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THE IN-THE-KNOW NINE

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Maryann LoRusso is a journalist and former media executive with more than 25 years of experience interviewing and writing about CEOs, celebrities and fashion icons—Vera Wang, Manolo Blahnik, Anna Sui, Kenneth Cole, Kate Spade, André Leon Talley and John Varvatos, to name just a few. She spent a good chunk of her career at some of the world's most illustrious publishing houses, including Fairchild/Condé Nast and Time Inc., as well as speaking and moderating panels at global fashion-industry summits and other business events. She has lived a glamorous life—from catwalk hopping through New York Fashion Week, to traveling to Milan and Paris for trade shows, to attending the Met Gala. Her beautiful life grew even "More Beautiful" with her family, and she shifted to a freelance writing career and a fresh start as a popular podcaster. We are basking in the glow of her answers to our nine questions.



1. What has been your career trajectory?

After graduating from journalism school outside of Chicago, I moved back to NYC and got a job as a beat reporter for a local newspaper. A year later, I was lured into the interesting world of magazine publishing. For about a decade I was entrenched in fashion journalism, working my way up from an assistant editor at a small publishing house to an editor-in-chief at Fairchild, which was then owned by Condé Nast. It was a blast traveling, attending fashion shows, and interviewing and writing about CEOs, celebrities and fashion designers. I even got to attend the Met gala before it became the huge deal it is now. Shortly after my daughter was born, my husband got a great job opportunity in San Francisco, so we relocated to the West Coast. I've been freelancing as a writer, editor and content creator ever since.

2. What inspired the More Beautiful Podcast?

Not too long after I entered midlife, I noticed that some of my friends were starting to complain about losing their zest for life. Either they were tired or depressed, or uncertain about the future, or grappling with symptoms caused by perimenopause. While I was going through some of that, I was mostly raring to go because my kids were growing up and I suddenly had more time to refocus on my own dreams and ambitions. I thought to myself, aging can't be as bad as everyone is saying—maybe it's just got a PR problem. Late in 2021, an idea started brewing to create a podcast and community for women in this stage of life who want to excited about the future. More Beautiful's mission is to empower and uplift (and entertain) women over 40 by delivering them all the content they've always craved—health and fitness, beauty and fashion, travel, career—but make it more relevant to their current life phase. I also wanted women to focus not on what we were told we would be losing during midlife (estrogen, sex drive, relevance, etc.), but on all the stuff we were gaining, such as perspective, confidence, self-love and focus. I truly believe that life gets better—more beautiful, if you will—as we grow into ourselves.



3. How do you balance work and motherhood?

I currently have teenagers—one in college, one in high school—so I'm in that stage of motherhood where it's less physical work and more of a spiritual challenge. I no longer stress about carpools and bedtimes, but I worry about who they're hanging out with, how safe they are, and whether they're living balanced lives as young adults. Thankfully, they're both great kids who stay out of trouble, and it's been exciting to see them hone their personal interests and start developing into the amazing adults they're becoming. Their increased independence has given me space to take on more freelance writing assignments and to embark on my own passion projects, like More Beautiful. In fact, my son is editing my podcasts, and it's been fun working with him (aka having him explain everything to me while he tries not to roll his eyes).



Best Buddies ride

4. How do you deal with adversity?

Definitely with much more grace and self-awareness than I used to. Growing up in a working class family and being a first-generation college student, I never had anything handed to me and had to be resourceful. I've never been afraid to get in there and do the hard work in order to get something done, even when the odds seem stacked against me. However, when I was younger I'd beat myself up at the first sign of failure. Thankfully, that's changing with age. When something goes wrong nowadays, I have the experience and maturity to step back, take a breath, and consider how I might pivot or handle the situation differently. Instead of stressing out like I might have when I was 20 or 30, I now calmly assess the situation and problem solve. I remind myself that there's always a solution—I just need to get creative.

5. How has experience and age shaped you?

For so much of my life I was incredibly hard on myself and, like a lot of women, a people pleaser. But that's changing as I get older. I no longer take things as personally, and I strive to live up to my own standards instead someone else's. I've learned that 90 percent of what people say is a reflection of their, not me, so I now take into account where the criticism is coming from. I'm also becoming less competitive with age. I stay in my own lane and try not to compare my life with anyone else's—what's the point? I look back at all the time I wasted in my youth feeling ashamed for something or other, but with age comes the realization that all of that is too exhausting. Just grow in the direction your heart tells you, and be yourself with every single person you meet. It's the only way. Now that I've finally embraced that philosophy, I can more easily generate self-compassion, which in turn makes me more compassionate and more loving toward others.



6. How would you describe your fashion style?

Working in fashion for so many years, I've been enraptured by a myriad of looks and my wardrobe is pretty eclectic. But overall, I'd say my style is feminine-chic. My closet is filled with updated classics as well as trendier, more casual pieces: skinny and boyfriend jeans, silky blouses in jewel tones and fun prints, softly tailored jackets, fitted Ts, and skirts of all lengths. I love dresses—especially those cut on the bias—and because I'm petite, I favor body-skimming pieces over boxy cuts, which can overwhelm my frame. In terms of accessories, I'm a sucker for a statement: a novelty handbag (like my Kate Spade typewriter purse), a whimsical scarf, a bold cocktail ring or necklace. I love heels and have been known to walk 30 city blocks in 4-inch stilettos. The pandemic has tamed me a bit; these days I'll wear joggers and trainers when I'm not running, and I've even embraced the sneaker-and-dress combo. But I'm still always looking for an excuse to dress up. Because life is short and fashion is irresistible.

7. What are your favorite beauty or self-care products?

For several years now, my favorite daytime skincare duo is Vitner's Daughter serum layered under Elta MD's UV Clear Tinted Sunscreen. My go-to night cream is CeraVe PM, a drugstore brand that's packed with hyaluronic acid and niacinamide. Origins Ginger Souffle is my favorite body cream; it smells heavenly. Always in my makeup bag: Glossier's Boy Brow, Ilia's Volumizing Mascara, Nars' Radiant Creamy Concealer, and various shades of Rouge Volupté Shine lipstick from Yves Saint Laurent. In terms of haircare, lately I can't live without Revlon's One-Step Dryer/Hot Air Brush for a fast blow-out with tons of volume.

8. How do you relax?

I love to run, go on city hikes, and take long drives along the coast. Several years ago I studied Transcendental Meditation, and I still use the skills I acquired to manage stress. At home, cooking, reading a good book, watching a romantic movie, or taking a bubble bath (only occasionally, because California is perpetually in a drought) can easily put me in a relaxed mood.

9. What is your most beloved motto or an inspirational quote from someone you admire?

I have so many quotes written down everywhere, but probably my all-time favorite is from Maya Angelou, who said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." I try to remember that always, no matter whom I'm interacting with.

Maryann is a San Francisco-based journalist and the creator of the More Beautiful Podcast and Newsletter. You can find links to all her endeavors right here, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter



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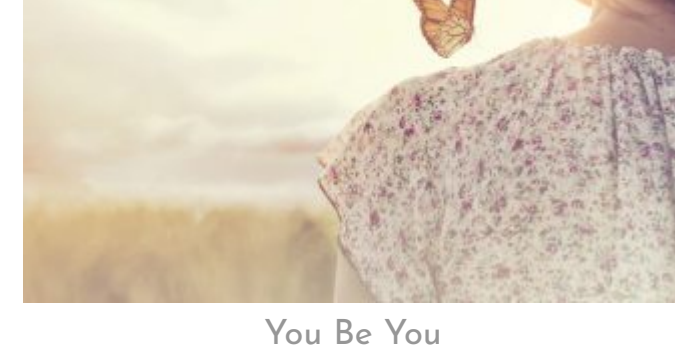
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