



Interview Transcript: Monica Magnetti

BB: This is Paula Shackleton podcasting for Bookbuffet.com and today I am speaking with Monica Magnetti. Hello Monica! How are you?

MM: Hi Paula, I'm fine thank you, and you pronounced my name just right.

BB: Excellent. Now I know you and I had a very interesting first meeting, which was on the chairlift of Blackcomb Mountain. And we talked about books, authors and...

MM: and translations.

BB: ...yes, writing and translations. You were at that time completing some graduate degree course work and had been writing yourself. Tell us a little bit about yourself, first of all and the education that you've had and how that has led you to your present business.

MM: Right! So I was born and raised in Italy and then will zoom to the end to my education. From Italian schooling I have a degree in Greek and Latin, and also that was the beginning of my love for mythology, obviously studying Greek for five years really opened up my world to Greek and European mythology in general.

Then I moved Canada and four years ago I went back to UBC and I completed a BSA in creative writing. From that I moved right into getting coaches certification. Coaching is something that I have done all of my life and yet, never really stepped up to the plate and said, "I'm doing this."

So right after my graduation from UBC I did two more certifications in coaching for individual coaching and for group coaching. Then I started writing books.

BB: I have got two of your books, which you very kindly sent me and I have read them through and started the workbook. Your first book is called *Outsmart Stress: Understanding the Dynamics behind Stress* (Portofino Press, 2007) and your second book, which is a larger ring-bound workbook is called, *Being in the Present: How to Create the Blueprint of your life*.

Can you speak about the writing process? How do you come to write these books and how you've structured them?

MM: Yes. My main book "Being in the Present" that really is my dream come true --- as a person, as an author, as an artist, as a coach. My heart and soul is in that book. I used all my own illustrations and graphics, with twelve metaphorical concepts and people get to do their own work around it, to find, the blueprints of their life. While I was writing that book, the other book, *Outsmart Stress* was just dying to come out. I wrote them parallel to each other, which was a very fulfilling process because you get to test the consistency in your thinking. And I was really able to support both books by writing the other one. It was a very interesting process for me.

What they both have in common is that true to the coaching philosophy I do not tell people what to do. It is about people finding their own individual method and their own individual steps to success, or to a happier life, or to wherever they want to get to. So both books are structured and designed with that in mind. Everybody gets different answers, everybody [goes through] different processes. It's quite exciting. I've got a lot of amazing feedback. Some people have done the same chapter three times.

BB: Is that right.

MM: Yes and I have a client who has read *Outsmart Stress* seven times.

Part I: Recognizing Stress

BB: It would be interesting for me to begin by talking about the stress book, because I think that everyone can relate to stress. It has become endemic in our society right now, Western society in particular. The BBC today had an article that reported on stress levels rising in people living in the emerging economies who are westernizing, such as Brazil, China, India. It seems that stress has become part of our culture. How do you define stress?

MM: I would say that the easiest way to define stress is a lack of balance --- really between the doing, between the being --- really about finding a place where you can be in the zone. The zone is where you're not coming from your head. You're coming from inside of you, a place where you can hear your own voice. It is a place you can access if you are grounded or in the present if there is that opening to listen to your own voice.

If we are busy, busy, busy, busy, doing, doing, doing, there isn't that opening to listen, to settle down, to come down and be in touch with our inner self.

BB: So it is a function, almost of just the intensity and pace of life, in fact.

MM: Yeah, yeah. It's about that. We live in a society that is very "doing" oriented. People even define themselves by what they do. They say, "I do this; I do that" and then you ask, "And who ARE you? Who do you want to be?" and they have no idea! They have no idea because the doing is really rewarded, while the being is still, not, part of people's consciousness yet. And what I noticed is that it takes very little for people to shift from a place of doing too much, to a place of being.

BB: Now when people come to you, what is their predominant reason for coming to you? Is it stress, or is a state of unhappiness or a crisis situation?

MM: It's a little bit Paula of everything, and yet, I'd say that most people who are attracted to coaching are reasonably successful, motivated people because coaching is proactive --- it attracts successful, motivated people. Yet they might be experiencing a breakdown in one or two areas of life. You know their work life might be out of balance, they might want to make more money, they don't love their careers anymore, their children have moved out of the house and they're lost. It's a combination of things that are resulting in some kind of imbalance. And it is by addressing the whole picture that we see the imbalance caused by things other than what they thought.

I do a lot of business and career coaching. People want to make more money. And you know, a lot of people think that to make more money you just have to work harder.

BB: Or work smarter.

MM: Yes! It's not about working hard; it's about loving what you do. Then the money follows. It's a different concept. People think, "Oh maybe I'm not working hard enough?" and it's "No, no, no you have to stop working hard and----have fun!"

And you know it is so amazing that when people relax, they embrace themselves, and they start having fun it is so amazing how their entire life changes.

BB: So would you say that people come to you and you start the process with an interview, get-to-know-you meeting, and then you offer them your workbooks, and send them home to do some homework and then you work on it from there? Tell me how your practice works.

MM: Usually people approach me, I give them a sample session, or people just hire me. They read my website www.lunacoaching.com they say, "I want to try that complimentary session, however I know I'm going to hire you. " During the complimentary session we pay attention to compatibility. I want to make sure I am the right fit for a person, so I ask questions like, "What are your goals? How do you know when you get there? Who do you want to be while you're reaching your goals? Then if it is a fit, we just start the coaching together. People have the choice to read my books or not. Usually I recommend them because my clients find them effective and they say, "Yeah, you know that really works!"

Part II: Recognizing Stress Being in the Present

BB: You know I was just reading *Being in the Present* and in that book you have twelve chapters and you've created these inspiring images, these metaphorical interpretations that visually allow people to go through the steps to examine aspects of their lives. This is very helpful. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about your use of metaphor because of your Greek mythology. This is a very interesting point.

MM: Yes, my Greek mythology is the symbolism, is the metaphors. Metaphors are very inspiring. I found they really support people in visualizing where they want to be. They're very basic. I use the metaphor of the lighthouse in, I think its Chapter Four. It represents being grounded, standing tall, and being grounded to the ground and being the person who watches out, and stands still for people, to be seen.

I use the same metaphor in *Outsmart Stress* when I say, "Imagine being a lighthouse and imagine taking yourself out of the drama of the situation. And it really works. So there are standard metaphors that are in everybody's consciousness that work very well. Then people come up with their own metaphors. They come up with their own visuals to support their own personal journey.

BB: Can you give us an example of creative metaphors that some of your clients have come up with?

MM: Yes. I was working with a coach-in-training and she was at a stage where life was very intense for her, and she wanted to bring more fun, more lightness in her life. While we were talking she said, "Oh my gosh, I saw hay rolling in the summer grass --- and that's how I want to be, I want to have that lightness where I can roll with the flow. " That was beautiful. She shifted. As soon as she could visualize it, or talk about it she shifted into that mode. Then of course once you have a structure or a visual, something you can talk about, you are able to access that place at other times. If you're really stuck, and really intense you can say, "Hey, remember to think about that hay rolling in the grass..."

Every person has his/her own metaphors or visuals, or sounds too. I access a lot of mythology for that reason. I find it very effective.

BB: Do you find that there are different phases in people's lives where they want to connect with this, and would that be related to those other triggers we mentioned earlier...?

MM: People come to me when they know they are not living their life at one hundred percent. Or maybe they're not living all areas of their life at one hundred percent. I define myself as a wellness coach because I support people in finding balance among all areas of life: business, money, family, fun, friends, and relationships.

Sometimes people have maybe five out of six. They know they can have six out of six.

BB: Do you strive for six out of six, or is it all very individual?

MM: It's all very individual. What it is is that I notice if people are willing to address where they are in their life and they put consciousness first. Usually they start to notice how much more they have than they thought. That in itself puts them in a better place than when they started.

BB: How do you get people to get into "the present moment?"

MM: [laughs] You know the fastest way to get into the present moment is to take a deep breath. To take a deep breath. You have a variety of breaths that you can suggest, but [audibly inhales] you just want to take a d e e p breath. I tell people follow your breath in your body. Direct the oxygen all the way down to your belly. Really connect with that. And people say, "Oh my gosh," and I just say, "Welcome, here we are."

BB: You know I'm not a yoga person but I took a skate-ski course that combined yoga at the end of the session and that component of the breathing, which is really important to yoga; that did exactly what you're describing. But there is also prayer. The fact that people are not attending church, thinking beyond their external issues, or looking for ways to work from within [from a spiritual context] at their issues. I mean, you come from a highly religious country while in Canada people do not observe or attend church regularly. I wonder about that?

MM: I think people are --- and I am just generalizing --- that the people who come to me are in fact quite spiritual, whether they practice in a conservative way or not. And they are looking for even more ways to be out there an express their spirituality. They want to be fulfilled in their careers so that [they can] make changes in their immediate environment. Or

they just want good parents, good people so that they give that to their children. You know what I mean?

BB: Yes.

MM: Being spiritual, being religious has many aspects, and you're right, in Canada people are more open to not being locked into "religious looks like this." I have some very young clients, and the rest are between thirty and up. Everybody is asking the question, "How can I be of more service? How can I achieve more fulfillment in the big picture?" So definitely being in the present and centering within you really helps.

BB: When you are meeting with people and they begin to open up to you and they begin to talk about their lives and talk about their families and their aspirations and so on, tell me how you work together.

MM: First of all I have to say that I don't meet with people in person. I work with them over the phone. The methodology of coaching is designed to be very functional to save you time. So you don't need to skip your appointment, and I do work with all my clients on the phone. I can tell you that I get amazing results, because I am trained that way.

As a coach, I empathize with my clients, however it's not about me, it's all about them. Coaching is all about the client, it is their journey, and so my experience doesn't really enter the picture because it would take me out of listening to them at 100%.

Part III: Finding and Meeting Career Goals

BB: That's very interesting. I remember there was a study that was done some years ago having to do with psychiatrists sitting in a session with a depressed patient and being able to determine whether that person was suicidal, or out of the risk of suicide, and in actual fact the study found that a computer program, or some sort of non face-to-face interface was more able to determine the likelihood of somebody's risk than an actual in-face meeting. There must be something to that. There must be something to that. To listen to what someone is saying without being influenced by the visual cues perhaps?

MM: That's true, I can tell you that you really develop different senses. You pick up details from the tone of the voice. Of course I am also a visual person so if I have the opportunity to meet with clients, I always love to do that. Yet, coaching is very effective when done on the phone because it is all about them... As a coach I don't give advice--I give suggestions that are designed to push people's comfort zone.

BB: Can you give us an example of some of the business people that you've helped?

MM: Yes. People put a tremendous amount of expectations on themselves. All so often they have limiting beliefs that stops them from really getting where they want. There is a chapter in my book, "Being in the Present" that deals with this. I call them the growlers. It is a name that I came up with to define inner voices, limiting beliefs we all have that come, somehow, from past experience. Sometimes they are voices we heard growing up. Voices like, "You could never be good enough, you could never make enough money, that project is way out of your league. I have to say that the first place I go with people who are not at 100% of their career goals, is to establish if there are limiting beliefs that they cannot rest and see if they are accurate... they need to update their image of themselves. Does this make sense?

BB: Hmm. Yes I believe it's true that people's perceptions of themselves are sometimes their most limiting factor in achieving their goals. Another interesting point that you bring up is the trust that people need in order to delegate, to find the right people to work along-side them, or below them or within partnerships. How do you coach them in that?

MM: There is a point where you have to believe that you are in the right place at the right time and that everything you do is perfect for what you need to learn. Sometimes people think that there are only right moves and the wrong moves are discarded. What I suggest to people is to look at the so called "wrong move" and discover what was right about that? Because there is treasure in everything. So if people start letting go of their labeling [of things] into "right" or "wrong" and accept that everything you do is the right thing for you to have done, to have learned at that moment... People need to learn to trust themselves to look close enough at these hidden treasures to discover they are always at the perfect place, at the perfect moment, if you are willing to trust that there is some learning for you there... If you are collapsing into victim and you are saying, "Oh that person took advantage of me." then it will always be someone else's fault. In my book "Outsmart Stress" I suggest to people that they let go of the laser pointer lens and use the wide-angle lens.

BB: I thought that metaphor was great. If you're focusing on something so finite, so narrow, so specific and really what you need to do is just open up your world and your vision.

MM: [laughs] Yes, thank you. If you are looking for only one possible result, you are going to be disappointed because life is unpredictable. If you are looking at the big picture, sometimes learning is the result. Then you decide what is going to be your next move from this big wide open space. And that works in personal relationships too. My first example is a woman who had problems dating. She had an expectation of falling in love every time she went on a first date, and it wasn't happening. Then when she embraced the big picture, she actually had fun and things really moved along. In relationships and in business, it is the same. When you are accepting only one result, you are really lowering your chances than if you are prepared to look at the bigger picture in business, in your personal life. People just get so much out of that.

BB: Well I've really enjoyed speaking with you today Monica. I think that both of your books, the workbook format is very brilliant because it allows people to bring forward those things that they might not be [examining], and it immediately makes you want to talk this through with somebody whose going to help guide you through it. I can highly recommend both of these books to our listeners. I'm wondering what your goals are now that you have these two books and a thriving practice.

MM: Well if you can believe it, I've started on my third book. Which is really about "Being in the Present" and "Outsmart Stress".. getting people to read and enjoy them. It's about people embracing themselves and loving who they are. Loving their Life.

BB: You're a very good example and [role] model to everybody for your outlook and enthusiasm. It's very contagious.

MM: Thank you, it takes one to know one.

BB: So thank you very much for speaking with me today, Monica. I wish you all the best of luck. We'll be putting these books up on our website and linking to your website. Would you like your email address included in there as well.

MM: Yes, email is a great way to get hold of me. We can setup an appointment. I would like to invite everyone to a sample coaching session.

BB: Thank you, that's wonderful. Since I'm up in Whistler and you're in West Vancouver, I was wondering if you'd be interested in doing a group appearance here at some point.

MM: I would love too.