believes in you and supports your vision and is going to help you manifest that vision in the world, the biggest mistake women make is often times they think they have to do everything themselves. They really bottleneck their abilities to grow quickly. So, the second thing is please give yourself that gift. Allow others to support. Believe in yourself enough to invest in a team earlier that will help you be in the energy of unleashing your brilliance and getting it out there in a big way!

Carolyn: I want to second that one because certainly that was something that I didn't quite realize was important earlier. It was "I'm sure I can do this." That's not really the point. We can all do a lot of really great things but is it really what we are uniquely brilliant at doing enough where we're spending our time or not.

Melanie: Can I do one more? The third thing I would say is know when it's time to say 'no.' I think that women aren't always comfortable saying no because, again, that whole people pleasing thing or it's like you don't want people to doubt your strengths. I think there is a time when we have to say no. It could be no to an opportunity that's not in alignment. It could be no to someone who wants your time and you know it's not right. You know you need to do something else. Sometimes it's no to a program or a product or something you've spent thousands of dollars and hours cultivating and it's not working. You have to be willing to say no. That was another one of my things this year is that I put a lot of time and money into something that just never grew legs. It just wasn't right. There were a lot of right things in it, but it just wasn't right. I wasn't fully there. I may have invested \$50,000-\$80,000 in it but maybe I'm just going to make it up another way. We can let it go.

Carolyn: For you, what are some of the indicators when you're getting that 'no' message?



Melanie: It can be that things are looking like roadblocks. You may have just known something was going to pan out and it doesn't. You may be feeling stuck energy. You might feel like a lot of anxiety or you may feel like you're just not passionate about it every day. Most of us really know, if we really listen to our truth to the real voice that is our guide, we will get the message. It will look or feel like, 'this isn't you. This isn't right. You're not in this. This is not going where you want it to go. It's okay. Let it go. Stop.' If you can't access that message, that's another really great way to use a good coach. Sometimes you can peel away the things that are clogging up the channel to hear your truth.

Carolyn: It's so funny because I think sometimes in working it with a coach when I hear people explain to me some of their reasons...."here's what I'm thinking about doing" and then when they hear themselves speaking out loud and there's a bunch of waffling in their language or there's not the commitment, they often will hear it and say, "This is not really a 'yes' for me. It's a 'no.' I just wasn't clear about it until you asked what was really important to me."

Melanie: There's a saying that might help people here. It's a little dicey but hey; I'm all about getting real so we'll just be real here. If it's not a hell yes, it's a hell no! Good yardstick.

Carolyn: Good one. Melanie, we're just about out of time, unfortunately, but I want to have you let us all know what is the best way that people can find out more about you and what you offer, your programs, and your new show!

Melanie: The new show is going to be at www.SuccessConnections.com/GetReal and the things that evolve from this space of me making the stand for getting real will be there. www.SuccessConnections.com has all the ways we support people in finding that space of realness and allowing yourself to kind of unleash. The different ways that we support people are easily found there. I'm looking forward to playing with you more and with everybody who's in the space of "Hey, form a community that wants to get real together."

Carolyn: Yea, I'm all for that. I would love to. We have to find our tribes, right?



Melanie: Exactly.

Carolyn: Melanie, I want to thank you so much. I know what a crazy busy schedule you have and I really appreciate you being a part of this conversation. You're really added some amazing bits of your own brilliance. I also want to thank you for being so real. You've shared with us here some stuff that I know is new to the public domain and I really honor your authenticity and your vulnerability and what you've put on the table here for us.

Melanie: You're welcome. I figured if I was saying it, I was going to play full out and I'm going to lead by example.

Carolyn: You're just getting real! Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time.

Melanie: You're welcome!

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