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GRAMMY
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**Special Power
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Shelley Johnson
Kathy Tuccaro
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GRAMMY AWARDS

Powerhouse Duo,
Shelley Johnson, and Kathy Tuccaro with
The Women Road Warriors Empowerment Talk Show
Podcast: Features Celebrities to Successful Women
Leaders

By Jules Lavallee

Women Road Warriors is a lively talk show featuring experts and celebrity guests on various topics that empower women. It aims to 'power women on the road to success.' The show is humorous, entertaining, educational, and sometimes quirky with lively banter between Shelley Johnson, Kathy Tuccaro, and their guests. Women Road Warriors is ranked by Podcast Tonight as one of the best podcasts for women. FeedSpot has rated it among the Top 100 Women Podcasts worldwide and in the 35 Best Women Empowerment Podcasts worldwide. Women Road Warriors is available on all the major podcast distribution channels and <https://women-road-warriors.captivate.fm>.





Shelley Johnson

Shelley: you have been described as the “Renaissance Woman.” Share your background.

That comment was made by someone who was being snarky. I let it roll off and took it as a compliment instead. I have always been tenacious and undaunted when I have a goal. I also hate the word no when it can be a yes. I have done many things during my career and have been an avid learner. I have never been a dichotomous thinker and have been blessed with numerous skills that I have parlayed in multiple opportunities. At the age of six, my first-grade teacher told my mother she saw skills in writing, art, and music. I have pursued all these areas in different ways. I always strive to do many things and do them to the best of my ability. I consider myself a work in progress - always learning - always striving and seeing what horizon and challenge I can meet today.

Learning and curiosity are part of my personality which is why I so enjoy interviewing. As I have joked before, I used to get in trouble for talking all the time as a kid, now I get paid for it. I have permission to ask a lot of questions, and no one minds. The biggest word I used as a child was “why?”

I know I drove my parents a bit nuts with that, especially when it was a question they could not readily answer.

Occasionally, my curiosity got me into trouble. I remember taking the telephone apart as a three-year-old because I wanted to know how it worked. That whole experiment would have gone unnoticed if I had put the phone back together correctly. It is that kind of curiosity and spirit that has taken me many directions. I have always been into gadgets and technology and was fascinated with a good visual story.

As a 12-year-old, I dreamed of producing a movie one summer. I wrote a movie script and auditioned my friends. That was slightly odd and unconventional,

but my friends went along with it. I even wrote the musical score that would be the theme for my movie. It is all tucked away in a box somewhere where it may still have big screen potential. You never know.

I was originally a music major for voice and piano at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. That career path requires rigorous focus, and I had many interests which included performance and theater. I wanted to explore more avenues to incorporate my interest in writing and media production. I ended up graduating from Western Michigan University where I earned a Bachelor of Science in communication with a journalism minor. As my career began, I worked in radio sales, as a disc

jockey and news reporter. While still in my 20s, I decided to forge my own path to become a corporate consultant as a script writer, video producer, director, voiceover, and on-camera narrator. As talent, I signed with major agencies in Chicago and Detroit.

That gave me entry into the advertising world. My corporate projects honed my skills as a technical and marketing writer. I began working for Fortune 500 firms like Dow Corning, Kellogg, Ford Motor Company, and others. I briefly worked on the auto show circuit as a narrator for companies like I.T.T. Automotive. I also worked as a freelance journalist for The Associated Press and United Press International.

I eventually got a regular gig with the UPI Bureau in Detroit, writing broadcast briefs and print packages while filing national A-wire stories. I provided regular voices on stories of national significance for National Public Radio, Armed Forces Radio, and the UPI Washington D.C. bureau.

As time progressed, I saw that IT and medical writing were viable areas and honed my skills and knowledge in those areas. As media changed, I earned certifications as a digital marketer with graduate certificates in digital marketing from Cornell University. This bolstered my ability to produce engaging digital marketing collateral for clients.

I never gave up on my music. After playing piano for a diversity day at a community college in Southwest Michigan, I was invited to become a part-time professor. That led to teaching piano and music theory for nearly two years while I worked as an accompanist for several area high school choirs and churches.

Dogged determination are two words that describe me. If I have a vision, I will uncover every avenue to make it a reality. Despite forks in the road, I have never lost sight of my dreams and have always worked to inspire others. This is largely due to someone very significant who inspired me. As a college student, I took the liberty of reaching out to Peter Horst, an advertising icon from Leo Burnett who was instrumental in creating the

Maytag Lonely Repair Man and Morris the Cat. I sent him some of my creative writing. He called me up and requested a meeting where he offered his critique of my work and told me I was a marvelous writer who should never lose sight of my goals/dreams. That stuck in my mind and galvanized me to pursue my dreams despite any naysayers I met along the way. Those messages when we are very young are life changing. We all need champions. I have endeavored to do the same for others which is another reason I am so inspired by our show Women Road Warriors.

Shelley, how did you and Kathy Tuccaro join forces for the Women Road Warriors Talk Show?

My mission as executive producer and co-host of Women Road Warriors is to motivate as many women as possible to accomplish their dreams and aspirations. I want to offer a show that is entertaining, educational, and uplifting with weekly episodes that help listeners feel just a little bit better about themselves with a can-do attitude. I want them to walk away informed and realize life's possibilities are *achievable*. Kathy and I have lively, heartfelt, and spontaneous discussions with our guests. I like to think we provide a ray of hope and inspiration which is hard to find today where the world seems so divided. If we impact a positive change with just one listener, then we have done our job.

Kathy and I joined forces after I

interviewed her on The Truckers Network Radio Show, a popular talk show I hosted in Houston where I interviewed industry experts, authors, and celebrities. We discussed her career in the heavy haul industry, her life's challenges and victories and her book *Dream Big*. I was inspired by her. Kathy and I had a special synergy during that interview. It all happened organically. I wanted to start a women's talk show for the industry and I thought Kathy would be the perfect co-host. I approached her and she agreed. At first the show was designed for women in trucking. It began a natural pivot with the guests I was booking. I quickly realized Women Road Warriors should be a women's empowerment show for all women, no matter what their career or life choice. That is an area that is really needed for women. Women listeners have responded with enthusiasm.

Everybody has a road they travel in life. The theme of Women Road Warriors is "helping power women on their road to success." We like to help people choose the road that is best for them while opening new directions on their route through life. We are their champions as they forge ahead. Our logo is a caricature of Kathy and me standing on a road holding shields (which are hub caps to maintain the travel theme). Being half Icelandic on my dad's side of the family, I like to think that Kathy and I are Viking shield maidens who fight for the success of women. We are their vanguards on the road through life.



Kathy, you have inspired, motivated, and transformed others' lives by sharing your story. Tell us about your background.

Well, it's quite the story so I wrote a book about it called *Dream Big! Overcoming a Lifetime of Trauma & Abuse That Led to Dreams of Success*. In a nutshell, I spent a childhood filled with trauma, violence, and sexual abuse. My only safe place to hide as a 6-year-old child was the doghouse hugging my dog, Sheba. This is where I began having conversations with God about life. These conversations continued throughout my teenage years after a rape at 14, another attack at 15, I was drugged and raped by a photographer after a photo shoot in Miami at 18, then gang raped at 19 in Montreal. Instead of calling the police, I proceeded to make my way to the Pont Jacques Cartier (the biggest bridge in Montreal) and had one leg over the rail as I cursed God asking why he hated me so much when I was such a good Soul.

As I stood there screaming and crying, a man gently pulled me off the bridge ledge and sat with me until I calmed down, never saying a single word to me. He just held me, which is what I needed at the time. He walked me off the bridge (still without talking) and sitting there at the foot of the bridge was a taxi. Keep in mind that this is in a part of Montreal where there are no taxis just sitting there waiting for people.

Long story short, I ended up having 3 suicide attempts and every time, a guardian angel stood with me making sure I would be okay. After the 3rd attempt, I realized how very precious the Golden Thread of Life is and decided to become a nurse in 1998. Fast forward to 2008 where I had a complete psychological breakdown due to a lifetime of undealt with trauma. Nursing was easy for me because it took me out of my own pain so I could focus on others. The problem with that was all my pain that I thought was safely locked away, was actually festering, and becoming so infected and toxic that it affected my thinking patterns. I became

an alcoholic and the choices I made in men weren't exactly the best, so I endured 7 ½ yrs. of extreme domestic violence.

I was strangled 3 times to the point of losing consciousness. I lived with a shovel on my porch as a reminder of what I would be buried with. I was under constant threat of being sold into human trafficking and also under threat of disappearing never to be found again. I was stalked for a year by a ruthless killer who was my boyfriend's best friend and would follow me everywhere I went so he could report to him. All this while I was nursing. It was just awful so I would work two jobs, just so I didn't have to go home.

In 2007, I made "The Great Escape" trying to put one foot in front of the other and survive, but alas, my inner turmoil won the battle, and I ended up losing my nursing career and becoming drunk and homeless in 2011 after a few tries at quitting drinking alcohol. If I were to show you my homeless picture, you wouldn't recognize me! On the 7th day of homelessness, a man named Toothless Joe, who

is the unsung hero of my story, slapped me on the back and said, "This is the life! Live it! Love it!"

When he did that, my vision cleared, and I realized that there was more to me than standing drunk on the street beside that guy! I had been robbed and literally only had the clothes on my back, but I had the sense to make a decision and say, "This is NOT my life!" I did whatever it took to get away from that guy, which was detox at the local hospital, then back to a faith based, year long recovery treatment center for women called Wellspings. Best decision I ever made was to take the time I needed to heal and help myself first and foremost!

I knew I couldn't go back to nursing, but how do you change careers at the age of 42? It's not that easy, so I went to a career planning workshop to find out what I wanted to be when I grew up at 42 years old. After three days of aptitude and personality tests, the lady gave me my sheet back with big black letters on top that said, "Heavy Equipment Operator." I laughed so hard; I just about fell off my chair! I said to her, "You've GOT to be joking!"



Kathy Tuccaro

I am a woman, I don't even like equipment, I am not mechanically inclined and honestly, this is a man's job! Your test is wrong!" She responded by pulling her glasses over the edge of her nose, putting a hand on her hip, and said, "If only you would believe in yourself a little bit Missy, you would see the test is right!"

She then proceeded to send me to a local Non-Profit organization called Women Building Futures where big companies sponsor programs that help women get into the nontraditional trades. The day I walked in was the very day ExxonMobil/Imperial Oil just happened to be there sponsoring a 12-week Heavy Equipment Operator course. I had no idea what a Haul truck was but signed up for it. I was picked out of 158 women and 16 of us took the course. It turns out that lady was right because every piece of equipment I would get on, I was good at operating it, not to mention how much I loved it! 11 out of the 16 were hired, and I started my journey in 2013 and haven't looked back!

I now operate some of the largest mining equipment in the world up in Northern Canada and tell women everywhere that its man's best kept secret! It's very rewarding, challenging, pays well and I will always have a job, not to mention I play in a giant sand box all day and paid well to have fun! It's been quite the ride!

I wrote my book in 2017 which is now its in 4 languages, I also have an accompanying workbook, I also wrote a children's book which is given freely to children in need and am currently writing another book which is fiction based on true events of our playing the Ouija Board as teenagers and all the paranormal

activity that has followed me since.

I spend my free time doing charities all over the world where I have speaking engagements. I go to women's shelters, schools, youth centers, juvenile homes, create community events and even speak at prisons when I can. I do it all for free because most people who are suffering do not have the money to get the desperate help they need. Besides, it's not about the money, it's about creating global change one person at a time. I tell women to always believe in themselves regardless of what people say. Change begins with having a voice in your own story and being true to ourselves. I talk about speaking up about sexual abuse and taking ownership of their own lives. By learning to flip that negative switch in their head into a positive one, life will automatically turn around. Forgiveness and love are the number one key to walking through the arches of a better tomorrow.

What makes your show a must-listen?

Shelley: The Women Road Warriors empowerment talk show is designed to inspire women to achieve things they had not thought possible. We are a free-wheeling talk show for inspiration, education and entertainment tailored to women. We feature guests who have been trailblazers. We discuss a wide range of topics from health, mental health, career, and business along with difficult topics like domestic abuse, drug addiction, and human trafficking. We talk with celebrities and trailblazers about the roads they have taken, the obstacles they encountered as women and how they have been champions for

women. We feature experts with unique information and advice to women. We choose the best guests to make sure they offer the golden nuggets of information and takeaways our listeners have come to love and expect. Because our show is conversational with no specific questions ahead of time, it allows us to uncover information and the essence of the guest that you may not hear in other shows.

Kathy: we are creating a ripple effect of positive change worldwide one show at a time! I am very grateful to Shelley for being such an amazing co-host and executive producer of the show. We make a dynamic duo, and the listeners feel it.

Our show has incredible guests from various backgrounds and incredible backstories, most of which I am continually inspired by. We all have a story to tell, and some of the resilience we have shared is outstanding. I draw strength from our guests just as much as they do from ours. It's a positive impact show in every aspect. Not only are we inspiring the listeners, but we have fun doing it. The conversations we have are free-flowing, natural and easy to listen to.

Shelley: The Women Road Warriors Talk Show shares stories of resilience and inspiring lessons from celebrities to successful female leaders. Tell us about your inspiring guests.

We have had so many great guests who have all been powerhouses of information. It is difficult to pinpoint just a few who are the most memorable as they all have been dynamic interviews. I hate to exclude anyone. I can list some highlights.

Celebrity Guests:

Valerie Bertinelli was a pleasure to speak with. We had a lively discussion about loving yourself just the way you are and what motivated her book "Enough Already! Learning to Love the Way I Am Today." The interview not only explored Valerie's life in Hollywood and with **Eddie Van Halen**, but her own personal challenges. It gave perspectives on how women can have self-limiting ideas based on what society tells us. It left me feeling it is okay to be who you are, not who someone else wants you to be and that the word no is a full sentence which is okay to say. It was entertaining with some great takeaways for our listeners.

Ruta Lee is a Hollywood icon we were honored to interview in our premier episode. She was promoting her autobiography "Consider Your Ass Kissed."

She was extremely entertaining as we talked about women empowerment, how she had been a trailblazer and the opportunities she had and people she had known. She has a spunky sense of humor and has been on more TV shows and movies than many of her peers. Ruta has worked with all the major stars starting with the Burns and Allen show to members of the Rat Pack and animated movies. I was impressed with her dedication to humanity and her tenacity. She discussed her work as a philanthropist and how she single-handedly got her grandmother freed from a Siberian internment camp by personally talking to the then Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. I loved the fact that she never forgot her roots and she fought for what was right despite the odds. In many ways, I felt a kinship, as I have always been an advocate and work to

right wrongs where I can.

Most Recent Expert/Human Interest Interviews

Lucia Kanter St. Amour is a recent interview that was very compelling. She is a renowned attorney and negotiator in San Francisco, and the vice president of U.N. Women USA. She is the author of "For the Foxes of Good: The Superpower of Everyday Negotiation." Lucia talked about the power of everyday negotiation. We had a lively discussion of how we all have the power to negotiate and get the outcomes we want in life every day. She walked us through negotiation techniques with examples of how to get the best compensation package for a job as well as convince a toddler to eat vegetables. These practical real-life examples were easy to grasp, and I learned some great fundamentals.

WOMEN ROAD WARRIORS



Some of our
guests



Our two interviews with Jean Peelen, a woman in her 80s who has had six careers were very inspiring. She is the author of the book "Feisty: A Memoir in Little Pieces." Despite being told her dreams would come through the eyes of her children, she finished college and went to law school to become an esteemed federal civil rights attorney fighting for the disenfranchised. She is a fierce women's advocate who defied the odds and was an avid feminist who hosted Gloria Steinem in the 1970s. She is funny, down-to-earth and carries a message that women can accomplish anything they set their mind to at any age. I felt almost invincible after that interview.

Shelley: tell us about some of most memorable guests?

We have had so many powerhouse guests on our show. It is hard to pinpoint just a few I consider memorable. They all have offered great information. We have featured nationally renowned psychologists and psychiatrists who have talked about ADHD in women, seasonal affective disorder (S.A.D), anxiety, and bipolar disorder in women. We featured a woman doctor who had recently addressed the United Nations about women's healthcare. We have featured fantastic experts for entrepreneurs as well as career counselors who were outstanding along with motivational speakers and consultants who help people

improve their lives through music, meditation, physical therapy and other areas. We have had guests who are champions for women such as a nonprofit that is a women's empowerment network; guests who are working to stop human trafficking; along with women trailblazers.

Kathy: you are a much sought after speaker, can you share upcoming speaking engagements?

I currently work on a 14 day on/ 14 day off rotation and fly to Los Angeles where I live for my precious time off. This year I have a few guest appearances for CATERPILLAR INC down in Mexico for International Women's month. I will be touring the factories where the days of the haul trucks are made, as well as the dozer blades and back rippers are made. There are 3 major factories with 5000 employees and 30% being women. I get to go share my story and create local events for women and children seeing as my books are in Spanish, I will be giving them away at shelters and orphanages.

The topics I cover are usually all personal development related to my personal story such as Mental Health in the Workplace, Building Resilience, Overcoming Adversity, Pothole Pitfalls; Rising Above the Challenges, Self-Esteem and Who am I? Discovering the beauty of our own Soul., and many more, all

depending on the audience.

In July I will be in NYC on a daily talk show, speaking at a women's conference, and doing a charity drive for children while there. In Oct, I am speaking at a National Recovery Conference in Dallas and in November, I will be a speaker at the Women in Trucking conference in Dallas as well. I will also be going to Peru for CATERPILLAR to tour some mines down there and speak at a career fair about my job. I will have the golden opportunity to hike up Machu Pichu while I'm there which is going to be incredible!

I started a work boot recycle program in 2014 because I didn't have boots to start work, and a lady kindly gave me a pair of gently used boots so I could change my life. Once I arrived at work, I realized they were throwing away hundreds of perfectly good boots, so I started recycling them and distributed them to local programs that support people looking for work. To date I have collected and distributed over 10,000 pairs of boots and over 4000 hard hats. My company asked me to look here in Los Angeles for programs that need boots, and we will be shipping some here if I can arrange it. We will also start shipping boots to other countries in need, so this is just wonderful! I am very grateful to work for such an amazing company as ExxonMobil/Imperial Oil.

www.womenroadwarriors.com