

CHRISTIAN WOMEN WHO CARE ABOUT OTHER CHRISTIAN WOMEN

Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of Flyingfreenow.com, and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 103 of the Flying Free Podcast. Today I'm excited to introduce you to three friends of mine who have been part of the Flying Free program since it started in 2017. All three women are survivors who have made tremendous personal progress. Part of that progress has been doing things like going back to school, getting educated in different areas of their own interest, and gaining experience. A lot of their experience has been in helping Christian women in different areas of their lives. Each one of them has a different way of helping women with a different kind of focus, which I think is fascinating.

Marion Mullinax has specialized in grief recovery. Stacey Wynn has a lot of education and experience under her belt, but lately she has taken an interest in helping people with faith recovery. When Barb Spanier talks about her experience, she is going to be talking about trauma recovery.

So we will start with Barb. How about if you tell us a little about yourself? Why don't you tell us what you do, why you do it, and your favorite ways of helping women or how you enjoy helping women with your experience and your education?

BARB: Sure. After I got my divorce numerous years ago, I decided to go back to school. I got my Master's in Transpersonal Psychology with specialization in coaching. I am a certified, credentialed life coach through the ICF, which is the coaching federation. I also recently decided to get more education. I'm in my second year of my PhD program where I'm researching a topic that is near and dear to all our hearts: how gender roles in the church have contributed to emotional and spiritual abuse as well as healing modalities for the trauma that women who have gone through that have experienced. That's what I do in my practice.

Part of what I do as a life coach is that I help women on their journey, wherever they are on their journey, to walk from their calm, centered self. I think that's what we all want to do, right? We all want to live through our authentic, courageous, confident self. Often when we've been traumatized and we've been in a destructive marriage, in emotional abuse, or in spiritual abuse, we make destructive choices. We live out of choices and actions that are from the critical part of us, this younger girl part of us, or

this angry part.

Those are the choices we are making, but what we want to do is make choices out of our self that is balanced and harmonious. No matter where they are on their journey, those are the women I coach. They want to start making their choices from a self that is clear and that they know where they want to move from.

NATALIE: What's your favorite part about the work that you do now?

BARB: I think my favorite part is working with women and having them move from the point of feeling like their voice is not heard to suddenly practicing their voice and having them feel empowered. They are like, "I did this!" They take these little steps, then all of a sudden they look back and think, "Whoa! Look what I just did!" It's that empowered feeling of movement and living authentically from their heart.

NATALIE: Yes, neat! Where would people be able to find you if they wanted to look into what you offer and your services?

BARB: IntegrativeCoachingforLife.com

NATALIE: So IntegrativeCoachingforLife.com.

BARB: Yep.

NATALIE: That's a mouthful!

BARB: It is a mouthful.

NATALIE: I will have links to her website, and Stacey's and Marion's, in the show notes. To get to those, just go to flyingfreenow.com/103, because this is Episode 103. All the links will be there. Thank you, Barb. Stacey, let's do you next. Tell us about the work you do and your experience. You've had a couple of different careers and made a transition in the last couple of years. So tell us about that.

STACEY: Yeah. It's ironic that I call my coaching "Clarity Coaching," because I think I have definitely traveled that path myself. I would love to start out, Natalie, and thank you for the work you do, because finding you in 2016 was instrumental in my journey. I'm grateful for the opportunity to give back in your community. So thank you for that.

NATALIE: That's awesome.

STACEY: I started out thinking I was going to be in the Army as an aviator but ended up, because of an injury, in corporate America. So I have a long tenure of corporate leadership. I've experienced leadership from a military perspective, from a corporate perspective, and got involved in ministry in leadership roles as well. I always kind of gravitate to that. When my marriage imploded, it was a shock and surprise to me because I felt like I had it together, but this really took me by surprise.

One thing that changed for me in that process was seeing church in a new way and a community of people who were less responsive than you would hope for and actually very exclusive. That made me start to wonder what I knew and what I didn't know about my own faith and my relationship with God. In addition to the leadership experience, the career experience, and the ministry experience I've had, I started to go on this faith deconstruction journey.

Although I had become a certified coach back in 2012 and was still working full time in my career, I ultimately ended up leaving that career and moving into a career coaching role. I've been doing that for three years now. Every day I work with clients who are transitioning in between jobs. It seems like I keep gravitating in the coaching world around this, which is really helping to equip and empower people to come to terms again with what they do well and then helping them transfer those skills into a new direction.

NATALIE: Okay.

STACEY: When I pull all that together now with the Clarity Coaching program that I have... Part of my journey also is feeling called into ministry. I'm about five classes from finishing my Master of Divinity. I'm really excited about that pursuit because I've learned so much. It's helped me help others sit in the tension of deconstruction, which is not knowing for sure what is a tradition of man versus what is really from God. There is a lot of tension and a lot of questions and experience in that place. That's where I love to be. I love to be right in there with people.

With Clarity Coaching, what I do is two different things. The first thing is coaching individuals through their process. I'm a certified Myers-Briggs facilitator. I use that as a foundation to really get to know yourself again: your strengths, your voice, your purpose. Then we can incorporate some of what is holding women (and I also coach men) back from their career pursuits or personal pursuits – just what their purpose is and what direction they want to move into. Sometimes that even goes into ministry, which I love.

The second thing is this Deconstruction Zone. I'm happy to be doing that in your community. It's a weekly call with people who are on this faith journey and have been ostracized from family and church. They want to pursue faith in God. They want to split off those traditions of man and find their new place and purpose. Those are the two ways that I see the ministry and my experience and education coming together now.

NATALIE: I love that. Why don't you tell us what your favorite part is about the work that you do?

STACEY: One of the visions I get in my head is of chains breaking. I know that sounds so cliché, but it was really something I saw one day, this picture of hands with chains that were breaking. I think my favorite part is seeing that freedom wash over somebody who has been chained by bad theology, bad doctrine, and harmful communities and relationships. To see those chains come off has been amazing for me. I love that.

NATALIE: That's awesome. Thanks so much, Stacey. Finally, let's talk to Marion and find out... You tell us about yourself and your work, because you are completely different, too. All three of these ladies bring something totally different to the table. It is very fascinating.

MARION: I'm Marion Mullinax and I am an Advanced Grief Recovery Specialist. I was trained in 2010 and certified by the Grief Recovery Institute. I got my advanced training this past March right as everything was being shut down. I take people through a textbook workbook, so what I do is considered education and not psychotherapy. I take you through this book and teach you how to process pain, how to process that stuff that is keeping you stuck. We go through a relationship, say maybe your husband, and what that relationship is, and try to find all the points of that relationship that need to be communicated that never were so you can vocalize them. You don't necessarily need to say them to the ex, but so you know what they are and get them out and give them to God and say goodbye to the pain, isolation, and fear.

If it's possible, we can go back through with another relationship, perhaps the original home/family unit. If there were problems there, we can work through each relationship one at a time, peeling off those pieces. Then we can do one on faith, on God – that relationship with God – apologize, forgive, and make statements that we need to say.

NATALIE: You have a lot of experience with grief. You've walked through grief in a lot of different ways. Do you want to tell us a little about that?

MARION: It took me a while to realize what I was going through. I didn't know what to

name it. Somewhere in the back of my head I knew there was emotional abuse, but I thought, "Okay, there's emotional abuse." I didn't know what it was until I found Flying Free. It opened up my world. Just the knowledge of that is so... It does something to your heart. That wound that had scarred over with shoving it out of the way gets opened back up when you say, "No, you need to deal with this." I put it as you are like a burn victim. You have to rub everything off, all the dead skin, until you get to the raw spot. Then you can heal.

I finally got the courage to leave my husband. He committed suicide right when we were ready for the judge to sign the paperwork. That was three years ago. The first experience was that I had identical triplets who were stillborn. That was twenty-three years ago this coming Sunday. My mother died a year after my husband. My thirteen year old (he's fourteen now), after my husband's death, began having massive panic attacks that led to psychogenic non-epileptic seizures and dissociating. He couldn't go to school, couldn't go in a restaurant, couldn't go to a movie. I thought, "Really?" I had to figure out what that was.

You know that saying, "The cobbler can't make shoes for his own children"? As a grief specialist I could tell my kids about some stuff, but that's too close to home, I guess. So I can only do what I can and just pray. But we got neurotherapy, which is putting electrodes on his head, and playing games at home. We've done it for just over a year, and he is a different child. He's back to his whole awkward teenage self.

NATALIE: Wow! Yea!

MARION: Yes, praise God! God is using me. God has been healing me. There's a whole healing component to what God is doing. The training that I have is not faith-based, but I'm trying to take what God teaches me and intertwine that. I have to set that aside and say, "We're done with grief recovery. Now we're going to just pray." Then I envelope that person in prayer and see where that goes.

NATALIE: Your subject is so heavy and serious. Do you have a favorite part about the work that you do?

MARION: When people "get it." It's hard. It is painful. That's just the sad truth about it. Some people are willing and want to be free. If they want to do that, they will do it. They will do the work that needs to be done. Some people are so stuck. It's so hard and so sad to watch them. But the best part is when they've overcome that and get on the other side of that and I always ask, "Was that as hard as you thought it would be?" And it never was. It was easier. We build up such a wall and have such fear. It's always easier

than we think.

NATALIE: Yeah. I think whenever we're resisting something, pushing it away, or fighting against it, it makes it worse.

MARION: Yeah.

NATALIE: Okay. Well, thanks, all three of you, for telling us a little about yourself. You know what I forgot to do, Stacey and Marion? We need to hear... I'll have the links on the show notes, but verbally let us know where people can find you. Stacey, where can people find you?

STACEY: Sure. ClarityUnleashed.com.

NATALIE: Okay. ClarityUnleashed.com. And Marion, what about you?

MARION: AthensGriefRecovery.com.

NATALIE: Okay. So Athens, like Athens, Greece?

MARION: Yes. But it's Athens, Georgia.

NATALIE: Athens, Georgia. All right. One reason I wanted to introduce you to these three women is that I'm going to be creating a coaches page where their bios and images and this video will go so I can refer people when they come to me and ask me, "How can you help me?" This is one of the resources that I can refer them to. These are women that I've worked with. I know them, I trust them, and I can confidently refer people to them.

Another reason is that all three women are going to be helping me in 2021 with a new program that we've been working on since last April, April 2020. We're launching it to the public today. It's January 27th (of course we're recording this in December) when this is airing, and today this program is opening up for the very first time. These three women are going to be working in this program with me in the following way. First, let me tell you a little about the program. Then I'll tell you how Stacey, Barb, and Marion are helping me.

The program is for divorced Christian women, and it's called Flying Higher. The reason we developed this program is because we have a program called Flying Free for Christian women who are in destructive relationships. But a lot of those women, when

they get out of those relationships, have done a lot of healing and are ready to rebuild their lives. There wasn't anything out there for them to focus on the rebuilding process. As you know, divorce leaves us with these colossal losses. We've got financial losses. There is spiritual fallout. There are relationship losses. Many people have lost their churches, their homes, careers get disrupted. Or maybe you were a mom. A lot of us were middle-aged, and we were moms when everything happened. Then we're becoming empty nesters and are left on our own, and we're not really sure what to do with our lives.

Also, women are emotionally and physically depleted after all that. They are left feeling sadness, grief, disillusioned, and some are unmotivated to get started again. They lack confidence and they feel fear and are even perhaps paralyzed. What I have observed is that they tend to spin in circles and have a hard time getting traction in their lives. Some of them buffer with food, sleeping (many of them are depressed), social media, binge-watching Netflix, shopping, procrastinating getting out there and starting up a career, pushing people away because they are now afraid of relationships or maybe even trying to control certain relationships to get back some control in their life. They kind of go overboard the other way. The result is that they are unable to rebuild their lives in the ways that they really want to.

So Flying Higher helps divorced Christian women do exactly that: rebuild their lives in seven different areas. The first is in their relationships with themselves and with other people; second is their mental and emotional health; third is their physical health; fourth is their faith; fifth is their environment – their home, apartment space, car, or office space; sixth is their finances; and seventh is their purpose or mission, which could include things like their career, volunteer work, hobbies, or life goals.

Flying Higher helps them in these seven areas through weekly classes, weekly coaching, a private forum, and a private podcast. It's a podcast that holds all our classes and our coaching sessions. New for this year (this is where these three women come into play), we're going to be trying a bi-weekly group gathering where every other Tuesday night one of these women will facilitate...They will do a bit of teaching, maybe ten minutes, on a concept and then have a group discussion. There will be some coaching going on and group discussion. People will get on a Zoom meeting, and it will look like this. Whoever wants to show up will come with their video on, and then you will get to know each other and get to know one of these coaches.

You can also get to know these women if you are in the Flying Higher program in the private forum, because these women are moderating spaces in there. You can interact with them, you can ask them questions, and they can help you out in the private forum

as well.

If you want to know more about Flying Higher, it's only going to be open starting today through February 2. Then it will close for six months. The reason we do that is so we can dig deep and get to know the people who are in the group. We get people who are onboarding, and we dig in for six months. Then we will open it for new people again in six months. [Flying Higher is now regularly open and accepting applications. Apply for the program today at joinflyinghigher.com]

I also want to invite those of you interested in learning more to a free workshop I'm going to do tonight at 7:00 PM CST. It's going to be live. (Now, if you're listening to this podcast and it's night time, you'll miss tonight's.) I'm going to do the same workshop live tomorrow morning, January 28th, at 11:00 AM CST. This will be a short, half-hour workshop, and then I will open it up for discussion and Q&A. If you're interested in that... It's December right now, and unfortunately, I haven't thought far enough ahead to make a URL for this.

But if you go to the joinflyinghigher.com page, that is where you can apply to join Flying Higher. There will also be a link on there that takes you to the registration page for the free workshop. So you don't have to register for Flying Higher at that moment. If you want to come to the workshop and register if you want to, I will have that link on there. Also, I'll have a direct link to registration for the free workshop on the show notes page for this podcast episode, which is flyingfreenow.com/103. [This workshop is now over and no longer available.]

I think that's it. I want to thank all three of you women for coming on and introducing yourselves. I hope some of you listening or watching will join us, because these women have been in Flying Higher. We started in April, so we've been doing Flying Higher for several months now. I think it's been magnificent! I think we've had a great time. I think the women have made huge progress in their lives. There have been a few stragglers who haven't done much because they've been so busy. It was 2020! It's been an absolutely insane year! But I'm hoping that 2021 will be different for all of us and we'll be able to dig in and do even more hard work. This is an intense program compared to Flying Free, wouldn't you say?

MARION: Definitely.

NATALIE: It's an intense program, but I always say "No pain, no gain." If you want to change your life, you've got to dig in. All four of us are going to help you guys do that. We can do it if we do it together. That's what this is all about. Thank you so much for

listening. Until next time, fly free!