

# Ep #87: My Uncommon Story: From Surviving Violence and Self-Sabotage to Post-traumatic Growth



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jenna Harrison**

[The Uncommon Way Business and Life Coaching Podcast](#)

## **Ep #87: My Uncommon Story: From Surviving Violence and Self-Sabotage to Post-traumatic Growth**

Hey, this is a new series where I'm giving you the context behind what I share in this podcast, i.e. what went on in my life to get me here. Think of this as part entrepreneurial mindset building told through stories, part historical nonfiction, and part audacious, salacious, beach read. Hope you enjoy.

You're listening to *The Uncommon Way Business and Life Coaching Podcast*, the podcast that helps women entrepreneurs get clear on signature offers and strategies that sell themselves so you can lean back and stop the hustle. You will learn to maximize your mindset, messaging, and strategy, and step into the uncommonly successful business and life you are creating. Here's your host, top-ranked business coach and reformed over-analyzer turned queen of clarity, Jenna Harrison.

Hello, my friends, it is so nice to be back with you. I am back from my trip to Panama. Of course, we've had two wonderful guests hosts over the last weeks for Black History Month, and I'm so grateful to them for the tips and the wisdom that they've shared.

I'm also grateful because we got a house. We are now officially moving to Majorca, Spain, in July. Our week was very intense. There is such a tight rental market there and places were disappearing in the day. We were making contact with different realtors, and following up with one, and we have to go see this place here. And oh, now this other one popped up. Let's shoot over to that part of the island.

But in the end the stars aligned, and we found a wonderful, wonderful place; it is two stories. It's part of a common community. So there's a community pool, and it will allow for, of course, Dylan to meet some other children and us to meet some neighbors. We have our own garden, and we have a terrace overlooking the sea.

In fact, it's overlooking this beautiful green space, and you can just see one house with a red tiled roof. That's actually part of the king's Summer

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Palace. So, that is our view. Amazingly enough, the family that owns it is moving into a second home and leaving all of their furniture there, which is beautiful.

Instead of moving into a rental property that is furnished with rental furniture, and you know what I mean, it is beautiful, wonderful, quality furniture, and it feels like such a home. We're just walking straight into a home, it's turnkey ready, which makes this whole move so simple for us. We can hop on a flight here, arrive there, and we're ready to go. And as you know, I like to keep things simple.

So, we have the house, we found the school, we set a date, and it's happening. Oh, I'm so excited. And I wanted to share all of this happiness, specifically now, to set the anchor for this episode, which will be about one of the hardest and darkest periods of my life, and one of my poorest periods economically.

I want you to know that things turn out fine for me. And if you happen to be in a similar situation, or you forward this episode to someone you know, I want to anchor this, with this story, to give them hope that their life will also turn out better than fine.

Before we go further, there is a trigger warning. Which is that I'll be talking about domestic physical and emotional abuse in this episode, and suicidal ideation. This is a challenging episode to record for several reasons. And one of them is that there are some details that I'll choose to omit so that I don't incriminate myself. Therefore, you, dear listener, will be left to connect some of the dots for yourself.

But in the celebration of my life story... And in case you haven't been with me since the beginning of the series, that is what this series is about. When I turned 50 years old, I had such a completely different approach to that birthday than any other birthday I had had previously.

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Where, rather than thinking about the advancing of years, I really thought about the celebration of life. And specifically, *my* life, and what a wild and glorious ride it has been. I decided to honor that by creating this series and hoping that any nuggets of wisdom that came through would find their way to the right people.

And so, in that celebration, I couldn't leave out this part of the story. It was so pivotal for me and it is such a celebration of survival. In the last episode of this series, I had just experienced 9-11. I was in my 20s, I was living a great life in Manhattan, and I was really at the zenith of joviality, even sprinkled with frivolity, when the towers fell.

I alluded to how the next period in my life was dark, and it was marked by some reckless and self-sabotaging behaviors, which now catches you up if you didn't get to listen to that episode. After the shock and horror of 9-11...

By the way, somebody asked if I had known anyone that was killed or injured on that day, which I neglected to mention, and the answer's no, thankfully. I knew someone who was meeting in a nearby building, but thankfully, none of my friends and loved ones were lost.

After that shock period of the first month following the attack, we all entered into kind of a tentative phase where it was like, "Is it okay to be doing this? To go out, to have anything resembling normalcy, or anything resembling happiness? Or were we just play-acting in a world that would never, ever be the same?"

Where we were all wondering when and where another attack would happen. Looking around and thinking about how meaningless so many of our old pastimes and old interests had become.

One of the most impactful books in my life is *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* by Milan Kundera. He really explores the themes of lightness and heaviness in our psyche and our society, and how at both extremes we're not living our fullest, best life.

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I think, in this period I was really caught up trying to figure that out for myself. Now, I'm a sixth in Human Design. Meaning, I lived the first part of my life in full experimentation. I need to go through it. I need to experience it all for myself, no one could tell me anything. I need to find out the hard way sometimes.

And this was definitely still that phase. And so, in this phase kind of moving between nothing matters and everything matters, and then feeling the heaviness and ping-pong back towards the lightness, and vice versa, I, like I said, had some reckless behavior. I remember calling up someone I'd met at a club one time and driving to another city, just to get away from the heaviness of what was New York at that time.

The rest of the country, that hadn't actually been there, seemed to move on from it so much more quickly than we did. And it felt oppressive. You wanted to be there, because that felt like reality. And yet, you also wanted to be away from it, because you could taste what was normal, what once was normal to you.

And so, I remember calling this person up, and just driving to this other city, having unprotected sex with this complete stranger, because why not?

I remember initiating an affair with a famous married man that I'd met in a restaurant; with no regard for the woman on the other side. I decided that because he was European they probably had an open marriage, and so I would just blatantly ask, "Are you very married or just married?"

Luckily, he ended up sending me a dick pic later, and so that killed the romance and excitement for me and I didn't go through with it. But if that hadn't happened, I would have entered very carelessly and callously into something just because it seemed like a good idea at the time.

So, it was in that spirit of 'what could go wrong? What could possibly go wrong that's worse than what we've lived through?' that I involved myself in the most disastrous relationship of my life, with the man that I call "Bozo."

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Called “Bozo,” because when I finally separated from him, I would get so triggered seeing his name pop up on my phone I would become short of breath and so distracted and unable to focus that I changed it to something comical to really lessen the charge, and it stuck.

We met at a well-known hip-hop club in the Flat Iron district called the Cheetah Club. Now remember, this is the 2000s, when hip-hop is fully leading and influencing fashion and pop culture and music. I’d gone with a group of girls, some friends of mine; it wasn’t our first time.

Somebody was dancing near me, watching me. A friend of mine spun me around and pushed me into him. He was a very good-looking man; a good-looking Black man. By the end of the night I had given him my phone number. I’ll gloss over the details of our courtship, but I’ll tell you that he was very attentive and sweet, and really a wolf in sheep’s clothing.

Sociopaths can keep up a very good front for a year or so. And while yes, there were definitely red flags, the real flags weren’t about violence. They were about his story not quite adding up, and him being a little insecure. Which would later translate into being very easily moved to jealousy. But I’d been dating a rather aloof artist for years by that point, and I liked that this guy was more straight up, as I saw it.

What really led me to my fall, in hindsight, was hubris on my part. It was thinking I had my shit so together that nothing could touch me. And so, like I said, what could go wrong? Now, Bozo was born in Jamaica, and his mother had brought him and his sister and other brother over to the country when Bozo was very young.

Because she was illegal, they lived in very difficult circumstances in Canarsie, in New York, right on the edge of the projects. I don’t know if it’s true, but he does have stories about being in the same room with different rappers before they were famous; that may or may not be true. But he did have a rough childhood, and was actually shot in the head when he was

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young which likely contributed to some of his mental instability. I don't know.

But it definitely added to his sob story about how he had come from a good family in Jamaica, and how his mom had been sort of the black sheep, wild child, and had taken them away from this very upstanding family that he had. In fact, he did use to call his uncle, so I would hear him talking to his uncle in Jamaica. So, someone existed, who apparently was very well to do.

Bozo had a singular dream, which was to become a pilot. He had already done some part of his qualifications, and his uncle had helped him finance some of that. His dream, really, was to become legal, finally, in this country that he'd lived in since he was a baby, so that he could continue his education and become a pilot.

Now, in hindsight, there are so many places where I got hooked here. I had always had such a strong passion and fire about the plight of people who were illegal. My best friend in college was a Japanese citizen who had grown up in international, in American international schools, all of her life.

But after graduating, because she couldn't get a job that would be willing to sponsor her in a tight market, she was forced to return to Japan to work. And she didn't even speak Japanese; or at least not the level of Japanese that would be required for her to work in a corporate environment there.

And of course, I, myself, had been illegal living for years in Spain. And then, my dads were both pilots, my brother was a pilot. I had always gravitated towards partners that had this single burning passion and drive for one thing, because, as you know, I had no clue what I wanted to do. That was the most attractive and interesting thing to me in the world.

And I had a great deal of "White guilt." I've spoken with many White women who have felt this, specifically after George Floyd. And if you've been listening to this series, you know that I had my introduction to these issues

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of race during my college years, during the Rodney King beatings. It had become clear to me just how much privilege I had had.

Also, I'd grown up in Hawaii, where I was very judged and condemned by many people for that privilege. I internalized so much of that. I felt so bad, so guilty about it. This is going to sound dramatic, but I was nothing if not dramatic in my 20s.

At one point, I had a breast cancer scare. I had a biopsy, and I was certain that it would come back cancerous. My reasoning was, 'no one can have such a good life without having something equally terrible to balance it out.' Now, it turned out not to be cancerous. But I think I was still searching for this thing that would be the hard knock that was inevitably coming to me.

While I honestly don't remember any thoughts about being a "White savior," to the point where I saw Bozo as a poor Black person that I needed to help, or that I would in any way receive glory for helping, or being seen as helping a poor Black man, I do definitely remember thinking that I had had so much privilege that it was only right that I would help in any way that I could.

I believed that we were brought together so that I could help him. Because of all of the experiences I'd had, international experiences I'd had, I didn't think anyone else would be willing to go as far as I would to help someone sort that out and get themselves into firm standing.

And of course, since my shit was so tight, and I had the great job, the great apartment, I was earning well, there was really no harm in the situation. What could go wrong?

So, when he came to me with a story, just a month or so after we met, saying that he'd had a fight with his roommate and the roommate had kicked him out, and now he really had nowhere to stay, I figured, sure, he could crash at my place for a bit. Sure, I could help him out. Not realizing that he would never move back out.



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Since the transition from sweet-guy-who-needs-a-helping-hand into maniacal and severely unbalanced abuser from whom I could not escape, happened gradually, over a fairly long period, I'm going to skip over it. Because A- we'd need several episodes, and B- it's honestly a bit muddled in my head still, to remember that whole chain of events.

So, I'll cut to the chase about the three reasons that I stayed with him once I realized that he was in fact abusive. Number one, was fearing for my family's safety. He threatened to kill or hurt them if I left.

While that might have landed someone in jail, or at least gotten us a restraining order, I believe that my only saving grace was staying with him until he could become legal. Because, during this time, he could not afford one black mark on his record. And so, he was careful.

For instance, he was careful to never leave bruises where they could be seen, or would likely be seen. Were something to go wrong and that chance for residency were to be lost, for instance, if he was ever taken into police custody, he would of course be deported. But then, he would definitely get into the country illegally again.

In fact, I knew several people in his social circle who had been kicked out at that point a couple of times and come back in. I believe that if that happened to him, he would truly have nothing to lose, and be, of course, furiously angry. So, I believed that I had no protection.

That really leads me to the second reason. Which is, my thought that, "I have to figure this out by myself. I got myself into this mess, and I have to get myself out." My parents knew nothing. My friends did not know the full story. I believed I couldn't go to the police or anybody. And that really, it was just down to me and my wits of how I was going to play the game and stay alive long enough to extricate myself.

And I notice, by the way, that thought coming back again for me, as if I didn't learn my lesson later on, when I was going to build my business. That

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'I should just be able to figure this out by myself.' I can see that it is a deep pattern. I've done so much work to rewrite my thoughts on that.

But just the other day, I was helping my mom with something and she was apologizing profusely. I said, "Mom, why are you apologizing?" And she said, "Because I should be able to figure this out by myself. I'm supposed to be strong and independent." It's like ding-ding-ding.

So often I hear words coming out of my mom's mouth that I now know why I say them, or have said them in the past, and that is one of them. Not blaming my mother, this was fully all on me.

But I will blame my human brain, because that is the third, and possibly most important reason that I stayed with him. Stockholm Syndrome is real. Stockholm Syndrome is when you develop a deep attachment to your abuser. It's a very important survival response for people whose lives are threatened. Because if they can bond and attach with their abuser their chances of survival are higher.

But it wasn't until much later that I learned about the mechanics of this. Actually, that I even learned about this, let alone how it actually works in the brain. And so, I remember feeling so much shame. I remember once, after we had separated, we saw each other again and I got this huge smile on my face.

That smile haunted me for so long. I just felt so angry. I just wanted to go back and wipe that stupid smile off my face. How could I smile at him? I wouldn't say I necessarily felt happy to see him, I felt very scared. But I had such a smile on my face, I just couldn't stop it.

For those years that I was living with him, which were about three, it was like a hostage situation. Where I had to do everything right all the time, or it would devolve into the pattern of him emotionally abusing me and tearing my life to shreds. Until I'd finally flip a lid, yell at him, and then he could hit me or torture me in some way.

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I learned later about the cycle of abuse. Which is where, after kind of a climax and intensity in a situation, such as a physical fight, there is some reconciliation. At which point, huge bursts of oxytocin are released. Oxytocin is a chemical that we know about from childbirth, and it helps us forget, but it also helps us bond.

And so, it really creates indelible bonds with this person, even though they're treating you so terribly. And then, there's a honeymoon phase, where this person acts really well. Maybe they've even, and they're certainly saying that they've learned their lesson and it will never happen again.

But little by little, there are these little annoyances, little flares, little comments, little digs, little jabs, that start becoming more constant. Until finally, one or both of you explodes and the whole cycle repeats itself again. And when I say I had to do everything right, I mean I even had to breathe right.

There were times where we would just be driving along and I would finally just be looking out and enjoying the sunshine and thinking for a minute, everything seemed okay. And all of a sudden, he'd say, "Why are you breathing like that?" I'd be completely caught off guard, "Breathing like what?" "You know what," he'd say. He would use that as evidence that I must feel guilty about something.

My intonation had to be perfect. My actions. My behavior. But often, the standards changed and what used to work no longer worked. And so, I was just constantly walking on eggshells. In the times when we were building up to these kinds of blow-up periods, he would try to exert control or get back at me by disrupting my work very frequently.

He'd start calling 20 times in a row, to the point where then the receptionist would have to tell the boss, or come ask if I were okay. "Why is this person calling you over and over again throughout your work day?" I was doing freelance story design, so sometimes, to exert control, he would keep me

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up all night and make sure that I couldn't work to finish a project that was due or something.

And that would teach me a lesson that I better not repeat those behaviors in the future. He'd do the same thing with friends. He got so bad that I finally left my beloved New York City. I thought that if we could get into a neutral environment, A- he would feel a bit more secure. And B- at least I wouldn't have to be dealing with the subterfuge of trying to keep everything from my work and my friends.

That's how I came to find myself all alone on my 30th birthday, in a place that I didn't even want to live. Sometimes his disruption was financial. He would spend a ton of money, using my credit cards, of course. It would get worse and worse, and I was always robbing Peter to pay Paul. I became the master of zero interest credit cards.

Again, I'd learned a lot about financing when I bought my apartment in New York, and I used a lot of those skills here. But I was carrying more debt than I ever had in my life. I hadn't had student loans, so this was like my student loan. And in fact, when I was bemoaning the situation later on to my therapist, she said, "Well, it seems like you paid for your graduate degree." Wise words.

Of course, sometimes the disruption would be emotional abuse or physical. Around this time, the events at Abu Ghraib were revealed, about how American guardsmen had been abusing prisoners in Abu Ghraib. As they talked about some of the treatment, and also what was coming to light about the CIA, I was like, "Yep, sounds about right."

I remember a night where he came storming into the room, ripped the sheets and blankets off the bed and threw cold water on me, opened the windows, and kept me up just talking all night long, berating me. That was really the worst part, just the talking. The talking was the worst part, how he would twist the facts and past events and stories. I started to feel like the movie *Gaslight*, where I was going crazy.

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I remember once where I was on the floor and he was up above me talking, talking, and with every fiber of my body I was saying, “Jenna just don't break. It's just words. It's just sounds. Ignore him. Think about something else in your head. He wants to have you explode. Don't give in.”

But every time, I would just snap all of a sudden, and then I would just hate myself afterwards for not being able to keep it together. Thankfully, he never punched me in the face or did anything that landed me in the hospital. But like I said, he really knew what he was doing, and would make sure that bruises never showed up on my forearms or on my neck, or anything that would be visible.

We were constantly bickering and fighting. The police were called several times. There was so much drama. But each time, of course, I said that I didn't want to press charges and the police would have to leave. I remember so many looks of pity and judgment from them, and from people in the hallways, out and about if we'd have an altercation, in an airport once, of people who had no idea.

We still stereotype women who are abused. Because, as a society, we don't fully understand the brain chemistry and the many pieces that are at play, which is very often the safety of other loved ones, including children. I came to feel so small, so uncertain.

I would have these flashbacks to a time where he and I were walking in a sunny day, in New York City, and it was early spring and unseasonably warm. So, I was wearing these knee-high boots, and this really great skirt that I'd gotten at a very cute independent boutique, down in Nolita. It was kind of cut on the bias, so it had this little sash to it.

I'd had a jacket on, with a shirt, but because it was so warm, I'd taken the jacket off and put it in my bag. And so, I had the sleeveless shirt on. I just remember the joy of the sun in that moment. I took a few steps, I kind of put my arm out and my face up. I was taking these strong, very purposeful

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steps. This was at the very beginning of when I'd met him. And he looked over at me and he's like, "Girl, I like your confidence."

And I was so fully confident. But then it was if he went to systematically breaking it down, piece by piece, bit by bit, until I wondered where all the pieces had gone.

My only consolation during this time were the moments that I would have when reading. I became so interested in philosophy and questions of faith. I desperately wanted to make sense of how bad things can happen to good people. And also, how I could possibly still have anything close to a guardian angel or anyone protecting me if this were going on in my life.

I remember my low point. We were fighting one night and there was a storm happening; these beautiful storms that kind of roll through the tropics with so much wind and lightning and rain. We had an apartment that was on a high floor with a balcony. I remember kind of screaming, and in that moment just thinking, "God, if you do exist, please strike him down right now with lightning. Just make this end."

I remember pleading that with my whole heart in that instant. And of course, nothing happened. That just shows you how fragile I felt at the time. That I thought maybe that would be a last hope, and then being disappointed that the lightning didn't magically rearrange itself to strike him down. I felt so alone.

I remember, again, flair for the dramatic, but feeling like I am, now it has been proven, I am now truly alone. After that, I was just kind of going through the motions.

Until I remember one moment when I was driving home from work, and I was very close to losing my job. By the way, I've always said that I switched into fashion, away from jewelry, because I was burned out with doing jewelry all day and so how could I start a jewelry business by night? That is absolutely true.

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But also, it was because I had to scramble to find a job, because I had to leave my old one. So, I'm driving home along the freeway, there's this curve in the freeway, and in that moment I just realized I could do nothing. I could just not turn the car. I could just go straight into the barrier and end it all. Wouldn't that be better for everyone? My pain would be over. My parents would be safe.

And really, what had become of my life? I was the girl who was getting recruited by McKinsey, and Goldman, and USAID. I'd had such huge dreams. There's a high school essay where I talked about, "Oh, and when I buy my private island..." Like it was just a natural course of action when that happens.

And now, here I was with no real career progression, nothing had turned out like it was supposed to, and I didn't know how much longer I was going to be able to survive in this situation.

Well, needless to say, that moment scared me enough that I realized I needed help. There was another one, as well. I realized that I also would even have thoughts of killing him and feel very cold in the moment. I didn't feel strong emotions about that either way. And so, I finally sought help and found a therapist.

And the reason that I was able to do it, is that I convinced Bozo that it was supposedly *my* anger issues. Because after all, we'd seen me explode in angry outbursts over and over again, which was clearly my fault. And so, I needed to go to therapy to help resolve my anger issues.

I remember the first time I went to see her just feeling deathly afraid. I said, "Could he get in here?" And she said, "Yes, actually. If he really wanted to, he probably could." She was in a kind of shared office, there were various offices in this. She said, "Do you want to leave the door open, so that you can see the hallway door if it opens?" And I said yes.

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I remember speaking in a very low voice to her our first few sessions, just in case he was out in the waiting room. But it was the beginning of my salvation. The bottom line here is, get help. Get help sooner rather than later. Don't be like me and try to go it alone. That helped me keep my sanity, and also to move up the timeframe for myself of when I thought I'd be able to extricate myself.

He was not fully legal when I left, but he was close enough that I was willing to take the risk. I remember going to the police, telling them the situation and that I needed support as I was moving out of my house. They stood guard while he said awful things about me. Well, directly to me and to the officers.

That's when I moved into a halfway house; it was surrounded with barbed wire. The moments that I was in there, I had not felt that safe since before 9-11. It was such a beautiful, delicious safety. I met so many amazing women. I considered everything there such a blessing. They also had support to teach us all about how the brain works, and exactly what had been going on.

I always love giving to houses like this now, because it is such a needed but also amazing resource for people that have lost everything. Well, not everything, right? They still have their life.

Then I managed to have him think that I got fired. This is now with the new company. In fact, I think I made it seem like that was why I was so angry with him, and why I was finally leaving. I think that's what I did. But the truth is I had not, and the whole company was in on this deceit. And so, I would take a very roundabout way to get to work, because I knew, of course, he would be watching the front.

I would park in the back, by the factory. All the factory guys knew that I was parking there. I'd walk up through the factory, the shipping floor, and into my office working for the chairman of this fashion company. And the



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receptionist knew not to get caught in any kind of manipulation and to, of course, say that I didn't work there.

I wouldn't answer any outside calls if I didn't recognize the number. The fellow assistants supported me in that. I really was so lucky to have so many people have my back. Of course, it was hard to come out to them about it, but they all just rallied. They just rallied. I was only able to stay in the halfway house for, I think, a few weeks. And so, I started looking for another place to live.

Again, I was so lucky, and found a room in an apartment in South Beach with these two gay guys. They were huge, and I felt so safe with them. They brought back so much levity to my life. I loved them so dearly. One of them has now passed.

Eventually Bozo did get his papers and he moved back to New York City. But then, I got a heads up from a mutual acquaintance that he was talking about coming back to Florida. I think it was that very same day, I walked out of the front of my office, because by then, so long had passed and I thought he was in New York, but he'd already gotten to Florida.

He was standing right there on the steps. And he was like, "Well, hello." That is that moment where I got that big, big smile on my face that I was so angry at myself for. Although, of course, I shouldn't have been. That is when I decided that it was time to get a restraining order, even though I was still, in some ways, scared of the consequences.

Even though it may just get him deported, and then he'd be off the books, and a loose cannon, looser cannon. But I went through with it anyway. I concocted a scheme with a friend of mine. She was going to come with me to the church that I would go to in South Beach. I knew he knew that I had gone to that church. And so, I knew that he would one Sunday for sure, go back and try and find me there.

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I sat in the front, and she sat in the back. After the service, I got up and I left and I walked outside. Of course, he was there and he approached me, and that's when she called the police.

Because, of course, you have to get the restraining order served, which is the worst part of it. If you need a restraining order, and you can't find the person, you have to get into a situation where you can see the person or be face to face with the person in order to get the police to serve this restraining order.

So, she called the police. Those were the longest moments of my life. I stood there listening, trying not to respond as he read me the riot act and told me why I'd been so wrong to leave him and why we shouldn't be together, and on and on and on.

I saw the police officer kind of strolling around, and he kind of glanced at us and walked past, but didn't actually come over. I was like, "Here, here, come over here." And then he kind of was walking back, and so finally I just had to interject. I had to hope he was the person that had the restraining order to serve.

I said, "Sir, I believe this is the person you're looking for. Please serve the restraining order." And luckily, it was. They served him the restraining order. I remember the look of absolute shock and astonishment on his face. Then I left. And when we were in a place where he couldn't see my friend, I just hugged and celebrated and cried.

A few days later, I went to the courthouse and had to sit in a room with him for the very last time, as the judge heard our case and decided whether or not to extend it. He was the first person to talk, and he talked and talked and talked, as he does. And afterwards, the judge said, "Okay, so I'm going to approve this." He never even heard from me. That was the last time I saw him.

## **Ep #87: My Uncommon Story: From Surviving Violence and Self-Sabotage to Post-traumatic Growth**

I am a survivor, and I am so grateful to have survived that. Though I would never, ever advise anyone to deal with it alone like I did, I did manage to navigate my way through, though with some hefty battle wounds that I am still working on today.

In an earlier episode, it was #34. It's called "The 'Too Braggy' Fear and What I'm Doing About It." I talked then about how I had a stalker, and why that is added to the difficulty in really being out there and vulnerable. For instance, showing a picture of me in a bathing suit. On the cover of that episode, I was in fact in a bathing suit, living my best life, and choosing to act into a place where I'm not afraid of being watched by him.

He has, unfortunately, made his presence known. Every 10 years or so he'll managed to pop up in my DM somewhere. It has been so wonderful living overseas and on military bases, and feeling that extra added security. But still, when I see somebody that looks like him in a certain way or a certain posture, my heart quickens.

For the last couple years I've been doing EMDR, which is been wonderful for me. I highly recommend that. Not specifically for this issue, although I knew that that was one area of the stored drama that I could probably benefit from exploring and releasing. But what I've noticed is that sometimes, when I'd get so angry with my son, it is in fact tied to trauma responses from that time.

And so, still to this day, I am doing beautiful healing work on many life stories, but it so supports the concept of post-traumatic growth. We've all heard of PTSD, but not all of us have heard of PTG. It's such an important concept of how trauma moves us forward, actually, towards growth. How it's possible to transmute those events into wisdom, into learning, into greater self-love and greater self-knowledge. And I can attest to that.

So, for anyone who needs to hear this, that is available to you, too. But I recommend getting help ASAP. We will link to some resources in the show notes.

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Fear and terror keep us stuck. But shame keeps us stuck, too. What I've learned is that shame can be a choice. And please, hear me when I say you have nothing to be ashamed of. You are being manipulated by someone who is lucky enough to have stumbled onto a glitch in our human psyche, in our brains' survival mechanism. And you are surviving if you're alive listening to this.

And for that, I commend you and honor you. But in order to thrive, it will take some courageous steps on your part. And I want you to do it safely. So, the first is picking up a phone and asking someone qualified for help.

Okay, I want to end on an uplifting note, and I want to share the story of how I got myself out of debt. Now remember, I'm carrying more debt than I ever have; \$100,000 in debt. Remember, I still have this place in New York City but it's not worth nearly that much. And the rent barely covers the mortgage.

One day, a realtor happens to write me and says, "Hey, do you have any interest in selling your apartment? I just sold another one in your unit for about \$100,000." Now, I don't think that was the exact amount, now that I think back on it, because that was my debt. Eventually, I did sell the apartment. It was the hardest decision, because New York City does hold my heart and I loved it so much.

I'd always dreamed of giving that little Manhattan studio apartment to my own daughter someday. So, that she'd always have a place of her own, and never have to feel poor. At least, she'd always have a roof over her head.

But as I started to look at the situation, by that point, without Bozo, I really loved Miami. I loved its vibrancy. I loved its passion. I loved the beautiful weather. I loved that I could afford more space there, that I could walk down to the beach, that I could walk to my favorite yoga studio. It just seemed like a better quality of life.

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And so, I did it. I said yes to selling. It came at the perfect time, and it, almost dollar-for-dollar, wiped out all my debt. There was no debt left over, and there was no surplus leftover either. It was like it was all just gone and I could start fresh. Such a blessing.

Then that realtor ended up saying that he was coming down to Florida, we met up, and ended up becoming dear friends. That friendship has lasted for decades. He became very good friends with all of my friends down there. Sometimes I just give him random hugs for how perfectly he came into my life.

Alright, my friends. That's it for today. Remember, you know who you are, and each day you're stepping further into what you're here to create.

Hey, if you want true clarity about your secret sauce, your people, your best way of doing business, and how you talk about your offer, then I invite you to join us in the Clarity Accelerator. I'll teach you to connect all the dots, the dots that have always been there for you, so that you can show up like you were born for exactly this.

Come join us and supercharge every other tool or tactic you'll ever learn, from Facebook ads to manifestation. Just go to [TheUncommonWay.com/schedule](https://TheUncommonWay.com/schedule) and set up a time to talk. I can't wait to be your coach.

Thanks for joining us here at *The Uncommon Way*. If you want more tips and resources for developing clarity in your business and life, including the Clarity First strategy for growing and scaling your business, visit [TheUncommonWay.com](https://TheUncommonWay.com). See you next time.