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Intro: Hey friends! Welcome to Girls Night. I'm Stephanie May Wilson and I am so happy that you're here. Each week I have a girlfriend over and we talk through one of the biggest questions we have about our lives as women.

We're talking about friendships and faith and relationships and self-confidence, about our calling in life, and how to live every bit of our lives to the full. Life is so much better and easier and absolutely more fun when we navigate it together as girlfriends. And I cannot wait to get started

So, friends, I'm so excited about today's episode. Today we're talking about how to see your value and ask for what you want, both in work and relationships.

Our guest for today's episode is my new friend Mori Taheripour. Mori is a speaker, educator, and negotiation expert, and she teaches negotiation and dispute resolution at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

She has a new book out called *Bring Yourself: How to Harness the Power of Connection to Negotiate Fearlessly*. When I first came across it, I immediately began to wonder how the things she teaches in the book might be able to help us in our relationships, specifically in three really vulnerable areas of life where we have to consistently put ourselves out there and ask for what we want in order to be successful. I'm thinking about dating, friendships, and then also our careers.

So that's what we're going to be talking about in this episode. This is a fun, different way of talking about our value and how to present our value and how to ask for what we want in these important areas of our lives, how to put ourselves out there, and I just cannot wait for you to hear from Mori. She is brilliant, you're gonna love her.

But before we dive in, I have a resource I'd love to share with you. It's called *The Between Places: 100 Days to Trusting God When You Don't Know What's Next*. Now, here's the thing. We all find ourselves in-between places throughout our lives.

Maybe you're waiting for something, longing for something, or working for something, but it just hasn't happened yet. Maybe you know where you want to go, but you have no clue how to get there, or maybe you know you're not where you want to be in life but you don't know exactly what needs to change or how to change it, or how to figure any of that out.

Maybe you're trying to make a big decision and you have no idea which option to choose. Or maybe you're feeling like the whole world has turned upside down in

the last few years, taking your life, your plans, and any sense of security right along with it.

And in all of it, you're trying to trust God with the future, but you're just not sure how to practically do that and how to quiet the fear and anxiety, all these uncertainties brought up in your heart. That's what *The Between Places* is here for.

Through 100 guided prayer prompts, *The Between Places* will help you trust God with the trickiest, most uncertain, and most important parts of your life. It'll help you believe more fully than ever that God is good, that He loves you, and that He's taking care of you. It'll help you live today with more contentment, step into the future with more courage and faith, and rest in God's peace knowing that He's with you every step of the way.

To pick up a copy, all you have to do is head to my website. It's stephaniemaywilson.com. Again, that's stephaniemaywilson.com. That link also be in our show notes.

All right, guys, are you ready? Let's jump into the episode with Mori.

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Stephanie: All right, friends, I'm so excited for who you get to meet today. I'm sitting here with a new friend of mine, Mori Taheripour. Mori, thanks so much for being on the show.

Mori: Of course, I'm so excited to speak to you this morning.

Stephanie: So can you tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact about yourself?

Mori: Who I am and what I do. So I'm an educator. I teach negotiations at my faculty at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. But that's only part-time. I do a lot of my work outside of Wharton with corporate clients. So it's sort of an education/consulting role. So from developing curriculum to actually teaching negotiations.

I also do some work in sports. Most people think that means like negotiating athlete contracts. Actually, it's not. It's a totally different sort of world for me where I do a lot of diversity, equity, and inclusion work.

I also work with professional athletes to help support... so preparing them for their life after sports. So off the field. So the education and the preparation that it takes to do that. So kind of a bifurcated life between sort of academia and sports.

Stephanie: That's so awesome.

Mori: Fun fact.

Stephanie: Fun fact.

Mori: So I'm a little bit of a real housewives junkie. Real Housewives of... fill in the blank. There's a few I don't watch. But yeah, sort of I guess like when your head is filled up with everything that we have in there during our daily lives, my little escape is reality TV.

Stephanie: That is amazing. I'm so glad to know that. I also need to ask you, what is your favorite sport?

Mori: What is my favorite sport? Probably football.

Stephanie: Football. I love football too. That's awesome. Okay, well, I'm so glad to know this. Tell me a little bit... You know, before we get into... I know that you have a new book and I'm excited to hear some of the things that you have discovered in your work and apply them to some of these tricky areas of our lives. But I want to just hear a little bit about your career journey because your work is so, so interesting. I'm curious to know how you got to this place.

Mori: I think the common theme is that a lot of... especially where I am now I have never planned for. So I'm not one of those people outside, you know, all along I knew that this is exactly where I would be. That would be untrue.

Let me go all the way back. My parents had wanted me to be a doctor, especially my father. And I went through most of my early life and well into college thinking I was gonna go to med school. And then I think the realization occurred to me that I was living at somebody else's dream instead of my own. It wasn't frankly either an enjoyment, especially the curriculum, much less sort of this notion of kind of being very on a micro level changing lives which is what I think of as sort of physicians. And I think it's really important. I didn't have a passion around that.

This is sort of cliché. But I did want to have an impact on people's lives, I did want to change lives, but that wasn't sort of the role for me. So it took me a while after college and two MCATs later to realize that that's not what I wanted to do. I know exactly. I was like, "Couldn't I realize that a little bit earlier?"

But I went into public health initially and I actually loved it. I did a lot of social marketing, cross-marketing, prevention education work. And in support of things

like HIV AIDS education, working with pregnant women to get them screened, and tested.

It was really a tight time where we were actually getting drugs and medication that could actually help these women and sort of prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child. So it like spoke to my heart. It was something that I really enjoyed.

I was actually in the Public Health Department. Left that business in California in the Bay Area, and went off and started my own company. I was at the time actually preparing to go to business school. I got an offer that I just could not refuse from the state of California to develop this big prevention education campaign.

And I thought, "You know what? I'm going to take the risk, put off business school for a bit, and start my company and see how this goes." Scared to death to do it, but, you know, just felt like, Why not? And I did that for about a decade of my life. Learned a lot, for better or for worse. I'll talk about that probably a little bit later.

But in the midst of all that, when I had started my company because I put off business school, I had always said, "But I do want to go back and I do want to get sort of graduate degree." And I love the notion of going to business school because I thought it was gonna be so applicable to so many different parts of my life. And I did.

I went to the Wharton School to get my MBA. And as I was graduating, I was sort of asked to teach by my professor who was negotiations professor. He became my mentor. We became very dear friends. And I thought he was crazy because I am an introvert. And at the time I was fearful of standing in front of a room of five, much less a classroom of 40 to teach.

And I thought, "I have no idea why you think this is the career for me because I can't even imagine myself doing something like this." That was almost 18 years ago.

And sort of found my way, I guess, into a career that I'm incredibly passionate about. That was the executive summary, I know, but incredibly passionate about. Like, you know, you sort of realize one way or another that you are truly working and living and walking in your purpose. And that's what education has become to me. That's what teaching the subject that I'm so in love with—negotiations—has become to me.

And I guess it's full circle because while I had always thought I wanted to do something that change lives, I didn't know that this was going to be the medium through which I would do it. And it's become exactly that.

So the journey has been not a straight line whatsoever, but I guess the ultimate sort of goal and what drew me professionally to do something that had impact is where I landed unbeknownst to myself that this would be where that sort of landing spot would be.

Stephanie: I love that. And I think that that's so encouraging because, you know, especially when we're starting out in our careers, there's this idea that you need to have like etched in stone 10-year plan. And if we don't have that, if we don't know what we're passionate about or we walk down a road and go, "Okay, this actually isn't it," we feel like we've failed.

I mean, your story is just a perfect example of it's taking different risks, it's walking forward until the path changes, or until you realize like this path isn't going in the direction that you want it to. And it's finding kind of a cut across and finding something different.

But I feel like all those experiences build on each other. Even if it's not directly, even if you're not just working your way up in one exact company, it's, you know, the things that you've learned in preparing for the MCAT probably had a lot to do with preparing you for business school.

Mori: Yeah. No, you're so right. Especially these past few years, I think with the pandemic, I think I've really highlighted the fact that I always say, you know, we make plans and God laughs. To think that everything is going to be exactly as you think it's going to be is quite frankly silly because we just don't know.

And I think so long as you are open to opportunities and... And really, I mean, this whole notion and I know it's sort of a lot of people talk about these days about knowing your purpose, and living for a purpose and finding your calling, and whatever that may be, you know, that's not... Your purpose can't be finding your purpose is what I'm saying.

You just have to almost live life and experience it and know what you don't like as much as what you really do like. And wherever that takes you, I think so long as you're present in your life, and you allow yourself to understand what truly brings you joy and happiness and fulfillment, that may take 10 years, 20 years, 30 years, whatever it is. But then the destination feels really good so long as you're so open to the journey and the experiences.

Stephanie: I love that. And so instead of sitting down and feeling like your purpose is figuring out your purpose, you need to figure it out right now before you walk out of this room, it's more walk out of the room and just like take notes along the way.

Mori: Exactly, exactly. And be mindful, be present, and participate in your own life, which I think is really important.

Stephanie: I love that. So tell me about your book. Just for women who haven't gotten to see it yet, it's called *Bring Yourself: How to Harness the Power of Connection to Negotiate Fearlessly*. Tell me about the book and kind of the backstory of it. I mean, I think you probably did in some ways, just tell us the backstory. But tell us more.

Mori: Again, I teach negotiations. And what I've realized about this subject... And by the way, writing the book was also not in the plans. Just to further reiterate, I was encouraged to do so. I never imagined doing that either. Here I am an author now. So this is a running theme.

But the way I teach negotiations and my philosophy around it based on now nearly 18 years of teaching and having been a student of it myself, and the research that I've done, and the thousands of people that I've had, the privilege of teaching, what I've understood about this subject, and particularly around women, actually, is that there's a lot of fear about negotiations, and there's a lot of anxiety around it.

And the truth is that a lot of that is based on the way we've been sort of indoctrinated in our culture to understand negotiations and sort of the models that we see of great negotiators are oftentimes in your face aggressive, contentious. And the way that we thought about negotiations is therefore, you know, sort of this win-lose proposition, potentially conflict-ridden.

What I've learned over the years is that, first of all, there is no one type of great negotiator. We've seen this in history. There's all kinds of different people, role models, renowned folks that we've seen in our history, from presidents to agents to what have you, that we've seen modeled.

If you look at them, actually, they're completely different in style and approach. So that tells us that this is not a skill, first of all, that we're born with, but it's one that we learn, and that the more practice you have, the better you are at it because it's not formulaic.

And unlike a lot of books that have been written out there that really sort of dictate a formula, you know, like, "Say this, do this," and "Oh my God, it's magic. You have a great outcome," it just doesn't work that way. Everybody is different, every conversation is different, every approach is different, quite frankly.

So when I sort of looked at all these different things, these messages that we were getting, I realized that of course people are going to have great hesitation around negotiations, of course, there's going to be fear.

Because if you're told that you should only be a certain way to be good at something, then your entire sort of being always wants to be that person as opposed to being told no. You can be exactly who you are, be your authentic self, and find your way because this is a practical skill.

To me, negotiations is sort of like the soundtrack of our lives. It's something that we do from the moment we open our eyes in the morning to the time we go to sleep at night. We negotiate with ourselves, we negotiate with our alarm clock, we negotiate with our pets, our kids, our parents. And of course, yes, we negotiate at work, and you know, on the business side of things. But it's a skill that really is embedded in everything that we do.

So when I realized that this is, one, the message that I sort of give to my students in class, and I see them flourish as a result, I see them leaning into these negotiations with incredible sort of sense of empowerment because what I'm telling them is, be exactly who you are and let's find the skills that will benefit you and a strategy that will benefit you or complement you as who you are, and your set of values and your convictions, and when I tell them that that's immediately empowering. So it starts taking away that fear and anxiety.

But then the notion of also, first, let's figure out who you actually are and let's figure out and give attention to what your value systems are. What are the things that are most important to you? What is your Northstar? And so once you sort of settle into that, then you now understand, "You know what? It wasn't that I didn't have the skills to negotiate well. It was that I was really getting on my own way." It was the imposter syndrome, the lack of understanding of what your value is, and your worthiness.

And that's where once you figure those things out, once you deal with some of those challenges that we all have, then you can now feel more empowered and more encouraged and have a sense of purpose. And so these conversations are not meant to be scary.

Negotiations are meant to be an opportunity for you to speak your voice and speak your purpose and you know, come to the table and understand that you matter, you have a place, and that really what you have to learn to do is just be able to honor yourself.

So my book was meant to do that. My book was meant to say, don't try to be somebody else, be your best self, and really learn to speak your voice. And don't let life pass you by because every moment is the right moment. Hence the title *Bring Yourself*.

So it's not by the way written as a textbook because I oftentimes think people are like, "Oh God, another textbook." It's actually much like an autobiography. It's all about stories. So that was really the purpose behind it was to create a sense of empowerment for people.

Stephanie: I love that. You kind of mentioned this with negotiations happening throughout our day. I think that there are probably some women listening who can't picture totally what that looks like, like what negotiations are playing out in their lives every day. And also I want to know...

So I'm wondering if you can dive into some examples. And then also show us like what happens if we don't know how to negotiate. Like in our everyday lives, what do we miss out on by not having this skill?

Mori: So let me start with this notion of what does negotiations look like because everybody knows how to negotiate. Whether you know it or not that you're negotiating, you're actually negotiating. So if you think about negotiations as just being important conversations, if you think about negotiations being problem-solving, then even when you make a pros and cons list, that's in negotiations, right?

The "should I, should I not," right? You stand in your closet, and you have an interview and you're trying to figure out what to wear. That's negotiations. You're doing that with yourself, right?

You merge onto traffic in a highway. I mean, coming even to the simplest of notions is that as you're trying to merge into traffic, you're trying to figure out where your place is. And that's problem-solving. And that's the negotiations.

So to think that, particularly women, mothers, daughters, you know, that we don't know how to negotiate, it's just silly. I think that we're some of the best negotiators out there because there isn't even... You know, that's like a world of practice that we have every single day that we're not accounting for. And we do it so well.

We have empathy. We have natural problem-solving skills. We have a sense of values and ethics that are really important negotiations. We think with relationships in mind, which makes for great negotiator, right? This notion of this is not a

transaction, but it's about relationships, that's how we are built. That's quite frankly how we operate as women.

So I think the immediate answer to your question is, first of all, you are great negotiator. You do this all the time. Take account of that. Take responsibility for all that you do so well. Those are negotiations.

Now, are there difficult negotiations? Are there difficult conversations? Absolutely. That's what life is all about. Are there challenges? You know, let's say breakups, marriage, relationships that present some kind of difficult moment to us that we have to navigate, that's life.

But we have so much preparation and training for it is what I'm saying that the oftentimes once we actually think about all the ways that we do this already so well and we apply those same skills, which include, again, critical thinking, being able to have a quiet moment to think these things through, being able to understand what's most important to you, thus understanding your non-negotiables. I mean, these are things that we as women do every day. So know that.

And then the second part of that is that what you miss when you can't tell yourself that is that you then feel like, first of all, we don't identify moments that we actually can negotiate because we feel like we have to wait for something that tells us this is negotiable, right?

Like the smoke signal that says, "You can now negotiate this." Whereas studies show us that men actually believe that everything is negotiable. So they come to the table all the time, they create that space for themselves. Well, if we wait for somebody to tell us that something is negotiable, let's say compensation or salary structures and that message never comes through, then you miss that opportunity—you don't create the opportunity yourself.

Let's just take this one step further with things like the gender pay gap. It's not that women can't negotiate. That's been proven wrong time and time again in research. It's that when you miss the moment to negotiate and you miss that opportunity, and that passes you by, then you have now actually missed the opportunity to get that salary bump, get that salary increase.

And it doesn't stop there because then that happens over and over and over again. So then you're seeing now a compounding effect. It sort of builds like interest only against you. So that creates the bigger and bigger and bigger pay gap that we see.

So I believe that there's a lot of moments in life that are presented to us that if we don't actually take the opportunity and lean into them, then when those moments

pass by, the regret associated with the what ifs is a whole lot deeper. And it cuts a lot deeper than thinking, "You know what I did? It didn't work out the way I wanted it to, but at least now I know that I had." You know what I mean? I think the biggest regrets come from not engaging as opposed to engaging and it doesn't work out the way we wanted it to.

Stephanie: Yeah. Yeah. So negotiation is really just you have an obstacle, and it usually has to do with people... Like you want something and it's a matter of talking to other people in order to get it.

Mori: I would say this. I would say, yes, it's obstacles, yes, it's problem-solving, maybe, but sometimes it's just conversations. And I would actually say that the majority of the negotiations, for example, that I do are with myself, quite frankly.

Any kind of decision-making, any kind of sort of working yourself through a problem, a big decision you have to make, even a small decision that you have to make, those are all negotiations. And we just don't give ourselves credit for that.

Think about all the different moments in your life that you've had to make a decision and what you've done to actually get to the point where that decision can be made. That's the negotiations. Right? Again, I think it's just taking the inventory of that and understanding that that's precisely what you're doing. And that therefore we do it so well.

Stephanie: We talk about relationships a lot here in our corner of the internet. And when I first came across your book, I immediately began to wonder about how the things that you talked about in the book and the things that you teach your students could help us in our relationships.

I'm specifically thinking about three really vulnerable areas of our life where we have to put ourselves out there and ask for what we want in order to be successful, where we have really hard conversations, or just conversations in general. And I'm thinking about dating, and I'm thinking about friendship, and I'm thinking about our careers, which we've talked about a little bit.

I know that there's a whole book and mountains of curriculum to choose from, but I'd love to hear just anything you have to share with us. You know, your research findings or strategies that you teach your students? Like, what does it look like to bring ourselves and negotiate well in these areas?

Mori: I think a common theme especially like, let's say in dating, marriage, friendships, I think... the successful ones, the successful friendships, the successful relationships

are really about compromise and the give and take. And that being a shared practice as opposed to one person always giving and somebody's always taking.

So where you build trust, where you come together to understand the things that are most important to you and the things that are most important to your partner, or friends or, you know, fill in the blank, then at that point, if you then say, You know what? The way we're going to do this to find happiness, to find joy, to find satisfaction in this relationship is that we both, first of all, understand what those things are that are most important to both of us, either one of us at any moment.

And I won't always be able to get my way and you're not going to always be able to get away. But if we do this right, if we first understand one another's boundaries, but then also understand the things that are most important to us, the things that make us tick—we call those things in negotiations, we call them interests—and if we have a lot of clarity around that because we've been able to have these conversations, and we've been able to... some hard, some easy, right.

But if we can establish that, we can understand it, and we have this open dialogue to get there, then you understand that over time that it's not about both of us being completely fulfilled and get everything that we want all at once. Because quite frankly, that's hard. But it's actually easy to understand that the things that the most important to you may not be as important to me.

So on those things, I'll bend, I'll give something up and just honored me and do the same for me. And the things that maybe are really important to me, may not mean as much to you. So that those are the moments that you give.

And it becomes this dynamic back and forth without ego, without this notion of that, you know, I won this argument, so now you're going to win this other argument, you know, and look what I gave up to get you there. That tit-for-tat thing just doesn't work.

But when it's this notion of this is a shared experience that we're gonna have and we're gonna get there because there's got to be this sort of give and take, and whether that's your boundaries, whether it's life goals, whether it's a vacation, you know, let's figure out what's most meaningful to us.

And again realizing that it won't always be easy. But once you do that, then what you're doing is making the commitment to a shared understanding. You're making a commitment to working out whatever issue comes your way, as opposed to who's going to win, who's going to lose, who's taking one this time, who's taking one the next time. It becomes this notion of, you know, commitment to the collaborative sort of the partnership.

And that works in relationships, that works in marriages, that works with sort of parent-child sort of a relationship, that happens in friendships. Those relationships where we feel like we're both in this and we're both committed to this work because they're built on compromise because they're built on, you know, "We're going to do this together. No matter how difficult, no matter how easy, we're in this together."

I think that's really important. And it's built on boundaries, by the way, or the compassion that comes with actually communicating your boundaries and setting boundaries.

For the work piece of this, it's not that different, actually. It's still having compassion, it's still setting boundaries, it's still having a sense of understanding. It's still understanding the things that are most important to you so that you can communicate it to your supervisor or the people that report to you.

It's still the sense of let's commit to understanding as opposed to, you know, again, who's gonna win who's gonna lose? You're completely taking the ego out of it, and you're seeking a better understanding of yourself. And you're also being able to communicate all that's important to you so that other people can understand that this, again, becomes this sort of shared experience.

So I think it becomes all about boundary setting and really communicating those things with this goal of working through whatever comes your way because nothing is insurmountable.

[00:30:20] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! I'm so excited to get to tell you about today's sponsor. This is a company I've loved for years and I'm honored to get to partner with them. Our sponsor for today is an amazing app called [Calm](#).

Calm is the number one mental wellness app with tools to reduce anxiety, improve focus, and help you quiet your thoughts so you can drift off to sleep.

I came across Calm a few years ago, it was the middle of the night and my mind was racing. And so I spent some time Googling around trying to find something that could help. And that's when I found them.

I saw that they have these things called Sleep stories, and I figured I'd give one a try. And you guys I fell in love immediately and I've never looked back. When I tell you that Calm is a mainstay in my life, that is truly an understatement.

I listen to their sleep stories almost every single night. My new favorite is this super funny one about picnics read by the comedian Nick Offerman. I fall asleep every night just sort of giggling to myself. It's the best.

Also, with two toddlers running around my house tends to be a bit noisy these days. And so when I need to find some peace and quiet in the middle of the chaos or get some work done, I listen to Calm soundscapes. They're like white noise, but better.

And lately, I've been switching it up a little bit and I've been listening to Rain on Leaves. It's just beautiful. It sounds like it's raining all the time.

Calm has been this incredible tool for me in the last few years, helping me fall asleep at night, helping me quiet my mind and on occasion to nap my toddlers during the day. There are over 100 million people around the world who use Calm to take care of their minds and I'm so happy to be one of them. I love Calm even more because they have a gift for our Girls Night community.

For listeners of the show Calm is offering an exclusive offer of 40% off a Calm premium subscription at calm.com/girlsnight. Go to calm.com/girlsnight for 40% off unlimited access to calm's entire library. If you need to hear that again, that's calm.com/girlsnight.

Thank you Calm for being an amazing sponsor and for all the extra hours of sleep that you've helped me get over the last few years. I just love having you on.

[00:32:25] <music>

Stephanie: I love that. That's something that has been just a recurring theme in my life for the last couple of years and something that we've talked about a lot here on the show. But I can think of like about a thousand examples of how that's been helpful to know what's important to me and to know what's important to the other person in the conversation, so that we can...

Because a lot of times I feel like, you know, when we get into conflict, it's over things that actually nobody cares about. So those things don't need to be conflicts.

This is just a tiny random example. I have 20-month-old twin little girls, and they have bath toys that they love. The other day, the bathroom is upstairs, we're going to play downstairs and they wanted to bring the bath toys downstairs.

And I said, "Let me have the bath toys. We're gonna leave him up here." And I asked, you know, a couple times because they're toddlers, and it's kind of hard to

get things out of their hands. And finally, I was like, "Okay, well, we're gonna leave the cow up here."

So I took it for my daughter, Annie, and she just made the saddest little whimper and just started to cry. And not like a mad frustrated toddler cry, but just like a really genuinely sad cry. I mean, I thought through this pretty quickly because I feel like this has sort of been my MO for the last 20 months is trying to decide, "What do I care about? And then what do I not care about?"

And really quickly I was able to think through, "Okay, I don't care if this bath toy goes downstairs, it's not wet. It's not moldy. I totally don't care." So okay, let me get it for you. Here you go. This is going to make you way happier than it is going to inconvenience. This is not a boundary for me. I don't care."

Mori: Right. Right.

Stephanie: And I feel like that process has brought so much freedom for me just as a brand new mom, but also in so many other areas of life, figuring out what actually is important to you, so that you know what you really... This is not a battle I need to fight. I truly don't care.

Mori: And it's interesting you said that. This is sort of a random example but it's actually a really good example. Because I mean, probably too young to be able to communicate it to you that. But let's just take this further out and so that parent-child relationship.

A lot of times we do create these rules, and then if, let's say, your child doesn't abide by them, then there's the punishment. As opposed to allowing them to understand why that particular rule is important. Your why. And then to understand why it is that they don't want to do X, Y, & Z or why this toy, for example, is so important to bring down.

So the whole notion of not the what but understanding somebody's why creates this sense of understanding that says, "Okay, now let's figure out how to get there. And that becomes the compromise piece. As opposed to being so dead set in your what. That then like you said, you sit back and you're like, "I don't even know why that was so important in the first place. Who cares?"

So your why is actually to see her happiness, to not see that sad face. That why is the joy you want to see in your child. And so then the other stuff becomes really unimportant.

It seems really simple, but we spent so little time trying to figure out one another's interests or our why's that we can't get past all these silly sort of the rules that we set out or the things that are meaningless to us in the grand scheme of things.

So it takes commitment and conversation and curiosity. And it really tells us, "stop feeling like you have so much certainty. Be open. Be curious. Figure it out." And I think that that's something that if you chose that to be the way, then it would actually eliminate a whole lot of conflict usually and create space for these relationships. And for people speaking their truth and speaking their voice and say, "You know, it's possible. We're gonna get through this."

We don't do that very much. Whether it's our ego or sense of ownership, or pride, or whatever it is, I don't know. But we do oftentimes get definitely in our own way and don't even know we're doing it, quite frankly.

Stephanie: Something that you talk about is, it's important to approach a negotiation with value in oneself. That, if we can do that, if we can come knowing our own value, that helps us get desired outcomes.

And you mentioned this kind of at the beginning, but for a lot of us we want to be confident in ourselves as we're applying for a job or going on a date or meeting a friend for the first time, but we're not totally sure what we bring to the table. So how do we figure out what we have to offer and then confidently hold on to those things as we're putting ourselves out there?

Mori: That's like a lifelong challenge for a lot of people. And that's sort of the basis for impostor syndrome, quite frankly, and this notion of not knowing our self-worth, not knowing what we deserve, why we deserve our sense of worthiness.

The answer is never easy because it's usually sort of our life experiences that account for something like that. The way you were raised, the way your parents have spoken to you, you know, this notion of somebody telling you that, you know, "Dare to dream. You can be whatever you want to be," as opposed to somebody telling you that there are limits to what you can achieve.

So then that becomes this narrative that you tell yourself. And then that self-narrative, that self-dialogue gets etched in your memory, gets etched in your being, quite frankly. And it's really hard to move away from that.

So the first step here is to understand just that, to understand your value, your self-worth, to change that inner dialogue and make it one of worthiness and deservingness. And really understanding that. Which could include sitting down and taking an account of all the things that you've accomplished, or even the top

three things that you've accomplished in your life. And knowing that you should be so proud of that. You've worked so hard for. That you didn't accidentally stumble upon these things. That it took blood, sweat, tears to get there.

So once we get into sort of this habit of being able to speak those things and to truly understand them, and quite frankly not be that humble around it, to really have a sense of pride and ownership around it, then that becomes your new narrative.

So when we can do that, and when we understand our self-worth and when we understand our value, then the goals that we set for ourselves are reflecting the sense of "I am worth so much more than this, and therefore, I can accomplish so much more than this, and therefore, I want more for myself than this." We become more aspirational. We start thinking about all the possibilities that are out there.

And when we do that, and our goals are more aspirational, then the things that we asked for are more aspirational because now we know that we deserve more, that we want more. And then once you ask for more, then you naturally are going to get more.

That's sort of honestly the research and negotiations and really things like positive psychology research and so many different areas of study that tell us that those people actually believe that they should ask for more because they need more, they deserve more, they want more, then those people who set those aspirational goals are likely to get better outcomes than those people who don't see that for themselves. They ask for less, and therefore they're going to get less.

It seems really irrational but the reason why it doesn't happen starts at the very beginning, which is that self-narrative and the inability to understand your worthiness. That's the foundation we have to change and really create this new story for ourselves.

Stephanie: That makes so much sense. And I mean, I can see this playing out in all of our relationships and at work and with salary negotiations. Like truly every... like buying a car. Any sort of scenario, if you don't ask, generally you're not going to get it. And it is really scary to ask, but I think, you know, every time I ask for something that feels big, it takes a lot of self-talk, it takes a lot of like bathroom pep talks in the mirror, like, "You can do this." But I never regret it.

I feel like it's very rare that people are, you know, shocked or offended or relationships are broken when we ask for something. I think generally they're broken far more often because we don't ask for things. And it's rare that you get what you don't ask for.

Mori: Right.

Stephanie: People don't know.

Mori: No, people don't know. And the other thing is that, you know, use the word "fear." What's the worst that can happen if somebody says no? The fact that we take that no to be sort of a personal rejection, I think is what creates that sense of fear. But it's not. The truth is that maybe it's just no to this. But it could be yes to something else. And like I said, you're then committing yourself to that process. And quite frankly, sort of working your way through... let's say whatever it is that doesn't work for them, the reason why they said no to you... Let's take salaries.

Your boss says, "You know what? We didn't budget for this on the cycle." They're not saying you're not worthy of it. They're just saying no to maybe this cycle, but you could easily turn around... Had you planned for it, had you been okay with not... This isn't a personal rejection. This is just no to this. You could say, "Okay, well, you know what? How about this? How about instead of waiting an entire year, can we have this conversation again in six months?"

Or "Okay maybe the salary bump doesn't work right now. But what about other benefits? What about a tuition benefit? What about childcare benefits?"

That only becomes possible because, one, you've thought about all the different things that are important to you. Away from just the salary, why do people want raises? Because they want to feel valued. How else can you feel valued? It could be a title. It could be, like I said, a tuition benefit. It could be a recommendation. Whatever it is.

If you come armed with all those things, when a person says no, you're not like, "Oh, God, life is over." You're just thinking, "All right, well, you said no to that. How about?" or "Okay, can I get an understanding why this doesn't work?" Because then maybe the next thing you offer is something that fits within that timeline or that budgeting cycle or whatever it is.

So I think that the fear comes from this notion of rejection or conflict. And if you change that narrative to say, "It's not a rejection of me. You have the right to say no to this, but let's figure out something else that works," then your fear starts to go away. And you'll understand that actually that fear was sort of misplaced in the first place. I mean, and you said it, you're going to regret not asking far more than asking if somebody says no.

Stephanie: So I have a lot of friends and then a ton of women in our community who are dating right now and online dating. I talked to one of our podcast listeners recently

who initiated a kind of defining the relationship moment and just ask the person that she was talking to really what he was looking for, if this was going anywhere. And he ended up saying, "I'm not really looking for a relationship right now." So basically she asked a question, she asked what she wanted and the answer was no.

And I think that we avoid that conversation so often because we think that when we get a no, it's because we asked. That's not the case. That wasn't the case for her because this relationship it wasn't like he was like, "Yeah, I like you. This is going somewhere," and then she said, "Is this going somewhere?" and he said, "Well, not anymore."

She was just finding out where he already was. It wasn't a no because she asked. And I think that that's just something that we have to remind ourselves constantly. We're not inciting a no, we're not creating a no by asking, we're just finding out what's already there. Then once we know what's already there, then we can work around it. We can find out, "Okay, well, then I'm going to stop wasting my time with this person."

Mori: You have choices.

Stephanie: You have choices. Or I'm going to ask for, you know, Child Care Benefit instead of a raise because same thing, you know.

Mori: Right.

Stephanie: Either one would be great. I love that.

Mori: And by the way, if that person says no because you asked, that should tell you something also. If your relationship isn't gonna work out because you asked somebody if they saw a future for the two of you, if that question is what drives them away, then I hate to say you're in the wrong relationship. Right?

Stephanie: Yeah. Then that is a really good thing to know because that relationship wasn't gonna go anywhere.

Mori: Yeah, exactly.

Stephanie: But I think that's the same for a job too. If you have a boss that's totally taken aback by the fact that you might want to advance in your career and that's going to offend them or you know, something like that, then you're in the wrong career. That's information. You can take that and go find a job where the person that you're working for also has an interest in you advancing and growing and developing in your career.

Mori: Absolutely. And sometimes, you know, quite frankly, it's how we ask. Actually, I should say not sometimes. It's always how we ask that actually matters, not what we ask for. So the way we frame the ask like salary negotiations... You never want to go into the HR department or your boss's office and say, "You know what? I want an increase in salary because I deserve it." That just doesn't work.

Instead of having done your preparation and having understood how you're going to actually frame this, the better thing to do in a way that they understand it and they don't take it the wrong way or they think, "Who goes in and says, 'I deserve X and that's why you should give it to me?'" What if the other person... their sense of "deserving this" is very different than yours?

So instead, if you go in and say, "Listen, I love working here, but quite frankly, and let's take right now, this moment and time that we're in. Inflation is at eight and a half percent. So all of a sudden the salary that I've been getting is worth 9% less because I can't afford all these other things." So that's the quantitative measure.

"But then also, since the pandemic started, I've taken on four other roles because all these other people were laid off. Look at what I accomplished in X, Y, & Z project. I've delivered on these things and I created this other sort of stream of revenue for the company that didn't exist because of this other initiative that I've started that I've been working on. So this is that moment that I really want to have this conversation with you about a bump in salary or an increase in my compensation."

That's a very different ask. Because now you're telling them the why you're coming to them, you're explaining all the reasons that this is important now. And therefore you're creating sort of a sense of understanding that they can better understand what it is that you ask him for and why it is that you're asking for it.

You don't look greedy, you don't look irrational. You've given them all the reasons. And when you give that many reasons and they make sense, it's very hard for somebody to say no. And to your point, if they still say no, then that may not be the right boss and that may not be the right company.

So I think we fail to understand that the other side has to buy into this, that we have to actually commit to persuading. And the way you do that is that you bring data and information and you educate, and you tell your story, and you create this opportunity of understanding for them so that they can't say no. And if they do that, they have to give you an equally good reason for it.

And that's where the work is, right? It's not the courage to ask; it's the courage to ask and then be able to support your ask with the data and the information.

Stephanie: I think everything that you just said falls under the umbrella of what does the company wants. The company wants to grow, the company wants to save money, the company wants an additional stream of revenue, the company wants more efficiency, the company wants employees that really care about the mission and want to be there, and all these things.

You know, I think that that's something that we forget so often is to think about... You know, this is so full circle to think about what the other person wants. And when we can match what we want with what the other person wants or approach the conversation having thought through what the other person wants and how we can give it to them, that's so powerful.

I think every time I applied for an internship or a job, especially just out of college, I felt like I was trying to convince someone that I was good. And just in general good. I think if I could go back and tweak my resume, I would say, Okay, why don't you figure out like what problems the company is having and how you could make their life easier. And then tell them that. Because that's what they're looking for.

They're looking for a solution to a problem, they're looking to get somewhere themselves. And if you can show them how you can help them do that, that's a slam dunk for them, instead of making them try to figure it out themselves. "I guess she's smart, so where can we put her?" is a lot less compelling than "We have this hole, she can fill it."

Mori: Right. Also, these days it's just the notion of having happy employees, right? Because the job market is really. Companies that will do anything to find good employees. So for everybody that's listening, this is the time for you to ask because it costs a company a lot less to keep their employees that they have now that are performing happy as opposed to losing those employees and having to spend the money to not only go out there and rehire into those roles, but also then start that process of training again, and all that.

So in a lot of ways, this is that perfect moment. This is that moment where companies want you to be happy, companies want to invest in you. And it is your then role to be able to make the ask, come to the table, tell them what you need. They're not going to be able to read your mind, right?

And to your point, be able to tell them that how you actually are that problem solver, are the person who's excelling in your role. Tell them that story because they're not going to know. So when you match up those two things, it's the perfect... So that perfect conversation. "You have a problem. I'm solving it. I want to be

happy, this is how you can do that for me." Now it's a mutual commitment. It's shared risk or shared benefit, if you will.

I tell people all the time. This is that moment. There is no fear. Go in and do it. Tell your story. Tell them with great pride what you've accomplished, and tell them what you need to be happy. And don't make it so much about you, but make it about this sort of shared opportunity.

Stephanie: Do you have just like one last... Just as we're finishing up, the thing that you wish that women specifically knew about negotiations or one last tool that you can slip in their pocket before we walk out the door?

Mori: I'm gonna dedicate this one to you being a mom of twin daughters.

Stephanie: Yes. Okay.

Mori: I think that women, mothers, daughters, I think... And this isn't just about women actually. This is sort of a cross-gender type of a thing. But a lot of us are what I call pleasers. That we want to serve. We want to make the other person happy. We want to fulfill their needs and their wants and their desires.

I think the sort of a story we've told ourselves is that if we do that or if we want to accomplish that, then that means we have to take less, or we have to compromise the things that are important to us. And that our boundaries don't matter as much, right? Because you want, again, this sort of the spirit of service.

Well, the truth is that it's like sort of that oxygen mask on an airplane example. That the only way that we can serve those we love, the only way that we can find happiness in those relationships that's sustained long term is that we have to also take care of ourselves.

And if you do one, it doesn't mean you can't do the other. I would actually argue that when we set boundaries, when we honor ourselves, when we have compassion for ourselves, then we are happier, we have more energy, and we have the wherewithal to better serve those people that we care about.

And I think that if there's anything that I want people to understand, especially in negotiations, your happiness doesn't have to come at the risk of somebody else's or vice versa. That there's mutual benefit and mutual gain and mutual joy that we can get when we are able to approach these conversations that way, when we're able to set boundaries.

Because then that way you don't have resentment for the other person. Because we're always blaming. "I can't believe they want to take my job. I can't believe they asked for that much." Well, you've been giving it to them. What is it that you don't understand about that? People do not take from us what we don't give. This isn't theft. We give and we give and we give and we give. And so we'll realize we're empty, that there's no more that we can give.

And had you actually said, "I can give. I want your happiness, but these are the things that I need," then, like I said, we have more energy, we have a sense of purpose, we have a sense of joy. And that makes for the sort of the perfect relationship. That makes for a happier mom. That makes for a happier daughter. That makes for a happier girlfriend. That makes for a happier employee.

Your happiness does not have to come at the expense of somebody else's. And when we realize that, that there's nothing greedy about self-love and self-care, then I think that everything changes. And I think that's probably my biggest message. Because I think that's the story that we've told ourselves that's actually not true at all.

Stephanie: I love that so much. Mori, thank you so much. Thanks for making the time. I know that you're on vacation, and so I want to send you off and go enjoy it.

Mori: Of course. Of course. Thank you so much for taking the time. This was a lot of fun.

Stephanie: This was fun.

[00:58:03] <music>

Outro: You guys, isn't Mori amazing? I just love her. I love this conversation, and I am so happy I got to share it with you.

One thing I wanted to mention quickly is I know we talked about a lot in today's episode. So if you want to find the links to any of those things, all you have to do is go to my website. It's girlsnightpodcast.com. And for every episode, we'll have a blog post with the show notes.

All the links will be there for everything we talked about, including all of Mori's contact info so that you can follow her and so y'all can be friends.

The other thing I wanted to mention is that if you haven't had a chance yet, it would mean so much to me if you would take just a quick second to leave us a rating and review on iTunes. We've gotten so many amazing five-star reviews from y'all and

you've left the sweetest comments. I can't tell you how much it means to me. And it also helps out the podcast more than you can imagine.

So if you haven't yet, please take just one quick second to leave us a rating and review. Thanks so much.

All right, friend, that's all we have for today, but we'll be back next week with another episode of Girls Night. And this next one is such a good one. I'll see you then.