

## Donna Ashworth Episode

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You can't just see. It's not good to be angry because if you don't get angry, you're not alive. You're not experience in the world. You have to feel anger at some points because it's justified. But the negativity from the anger is no good for anybody. So I've learned to almost. It's like a distillation process, like cheese making or making butter, or I remove the negativity from it. And that's the discarded way. And I keep the passion. **2s** Welcome to Women Are Mad, where we invite women to bring their anger into everyday conversation. I'm Selima Saxton, I'm an actress and writer. I'm Jennifer Cox and I'm a psychotherapist. We notice that anger is the one emotion that women aren't allowed to open express. Meanwhile, everything around us is making us absolutely furious. We're all feeling it. Let's get together to work out what to do with it. So in the spirit of what this podcast is about, it felt important to share a message with you all at this time of the year holiday season. As a therapist, I can assure you that most people are having a pretty complicated time despite what the John Lewis ads suggest. We know how much for women, especially expectations and demands, increase, and we also know that it can feel incredibly lonely and that ghosts of regret and longing are want to come knocking. **1s** This is so depressing. I can't. Can I? Can I interrupt? Can I interrupt this? I wholeheartedly support all that you're saying. But, you know, there are going to be pockets of joy that are there. Yes. Yeah. I mean, even if it's by yourself in a room, there's a Doctor Who special. Yes. This **1s** guy or two, maybe. Yeah. There's potential for hiding under blankets, in cupboards. Yeah, there's loads of stuff. Okay, now it's sounding good. I find Christmas to be a really beautiful time where even if you don't have a traditional sense of family with you, you maybe don't celebrate Christmas. Let's just call it festive time. Festive season. Festive season. Yeah. It's a reminder of all that you do have or have the potential to have. I agree very much on this score, and the kind of rounding off of the year is definitely everybody can have a think about what that means and what next year could bring for you. Yeah. Look, I think December is a great time as opposed to January, um, when there's all the pressures of like New Year, new you, you know, reinvent yourself, um, lose half your body weight, all the things that are kind of these crazy short term solutions to everything. December is actually a really gentler way of like, Catherine May's brilliant book. I would highly recommend wintering. Oh, I love that. We yeah, I love that book. And I think it's we all need to be like hedgehogs. Yeah. Fallow season. Hibernate season. Yes, exactly. Um. And embrace that because humans need to recuperate and rest. Even that. Even if your rest doesn't look anything like my rest. Um, we all need to do a bit of that. So the festive season, as you say, is a great time for that. So that means in a sense that if people can, as far as possible, shut themselves away a bit from all the demands, put up some boundaries. I love Donna Ashworth festive boundaries idea. Yes, brilliant, because maybe it was a really tough year and maybe this time especially is hard. But, um. I think you're right. If you take the view that it's it's about just hunkering down and having a nice think and maybe planning for what, next year, I think. And I also don't think if you can get out of your head and don't think and just take a break from the thinking for a little bit, pause where you can, if that is possible in any way, whatever your pause looks like. I think sometimes an absence of thinking can be brilliant. As says the Overthinker Supreme here, I. I know I can tie myself in knots. Well, maybe we should set ourselves a challenge to inspire listeners, which is we're going to try to switch off our overactive brains for at least a couple of days. Okay. **2s** Yeah, yeah, I will try. So our guest today is a very special woman. She sculpts her vulnerability into words and shares those words with others to make them feel a lot less alone. Meet the Sunday Times bestselling writer who's put poetry back into the playbook. Welcome the sensational Donna Ashworth. Good morning. Good morning. Thank you

for being here. Oh, you're. Thank you for asking me. Um, Donna, let's just get straight into it. And I was just rereading one of your beautiful lines about one day there being an army of furious older women who will take over the world, and that you want to be there at the front. So when that happens, and let's please God, that happens soon. 2s What? What makes you angry? 1s Ah. I mean, as I get older, the anger that I feel is what I like to do is remove the, um, the negativity from the anger and keep the, the passion. Um, so obviously the negativity from your anger does no good for anybody. I mean, it only, you know, it only erodes you. But the passion from that anger is really important. You know why? Why are you angry? You can't just see, it's not good to be angry. Because if you don't get angry, you're not alive. You're not experienced in the world. You're not seeing what's going on in front of your eyes. You have to feel anger at some points because it's justified, but that the negativity from the anger is no good for anybody. So I've learned to almost it's like a distillation process, you know, when I remove like, cheese making or making butter or I remove the negativity from it and that's the discarded way. And I keep the passion, and the passion gets fueled in a, in a very positive way or a cathartic way, um, to go towards the things that are important. And then you've got to filter out the small face, the dramas, and you've got to distinguish between what are the important fights, what are the fights that will matter, that do matter, that are going to continue to matter? And what is drama? What is something that I am distracting myself with? Um, so, um, so there's a lot of processing to be done with my anger before it even gets to, um, to see the light of day. But what makes me angry? The things that shoot make me angry. Injustice and unfairness and inequality and, um, the way that the world is set up for the success of the successful, um, all of the things that should really make any normal, average human heart. Angry. 1s So now do you think, um. And you, you said this so beautifully about distilling the anger into into a force. And actually, Jen always speaks about this, um, how the anger can be such a positive force if we take the real essence of it and it can be a propulsion in our lives rather than something that makes us stagnant. Um, with your beautiful writing that I'm sure all our listeners will have heard, uh, pivotal moments in their lives. Beginning marriages, funerals. I I've been thinking of your words recently. I'm breathing somebody at the moment, and I've been using your words in the last few weeks. Do you think anger for you gets interspersed into some of your writing? And how did you even start your writing? Do you think anger might have been part of the fuel of that? Or your reaction to the world? Yeah, absolutely. Uh, yes. To all of that. I mean, I've always been quite an angry person, but, you know, when I was younger. Oh, I'm a redhead. I'm fading as years go by. But I used to get at all that you are fighting. It must be your fault. You've caused this argument because you're fired. Elated. And I'm in the 80s. So I was further told that, oh, you're a red headed 80s. You may as well stand up in the middle of the room and self combust. 2s And to top all of that, I do have that personality. I'm always at one extreme. I've never been somebody who who, you know, who just rolled through life very on a level. I've always been angry or sad or happy or, you know. So, um, there was a lot to be done with if you've got that kind of personality, if that's how you are showing up in this world, there's a lot to be done to manage that for everyday life, other people's expectations. And just so that you're, you're you're not living an absolute drama every day. Yeah. So I had to start at a very early age. 1s Sort of realizing what made me angry, why I reacted like that, and how. And at that time, sadly, I was changing myself to fit so that I didn't rub people up the wrong way and people didn't write me off or go, oh, Donna, you know, but I experienced a lot of that as a child. I it makes me think, actually, about how damaging it is. And I do bang on about this a lot, um, how damaging it is that families cast us into roles and, and the, you know, the, um, the violence of that really. Because once you're in that once you've sort of been aggressively pinned in that way, like you were I mean, it was a you all this and that's that's who we're going to relate to you as. You don't you're backed into a corner. You don't have any sort of agency to do anything differently. And it almost creates it in you and, and even as an adult when people and it's coming up now the holiday

season and I've just written a poem about festive boundaries and how I love that trick. It in it is to go back into family situations where you, regardless of your age or the family of your own that you have or what you've done with your life, you instantly feel triggered to behave like that 11 year old self and and how common that is. And for me, it wasn't so much my family. I'm very blessed with the dynamics of my inner circle family. For me it was society and school and friendship circles and, you know, adults within that system who sort of didn't know me, took one look at me and said, well, you're clearly a handful. Therefore, um, but I think it's something that we all experience and we all still do. You know, I try really hard not to with my kids, but we all fall into the trap every now and again. Where you go, all my eldest is and my youngest is the one. And actually we must be away from saying. From, you know, defining them by one of their personality traits. But it's the one that the world wants you to give up. So they want to know which one is good, which one's naughty, which one's loud, which one's quiet. Yeah. They want the little stereotypical label ~~is~~ to place them for themselves. Yeah, it's about them. And sometimes we conform and give them what they want. We say, oh, yeah, he's the loud one. Um. And I hear myself doing it every now and again and I think, oh, we're just done that. It's more about me than it is about them. It's me wanting to please that person and give them. But this is what I think you do so well in your writing is this is you discuss the tussle, that endless tussle between, you know, who we are to the outside world, who we are to ourselves, and that and that eternal conflict and trying to get that right. And also the pleasing. I think that's such a good point, Donna. I have caught myself and I continue to catch myself joking, really, if I'm being really frank at my children's expense to make light of a situation or to kind of try and deal with it, or he's like this, she's like this. And actually, I'm glad that we've spoken today because it reminds me it does them a great disservice. And it's, uh, and it's, you know, it harks back to that old part of us that just tries to fit in. And we know that we shouldn't be fitting in, because that's what it all goes horribly wrong when we try and fit in. But it's easier. It's easier to just give them what they want and one little comment and then walk away. But I'll tell you something that makes me really angry. And to this day, I haven't worked out a way to distill it is when I hear and I heard it two days ago in the supermarket, I saw a beautiful young couple with a new baby, and an older person came up. Not too old, not old enough that you can see that some of your generation and you know there's no point in you changing your your thoughts there. But they said, and is she good? Oh. <sup>3s</sup> And I walked by with my with my basket. And that lingered. And I was so drawn to just go. Of course she's not good. She's three weeks old, right? What the fuck does that mean? She'll cry. If she's hungry. She'll cry. If she's scared, she will cry. None of these are behavioral, you know, but I didn't. I walked away, but it boils my blood. It instantly boils how we're conditioned from days old. Is she or is she bad? And speaking as somebody who has worked really hard not to be a good girl, and I've only managed just about managed it in my 40s, I feel that's so strongly because I still catch myself and think, no, my response is because I want to be perceived as good or I ought to do that, or they need me to do that. And that's polite and that's appropriate. But everything in my gut is saying, run, don't do it, or it's awful. Here, um, it's taken a long time to train myself out of that. And the shame when you feel like, oh, God, I did it wrong. Oh, God, I upset them. I was that bad thing that. Yeah, yeah, you're left grappling. I'm getting a lot better with the shame. I don't even in a team anymore. And I realized that. I used to have such high standards, and I wanted the world to see me in such a perfect way that the fear of getting that wrong was was almost crippling. And once I started to, um, unravel that, it unraveled all by itself, like a sock that was ready to fall apart in the washing machine. And I then had no control over it, and it was gone. And now I cannot find that shame that I used to feel when I messed up. That is wonderful. And also creatively. So, you know, I'm an actor, I'm a writer. And I have found that I the minute I'm able to, um, let go of that need for perfection. The need for perfection is a is a paralysis, right? So the need for creativity. Yeah. Uh, I've walked into rooms needing to be perfect and just bombed because I was so desperate to give a certain, um, sense

of myself or a certain read on a character or something. But the minute I've walked in or written something where I've just gone with the flow, the messiness of it all, it's much better, I know. And the need for for control and how other people think about you is it's like a blockage. So if you if your talent flows, as most talents do, I think then you're literally putting a blockage in the middle of that pipeline, you know? So if I'm reading poetry and I'm in a situation where the imposter syndrome grabs me and I think, what am I doing here? Why are these people listening to me, and who am I to tell then? I cannot connect to that source of whatever that loveliness was that people were interested in in the first place. So you have to stay in yourself. You have to stay very authentic to that moment your own way. Right? Yeah, yeah. The thing that you're doing, it's not something that you're always control and it's something that you allow to happen. And so if you're not out, you don't wait. It's not actually happening as it, it's, it's forcibly being done. And that's not where the magic is. So um, so I do myself a disservice by. Getting involved. Almost that ego side of yourself needs to to leave the room. If I'm going to do a nice reading and people are going to feel something, then none of those elements of me can be invited along. They have to go. Why do you think we've all fallen so in love with the words of Donna Ashworth? I think because they're really simple and because from the very get go I say to myself, If I'm going to edit these, judge these criticizes, read the nasty comments, then I am going to crumble as a human being, not strong enough. I'm not thick skinned, I'm highly sensitive. So I made a little deal with myself that I would see each thing that I wrote a bit like this. It's done. I'll have a quick spell check and it's gone and it no longer belongs to me. Except that, you know, that's obviously part of my work. It's done. That message is on its own. It's life has begun in the world, and people will either connect to it for their reasoning or not. And therefore that's the end of that life and nothing. So you decide not to control it. Beyond that, I don't attach myself to it either. It's wonderful that it's my work, and I can put it in a book and I can lay claim to it, but I don't attach my self-worth to it, and I don't attach my, um, piece to it. So I've got a separate thing. So I'm interested. You said about the comments, I can't imagine this with your work, but I don't get any nasty comments to say. Did you ever respond angrily to your work? In the very beginning, before I had a following, who have become so loyal and they've become like friends? Um, <sup>1s</sup> there were not nasty comments, but there were your normal, you know, array of Facebook comments. Because that's what I was doing all of my work. And I can take criticism from 100 miles, but I cannot take a compliment in my face. So I would seek out and read into the slightly negative comments. So I thought, right, this is going to be miserable, why would I want to do this? And I set those ground rules for myself before they even had a book. Um, and I've stuck to them. It's one of the things I've really, really stuck to. I screenshot all the lovely comments that I want to keep. Um, <sup>1s</sup> Or I ask people to put them in a review so that they remain there for, you know, for longevity, for longevity. But everything else I let go. Um, and I don't think I could have done it without it. So brave. What a brave decision. And it's making me think, actually, about how many women, really talented women out there probably aren't able to do that. Like a lot of of what you chose to do in that moment meant that you could continue, meant that you your words would continue to be heard. You could so easily have just gone, this is unbearable. I can't, I can't do it. And there's always going to be somebody better. There's always better going to be better coming up. There's that means there's there's actually there's people who will do exactly what you're doing. Um, for want of a better way of seeing that. Um, so you cannot be involved in any of that, um, thought process either. You have to. I've wrote a poem and I wish I knew called, um, I actually forget the name of the poem, but it's do not attach your self-worth to something that moves. So as women, we attach it to how you look that's going to move. Besides, that's going to move your relationship, that's going to move your career, that's going to move. All of these things are not solid. They will evolve. They will change if you attach. If you say, I am Donna, I am the poet who is always a size ten and I've got a great marriage. You know, you're you're attaching yourself to, to tenets that that can change at any given moment. So you have

to find things to attach your self-worth to that are of the essence of you, that you know, that will always be there. The fact that you're a seeker of kindness, or you know, the fact that you will laugh at any given opportunity or that you you get joy at making people laugh, these things will never change. That's not going to change about you. What strikes me about you is that you seem to wear life beautifully, lightly, even though you're such a deep thinker and you know, at peace with the fluidity of it all. Which, again, is something that I'm really drawing of, right? I mean, you're looking at 20 years of trying and it's astonishing, really finally achieved some peace and and found peace by accepting that there is no peace. And that if you can find peace in the fact that your day will be an absolute mishmash of all of it. If you can accept that, then you. That's where your peace comes in. Your peace is knowing that there is never actually any real peace. And you have to you have to make peace for the moments. Speaking of peace, Donna, when did you last actually get angry? Probably angry with something or someone. *Is* Mm. Apart from in the supermarket, the other gift that *Is* my husband often makes me slightly angry. I wouldn't say angry, but *Is* the anger we are talking about here is that spark. You know, that fire, that passion for justice or being overlooked or being gaslit or being, you know, assumptions being made of you. And whilst he's somebody who's, um, really grateful for the fact that he's certainly Evolver, he's constantly trying to change in life and and enjoy it more and get better and be more. But, you know, without giving more of yourself away. But you know what I mean? The work, as we call it. Um, um, but he will occasionally see things, you know, that that might, um, cast aspersions on the Lord, the mental load that women have on a daily basis, that if we were to spend the time telling everybody about it, we wouldn't have time to do the mental loads or anything else, anything else. *Is* And so he will occasionally say, oh, you know, I'm very busy because. And then it's that whole. What you haven't taken into consideration here is that, you know, Christmas is coming and that all falls on me. We're lucky enough to be going away in holiday for a week before Christmas. That increases my workload hugely so everyone can relax, the preemptive work that goes into that, and the post work that goes in because you know all of that. Where does he shows up at his job every day. So he works in the mines 24 over seven, seven days a week. Yeah, and that's fine. I'm really grateful for this job that I have and the way I can fit it in with my life. But don't make the mistake of assuming that, you know, because I am finding peace with it. That means that somehow less right? And it's all about busyness, isn't it? As well, the appearance of busyness. Jen and I have often talked about this that, um, we all, as a society, feel the need to tell everybody how busy we are. And the minute that we're busy, then we're valid and then working hard and then we're appropriate and that what we're doing well. But then this is the thing with being a woman where so much of what we do, you can't verbalize it. So of course it would be impossible. It would be impossible, as you say, we wouldn't get anything else done. So I think, you know, when you say there are kind of two types of anger, there's this one at the injustice, and then there's the sort of almost like the daily grind, the the irritation and all of that. I think it's the same because I think for women, so much of what we're up against every day is the reality that we're not appreciated. These tiny but never ending activities and tasks that fall to us are completely invisible to everyone else. But they wear us down, they grind us down, and there is no recognition. And I think that does impact us. And I think it does lead to greater levels of anger, which we can't do much about. Yeah. And I've spent a lot of my time and especially in my, my relationship with my husband and my family, making sure that I do not have that to complain about anymore. So we we separated the tasks a few years ago and we and then we sat down because I was tired of my husband, not seat. So we sat down and I wrote a list of everything, and, um, I wrote a list of everything that he does. And I was really fair. And I said, what do you want to add to that? What do you want to add to that? And, you know, we tied everything up in that conversation money as well, because people don't necessarily want to talk about it. But it's a huge thing in relationships and marriage and who earns what and who does what. If you take that out the the way off everybody's shoulders. So we we put it on these bits of

paper and it went on and on and on and on and on. And it was only a few months later that my husband fell back in the trap. And I went and I got the bits of paper and I said, remember, do you remember which part of this list has changed? You know, and I made and he was like, well, you're being silly. No, no, no, I want you to tell me. So we have we've changed all of that. So now it's really fair and I don't want to complain about it. I don't want to spend my life going, oh my goodness, you should see what I've done this week. I want it's boring. I want to be free of that. I want to be the person that goes, actually, you know, I've got lots of time to myself. I've made it that way. And and I have made it that way. And it is possible. And I do have two kids and I do have a job, and we do have two dogs. But, you know, um, I got a dog walker for four days of the week and best thing that we ever did, because it's it's just about weighing up what's important and. Yeah, and it's the cost, isn't it? It's kind of cost of the dog walker is cost. Yeah. Emotionally costs you in time and and and then it's letting go of the need to look like you're always the busy one and they need to be. How does she do it. Oh my goodness I get tired looking at her. You have to. It's like when I moved on from my eating disorder. It's like killing a best friend. It's like murdering a best friend. That eating disorder, that part of you is there for you. Through thick and thin. It becomes an alter ego and you have to very brutally and viciously kill that. Person. Um, and it's the same with this sort of busy, busy, busy, stressed, frazzled. How does she do it? You know, we cling to that because we know it means we're showing up right in the world. We're doing it right. Women are supposed to look like that. If I'm sitting down with a cup of tea all the time, people will say, well, she's lazy. She's what? You know, they will blame you for things that are maybe lacking that would have been lacking anyway because it's impossible. So it's about not knowing that people might think that about you. They might think you are lucky because you've got time yourself. They might think you are lazy. They might think you are selfish. Um huh from the outside. And they might think that. And you have to let go of any care of what they might think of you. And that's what's coming up a lot today, talking with you. I'm really pleased this is coming. A lot is about the expectation of others and how they see you, not how you see yourself, how those eyes are looking at you. And in a way, how dare we? Why should we? Why waste the energy of, like, diving? I have a terrible habit of diving into other people's heads. Like headfirst, right? All around. You know now exactly what they're thinking, why they're thinking that. And actually, what a waste of time when I could. Also. It's impossible. You can't possibly know this is true. What you do is you're going in your own head. It's a little compartment of your head that you're putting in their head. And, you know, it's all so well put. Yes. I never did that. Course not. Even then. This is it, right? You're right. In stories that you know that you are writing. Um, and then you're assuming and imagining that other people are, you know, are part of that story, and they don't even know that you're thinking about them. It is. It's mad. I mean, it is a form of madness. Can I ask you, um. Don. Sorry. Uh. When has anger driven you to do something incredible? I mean, I think writing, I mean, your entire I think it has to be we're sort of halfway through. I used to work in magazines, uh, which is, which was a form of writing that I was doing quite a lot. They were my own business, so I was never employed. Um, I created some magazines with friends and then abroad. So we we decided to have kids. We came back to the UK and we sold that company and we bought a children's place in. And for about five years, it was perfect for the work life balance. We could take the kids with us exactly what we wanted. We knew that the jobs that we had before would not allow for a family time. But then about halfway through and I, you know, I'm watch maybe five years in and watching all these women come to everyday with their kids and grannies and, you know, um, and the whole parenting thing was 24 over seven because I was doing it and we were working in that industry. We never had to deal. If it was Monday, you know, seven days a week, soft place, you know, the place in Europe it did for me. And Jenny and Dad just got angrier and angrier and angrier about the way it was for women. Um, and, uh, I just felt the need more and more and more to sort of hold my hand up and say, anybody else

think this is. Ridiculous. So that's when I started lady's parser on com, which was going to be an online magazine. That was the name of my Facebook page before I changed it to my own name. And that was going to be a place for women to come together and have a chat, have a rant, get some solidarity, sisterhood. And and it wasn't until I started sharing more deeper. It started off with fitness and health and, you know, funny things and and silly things and, um, and then it got deeper and deeper and deeper until I realized that actually, I can't stop myself going deeper now that I've switched something on. But I was anonymous. It was called Ladies, Pass It On. It looked like a group of women running this site. I used to see we when I introduced anything, and I found that the strength and that that nobody, apart from people who knew me, nobody knew it was me. So, um, once that snowball started running down the hill and then I realized that, you know, I'm. I'm going to chase the snowball. This is my snowball. I'm going to put my name to it, and I'm going to go along for the ride and see what happens. So that was quite a passion, anger driven thing. Um, I just thought, this is not enough of me. I can't go through this life pretending it'd be perfect with these ridiculous expectations. And one of the first things I wrote was about coming into midlife and realizing, it's time, though. You're not going to do this twice, you're not going to live the second half like you love the first half. Come on, let's let's shake ourselves up here. You've got wisdom. You can see now you've got big picture vision and what you're going to do with that big picture vision. You can't go back once you've seen the whole painting. So, um, so that was very. And get in that way. Driven. Hmm. Wow. You've touched on about midlife really resonates with me because seeing the big picture, seeing it all, calling out my own behavior with people over the years as well. And and what I've been accepting of once you've done that, there is such great power in that, isn't there? To really. Is Sorry. Go on. No, no. That's it. I just I'm totally agreeing with you. And I feel like we have a responsibility, not in an expectation way, that we're trying to get it off, but in the opposite way, in an ancestral hundreds of thousands of years type way. These women that have gone before us, and they have lead the pathways and they dare to dream that we would live better. They you know, I think of all the women in my, you know, laying going back and their friends and the women that loved by choice and not blood. And I think about what they would think of me and what I'm doing and what younger women coming up will think of. They look at me. And that's not in a I care what other people think of me. We it's in a real what am I showing them? Am I showing them what's real? Am I showing them authentic? What it's like to live as a woman? And am I showing them the way it can be? Or am I giving them another masked version of, you know, the social media that they're seeing in their age group? I don't want to be that. I want to be an older woman that they can look at and go, that looks good. I like that, and it's so generous. It just feels as if what you're imparting is something so precious that actually you look around and and don't see very often because there is so much masking. I see a lot of that is because my algorithms are trained for it. So you've got the real stuff coming in. Once you start looking and life's like that, set it algorithms, it will flood you with what it is that you need and in life, sustain. Once you set your intentions of what you want in, you'll be flooded with it. So I'm surrounded by women who are doing it. Yes. Oh, that's you know, Donna, that is so true. Because then all the people start appearing, don't they? Do? And you're like, oh, by the look of you, follow. And what a great analogy that is in life as on social media. And of course it would be, wouldn't it? Yeah. Donna, could we invite you into our virtual rage room and we're handing you a baseball bat, and we're going to, um, play some objects of your choosing in your eyeline, and you can whack it as you will. Um, so firstly, we're going to ask you to give us a current news item that makes you see that you would like to swing that bat at when the world is a very badly wrong. I tend to go through a phase of muteness for a few weeks where I'm waiting on Superman flying in and fixing it, because I cannot believe that it's happening daily. So obviously I'm referring to the war situations that are going on, which there is very little that I'm able to think about other than that at the moment. And I'm in that sort of helpless. Useless stage where I almost feel quite

muted by the enormity of it, and then that normally will process, and then the anger will come out and the proactiveness will come out. But but I think a lot of people are in that stage at the moment. It's interesting that you say that you're waiting for Superman to come in and save us, when it's actually all men up there, isn't it? Not a single woman doing anything useful. You talk about hitting with your baseball bat. It almost seems like a mountain that, you know I would never stop swinging. So let's move on. And let me ask you an aspect of modern life that's making you fume. The absolute overwhelming need for everybody to reach these ridiculous standards, these expectations, all deadlines that are set that nobody can actually reach without harming your mental health or your physical health, and the perfectionism, the social media. Um, let's make everything look shiny and rosy. By all means, take the beautiful pictures and show the beautiful pictures because we all love to see them. But make sure you put in the caption. You know what the reality behind that was? Um, remind everybody that, you know I did this today, but the rest of my week did not look like this. Yeah, I needed 3 or 4 days on the other side of that with a social hangover or, you know, just to rest or catch up on all the stuff I wasn't doing when I was putting pumpkins all over my house, because that's the reality. That's like, you know, because I had about 14 people in my house yesterday for this lunch. And I, um, and today, I can't imagine doing something like that again for a very long time. But if you look at my pictures of yesterday, it really paints a picture of, yeah, Jen and I was talking about this, that this bohemian country life with 1s so easy to look at that when you don't know and think, oh look at these people out there winning or all of this and yeah, but you know but we know what goes into that. So we assume that other people must know that as well. But it's important that we see it. Yeah, because I've seen it. Some people are just completely overwhelmed by the enormity of what they're not doing. And, you know, adds to that feeling of less. And so I would you know, I would again, it's that part of our own mind that you were saying that actually pings out and kind of gets projected onto somebody else. And. And imagines that because we're thinking, oh, they must be doing this and that, that they are. And also, we can all have these conversations all the time. If I can speak about these 14 people having lunch now, I'm not going to see anybody in that kind of context, at least for another three months. Then like you, there's a little bit of you that goes, oh yeah, yeah, yeah, that's understandable. And then we can all talk about all these aspects where in a much more honest, real way, 2s isn't it great to see, you know, I spent three days at the weekend preparing for this lovely little place that, you know, enjoying the beautiful pictures of. And I want to share the beauty of it. And it was lovely. I wanted to show these lovely pictures, and I want to show the beautiful food and look at my decorations. Aren't they great? You can still have all the beautiful things and do the beautiful things and be proud of them. We're not saying everybody should live in, you know, don't don't do anything lovely because it's not real. Just be real about the process. Yes, exactly. That's not all about the process, I think. Um, Donna, another quick fire. I love our quick fire. It's not very quick. Um. Oh, the taking me out just like fires. I'm like, oh, I'm sorry. 1s No, I love it. It's good behaviour of others which gets on your wick. People who cannot find kind things to see. 1s People who will deliberately find something, even if it's what I call a jellyfish sting. If it's disguised and you almost think, did that just happen? Oh, that's the worst. Women, especially who do that to other women. I really, really get my the meek. I just think, why would you choose to write that there or say that to this person who you can see? You know, why would you take that 10s to your life and do something crap with it? Yes, you have done something that will grow in that person that they'll take give it to somebody else, they'll take it. And you start a little chain of something that will ripple and grow positively. If you do it negatively, that's going to ripple and grow negatively, and they're going to pass it to their friend. And it's just, you know, make their choices with the things that you see or do. Because what you're really doing is you're having a go at yourself because something within you again, it's yeah, comes back to that thing that that person did or, you know, and you've gone, oh, that makes me feel a bit worse about myself. Therefore I'm going to meet you. Feel. Yeah,

I'm going to attack. It's your responsibility, that feeling. You can feel it. We all do that. You have to. It has to die with you and stay with you. You can't pass it back. You're gonna. You do the absolute opposite for all of us. And let's exit our virtual rage room there and say, because I think all those things can safely stay in there. I don't want to go back in there for a little while. Exactly. <sup>2s</sup> And let's please just end on both Jen and I are so grateful for all your beautiful words, and I know how much they resonate with so many of us. Yeah, difficult. So powerful. Thank you so much. It was such a privilege to meet you. Thank you for inviting me and wanting me and having me. <sup>1s</sup> So was this conversation brought up for us? I thought it was so refreshing talking to Donna because as somebody that seems so elegant and kind of dignified and put together, she just has this capacity for absolutely nailing really quite dark, painful realities. Yeah, she's a great lesson in exactly that, in that you can say less and you poise, poise, love some of that. Yeah. Isn't it? Um, she's sort of. Yeah. Evolved. Well, let's aim for that, you know. Okay. Yeah. When we grow up. Yeah. See you on the other side. Yes. Happy festive season. Happy festive season to you. <sup>2s</sup> Thank you for listening and sharing in our anger. <sup>1s</sup> And remember, we're not mad to feel mad. <sup>3s</sup> Please like and subscribe. It helps other people find the podcast.