

**Episode #40: When Your Husband Doesn't Support Your Dreams
with Sharon Costanzo**



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with Lara Johnson

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Welcome to *The Mom on Purpose Podcast*. I'm Lara Johnson, and I'm here to teach you how to get out of your funk, be in a better mood, claim more with your kids. Manage your home better, get your to-do list done and live your life on purpose with my proven method. This is possible for you, and I'll show you how. You're not alone anymore.

We're in this together.

Welcome to *The Mom Purpose Podcast*. I am so excited to be with all of you today. And as you can hear, I do have a cold. So, I hopefully I don't have to pause this at all to take a coughing break at all but there might be a chance that you do hear me with a cough drop in my mouth. So, I do apologize about.

But I didn't want to reschedule this, episode because I have Sharon on today and she is absolutely amazing. And we've had this scheduled, gosh, what, for a month now? Maybe even longer. We've been talking about this ever since before my maternity leave, but I'm really excited about because this is a topic that I see a lot of my clients struggle with, is when they start figuring out what their purpose is, what their dreams are, and getting clear on that, and they want to start moving forward.

On that thing, but they struggle with that because their husbands aren't totally on board. Not that there's anything bad about their husbands. I have clients that are ma that are married to amazing men, and because of that, sometimes their husband just doesn't get the whole vision that they have in their head, and so it's hard for them to understand why they're so passionate or why they want to move forward on it.

Even though they already have a really good life, like why change that up? So, the reason why I asked Sharon to come on here is she is a relationship and communication coach. She specializes in helping women improve their communication in their marriage so that they can work through these challenges as a team and feel more confident and connected with their spouse.

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And so that's why I asked her to come on, for this particular topic because she is an expert in this area. As far as communication and marriages. So, Sharon, welcome. We're going to have fun today. So, is there anything you want to do to introduce yourself before we really kick off?

Sharon: Oh, I think that's a great, no, that's a great introduction.

Lara: Okay. Yeah, and Sharon and I, we've known each other for a couple years. I think we met on social media, didn't we? And then I found out she lives like right around the corner from my parents, which is really fun.

So. All right. Let's just talk a little bit about what you see as communication struggles in a marriage.

Sharon: Yeah, I think the communication struggles so many of us have often in our marriage is we're overthinking how to bring things up.

And I hear my clients often say like, I need to figure out the right thing to say, or I need to figure out the right time to bring something up. And often we're trying to control the outcome of the conversation, which I think is the wrong goal when it comes out of this sense of fear. You know, nobody wants to be rejected. Nobody wants to have their ideas dismissed or anything like that. So, we, we think, okay, if I just bring this up in the right way, or if I just bring it up at the right time, then I'll improve my chances of getting what I want.

But I've helped so many clients to let go of that and to just be more honest and more vulnerable. And they always come back to me and they're like, oh my gosh, everything is so much better when I quit trying to do it perfectly. And of course, you know, I would never say, just say whatever you, you know, just unfiltered spew of thoughts and complaints and all of that.

That's not what we're getting at here, but it's being honest and vulnerable and that, hey, I'm not quite sure if this is the right time to bring this up, or, I'm not quite sure that I have the right words for this, but this

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is important enough to me that I need to share it with you in the imperfect way that I can think of right now.

Lara: I love what you said with all of that because it really, it comes back down to the words you said, like the controlling versus the vulnerability, and I think sometimes a lot of us women, have almost like an emotional reaction to that word controlling and, and I don't think it's very conscious that we're trying to control the outcome in the sense that we're controlling human beings, but more in the sense that there's something that we feel passionate about and we hope they feel passionate too.

Like that is still controlling, like we want them to see from our perspective. So can you speak a little bit more about. You know how that like subtle, like subtlety of controlling comes into play?

Sharon: Yeah, so I was just talking to a client about this last week and she's in a kind of a tenuous situation in her relationship and she's working on changing some relationship dynamics that are really difficult and she brought something up to her husband and she tried doing it a little bit of a different way than she had before, and he told her that she was being control.

And she came to me, and she was like, I was like, well, what would you like help with? And she's like, well, I need to like to prove to him that I'm not controlling. But as I asked her more questions, I was like, well, you're kind of are being controlling, you know? But I can bring that up in a compassionate way. Like I can see how difficult it is.

To be vulnerable, to be seen with the most important person to you, because there's a lot of risk involved in our closest relationships, especially when, when things are challenging, when we haven't established that trust over a long period of time. There is, you know, a lot of times we have this assumption that the people who are closest to us should be the easiest to communicate. But often they're the hardest because there is so much at stake.

Lara: Yeah. I love that so much. That's so true and, and I've found that we have a lot of internal beliefs that we want our spouse to be happy

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and I think sometimes that bit of controlling comes in with that as well as we want them to always be happy about the decisions that we make.

Yes. And so can you speak to that a little bit as well, about how, when we're trying to be vulnerable, we're also trying to make sure they're happy about whatever we're saying.

Sharon: There's this idea that if our spouse is happy with us, then it's just, it's not as uncomfortable to go forward with whatever it is that we want.

If we know that our spouse agrees or they're happy with us, and I almost feel like it's how we're socialized as women, I don't think that men think about this nearly as often as we do in the same way they see them. And their objectives, they're going out to conquer the world. You know, they're going out to bring home the bacon and they don't even think about whether or not it, it's disrupting the family.

I think that's changing a little bit, but they almost have like this implied permission to go after what they want because it's part of their role as a breadwinner, as a protector, as a provider, and us as women, it's like, oh, well we can only do, we can only go after ours. If it fits within the family, if it fits within my, my role as putting my family first.

So, we all, we look at our, our husband, our spouses, in that same way. Okay. If he can understand that this is part of me playing out the role that I've kind of unconsciously agreed to, we've kind of unconsciously written all these rules. If he can understand that this fits within that framework, then we're all going to be okay.

But as soon as we kind of start to step outside of those, you know, what's the word? Like those unspoken rules. Then it's, it's a little bit tricky. And we haven't really been given great tools as women for how to navigate that, like how do you go after your goals and your dreams if they're not necessarily bringing home the bacon?

I remember encountering this when I was a stay-at-home mom, I had two babies less than two years apart, and I stayed home for about 15 months. That's about as, as long as I could handle it.

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Lara: Me too.

Sharon: Working for me was a way for me to feel like I was, you know, pursuing passions and all of that.

Maybe, I guess in a more acceptable way, but I was home with the two kids, and I really enjoyed sewing and I was like, oh, I just want to take a sewing class at the community college. And it cost money. And because our income had just very significantly decreased recently, and because I wasn't working anymore and my husband was in graduate school at the time, and I thought it seemed fair.

I should be able to do something, I should be able to take a class at the community college. And it was like \$400. And my husband was like, oh, well if you get \$400 for that, then I should get \$400 for something I want to do. And I was like, aren't you already doing things every single day that you want to do?

So, we had that negotiation and, and we didn't handle it very well at the time. And that's probably why I'm able to share. So much of what I share now is because of all of the mistakes I've made along the way, but I just felt like I needed to convince him that I was worthy of that time and that money to pursue a goal.

And it would've been a lot better if I would've had some of the tools that I have now of just saying, hey, this is important to me. And not having to convince him about fairness or about, yes, the worthiness of my goal. I've helped clients with that as well. If you just say, hey, this is important to me and this is why it's really vulnerable to do that.

But it almost like it takes away a lot of the energy, a lot of that anxious energy around it. Nobody wants to be convinced.

Lara: Yeah. I think that's such a good word right there, because it's easy for us to feel like emotionally triggered around the word controlling, but we can definitely see when we're trying to convince.

We're, we're trying to like lure them into our way of thinking in order for it to go over smoother. So, I think convince is such a perfect word. Like we

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move into that convincing energy versus letting our guard down and just showing up and being vulnerable. It's so very different. I feel like emotion inside of our body.

Sharon: Yeah. And I think part of it is like just saying, hey, this is important to me. And it doesn't have to be important to you. You don't have to understand it completely. I just know that we value our relationship enough to let each other have things that are important.

Lara: I love what you said there, and if you could speak more to the difference between supporting versus like, having permission to move forward on your dreams, because I think when we're trying to convince, we're trying to get that buy-in, we're trying to get that permission instead of what you just said.

I'm like, this is important to me and it's okay if you don't see it. So, can you speak to that a little bit more about that difference between permission and support?

Sharon: Yeah, you can, you can recognize the way that you're asking for permission if you're saying something like, hey, are you okay if I do this?

Like I've caught myself doing this so often, like, hey, some girls are going out this weekend. Are you okay if I go, we have to stop doing that, or hey, I want to take this class. Are you okay watching the kids? Or, you know, we're asking for permission. And that's a pretty, pretty clear differentiator. Or like you said, the convincing.

We start to build a case like, this is why this is important. Explaining is another one. Explain why it's valuable in a way that we think that they're going to buy into it. But when we're asking for support, it's more like you've already decided I'm planning to do this.

I'm planning to, like when I was a stay-at-home mom, I'm planning to start taking a few classes at the community college. So rather than making the case, we're just saying, hey, I've already decided this. But I do care about you enough to ask you for your support, and I do care about you enough that I want to negotiate a way to make this work that's going to work for both of us.

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I'm not just saying I'm doing this no matter what, but I'm asking for input. You know, if you need to, if you need more childcare options that are going to work well for both of us and for our family? You know, if I'm going out one night a week to do something, is that a time where you can be with the kids, or do we need to find some childcare provider or options so that neither one of us is taking on more of those childcare responsibilities than we can handle?

Lara: I love that you give those concrete examples on what it sounds like, because I know, at least for me, that was a really big shift of going from, is this okay versus, hey, this is really important to me and I'm going to do this because every time I shifted into the second the, hey, this is really important to me.

I'm going to do this. I thought I wasn't being a good partner, because partners are supposed to discuss things and they go back and forth. And so, in my mind, if I was saying, hey, are you okay if I do this? I thought I was being a good partner, when in reality I was very subtly asking for permission.

So, can you speak to that just a little bit on like how to be a good partner and asking for support is in support of a partnership?

Sharon: Yeah. Well, like one of the things that I've heard, Julie Hanks, who's a mentor of mine, talk about what partnership is. Partnership is not always about who does what it's about who gets to decide.

Yeah. And when we ask for permission, we're automatically saying you get the final say in this. Yeah. So, we want to go and say, let's decide together, but we're also two autonomous human beings. I get to decide what kind of mom I want to be. I'm open to negotiating with that part with my partner.

And I hope that if he sees something in me that. Not fulfilling that we have decided as a value for our family. I hope he'll be able to tell me that, but he doesn't get to decide what kind of mom I'm going to be. We, we make decisions as a team. But it's so tricky to think about what that looks like because I think most of us didn't see that growing up.

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I think most of us saw one parent was kind of the ultimate decision maker mm-hmm. In certain realms and the other. Went along with it. Mm-hmm. Or we, we saw like different kinds of control dynamics. Mm-hmm. And it's really hard to think about what this looks like to make this decision as team.

Lara: Yeah, and I, I like that you bring that up.

I think growing up I was in a very unique situation where that dynamic didn't exist in my parenthood, but it existed in the culture that I was raised in, and that was very different for me because it was like I could see what was happening inside of my home and I could see what was happening in my culture.

And they didn't mesh. And that was like really hard for me on trying to figure out, okay, well how does this mesh? But then when I became a stay-at-home mom for a time and I wasn't the primary breadwinner for our family, all of a sudden, I thought even though we shared the money, he brought in the money and therefore he got the final say on the money.

Mm-hmm. So that was really hard when I was started moving towards, you know, my goals and, and there was financial decisions that we were making with regards to that. That was really hard for me on saying, no, actually this is just as much my money as, as it is your money. Although I do unpaid labor within our home, I still have rights to that money.

I, I don't know if that makes.

Sharon: sense. And oh, it makes so much sense. And my husband and I kind of went through that too. And to be

Lara: honest, I think every marriage does at some point. Yeah. And

Sharon: I think that because at the time my husband, my husband and I didn't have great ways of dealing with conflict and he was not modeled healthy conflict at all.

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Mm-hmm. But I remember talking about some sort of financial decision and we couldn't agree. And he said something like, well, I make the money so. I should have the final say. And I was like, I am.

Lara: not okay with that. Didn't go, yeah, it didn't.

Sharon: go over well, did it. I'm not okay with that. And I told him, I was like, if you ever try to use that to control me, I will go back to work.

Mm-hmm. And I will never depend on you financially again. This is how important it is to me. Right. That we, we agree on our financial decisions cycle. Mm-hmm. And I think sometimes we have to do that. you know, we have to decide if I'm not okay with this, what am I willing to do, right. To have my own back?

And it sounds, I mean, some people will probably feel like that sounds really, confrontational to say something like that, but it's like it. I think when we do that when it really is important. If we do it and we're just trying to get the other person to go along with, with what we're saying, then we are being controlling.

But if we're doing it because we're, we're trying to have our own back, and it's not an ultimatum. It's like, this is how important this is to me. it really, the message really gets across.

Lara: Yeah. And a, a lot of times in my coaching and what we talk on the podcast a lot about is when we feel called to something, it's almost more painful not to act on it.

And I remember there was a, a time in my marriage where I had to, like, my husband couldn't see the vision of what I had, what, like I felt like God had placed in me. Mm-hmm. And I remember sitting him down and I'm like, look, I know you don't understand this, and. I need you just to, I, I can hold the belief enough for the both of us.

I believe enough in the both of us, like the things that God is placing within my heart. So, I'm going to make this work and I want to work with you on how that's going to work. So that's either going to require me using some of our finances, or that's going to be you taking care of the

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children while I go work a part-time job so that I can take care of the finances on this.

And it was so, and I think, you know, going back to what you're saying, like it wasn't convincing in the sense that like you have to get on board with it. It was like so much love for him, so much love for me, so much love for our family. So much love for what I felt like God was placing in my path. And I didn't know how else to communicate that except like, like just showing up like with love exuding out of my pores on like, I know that sounds so silly, but it was like I really, really, truly believe deep in my bones that this is what I am being asked to do and we got to get on board with.

Where, where do you see yourself fitting into that? Because mm-hmm. My marriage means everything to me. And so, for me that was like, that was kind of my journey on it as well. so I would love for you like to be able to speak to what are some of the dangers that you see in your clients when they do give up their dreams because they don't feel like they have that permission from there.

Sharon: Yeah, I think it's interesting because we feel like we're, we give up on our dreams. It's mostly to keep the peace and to make sure that our spouse is happy, but the thing that we give up is we become less of who we are. Yeah. And our spouse fell in love with us because we were a person. Yeah. Not because we were propping them.

And always making sure that they were comfortable. And Eve Rodsky talks about this a little bit and her book Fair Play mm-hmm. About some of the women who have done this, you know, who have given up all their goals to support their family and there, their relationship kind of just disintegrates because they're not really showing up as a person anymore.

Yeah. They're not showing up as an individual who has their own passions and dreams. And so sometimes it is, it's uncomfortable. To be someone who's unique and different from your spouse and someone who has different perspectives and different ideas and all of those things, but that, you know, that little bit of rocking the boat mm-hmm.

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Is what maintaining the integrity of the relationship. Yeah. Without it, you know, nobody, nobody marries someone so they can just kind of fall into their lives and, and not keep being an individual. Yeah,

Lara: and I find that it brings so much dimension to a relationship. Like I remember the, I remember one of my clients going through this, and when we did our consultation at the very beginning, one of her biggest fears was that she would change who she was to where.

Her and her husband no longer meshed like she was genuinely concerned about that, and it was so cool watching her journey as she really found what she was passionate about and she started speaking up more for her dreams. Suddenly her and her husband started connecting on such a much deeper level.

Because she was becoming more of herself again, and it was so cool to be able to see how much there, like there she, I remember her telling me once, she's like, I feel like we're dating all over again. Like there's so much passion and spark and love and all of this. She's like, I, because she was being more of who she has was meant to be.

and so I love that you bring that.

Sharon: Yeah, it really is. That's how you, you take the honeymoon phase of your relationship and turn it into the kind of mature love that has lasting power. Yes. Like you have to make that shift. Mm-hmm. And it is uncomfortable. Yeah. I don't know anyone who goes through that shift and doesn't have some degree of discomfort and like, holy cow, what am I getting myself into?

Why can't we just go back to the easy time before when we. Its just Twitter painted or mm-hmm. In that honeymoon phase. But it really gets, that's what gets you to the point in your relationship where you feel like, we've got this. Yeah. Like we can handle whatever's ahead because we've been through those moments of negotiating and navigating ours.

Lara: Yeah. The way I explain it to my clients is it's kind of like cleaning out a closet. Like sometimes it gets messier before it gets better. Yeah. Oh, for sure. And there, there were some hard, hard comments and, and

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not comments, but like conversations that my husband and I had that he felt so much discomfort.

I felt so much discomfort and we had to both be comfortable feeling discomfort in our marriage. And that was very strange. so I would love for you if you can like, speak to that on like when you're both in that discomfort and it's really hard to move forward. Like what, what suggestions do you have for people when they enter.

Sharon: that phase?

Yeah. The first one is to just like give it a little bit of. Like, just last week I was thinking about this, and I knew this podcast was coming up and I, I had planned to go out of town. I was going on a retreat, and I needed to leave like Thursday at noon. And one of my children was sick and my husband has a, a fairly demanding job.

And, and so he's like, uh, I can't be home today. And I was, I'm leaving at noon, you know? Mm-hmm. And I said, I can make a few calls, I can see if one of my parents is available or something. So, I make a few calls and, and, we still didn't have any. And I, so I was like, oh, is he expecting me to, to postpone my plans or cancel or something?

And rather than getting into a discussion of it, I just waited for a minute, just like you said, that discomfort. I just wait. And he's like, you know, after he could see that I wasn't going to jump in and rescue him from this commitment that he'd made to take care of things while I lefted, he's like, oh, I think I could take the call from home.

So sometimes it, sometimes it really is just that pause, giving them time to process. You know, sometimes we want that first immediate response to be, yes, I'm totally behind you. Let's do. But sometimes it has to be that that resistance just needs time to work itself out. Yeah. And if we try and talk too much and do too much convincing and too much of that during that time, it increases the resistance instead of letting it just work itself out.

Yeah. So, pausing is really helpful. And then, you know, like I said, don't try and, and protest or overexplain or go into that convincing mode. Mm-

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hmm. But you can say, you know, this is really important to me. I don't need you to agree with me and I don't need you to understand, but I would really love your support.

Lara: I love that. And, and it really is just an invitation, for them to come to their, to come to our party.

Sharon: I love that. And honestly, a lot of times it's helpful for women to understand too, their husbands, they want to be a hero in their lives. And if we can think of them as. You know, we can give them the mission.

Mm-hmm. Give them the vision of the mission and say, hey, I'd really love you to, to support me on this. It's so much more inviting than us trying to convince them. Yeah.

Lara: I love that. I think that really is like the difference between, you know, we, we were talking about the controlling and the convincing versus just an invitation.

Mm-hmm. An invitation. Like even though you don't know what's going to happen on this journey and me following my dreams, and it's an invitation to come along for the right and sometimes. There's multiple invitations before they feel comfortable jumping on, and they don't have to know all the steps for it to be laid out, crystal clear.

And sometimes that's hard for them because they don't know what it'll look like, and they have their own thoughts and opinions. Yeah. Cause they're human, but we don't have to make it mean that they don't love us. It's just a lot of, they don't have the same vision that we have. Yeah. And so, we can just keep inviting them along the way.

Yeah.

Sharon: And I think also as they see. Moving forward and they see the joy and purpose that it brings to our lives. That is where the inspiration and the invitation comes from. Totally. You know, I'm moving forward. It might be something simple like, you know, I, I go to a fitness class at seven on Mondays and it's not fun for my hu for me to be gone during that time.

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But when my husband sees me come home and I tell him about high fitness and how, how crazy it is, and yeah, and just him seeing me happy mm-hmm. As I'm pursuing that is, is motivating and inspiring for him.

Lara: We'll kind of end on this and then I want to be a couple minutes just to share any other thoughts you have for us.

one other thing that I, that I will say that I didn't expect when I went on this journey in my marriage was that when I wasn't pursuing my dreams or my goals, I had a hard time figuring out things that we could talk about outside of like the mundane life of me complaining about something hard with the kids that day.

But it was like, as soon as I started pursuing my dreams and growing my business and, and doing all of these things, suddenly we had a, a, a, a, more of a richness in our conversations. We had something that we actually could talk about outside of the mundane of life and the stresses of life, and I wasn't expecting that.

That was like an added bonus, I think, as I started moving forward. And I am grateful for that because I, I do find, Uh, it's more fun. It's more fun for me to talk business with him, and, and he gets to give me advice on certain things, and, and it's just, it feels like a two-way street in a conversation now where he's very much part of that dream and it took time and I had to give myself permission.

For myself, you know, that it would take some time. mm-hmm. Because I had such a strong vision that he couldn't see yet, and so there were many invitations over many years, but now it's like so much part of our lives that. That he's so supportive and knows how to be supportive at this point, that there is a learning curve, for sure.

Yeah. So, is there anything else that you want to share with everybody listening?

Sharon: Yeah. Well, what the word that stood out to me is kind of what you were sharing, just barely. You talked about how before you kind of embarked on your journey, that a lot of your conversations were. You

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know Yeah. Complaints about your day and stuff, and a lot of women get into this trap where they're complaining and then they're expecting a positive response to that complaint.

Yes. You know, I, and I, I know I did it for, for years and years, like, oh, let me complain to you about how hard the kids are so that you can say, hey, you should take, you should get a babysitter one afternoon a week or something. And it has, it was never effective for me. But if I instead thought about, okay, what does that complain?

What is the underlying need of that complaint? What am I looking for and how can I turn that into a request? Yeah, so just skip the complaint altogether and say, I love that. Or I say often, like a, a request is more powerful than a complaint. I love that. So that's another just, just little tip. If you have things that you're feeling unsettled about in your life and you want to bring your spouse in as a support person, for addressing that and creating something better.

What can you ask of them to do? I

Lara: love that. I found myself doing that the other day where I started complaining about something and my husband, you know, was just kind of like listening, and then he just stopped and I stopped and I was like, oh, I see what I did. And then I told him, I was like, this is the part where I want you to step in and tell me I did a good job today.

He was like, oh, okay. I'll do that. Yeah. It was like I had to make that request of him because what I didn't realize was, I was actually fishing for compliments from him, and as soon as I realized, like. Oh, I just want him to like to say something nice to me. I told him that. He's like, oh yeah, I can say something nice to you.

That's no problem. Yeah. But he had no idea what I was doing when I was just complaining, you know? Yeah. I just had to make it. It's confusing. It totally is. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's so funny, especially with my husband, like he just does not pick up, I think a lot of people don't pick up on those men and women, and so it's important for us to just always make those requests and that's good.

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We

Sharon: could do that. Yeah. And for my husband, it's kind of triggering because of the, he, the women that he grew up with, the, the mother figures that he had or the complaints just. Really triggered him. So

Lara: yes. So good to recognize, make requests. Yeah, it's been really helpful. Oh, that's awesome. Well, thank you so much for coming on the podcast today.

I would love for you to share how people can get in touch with you, your, your podcast, you know, social media handles website if you can fall asleep. Yeah.

Sharon: It's all Keep Talking Revolution. My podcast is called Keep Talking Revolution and that's what I am on Facebook and Instagram as well. So, I'd love for you to, to get in touch with me and follow me there.

And if there was anything helpful from this episode, send me a message on Instagram. I'd love to hear about

Lara: it. That's great. Thank you. And I'll make sure that in the show notes everything's listed as well. Okay. So, thank you so much for coming today and I hope everybody listening, uh, really enjoyed and was able to take away some things as you move forward in your goals.

Thank you for listening. Please share, review, and subscribe to this podcast so that together we can live life on purpose.

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with Lara Johnson