

A Conversation with Suzanne Falter-Barns

Andy O'Bryan

Welcome to another Audiomotivation.com interview. My name's Andy O'Bryan and today we are with Suzanne Falter-Barns. Suzanne, welcome to Audiomotivation.com, it's great to have you with us.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Thank you, Andy.

Andy O'Bryan

Let's start by hearing about how you got to where you are today and I'd love to talk about your website, Howmuchjoy.com and you have a book out as well. So, let's get started.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Howmuchjoy.com came around because I published a book called *How Much Joy Can You Stand* and my publisher back in 1999 said gee, you should have a website, that's a great way to sell your book. And I didn't know anything about it and I set this thing up and immediately started getting traffic from women in particular who were interested in getting on with their dream in life. And they needed some additional tools or they wanted to get a little bi-weekly message from me to encourage them about their dream. It was just kind of an organic process in which everything kind of came together, melded together, popped up in surprising ways and seems to have grown in leaps and bounds. And my current website almost four years later, it's kind of hard to believe.

Andy O'Bryan

There are so many things there. There are your products and there's some articles. Can you give us kind of an overview of what you can find?

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Yeah, Howmuchjoy.com's intention is to help people who have a dream find the support tools they need to actually make it happen. And that can mean finding the time or the money or the energy in your day to live your dream. Or it can mean finding encouragement or learning how to do specific things. Some of the people who come to my site are life coaches or people who are interested in writing self-help books so I've included some information on how to get published as a self-help author and how to lead workshops and help other people have creative breakthroughs. Because my work is really focused on getting on with your creative dream that might otherwise languish and die if somebody doesn't support you to do it.

Andy O'Bryan

Now, this is in your latest book *Living Your Joy: A Practical Guide to Happiness?*

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Yeah. *Living Your Joy* is about finding the time, the money and energy to live your dreams, specifically those things. A lot of people are trying to live their dream while they're stuck at work and have no time to breathe, let alone get on with this other business they want to build or idea they want to hatch or book they want to write. You know, so few of us actually make time for our dream in our day because we are so busy taking care of everybody else, particularly women, that that's why I wrote that book. For instance, I talk at length about when is the right time to leave your job for your dream, meaning your regular day job. And it's such a sensitive kind of critical balance that people can never quite find, you know, certainty on when to do it. And so they don't, and they stall and wait and then the dream dies.

Andy O'Bryan

I can relate to that.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Yeah.

Andy O'Bryan

And, you know, I guess it depends on the circumstances. How happy you are in what you are doing currently and I mean even people who are happy with their jobs are probably thinking is this all there is. How long, is there an average, can you give us maybe a hint, a peek inside your book that maybe gets into how you determine when it would be time to really go full throttle and how to do that?

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Well, I really advise people to build the infrastructure as much as they can before they leave the job. I really want people to have a savings account, which could cover them for six months if they had to just live totally without income for a while. Or to create their job so they're really part-timing it or working in their flextime arrangement over several years when they build their business. I mean there's no rush, you don't have to leap. Leaping is great for people who are maybe in their 20s, they don't have children or elders that they're taking care of or huge debts, you know, people without a whole lot of education debt for instance. I mean you've got to pick the right time in terms of what you can comfortably support. Because if you're stressing on how little money you have and how you're going to pay the bills, you don't have the clarity of focus to receive the information about getting on with your dreams to be able to do it.

Andy O'Bryan

Right.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

So I really urge people to try to take it slow and at the same time set their day out so a piece of their day really does go to developing their dream. For instance, if

you're a morning person, get up an hour earlier and spend that time working on your dream. Or if you're a night person, go to bed later. And, you know, turn off the television and start using that time to actively develop the dream. Or another great thing you can do, which I've recommended a lot, is simply shut the door on your job and work during your lunch hour. And you know, a lot of people resist that notion because they think oh, somebody's going to find out, I'm supposed to be working during lunch. Well lunch hour exists to give you a break and if you go off and do something with your mind that is fulfilling and exciting and rewarding, you're going to come back to your desk refreshed and much more productive for the afternoon and if you just keep on plowing through the whole lunch hour you don't really take a proper break.

Andy O'Bryan

Now, Suzanne, how did you get to where you are at this point? I mean did you do this at some point?

Suzanne Falter-Barns

In fact, I had a couple of dreams successfully pursued and one of them was to have a career as a singer and when I went to New York as a fresh out of college kid, that was my primary goal. But I picked up a job in advertising as a copywriter to support myself while I did that. And first I worked in an office and I worked through my lunch hours on my dream and I was very careful to go home at 5:00 every day. And I began to really develop an act and a bonding of work and partners in my cabaret career and successfully performed at night for about five years while I was doing this work as a copywriter. And during that time, I went from working full-time to freelancing, which gave me fantastic flexibility because I worked out of my home. I could go to as many auditions during the day as I wanted to. I was still able to make money. I mean, I went through the whole process which I describe in my book of being able to go from a full time locked in to the, you know, 9 to 5, down to being able to come and go as I please, making money in a way that only occupied a small chunk of my time and being able to live the dream in the evenings.

And then I kind of went a final step with this, which was that I left New York, I stopped the singing career and I started getting along with writing the self help books and in doing that, I set up an Internet business so I could work on the self help books and still have income coming in that was really above and beyond the books. So I didn't have to worry about selling the books while I was writing them and that took a lot of the pressure off so I could write in a less sort of bottom line oriented way and I had a little more creative freedom.

Andy O'Bryan

And so now here you are with your website, and do you still sing?

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Yeah, I do as a matter of fact. My next website, which I'm just developing right now, includes a character who is me, who is going to go out and do live performances which are related to self help believe it or not.

Andy O'Bryan

Wow.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

I brought it all together in a rather strange way.

Andy O'Bryan

We'll have to get some of that on the member site.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

That would be fun.

Andy O'Bryan

Well, that's a great success story and you know I think part of it is that people don't really think that they can do it or they don't know how to proceed or they're not writing their goals down. It seems like there is always something that is standing in the way...so would you say that your latest book tells them, you know, step by step how to overcome those obstacles?

Suzanne Falter-Barns

What both my books do is help people dismantle the infrastructure of fear, which is really what keeps people stopped. You know, you can write down goals until you're blue in the face but you're never going to do any of them if you're too afraid to try. And a lot of us are really afraid of becoming bigger in life and really changing and evolving and requiring different things of ourselves.

You know when I worked in corporate America under my various freelance jobs, it was so comfortable to kind of hunker down in my office and just live this little constrained life where I just did these little paths and nobody really required a lot of me and I didn't really have a lot of responsibilities and nobody really knew me. I was really cozy and I had fun. But it wasn't what I was supposed to be doing and I was always gnawed at by this inner voice saying, "you really shouldn't be doing this, you need to be reaching a bigger audience with your work, Suzanne."

So *How Much Joy Can You Stand*, my first book, really takes people by the hand through all the different barriers and fears that keep us limited and small and feeling like that's the only safe place we can find, because it isn't. In fact when you get on with your dream, your dream is so authentic to you and it becomes such a natural thing, that it just naturally increases the happiness factor, the joy

factor in your life but it also gives you a kind of license to be who you are and that's a very empowered position--one of real strength and courage.

Andy O'Bryan

It builds momentum.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Exactly. I'm sure you found that in development of your own website.

Andy O'Bryan

Yes. And now I'm just trying to segue into this because I feel like your two books probably cover the resources that a lot of folks need to keep on track and go with their dreams, but what other tools and resources would you say are essential for personal growth and success and dream achievement for our members?

Suzanne Falter-Barns

I'll tell you, I like meditation a lot. And I don't meditate for a long time every day but maybe 10 minutes and during that time I'll think back into an authentic, calm and grounded place in my gut. And then I'm not running my business and doing my work out of a place of scrambling, hectic, stress built fear, I'm writing it from a place of this is fine, everything is fine, it's all going to work out and this is the next step I have to take. Because every day I sit down at my computer to do my work, it's clear that I need to work on the next step in front of me and when I lose sight of that and I get a little panicky or stressed or anxious, I just have to go upstairs and do my little meditation for about ten minutes and I come back in a much calmer place. And that's my grounded place.

Because that's the thing, you're supposed to be doing the dream so all the information gets made available to you as you go intuitively or through lucky circumstances or just finding the right bits of information. And that guides you to the next point, which guides you to the next point so you can relax into that process and not sweat it. You're great and that's why meditation can help you do it.

Andy O'Bryan

You know, people probably say who don't do it, say they don't have time and then if they realize it makes you more productive with the time you have then I think, you know...

Suzanne Falter-Barns

It makes you more productive and it makes you understand a little bit better what you're supposed to be doing.

Andy O'Bryan

Right.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

You know, adds a little more clarity. And I really mean that about 10 minutes, you know, we don't have to become these Zen masters and sit for hours meditating. I would be bored out of my mind frankly and I'm too itchy, I got to get moving you know.

Andy O'Bryan

Right, right, but it brings you into focus and keeps you going.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Right, that's my good tool.

Andy O'Bryan

Well, that's terrific. Well, Suzanne, I wish you luck with your latest book. It was released in September, it's called *Living Your Joy: A Practical Guide to Happiness* and your website which is Howmuchjoy.com.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

That's right.

Andy O'Bryan

Suzanne Falter-Barns, thank you for joining us today.

Suzanne Falter-Barns

Thank you. Take care.