

EPISODE 203

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:02.7] PF: Welcome to Episode 203 of Live Happy Now, brought to you this week by the Happy Child Summit. I'm Paula Felps, thanking you for joining us today. If you've ever felt like your fears were holding you back, you're not alone. Today's guest, author Ruth Soukup is here to explain that fear is perfectly normal.

Her new book, *Do It Scared: Finding the Courage to Overcome Adversity, Face Your Fears and Create a Life You Love*, looks at how each of us are affected by fear and why we react to it different. She outlines seven different fear archetypes and shows how they influence our response to fear and how we can use our understanding of those archetypes to overcome our fears. Let's hear what she has to say.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:42.2] PF: Thank you so much for being on our show today. This is a wonderful topic and I'm really excited to have you as a guest.

[0:00:48.3] RS: Thanks so much for having me. It's great to be here.

[0:00:51.1] RS: Well, you're looking up fear and we do hear so much about fear, but I don't think I've seen it addressed and scrutinized and explained as well as your book does. Can you tell us first of all, what inspired you to look at this topic?

[0:01:05.7] RS: For sure. I started noticing a big trend in my community actually regarding fear. When I talk about fear, especially in the book *Do It Scared*, I am speaking specifically about the fear that's holding us back from stepping outside of our comfort zone, from going after our big goals and dreams, not phobias, or being afraid of airplanes, or spiders, or anything like that; two different kinds of fear.

Specifically, I was interested in this fear, because I had so many women coming to me and saying, "I hear you talking about goals, but I just feel stuck. I feel my whole life is passing me by,

or I don't know how to move forward.” It piqued my curiosity and it made me want to dig in and figure it out, figure out this problem why are so many of us afraid to take that next step and what is the fear that's holding us back and how can we overcome it?

[0:01:58.8] PF: Is it something that's more common in women than in men?

[0:02:03.1] RS: My audience is primarily women.

[0:02:06.9] PF: As large, so that's perfect.

[0:02:08.9] RS: Yeah. I think I was specifically looking at it from a woman's perspective. What I have found through the course of all this research and through talking to people is that I think fear also affects men, but it manifests itself in different ways. For women specifically, that's the fear that I was addressing in my study and that was the fear that I would address in the book.

[0:02:31.3] PF: This is so incredibly well-researched. I wanted to know how you went about finding all that data. Can you address that process for us?

[0:02:41.9] RS: Oh, yes. It was an incredible process. I mean, I have a very large community of over a million women, weekly subscribers. I had a pretty big reserve of a community to draw from, to do the initial research. I couldn't believe actually how many people responded to just the questions that we were asking and a survey that we put out, we had over 4,000 respondents.

[0:03:07.7] PF: Oh, my God.

[0:03:08.4] RS: [Inaudible 0:03:08.5] survey, which is way more than you need for an academic study. It's a way more –

[0:03:14.2] PF: That's amazing. That happens to be amazing.

[0:03:17.5] RS: It was stunning, but it was so much data and there was so much to sift through that I ended up hiring a team of researchers and psychologists to help me go through the data

and really dig in and come up with some findings and conclusions about the way that fear was manifesting itself in people's lives. What we found was actually really fascinating.

[0:03:36.0] PF: Yeah, because you talk about the seven fear archetypes. I think it's so interesting going through this, because you're like, "Gosh, which one am I?" You can see yourself in more than one and you start really – it's an interesting process just to read the book and look at the different archetypes. I wondered if there's one that is maybe more prevalent than others.

[0:03:59.8] RS: Definitely. There's seven fear archetypes. Just to back up a little bit and explain how that all came about, what we discovered in the study was that fear really manifests itself in different ways for different people. As a general rule, there's one or two archetypes, these fear archetypes that are more prevalent in someone's personality than others. Some people are afraid of making a mistake, while other people are afraid of rejection, while other people are afraid of authority, other people are afraid of being judged by others. How that fear is affecting you really plays out in different ways and what you're afraid of and how it holds you back, it happens differently for different people as well.

That's the purpose of the fear archetype is first, being able to identify how fear is holding you back, so that you can then learn how to overcome it. What we found is that the biggest, most common fear is actually the procrastinator archetype, which is the fear of making a mistake. The procrastinator is actually just another name for a perfectionist and the way that it manifests for that archetype is being afraid to make a decision, analysis paralysis, sometimes over-planning in order to avoid making a decision till the last possible minute, or trying to get things, almost is counterintuitive for some people who say, "Well, I'm not a procrastinator. I try to do everything so far in advance."

Really what they're trying to do is get ahead of that fear of making a mistake. That one is definitely the most common. I believe 40% of the population has procrastinator as their top fear archetype.

[0:05:38.9] PF: That is really – that's a pretty healthy statistic there. One of the things that's really helpful with the book is you talk about how to use these, like this is the good side of it, this is when it manifests itself in a negative way, here's what that looks like, but also here's how you

can use that to your advantage. How did you go about knowing all that? How did you develop that game plan for readers to be able to put into practice?

[0:06:05.9] RS: That was really what came out of all the research and then the secondary research that we did, once we had developed these archetypes. We had to do another survey which was with another 4,000 participants of having people take our assessment. That was where we learned what percentage of the population is which archetype and all of that stuff.

What we found was with the stories. We were getting these stories of people in the survey that we asked of how does fear play out in your life? Give us an example of a time that fear – you wanted to do something, but fear stood in your way, or that you were afraid to do – you were afraid to do something. On the flip-side, give us an example of a time where you push past that fear and did it anyways and what was the difference-maker for you?

By asking all of those questions, we were really able to dig deep into each of the seven archetypes and see what was working and what was not working, the strengths and weaknesses of each one.

[0:07:03.5] PF: When women learn this and when they start realizing they can have some control and can actually use this archetype of fear that's running them ,what is it that they're most surprised about? What are some of the changes that you see when they realize what's at play and how they can change their actions?

[0:07:22.0] RS: I think the most surprising thing is how much of our fear is really in our heads. I think what happens and the power of identifying how fear is manifesting itself in your in your life is that once you know that, knowledge is power. You start to know how to recognize those signs of when fear is holding you back and why it's holding you back and what the underlying motivation is and what the underlying fear is. Because once you can start to recognize those patterns, you can start to overcome them and you can start to see, “Oh, wait. I'm afraid of being judged right now, but really it's just because I'm a people pleaser and people maybe aren't judging me as much as I think they are.”

For me, my own personal archetype is the outcast archetype, which is the fear of rejection. I don't think I ever had any concept of how much that plays into my life and how much it has

played a role in my life for so long. Now that I have recognized that and see the outcast archetype in me, all the time I can point it out and I can go, “Oh, wait. I'm being an outcast right now and I need to stop this behavior and it's not true. I'm not being rejected right now.”

I think it's really – it's the first step in creating a solution and being able to do it scared, which is the whole purpose of the book, is not that you're never afraid because courage doesn't mean that you're never afraid, courage is being able to take action even in the face of fear. Part of that is understanding what's happening in your head and what is reality.

[0:08:55.7] PF: Where does it come from? Because obviously, we all have some fear archetype, or multiple ones. Is it innate in us? Are all of us born with this? Is it something that is the result of our upbringing? How does that get cultivated in us?

[0:09:12.7] RS: I didn't specifically research that part, but if I was to guess based on the research that we did do, I would say it's probably a combination of nature versus nurture. Some of it is has to do with their upbringing, our family situation, but some of it is innate. Some of the archetypes, especially the pessimists for instance, that archetype is often the result of having had some really hard things. It's the fear – the pessimist's most fears adversity. Usually, the pessimist is someone who has had hard things happen in their life and is afraid of more hard things happening. That sometimes is more a result of circumstances.

The procrastinator for instance may have grown up in a home that had really high expectations, or where mistakes were punished, and so that fear of making a mistake then has been exasperated and magnified even worse than it may have been just naturally.

[0:10:16.5] PF: In coming up with the strategies for, I don't want to say overcome, but managing and making the most of these archetypes, how did you come up with those strategies?

[0:10:26.3] RS: Well, I think there are some strategies that are universal for all the different fear archetypes, because I believe that all of us have a little bit of all seven of the fear archetypes in us. There's usually one or two that are more prevalent than others. Also when you start to think about and you start to see how fear is playing out in our lives, you can start to see how specific coping techniques can help with that specific fear.

For instance if you're a procrastinator and you tend to put things off, or you tend to be a perfectionist, one of the things that can be most helpful for you is to give yourself a hard deadline for things. Always give yourself a hard deadline, because you will sometimes put things off until the very last minute, or you will – if you don't have a deadline, you will endlessly put things off.

Giving yourself a hard deadline for every important task is one of those key coping techniques that can make things – could make things better. Yet for all of us, one thing I talk about a lot over the course of the entire book is the importance of accountability and having people in your life who will speak truth into you and who will balance out those fear archetypes.

For a procrastinator, it might be a smart move to find somebody who's not a procrastinator to be your accountability partner. That way you can have that balance and have somebody who maybe is struggling with a different fear and you can help each other, but in different ways.

[0:11:50.6] PF: That makes absolute sense. There is one statement in your book that I absolutely love, it says that action is the antidote to fear.

[0:12:01.3] RS: Yes.

[0:12:02.5] PF: Can you flesh that out a little bit for us and talk about how that works? Because it is an – We know that if we take that step, we're going to get past that fear. Oh, my gosh, getting the courage to take that step is so huge.

[0:12:14.5] RS: It's so hard. That is exactly the whole point of doing it scared and do it scared. It's not do it once you have the courage, it's do it even though you feel afraid. What I've learned and what I've seen is that courage is a muscle. The more you build it, the stronger it gets. The more you exercise it, the more you do little things, take one little step; the quickest way to start overcoming your fear is to take the smallest step in the right direction. Because that one single tiny action and it can be so small, but that tiny action will give you a little bit more courage. That little tiny extra bit of courage that you get will give you enough courage to take the next step and then the next step after that. You don't have to have it all figured out all the time. If you can take one step and then another step and then another step, you'll be amazed at how courageous your actions really can be.

[0:13:10.4] PF: You didn't just research this and write a book. You've lived this. Can you speak a little bit about how – You have an amazing back story and I think we'd be remiss to not talk about that, because you're such an example of living what your book is talking about.

[0:13:28.0] RS: Well, thank you first of all. Yes, I think one of my big motivations, or my big interest in helping other women overcome fear in their lives is that I've really walked through that. When I was in my early 20s, I went through a terrible depression and I attempted suicide multiple times; very nearly lost my life in that battle; was hospitalized for two and a half years. Really through all that, coming out of that from the other side of hitting absolute rock bottom and feeling there was nothing left. Through the course of that depression, I ended up divorced, bankrupt, lost all my friends, dropped out of college, literally had nothing left.

Then to climb back from that and get to over the course of many years – this did not happen overnight, but over the course of many years to get to where I am today, where I've built this successful seven-figure business and to have this amazing community, that I believe I am here to share that journey and that story. To show people and to say to people if I can come through the other side of a major breakdown like that and end up okay, you literally can come through anything too.

That is what the purpose of *Doing It Scared* is. For me, that's why that story is so important, because it didn't happen for me all at once. It wasn't like I hit rock bottom and then had some big turning point and magically my life turned perfect. It's anything but that. It's been a 15-year journey of taking one step and then the next step and then the next step, even when I was terrified along the way.

[0:15:12.8] PF: I think it's just such a great illustration of how what you're talking about works and being able to take those baby steps and it's just keeping going forward. It's not the size of the step, it's the direction that you're going that really makes a difference.

[0:15:27.1] RS: Oh, so much so. Sometimes it doesn't even matter the direction. Sometimes it's just that you take the step, any step, it doesn't even matter. It's the act of taking a step and having some action will help you take another step and that one might be in the right direction.

[0:15:43.9] PF: Now you have – as you alluded to, you have a lot going on these days and we've got to talk about your podcast, because obviously our listeners like podcasts and we really want to tell them about *Do It Scared*, because I love the format of it and I love how specific it gets. Can you tell us – just introduce your podcast to us and tell us what it's about.

[0:16:06.0] RS: Thank you. Yes, my podcast is *Do It Scared*, so that's easy to remember. It's the same title as the book, it's *Do It Scared with Ruth Soukup*. It alternates on a weekly basis. It's a weekly podcast, but every other week I do an interview and then every other week is a stand-alone episode, where I go real deep into a specific topic and give practical pointers on some aspect of fear, or not even necessarily. Just parts of our life that might be keeping us stuck and how to move past them, how to overcome them. I've been doing it for about a year and I love it so much. I can't believe I've waited this long in my life to start a podcast, because it is the most amazing thing ever. Yeah, I would be honored for if anyone – new ones to come and listen, because it's a lot of fun.

[0:16:55.4] PF: Yeah. It's a great companion to the book *Do It Scared*. Anyway, I also wanted to mention that as you talk about these archetypes, people can go online to your site and do an assessment to figure out – like we don't have to just read the book and think that, "I think I might be this." We can actually do an assessment online and find our fear archetypes.

[0:17:15.6] RS: Yes. That's really one of the incredible things that came out of all of this research is this company that helped me with all of the research and the data. We also over the course of the last two years, we've been working on this, have developed an assessment that it's 49 questions, so it's scientifically valid. You can go in and take it and find out what your top fear archetype is and how that's impacting you. It's a great companion if you're reading the book and you want to know. It's funny, as you read the book, you probably start to see people that you know in the various archetypes too.

[0:17:50.7] PF: Absolutely. Absolutely.

[0:17:53.0] RS: It's such a great tool actually, because it gives you so much more compassion and understanding for people in your life that may be difficult in some ways. All of a sudden you go, "Oh, maybe this is what is behind the way that they've been treating me, or the way that

they've been acting.” The parts of them I've been struggling with, I can see this fear archetype manifesting itself and it gives you a lot more compassion.

[0:18:14.1] PF: Yeah, it's really the closest you're going to get to X-ray specs, right? It sounds like I can – I see what's going on in there. Now I know how to deal with you finally.

[0:18:24.8] RS: Yeah, exactly.

[0:18:27.0] PF: It's a great read. It's super interesting. Like I said, it's a unfamiliar territory. I haven't seen – I don't know that I've seen this addressed elsewhere. I really hope people pick it up. What is it that you hope people get out of it from reading this book and from experiencing your podcast and going online and seeing what you have to offer with your website?

[0:18:48.7] RS: Oh, that's such a great question. I really wrote this book for any woman, or person. It doesn't have to be a woman. Any person who feels they've been watching life pass them by, maybe took time off to raise your kids and now your kids are a little bit older and suddenly you're not sure where you fit in in life. Or any other thing, anybody who feels they've settled for less, or been afraid to really take that leap to do some scary things, to go after big goals and big dreams and feels they're settling.

This is the book that I hope brings that moment of clarity where you can say, “I can do it scared. I don't have to let fear hold me back. Maybe it has been in the past, but that does not have to be my future.” I really think that the book brings not only the science behind fear and why it's holding you back, but also very practical steps for how to get unstuck and how to move past it and how to implement these strategies in your own life.

[0:19:52.7] PF: That's it too, it is very practical and very actionable and doable. It's not like, “Oh, my gosh. I've got to do what?”

[0:20:02.9] RS: It's definitely not an academic read. If the whole thing about the study threw you off and –

[0:20:09.5] PF: It's fun.

[0:20:10.7] RS: Scary academic book, I am not a scary academic and it is not a scary academic book.

[0:20:17.3] PF: It's not. It's easy to go through and it almost becomes this reference book too, because I want to hang on to this just because I know as you mentioned, there's people in your life that you can start seeing in that book. I think it's a great tool to understand how to interact with them better.

[0:20:33.2] RS: Absolutely.

[0:20:34.4] PF: In the future. As we're wrapping up and people are going to go find out more about your book, but what advice, what are a couple of things that you would say to them right now that they can do to start overcoming some of the fear that's holding them back and start taking?

[0:20:49.4] RS: Feedback and who will push you to be better. Sometimes for people and I get asked about this a lot, sometimes that means pushing outside of your current circle. It's hard to think outside of our current circle, but sometimes we get so wrapped up in whatever season of life we're in, whatever current circle and environment we're in that we don't realize that there is a whole world of people out there who are growth-minded, who are willing to push you and challenge you and make you better. All you have to do is start looking.

Once you start finding those people who will push you to be better, it's a whole new world opens up. They will help give you the courage to do harder things in your life. That would be the first thing. We actually have a community that you can find at doitscared.com that helps with that exact thing. That would be definitely number one.

My number two tip is to just keep going no matter what. I think that so often, we quit right before we strike gold. There is nothing in the world that you – that will take the place of persistence. There is nothing that will take it. If you can just keep going no matter what, no matter how hard things get, don't give up, because that is the secret. There is no other secret to life, except that you just have to keep going and not give up.

[0:22:12.2] PF: That's fantastic. That's great advice. This whole book is like I said, it's an enjoyable read. It's really insightful and so very helpful. Thank you for writing it. I mean, that's that. It's a great, great addition I think to what we have.

We're going to come back in just a couple minutes and tell people how they can get a free excerpt from the book and how they can get the book and tell them more about how they can find you online. Ruth, thank you so much for joining us today.

[0:22:40.5] RS: Thank you so much for having me.

[END OF EPISODE]

[0:22:46.5] PF: That was Ruth Soukup, author of *Do It Scared: Finding the Courage to Overcome Adversity, Face Your Fears and Create a Life You Love*, which is available for pre-order now. When you visit our site at livehappynow.com, we'll give you a link to download a free excerpt of her book, as well as giving you links to find Ruth's Do It Scared Podcast and tell you where to find a quiz to learn your own fear archetype.

We want to remind you that this week's episode of Live Happy Now is brought to you by the Happy Child Summit, which is happening online April 8th through 11th. The Happy Child Summit brings together 20 different experts who will talk about everything from how to motivate your kids, to ways to tackle technology, to how to instill your child with grit and resilience. You're going to learn ways to set goals, nurture your child's character strengths and so much more. You can visit us at livehappynow.com to learn more about how to register for the Happy Child Summit.

That's all we have time for this week. We'll meet you back here again next week for an all-new episode. Until then, this is Paula Felps reminding you to make every day a happy one.

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