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Mari: I feel like I have lived at least two lives in my forty-something years, maybe even more! I was actually born in Canada to Scottish parents. They divorced when I was 12 and my dad got custody of five girls. We went to Edinburgh, Scotland, his original home, and my mom stayed in Canada. For the next 20 years, I was in Scotland, and in 1999, literally out of the blue, I got an invitation to come to California. It just landed in my lap.

Lorin: So strange.

Mari: In 1998, I spent the whole year putting together a really ambitious business plan. I had always been an employee. I had never been an entrepreneur. I worked for different law firms. I was a legal secretary, then I did sales jobs and software training and drove around Scotland going to different law offices, training them on certain software. I liked what I did. I am always a very happy and optimistic, outgoing person, but I really had this vision to be a speaker and a trainer and I started putting the plans together in 1998. Then, in 1999, this opportunity landed in my lap. It just was one of those defining moments of life where I knew with every cell of my being that I am supposed to go in this direction, even though I'd done all this planning.

I was single, in my early thirties, hadn't been married before, and all my sisters were married and having babies. I thought, "No, this is what I am going to do." I came to San Diego with fifty pounds...very broke. I came here with two suitcases, knowing only the two people who had invited me, a husband and a wife, and had no idea what I was going to do for work, or how I was going to work legally. I knew I wanted to get a visa and eventually a green card. And literally, within six weeks, the friend of mine that I was staying with said, "You

know, I just had this flash! I couldn't sleep last night. I am supposed to introduce you to this person." From there, it ended up that this person introduced me to an immigration attorney and to a person that is very, very well networked in San Diego and before I knew it, I had a new place. I had moved in with her; she and I had a very beautiful place to stay. I worked with her, she sponsored me, I got a visa, and then, within five months, I met my husband.

From there, business wise, I have always been an entrepreneur. I had never worked in a J-O-B employer-employee relationship within the last ten years. I worked in the Internet. I've always had a flair for computers and I did Internet marketing consulting. Fast forward a little bit, since about early 2000 through to 2007, I was pursuing a path of relationship coaching. In 2002, I got certified as a relationship coach. I used to coach and counsel and do classes for singles and couples, more in the personal relationship side. At the same time I was building the Internet marketing, I was in email marketing coaching and I was writing information products, building web sites, and got trained as a copywriter.

It wasn't until 2007 that social media really came to me, literally, as a combination of all of my skills and talents and years of pursuing my different passions. Social media was really like the perfect marriage between my people skills, my relationship training, all of the human behavior I had studied, and my flair for computers and the Internet.

So, I got invited to be on an alpha team of a Facebook application to test out this application that was for teaching and taking courses. My friend was so excited about this Facebook and I thought, "Well, what's so great about Facebook?" I've heard about it, I just wasn't really that sold on online networking. Some of these sites I've been on like MySpace never really appealed to me. But, the moment that I went to Facebook and I signed up for an account, something spoke to me. It just was a really powerful experience! I thought, "Oh, this is going to be

something really huge!” It had already started; this was early 2007, and I just fell in love with the platform. I loved all the white space.

Lorin: That’s amazing!

Mari: I loved the ease through which I could just instantly connect with people whom I had admired for years – authors and speakers and celebrities. Leonardo di Caprio was one of my first Facebook friends. I can’t say that we hang out, that we’re buddies and we chit-chat, but that’s kind of one of my claims to fame!

You know how they say it’s not what you know, it’s who you know? You can kind of leverage your way into higher places by who you know – that part is certainly accurate, but there’s a piece missing, and it’s “Who knows you?” Because, I can say, “Well, I knew all these people.” I was reading their books. I would go to their seminars and their books are all on my shelves. I have studied their home study courses, but they didn’t know me! If somebody went up them and said, “Do you know Mari Smith?” They’d say, “Mari who?”

Now, because of social media, I am able to create this system of visibility and a high profile presence, but one that is very engaging, very open, very authentic, caring, with no agenda. I am not trying to do anything inappropriate, I am just really there to be their friend and support them. I’ve had lots of interactions of clients that became dear friends, as well as many of the high profile authors and speakers and trainers.

Lorin: You said something really important... One part of your being was all set to go in a certain direction, but you also knew within you, that you were going to go in a whole different direction and you sort of blindly followed that.

Mari: Yes, correct. There's another little layer to the story, if you'd like to include it. Aside from my husband, from who I'm now amicably divorced, my only other significant relationship was in my twenties. The guy was twenty years older than I was, and he passed away of a heart attack in 1998.

Lorin: Oh, wow.

Mari: We'd broken up about two years before that, but we'd stayed in touch, and I went to his funeral. So, the most fascinating thing is that there was a friend from San Diego at his funeral, a mutual friend that we hadn't seen for about five years. I don't know if you want to include this part in the story or not, but this mutual friend of ours ended up introducing me to my now ex-husband. I really feel that my former partner sent her to do that for me.

Lorin: Wow!

Mari: The guy that I married was so unbelievably like this former partner, except he had all of the good things [chuckling].

Lorin: That's great – we have to include that as part of the story!

Mari: I knew that there was something happening on the other side, if you will, or that I was getting a message that he just always wanted to look out for me.

Lorin: I am getting goose bumps hearing that part of the story.

Mari: Yeah. Oh, God! It makes me emotional.

Lorin: I'll bet it does! Thank you for sharing that. That's a vulnerable piece, but I think that's the part that women love! I think there are so many times that we tend to

leave out that part of our stories and it doesn't inspire other people to listen to that inner voice. So, I really appreciate you sharing that more intimate part of the story.

Mari: So, he was really my first love, and I just really trusted that he was looking out for me.

Lorin: And, probably, in some ways, he still is.

Mari: Yeah, I know. Even though I have just divorced, it's like...it is all perfect.

Lorin: I love that you say it's perfect. In my first book, one of the principles in it is that perfection is around you every moment and I totally believe that. I totally believe in the perfection of every moment and, of course, tragic things happen, but in the bigger grand scheme of things, I believe that there is perfection even in that tragedy.

Mari: Yeah.

Lorin: We don't always see it or sometimes don't ever see it or see it much later. So, did you ever envision that the two worlds would come together? Did you ever see that or not until it happened?

Mari: I really didn't because, for example, in 2002, I wrote my first information product and it was about how to attract and build wealth together with your partner. Really, it was speaking to women. Have you ever heard the saying, "A man is not a plan?"

Lorin: Yeah, exactly!

Mari: And so, I wrote this product describing the steps that I had taken to get really, really clear. I had written out seven pages of criteria for my ideal guy in 1998 and that's also why I like to say, when I got the invitation to come, he goes, "Oh, there's something calling you there."

When I first met my husband in 1999, he had a part-time business providing entertainment in the wedding industry. We continued that business from about 1999 through about 2002, when I started doing my relationship study. By 2003 or 2004, I was done with the entertainment business. California is really a destination place for weddings and it just broke my heart to see so many couples pledging a lifetime commitment when I could see how troubled many of them were. So, I always felt like my first love, if you will, was relationships. I really wanted to impact the divorce rate. I really wanted to empower them to make more intelligent choices around the relationship. But I couldn't see how to merge Internet marketing with the world of personal relationships until I designed the product.

Lorin: Exactly!

Mari: Of course, it was again, how to attract the ideal partner, but even then it just didn't seem to compute. Then, I went on to work with T. Harv Ecker, from 2003 to 2006. I don't know if you know him. He's the *Secrets of a Millionaire Mind!* guy.

Lorin: Uh-huh.

Mari: I was one of his success coaches and kind of an interesting thing would happen. I ended up getting a lot of powerful single women business owners as my clients. I would introduce them to some relationship coaching and some business and marketing coaching. So, that was fun! It was all gathering momentum and gathering more skills and experience to bring me to where I am today.

Lorin: Do you believe in having a vision for your life? Do you have a vision today for the next segment of your life and where it's going and the track that you are on now? Do you have a sense of where you want to take it?

Mari: Yes, I do. I think when it comes to having a vision, it is one of the most crucial parts of your life's design, while also surrendering and letting go and never being attached to the form. I spent a whole lot of time writing this business plan, getting experience and training and applying for a small business loan, and thinking, "Well, this is going to be my big enterprise based in Scotland." But I wasn't really attached to that, and if I had been so stuck on the fact that it had to be in Scotland, I would have turned down an invitation to come to California.

Lorin: Right.

Mari: But, I knew that it was my bigger vision, and I can see that clearly now. I don't know that I would have created the same results had I stayed in Scotland.

Lorin: I totally agree with you on having a vision, yet surrendering to it, as you said so beautifully. How do you feel about having written goals?

Mari: I do write goals but I am not as goal-oriented as some people might be, let's put it that way. I set milestones. I am my hardest critic and I set these huge, high bars for myself. If I don't achieve them, then I get real hard on myself. When I worked for Harv, I loved how we used terms like "minimum target" and "extraordinary." (I think the terms might be the work of Raymond Aaron, who was like the gold guru for decades.) So, you have his minimum, and you think, "Okay...cool! I can achieve the minimum goal!" Then, there is "extraordinary," which is almost like that vision where it's just so outrageous that you just kind of let it go. But the fact

is that you formulated it. You told The Universe, “Yeah, it would be really cool if this happened. And then it is more likely to come to pass.”

Lorin: Exactly!

Mari: But, in an ideal world, I think I would prefer to work with a coach who is more goal-oriented than I am. I don't make it as structured as I could, let's put it that way. Another interesting thing is that I've done so many of these personality assessments as part of my coaching training, and I was exposed to one that showed me not everybody is goal-oriented. Some people are more power-oriented or like recognition, and if you have a really goal-oriented coach, working with somebody who is non-goal-oriented can create quite a bit of tension.

Lorin: Got it. I think I remember hearing you say when you spoke in Dallas a couple of months ago that you had set a goal for a certain number of followers on Twitter. Was that you?

Mari: Yeah! Actually, it was for Facebook. I love it!

Lorin: Facebook.

Mari: Yeah, I love it! When I first joined, I dug around and read all the small print and found that 5,000 friends is the maximum. I thought, “Well, I am not going to be one of those people that focuses solely on the numbers and tries to just amass friends,” because it's just not the name of the game, in my opinion.

Lorin: Plus, you are all about relationships!

Mari: Exactly! How can you do them en masse like that, except over time, which I have managed to do. So, I thought, “Let's see if I can get fifty.” I uploaded my address

book thinking, “Well, let’s reach out and see if I can get more than fifty!” Soon it was, “Cool! One hundred friends!” Then I added my fan page where I’m now at around 11,000, so that’s doing pretty well.

Lorin: Amazing! It’s great to hear how you set goals, and I think that so many women don’t take that piece as strongly as they need to, especially when they are not so goal-oriented. It’s a really important area, I think, to set some goals that are sort of fun! It’s sort of like, “Let’s see if I can do this.” It sounds almost like my three-year-old. You know, “Let’s see if I can climb the cabinets to the countertop. That would be fun!” There’s something about how you are holding this that is very important. There is an undertone of fun. It’s not so serious and it’s not so hard; it’s fun! I’m not sure that anybody else has ever underlined that as well as you have.

The next piece I want to go to is about having that work-life balance. Women tend to worry a little bit, thinking, “If I am wildly successful, I can’t have work-life balance,” but I actually think that it’s the other way around. It’s at the lower level of business that we have more of a struggle with work-life balance, and when we become wildly successful it’s much easier. I could be wrong about that, but from my perspective, that’s my experience. You are very successful and obviously online a lot, doing your online relationship work and social networking. How do you manage it all? And, just having gone through a divorce, that might have influenced it. Is there anything that you want to speak about here?

Mari: Yes, it really has been intense. Actually, another little part of my story is that 2007 was a landmark year, because my husband and I were living in a home that was a family estate property, and his mom had passed away in 2003. It took the family four years to finally resolve this property issue! It took 14 months to sell, and I can look back and see that he and I were kind of hanging on energetically. All of us were ready, the planets were aligned, and the house got sold in the

summer of 2007 at the exact same time of getting into social media, when my business was starting to take off. Instead of going to either buy or rent a property in San Diego, we just decided to do something real crazy and sell off all the furniture, put the remainder in personal storage, and get a big motor home.

Lorin: Oh!

Mari: We got a big 34-foot motor home and we traveled around the country for 18 months. So, I got to build my social media business on the road while we were traveling. We covered everywhere from the Mexican border all the way up to the top of Alaska, and all the different parks in between. We spent three months in Alaska, which was very, very intense. I don't say that I live a life of no regrets; he's a very, very good person. I wouldn't speak negatively about him but there are just some areas where we weren't as aligned as we could have been, and that really became very obvious living in such close quarters.

Lorin: Yeah.

Mari: I always tell people that you've got to have an extremely solid marriage to be able to live with your partner for a year-and-a-half in a motor home!

Lorin: You are crazy, girl!

Mari: When we first set off, I was all excited about writing an information product. This is before I was getting into social media. I said, "I want to write an information product called, *"How to Travel the Country in a Motor Home with Your Spouse...and Still Stay Married!"*

Lorin: That's so funny!

Mari: I can't write that one anymore.

Lorin: Yeah, you can't write that one!

Mari: Last fall, we came back to San Diego. And what I found is I just would stay up crazy hours. I'm like Gary Vaynerchuk, if you are familiar with him. Gary is so passionate. He talks about hustling, and that the person who's really going to make it is not the one who has the most money and resources to throw at things, but that it's whoever is able to go the extra mile. And so, yeah, I would stay up crazy late. I was very, very much absorbed in my work. We had to design our whole travels around my schedule and around getting Internet access.

That was very stressful and at the same time it was blissfully enjoyable because it just was such a magical experience to be able to be in the middle of nowhere in Alaska and see the wildlife or Yellowstone Park with the geysers or Zion Park or Yosemite. So, when I came back I just threw myself further into my work and I realized along the way that one of the secrets of success in life and business is to ask for help. And, to do it in a way that you really get the right help, because I noticed that I had been such a fiercely independent Scottish woman that I'd ask for help, but then my underlying unconscious belief was that I could do it all by myself. I don't need help, people aren't going to do that good a job anyway. My dad always used to say, "If you want something done around here, do it yourself!" That was his message.

Lorin: Yes, and you really internalized it, so you are seeing that in order to really gain more balance, you have to start asking for help and really mean it.

Mari: What I've also found in going through the emotional turmoil of getting divorced and having moved into a beautiful home about six weeks ago is that it is vastly bigger than I could have ever imagined. When I ask myself, "Can I afford it, or is

it worth it?" I realize it's not is the house worth it, it's am *I* worth it?" And so what I found is a more spiritual worth. To keep my life in some semblance of balance, I found I need to work on myself – on healing the inner child, on processing emotions, on being surrounded by really powerful support.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I took off to Scotland to go and visit with family for the first time since 2002, in seven years. I remembered back to why I didn't enjoy the last trip, and that's because I hate flying coach. It was all cramped and I am very tall, and I thought, "You know what? I am going to fly first class!" The tickets were \$3,000 and I remember being nervous hitting the send button on the computer. I thought, "Oh, my God, I can't possibly spend \$3,000 on a plane ticket! Is it worth it?" And I caught myself. I am thinking, "Wait a minute, it's not is it worth it? It's am *I* worth it?" And I thought, "Yep! Absolutely!"

Lorin: I love what you are saying. So, one of the things that you've done from both a money and spiritual perspective is that you invest in yourself, not just in that first class ticket, but also in growing yourself personally. It sounds like that's really had a huge impact on your success.

Mari: Tremendous! Harv Ecker says, "Money only makes you more of who you are." People will look at people that have money and if they are a very greedy type of person, the more money they have, the more they are going to hoard. If they are a very generous type of person, the more money they have, the more generous they are going to be.

There is also another phenomenon, if you will. You know how they say studies show that people who win the lottery are no better off or even are sometimes worse off several years later? When you are growing financially, it is so important to grow according to your capacity to manage and hold and invest and distribute that energy. Because that is what it is, right?

Lorin: Exactly! I love that you are saying that it's not money that changes you; money makes you. You just have a chance to be more of who you are, whatever that is.

Mari: Yes, and you want it to be expressed healthfully. Sometimes we might be tempted to be irresponsible with money. So, look and see what is being expressed. What I have found to be helpful is to surround myself with good support, to engage myself in some kind of cerebral training, some kind of professional development to get those hard skills, but also to work on the soft skills, and then just doing the spiritual growth work makes a profound difference.

Lorin: So many women don't see the value of investing in that particular area of their life, so I love that they are hearing it directly from you.

Mari: My mentor, Esperanza, has this saying that just so resonates with me. She says that the most important relationship in the world is the one that you have with yourself. Everything else – the physical world, all human beings, all animals – is a direct reflection of that relationship that you have with yourself. So if you are a loving person, you go around seeing other loving people. You see the world as loving. If you are a hostile person, you'll see the world as hostile or whatever the case may be. The Universe is always speaking to us, always, and there are always little signs and interpretations. I grew up with four sisters, and I can go back and say, "This happened in my childhood" or "My parents did this or that." Then I talk to my sisters and they say, "Well, I didn't have that experience. I have a completely different memory of that." Or I talk to my mom or dad and they say, "Well, good grief! I never knew you felt that way. That's not what happened." So, it's all whatever I thought was going on inside of me and that's what I saw.

Lorin: And that's how you interpreted it.

Mari: Yeah, and with this life-balance piece, it's so hard for me to just really take time off and go to spas and have retreats and have special time for me, meditate, work out, eat well, and build my team. I am actually bringing on another new team member to do all kinds of personal and administrative things in my house. I see all of that as being a gift to myself. But then if I want to take time off to go to a three-day retreat, for example, I feel I can't afford to do it because I have a ton of writing to do for those who are waiting for me to produce materials for certain projects. I think, "No, I have to do this!" It's how to take care of me. It's like the oxygen mask, right?

Lorin: Exactly!

Mari: So, this is how I do it.

Lorin: You also spoke pretty directly to intuition. Is that a big part of how you build your business? Do you really pay attention to that?

Mari: I do. I check my gut a lot, and usually I am right. But, one of the most challenging things I do in my business – and I have talked to many fellow entrepreneurs and they concur – is firing someone. It's really easy to hire people and I will hire people on gut feeling, thinking, "Oh, they are such a nice person." But then it's so important to really do due diligence and call the references, look at the results. I am just using that as an example. We'll progress down a path and I'll see little things and go, "Oh, that's not right." It's starting to build up, cumulatively. We really need to let this person go, and I realize that I am not doing either of us a favor by holding onto them when really that's not their true path. So, that's been one of my hardest lessons to learn the last few years.

I'd also like to address personality assessments. I know and admire Briggs as a very, very strong feeler versus a thinker, and the logical part of my traits, if you

will, is not as strong as the feeling parts. I do a lot by feeling it. If left to my own devices, if I just don't feel like doing something, I just won't do it, but sometimes that's to my detriment! In regards to your business, you've just got to do it...or at least find someone else who can.

Lorin: That's a really important point. It goes back to having that goal piece that says, "I am needing to achieve this and, in order to achieve this, I need to hold my feet to the fire, so-to-speak. That's the other side of that."

Mari: Yes, and you can even delegate that. You can hire a really strong coach who meets those different parameters of accountability. If you don't achieve something, a check goes off to your least favorite charity. You have to have all kinds of ways to motivate yourself.

Lorin: You have really taken the bull by the horns when it comes to social media, and have taken on the responsibility to educate. You have a strong sense of responsibility that you can be a real resource for people. So, what do you think about responsibility in every aspect of your life? You alluded to money, to having a mission, and serving the world. Any thoughts on that?

Mari: Yes, I was working with another spiritual teacher a few months ago and she was saying that if I am creating all of this abundance or these material results – expanding my business and myself and my outreach – but I am creating it from a place of depletion, all I am putting out into the world is more depletion, almost subconsciously. For example, if I get up on stage and I am exhausted, I am utterly drained because I haven't worked out for a while, and I haven't eaten properly, then, over time, that's going to have a domino effect. That is a work in progress for me, to really take responsibility for my health. Now, my new home is literally walking distance from my trainer and I am getting my new personal assistant. She is going to be doing some of my grocery shopping, things like that. So, setting up

systems for support is crucial. One of the seminars that I did years ago included an exercise that really brings home responsibility and how most people think of it as kind of a burden. It feels heavy on our shoulders, but I love to think about responsibility from a place of joy, rather than as a burden.

Lorin: Great!

Mari: Because at the time that we are talking today, Lorin, I have 46,000 followers on Twitter, and I know I can communicate to them in the click of one button. In 140 characters or less, I can communicate a message to them. I have a tremendous responsibility to communicate that message to them in a way that uplifts their spirit, and that contributes to the greater whole. So, if you really stop and think about when we are using social media, even though a site like Twitter that says, “What are you doing?” you don’t need to take that literally.

Lorin: Exactly! Thank you for saying that. I’d love to have you underscore that, because I just feel like that’s why we are born on this planet. Do you have a sense of responsibility to choose in each moment how we uplift the world and to be conscious about that choice?

Mari: Absolutely! It’s funny, I’ve actually started talking about conscious social media. I bought the domain www.conscioussocialmedia.com and I’ve got the plans to build it out.

Lorin: That’s a great domain. Just based on this conversation, I get a sense of where you could be going. I love it!

Mari: Thank you.

Lorin: I am hearing how you are being in order to create a service to the world that is very specific, very grateful, and very giving. There's a real sense of not only learning about the world, but learning about yourself. I think that's such an important piece – just to acknowledge that you have a really strong way of being in the world – being very thoughtful and very conscious about your actions. I appreciate that. Thank you.

Mari: Sure, absolutely.

Lorin: The final chapter in the book is about men and what they have to do with it all. As women are getting more and more successful on this planet, we tend to think that we have to do business like a man has done business until now, and I really think that that's a misnomer. Like you said, "It was my experience and that's how I perceived it. So, I made up that it was true," and as women, I think that we have done that to an extent. If you were to impart one last thing about how you can do business your own unique way, what would it be?

Mari: For many years, Internet marketing as an industry has been very male dominated. Well, now that social media has become so prevalent, certainly within the last year, we are starting to build some absolute critical mass. Many women are really starting to step up and be more visible and more successful in this arena because we tend to be relational. However, I am careful when I get into gender discussions, because we all have a little bit of both, masculine and feminine. There are some men who are just tremendous at social media because they are very relational and they've also brought the business smarts and the money into it. They are looking at matrix, and they are looking at formulas and systems and the hard numbers and that kind of thing. So, I think there is a fine balance in using social media if you've got a dominant male Internet marketer type person coming into social media who is very pushy and sales oriented, is not that available, and doesn't respond to his followers.

Lorin: Or even *her* followers.

Mari: Well, exactly! There are women who will be like that, too.

Lorin: Yeah, absolutely.

Mari: But then, if you go to the other extreme, you find those who, male or female, are chatterers. They just appear to be sitting around and chatting all day. And you think, well, why do they make money? What do they do for a living? They've gone a little too heavy on the relational side and they haven't brought in enough of the business savvy. So, I like to really teach my clients and students that you've got to have a blend of both. Everything that I do is strategic and I actually make it look at times like I am just chit-chatting.

There is a momentary hesitation before I hit the send button or the update button every time as I ask myself if what I am sending out to the world is responsible. If somebody is upset, am I going to respond in a knee-jerk reaction? Sometimes, the answer is "yes," because, you know, we are all human, but I think that I am just really enjoying seeing this new arena open up that really speaks to leveling the playing fields.

Lorin: That's such a beautiful way of incorporating that whole male-female thing in the social media. I love that perspective!