



OurVoices

podcast

by  OurPath

S4 Ep 4

⋮ The Invitation to Transformation with Priscilla Tuft

Kristin Kalbli: Hello everyone and welcome to OurVoices, the podcast by OurPath, the formerly the Straight Spouse Network. I'm your host, Kristin Kalbli. Our guest today is Priscilla Tuft. Priscilla is a Reiki master, transformation and empowerment coach whose gift is guiding people through radical transformations. She maintains a divine connection that allows her to hold powerful space for those in her care. She is the wife of world wrestling entertainment champion wrestler, Gabbi Tuft, formerly known as Gabe Tuft. Priscilla is the host the "Her" podcast which she created to share the story of Gabbi's gender transition and she is the co-founder of Body Spartan with her spouse, Gabbi. Welcome to the podcast, Priscilla. It's such a pleasure to have you.

Priscilla Tuft: Thank you for having me and hello to the listeners and all the beautiful energy that surrounds you.

Kristin Kalbli: Well, you're the first sort of Reiki master, transformation, empowerment coach who's been on the show, but we're also here to talk about your own transformation, your own radical transformation in your marriage. When your spouse, Gabbi, who was then when you married, cause you guys have been together for like 23 years or something like that, right?

Priscilla Tuft: Yes. It actually just hit 24. Time has flown and we've been married nearly 19 years. It'll be 19 years this summer.

Kristin Kalbli: Wow, so we're going to start. We wanted to have you on Priscilla because Gabbi came out as transgender early in 2021 and I'm sure, you know, most of the focus was on the transition and Gabbi and her experience and journey, which is kind of the way it goes in the media, et cetera. But we wanted to have a platform to hear your story and how things have been going for you. And so for our listeners who are not familiar with your story, who you are, who Gabbi is, can you tell us a little bit about who you guys are?

Priscilla Tuft: Yes, absolutely. We've been in the public eye for most of our married life. We started out really heavily in the public eye when I was an international fitness model. And then we switched roles and Gabe, my husband at the time, she joined WWE and became a pro wrestler, nationally recognized superstar who wrestled in his underpants, great big entertainer. And more recently we started a fitness company, a global fitness motivation company, which we run together online. It's called Body Spartan. And in the beginning of 2020, Gabbi had a little surprise for both of us. Neither of us understood what was happening. She was in and out of lingerie, kind of hanging out, trying some female style outfits. But in the middle of 2020, he sat down with me and told me that he could no longer go on living as a man and that is when the transition began for both of us.

Kristin Kalbli: Right. Okay. So a couple of things. First off, it's this is, I think something people don't always understand. It's a transition for the whole family (Priscilla: It truly is.) Yeah, it truly is and so in that moment, what was that like for you hearing that?

Priscilla Tuft: Well, I did know in advance and given divine information pretty much free flowing. I tell a lot of people, I just kind of walk my life with spirit and so messages come through all the time. And so I was getting dreams and I was getting premonitions and visions and all of the things for quite a few months. And they became stronger and stronger where I would see my spouse, Gabe at the time, look down the barrel of his shotguns. I saw this vision over and over again, and his anger and his reclusiveness and (deep sigh) his depression and unhappiness just continued to grow so much that I sat down with him one day and I said, "I love you very much and it's not okay the way that you're behaving in our family." And to my surprise he said, "I'm sorry." It opened up my heart enough to sit right next to him, hold his hand and say, "What is it that you need to tell me?"

Priscilla Tuft: That's when the information came through. So I was prepared in advance and I was relieved that he was brave enough to be honest with himself and look at it as a couple understanding that he didn't know what my response was going to be. Maybe I would walk out on him. Maybe I would start crying. Maybe I would freak out. Maybe I would get angry. He didn't know but he trusted that moment enough to be vulnerable with me and share the truth behind what was going on in his heart. We cried together. We held each other but it was more a cry and a holding of relief. I told him, "Everything's going to be okay. We're going to figure this out together."

Kristin Kalbli: Wow. I mean, so a couple of things. First, I'm struck by the level of vulnerability that's allowed in a space of open, sort of invitation and safety. Like almost in anything in life, when we create this open invitation of safety, then that allows deep vulnerability. So that strikes me in your story. And then like... I mean the dreams about the shotgun and that was that's really pretty striking image to me. And how remark... so you were getting sort of premonitional? I don't know what the word is. Premonition style dreams about obviously Gabes suicidality maybe?

Priscilla Tuft: Oh yes. I realized that something needed to end, it needed to die. And in reality, this was not just a metaphor. He was considering taking his life because he just couldn't go on with the way that things were and so I knew the topic needed to be brought up for discussion in a way that made him feel safe. But first I needed to stand up for myself because he needed to feel that container ship of what's okay and what's not okay. And previously in our marriage it was... you know okay, you need, okay, okay... to my own demise and spirit told me, you need to stand up for yourself and then you need to hold a space of love. And it happens so beautifully and seamlessly. I mean, Hollywood would have loved that moment to capture it all because it was so beautiful. Our daughter was next door at the neighbor's house, playing happily.

Priscilla Tuft: And I had just come home and his heart was open, ready, and receptive to begin the transition and it began immediately after that.

(Kristin: Wow.) We didn't know what it meant because when he was playing dress up, we thought it was something that was just for fun. Right. And it was fun. It was really sweet. We'd stay up late, we put the baby to bed and we'd go through the closet, pick out something cute to wear and he's a six foot four, 280 pounds body builder at this time. (Kristin: Right) And I would crawl up on our - between our his and her sinks at the time- now they're her and her sinks. But at the time it was the, his and her sinks, and I'd crawl up between them and I would do his makeup and he would look beautiful but what's so cute is he'd have, you know, his beard underneath the makeup.

Priscilla Tuft: He just didn't care because he got to express his feminine essence that he suppressed our entire marriage and his entire life because he had to be this larger than life, iconic beast for the media. He had to play that role to such a degree that he wasn't allowed to jump into that. That role of femininity and to feel that way so it was very fun and very playful for us at first. There was a lot of alcohol on his part involved because she was trying to believe that it was okay for him to express himself in this way and I gave him that safe space. So it was very sweet. It was a very happy, very sweet time, but there came a point where I realized, okay, number one, this is not average, none of my other girlfriend's husbands like to dress up like this

Priscilla Tuft: and then none of them liked to put on makeup. This isn't something that is common. So that was the first indicator. Then I asked a couple of gay friends, "Like, oh hey, you know and there's those nights where you put on that lingerie" and they're like, "What are you talking about? you know, we don't do like, that's crazy." And I'm like, "Oh yeah, yeah, totally crazy, totally you know." I realized I was alone in this and so it was a really interesting situation for us because we didn't realize at the time that Gabbi was transgender. We thought that she just wanted to play but it got real really fast when we realized that she didn't want to get undressed. I would - I can see energy and I would see as she would peel off these nails and take off these little breast forms that she had purchased for herself and take off the wig, I could see her pain. In fact, I have chills up and down my body remembering the agony and depression of her taking off these things at the end of the night or sometimes she'd just crawl into bed next to me and peel it all off in the morning before our daughter would wake up. And that's when the dream started coming, the premonitions, and we realized that it was much more than just a dress up party.

Kristin Kalbli: Okay so you've got this sort of dress-up thing where you're like, okay, this is a fun thing that we like to do together and it's sweet and it allows my... and for people who are listening, all you have to do is just go on the internet and look up Gabe Tuft and you can see as a wrestler, a professional wrestler, that the physique is just like the masculine ideal to the nth degree, I mean, holy smokes. And so you, in this little container, Gabe gets to unleash the side of their personality, their identity and you think it's just this moment, this kind of play. And then when you realize it's not play, when you realize it's something more, something deeper, what happens to you as a wife and as a mom in that moment going... oh gosh, you know, like, was it, was there any fear of like, what does this mean for me in the relationship at all?

Priscilla Tuft: (Laughter) Sister, I went through all the emotions. We go through a grieving process in our own way, because we are also in transition with them. We don't know what's going to happen five minutes from now. I mean, when you, when we have this conversation of like, okay, you're going to go ahead and transition. We decided, okay, this is going to be the demise of our business, our parents are never going to talk to us ever again, our kid going to freak out and be messed up for the rest of her life. We had to look at the worst case scenario but the whole journey of my grieving process, which I'm still in it - you know I don't like to call it the grieving process, but that's what it is. It's more of a processing process. It's the layers that we peel away from our own ego.

Priscilla Tuft: And so it started out as acceptance because I was really happy that she wasn't going to kill herself and then it turns into big time denial. Oh yeah, baby, I was good at that because I can be really imaginative and I'm like, "You know what, she's gonna do her thing but at the end of the week, she is going to just change her mind and realize this was a silly idea" because this was a secret that we held for 10 months before we ever went public with it. (Kristing: Right.) I mean, it was a big secret. Maybe I have my timeline off, maybe it was six to nine months but it was a long time to carry this. It was really March of 2020 and then she didn't come out publicly until February and so it was a huge time of just not being able to tell anyone.

Priscilla Tuft: And I felt very separated. I felt like a fake. I felt like a liar because my heart wide open, wherever I go, that's how I navigate the planet. And these were my deep dark secrets. I don't like deep dark secrets, but this had to be kept quiet. So I would face myself with a lot of denial. I would wake up in the morning, I'm sure that so many of you listening can totally relate to this, where you wake up in the morning and you're like, "Am I awake or am I asleep? Is this real or is this not real?" For me I categorize this in the area of denial. You know, like, oh, this isn't happening and then I'd realize once I'm back in my skin in the morning, this is really happening. This is actually real. (Kristin: Right.) And then from there, I went through the other layers of what is called grieving or what I like to call it processing.

Priscilla Tuft: And I've been through an array of different emotions and that's just to be straight up honest. There's been jealousy. There's been anger. There's been just really any emotion that you can possibly imagine and in touching on this as a lot of you have just sparked interest and curiosity and you can relate to my story. The one thing that I hope you take home is that all of these emotions and all of these feelings are okay, it's okay to feel them, but you don't have to camp there. It doesn't have to become who you are and how you project yourself to your spouse or to others and understand these feelings have nothing to do with your spouse. This is your personal identity peeling away and there is so much healing on the other side of that.

Kristin Kalbli: I want to talk more about that after a quick break. I want to talk about this process that you went through and are still going through in many ways. And I want to talk about the jealousy and the anger and the emotion and then I want to talk about like what your realizations were around those things that we like when you say this has to do with me and my process. Like, I want to talk to you about how you got there. So we're going to take a quick break and we'll be right back with more Priscilla Tuft.

Kristin Kalbli: (music) Hey, everyone. We want to take this moment to thank everyone who donated to make the new website for OurPath.org a reality. Your generosity means we can help people in new ways. We can provide more resources than ever before and we can reach more people who need our help. You made this website happen and we could not have done it without you but the work isn't over. Websites require upkeep and maintenance, podcasts need to be produced and general operations need to be funded. If you would like to contribute to OurPath, please head over to OurPath.org and click on give support. (music ended) And we're back with Priscilla Tuft. So I think one of the things that our listeners will really relate to right is when they have a partner who's transitioning gender and they're going to relate to what you were talking about, the emotional, like the whole gamut, the whole range.

Kristin Kalbli: And one of the things that I think that we hear frequently from partners of trans people is when they're navigating these difficult feelings, there's not a lot of permission, I think, sometimes where they feel like there's not a lot of permission to have those difficult feelings because sometimes those difficult feelings get interpreted like either transphobia or homophobia or you're not supportive of your spouse or et cetera. And there's just a lack of permission to be able to have the full range of emotional experiences that would be kind of a normal part of the process of any kind of monumental change in your marital relationship in your significant partnership like this. And so I wanna like dive in a little bit more about what that transitional period was like for you with some of those intense emotions of both, you know, the relief you described that your partner's not gonna commit suicide, thank God and then also the other stuff, the jealousy, the anger. Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Priscilla Tuft: Yes and I do want to touch on just the fun things that happened. Enjoying the first, because every it's like watching the baby be born and navigating the world. Watching her move in different ways and just really relishing it and taking pleasure in it and experiencing her telling her parents for the first time and just timestamping and just enjoying. This is one of the keys that helps us live from a heart centered place of love instead of a selfish place, where we do need to be somewhat selfish in a healthy way, but it can drag us into the lower dimensional vibration that make us all unhappy and make them question what they're doing. Right So the first stage of grief, for me, was the acceptance, which I talked about but one of the lower dimensional frequencies is shock and denial. There was a loss. There is a loss of what was and we want to deny the reality that the event ever occurred or maybe tell herself that there was a mistake.

Priscilla Tuft: There a lot in that. I'm trying to think of how it, well, it came up for me, as I shared earlier, just waking up in the morning and saying, oh, you know, this didn't happen right or going to bed at night saying, she'll change her mind in the morning. (Kristin: Right.) But that is not being truthful with ourselves a nd the reason we lie to ourselves is because we can't handle the truth. And so just breathing into that thing... okay this is what it is, and it is happening, t his is happening now. Then we're able to go through that layer of grief onto the next layer of grief so that we can find joy and happiness.

Kristin Kalbli: You know we did an episode, just a few episodes ago, with Dr. Debi Silber and her website is a Post Betrayal Transformation where she talks about someone having... and I don't want to characterize what happened with you in terms of betrayal or anything b ut what I'm saying is that when we've had a major, significant change in our relationship status that for some people, there's the trauma of that a nd then there's the opportunity of transformation in that a nd then - but the first step is like accepting that this is what it is. The acceptance around t his is happening, t his is real, i t is what it is, a nd that the more we stay in the denial, the unwillingness to accept what is actually happening, what the reality of our circumstances is, the more we sort of prolong that bore that painful phase.

Priscilla Tuft: Absolutely a nd I wish that there was a timeline set on the grieving process or the processing process because sometimes denial will come for 30 seconds and it'll go away. And then sometimes it'll come for a full day and you might have some tears. You might work through the trauma with a therapist or with a Reiki master, somebody that can help transmute the energy. You think you're healed a nd then it comes up like three months later a nd you're like, " I thought I healed this." You healed a layer of it. You heal the dimension of it a nd your soul is calling you deeper to really experience your own personal transition. It's like we're both butterflies. W e're both emerging with this brand new set of wings and finding out... okay, how did these wings work and watching as the beautiful colors become more and more vibrant. (Kristin: Right) So as long as you're willing to face it, you're going to experience the healing. As long as you hide from it, the longer it's going to last.

Kristin Kalbli: Did you feel like at any moment when you examined that worst case scenario sort of event was staying in the marriage ever a question for you? Was it always just, no I'm here or was it I don't know if I'm going to be able to be here or was there any part of it that was like, I'm not sure if what this is going to do at our marriage question for you?

Priscilla Tuft: Absolutely. Absolutely but because it was surrounded in love and there was a peaceful, playful undertones to all of it. I mean, we laugh and we joke about everything. Like this week's joke is her butt's growing, right and so she's watching as her body changes and she's dancing around like (cheer) and I'm making jokes and we're enjoying it. So I feel like the reason that we want to leave is because of the emotional tension, but there's so much joy that that really didn't come to mind at first. But there were a lot of things that came up along the path that made us both wonder if we could do it. This is normal. (Kristin: Right.) We're going to question our own ability to withstand the change. (Kristi: Right.) You know, another part of it is just, is guilt and pain and wondering, "Did I have something to do with it?"

Priscilla Tuft: Was I not a good enough wife? Did I put too much pressure on her when she was a man?" Some people feel like their spouse has died. I don't feel like my spouse has died. Everyone is like, it probably feels like your husband just like died. It doesn't to me. What it feels like to me is that my person is transforming from the inside out and I'm doing it with her. So pain and remorse, they're, they're difficult things. They're natural emotions related to the loss of something that is important for very own healing process. This is your transition as much as it is theirs.

Kristin Kalbli: Right. Did you have pressure? So speaking about, you know, staying - wondering if you could stay in the relationship or leave the relationship? Did you feel pressure outside of you to like - I mean I know you were keeping it a secret for about a 10 month period so maybe you didn't have, maybe there wasn't outside pressure. I think the thing is what I've noticed, as we support, as OurPath supports Partners of Trans People, one of the things is that there's pressure externally, both to stay or both to leave. There's pressure and I think you'd be a great person to speak about this. So what I've noticed, and this was not my experience because my ex-husband was gay not trans but I think one of the things that we see, Partners of Trans People, dealing with is on one side, there's the, "Oh, you gotta leave,

Kristin Kalbli: you didn't sign up for this, you got to get going like this" and then on the other side, "It's where you have to stay, you have to love the person and not the gender." And so I think both camps of people, who either if you're a partner of a trans person who is like, "Look, I'm not going to stay because this is not authentic to my sexuality and my, you know, what I want for my marriage and my life" then there's a negative - there can be a negative interpretation put on that. And then if you're like, "I'm going to stay because I do" - you know some people love the person and the gender and some people love the person, not the gender, I guess, is what I'm saying and, and choose to stay. And OurPath doesn't take a position on whether people should stay, go, whatever. It's like all about you finding the authentic path forward for you as you navigate this, this tremendous life transition. But it's just seems to me that there's this tremendous external pressure and I wonder, to either stay or go, and I wonder if you experienced that? Or if you see that? Or you know what I'm talking about?

Priscilla Tuft: Oh yeah. I mean, we have a fan base of millions and we've got a brand new fan base of people that love my spouse and I. There's always going to be a peanut gallery. Always because people want to be heard. They want to give their opinions. They want to project their fears upon somebody else to control the outcome that makes them feel the most comfortable. That's what it's all about and being patient with them. I always tell Gabbi, and this is a quote that I wrote in my book, it's coming out next summer, it's called Being Her and it's all about a transition of a spouse from my perspective. And the quote is "Be patient with people, they are in transition too." So as they project their ideals and opinions, they're really coming from two sides. And this is just, I mean, I get so much fan mail and so many opinions, from all directions, but the main two are; number one, you can't leave him, the trans community will lynch you. (laughing)

Priscilla Tuft: That's your forever, how dare you judge, you know, or whatever. And I don't judge, I come from a place of love but everyone's got their opinion. And then the other side of it is you married a man, not a woman, and you need to go. I always love it when people just are so like telling you what you need to do, "You needed to do you need to go and find yourself a man and you need to create the life that you were promised in the very beginning." And the thing is they don't have all the information and that's okay. I love these people in their unawareness. I love them in their neediness to be heard because we all want to be heard. But yes, I definitely get two sides and there's a lot of different spins to the leave or stay kind of thing but we must trust our inner guidance system.

Priscilla Tuft: We must press in deeper and say, "What is the truth?" because nobody can be God for you as much as they try. I mean, it's cute, it's cute them trying and I think that a lot of them are very well-meaning. I definitely see people in the highest light, but they've got opinions and it can be very clouding to your own inner guidance system. And so the meditation process is very, very critical and important for anybody going through the transition of a spouse, whether it's gender, whether it's orientation, we must tap into that divine wisdom that can come from one place, and that's within.

Kristin Kalbli: I love that because I mean, some of our listeners come from all different kinds of faith or spiritual backgrounds, et cetera. But I think what we're really saying, regardless of what terminology we use is your inner guidance. I love that. We all have, no matter what our spirituality beliefs are or whether we have no particular spirituality at all or faith, or what have you, we all have a system of inner guidance and there can be a lot of noise outside of you when something like this happens around - like you said, "Do this, don't do that right? Do you think you should do this? You need to do this don't." And the reality is we don't need to do anything other than what our inner guidance is telling us to do. We don't need to do anything. We don't need to leave. We don't need to stay. We can leave. We can stay and it all depends on our individual circumstances, what the merits of the relationship are itself and then what our own individual guidance is saying about what we want to create for our own lives. And for some people that typically is going to be staying and for some people that authentically is going to be leaving.

Priscilla Tuft: Yes and if you don't know how to tap into your own inner guidance system, connect with somebody who can help you because what happens with all these opinions and all this chatter, or you called it noise, it blocks our frontal cortex and we're not even able to think cognitively. We're not able to find the words. Our bodies might get a little shaky, we're ungrounded, because we do not feel safe because we are not trusting ourselves. (Kristin: Right) And that's one point that I really wanted to make, is the bottom two chakras. These two chakras can really get jarred in the middle of a transition, any sort of transition, but especially with straight spouses that are going through some sort of transition. When our root chakra and our sacral chakra, the first two chakras, one is located around the tailbone, the other one's located around our womb are right below the belly button.

Priscilla Tuft: These are our places of safety and when we're ungrounded; we might stutter, we might trip on things, we may lack clarity, we may feel like everything's staticky and flying all over the place. And a few simple tips to really ground yourself into your root and sacred chakra. Number one, the earth, connect to the earth. It is a place of stillness. It is a place of grounding, your physical body. It is a place of not needing to do anything and there are so many lessons in nature. Another one is getting lost in an activity that makes you lose track of space and time. Do you like to paint? Even if you stink at painting, grab a paintbrush and doodle on a canvas and lose yourself, just lose yourself and feel that safety that this crafting or this art or listening to music or dancing might provide for you.

Priscilla Tuft: And then just another third tip, just something, just easy that you can do on top of course, the meditation practices is very critical. Is just looking around your life, finding places of pleasure, whether it's looking out in nature, or if it's eating more mindfully and slowly and tasting the flavors and smelling the food or staring at your child, find pleasure in everything. You don't have to be upset. You don't have to be stressed just because everybody around you thinks that you're in trauma or crisis. To some degree you may be, but you're just in transition. You're just in an intermediary point. You're not broken. Your marriage is not broken. There's nothing that needs to be fixed. Only something that needs to be involved. So finding a way to feel safe, such as the practices that I shared, are going to help balance the first two shockers and help you feel better.

Kristin Kalbli: I love what - for the audiences who are not kind of steeped in the language of chakras and things this is - you're speaking my language, Priscilla. So the root chakra is like the chakra that is connected with our sense of safety, wellbeing, our stability in the world. And so when something like this happens, it only makes sense that we would feel unstability, is where unmoored in the world can be a way that we end up feeling around a transition like this. So I love what you were saying about connecting in nature and because we tend to want to figure this stuff out in our minds. I know when I was trying to decide if I was going to leave my marriage or stay in it, I didn't know that my partner was gay at the time, but I was just so - didn't know if I should leave or if I should stay.

Kristin Kalbli: And I was trying to solve it in my head and solving it in my head was not working and so I ended up saying to myself every morning, I said, "I don't have to decide that today." And then I would focus on whatever it was I was doing if I was going for a walk, or if I was just doing my life, or what have you and lo and behold, like two months later, I'm sitting in my kitchen and it was like the heavens opened and it just landed in my lap, "Like, oh, okay, I do want a divorce." And it was so - it wasn't even a deciding it was a... it was a knowing. And so - and then I was always sure of it because it wasn't something I had to like make myself decide or figure out, it was something I knew from inside of myself. And so I like the conversation around inner knowing, because this gets so noisy for people and especially you in the public eye, being, you know, public figures, there's the orders of magnitude of people having an opinion about what you're doing with your life just grows exponentially in that case.

Priscilla Tuft: Yes and it's a process of observing and not getting tangled up in it. I mean, people can have their opinions, it's not going to be the end of the world. Just observe. It's like watching a play or, you know, being at the theater and just watching all the players do their things. You don't have to get on stage and dance with it. Get on stage with your own inner guidance system and dance with that.

Kristin Kalbli: Oh, I love it. Oh my gosh. Okay. We're going to take a quick break and then when we come back. I want to talk about where you are now and how things are going now and where you are with language. So - because that's another thing that we have to figure out if we're family members or et cetera, like there's dance with language. So we're going to take a quick break and we'll be right back with Priscilla Tuft. (music) Hey everyone, OurPath, formerly the Straight Spouse Network, is looking to add new support contacts to expand our volunteer force. Support contacts are the people who reach out to street partners and partners of trans people in those critical days, post discovery or disclosure. Support contacts are the heart and soul of OurPath and we need more of them. If you remember those early weeks and months in this process, you know how critical compassionate, neutral, nonjudgmental support can be. And if you're far enough along in your own healing, that you are ready to be there for someone else, we hope you'll join us. Visit OurPath.org and click on, Become a Support Contact, under peer support to learn more.

Kristin Kalbli: And we're back with Priscilla Tuft. So Priscilla, I just want to say, I want to thank you for coming here to talk today about your own process and your own experience because I think we need models of people who have felt all the feelings, have had all of the thoughts, have gone to those, as you say, lower frequency places, but then also models for how to bring us back out again. And because we can get - you know those lower frequency places can be places where we can stay for a long time sometimes. And so I love that you're providing a model for like, "Okay, we don't - we can be there, we can experience it, we have permission. I always feel it's really important to give our listeners permission to feel all the feels, you know, like continue to give yourself permission, to feel all the feels even the ones that aren't popular, or even the ones that are not pretty or not fun. But then like, let's see if we can have some intentionality around not staying there for forever. Not that you have to move on anybody else's timeline because it's not my timeline, it's no one else's timelines, nobody outside, it's your timeline. But the intentionality around; "Okay, I feel all the feels, I'm in this suck and I don't want to be in the suck forever."

Priscilla Tuft: Yes, it's interesting because people will say, "Like, how do you get around this?" The easiest way to get around it is to go through it because if we go around it, it's going to show up in our past, over and over and over until we go through it. And the easiest way through it is to let go and to release the identities that we put upon our spouses. I mean, I'm a wife and this is what you do and this is what I do. Just let go, my sweet friends. You don't have to be in that anymore. And there's going to be moments, you know, back to this idea of the grieving process, there's going to be moments of anger. They're going to come up out of nowhere. You might not like that they suddenly have longer nails than you and they're getting Botox and you wish you had Botox and hey, you're getting a boob job,

Priscilla Tuft: that's not fair. You know all these things that come up in our mind when we're angry or we're comparing ourselves to them or the bargaining, If I just do this, then my spouse will do this. And there's going to be loneliness. There's going to be depression. There's going to be deep times of reflection. Go through it, strong warrior. This is just as much about you as it is about them and you have everything within you to get through this because your soul has chosen this path. And I promise you, if you go through it, you are going to be so strong on the other side of it and you are going to be an inspiration for this world.

Kristin Kalbli: I love what you said about this is just about... as much about you. People will dispute that but I think that's people who maybe don't understand, who haven't been in this, who haven't walked this particular path or experienced this particular kind of transition. Like we do get to say, "This is happening to us too." And so like, I love how you say that and I love how when you go out on the other side, when you go through it and you go out on the other side, you do get to be a warrior and an inspiration and that's some really, really powerful stuff. For people who are listening and going well, "What do you mean about letting go of the identities?" Because I can hear the questions of audience members. Like I can hear them going "Well, wait a minute here Kristen. You can't let her off the hook and you can't not ask her. Like, don't you miss being with a man?" Aside from you married a man, you wanted to be with a man, you should go find yourself a man, that's not this question. This question is, do you miss being with a man?

Priscilla Tuft: Absolutely. Absolutely and I found ways to obtain that container ship in my life because it's still different when you're the one taking the trash out, you know, you kind of switch these roles and shown up in a different way and you don't feel that safe space that maybe your husband provided for you, but there are other ways to find it. It's not about finding a man, it's about finding ways to feel that safety or container ship in your life. For me, I spend a lot of time in nature and I was sitting out in nature one time and I just asked divinely. I said, "Show me the feeling that I'm longing for so much" because there've been a lot of tears over not having a man anymore. I mean, my husband was hunky and

Kristin Kalbli: You know, I got to say, it's pretty impressive.

Priscilla Tuft: He was top notch. I mean, he was the pinnacle of a man for sure. And I sat there by the tree and I just felt the roots underneath me and I looked around and I was surrounded by trees and there was plentiful water beside me and I felt held for the first time in months and months and months. So there are other ways to find this place of safety and security. It's not about having a relationship because that's something outside of yourself. It's about finding it within and embracing that and allowing yourself to surrender and be held and understand the only reason that you don't like what your spouse is doing, and I'll go ahead and relate it to my personal story, I didn't like the fingernails because I was like, my husband doesn't have fingernails, what's going on I didn't like the wig because I'm like, I don't like that to touch me when we hug. You know, I like men, you know, what's going on here?

Priscilla Tuft: And I realized that the challenge was in my rigid thinking that thought I was something that I wasn't. I thought I was this tangible world. I thought I was Mrs. Tufts. I thought that I was married to this big strong wrestler. I thought that I was the girl that drives this car. The girl that lives in this house. That's when I realized that I needed to drop that information. It was not true and press into the fact that I am a unique spark of the divine that they call Priscilla. I am not this body. I am not this mind. I am the soul and we are able to tap into that and embrace that truth, then nothing can destroy us. It's only the mind and we can take this garbage in the mind. Everybody's ideas, all of our fears, the anger, the loneliness, the depression, the confusion.

Priscilla Tuft: and we can - I like to tell my clients that it's like a sand timer, flip it over in your head and allow that sand to go down your neck, down your heart, all the way into your womb and operate from that space. That divine sweet spirit space, where all of the answers and all of the peace are held within you. And for men that are listening, this should be done in your heart. So same thing with the sand timer when you turn it upside down, and this is kind of a cool meditative process where you see the sands go down, gathering your heart so that you can live from a place of warrior power and you can do so with love and compassion. And you don't have to understand what they're going through, sweet ones. We don't have to understand, but what we're called to do is love. Just love even when we don't get it because I don't understand, but I mean, straight up honest, I don't understand why my husband wanted to become a woman. It doesn't make sense to me because I'm not wired that way. That's not my path. That's not my journey. My path is to allow my ego to die so that I can be pure love in this world and you do so by letting go of one thing at a time.

Kristin Kalbli: What I hear you saying is that, for you part of this journey has been about dropping the identity of Priscilla; the wife, the mother, the drive, this car that have this kind of husband. That you have found your way through this, in part, because you've dropped what you were when you were saying ego or ego identities earlier. These layers of ego identities that we wear like clothes sometimes. Like my identities are; I am this person who wears this kind of clothes and dresses like this and likes these kinds of TV shows and read these kinds of books and does this kind of work and then those are all just like layers of ego identity, like clothes and then we can peel those things off. We don't have to be so wedded to our identities. We can peel those things off and just be a being on this planet who is here to express love the best that we possibly can.

Kristin Kalbli: And I wonder - so speaking of expressing love, okay, one of the things though that is not necessarily an ego identity, it's about around intimacy. It's around how we express physical love. I mean you know sex is an important part of a marital relationship and when one person undergoes a gender transition that impacts what's happening in the bedroom and I think we don't talk about that. Like how it impacts what happens in the bedroom and I feel like it's a critical discussion because, it both impacts the partner who's transgender and it impacts the partner who is cis-gender or non transitioning and it brings up all kinds of stuff. It really confronts and kind of in the face, like who I thought I was as a lover, who I thought I was as a wife or who I thought I was as a husband or who I thought I was as a physical intimate partner of someone. Can you, without saying anything that makes you uncomfortable or is TMI, can you talk about how you've navigated the intimate relationship?

Priscilla Tuft: Absolutely. So our intimate life has been in transition too. Our forms of intimacy have changed because I don't know if this is common for everybody, but I realize that Gabbi doesn't want to feel like a man in bed. She wants to feel like a woman all the time, and I'm a very feminine girl and I'm teeny tiny and that's not how she wants to feel anymore. And so our physical intimacy has transformed into emotional and spiritual intimacy that has far surpassed any connection that we've ever had. We meditate together deeply. We sit and we hold each other in complete safety and serenity as sisters, as friends, as partners in this life. Walking each other home, we're all here, figuring it out. I know her soul. She knows my soul. We're allowing ourselves to experience intimacy in all sorts of different ways. Deep conversations about the future that have shifted from what we used to have, in our physical intimacy.

Priscilla Tuft: And it's been powerful and I don't want it to stand before all of you and make you think that every day is easy. There are times when, well, sometimes I go to a place of straight disbelief. Where I'm like, "Is this possible? Is this really happening?" And it's kind of cute because Gabbi has the same moments where she's like, "Oh my gosh, it's me and I'm a girl." She has these moments often and I have these moments of thinking, "Wow, this is really happening, this is my life." And just being present in that and realizing there are going to be hard days and that's okay. Again, what my mom always tells me, "She's like, you can have these feelings and address them, don't camp there." I love that because you imagine yourself walking through the forest. It's another thing to set up a tent and build a fire and nurture and feed these feelings of anger or depression or denial but feeling them is perfect and healing them is perfect.

Priscilla Tuft: But if you're not going to do the work to heal it, don't camp there. Sit with a healer, sit with a therapist, get the help that you need. Get the spiritual, emotional replenishment that you need, but don't just camp there to camp there. Don't just sit there and scheme like, "I'm just so mad. I'm just so mad." Give yourself 60 seconds. If you're not going to do the healing work, let yourself feel it and decide how you want to heal it but you can step into happiness. You don't have to live in the trauma even if you're in trauma. There's a choice when it comes to suffering, you can be in a crisis and not suffer and we do so by healing ourselves and being honest with ourselves.

Kristin Kalbli: I like what you say about when give yourself permission to feel it and then decide how you want to heal it. Like that is the ultimate taking responsibility for ourselves and our emotional journeys and our own lives, like, which is something that is incredibly empowering. Like I know a lot of times we feel like we found ourselves in this situation. Like sometimes the story we tell ourselves, as we found ourselves in this situation not by our own choosing, which I totally get because I was there and lived it and experienced it. So yes, we can feel that way but then the empowering part comes, at least I founded my own life, the empowering part comes when I was like, "Well, okay but I do have control over and I am in charge of my healing and I am in charge of what happens in my life going forward and I am in charge of how I live and what I want my life to look like from here on out."

Priscilla Tuft: Yes and even taking more responsibility has really helped me too because I did choose this marriage. I did choose this person and my soul has chose to transform in pivotal, unseen ways in this lifetime. And I love that before I even see an ounce of that healing. This is purposeful. We chose this and we're incarnating in the most powerful, impacting, free thinking period of time that has never been known to man. This was a gift. It was beautiful.

Kristin Kalbli: What I love that you have arrived there. I mean, I love that you have arrived in the space of this is a gift and it's beautiful. I think that that is just, it would be my hope for every listener to arrive in their version of that space, whatever their version of that space is, it may not be like I'm prepared to say it's a gift, but it might be like, I'm prepared to say, I've let go or I'm prepared to see where, where I took the opportunity to transform myself in the midst of this experience and whatever that looks like for you, that total healing, whatever that looks like or sounds like for you. Where are you at with like the pronouns and the language? Because I know we'll chat about that before we come to a close, like how did you navigate language and how do you navigate language because we've talked about Gabbi and we've talked about Gabe. We've used the him pronoun, we've used the her pronoun. Like where are you at with all of that?

Priscilla Tuft: In the very beginning we use he, him, Gabe but I kind of transitioned to G because Gabe, Gabbi, they both start with G it was a very easy transition for me but our little girl, she's nine and she calls her dad, daddy because that's what she's always known. That's what makes her feel safe and happy and secure in this time. And we use male pronouns with her because she said, I'll change when I'm ready. And G does not get offended. He doesn't feel upset about that. He embraces it. He loves it. I don't think it's his favorite, but he loves it and embraces it and she'll, as she said, she'll change when she's ready. When she's not around, it's female pronouns and it's a G. I actually rarely call her Gabbi. Sometimes I'll call her Gabs or Gabbi buns or something like that but I don't really call her, but just like I never called her Gabriel or Gabe

Priscilla Tuft: when we're married, we always have our little pet names . So it's kind of in transition too but to the world, I use female pronouns. I mess up all the time. She has a grace with me. Our neighbors do the same thing because they all knew her as him and so they'll say he, him and I just make sure to use pronouns that make her feel honored, make Gabbi feel honored and kind of help them along the process of their own transition. And this started probably five months ago where I was using some female pronouns, but she did something, we were like playing, we're cooking in the kitchen and I said, "Yes, sir." And I could just see her heartbreak and I was like, "Oh you're not being validated and I said, I'm so sorry. I can tell that really hurt your heart." And she's like, "Oh, it's okay. It's okay." And I said, "I see that it hurt your heart. I'm sorry."

Priscilla Tuft: And I realized that moment that things needed to change. So it's really been, I actually want to say like maybe a three month process, but now she presents female every day since the beginning of March and she's got her eyelashes on all the time, she's got beautiful eyelash extensions. She's a doll. She's had, you know, Botox, fillers and all those things and so she looks very different. She's dropped 60 pounds of muscle and so she looks smaller. She's getting her breasts done next week, which is going to be another transition because every time something changes, I go through the grieving process. Again, it's not as heavy as it was, but I love giving my wife heart hugs and I love it being chest to chest, just like it's always been and when she's got her breast forms and I can't feel our connection as deeply.

Priscilla Tuft: And so I'm going to have to transform the way that I think about that heart hug so that I can embrace her in her transition with the breasts. And there's going to be more but this one's going to be an area of growth for me and another area of letting go. I haven't even had the moment to sit with the fact that she'll have breasts. I mean, I want to say that it's a small thing because it's just the physical identity but it means that part of me has to die. And then I look at her breast compared to my breasts. There's comparison and you know, I'm still human and I look at her and I'm like, "Oh, you know, I sure would like to..." you know, all of the things and so then the feelings of anger creep up. And so it's again the processing process, but it makes sense to call her female just because she does present female every day and even when she takes off her wig, she's got her lashes done, even if there's no makeup, she's dressed in something girly all the time. She loves like all the bright colors and she's actually got some pretty awesome fashion sense that's going on right now and sometimes she'll even do my makeup. She's really good now .

Kristin Kalbli: Wow. I love that. I love the exchange of like grace on her part for when people get it wrong or they're just not ready. And then the extension of the, on your part, of being able to see when something hurts her heart and then being able to adjust. Like the mutual respect and grace I think is just really lovely because I think that people don't really understand how baked in language gets and even when there's good intention and well-meaning that sometimes, you know, it can be hard and we just automatically go for that pronoun or automatically go a nd it takes a little while n ot only for the intention, it takes a little while for the habits to catch up to the intentionality, I think, you know.

Priscilla Tuft: (laughing) Right, it's so true.

Priscilla Tuft: Yes a nd actually I have a whole podcast episode on my podcast. It's on pod bean. It's called the Her podcast and it's a whole episode of me just messing up pronouns from the very beginning. It's up to three, but we have 15 more in queue that we're waiting for permission to release and there's going to be so many more. They're really juicy a nd the reason that I created that podcast is because I had no resources. I wish that I had known you earlier because I had nothing. I had no one. I read every book and they did not resonate a nd when I met you, I just, I got tears in my eyes and out loud I like, "Yes", you know, like the hands in the air because what you are offering to the world is so important. A nd I had already started my podcast and begin to record episodes because I didn't see any resources a nd when I saw you in your work, doing what you're doing, I was like, "Okay, this was an unmatched healer that the world so desperately needs right now."

Kristin Kalbli: Thank you for that. I mean, we, it's really important to us at OurPath that we maintain that neutral space of, you know, when you're experiencing this as the Partner of a Trans Person or a Straight Partner, when you're experiencing a partner come out, that you have a neutral, safe place to go to talk about all the feelings and all of the experiences and to begin to process like so that you can find your path forward through this, relying on that inner guidance that you talk about so beautifully. I am so glad that you came on today, Priscilla, and that you expressed the vulnerability of just all of the whole range of frequency in terms of this experience, the low stuff, the high stuff, the focus on love and acceptance and also the moving through the anger and the jealousy.

Kristin Kalbli: I think that that brings a realness to our audience to know that it's like, you've been there, you've gone through it, you've like you've been in those particular trenches and you've chosen a way to move through it that works for you. I love providing different models. That's kind of what we're all about at OurVoices podcast is providing different models of how to move through these transitions for people so they can choose what models resonate with them. And so I want to thank you so much for bringing on such as a heart centered, spirit connected model. We haven't had like a really heart-centered spirit connected model on the show before and so I want to thank you for bringing that presence to the show and as you mentioned too, I want to make sure that people know where to find you, if they want to learn more about you. They can check out your, Her podcast and is there a website or anything they can go to to check out?

Priscilla Tuft: Actually, my IG is pretty fun. I share very vulnerably, both with my Instagram posts, my Instagram is at PriscillaTuft . That's my Instagram and I share stories all the time of own transition process and kind of how I navigate through this world so that I can transition as well. Those are probably the two best places to find me, but you're going to be seeing a lot more. We've got some really exciting things in the works. You'll be able to follow our journey and our story through our podcast, and I'm here in spirit, just hugging every single one of you and thank you so much for having me as a part of this podcast today and thank you for your healing work in this world.

Kristin Kalbli: Oh, thank you so much, Priscilla. I wish the best of luck and all good things for both you and G and your family and all of your endeavors that you're doing and just again, thank you so much for coming on the show today.

Priscilla Tuft: Thank you. Bye.

Kristin Kalbli: I want to thank our listeners for tuning in today. Be on the lookout for all new episodes. Don't forget to subscribe to our podcast. You can find us wherever you get those things. This is a reminder that the views of the host, yours truly, are not necessarily the views of OurPath or its board of directors. I want to thank our engineer and editor Mia right here at Gwynne Sound in Cincinnati, Ohio and this is Kristin reminding you until next time, keep using your voice. (music) Transcribed by: Designrr

Priscilla Tuft Bio: Priscilla Tuft is a Reiki Master, transformation and empowerment coach whose gift is guiding people through radical transformations. She maintains a Divine connection that allows her to hold powerful space for those in her care. She is the wife of WWE champion wrestler Gabbi Tuft, formerly known as Gabe Tuft. Priscilla is the host of the "her" podcast, which she created to share the story of Gabbi's gender transition. And she is the cofounder of Body Spartan with her spouse Gabbi.