

Abundance Bound podcast / episode fourteen: Ruthy

MIATA:

Abundance is not about the amount of money you have. It's about the quality of the relationship that you have with your money.

KRISTINE:

And no matter where you're at right now, you can decide to become someone who is bound to abundance. Someone who is committed to having a healthier and more compassionate relationship with your money. And you can decide to become someone who is bound towards abundance, someone who is stepping into a more expansive financial future.

MIATA:

We are here to help you become abundance bound.

KRISTINE:

Hello, I'm Kristine Oller, co-host of this podcast, and I'm delighted to have Ruthie Otero joining us to share how she grew beyond her initial shame around not knowing what she “thought she should know” about money to becoming one of the first Abundance Bound course facilitators for the Financial Empowerment Program. As it is for so many of us, Ruthy’s family of origin wasn't able to offer much in the way of solid financial guidance, especially in relation to her life as an artist and non-traditional earner. So she chose to seek out a community that understands the challenges of having income that fluctuates and that provides a space where it feels safe to be a beginner without being judged. Working at Abundance Bound became an additional source of income for Ruthy as did the little side biz that she started shortly after the pandemic began. Keep listening to hear how Ruthy’s relationship with money matured into one filled with much more clarity, intimacy, and kindness. What was making you even think about the fact that: *“Oh, maybe I should get my financial house in order? How were you even thinking about money back then?”*

RUTHY:

Well, the only thing that I really remember is that, for whatever reason – and this was way before Miata – my dad was like: *“You need to learn about money.”* He had a business, my mom was a registered nurse, so they had a regular life – but I needed to learn about money. He couldn't help me with that. So I was like: *“Let me read Money magazine,”* and I got a subscription. And I couldn't read them because it was for people who already knew about money. And it was very boring. And I just felt more alienated about money and like “less than” and like: *“What the hell?”* but I was trying. Being a creative, I would get, you know, checks, and then be happy about it. And if I did well, I would just go travel for five weeks. But it was very much like: *“This is my shot to live! And then I'm going to have to hunker down again until the next job.”* And I love learning, but I still didn't have a system. And so then it's like: *“Okay, one more thing to learn about... what to do with money.”*

KRISTINE:

Obviously, *Money* magazine isn't a great introductory teacher... but what was it like to start learning this kind of stuff from Miata?

RUTHY:

It was like a sigh of relief. Knowing that she also is a non-traditional earner and an artist was like: *“Okay, she gets me.”* And then knowing that she had been in so much debt and got out of it, and she wasn't like: *“...and I got a full time job and that's how I did it.”* The fact that she was still acting and was able to dig herself out of that hole made her a superhero to me. It just felt like a safe space to not know, to “not know about money.”

KRISTINE:

That's such a great point: "a safe space to not know." I always find it strange that we become adults and there's this shame around not knowing –

RUTHY:

Absolutely.

KRISTINE:

We put this pressure on ourselves. You just don't know this stuff until you know it. Miata and I didn't know any of this stuff until we then knew it. And the only way we're able to turn around and help anyone else is that we have literally gone through the ups, the downs, the discomfort, the tears ourselves.

RUTHY:

And the thing about being part of this community that I've gotten is the humility that it requires to grow in any area. And that has helped so much because the "not knowing," you know, I could say: "*Oh, I'm ashamed because I don't know.*" But for me that shame comes mostly out of pride that I "should know" and I don't want anyone to know that I don't know. So I'm not even going to ask because obviously *Money* magazine tells me I should know because they're not writing to me – and so everyone else must seem to know this too! And money being like sex, people don't really talk about their experience with it. It's very hush hush. So we're all left alone to think that we're doing it wrong.

KRISTINE:

It's so unfortunate when someone has the desire to learn – and they actually take an action to learn like you did with like: "*Well, I guess I'm getting get a subscription to this thing,*" and then cracking it open. And you're just paired with the wrong resource or the wrong teacher for the time that you're at. And it's unfortunate, because I think sometimes people run across a teacher that's not a good match for them, and then they're like: "*Well, I can't do this.*" So that's why I'm always so excited to find the people who do come across Miata, because I'm just like: "*Oh, you are in good hands!*" So what has been one or two of your areas of biggest growth through this process?

RUTHY:

One is sticking with it. Honestly, sticking with it despite doing it really imperfectly – not giving up at all. Forgiving myself. Because it just takes a lot of forgiveness because there's no way to do this perfectly. So the ability to give myself grace... that's something I'm really proud of. And then the big one is just being unafraid to ask for clarity. That's a huge principle. And so again, that would come to shame and fear of: "*Well, I shouldn't be asking these questions.*" Or when I got my car repainted: "*Oh, I don't want him to think I don't trust him on these numbers.*" And this discount he said he gave me but I was like... um, let me pull out the calculator... "*I thought that the discount you said was this amount but you only gave me this percent...*" And he was like: "*Oh, well, then blah, blah, blah,*" and I got a bigger discount! Which I wasn't necessarily going after – I was going after clarity because I'm abundance bound and that's what we do. So that was like, one of those moments where I was like: "*Look at me do this in front of the person who's selling me something!*" That was really a courageous act that came from doing this work and hearing it over and over (and probably other little wins that I've had along the way) that taught me "clarity is your friend," regardless if the person gets upset (that's more information about the person).

KRISTINE:

That is a huge piece of personal growth – being willing to stand there and go: "*I need a minute to make this clear for me.*" Because so often, people want to rush you through things – not even if they're selling you something – they just want to move along.

RUTHY:

Right. And it takes being willing to be in a moment of discomfort knowing the other person feels something in the moment.

KRISTINE:

Yes. I'm always maintaining in the Creating Cashflow part of this process, that the ability to generate your own income requires you to get more comfortable with being uncomfortable. It's a requirement.

RUTHY:

It's about worrying about what the other person thinks, and whether that person thinks I'm stupid. Or: *"Oh, that person is upset and I don't want to upset them!"* Worrying about the other person more than just what you need in this moment. And again, clarity is the foundation of this work around money. *"These are numbers and I'm just trying to get clear on the numbers you're describing to me."* And the story. That's huge. And with my mom's financial advisor... I've known him for many years and I would ask him a simple question (or what I felt was simple) and he would go on and on and on. And so now I've asked him four questions that again: *"Oh, he may think I don't trust him"* or whatever – not my problem, not my business – just here's the question. And he's evaded the question, which is fine cuz I'm like: *"I don't know if you saw my last questions – (cut and paste) – here they are again."* And then another issue came up and I'm like: *"Great, thanks for answering that – that happened to answer one of my questions and, by the way, here are the other two. I still need clarity."* That's it. And that's huge. And again, it's letting go of pride. Having humility. Being willing to, in my mind, piss someone off or offend someone. But that can be cleaned up after. And that's, you know, showing up for yourself and your money.

KRISTINE:

And doing business in just a very neutral way. *"I need these questions answered because that helps me do my business."* It has nothing to do with you or me, I just need these questions answered. I'm not going to expend extra energy getting flustered and worked up about it, I'm just going to do business. Like you said, very adult communication. Also, this point that you mentioned about: *"This is how I do this because I am someone who is abundance bound. I am someone who is abundance bound."* It's like an identity that you can incorporate and stand behind. And what helps by being part of a community like this is you have that feeling of the energy of all the people who are being abundance bound – so you don't feel like a kind of a lone weirdo out there going: *"Oh, I need to check these numbers."* It's like: *"Oh, this is just how we do it."* It's lovely.

RUTHY:

It's the being – *"Who am I being?"* This is an action that someone takes who has a relationship with their money and wants it to grow. That's what they do. So it's not a punishment – I haven't been sent to the corner. This is getting me to where I want to be. And so taking it on as an identity – that is huge. Rather than being a victim to it: *"It's hard and I'm busy!"* You talk about that, and Miata talks about that. And that's also been really helpful in shifting the perspective on that work.

KRISTINE:

Was there anything else about your mindsets or stories that had to shift in order for you to make the progress that you've made?

RUTHY:

I think this is a cousin of the humility part – that sort of instant gratification... because I believed if a bag of money with hundreds of dollars in it fell into my lap, then I'll be okay. And I'd have something worth paying attention to and to manage. But until then, I have to go get more of it so that I'm okay. Now being able to be a little bit more in reality, two things happened... yes, I'd still love a big bag of 100's to fall on my lap, but I don't have to wait for that to have more respect for the money I do have, and to be working towards those things that I need, and even dream of. There are actions I can take that will get me there in its own time, you know, and if I wanted to get here faster, there are things I need to do and ways I need to be. So it just helped me see like: *"Oh, I have levers to pull here more than just pray and scream and cry."*

KRISTINE:

Very well said, because that is so true. If you have two nickels to your name, then it's important to know what to do with those two nickels – to help you get a third and a fourth one. The question that I ask often is: *“What are you making this mean?”* So, you have two nickels... you want more (who doesn't want more?) but what are you making it mean that you only have two? And you're either going to spin a set of stories of it meaning: *“I'm not good with money... it means I'll always be in this situation... it means I'm unlucky.”* You're going to spin a set of stories that make you feel really bad. And when you feel bad, you don't take action. Or you're going to create some other stories – or just kind of dial it back from the meaning that you're placing on it – *“It means I have two nickels. It means that because I'm not happy with the two nickels, I should move in the direction of learning how to make more. That seems the next logical step. Let me look around to see who can help me.”* Those stories conserve your energy. And when you feel better, and you have more energy, that's when you start to take the action that you need to take. So when you got into the world of Abundance Bound, what was in there that you found most helpful in your particular journey?

RUTHY:

I think it was what you said about having a community on the same path and having their voices in my head. Not even literally, but like you said, the energy of hearing these conversations every month. Every month hearing and seeing people grow and hearing what they did, going: *“Oh, she's doing that? She grew that way? So that's how I operate in the world...”* It was just different from my old stories. I was able to not default to them, even if they came up. It was like: *“Yeah, but wait a minute, remember, so-and-so and how she gave me more of a backbone?”* And then also just being able to come to Miata with different issues around money, like settlements and insurance – money touches so many different parts of our lives... rather than just: *“How do I get more?”* – and then hearing how she again, uses the same principles. She didn't pull out new principles or a certain hack, it was just good homegrown actions, one step at a time, that I would hear over and over so that they just started becoming part of me. That was the most empowering thing. It was worth being part of a new family with a new story around money and my ability to influence how it goes in and out of my life. I didn't know that was possible, especially as a creative. I did this exercise: writing a letter to money (for two and a half minutes) and then having money write a letter back to me (for two and a half minutes). My first letter was an abusive relationship with me just making demands: *“Where are you? You like her better than me! What the hell is your problem? Why don't you like me?”* The letter I got back was like: *“I tried. I try. Your parents give you money, you tell them you don't want it. Friends want to buy you lunch, you say no. You're always pushing me away.”* Oh, my God, the personifying of money as a relationship has been a super, super helpful tool, because I can put myself on its side – like: *“Would I show up for this kind of friendship?”* And then recently, a month or two ago, I wrote a letter. And I just saw that I'm thinking more good thoughts and money's response to me was like: *“Yeah, I'm noticing you're trusting me a little more. and that's really cool. And just keep doing what you're doing and I'll be there.”* I don't let go of money because I don't think it's going to come back – even though I have it, I won't. That's the whole problem. And that's a trust issue. And so this year, my goal is to build more intimacy, specifically, and trust that the more I show up for my money, the more it will show up for me. And whether it's true or not, like you said, just that story kind of eases my mind and gives me permission to let some of it go, gives me space to test it out. And I do think it is true. I've seen it happen enough to go: *“Wow, if you're good to money, paying attention to it, respecting it, it shows up.”*

KRISTINE:

Isn't that the best exercise? The letter writing to money, and then money writing a letter to you. I found it very eye opening to look at how you're treating money. And you're like: *“I would never treat a person like that.”* I find that that exercise kind of unlocks little doors in your brain where you can then start making connections about: *“Oh, I see how I got here. I see what I'm doing.”* Which then allows you to sort of go: *“Okay, I can see where I might be able to start unwinding from some of this old patterning and stories and thoughts.”*

RUTHY:

Yeah. And it takes money out of just being this tool, or this object, which I use to measure myself or judge myself or beat myself up with or to be like, *"Why won't you take care of me?"* From just an object into: *"Okay, what are we doing? What do we want to do?"* And that it asks me: *"What do you want to do? Oh, okay."* A much better relationship. Because I can't avoid it.

KRISTINE:

Yeah, you're in a relationship with it – whether you are avoiding it or not, that is the relationship. So on the Creating Cashflow side of things, what have you learned about yourself? Or how has that exploration helped you in any way?

RUTHY:

Well, it definitely brought the bar down on my perfectionism, which I needed. So I've done several – more than several – online courses on how to have a business, you know, an online business or whatever the thing is. And it's always been with a series of email sequences – this email and that one next – and it's exhausting. My perfectionism just makes everything feel impossible. So that was just another place where I was like: *"I'm not cut out for this either."* So I gave up on that. And I just trudge along, lost again, not knowing what to do. Working with you really helps take this huge Thing of a business and make it into something more manageable. But the breakthrough for me was when the pandemic hit... I was taking Italian cooking classes, and I had been doing it, I don't know, three months. And it just felt like: *"Okay, what can I do with this?"* And the first big thing was that you validated it by even considering it. You never said: *"Well, how long have you been making ravioli?"* You know, all the voices that would have been in my mind. And then in that one conversation, taking it to: *"Okay, what's your next step?"* And it wasn't about email sequences, or make a website or anything complicated. And then I took some steps... but then serendipity just came in and was like: *"Okay, here's an opportunity!"* And I was like: *"Wow, if I hadn't had that conversation with Kristine, I wouldn't have even seen this."* And then just to be able to come back to you, right? Because the Cashflow coaching sessions are three times a month. So I come back to you quickly and go: *"Hey, this happened. What should I do next?"* And again, it was just something simple, something doable, without having to reinvent anything, or spend a lot of money to make it happen or energy. And whatever energy it was, it was in the direction of that goal to get that done. And you even helped me sell ravioli before the business was set up because I was like: *"I gotta practice making ravioli. What do I do?"* And you said: *"How about selling that homemade ravioli?"* So I was able to make money before the business was set up and that was amazing. For me, the importance of working with you in Cashflow is that, because you, too, are creative, you know the lifestyle and the mentality and how to make a business while not abandoning that other side of your life and your income and all of what else is going on while pursuing something that you would enjoy having as a side business.

KRISTINE:

Would you mind describing what you did for your business?

RUTHY:

So I had learned how to make lots of pasta, and I just thought: *"How can I help people get together during the pandemic however they can – in a fun way?"* So after I did that initial: *"Okay, I'll just teach people to make ravioli,"* someone asked me: *"I'm having a birthday party, would you host it?"* and it was like: *"I've got a client just from doing this free thing, Kristine's not gonna believe this!"* And so my business is hosting ravioli parties. It's instant gratification: we can make it together and then you can eat it together as a group with your friends and family. You get to share stories – because storytelling is a big part of cooking and being in the kitchen – so you get to tell stories about the person who you're celebrating, and talk about what adventure means to you. And then have delicious ravioli to enjoy together. And then I just sign off while everybody just talks and has a good time and I clean up the kitchen.

KRISTINE:

And they're really good – I can attest to this. So one of the interesting little journeys that you and I went on as you were building this was there's a difference between making some money and actually making a net profit – so that you're not over-delivering and you're setting prices in relation to the time and effort that you're putting forth so that you're actually have money left over from the experience for yourself.

RUTHY:

This is similar to like acting because like: *“Oh, I love it so much you don't have to pay me, I'll do it for free.”* But just that's not sustainable. And so I was like: *“Oh my God, you're gonna let me teach you how to make ravioli? How fun!”* And because I enjoyed it so much, it was almost like... well, I don't want to charge a lot, or just being afraid that they would then not do it. A lot of it has to do with my perfectionism. And so at the beginning, I charged not a lot of money because I just thought I was so lucky. You know, it was a friend. And just to be fair, when you're starting something, there is extra time that goes into setting up a lot, like the recipes, and making sure I have the format and all of that stuff. But then, as I had that in place, I just started feeling like: *“Oh, wait, what about the time that it takes me to get the ingredients? Oh, what about the time that it takes for me to clean up afterwards?”* Like I started tracking the actual time, and so then increasing the price, while scary, because I had been tracking the time and I knew how much things were taking me and I wanted to make some money then again, clarity showed up to the rescue and went: *“This is a fair price. This is what's fair for me and for you.”*

KRISTINE:

How did you get comfortable saying and charging a higher rate – and then a higher rate?

RUTHY:

Practicing it. Keeping my mouth shut. And then people paying it.

KRISTINE:

Yeah, practice. You have to just do it. The “being comfortable with it” comes after.

RUTHY:

Yeah. And definitely reaching out for support: speaking to people like you, talking to a friend, having a tantrum a little bit, and then just getting perspective and having a good friend remind you that you have value and this is what's going on. And knowing that the exercise itself is asking for the money – because you can always come down – but just ask for it and see what happens.

KRISTINE:

But notice how many things you just listed, that you had available to you to do to manage your own discomfort rather than lowering the price: you could talk to friends, you could seek some guidance, you can meditate, you can look at “what am I making this mean?” You can examine your thoughts and you can cry a little bit, you can process your own feelings – you can do all of that stuff instead of lowering the price to make you feel comfortable again.

RUTHY:

And it goes back to what you said earlier which is that your business can't grow if you're concerned about how other people feel and think about you.

KRISTINE:

So Ruthy, what does being abundance bound mean to you?

RUTHY:

I used to think abundance bound meant a lot of money and having my life look a certain way – which doesn't necessarily mean stuff... it means freedom and I can go wherever I want when I want – which is still a part of it for me. But now being abundance bound is just allowing myself to savor what I have.

Building that intimacy with my money, building more intimacy with what I actually enjoy in life instead of waiting to live life until I get the money. Also, just feeling like no matter what happens, I'm going to be okay. It's going to be okay because I have skills, I have a community, I have my energy that comes from doing what I love. In a way, I love just having that sort of power in me, that perspective. It feels so good to be able to tap into that in a way that I could only imagine getting what I wanted materially or physically in this world would give me. That and knowing that that stuff can still come if and when – but having got this feeling on my own is huge abundance.

KRISTINE:

Thank you so much.

RUTHY:

Thank you for for having me.

KRISTINE:

“Being abundance bound is allowing myself to savor what I have instead of waiting to live life until I get the money.” Ruthie that is music to my ears. We are sharing Ruthy’s story to show you that it is possible to lessen your anxiety around what other people may think of you so that you can do what you need to do – take action or ask questions – in order to get the financial clarity you need in the moments that you need it. It's true – things like increasing your prices or checking someone else's math or asking a question in a class can feel so uncomfortable. What's also true is that those types of courageous actions are the little stepping stones on the path to towards the financial abundance you desire. Ruthy can be found online at her YouTube channel: [Youtube.com/RuthyOtero](https://www.youtube.com/RuthyOtero).

MIATA:

This podcast is our invitation to you an invitation to accelerate your progress towards a more expansive future by joining us in the Abundance Bound Financial Empowerment Program. It's an invitation to develop a healthier relationship with your money, one that is less conflicted, less neglectful, less desperate. Our program offers a warm, friendly environment where you'll have the space and time to work at your own speed and get the hands on support you need. You'll receive step by step guidance that will help you strengthen your money mindset. Practice consistent money management and create additional streams of income to fund the life you want to live. Your next step is to learn more. So take a moment today and visit: AbundanceBound.com/financial-empowerment.

KRISTINE:

All of the show notes for this episode are available at AbundanceBound.com/the-podcast. We are delighted you are listening. Please keep taking very good care of your very talented self.

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