

# Gen Y Shift

## Barbara Arredondo

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Ben: Good evening, everyone or good afternoon or good morning depending on where you are. Welcome back to the Gen Y Shift Series. This is Ben Hart of The Shift Network, very happy to be back with you for our June call and I'm joined by a wonderful, wonderful woman who I'm going to introduce in just a moment.

Before we begin, I just want to say that we've been off for about three weeks now, so we had a big break, but we're going to be coming with more continual calls throughout the summer and into the fall probably about every two weeks. So I look forward to being with you on all those.

And actually, the reason for the three-week break is -- part of the reason why we have our lovely guest for tonight -- which is that I was off in Japan for a trip. I got invited by a peace organization there to come and take part in their peace event and give a talk at the end of the week with a number of other young peace workers from around the world.

And my guest tonight, Barbara Arredondo, was one of those guests as well. So I got to meet her in Japan. We've spent a week together. And really the six or seven of us who were there just became a big family and got to inspire each other with the work we're doing in the world and who we're being in the world. And so I really want to bring her on to share her story because I got to hear much of it while we were together and it's just really inspiring what she's up to in the world and really inspiring who she's being, and I think there's a lot that we can each take from that in terms of our own lives and our own inspiration.

So with that, I just want to give a brief intro for Barbara which is that she --I don't know how many years ago at this point, but three or four, started a peace conference in Monterrey, Mexico where she's from and 6000 people attended. And then it became another annual thing. It happened the next year as well and the Dalai Lama came and many, many peace builders and peace activist from around the world came. It was just a beautiful, beautiful thing.

She's now the CEO and co-founder of ILSTN and started the "I Am Here" Series which is a journey for women, a five-month journey in Monterrey that would be supporting women to connect to who they are and what they're here for.

So Barbara, thank you so much for being here. It's a pleasure to have you on.

Barbara: Hi, Ben! Thank you so much for the invite. I feel honored to be able to speak to you tonight and also with everyone who's listening. So thank you so much for having me.

Ben: For sure, for sure. And just to be given, what I'd love to do is ask you to share a bit of your story. I heard a bit of it in Japan and that goes back quite a few years to really you releasing into or discovering or having it revealed to what you're here to do and kind of going on the journey of those years. So I think there's a lot to choose out from that but I'd love for you to just jump in and kind of share it with everybody.

Barbara: Definitely. So my experience was that when I was about five, six years old, I always knew that I wanted to help others and I was this really fearless child even. I have an older brother and an older sister and I would even tease them because I would never be afraid of anything. But all of that changed when I was I think between 21 and 22 because I slept with my lights turned on for about six months. I would cry myself to sleep every night and at that time I was so afraid. I thought I was going to die and at moments I wanted to die.

So one day my mother, she comes up to me and she notices that I had been acting strange and it wasn't only because of school or studying too much at university. And she tells me, "What's wrong?" So I told her I was really afraid and I can't give her a concrete answer as to why I was feeling that way. And that night before going to sleep, I didn't want to go throughout the whole process over and over again, waiting until it was 4:00 a.m. and crying all over again so that I could fall asleep.

And that night, I started asking myself, "Why are you afraid?" And I like to think that the other voice I heard, it was the voice that came from my heart. So I heard that I was afraid because it was time to do what I came here to do. And I said, "But I'm just a girl. I'm only 21. I'm from Monterrey from this city in Mexico. It's a big city but what am I going to do?" And something deeper inside of me told me that in a way I knew but I still wanted to question it.

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So since I didn't want to keep living like that in this ocean of fear, I said, "Okay, it makes sense. I'm alive. I probably came to this world for a reason." So I asked for one thing in exchange. And I asked to the universe or to God, the angels, "Show me the way and I will do the work that I

have to do." But there is one trick to that. I said, "Please let me meet the people I have to meet in order to do this work because I knew I couldn't do it by myself." And it was the first time that night that I was able to sleep with my lights turned off and I smiled that night and was able to finally get some decent sleep.

And the following day when I was going to school, I was in my car and on the red light there was a woman that was asking for some money, and she was an indigenous woman who was carrying her baby on her back. And I just looked at her and I wondered why was I so lucky that I could have a car, go to one of the best schools in Mexico, learn about Africa from an Italian teacher; and I was looking right into her eyes, and I knew that I had access to all of that because one day I would be able to help women like her.

So to this day, I still remember her face and she taught me one of the biggest lessons. It's that how to look into someone else's eyes without being afraid and also really looking regardless of who the other person is. And that semester at school, that is when I realized that I loved writing. So I said one night one day I'm going to be a journalist and I'll be an editor for a magazine although my major was foreign affairs. So it had nothing to do with that.

And a couple of months later, I met a friend and she invited me to work with her on a magazine she was just opening, and that's how I got involved in journalism and being an editor. And for that time, I was sure in my heart that I was doing what I love. I started out in music so I would get to go to Coachella and all these music festivals in different cities and also every other time write about the environment and things I like that were more about the conscience. But I still wasn't really happy.

So two years after working in music and in film, I became really sad again and that was 2009. So I thought that my voice wasn't being expressed and that my ideas weren't heard in the office, and I wanted to keep on writing more about peace and social issues rather than music and the arts. So every night, I began again crying myself to sleep and thinking that my work wasn't good enough and that I really hadn't done much, and I was being really hard on myself.

That is also the year where the war on drugs in Mexico intensified. And so Monterrey where I'm from, it's known as Mexico's wealthiest city and it was also known as one of Latin America's safest cities. So at the time wherever I would go, people would be talking about terrible stories, kidnapping or things that were really taking over us. There was a constant fear every day everywhere. And that helped me realize how important media was in helping change that because media would only talk about

all these killings and shootings all day, and then of course when you would go to work or school, the stories were even worse.

So I said, "How can we overcome this if everything we're seeing, everything we are being said is fear? And how will we be able to see the light?" And I started thinking about Gandhi and Mother Theresa and all these leaders that we all admired in the 20th century and thought why aren't there any Gandhis in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Why aren't people talking about them?

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But something in my heart told me that they existed; we just weren't sharing their projects or their ideas. So I committed myself to finding them.

And that summer, I came across an article in Time 100 that was written by Zainab Salbi. She is an Iraqi woman who founded Women for Women International at age 23 without a single penny. And to date, 18 years later, she has helped over 300,000 women in eight war zone countries. So her story was fascinating. And when I was able to get that interview with her and just to feel her presence, she's so humble and so powerful that I thought more people need to know to her. These are the kind of leaders that I thought existed or positive stories out there that we need to learn more and more.

So that day, I called home and I told my mom, "I'm dreaming to do an event." Because I was so inspired that I wanted people to feel what I felt but beyond an article because when situations are tough and we might read something, we might feel a little bit of what the other person is trying to share. But considering the situation of Monterrey, I thought that the articles weren't enough anymore. I thought these people had to come. So I started emailing her agent telling them I was going to do an event and everything was all really in my heart. I wasn't really working with anyone. I was doing the magazine.

And I got to meet a couple of people like Zainab. I heard about Cameron Sinclair from Architecture For Humanity and Jacqueline Novogratz and I thought these are wonderful beings. And I kept this idea for six months that I'm going to do an event.

And at the end of that year, an organization contacted me. They had been doing an event for the first time that year and asked me to work with them. And I thought well, great. Maybe this is the opportunity to actually do an event. So that's how I started getting involved in curating events. I had no idea about organizing or asking for sponsorships or

anything at all. So I tried to look at everything as writing an article or sharing a story as to why this was important or why this had to happen.

And it was really magical because even when the organization contacted me and they told me the dates, the event ended on October 2<sup>nd</sup> which is Gandhi's birthday and I thought that was a great sign. So I said definitely, I have to do this. And even when I started working with them and I was thinking of who could come, I would play Gandhi's video from the background or just you know videos of people who inspired me or music in general.

And when the event actually happened on September 2010, all these people that I dreamed of them being here or coming when it was just an idea and reaching out to 6000 people from Monterrey, 6000 people who had lost all their hopes. We had from public school teachers to students, CEOs, housewives, all kinds of people. And to see them take note and be inspired and crying and just observing how the look in their eyes would change from when they arrived to when they left, it was very empowering and inspiring. And to my surprise was that the speakers who came here, people such as Zainab and Cameron, they were overwhelmed because they were so well received by the audience. They didn't expect that.

And when I invited them, I would tell them, "This is the best event you will ever go to because we are in such need of these messages that the audience will listen with an open heart." And they could really feel that. So in spite of the fact that it was such a large audience and massive venue, it really felt like it was small and intimate. And every night I would question myself how can I make people feel at home.

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Because as a journalist, I notice that when people would interview others sometimes or even myself as a reader, I would look at something. And the person that's presented to us, his or her life seemed so attainable and unreachable that they were someone we could admire but maybe we couldn't really what they were doing. So I would always try to bring the story to a human level, bring the human side in them as part of the story. And that's what I try to do in the events as well.

And that year was the first year that finally we made it, and we started listening to success stories of people within the audience, students getting together to help people in their community or mothers realizing how they had been raising their children and just noticing how the conversation had been changing in the city.

And there's a little cool channel in Monterrey. The first day, they aired a couple of minutes of the program but they received so many phone calls that day that they decided to air the next two days because it was a three-day event. They canceled their programming and just aired the whole event.

And then they were blown away because people kept calling. They wanted more and more of those who didn't get a chance to see it that we decided to for the rest of the year to air one conference per Saturday. So all of the 30 speakers who showed up, we repeated their messages over and over again.

And I thought okay, so the first achievement was done and I felt really loved and blessed and I just wanted to give more and more and more. So the question came, should I do another one or not? Some people advised me that I shouldn't because it was just so magical that it would be risky to do a second one, and I decided to accept.

And the second year which was last year, we had people such as you know His Holiness, the Dalai Lama as you mentioned, and Somaly Mam who came from Cambodia, Shirin Ebadi, another Nobel laureate. And they all again, once again magically accepted and we now moved into a larger venue.

And the interesting thing is that when that event happened last year, one week before there was a massacre in a casino at 4 p.m. where 54 people were murdered because of the organized crime. And the accident actually happen a couple of blocks from my office at that time. So everybody started talking about it all around the world, tweeting and on Facebook, and now Monterrey was being shown as the worst place to visit in Mexico when it used to be the model city, the city that all of Mexico wanted you know to become like.

And I started receiving calls from all of our speakers, Forrest Whitaker, Ishmael Beah or emails. And instead of wondering or suggesting we should cancel, they just called to say, "How are you? We're thinking of you. And I hope you don't cancel because now more than ever is when r city needs these messages." So it's very encouraging from their side to show their support to us.

And so when the event took place and there was all of this healing that had to happen as a community and as a whole because there was so much hate right towards people who are involved in this crime and whatnot, and all of this forgiveness that have to happen inside of us as well as outside of us, so we decided that for that year, our theme had to be nonviolence from inside to outside. And it's just how can we introduce

such concepts when there's all this suffering going on. But we realized that people were ready for the messages and they were very receptive.

And even on the third day that the event happened successfully once again, people are showing their love, we shared the event online through Livestream and 93,000 people watched it from 74 countries and we didn't really advertise it but we just had that response.

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So imagine all of us really elated, really excited, so grateful that everyone came and for what they had to say. So on the third day we had a side event in one of Monterrey's most dangerous neighborhoods and we had to do it early because as soon as the sun disappears, shootings might happen. So we had 84 speakers there, one of them, his name is Jiwe Morris. He was a former member I think of the Blood Gang, yes, of the Bloods, and he's talking there to all these people from that community, and we had a Q&A session with the neighbors and the speakers and because of time we had to finish.

So one of the people in the audience, this man in his 40s, he comes up to me and just grabs me and he starts shouting, he says this. "I'm fed up of all of these!" That particular event was organized with the help of the government and he started just expressing all his anger of the situation but he grabbed me. And so he punches me in the arm and he is just really angry, and by that time I'm just so tired I couldn't even cry and say anything. And I was just observing and listening to everything, all his anger, and I understood even though it was the last day, it was my experience of how the event itself ended. I knew that there was so much more work to be done and that it was just a beginning.

At the end of last year I decided to partner with a friend of mine and I started analyzing what had helped me come to this stage, the decisions I had made and the ones that I hadn't made and I learned that I've listened in to have big role in all of my story. So being a journalist and listening to the other people's answers and then listening to what people wanted in events and what the speakers would say.

And when I did all these work last year of giving and giving I really lost myself of who is Barbara, and even though I would enjoy it and everything, there was just no line between me and my work or whatever else. But the fact that I was able to regroup into that listening mode I learned that if one listens to the beauty in others you can actually find your own and then take it from there. So at times we forget to even talk to the person next to us or listen to what someone is really saying and it just I knew that I had to take the next step because there was a kind of

message that had to grow and I had finished my time with that organization. So that's how the agency ILSTN came to be, and my friend and I, Christina Cortez, we didn't really even know at that time what we'll be doing but we thought we would trust and that things would come by themselves and they did.

Another friend of us who said, "We should really focus on something for women. How about we do a couple of these events for them?" And we thought this is the best idea. After meeting Zainab I wanted to do something for women but it wasn't the right time and let's just do this. So that's how the idea for the "I Am Here" series came to be, and the idea of calling it "I Am Here" there's a couple of stories behind that.

When I was a journalist and we went to this concert festival in Florida, and to go to a concert we had to take a shuttle that was an hour drive from the hotel. And in our way back I just knew since the moment that I got on that bus, I knew we were going to crash. And sometimes we have these feelings and we think we're crazy and I just said to myself, "You're crazy. You need to sleep. It was 2:00 a.m." But there was this voice that kept telling me to tell the driver, "Keep your eyes on the road," and I didn't tell him.

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It at two-lane, two-way drive highway, and I looked at the end and I see two lights coming our way. And I just thought we're going to crash and we're going to crash with that car. And we did, we did crash. And the shadow turned. Everyone was screaming.

And a friend who I was travelling with, she jumped over to me to protect me. I was very still. And I remember thinking, well, this life, it was really nice and I'm very happy to have been here, and I'm ready to go home and I was smiling. And nothing happened. The driver was hurt. Nobody in our bus passed away or suffered any major wounds. But the person, unfortunately, who was driving on the other truck, did pass away. Both drivers were driving really close between each lane.

And I thought why didn't anything happened and I'm still here? And I learned that it because there was something more than just writing about music or this or that I have to share, that it was just the step towards my mission. And even that time, before when I was a student and afterwards when I was depressed again, and those moments of just wanting to die because I wanted to go home and learning over the past years that I am here and that we are all here and really acknowledging that presence every day because it's daily work of how amazing it is to be here and to be able to share and listen and enjoy and experience all the



kinds of feelings from sadness, anger, love, and how just that constant flow and wave of emotions and experiences that are given to us makes us beautiful in so many different ways that sometimes we don't acknowledge or just let things pass by.

So one of the greatest things I have learned is that when we are able to say thank you no matter what kind of situation we are in, whether we're angry or sad or when we are happy, that's so important, we should say thank you. That I learned when I'm angry and I'm saying thank you, the situation changes completely or even when I'm sad.

And I think for me, the journey has been how to get rid of my own fears to be true to who I really am, listen to the beauty within, stop judging myself. I never judge people while I'm so judgmental towards myself and that doesn't make sense. So it really has been this journey of letting go of fear and embracing the love that is within each of us and of course for all of us. That's a beautiful thing.

Now, everything that I do, I would say, "You do this thing for others and always for yourself." It's a two-way thing. And I think that's one of the biggest non-negotiables for me in my life.

So I don't know, Ben, if you'd like to ask anything and so that I would be able to share in a more directed way.

Ben: Yeah, that's great. There are many things I'd like to ask you and I think your story is so rich and there are so many levels to it as well as periods of it that I think there's a lot to parse out in that.

I kind of want to use that kind of as a template almost for each of us. Each of us is in your story because our lives are so similar. We're all mirroring back to each other. I realized or so, similar with all nearing to each other. So just to start at the beginning of what you've experience, I think the fear that you described at a young age and going through that period of really crying out for --

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The way I heard it was it crying out for guidance and crying out for support, and I think that's something that everyone goes through in their 20s and in their 30s as well when we're looking for our place in the world and looking for our identity. I'm wondering for you, it sounds like you have a relationship and had a relationship at that time to this idea of benevolent universe like the universe is kind and the universe is there to support you, and I'm wondering if you could speak a bit more to that

because I think that's so important when we're in that period of kind of opening and listening.

Barbara: Yes. You see sometimes when we are going through that -- and I've been sharing this with some friends that might be going through some similar stages -- is that when we are in that stage we don't realize the beauty that is given to us in that stage. I tell them, "If you have similar feelings, embrace it." This is the best part of everything because that's when you start learning about who you are, what do you want from life, and also to know that it's okay not to know, to embrace the uncertainty. It's just like this saying that just when the caterpillar -- is that how you call it before you become a butterfly in English, the caterpillar?

Ben: The caterpillar? Yeah, exactly.

Barbara: When the caterpillar thought it was going to die, it became a butterfly. So I was like shifting between what I'm going through personally and what my city is going through or the country or the world. So take Mexico that we're going through this situation and everyone is involved with all this fear. I think little did we know is that we're actually all these caterpillars, that we're about to become butterflies, and things will change; things will shift.

So when I had that first big experience at 22, and I thought I was raised up Catholic, but I've always been really open to all religions and spiritual traditions. In a way, I knew that I wasn't alone because we all feel alone at times and I think it's part of our human process, but something in me told me that it wasn't completely true. There have been many dear family members who have passed away, either grandparents or uncles or aunts, and I would always call out on them and ask them for messages or signs.

And that's what I did that night with the universe and God. I've done it every day since then. Whenever I'm about to start a project or make a certain decision I say, "Please give me a sign." And it really has become like a game because there are all these signs around us all the time and we don't notice them. They can come either through something a friend of yours said and you didn't expect that the friend would say that or a cashier or even just a song, a car driving next to you.

And if we really pay close attention I think there are various levels to listening. One can listen of course with their ears, but we can listen with our eyes and with all of our senses. I think that when we are able to place ourselves in that position of just being and listening to everything that's when we can set ourselves outside from the picture so that we can take it all in, analyze, observe, and then go back into it.

I was really surprised because last year I learned through Barbara Streisand. She spoke on TEDxWomen, and I was watching her online. She's been an advocate of heart disease so she was invited to speak about that, and she shared a really interesting fact, which is that when the heart is being formed, when we were babies, when we were in our mother's womb, what it does is that it not only pumps, but actually it has to listen to the organs around it so that it can actually be developed and become a heart.

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And it really struck me because I thought it's in our nature to listen to what's around us so that we can become who we are. And so I think that listening to all those nights of crying and of just ignoring myself and being the perfect, I think, actress of hiding it also well except from my mom, that going everyday to school and when laughing and pretending everything is okay and just saying that you've been tired because of the grades or whatnot or partying too much, and how sad it is that we do those things and when you get home to our own private spaces, we just fall apart.

And I think there is the song in all of that. There is music in it. Because once we go to our little corners and our walls come down, we fall apart, and that is when we can actually take the time if we want and if we are ready and if it's something we would like. There is always all this if's and all of these choices.

But what I am trying to say with this is that we do have the opportunity to decide and to choose and it really all comes down to us. And we've altered all of these so many times. I would hear about these things and of course when I was going through it, I would ignore it. But it got to a point where I couldn't take it anymore. And I've also learned that the more we ignore it, the harder the lessons or the signs will be, the more we will suffer, the more we resist to being true to who we are.

And I've been meeting people in their 50s or in their 60s, in their 70s that relates to my story of course and I can relate to their stories as well, and who are going to a very difficult thing in their personal lives. They're only at work but with their families. And I've learned that the more we ignore it, the more difficult it is going to get and complicated because it's I think one of the basic lessons that all of us has to go through in this particular time of humanity.

And so now, all I like saying is just embrace whatever it is you are going through because surely, something good will come out of it. So I really enjoyed those six months. Now, looking back, now I can smile that I went

through them. And I even enjoy a day, a cloudy day now. I smile at it as well.

Ben: That's so good. I love that. I think it is such an important reframing for young adult in this time in history to really embrace those mysterious moments and those moments of confusion, those months long, it's not even years' long periods of not knowing what we're doing with our lives because it really is, like you said, a caterpillar turning into butterfly. And certainly that's a big reason why we started this series is to support young people and those that are in their 20s and 30s and really grounding in this wisdom and creating the context that we can ask this question and support each other and kind of breaking down and seeing what arises as we listen. So yeah, thank you for being an example of that.

What I'm struck by from your story too if what often emerges from that space is not total clarity on what my life purpose is. It's often a thread of inspiration that we didn't get to follow and for you, you move to the journalism and then finding 21st century Gandhis and then moving into the peace event. It feels like you really are just committed to following what's that true to you and inspiring to you in that moment and moving one step at a time, which it seems like you continue to do. And I think that is so important for each of us to get is okay, it won't be completely clear but as long as I take one step at a time and willing to fail and willing to experiment, it can work.

Barbara: Yes, and like you say, just one step at a time because what good would it be or would it even be fun or worth it at all if we knew we can't complete clarity about everything?

Ben: Exactly, where is the fun in that?

Barbara: Exactly, it's like when you've already seen a movie and you might laugh at some parts and not so much in others but what's the point? It's about how we can always learn and let ourselves be, and this is what I always hope is that I never lose the capacity of wonder and amazement of what happens in my daily life personally because it is what personally keeps me going.

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I used to be really tough growing up like I would never cry at anything and now I would just cry at everything. You have met me Ben. And I made this decision, I said, "You know, I will never cry again over anything sad like the things that really aren't really sad. I will just cry about the happy things." And now I'm crying even more than before but just because I'm so happy.

And so today, this is why, you know I'm really enjoying having this conversation with you and sharing this with those who are listening. The only reason why I'm actually here tonight sharing this story is because of that decision that I made that day. And going back to how these ideas started we never know where this will end, and the truth is that I don't want to know. I'm just happy of being here and letting it show me the way.

Ben: It's great. So in the midst of this kind of trust that you dived into and this surrender that you have to enjoying the adventure as you go, I'm wondering, how do you deal with fear as it arises? Certainly I imagine it was more in the beginning, but in these days how do you deal with fear?

Barbara: It's a constant. With this new project of course there's fear. Will people like it? Will we be able to raise the corresponding sponsors or all of these and all of that? And I go always back to the same basic thing is that if it's something that's really being done from our hearts. I'm questioning myself, "Is this coming from my heart? Then I shouldn't be afraid."

If things will happen, it's because it was part of the song that we were supposed to play. If it will not happen, it's just not the time or not the part of the song. So it's how can you let go of that which you cannot control.

And I learned this on while working on the second event. One night before the event started, we're at the venue, staging everything and all of these people coming from everywhere and I thought, "This is really huge." I was really nervous. But I said, "You know what? This is perfect and it hasn't even started."

So everything will fall into place like it has to because I know that I'm not doing this by myself. We're just instrument of that and beyond those of us who are in this world, our guides or angels or whatever we like to call that greater force or higher source and I think they are all with us and helping us if we want to call out on their help.

So I think that's something that helps when we are willing to receive help as well. And that fear of -- I learned that the only thing I should be afraid of are my own negative thoughts. So when one of those starts to rising in my mind and I now can identify them easily, I just ignore them.

I do do one thing with them is that I look at the source of where they are coming from like what's the real reason behind that fear. So like when I shared with you in Japan, my biggest fear was public speaking and the fact that we were invited to share some of our messages over there at

the gift symposium is that I was supposed to who were giving a gift but the gift was given to me of how to overcome this fear of public speaking.

And so now, sometimes when something creates fear within me, I just say, "I want to do that" so that I let go of that and I should try it. And I realized that it's not that bad. So sometimes it's just these ideas that we have created or we have made believe. And the funny thing is that all of us are going through the same things, no matter who we are. Either it's a president or this really famous musician. Everyone is going through the same feelings. And my mom, she's been one of my greatest teachers. She has taught me how not to care so much and not be embarrassed about things and just it's okay.

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She has a great sense of humor and I learned how not to take myself too seriously because I became this person who didn't go out and I was just like yes, the world and humankind. But we also have to have fun and life is about smiling and dancing and enjoying being here. So how can we balance all of that? And it really is a daily reminder of how we want to choose our time on this earth, how can we be of service, how can we always be open to learning. So I think those are my thoughts on getting rid of fear.

Ben: That's great. Thank you. We have about 15 minutes left or so and people who are on the line, I want to give you the chance to ask Barbara any questions you might have. So we have people on the webcast. You can insert your questions there. You can just type it in. And if you're on the phone line, feel free to hit 1 and we can call on you to ask your question.

So while people are thinking about if they have any questions in the moment, one of the things I want to ask you Barbara was you mentioned a few times this idea of listening to your heart and I'm wondering if you could just speak to what that looks like for you, how you'd recommend people to really deepen more into their heart and to their truth in that way.

Barbara: Yes, so I would now describe listening to my heart. What it means to me is a voice that creates inner peace, not this voice that makes me doubt or be afraid. It's this warm and loving voice that wants to bring out the best in me.

And there's also a side to it where when you're able to listen to your heart, you can begin to also listen to the hearts of the person next to you, when you're having an argument with someone or any kind of conversation so that you can fully place yourself in the other person's

position and just face the conversation in a completely different way. So I would say that listening to the heart just means knowing there's a safe place in there and out there for you.

And there's a quote by Rumi. This is the poet that I've loved for so many years and that's how I use it to know if I'm listening to my heart or not. What Rumi used to say is that "When you do things from your soul you feel a river moving in you, a joy." So that's what it feels like for me to listen to my heart. It's just this force of joy and happiness and openness and truth.

Ben:

Beautiful. That relates a lot to -- Gay Hendricks was on with us last month and he was talking about people living in their genius, which I feel is very similar to what you just described of a river moving through us. And his thing was often we have to just sit and say "Hmm, what is my genius? What is that river that wants to move through me?" And it's so similar to what you're describing about listening and it really it is the discovery and something we reveal on ourselves and kind of clarify as we move more and more.

So again, people on the line, you are again nice and quiet which is beautiful. You're welcome to just listen if you'd like but feel free to ask questions on the webcast or on the live line by hitting 1. So I'll just keep going because I've got tons of questions for Barbara. One other thing that comes up for me is the experience we had in Japan of being with ourselves and a number of other people in there, 20 something, 30 somethings who are doing great things in the world, is just how much we kind of balance off each other in inspiration, and certainly being here for the Gen Y Series like this is all about just having people our age come together and support each other and get great information and just all of us live our greatness.

And so I'm curious for you is you bring this work into Monterrey where there is violence and there is probably a lot of hopelessness as you described. I'm wondering what is your experience of bringing this to powerful leaders and people who are being loved and sharing their gifts. How are people responding to it and how are things moving with both the peace conference and with the women's series you've started?

Barbara:

Well, before I go into that, I'd just like to share something, is that after meeting you and having that time in Japan and when you shared your presentation, there was one thing that really helped me tie one thing to the other and it's just this idea that you shared about being loved, and you said, "I am loved."

**[0:50:05]**

And I've kept that close to my heart in what I'm doing now, is in that whatever it is that we decide to do or to accomplish or not and just be or decide or whatever, but if you're in the space of saying, "I am loved, I am listening to my heart, I am flowing, I am the genius, I am the river," however we want to label it, it really transforms the outcome and the process itself.

And now that after going to Japan, the treats ended three days before the launch of our presentation for "I am Here" series where we were expecting 800 women and we're inviting the wealthiest women in Mexico to participate because this group of women haven't been addressed before in such a way in Mexico of being open and honest and just sharing conversations like the one we are having right now.

So I was just -- I couldn't believe that I was able to go away and my amazing partners, there were four of us, doing this work and how can you trust and let go. And I just knew. There is a larger force in everything that we're trying to do so everything will turn out great and I trust it. And so when I came back here I started thinking how much -- this is lots of hard work when we set out to do these things. It's not easy but it's really worth it. You just have to be persistent and I thought I have been trying to get all these people from outside to come to Mexico and remind us the beauty within and our potential.

When they come is that, of course, you go somewhere and you share this message, but there is an experience that happens both ways and for the first time I was able to learn that in Japan. When we were there I think so much was given to us. And that when we visit Tohoku where the tsunami hit last year and it was just this empty city, for me it made sense of why I was inviting to come to Monterrey in spite of the violence and how people don't want to travel here, is that when-one shows up to a place, just by your presence you are giving so much. But I think that you're there giving but so much is given back to you.

So what I learned last week after our launch, we had 800 women. They were all really excited. And Marianne Williamson and Agapi Stassinopoulos were our opening speakers, were our fairy godmothers to wish us well for the rest of the series. And they touched on very difficult themes and issues that people in this community sometimes and many communities around the world don't like listening to because it's difficult to really face your fears. It takes a lot of courage. We are resistant to change. Each of them has their own powerful way of sharing the messages.



What was really beautiful is that by the end of the night, hundreds of these women, they were so grateful for the message and our presentations. It was a free event. Nobody have to pay to go to it. We shared it online and just tried to introduce the idea of the potential already lies within them. Both Agapi and Marianne -- Marianne had already been here two years ago for the first massive event they had organized, but the fact that she was able to come back and see how the city had been changing -- they were really surprised and happy. They felt their hearts because you might have this conversation with every woman in Monterrey and that is I want to help but I don't know how or where to start, and there is something that tells me you have to do this but I have no idea.

**[0:55:00]**

So you see, all of us, like when I had that at 21, had that dream. And then someone like Agapi who has said that she's 59 and for the first time in her life she can be Agapi for who she is, and her name means unconditional love.

So just the celebrating that love and life -- and she's Greek -- and helping us, remind us of how to enjoy that in spite everything. And I think the most powerful thing she shared was she said, "What I feel in Monterrey is that it's a city where people love fashion and it's very similar to L.A. in many ways. It's kind of Beverly Hills. You love all of these and that. You have the best shoes and best dresses and haircuts. But what I'm feeling," she said, "is that you need confidence."

And that's when she was able to really go into everyone hearts because they are all, we are all wondering this but we are afraid to start talking about it. So even myself, who at 22, 21, I didn't talk like I do now even though I would always think this way, but I thought people would judge me or that I was crazy. Who wants to hear this 22-year-old talking about the heart and the universe and being spiritual? And you want to be cool and talk about the latest bands or concert or whatever movie or book that you've found out.

But I think the question is we have to realize that this is cool as well and you can still be who you are. You don't have to change the way you dress or the way you live or the way you eat. I think that's the challenge is that's more truth to yourself that you can be, the more fun it can be.

So I think this process will begin officially on August, August 30th. That's when we kicked off with Abby Disney and Kathy LeMay. Then we finish in November with Zainab Salbi and Alice Walker. We will go -- all of us in

this journey and that's why we've been sharing with them -- of finding ourselves and creating community within the community.

And when we have the presentation, the four of us at different points, we shared our own personal stories of why we were afraid or what had happened or this inner violence or inner war, and people didn't expect that. Usually you go to an event here and just everyone, they talk to someone but nobody talks about what's going on inside.

So what we've really been insisting is that the only way that any kind of help we can be to others or of service is that we are very open as well with our own processes. I don't expect anyone to change or be fearless if I don't share with them what it has been like for me.

And I think that's sort of bit of what we're going to be seeing the next couple of months, and hopefully we'll be able to share it in different cities and different places around the world. And being reminded of the gift that it is to being here. I always go back to that of being happy of being alive and knowing that you are here and knowing that this is true for so many of us around the world.

There's seven billion people wondering the same question. So how exciting is it that we can come together, take off our masks and celebrate that.

Ben: Beautiful, Barbara. I love it

Thank you so much for what you're creating in the world. It's awesome. I'm a big, big fan and everything that you're doing is really just reflecting people's greatness back to that and you do that so much for me in the short time I've known you. Obviously you're doing that in your city. So thank you for who you're being in the world and thank you for coming on here and sharing your life with us. I really appreciate that.

**[1:00:00]**

Barbara: Thank you. I enjoyed it so much. So thank you for having me and thank you to those who listened. It's been really fun.

Ben: For sure. Yes, to all of you who listened, thank you so much for being here.

Also, I just noticed that about many, many, many people just joined us at the end of the call so I'm a little worried that you might have gotten the time zones messed up. So for those of you who just joined us, you can always go on [genyshift.com/program](http://genyshift.com/program) and listen to the recordings. So

we'll post the recording for this later tonight or tomorrow morning so you can catch up and listen in.

Yeah, such a great time to have you on, Barbara.

And oh, one other thing is that if anyone ever has any comments or questions or ideas for us here at Gen Y Shift, you can always write to us at [geny@theshiftnetwork.com](mailto:geny@theshiftnetwork.com). So feel free to write in and let us know what you're thinking.

But Barbara, we are all supporting you from afar as you launch the series in August and big appreciation for what you're doing. I'm super excited for the months and years and decades ahead as we keep reflecting back to each other and rocking and enjoying the journey.

Barbara: Thank you, Ben, likewise, and much love to you, to everyone at Shift. Good luck with the series as well. I think this is a brilliant idea and just good luck to everyone out there in whatever it is you're doing. Be patient and trust and remember to listen to your heart.

Ben: Amen. Awesome.

We love you, Barbara. Have a beautiful evening.

And those of you on the call, if you want to stay on and have discussion group, you are welcome to. I'll put you into groups. Just hit 1 if you like to be in a discussion group and I can stick you with someone or two or three. And everybody else who is going off into your evening or the rest of your day, have a beautiful, beautiful day, and we'll see you back here in two weeks with Sean Stephenson on the 25th.

**[1:01:43] End of Audio**