**Marilyn:** Good morning Simone. I'm happy to be having another session with you. I wanted to check in and see how you're doing?

**Simone:** Good morning, thank you so much, Merlin. I always appreciate your coaching calls, so thank you for taking it.

**Marilyn:** We want to talk today a little bit about what you'd like to accomplish. We have about 30 to 40 minutes today. A little shorter than we usually have, but we pretty effective at jumping in and I appreciate that about you. I would like to talk to you about the topic you'd like to explore today, I did get an email from you about that, but tell me a little bit more how you would like to use our time today?

**Simone:** As you know, my son as we talked about before my son, this is my first year being sonless. My 12-year-old son has decided to live in another state, live in Louisiana with his dad for a year, and I'm here in Chicago. It's been a smooth transition as for us getting him there, but now the real me in potatoes has started. The things that his dad-- this his first time his dad has been around him for such an extended period of time. The things that he's doing is almost like a trial and error but I find myself having a little bit of a difficult time not saying when he makes a decision, not saying, "That won't work",or "Don't do it like that", Just being a little too assertive, I won't call it bossy. [laughs] A little too assertive, and not just letting him experience or letting both of them experience something new. I'm trying to find those healthy boundaries. I really I don't know because this is new for me too. I don't want to mess it up almost, even using those words is interesting that I'm saying that, that just came out, messing it up.

**Marilyn:** Messing it up? It's great that you have the awareness of this, that you're noticing the pattern of becoming instructional and a “little too assertive” as you call it. That's a great level of awareness to base this conversation on to. The other thing I heard you say was that you want healthy boundaries?

**Simone:** Yes.

**Marilyn:** You don't want to mess this up?

**Simone:** Yes, I don't-- go ahead I'm sorry.

**Marilyn:** Those are very clear.

**Simone:** Good, now how do I do it? [laughs] I don't know what to do. It felt different.

**Marilyn:** As you know the most important step is for you to be aware of this. I think we can play with that today, being that assertive person with the positive intent of creating healthy boundaries without messing it up. Here we have this time together and if you imagine what we could accomplish in this time we have together today, what would you like to accomplish in terms of this?

**Simone:** I would like to uncover some triggers, maybe something that I'm not realizing that is triggering me to feel like I have to jump in or I have to save the day or investigate a little bit somethings that I can do when I start to feel that emotion of the sky is falling. I have to jump in, I have to save because that's the feeling that I'm working with you, and taking the classes, and learning the emotional intelligence. I'm starting to be a little bit more aware of the feeling and not let my mind take over. Now I'm at the point where I feel the feeling but I don't know that the next step to take when I feel that feeling.

**Marilyn:** If by the end of the session today, you can uncover some of these triggers that set that feeling free that, "The sky is falling and you have to jump in", so that would be something to work with?

**Simone:** Yes that would be something tangible right now that I could be like, "Oh, maybe I can do this and this", "Oh, maybe I've never even noticed that I was thinking it look like that" Just talking about it with you and then you can reflect back to me some things that I'm not even aware that I'm saying because in the moment I feel like the sky is falling, but then afterwards I'm like,"Girl, It was okay the whole time", but I've already overreacted. I've already told you, "No, you're doing it wrong", [laughs] I cant take those words back. I start to feel bad and I'm back in a cycle of just feeling hopeless, maybe feeling alone, maybe feeling unneeded and unwanted. See, this talking to you sometimes helps. You're coaching me and I don't even know it, Marilyn.

**Marilyn:** That's a great and uncovering of that feeling, the sky is falling, I'm not paying attention to the patterns and then really when I heard right under that, Simone was, "I don't want to be left hopeless alone and unneeded."

**Simone:** Unneeded yes. That's something again just now that those words evoked a feeling, strong feeling that went along with that, those words, just now.

**Marilyn:** What is that feeling, if you just take a moment because I can tell that's a powerful place to uncover the feeling underneath that, hopeless and alone and unneeded, what would that be?

**Simone:** Fear. That's the strongest, most accurate word I could say right now is fear.

**Marilyn:** That fear in relation to this issue with your son and your ex-husband, has that been a part of your relationship before?

**Simone:** Well, definitely a part of my major relationships as far as with my parents. Fear of being not loved or not wanted or I needed to do something to make --my dad was an alcoholic, so he passed away 2009 from his alcoholism. I just could remember as a child, always feeling I had to do something to make him want to be around me or want to stay. Because my mom never explained, what is an alcoholic, what does that mean, why does he leave so much, and why he's sporadically here, there and everywhere. I never got that explanation. I never got that understanding. I thought it was me, I thought I had to do something, this is like, I got to tap dance to make him interested in making him want to stay.

**Marilyn:** Does that History have some lessons in it for you today?

**Simone:** Yes, I feel talking about it is just like, "There is a connection here Simone, what are you doing, there is a pattern, I can feel it.", but it's a slow-- I just don't want to miss it and I don't want to repeat it and I feel maybe I'm doing that.

**Marilyn:** I can't help but notice that, a few minutes ago, you said that one of the triggers for you with your son, is that you want to step in and save the day?

**Simone:** Yes, I see what you doing there. I felt that before, that if I share the story I just shared, at home it was just so chaotic. I just wanted everything to be okay. I used whatever skills that a five-year-old has which is just-- now that I'm thinking about it, that's a lot, that's heavy for a five-year-old to try to make the household peaceful. I felt like that was my role. I got to make everybody laugh. I got to just try to pacify my dad and my mom and in whatever situation so that they don't argue. To basically save that day because I was afraid what would happen if I didn't do that.

**Marilyn:** Yes, how were you with that role when you were five-years-old. How did you believe you were doing with that role of saving the day?

**Simone:** I didn't do [laughs] I didn't do a good job because I couldn't. I couldn't save the day because, again, like I said, I didn't know at the time, though, but it wasn't about me. I wasn't the one that was causing any problems with the day. It wasn't something that I couldn't save my dad, he had to go through that experience. My mom had to go through that experience. It really didn't have anything to do with me, but at five, I took it personal.

Man, I messed it up. I didn't smile hard enough. I wasn't cute enough that day. I didn't have on the prettiest dress and now he's angry and now he's angry at my mom. He's angry at everybody. Now he's screaming and yelling and he's violent. Then he leaves. I took that personal, definitely.

**Marilyn:** Which is very appropriate for a five-year-old child to have that ego-based response. Children are the center of the universe until they get a little bit older, but I think you are very clear. I thought it was all about me.

**Simone:** Right, yes.

**Marilyn:** Let's save that awareness because there was something really wise about you, Simone, in that moment wanting to save the day. You did exactly of what you felt was appropriate in that time. Now we're in a very different situation and yet there's a little bit of a theme there.

**Simone:** Yes, I've carried that heavy load. [laughs] Yes.

**Marilyn:** How does that show up for you?

**Simone:** That's exactly how I feel now. It's almost as if I think my son is me. It's almost like I'm trying to go back and still be that five-year-old to save my son from that experience. In a way, that experience is the experience that got me to where I am now of awareness, that state of-- I almost appreciate that experience in a way, because it taught me so much about myself, but I'm ready to release it. It taught me so much about life, that extreme suffering. One of my favorite Zinn mentors, Thich Nhat Hanh always says, "A person really doesn't know their selves until they really know their own suffering."

That suffering, even at five it just revealed so much to me, but at this point, I'm ready to release it. I'm ready to let it go, but I couldn't let it because I didn't know that I was carrying it. Now I'm doing it again because I'm still carrying it. I'm doing it again where I'm trying to save the day and trying to prevent Benjamin's father from making any mistakes that my dad made, but it's not even the same experience.

**Marilyn:** Yes. That's an interesting awareness. It's not the same experience.

**Simone:** Yes, it's not.

**Marilyn:** It's not the same experience and what is it that brings that same experience up for you?

**Simone:** That I have no control. [laughs] I have no control and I can't. Yes, I have no control over it. That's how I felt when I was that kid. Since I have no control over it, I thought that I was the cause of making things go wrong. Yes, maybe that's that trigger. That is the trigger, the control, that's me, that's my thing. I know that in other areas as far as work and I've done such a great job of releasing it and accepting the present moment and not resisting it in areas at my job and in my other relationships, but this is my son, it's so close to home. It's just a little bit more difficult to see that trigger when it's in motion.

**Marilyn:** Yes, that trigger created safety for you, as you said, when you were younger. That save the day role was very much a part of your day-to-day environment at home.

**Simone:** Yes.

**Marilyn:** Now we grow this up and we bring you here is to fairness what you just mentioned about control. How is that operating today? What is the purpose of that today?

**Simone:** Zilch, zero [chuckles]. It's only causing stress. Now granted, is not to the point where I'm constantly worried about it every day, but I think even this little bit of stress that it is causing, the need to be in control, if I don't become aware of it, it's just going to fester and fester in me to grow bigger. It's going to seep into my job, my experiences at work and my other relationships. I'm at the point right now where I want to catch it and become aware of it, because it's not serving me at all. I can't be in control. There is nothing for control. Life doesn't need to be controlled. Life just needs to be experienced.

I want to-- I don't know maybe love it? When I feel that feeling of fear and need to be in control maybe I could go back to that exper-- because it's almost just like I'm reliving a past. I'm not in the present moment. I feel that I'm living that past experience. It's almost as what would I have wanted someone to do help do with me or if you could come back and you could be with me when I was five. I'm trying to think of some of the things that maybe you would have told that five-year-old Simone to help her not feel like she needs to be in control of that such an adult experience.

**Marilyn:** Yes, let's play with that a little bit. I think that's a lovely idea to revisit that. What would Simone have wanted an adult to say at that moment… what would themessage have been to you?

**Simone:** The first thing that pops into my head is when we had one of our other coaching sessions. We were talking. You were telling me about an experience with the Head Start organization and you talked about when you were in the room with a child and they were having a temper tantrum or they were just having a strong emotional reaction to something. The one thing that you said that I used this-- I've been using this at work weirdly enough and I didn't realize it til just now. You said that the one thing that you told the child was I'm just here to keep you safe. I'm just here to make sure you're safe or you just told the child that they're safe. They can feel have what they want.

I'm just here to let you know that you are safe and that was so powerful for me because even now my relationship with my mom is a hundred percent better. I'm actually coaching her, but I'm still the protector or the mom in the relationship. She doesn't have the ability to now so I understand. I don't take it personal, but just to have someone to tell me you're safe, you're okay. She can't do that right now and I'm not getting that from anyone. That's what I would like.

**Marilyn:** Is that something you can tell yourself when you feel that trigger of being in control and being fearful?

**Simone:** That would sound so heavenly if I-- I think it would just evoke such an emotion of feeling of peace. When I'm in that heightened state of the sky is falling, I'm safe.

**Marilyn:** If you're really able to do that for yourself as adults we do some fuse things for ourselves and yet what you're creating in this conversation Simone, I'm very touched by how you're connecting these dots as we speak. What would that be like if you were able to just say to yourself, "I’m here to keep you safe, I'm here." However you might sound to your SELF .

**Simone:** Yes, even just hearing you say it and then I picture myself saying it to myself in my head, it almost is such a weight off me, I feel even just a lighter even just thinking about mention in to myself when I am a little bit of moment of anxiety. It just feels lighter, it just seems like the problem just almost dissipates.

**Marilyn:** So paying that kind of attention, the weight of that feeling for you.

**Simone:** Yes, it's just like that emotional intelligence times two, because of course in the problems really seem real impalpable that I go in to fix it mode and I'm not addressing how I feel right now in the present moment. Even the things that-- the problem that I'm trying to fix, I'm not fixing it from a moment of-- fixing it from a place of awareness, I'm really not addressing the real issue. It is easier to say it but now that when I'm talking to you about it because I really don't have, say, there's not many people like we've talked before, that's not really many people that I could talk to about this and understand it from a such and advanced level of emotional intelligence that you have. I feel, I have to fix it but it's too heavy. I never get to the core of it, I am now, I’m safe, just saying that I don't need to feel like I have to fix it anymore.

**Marilyn:** What I'm noticing in the quality of your voice too, there's a deeper quality of the tone of your voice, almost as I don't know what to call it what would you--

**Simone:** Yes, I feel it I don't know what this or how to explain it. I would just call it presence, stillness I feel peaceful, I feel safe.

**Marilyn:** That's where you where you are right now that present, safe, peacefulness place. It's an important thing to just let yourself feel that for a minute here, like install it.

**Simone:** Yes, instead of brush passing it too quickly because the next thing, there's always going to be a next thing, there's always going to be something else, I got to go to work, at the JO but at now that we're talking about it, I feel it's something that I can carry with me across the board in many different situations. I want it, I need it, I don't have to separate it from myself and handle the situation like this. This is something that could come with me in-- I can experience in all situations. It's something that I could practice here at work, at home and with my son, I just have to remember that it's not the experiences only seen different. It seem like I got use these skills here, I got to use this skill here. If I can just like you say a cultivate it and sit in it and bring that presence with me. I can use it.

**Marilyn:** How would that installation, that awareness that this trigger that you have changed your relationship with your son?

**Simone:** My goodness, that's my main goal is to have him feel independent because he made this decision, I've always told him we moved to Chicago that when he turned 12, that I would let him make the decision of whom he would like to live with. The purpose behind that was to have him start to feel, you don't have to wait until you're 21 to start to make decisions if you want it. My whole goal now being a mother is let him be him. Let him start to make decisions, let him feel confident, let him start to develop his own awareness of who he is and what does he want, that's my whole goal.

What my actions when I'm in a fear based definitely contradicts that, for him and for his father because that causes stress because then I'm telling him what to do, then he's upset with me because, I think I know everything, I'm the better parent, then that causes my son said just be anxious almost, he hates it, he of course would want-- I'm doing the same thing my parents did **[unintelligible 00:26:30]** I'm doing the same thing that I didn't like when I was a child. I noticed the same thing that my son, he picks up on that and then he tries to placate everyone, he tries to be the peacemaker. Where are you in. Marilyn, why didn't you tell me that? [laughs] Oh, my God that's the same thing?

**Marilyn:** You're good at uncovering [crosstalk] yourself. Trusting that place in you that can uncover this things. It's almost the sheep has a different clothing on. The sheep is cloaked differently this time. There's something very [crosstalk] there's no alcoholic here.

**Simone:** There's no right yes.

**Marilyn:** I am also very curious Simone about something, you said that you told your son when he was 12, he was going to be able to make his own decision. That was a very brave thing to say. What did you know about your son earlier that gave you that confidence to give him that decision?

**Simone:**  I would say more and notice something about myself. I was being in over protective mode. Again moving here to Chicago was probably one of the best things that ever happened as far as my evolution of who I am but then just separating myself and him from all of our family, we don't know anybody here. It also triggered me and pushed me into over protective. I got to keep him safe where his here, we're here by cells we're alone. I had to do everything, I have to fix everything, I have to make sure everything is perfect because I got to have this image of I'm doing this, I succeeded, I'm doing this by myself, I'm powerful, I’m strong, his grades, his schoolwork started to slip. We had to have all meetings with teachers and stuff like that. In one of those meetings I noticed that, well, something that one of the administrator said, I noticed that I don't allow him to be who he is. I don't allow him, he's waiting for me to help him with his math, he's waiting for me to fix it, he's waiting for me to tell him the answer. That was just weird because he's never been that type of child. He was always independent, happy, go lucky fun. Now he started to slowly turn into this little bitty shy shell of a kid like me, like I was. When I became aware of that I was no, that was one of the biggest decisions. I was just like "Wow" As soon as I notices that I was like, "You know what I'm going get a break this pattern of mine." Then I started to notice in him, let me start allowing him to make some of his own decisions. Every time he used to come back home from like in the summer when he used to go home he used to be sad, just to comeback without just me but not having his family. That was one of the main things that I thought, well, maybe if any decision to allow him to make even though it killed me on inside a little bit when he said he wanted to go home. I just felt like I needed to, that’s one of the main I did to incorporate in our relationship. That I can feel like his life is important, he can make that decision on his own.

**Marilyn**: You've done a lot in terms of that overprotective mode, relaxing a little bit and watching/seeing in your conversation, as youtellme about that ability that you have.

**Simone**: Yes, it seems like this part that where we're talking about now, this is like the last little remnants of it that little part of me that still wants to have my thumb on it and now, that I've become aware I’m like okay, well, it's okay. Let me just slowly become aware of this, try to ease it all out. Like I don't need it anymore.

**Marilyn**: Simone you’re very good at uncovering this pattern. You made a very clear connect to uncovering this pattern today and now something that you said in the beginning is you really want to know what to do with it. *“If I can leave this phone call today with some clear things to do.”* Let's talk about that because I think we're in the moment of really understanding the trigger that is tied to that past experience. What can you do?

**Simone**: The first thing I'm going to go do, as soon as I walk into the office is Journal this, write all of this out because I need to really see this story that I've been telling myself. I really need to read it. Read it, look at it and see it for what it is and realize that that's not what's happening right now. Also acknowledge it and appreciate it. That’s one of the things that again, skills that I learned in my mindfulness meditation work that sometimes it's hard to put it into practice when something is so close to home. Just us talking about it and I really appreciate you being present with me to talk about it. It helps me become aware of it and I need to write it down. I need to write it down and I need to see it and see how it does it-- How the patterns that [laughs] I was unknowingly following and then how did that make me feel when I was a child. Just really sit down and really talk about it with myself. How did that make me feel when I was a child and then see how I could be doing the same thing with my son and I don't want that. Once I can really get it out and see it and it become tangible then I could slowly release it. That's one of the practices that I use in my other work with mindfulness.

Just writing out, seeing that story as just a story and then hopping that little story bubble about it we talked about this, loving it. Telling myself that I'm safe, it's really applying love and attention to that story in that child, so that she can grow up and realize that it's okay.

**Marilyn:** That's very clear that journaling thing I know is important to you, your mindfulness and meditation allows you to really see it and acknowledge it. Yes, that child is still a part of you, we all have a child within that has stories and experiences and things to draw from. Yes, that's great. Then, make it tangible for yourself, as your final step when you release it then you get right back to what you just said was your safe.

**Simone:** Yes, I'm safe, yes. This is going to make me feel-- I feel so empowered. Even thinking about-- I'm almost excited. I'm excited about going, write it out and write that story and appreciate that story. It's just like you said, that weight is almost lifted-- just almost completely lifted off realizing that I wasn't doing anything wrong per say, I wasn't trying to hurt my son's father or my son by being demanding or assertive, I was striving to feel safe. I was the one that was trying to feel safe. That's so cool [laughs] It makes it more exciting. It makes it more light hearted, it makes me actually feel loving. It makes me feel loving towards myself when I can look at it in a different light.

**Marilyn**: That's a very different thing than trying to judge you by being-- [crosstalk] I'm in control, I’m trying to save the day. There's a very big shift in being loving towards yourself, understanding the purpose of that. Let's take a little leave we have a little bit more time but I think it's really important to come back to Benjamin with this. You're going to talk to Benjamin, I don't know if you talked to him on weekends or when you talked to him but what would you like to have happened with your next conversation, your next experience with Benjamin?

**Simone**: Almost verbatim, the same conversation that I'm going to have with myself, I would like to have with him. All I need to say to him is that he's safe and that I'm here to support him and just to go back to originally the idea. The whole idea, the whole reason why he's made that decision in the first place are we came to the agreement that he could make that decision is to empower him in that decision. In his choices. I was slowly started to get away from that by put my thumb on him and his father so I would like to go back to that and just have that conversation and just tell him that I'm proud of him for making that decision. Sometimes mommy's actions may seem like I'm back to the controlling mommy, but explain to him, just to be vulnerable a little bit with him. Mommy had a rough childhood. Sometimes she gets afraid and she's scared but that doesn't have anything to do with him, that he's safe and he can make any decisions that he wants and I'm here to support him. I think it's time for me to have that conversation with him. Just saying is just, he's going to appreciate that so much because like I said, I would have appreciated that conversation so much from my mom.

**Marilyn**: That’s a big statement, that's a big conversation and it's a very brave thing to do. If we imagine just some of the smaller decisions about what's happening at school, some of the kinds of conversations that you're having with him. How might that bigger I'm here to support him, empower him, how much bigger decision are in that conversation with him will sound with some of these just smaller day to day things how is that?-

**Simone**: Yes. I think it would open up a lot more. Then the very thing that I want to be included more in his life would naturally organically unveil itself almost, instead of me trying to tell me about your school, you've got to tell me what's going on. Now, what I'm just step back, just tell him, you're safe and I'm here to support you. He will do that,I will be able to be there like I want to be but more in a natural cohesive organic way but isn't that how life usually happens [laughs] like the very thing that I want is going to happen if I tried so hard not to get it and try to force him to do it.

[laughter]

**Simone**: He’s going to open up a lot more because he’s going to feel safe. There, yes, I can't believe I was doing it. [laughs] Marilyn it is just so mind blowing, just moment of presence and awareness can reveal so much to us about our past and our emotions and how that it used to really help us. Like I said I feel that fear and I felt that fear. I just couldn't figure out- "Okay now, what to do with it, what to do with it? Where it was coming from?"

**Marilyn:** Fear can be so overwhelming but what you did here is uncover it and made it okay. There's an acceptance. What I've been noticing Simone, is there is a tandem lesson here, a tandem awareness here. Awareness of yourself as a child and your awareness of how you're operating as a mother with your own child. There's a tandem thing that's very well paralleling. I'd invite you to just really watch this. You've installed it, you've really played with it, there's a lot of big hoss in your-- I love your voice. You're dancing in it. Let's make surethat we talk in a couple of weeks. That we set up another time and review the things you've mentioned journaling, about it. Making through those phone calls with your son. Have a little bit of different tone to them that you've mentioned. What other tangible things would you like to accomplish by the time we speak next?

**Simone:** I think I would really like to cultivate this presence that we've experienced on the phone today. Have it go be more fluid throughout all of my experiences. Just like you said, just sitting in it, I would-- My plan is to practice sitting in it more, so that it could be more fluid in all of the experience and realizing that it is here. That presence, that stillness is in me. That intuition is here too, using all experiences. It doesn't have to be turned off and on as far as-- Just making it more harder on myself figuring it stuff out all the time. Sometimes it's just good just to sit still. When I am practicing my meditation, that's one of the things that I'm going to do. That's one of the mantras, are the intentions that I'm going to set.

Now is realizing that my presence is here to aid and guide me in all situations even when they are the scariest situations. That's what I would like to do on a daily basis. That's something that I can commit to myself even- Like I said on a daily basis even if I don't journal every day. This is something that now I have the awareness, I can commit to myself on a daily basis. Just sit in it more because it was just so magical just now. I want it every day [laughs]. I want to not forget it.

**Marilyn:** And cultivating that presence and staying more fluid in it. It's almost like a self-correcting assignment you've given yourself because you're in it though.

**Simone:** [laughs] Yes it's almost easy. It's very easy. Because in meditation, when I am still, when I am present, it's definitely easy to feel when I'm not, when I'm not [laughter]

But sometimes I have to make specific intentions towards certain feelings. The fear was so tangible. It's almost like I have to set an attention specifically to love that fear. That's what the intention that I'm going to come up with for my next meditation, an attention to love that fear and that stillness.

**Marilyn:** Great. Would you be willing to write this down and share it with me?

**Simone:** Yes. I'm a good storyteller. [laughs] I'd love to tell you the stories of what has transcribed since our last call.

**Marilyn:** That is very much a strength of yours. You take the awareness and create it into something tangible for yourself. It's another lovely skill that you have Simone.

**Simone:** Thank you. Thank you. I appreciate you.

**Marilyn:** I'm going to end this tape that we've been doing today. Honoring the fact that we've captured this lovely session on a tape which we don't often do. I'd like to-

**Simone:** I can share that with everybody. I would like to be one of your new coaching tapes that you can share with people. [laughs]

**Marilyn:** No that's not my intention but I would like to share the tape with you. That would be something that I think it would be fun for you, to listen to it again. Thank you Simone so much. (And then on Aug. 14, 2020 she gave me permission to share this will ALL of you!)

**Simone:** You're welcome. My pleasure.

**Marilyn:** You're a delight.

**Simone:** Thank you.

**[00:45:33] [END OF AUDIO]**