

Rebellious Wellness ^{over} 50

Inspiring Widows and Widowers to Learn to Live, Laugh, and Find Love Again



Episode 30: Inspiring Widows and Widowers to Learn to Live, Laugh, & Find Love Again with Marie Scott

Gregory Anne

This is the Rebellious Wellness Over 50 podcast for women over 50 who aren't done yet. You may have seen the worst of aging and are hoping there's a better way. There is and I'm going to show you how in interviews, book reviews, rants and stories. Each week I'm going to bring you the latest science-based info on how to age better. I'm Gregory Anne Cox, and I believe it's time to bust the myths that aging equals decline in every area of life. It pisses me off and it's BS.

Gregory Anne

Look, aging happens. It doesn't have to ruin your life. You just need to get a little rebellious in your approach.

Gregory Anne

Welcome back, everybody to another episode of Rebellious Wellness Over 50 where you get to meet the most interesting people that aren't necessarily found on the mainstream quite yet. And my guest today is one of those people who will become somebody you see in the mainstream. Her book is coming out in December. We're going to talk about that. Her name is Marie Scott. Marie, welcome. And thank you so much for being here.

Marie Scott

Thank you.

Gregory Anne

Let me just tell the listeners a little bit about you. You are a functional medicine health coach and we're going to talk about the importance of functional medicine for you and your life.

And what you do, which I think is so interesting is help widows and widowers rediscover how to live well, laugh more and even find love again. And gosh, in the few minutes before we got on the air, you were telling me some of the statistics and it's mind boggling. But why I wanted to have you here is that you told me just now, the average age of widowhood in America and Canada is that correct, both countries? Is 59, 59 and a half.

Marie Scott

Yes

Gregory Anne

I didn't realize it was that young as an average. So of course, there are many younger and many more, older.

Marie Scott

Yeah,

Gregory Anne

59, your life up ended in that way. Tell us about you. Give us a little bit of background about your life. I know that you and your husband had a lot of laughter and then something happening. You became a widow and this is where the journey started. But tell us about your marriage a little bit.

Marie Scott

Yeah. So, Dave and I, my late husband, Dave. We had 30 years together and it was a life of adventures and stories, and he was a fireman. And so, the fire house stories were just hysterical.

Marie Scott

I'd hear them year after year, and they'd still make me laugh. All of a sudden, on April 15, 2018, he passed away peacefully in my arms and I thought the laughter would never come back in my life. And I remember whispering into his ear before he passed away that morning. Honey, it's okay. I'll be alright. And I lied because every single thing was different from that moment on. Every single thing. And I remember the first time I laughed out loud, it was about maybe eight or nine months later, and I had to do a double take.

Marie Scott

I wonder what that sound was coming out of me, because it's just so rare, so unusual. That began my life part 2 as I call it. And the journey that I went through from becoming a widow, part of a club you never want to be a part of, to where I am today, about to get married in five weeks is pretty incredible.

Gregory Anne

That is incredible. And you met said fiance during Covid.

Marie Scott

I did.

Gregory Anne

How did you meet somebody during COVID? We're all locked down.

Marie Scott

So, it was January. The chapter of my book is called The Corona Love Story. The scene was Sarasota, Florida, and Jeff was down there working. He was helping renovate beach resorts in Sarasota. I was down there because I decided to run away from home because the community I lived in was all, you know, 20 years of couples and friends. And I thought, no, I can't. I can't do this anymore.

Marie Scott

So, about a year and a half later, I packed up the car and I thought, I'd go for a month or two. Well, that changed. On January 9, I was having dinner by myself, listening to this wonderful band in a restaurant called Madison in Sarasota, and Jeff was on the dance floor dancing the whole night long. Well our eyes met. We started dancing, and we've been dancing ever since. So we met in that dance floor. So it was right before COVID. He

had come down in March, we went to a Red Sox season game, preseason game. And then he flew home, and I thought, when am I ever going to see him again?

Marie Scott

Well, I was flying to London to give a speech, it was going to be the debut of my book. I was on my way. I had everything packed, all checked in and the world shut down. And so I said, Let me just fly up and see Jeff for a week. I had all these airline credits, and I was a frequent flyer in my career with Oracle as well. And so let me just fly up and see Jeff. So I showed up in Maine with a raincoat on and my snake skin boots.

Marie Scott

And two and a half months later, we finally got out of Maine, and it was the best quarantine ever. I mean, we built an addition, and we just had the incredible. He bought me in my own palm hammer, I learned all kinds of new skills outside and hunting. And it's awesome.

Gregory Anne

That sounds so cool. You talk about your hammer. My husband manages an estate, and I do a lot of the gardening, and he has these great mallets for whacking poles and things into the ground. And I don't ever need the big thing that he needs.

Gregory Anne

So, he would never want me to use it because he's like, no, you're gonna whack your finger off, whatever. Anyway, as a present, a surprise this spring, he bought me a little mallet that is perfect for the garden stakes. And I was so excited. It's crazy. In the old days. I laughed when one of my girlfriends was early word. She was mid 20s. She'd been married a few years, and she said, I'm so excited. My husband's finally buying me a washing machine. And I thought, eeew, really? You've only been married...

Gregory Anne

That's romantic? And now I'm getting excited about a hammer. So I know it's the little things. It really is. And it's what's important to you, right? She had already had two children. So having a washing machine, meant, she didn't have to leave the house and drive you know? It's just wanting what you want in the moment. But that's a great story. I'm so happy that that is your story after losing somebody that you love. What is it about societally, culturally, we stumble around death, and especially when a friend loses somebody like a spouse, a partner, a child?

Gregory Anne

And did you experience people being awkward, not knowing what to say? What was your experience of your friends and your family when this happened?

Marie Scott

Yeah. It's interesting. I remember writing about that and reflecting back on that for the first month after he passed away, there was a tremendous buzz of activity. We had a Memorial for him. It's a great way to honor someone to have a Memorial. And but after that, you were kind of left alone because like you said, people don't know what to say. And in fact, Joyce Brothers in her book, "Widowed" says "a weeping widow is about as popular as a case of the flu."

Marie Scott

And it's true because people don't know what to say. But really, what's important is just to have someone there. And I remember the first year the holidays hit and, you know, things are going wrong in the house, and I almost burned the place down because the heater component melted up in the attic. And I was just, I was beside myself after the guys thought they couldn't fix it. And my friend Cindy, who knew exactly when to come around, came over as I was just complete sobbing mess.

Marie Scott

And all she did is, she walked in, she gave me a huge hug. We had tears together, and she basically just took over. She finished the meals I was preparing for Christmas dinner, and it was just a tremendous relief. Just have someone there. So really don't worry about what to say. Just be there. Just be present, best thing you could do.

Gregory Anne

Yeah. That's a good point. And still in my mind, I'm thinking, but shouldn't I bring something? Shouldn't I try to comfort? So we want to make it right, I guess fix it, making it right?

So you said it was about eight months before you heard yourself laugh out loud.

Marie Scott

Yes.

Gregory Anne

Were you intentionally looking for laughter again, or did you not want laughter? Because it had been such a part of your marriage, your first marriage.

Marie Scott

That's a good point. I think I've always, I love to make people smile. I love to make people laugh. And Dave and I had 30 years of laughter and lots of good times. And I think when you're suddenly alone, your world is shattered.

Marie Scott

And you really don't know how you're going to overcome this tremendous grief if ever. And after about eight months, it just happened. It just happened. And I don't know if I

was had a funny conversation with someone, but I remember how strange the sound was coming out of my mouth, and I did a double take like, wow, what's that sound? And then I realized it was okay. I had permission to laugh again. I had permission. You know, Dave wanted me to carry on and embrace life again.

Marie Scott

And even though I didn't think it would ever happen, he was right. I just needed to see back and know that I had his permission to laugh again.

Gregory Anne

What would you say to people that don't get that closure?

Marie Scott

Yeah. After I became a functional medicine health coach, it really helped me articulate the seven steps to healing. And through these seven steps, like leverage food as medicine, for example, because if you don't eat well, you're going to feel like crap and you're not going to want to do anything.

Marie Scott

And the last step is to find new purpose. And finding new purpose for me was getting out of the community I spent 30 years in, going to a new place. Even though it's scary as heck, not knowing anyone. And develop new purpose became for me, launching the business, writing, finishing the book, becoming a health coach. With this burning desire to help other widows and widowers learn to live well, laugh more, love again. And that's my mission for part 2. I think if I didn't have that mission, I wouldn't want to get out of bed in the morning.

Gregory Anne

So you mentioned Oracle. So you had a corporate career...

Marie Scott

Yeah, 30 years.

Gregory Anne

30 years corporate and then functional medicine health coaching. What's the segue there?

Marie Scott

Food has always been my passion, my flow. And after Dave, I wondered if there is something that I could have done to help him with food. And the biggest thing I learned about food and cancer is that sugar feeds cancer, period. So I wanted to go back to school to become a health coach. And also because functional medicine changed my life.

Marie Scott

After Dave died, I was lying on the floor wondering who is going to take care of me now? And the answer came quickly. "It's you silly." So I discovered functional medicine actually, back when I tore my rotator cuff. And it was the first time in my life that somebody actually took a family history, spent an hour with me, jotting down the family history, and I became so aware of all the autoimmune diseases running rampant in my family. And so things from Celiac, ALS, Lou Gehrig's disease. My brother died from hypothyroidism Grave's disease, breast cancer, and then me.

Marie Scott

I was diagnosed with autoimmune hepatitis. So I, you had pills for everything. I was on blood pressure meds. I was on, I was pre diabetic. My cholesterol was sky high and through functional medicine, after Dave died, within six weeks, I went from a size twelve to size six. And at that time, Sachin Patel, the founder of Living Proof Institute, send me an email one day, it said, " become a functional medicine health coach." And I thought, Well, you know, I know what the power functional medicine is. It's too late to help Dave, but it wasn't too late to help myself.

Marie Scott

And so that empowered me to be able to articulate the seven steps to healing. So becoming a functional medicine health coach allowed me to learn more about food and all kinds of things like meditation to reduce stress, which is a great grief buster. And I lost my mom the same year as I lost Dave. So it was a double whammy on the stress scale. And if it wasn't for functional medicine, I'd probably be unhealthy, overweight, alcoholic and with no purpose in life.

Gregory Anne

Part 2, can you give the listeners who may not know what functional medicine is?A short description of that concept?

Marie Scott

Yes, And so functional medicine, in my mind, is truly health care. It's taking care of yourself without being prescribed medical pills for specific symptoms. So if you have a headache and you go to an allopathic doctor regular doctor, you're going to get a pill for migraines. If you have high blood pressure, going to get a pill for blood pressure, if you have cholesterol you are going to get a pill. But nobody's really overseeing the function of the body saying all this stuff in your system that's crashing your adrenal glands.

Marie Scott

It's affecting your liver. So I remember the last time I saw my primary care doctor. It was allotted 15 minutes sitting in front of a screen, peering over bifocals, looking at two things, blood pressure and cholesterol. And I left the doctor with two prescriptions for,

one of each, blood pressure and cholesterol. And then I'm sitting there thinking, but what's the root cause? Why do I have high blood pressure? Why do I have cholesterol? And then I learned that what I was eating was really affecting my system.

Marie Scott

And through those six weeks of changing my food preferences, I lost the 30 pounds, I got weaned off my hormones, weaned off the blood pressure meds. And I really learned the power of functional medicine, which is getting to the root cause of what the issues are, not prescribing a bunch of pills. And I didn't want to be like my mom. She was on 20 pills at the end of like, 20 pills a day.

Gregory Anne

How do you even fit those in?

Marie Scott

Yeah.

Gregory Anne

And the other idea about functional medicine, my understanding is it's treating the whole body, not the one organ or the one thing that's crying out for help because it's, we're one big system.

We're not just an isolated liver or heart or brain.

Yes. And what you said about being in the doctor's office. Ever since, the appointments used to be short, that hasn't changed. But now that they have screens, I find that it's a rare doctor that turns around and speaks to you. They speak generally over. They're looking at their screen. We're over here. They're talking, hoping it bounces back in some connective way. But it doesn't.

I don't see a whole lot of doctors regularly, but in my memory and I go with my husband. And I recently had, we kind of got in trouble because he was on a blood pressure medication because he was having knee surgery, and it was slightly too high.

Gregory Anne

So, they were going to cancel in your surgery. So, we didn't have time for him to get healthy. So, they gave it to him. Well, then, some new doctor, because our other doctor left, he came along a year later and says, Well, I think you need more blood pressure medication. I'm sitting in the office and I didn't say much at the time. But when we left because my husband thought, Why? Because it's a few degrees higher? Why would I want to take more medicine? And the doctor's reasoning was because you're 56 and la la la whatever.

Gregory Anne

And then I called the doctor later. I said, I'm not comfortable filling this prescription. He said, oh, who are you now? A doctor. And I said, no, I'm an educated consumer of medical care, and this feels like an overreach. And we'd like to see a cardiologist. So my husband is going to see a cardiologist and he wasn't happy. But you know what? Everybody needs a patient advocate or the courage to educate themselves and then stand up. And it's hard. I know it's hard when you're in the doctor's office, to speak for yourself.

Marie Scott

And the thing is that the trillion-dollar industry, a trillion dollars is spent on cholesterol pills alone. And it's just incredible that big Pharma controls so much of the medical profession, and it truly is sick care, right? Regular. And once you get on a prescription med, I always realize this once you get on a prescription med, there's no exit strategy. Where there's no take this for six months, and then we'll see what happens. You're on it forever.

Gregory Anne

Yeah. I call it the cradle to grave system, because if you think about the age that they give the first vaccinations the formulas and then it's ADHD maybe. And then it's a vaccine for the Gardasil vaccine. It just seems like they groom us from a very young age to be dependent on these medications. And I'm not saying that there's anything wrong with necessary medication. Medicine can do wonderful things for people.

Marie Scott

Yes

Gregory Anne

it's just the stuff that they want us to be on that maybe there's an alternative to having. How does somebody go from that place of, you know, it was eight months, you're alone, I know that there's probably this, you're trying to adjust to a whole new life.

Gregory Anne

You miss the person desperately. Even if you didn't get along with the person, there's a "missing" from what I understand, because that was the routine that was half of who you were. And you found this purpose for yourself. But in between times, you had to get out of bed every day, you had to do something, like what did you use to motivate yourself? Or wasn't it motivation? Was it just like 1foot in front of the other?

Marie Scott

It was absolutely one foot in front of the other. So at eight months, I had my first laugh.

I had started school to become a functional medicine health coach, and it was a year long program. And I found the key was also finding new communities, finding new tribes that that I felt comfortable with, and to expose me to, you know, finding my new life purpose. And so after about a year and a half, I decided that maybe it's time to start dating again. And so I did. And I met Jeff in Sarasota, and I never dreamed that it would be possible not to just have one great love in your life.

Marie Scott

My friend Lee said to me is, how do you rate? Most people don't get one great, let alone two, great loves. But I attributed to healing my body, eating well. Living well. Functional medicine teaches you that to mitigate stress meditation is a huge advantage. And so I try to meditate at least ten minutes every day. And so all of these things I put together helped me overcome the tremendous grief of losing Dave. And grief never goes away. It's a good, constant companion, you know, sitting on your shoulder and just the thought of getting married in six weeks from walking down the aisle again, you know, with my brothers, walking me up to just dad is going to be super emotional.

Marie Scott

And I can't even imagine. But I'm so happy. We laugh every single day. We feel like we're 29 again. So it's like, you know, life reimagined.

Gregory Anne

That's great. And I imagine, speaking of imagining, in the moment or the months leading post death of a spouse or partner, you don't see possibility. You can't even imagine is really, truly your situation. You can't imagine anything can you? Except what you feel in the moment?

Marie Scott

Yep. And my favorite spot I'd break down often in the closet, a walk-in closet. I just find myself sobbing on the floor, you know, for hours, and I'd sit up and put on Dave's leather jacket, wrap it around, or light a candle and feel his spirit. But, you know, it's the hardest thing I've ever gone through in my life and to come out of it on the other end with the desire to help other widows and widowers is really, it's just pumping me up. I can't wait to get the word out.

Gregory Anne

We're going to help you do that. Would you say there's a difference between how a widow is in the moment or a widower? Are men and women different even at this place in life of grief?

Marie Scott

Yes, I think so, because if you think about it, then aren't always, I'd say of men, really aren't emotive or expressive of their feelings. Jeff, on the other hand, wears his heart on his sleeve. And it's really hard for them to live and deal with the grief that they're feeling because they can't show the emotion. So I found through three years of research that widowers will often get married within three months.

Gregory Anne

Wow

Marie Scott

Three months, six months because they need a woman in their life.

Marie Scott

But the problem is that the second marriage rarely lasts because they haven't really dealt with the grief. And widows, on the other hand, are a much longer. The first thing I did was by a security system because I wanted to feel safe. First thing a man does is goes out and buys a new woman. It's a big difference between the two and and some women I've heard say, you know, I've had the best. Forget the rest. That saying really sticks in my mind. But, you know, it's life.

Marie Scott

And to come out of a dark place and embrace life again is really, really hard. And I want to help them take that journey and learn about how you can, in fact, live well, laugh more, and in love again.

Gregory Anne

I was reading on a grief website for something else. And it was people had written into this person who is running the website and talking about, "Well, I've lost-- these were people that were family members or friends of somebody who was grieving. So they were asking, how do I cope?"

Gregory Anne

How do I deal? And the one person said, Well, you know, I lost a family member. I lost my mother. I don't understand. Why can't they just get back on the horse and ride kind of thing? And I know that that person was coming from a loving place again, like, what do I do? But then the person or the guru person responded, "that was one half of the person's life. You lose a parent. It's a different relationship. You lose a sibling unless you're a twin. It's generally not even similar to having that partner."

Gregory Anne

And again, I think I mentioned early on, he said, even if they were not the best of friends or having the best relationship, it's your routine. It's your day to day, and that's gone. So

you have to, like you said, recreate what a life is. But you didn't feel the need, like a man in three months, you didn't feel the need to run out and replace your husband Dave.

Marie Scott

No,

Gregory Anne

Probably the last thing on your mind.

Marie Scott

The last thing. It really didn't cross my mind. And, you know, even the thought of getting married, I thought, nope never getting married again. And Jeff proposed in our one year anniversary back in January on a Zoom call. And it's like, you know, I had no clue. Totally surprised me.

Gregory Anne

Did he got down on one knee on Zoom?

Marie Scott

When we were sitting in side by side chairs. And he was like "I'm going to invite your brothers" because he loves my brothers and my family. And so I said, oh, that's okay. Well, what about my sister? He had to invite her. I'll invite my mom and my sister. Nobody knew. I'll invite my best friend. And I invited my best friend from Vancouver, my sister, my friend Anne.

Marie Scott

And so we're sitting in Orlando because he wanted to be somewhere different. Just had a wonderful day at Epcot and golfing. And so I had no clue. We're sitting at the condo, and he turns to me, goes, really, my brother Rich was baking cookies with my brother Mike. And he said, Rich, where are you? I got to pop the question. And I said, I'm thinking to myself, what question? What kind of cookies you want rich to bake? What question? So he turns to me and he goes, "Honey, will you marry me?"

Marie Scott

And Niagra Falls. I mean, Niagra Falls started after about 30 seconds. I couldn't process what was just happening. Somebody yelled out, typical Zoom call. Can you hear me? Can you see me? So somebody yelled out, did she say yes? And yes, I said yes, over and over. And so it was just so perfect, you know, setting for the global pandemic to get engaged on a Zoom call.

Gregory Anne

Nice to hear that there is such positive Zoom calls, but there's always that one., "Can you hear me?" You're on mute. So funny.

Gregory Anne

Oh, gosh, Marie, tell us about your book. I'm so happy to hear you laughing.

Marie Scott

So my book is called "Finding Meaning and Humor in Widowhood, Firehouses, and Organic Vegetables." And the original title was called. And this just came to me the first year I started writing. The first title was called Finding Humor in Widowhood. Firehouses, and Organic Vegetables. But the editor I had, James from New York City, said, I don't like the word humor so close to Widowhood. So it's been Finding Meaning and Humor.

Marie Scott

And then the subtitle is "Seven Steps to Healing". So I hope that it can help many other widows and widowers learn to shine a light in a dark place. It is possible. And that's my first book. The second book is called "Cooking with a Side of Kleenex," because a lot of times widows and widows, even single people are empty nesters. Then it's just me. I won't Cook. But if you don't Cook for yourself, you're not going to eat well. And if you don't eat well, you're not going to feel well.

Marie Scott

And the third book is called "40 Things To Do In Your Widowhood."

Gregory Anne

Are you gonna keep writing books? You should take some time off and enjoy your new life.

Marie Scott

No, I actually am launching an online course of the Seven Steps to Healing, as well as planning retreats in this beautiful healing place, in Evans Pond, Maine and one in Sarasota. So lots of big plans just to get the word out. And I'm also speaking at Camp Widow in October.

Gregory Anne

Tell me about Camp Widow. You mentioned it and I'm not familiar with it.

Marie Scott

Yeah. So. And I'm not speaking. I'm actually, they're allowing me to promote my book. Camp Widow is an organization, 30,000 widows and widowers. The organization is called Soaring Spirits and Camp Widow. They have these global events. I was going to

do a workshop in March and Tampa, but they canceled it, of course, because of the pandemic. But San Diego will be the first in person event since before the Pandemic. So I'm wildly excited about being there and being among other like-minded widows and widowers and helping get the message out there. To know that it's possible to embrace life again.

Gregory Anne

Hmm, And that's a beautiful message, especially for people that are in it right now. Have been a year or two. You know, some people need something, someone to help them move forward. Right. I think we're all such warriors as women these days. In this time of life, we think we have to do everything on our own. We don't want to ask for help. We don't even know what to ask for sometimes, right. And I'm sure when you're in a grief state, you don't know what you need or want. You just want to not feel bad, I think.

Marie Scott

Yeah.

In Charleston, I started a Meet Up group because I'm very social. I love to be around people. A started a meetup group called Widowhood Sucks, especially over 50. And we got up to 100 members. It's pretty proud of that. So one thing I can say as a widow or widower is, join a meetup group.

Marie Scott

Really great, safe way to meet people. They go on walks, in Sarasota walks. And in Charleston, they had dinner, wine tasting. So it's a great way to meet people and get outside your comfort zone. It's really hard going up the first time. It's really hard. But once you do that, you realize is, I've got a whole rest of my life to live. You know, if we're going to live to be 100, then I want to have some fun doing it.

Gregory Anne

Yeah. Are you familiar? Because you seem to be connected.

A woman named Jennifer O'Brien wrote a book called The Hospice Doctors Widow. I interviewed her a few months ago, and she talked about the importance of finding groups, social communities through places like Instagram or Facebook. If you're not ready to go out because it will at least give you people that understand, have been through or whatever. And then it'll help you come back to some understanding of who you are if you find the right groups. She started her book. Her book is called The Hospital Doctor's Widow because she was journaling, and she's an artist, a collage artist.

Gregory Anne

So she was making these pieces of art that represented how she was feeling at different stages through her husband's illness and some really close friend of hers was a doctor

and said, you know, this patient, she's losing her husband and whatever, Jennifer said, well, I wrote this. I put together this book. Maybe it could help, would you take a look at it? The guy came back and said, you need to get this published. This will help someone. So the same kind of so that she was happy that her time grieving and caretaking and grieving and loss could be put to use for other people.

Gregory Anne

Much like what you're saying?

Marie Scott

Yes, for sure.

Gregory Anne

Well, Marie, what is the most important thing that people should leave with? What can you give people listening, who might just recently have been, become a widow or widower?

Marie Scott

Yeah. I think the most important thing is to realize that you have permission to embrace life again, and you have permission to laugh again. It's okay. That's what your partner would have wanted. And I know that's what they wanted, even though I never dreamed it would be possible. But, yeah, it's okay, though. You have permission to embrace life again.

Gregory Anne

I think that's the perfect way to end. Thank you so much for your time with us and for your authenticity and openness. It's not an easy subject to talk about, even though you've now made it your work, your life's work for the next life part 2.

Marie Scott

Yeah. Thank you.

Gregory Anne

People listening. Thank you for being with us. I will be back next week again with another awesome guest on the Rebellious Wellness over 50 podcasts. Take care till then. Hey, before you go peeps. I'm just wondering if we are connected on social media. If not, let's do that. You can find me on Instagram at Rebelwell50.

Same on Twitter, On Facebook it's Rebellious Wellness over 50. And hey, don't be a stranger. Comment. Let me know what you'd like to hear about on the podcast. What questions do you have about aging better and living rebelliously?