

Laura ([00:00](#)):

Hi. This is Laura Cox Kaplan. You're listening to She Said/She Said. (singing) Ginny Flynn Brzezinski is the co-author of a terrific book called, "Comeback Careers: Rethink, Refresh, Reinvent Your Success at 40, 50 and beyond." Like so many women, Ginny took a career break and a detour to be more present for her kids after having worked in politics on Capitol Hill. But when she got ready to relaunch herself into more substantial work after that break, she found that transition really tricky.

Laura ([00:50](#)):

Now, now, given how common career breaks and detours are for women, there still aren't as many great resources to support us as we pivot including pivoting with those shifts that are forced upon you. Things like layoffs, downsizing, getting fired, and also caring for kids and loved ones. This book, Ginny's book, taps into and addresses so many topics related to women at mid-career or second career phases, or women coming back to work after an extended break.

Laura ([01:26](#)):

Ginny's sister-in-law is Morning Joe's Mika Brzezinski. Mika is also the author and creator of Know Your Value, but it was Ginny who inspired the idea of really digging into this notion of Comeback Careers. Now, one caveat, if you're listening today and thinking, "Okay, this really doesn't apply to me. I'm in my 20s or 30s. This is just not relevant," but let me tell you why it is, it's really important that younger women be aware of and plan for these career junctures, especially those junctures that you won't necessarily know are coming.

Laura ([02:07](#)):

Some can be forced upon you as I said before, or like mine, can be more about stretching yourself and finding new ways to have an impact. Even when you are making the choice to leave a job, there can be distinct challenges associated with that. So, if you're on the younger side, please stay with me. I think you'll find our conversation with Ginny really, really valuable. I should also mention, I'm grateful that Ginny and Mika included my own career transition story in the book. My story of course led to the creation of She Said/She Said and brings us here today.

Laura ([02:49](#)):

So with that, Ginny, welcome to She Said/She Said.

Ginny ([02:53](#)):

Laura, it's so great to be here and to see you again. It's been a long time.

Laura ([02:56](#)):

It has been a long time. Ginny and I worked together, uh, sort of together as press secretaries-

Ginny ([03:02](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([03:02](#)):

... for senators at the same time.

Ginny (03:05):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura (03:05):

But we have not seen each other in person in about 20 years.

Ginny (03:08):

I know, and you still look the same.

Laura (03:09):

You do too. (laughing) You look better, I think. Yeah. (laughs).

Ginny (03:14):

Thank you.

Laura (03:14):

You're so welcome. You're so welcome. So, I am so delighted to be here to talk to you about this incredible book today. There's a great story about how this book came about. Tell me that story.

Ginny (03:29):

So, my sister-in-law is Mika Brzezinski of Morning Joe. And she has a movement called, "Know Your Value" where she advises women through books, and her websites, and conferences on how to get a promotion or ask for a raise, and be paid what they're worth. And she addresses a lot of challenges for women in their careers, but her advice to me had always seemed like it was geared towards women who are in their 20s or 30s, and as well toward women who always leaned in.

Laura (04:06):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny (04:07):

And so one day, I was ... I just turned 50. Both of my kids were within you know, a- a- a- uh- d- within a couple years of leaving the home. And I had been working in real estate for about eight years. And I thought to myself when the kids leave home, it'll just be me and my real estate career. And that is not what I wanna be doing for the next 20 years, but I don't know exactly how to figure out what I do wanna do.

Ginny (04:38):

Um, and I thought Mika's got this great Know Your Value movement, but I didn't even know what my value is. So I don't know what I would add to an organization. I don't know how I would go about finding a job. I have no idea what my resume is, so all these questions. So it was like 7:00 in the morning, and I texted Mika who was on the set of Morning Joe at the time. And somehow, she managed to text me back.

Ginny (05:04):

Ginny.Flynn.Brzezinski. FIN2.Episode86 (Completed 02/11/20)
Transcript by [Rev.com](#)

And I'm literally watching her live on TV, and I can't see her hands, and I'm thinking, "She is texting me back as she is like interviewing somebody." I mean, ho- I don't know how she does everything she does.

Laura ([05:13](#)):

(laughs).

Ginny ([05:13](#)):

But she texted me back and she said, "Great! Let's do something together and why don't we write a book?" And I am looking at my phone going, "She cannot be serious," because I've written press releases, I've written blog posts, so I have never written a book. So I thought maybe she just means like an eBook, or like a manual, or you know, a little brochure. And so I said, "Sure. Sounds good."

Ginny ([05:39](#)):

And turns out she was serious, and we wrote a book called, "Comeback Careers," about refreshing, reinventing, and rebooting your career after time off, or after you know, you had a plateau, or how to, how to reinvent your success.

Laura ([05:55](#)):

Now, am I recalling correctly that you not only wrote the book, but you wrote the book in something like 60 days?

Ginny ([06:03](#)):

Well, that was her initial request.

Laura ([06:05](#)):

(laughs).

Ginny ([06:05](#)):

She's conveniently forgotten that, um, at this point. She likes to tell the story that I was resistant about writing a book. But what I was resistant about was being told that it had to be done in 60 days, 'cause, uh, you know, who really writes a book in 60 days? I don't think even like Tom Clancy can write a book in 60 days.

Laura ([06:23](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([06:24](#)):

So when we got through that little hurdle, we were good to go.

Laura ([06:28](#)):

Yeah. Okay, so you go really deep into the research. You talked to a very broad range of people from women who are experiencing these career pivots at different stages to consultants, and coaches, and I mean, all sorts of people that you talk to. For you as you began to dig into this, what was your biggest

ah-hah moment? I mean, you were living this yourself, but was there anything that surprised you as you started digging into the research that maybe you hadn't thought about?

Ginny ([06:59](#)):

Um, what surprised me the most is these women that I would talk to, how their view of themselves and their skills was so wildly different from my view of them. I would be talking to these women, I thought they were fantastic that they had so much to offer. And their insecurities and their lack of confidence, and what they could do, or what they could add to an organization was so limited. I mean, they just didn't believe in themselves, and that surprised me, because they just seemed fabulous.

Ginny ([07:32](#)):

So, I think that that is ... That was really one of the areas that we needed to, I felt like we needed to get into in the book is confidence.

Laura ([07:42](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). And was that true for you as well? I mean, when you heard people say that to you, was it reaffirming? It's surprising, because you assumed that this person that you're looking at is very confident, but was it reaffirming to you? Were you having those same sorts of feelings about yourself?

Ginny ([07:57](#)):

Uh, y- y- yes. Um, I mean, p- part of my feeling was confusion over, "Well, I don't wanna do real estate anymore," but I'm not quite sure what I can do, and certainly my skills dating back to working in the senate ha- m- you know, the commun- world of communications has changed so much.

Laura ([08:17](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([08:17](#)):

I wasn't quite sure how you know, where my transferrable skills were, or w- where I would add value. So in that way, it was definitely a confidence issue. And for Mika to say to me, "Let's write a book together," certainly, uh, uh, that you know, ah- eh- uh- there was impostor syndrome you know, for me with that, because I thought I have no business writing a book. Uh- uh- I c- and a friend of mine said to me, "Look, you know, just take this one step at a time."

Laura ([08:44](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([08:44](#)):

"Don't think of this as writing a book," because everything- every time I thought 200 pages like my eyes would roll back in my head. And I would think I can't do this, but I took it one chapter at a time. And the other thing that I read, and for anybody who's considering writing a book that will make you feel a little bit better is anybody whose written a book will tell you that their first draft is terrible. Their second draft

probably is terrible too, I mean, just, just write and then you go back, and you'd go through the edit process and you do it over and over again.

Ginny ([09:17](#)):

And in my case over and over and over again. But it was a confidence issue and then uh- eh- taking the risk and, and saying yes to this project you know, uh, there were many times and I felt like an impostor. And eh- and also, to be able to tell somebody, "Hey," you know, if somebody says, "What are you doing?" You go, "I'm writing a book." They're like, "Yeah, sure you are." (laughs).

Ginny ([09:37](#)):

Because people like look at you like you're crazy. Like, you're like the lady with the 60 cats. Sure, you're writing a book. That's nice.

Laura ([09:45](#)):

(laughs).

Ginny ([09:46](#)):

And kind of you know, be on your way.

Laura ([09:47](#)):

Yeah. How did you deal with that? I mean, ho- I mean, may- Did you talk about the fact that you were writing a book, or did you kind of hold your guards closed your best?

Ginny ([09:54](#)):

No, I talked about it. I said, "I'm writing a book." And when it, it did because there were ... Mika had a series of books coming out, so and mine ended up being the caboose. So this project went on for longer than I would prefer it to go on for. It went for like two and a half years. And so by you know, two years and people were like, "Hey! How's that book going?" Yeah, (laughs) and I feel like, "It's in editing, we're getting through it."

Ginny ([10:19](#)):

Writing a book is one of those things where unless you've already written a book-

Laura ([10:23](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([10:23](#)):

... when you say you're writing a book, people are like, "Mm-hmm (affirmative). Sure."

Laura ([10:26](#)):

Yeah. Was it hard at all, this may be an unfair question, but as I was reading the book and thinking about you and you're writing the book, and sort of knowing a bit of the history behind how it came together, was it hard for you in the fact that you didn't necessarily have all the answers, right?

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Ginny ([10:43](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([10:43](#)):

Like you're the person writing the book (laughs) to tell people, "Here's how you do it."

Ginny ([10:46](#)):

Oh, yeah.

Laura ([10:46](#)):

And yet you yourself were struggling with the answers. Was that hard?

Ginny ([10:51](#)):

Oh, that was very hard, but it was also, you know, I was going through it.

Laura ([10:55](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([10:55](#)):

So, it was my first person account of what I was going through. Like when I had to figure out how to tell my ... How to do my pitch, I mean, that was the most uncomfortable thing I've ever been through. But it was good, because I, you know, in my zigzag career, I've been through, I've paused, I've pivoted, I you know, took time off for seven years.

Laura ([11:17](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([11:17](#)):

Went back to work, but in a completely different industry. And then I wanted to pivot after that. So, I've been through all of this. And I talked to so many people not only women who had been through this, but career coaches, um, people who help write LinkedIn profiles, people, um, who eh- you know, are executive recruiters, HR people. And so I learned so much about careers and career communications. It was a great experience both for me to be able to figure out my own path, but also to be able to help people figure out theirs.

Laura ([11:54](#)):

Yeah, confidence is such a big piece of this.

Ginny ([11:57](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([11:57](#)):

You talk about this in the book. You and I have talked about how ... What a big role it plays for women. Talk about your own experience, and what happened to your confidence and what you have come to learn about other women that have gone through this process.

Ginny ([12:12](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([12:12](#)):

What happens to our confidence? Why does it bottom out?

Ginny ([12:16](#)):

So, uh, I think that if you've paused your career, and you've been home with your kids, for so many of us, our confidence and our identity really circles around, especially in a place like Washington or any you know, cities like this. Our confidence really centers around y- your- your identity as a Senate Press Secretary, or a lobbyist, or whatever it is you do. And when you tell somebody that you are a stay-at-home parents, it kind of you know, whether you're at a cocktail party, or whether y- you know, you're on the playground, and I hate to say it, but in a place like DC, people are kinda like, "Oh, that's nice," and they move on.

Laura ([13:00](#)):

Right, (laughs).

Ginny ([13:00](#)):

And so that does not help with your confidence.

Laura ([13:03](#)):

She can do nothing for me is what-

Ginny ([13:04](#)):

Right, exactly.

Laura ([13:04](#)):

Yup, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([13:05](#)):

Um, I'll tell you I was ... When I first stayed home with my kids, I was at a, a brunch, and I had you know, whenever I had told people what I did when I was on the Hill, people were like, "Ooh," and you know, didn't want to talk to you. When I told this man that I was seated next to at the brunch that I was home with my kids for a couple years, he looked at me and he said, "What do you do all day?" And I literally wanted to take a fork and stick it in his forehead.

Laura ([13:32](#)):

(laughs).

Ginny ([13:32](#)):

Because for anybody who has kids, whether you're working or not, you know that there is a lot that you do all day long. But back to the confidence part, it's things like that that release out your confidence.

Laura ([13:43](#)):

Right. And- and you refer to those instances maybe as triggers, right?

Ginny ([13:49](#)):

Oh, absolutely.

Laura ([13:49](#)):

These are triggering. So talk about what you mean by triggering.

Ginny ([13:53](#)):

We all know what the mommy wars are. And I- it is triggering to have somebody really look down on what you're doing if you've chosen to stay home, and you're you know, you don't have any paying income, maybe you're doing projects, pro bono work, maybe you're you know, working an- as a volunteer for your community, or for the school. It does trigger your lack of confidence when somebody says what you do and you kind of stammer through on, "I'm home with my kids."

Ginny ([14:23](#)):

But the one way if you are looking to turn to work to build that confidence back up is to get your skills up-to-date. Um, learn, and make sure you're relevant in whatever you're looking to get back into, to become a subject matter expert at whatever the field is that you wanna return to, to start having conversations with people who were in that area and say, "Well, what thought leader should I be following on LinkedIn? Um, what are you reading? What should I be reading? What should I be doing?"

Ginny ([14:53](#)):

That really helps to get your confidence piece back up. And so that is helpful, but the other thing that's really helpful is to really identify what are your transferrable skills? What are your ... What- What can you bring to an organization? And also to look at your unpaid work and think about, what have I done in the community or in my volunteer work that could be a skill that I could say I have when I wanna return to work, whether it is if you've been a leader and a volunteer organization, you have a soft skill of persuasion.

Laura ([15:28](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([15:29](#)):

Which as anybody who has led a volunteer organization will tell you, "It takes a lot more to motivate volunteers than it does to motivate people who actually work for you and get paid." Um, and that is a huge skill for employers to see.

Laura ([15:41](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([15:42](#)):

Um, so things like that, and that helps build your confidence when you can say, "Yes, I've been home. I took time off to be with my kids. Now I'm ready to get back to work, and here's what I've been doing." And you can say what you've been doing and you can say what your skills are that can add value to wherever you're going, that helps build your confidence.

Laura ([16:01](#)):

Right. You talked about triggers, and you know there are triggers for the person who's potentially getting back into the workforce, or, uh, pursuing something, but there are also triggers for the people who are not quite ready to go back to the workforce.

Ginny ([16:16](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([16:16](#)):

Or maybe threatened by the fact that you have decided to go back to the workforce. How do you navigate? You- You refer to it as the mommy wars, which I think is a perfect way to put it. How do you navigate sort of the social politics around different choices and feeling judged regardless of what you do and how you do it? How do you navigate that?

Ginny ([16:39](#)):

Well, I think that you just need to keep in mind who you're talking to, and just be careful about saying that one choice is better than another, because it's not. Everybody's choice is right for them. When I look back at the choices I've made, I certainly don't, um, regret taking time off to be with my kids. I think financially, it you know, was definitely not the, the best choice. And I think that there are other options now. There are a lot more part-time flex project based ways to keep up your skills if you are taking time off to, to be with your kids. But I think that in terms of being careful not to trigger-

Laura ([17:19](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([17:20](#)):

... I think it just takes, just being careful not to judge choices, and not to say, "I'm going back to work." I really think that you should start doing more stuff with your time too.

Laura ([17:30](#)):

(laughs).

Ginny ([17:30](#)):

Yeah, don't- don't say things like that, um, because everybody comes to it in their own time. One thing that we tend to do if we've been home with the kids is that sometimes we'll ... we do put up barriers.

Like we say, "Well, I do wanna get back into something, but I'm not gonna do it until I get through you know, these projects with the kids or until you know, my youngest is at a certain point."

Ginny ([17:57](#)):

And sometimes, sometimes that's completely legitimate, but sometimes it's, it's also a little bit of, uh, an excuse that we put up out of fear, because we're a little bit nervous about putting ourselves out there.

Laura ([18:12](#)):

And how do we know the difference? Like how do you know the difference if you are that person who's saying, "Well, I really wanna go back, but I wanna do these you know, three or four things first, or let's wait until you know, X child is X old, you know, w- whatever it happens to be." How do you know the difference between really making a sound decision and just operating out of fear?

Ginny ([18:35](#)):

Well, I'm a big advocate for bouncing ideas off your friends. I think that just getting together kind of a, a squad sounding board where you can say, "I've been kind of thinking about this, but I'm not sure."

Laura ([18:49](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([18:50](#)):

And they can say, "Well, you know, we think that you are really good at X, Y, and Z." Like I have a friend who is phenomenal at interior design, and I have always thought that she should do something with that, but there's always been a reason why not. And so I think if she ever said to me, "I'm thinking about it, but I'm not sure," well, I would say to her, "Well, why don't you just test out like help somebody for free?" Or nothing's on the line. You're not like going out and starting a whole new business, but just test out and see how you like it, and see if you do have the time.

Ginny ([19:29](#)):

Because sometimes we can say we don't have the time, but that's just a little bit of an excuse. And sometimes we're not ... sometimes people aren't ready, but there are some times when you have to be ready because you need the income.

Laura ([19:41](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([19:41](#)):

And you need to figure out what you're gonna do, and figure it out pretty fast.

Laura ([19:46](#)):

Yeah, absolutely. As I mentioned before, you provide so many great really tactical tips in this book including some things that surprised me. Let's talk about really what's the first thing that you do when you decide that you wanna jump back in?

Ginny ([20:04](#)):

Well, the first thing before you do anything else is you need to figure out what it is you- you want to do.

Laura ([20:08](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([20:08](#)):

Eh- And that's so important, because for example, I could say, "Well, you know, I was a press secretary in the Hill. I wanna go back and be a senate press secretary again." And maybe I do, but the thing is, is that it's been a while. Maybe I've changed. Maybe, um, my schedule has changed. Maybe what I want from work has changed. And- and certainly the whole world of work has changed. So, I need to kind of dig deeper into that. What was it about what I did that I love so much? What are my skills now? What skills have I developed since then? And what would my ideal work look like?

Ginny ([20:53](#)):

Like do I want to work in an office? Do I want to work part-time? Do I wanna work full-time? Do I wanna have more control over my schedule? And then kind of put all those things together and start talking to people saying, "This is what the type of thing I wanna do. What would you do if you were me?" Because if I you know, say I go on Indeed and I put in communications director, it's gonna come up with a bunch of jobs. But that's probably only like 10% of what the whole world is out there of the types of things I could pursue that aren't exactly communications director.

Laura ([21:31](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([21:32](#)):

But they're tangential to it, and they're probably things that have popped up as the work world has changed over the past decade, or in my case two decades, and so I was press secretary in the Hill, because everything's changed. And sometimes it helps in finding what you wanna do to get a career coach, because they know th- the landscape now and they can kind of help you identify.

Ginny ([21:55](#)):

But the thing after that, after you kinda figure it out, you need to rev up your networks. You need to start talking to people, letting people know that you're interested in going back to work. And then after that, you do need to put your resume together.

Laura ([22:10](#)):

Yeah, that's my next question.

Ginny ([22:11](#)):

Yeah. Um, and resumes have changed so much. If you've been out of the workforce for a few years, eh- it's ... there's a new approach to it. It's not, you are putting at the top of your resume what you know, a summary of what you bring. And depending on what job you're applying to, you wanna kind of format that and describe your skills in a way that shows how you add value to that particular job, so-

Laura ([22:39](#)):

As opposed to the sort of broad way that we used to do resumes.

Ginny ([22:42](#)):

Exactly.

Laura ([22:43](#)):

We were ... We are objective.

Ginny ([22:44](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([22:44](#)):

But you're talking about something that's much more tailored specifically for that job. And you also ... The advice that you give in the book is to have different resumes-

Ginny ([22:52](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([22:52](#)):

... for different jobs.

Ginny ([22:54](#)):

So your resumes is now a dynamic document, and that makes a little complicated, because you go into your file on your computer and you've, you've got like ten different resumes. So you need to figure out a way to say, "This is the resume that I used to apply for this job or that job," but you look at the job description, and you look at what they're looking for, and you compare it to your resume. And you figure out without like making stuff up, of course. How your resume is going to, um, how you can make your resume better to fit the job description.

Laura ([23:23](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([23:24](#)):

Um, by emphasizing different things in a different way sometimes.

Laura ([23:28](#)):

Right. Um, talk about how you may be thread that needle to weave things together that might not immediately do an employer seem relevant to that job.

Ginny ([23:38](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([23:38](#)):

But how might you make volunteer work and a part-time job, various things actually sort of flow together in a, in a contiguous way.

Ginny ([23:47](#)):

Right. So you, you need to go back and find the common thread of what your skills have been and it, you know, if you pause and you've got a bunch of different volunteer things, to show w- what nuggets within those different volunteer jobs. W- w- what are the transferrable skills? Have you raised money? Can you put ... Can you say how much you've raised? Have you led an organization? Um, have you volunteered in the community and say you've, you've persuaded the town council to build a dog park? Or what have you done and, and what are the skills that you have shown and developed that you can s- you know, talk about in an interview or in your resume that might help solve this organization's problems, or might be the reason you know, they might be looking for somebody with your skills, and you've got to connect the dots for them on your resume, in your LinkedIn profile, in an interview. And show how your history of work, how your skills and experiences can add value to their organization.

Laura ([25:00](#)):

Yeah. How do you think organizations are looking at age at this point, this big question of-

Ginny ([25:07](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([25:07](#)):

... ageism. Is there more of a bias for a woman who's going back to work in her 50s or 60s even potentially-

Ginny ([25:16](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([25:17](#)):

... than if she were in her 30s? And how should a person prepare to navigate that?

Ginny ([25:23](#)):

So ageism is, uh, is definitely an issue for men and for women. Um, I think for women it starts a little earlier. Eh, we heard stories about people being restructured out of jobs when they turned 50 and the, you know, the organization would then turn around and hire three people for the same amount of money they were paying that person. Um, we heard stories of women who did not even get interviews because they felt it was because of- of their age. And we heard stories of resumes that somebody found out later on had written on it, TO for too old.

Laura ([25:59](#)):

Oh, wow.

Ginny ([26:00](#)):

Right. So it's a problem, and it is illegal, but no one's gonna come out and say, "I'm not hiring you because you're 55." The stereotypes that people have of people who are more mature are that they are unwilling to learn new things, they're stuck in the past, they maybe rusty, or they won't fit in. They can't mix well with younger generations. So my advice is show that you can. Make sure your skills are up-to-date.

Ginny ([26:39](#)):

It's so easy. If you are on LinkedIn, you can join LinkedIn Premium for like \$29 a month. They have 15,000 courses that you can take, whether it is learning about social media, whether it is learning how to write a speech, whether it is learning about Google Suite. You know, uh- uh- things that you might need to know like b- b- Basecamp or Slack. Eh- there are different things that you need to know and, and be up-to-date. And you can do that very easily like that.

Ginny ([27:10](#)):

By doing those things also, you're showing that you're willing to learn and you're constantly updating yourself, and that's important. Um, and the other thing of course is to be ... to keep your subject matter expertise up-to-date. And then you know, he- you hear all kinds of things about show energy, and make sure you're, you know, you're not wearing glasses that date you, or your hairstyle doesn't date you.

Laura ([27:31](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([27:31](#)):

You know, uh- th- that- that is important. I ... You know, I hate to say the superficial things don't matter, because they, they do. It helps if you can make sure that you, you don't have to wear clothes that a 20-year old would wear. I would recommend you didn't.

Laura ([27:47](#)):

Right, (laughs). God- God forbid.

Ginny ([27:49](#)):

But you have to look current.

Laura ([27:51](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([27:51](#)):

You have to read current. And, um, if you can fight back against those stereotypes, I think it, it helps a lot. Um, but there- there are certain industries that are a lot more ageist than others.

Laura ([28:06](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([28:07](#)):

And there are industries that are much better. But the good news is, is that-

Laura (28:14):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny (28:14):

... there are a lot of industries that are now really seeking to diversify at the top.

Laura (28:23):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny (28:23):

Um, and they've had a pipeline of women who have peeled off along the way for a lot of different reasons. They've either gone part-time. They've downsized. They've gotten off all together. And so there are a lot of industries and companies that are eager to get people back, women particularly back into the, into the workforce.

Laura (28:46):

What are some examples of those industries where you saw real opportunities for women who were more experienced?

Ginny (28:52):

Financial services, the tech industry is eager to get women back in. There are programs like returnship programs.

Laura (29:00):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny (29:00):

There are mid-career returnship programs, eh-

Laura (29:03):

So those are like internships for-

Ginny (29:05):

Exactly.

Laura (29:05):

... but for people at mid-career.

Ginny (29:06):

And they're fantastic. They are hard to get. They are ... But there are a lot of Blue Chip companies that are now offering them. Um-

Laura ([29:13](#)):

And they're paid largely.

Ginny ([29:14](#)):

They're paid. Mm-hmm (affirmative). The- There are a lot of companies that are trying to expand them, because they are working.

Laura ([29:21](#)):

Hmm.

Ginny ([29:21](#)):

They bring women in who make the cut get into this program. You go through ... With a cohort, you'd go through a lot of different training and mentoring. Um, and then at the end, uh, your ... you may be assigned to a project. You may be assigned to a role, it depends. And then at the end of a certain period of time, sometimes it's three months, six months. You're either hired, or you've got something on your resume that you can now go and say, "I've done this."

Ginny ([29:47](#)):

I think the- the rate of people being hired from these programs is like 85%.

Laura ([29:52](#)):

Wow.

Ginny ([29:53](#)):

And the- A lot of the banks have done this. A lot of financial services firms have done this. There's a whole movement in the STEM industry to get women back in and, and they're doing it in ways like this. And the companies want more diversity, diverse teams do better.

Laura ([30:12](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([30:12](#)):

And so this is, this is one way. And this ... This is going to help women who want to get back in and multi-generational teams also do better.

Laura ([30:22](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([30:22](#)):

So.

Laura ([30:23](#)):

While many of the women who go through those mid-career internship type programs get hired, in other instances, I assume that rejection can be pretty high. As you start sending out your resume-

Ginny ([30:36](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([30:36](#)):

... and going on interviews, you can probably expect for there to be rejection-

Ginny ([30:41](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([30:41](#)):

... just like there would be in any other context in which you were looking for a job. But because you're recovering from maybe a confident slump, in many cases you talked about in the book, what's your advice for bouncing back from potentially repeated rejection that may come?

Ginny ([30:59](#)):

So, it's hard. I mean, a friend of mine who went through this, she was on a 13-year career break to raise her daughter. She had been, um, in the energy industry and government affairs.

Laura ([31:11](#)):

And this is Laura who-

Ginny ([31:12](#)):

This is Laura. And Mika's best friend.

Laura ([31:14](#)):

... Mika's [crosstalk 00:31:14] talk about her in the book.

Ginny ([31:15](#)):

Yes, exactly. Laura spent kind of ... She'd spent a, al- lot ... She'll tell you she's done a couple years, but she didn't really full-time look. When she really put the pedal to medal on looking, she probably spent a good six to nine months, but she says that she had to file rejection letters, and it is hard, but you just have to be resilient, go back at it, try and learn from what you've done.

Ginny ([31:42](#)):

One thing that Laura did that uh- eh- is the whole reason I think that she was able to get back to work is she kept track of that industry on an almost granular basis from-

Laura ([31:52](#)):

Hmm.

Ginny ([31:52](#)):

... reading you know, the CEO's letters to the investors. I mean, she read and kept up with everything. She went to conferences when she could. Um, and so sh- when she started interviewing for this position with GE, she was able to talk about w- w- what was going on there with a good degree of authority. And I have to say about GE and the HR people there who gave her a shot, I mean, they are amazing for doing that. There- There's ... There are more and more companies that are willing to, to overlook a career pause, but kudos to GE for being willing to do that.

Laura ([32:31](#)):

Absolutely. How about the working relationship with Mika, working on a project with someone, I mean, in your case it's your sister-in-law, but in other cases it might be a friend or somebody that you go into business with.

Ginny ([32:45](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([32:46](#)):

What did ... Did you guys set ground rules before you started on this project to think about, "Okay, how do we preserve the relationship?" I know there's some funny stories, I can't remember if they were in the book or in one of the interviews that I watched you two do. But there were some, some tricky moments over the course of putting this book together. Talk about that experience.

Ginny ([33:07](#)):

Yeah.

Laura ([33:07](#)):

And advice for other people who might find themselves working with a family member or a friend.

Ginny ([33:12](#)):

Mika is extraordinarily busy. So you know, she needed ... Sh- She kind of set me off on this project on my own, which, uh, was kind of scary, because I ... Of course, I'd never written a book before and I ... But the good news about ch- um, working with Mika for me was that I could pick up the phone and say, "Can I interview you? I'm working on a book with Mika Brzezinski. And that name would open doors.

Laura ([33:39](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([33:39](#)):

But in- in- in terms of working a- working with a friend or with a relative, yeah, I mean, you have to be careful because you know, if we were at different like stress points or whatever, or when I would you know, at one point I said to her and I probably picked the worst day in the world to tell her this, I was like, "I think I need a lot more time to get through this next edit." And you know, you need to be careful that any kind of tension that's going on in a you know, partnership or a business relationship doesn't bleed into other areas.

Ginny ([34:16](#)):

But I think that in terms of working with a friend on a project, or an entrepreneurial venture, I think that from everybody I talk to for this book who had gone off and done their own thing, or started a new business or a nonprofit, the message that I heard from virtually everybody is, "Don't do it by yourself. Do this with a partner." Because you can't ... It's hard to do things on your own, whether it's the two women who started Grown and Flown, or my friend Trisha Sabatini who started, Together We Bake.

Laura ([34:48](#)):

Yeah.

Ginny ([34:49](#)):

Um, they all really said, "Doing stuff on your own is, is too difficult, to be able to do it with a friend who you can bounce ideas off of who can take over when you know, you're having a, a tough day is the way to go."

Laura ([35:04](#)):

Yeah. Was there a part of the book that was harder to write than other parts of the book?

Ginny ([35:11](#)):

Probably telling my own story was more difficult than tel- you know, than researching and coming up with how people you know, put together LinkedIn profiles, or work on resumes, or have their best interviews. I think for anybody telling your story is tough. So that was probably more challenging, and also 'cause I'm, I'm much more of a private person-

Laura ([35:38](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([35:38](#)):

... than Mika is. I didn't want to have my whole life out there, but at the same time I wanted to be able to help women who were going through what I have gone through career wise so that they could find a way to either return to a career they loved, or start their own business or gain some confidence.

Laura ([36:02](#)):

Yeah. Was there anything that surprised you about yourself or anything that you learned about yourself that maybe you're like, "Hmm, ha- wouldn't have known that, had I not gone through this process."

Ginny ([36:14](#)):

Um, I guess just writing a book really, (laughing) surprised me. Um, but I also, what I found in writing a book was how much time you spent alone when you're writing a book. And one thing I did discover while I do like having sometime to myself, I really need to be with a team of people. I'm a very social person and to be ... When you write a book, you have to spend so much time just focused by yourself. C- C- Certainly, I was interviewing people. A lot of that was by phone, but I love working with a team on a mission. And writing a book is a very different way of working than working together with a team on a mission.

Laura (37:00):

Would you do it again? Would you write another book?

Ginny (37:03):

I don't know. Um, if I can figure out what I wanna write about probably this ... Uh- Writing also, writing in somebody else's voice is-

Laura (37:11):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny (37:11):

... a bit of a challenge.

Laura (37:12):

Right.

Ginny (37:13):

I read all of Mika's books and I try to do it in her voice, but all of my friends have said to me, "We hear your voice coming through in this book." So.

Laura (37:22):

Yeah. Wha- Why did you guys make that decision? I mean, I know she has a very high profile, but I was curious as to why you might not have picked different sections to write-

Ginny (37:32):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura (37:32):

... you know some in her voice, some in your voice. And I assume you guys probably talked about that. Why did you make the decision you did?

Ginny (37:38):

That was the editor's call. The editor wanted it that way. There was one book that Mika did called, "Obsessed," which was about you know, eating disorders and, um, her, what she calls her obsession with food. But she did that, I think they divided up chapter by chapter and Mika's views, and her co-author's views. And I think the editor felt like it would flow better, if it was in Mika's voice.

Laura (38:04):

Hmm.

Ginny (38:04):

And of course since more people, many more people know who Mika is, that they would take her advice before they'd take mine.

Laura (38:12):

(laughs).

Ginny (38:12):

So, that was a lot of the reasons.

Laura (38:14):

A little unfair, but yeah, (laughs). A little unfair. It's ... Uh, it works really well, um, but she was lucky to have you to, to actually have you pull this together.

Ginny (38:23):

Well, I was lucky that she wanted to, to do this. I mean, it really worked out well, because I think at the same time she had been feeling like, that Know Your Value needed to come full circle and go you know, she had just ... She was talking to Daniella Pierre Bravo who works with her-

Laura (38:40):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny (38:41):

... um, and Daniella was focusing on the beginning of your career in a book called, "Earn It." And so this really book ended it nicely. I think that this is a group, um, that we don't need, uh, eh, especially, I mean, I feel like Gen-X is like the lost generation. People talk about the millennials and the Baby Boomers, all talk about the so- no one's talking to Gen-X.

Laura (39:03):

Right.

Ginny (39:04):

And I'm kind of on the cusps. So I think that Gen-X and the younger Baby Boomers really needed to have something geared toward us, because when you're in your 40s, or 50s, or 60s, your career challenges are gonna be a lot different than when you're younger.

Laura (39:20):

Sure. Absolutely. What should the young women who are in their 20s and 30s really takeaway from our conversation from this book? Why should they pay attention to what you're talking about?

Ginny (39:32):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). So if you told me at when I was working in the senate that I was going to off ramp, and take seven years off with my kids, and then become a realtor for eight years, I would've told you, you're out of your mind. No one really ever plans for things like this. The whole reason that I off-ramped, was because I had a one-year-old, and I was seven months pregnant with my second. And then my boss lost his reelection bid.

Ginny (40:01):

And so, uh, I went home to change diapers, because the- the thought of trying to find a new job and then tell that person I was gonna need a 3-month maternity leave and you know, maybe I could've pulled that off in 2020. But in the year 2000, it wasn't gonna work. Eh- you know, I went home to change diapers and my house counterpart, Ari Fleischer went onto become White House Press Secretary.

Laura ([40:23](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([40:23](#)):

So, uh- I never expected this. And so if you're in your 20s, in your 30s, and you're very focused on your career, maybe you won't when you have a family, maybe you won't take time off. Maybe you'll find a way around it, but plan. Do things like keep track of all of your signature wins.

Laura ([40:46](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Ginny ([40:46](#)):

It's what, um, one of their career coaches calls them. Keep a list of what you've done. Keep your resume up-to-date. Keep your LinkedIn profile up-to-date. And if you do decide that you're gonna take some time off, then you have that to, to go back to. And today, the good news is if you are going to take some you know, t- gonna pause your career for a while, there are so many resources for you and ways to, um, g- uh- to do project based work, to do flex work.

Laura ([41:18](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([41:19](#)):

Um, to kinda keep up your skills and keep your toe in the water, um, while you're home with your kids and maybe keep an income stream going. So, there are ways to do it, but even if you think, "I will never ever do that," just be ready because you never know. I never thought I was going to do it either.

Laura ([41:40](#)):

Right.

Ginny ([41:40](#)):

Um, and then you know, I ended up doing it for seven years. And when I wanted to get back in, I decided that I just wanted a no commute way. And I should've thought that through more and-

Laura ([41:52](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Ginny ([41:53](#)):

... going back into what I really loved, but you know, so different decision points like that really think them through.

Laura ([41:59](#)):

Yeah. You know, eh- your experience was different than mine. You were kind enough to reach out and talk to me about my own story for the book-

Ginny ([42:06](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([42:07](#)):

... which I really appreciated. Um, but my story was a little bit different and that I outgrew the job that I was in.

Ginny ([42:15](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([42:15](#)):

And it had been my perfect job for many years, and then all of a sudden I found that I was not challenging myself in the same way that I had early on. And I needed to make a shift in order to do something that at least for me I felt would be more impactful. And I would never have seen that coming, (laughs)-

Ginny ([42:35](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([42:35](#)):

... or anticipated it, you know what I mean?

Ginny ([42:37](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([42:37](#)):

Like it's hard to know that you're gonna go through that, but I think knowing that most people or many people do at some juncture and just being aware of the fact that that's normal, and not struggling through it so much.

Ginny ([42:52](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([42:52](#)):

Just recognize that sometimes you do need a break, or to make a shift, or a pivot-

Ginny ([42:57](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

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Laura ([42:57](#)):

... or try something completely different to challenge yourself and keep growing.

Ginny ([43:01](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([43:02](#)):

Um, but you guys did an awesome job including all these different voices and perspectives around the different dimension. So, it really is incredibly well done.

Ginny ([43:10](#)):

Thank you.

Laura ([43:11](#)):

Yeah.

Ginny ([43:12](#)):

It was ... It was great to do.

Laura ([43:12](#)):

When you think about this project, uh, the book, what impact do you hope you will have had on others?

Ginny ([43:22](#)):

I hope that women who are either pivoting, reinventing, or relaunching careers know how to tell their story after this, and how to be okay with their story, how to say, "Yeah, I t- I paused my career for a couple years to raise my kids, but now I'm ready to go back, and I'm excited, and here's what I can bring to you." And that women, no matter what your choices have been career wise that you know your value.

Laura ([43:53](#)):

Yeah. Yeah. It's great. One final question.

Ginny ([43:56](#)):

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Laura ([43:56](#)):

We ask everyone who comes on the podcast for a single piece of advice, a life hack, or a mantra, maybe it's something that you might have told your younger self, or something that you'd tell your kids. But if you had to boil it down to one thing, what would that be?

Ginny ([44:13](#)):

Um, I would say to always remember that there is a pathway to a comeback that everyone deserves a comeback and you can find your own, but you have to get started and start saying yes to things.

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Laura ([44:28](#)):

Yeah. Ginny, it's great. Really great. Thank you so much for being here.

Ginny ([44:32](#)):

Thank you for having me, Laura.

Laura ([44:33](#)):

Really appreciate it. To learn more about Ginny and find a link to Comeback Careers, check out the show notes for episode 86. You can buy the book on Amazon, or wherever you get your books. And be sure to let me know what you think about the episode. You can contact me via the link at www.shesaidshesaidpodcast.com or via my email at laura@lauracoxkaplan.net. And a great big thank you to our friends at EFB Advocacy who hosted us this morning. We're really, really grateful for the time and the fancy studio space. It was really great to be here.

Laura ([45:13](#)):

As always, thanks so much for listening and thanks so much to our guest, Ginny Brzezinski.

Ginny ([45:17](#)):

Thank you.