

Suzanne Somers on Growing Yourself and Your Business



Gene Marks

CPA, Columnist, and Host



Suzanne Somers

Actress, Author, Businesswoman

Announcer:

Welcome to Thrive, a Paychex business podcast where you'll hear timely insights to help you navigate marketplace dynamics and propel your business forward. Here's your host, Gene Marks.

Gene Marks:

Hey everybody. And welcome back to another episode of Thrive. My name is Gene Marks. Thank you so much for joining us today. Special guest today, someone that I've followed for so many years and have been a fan of Suzanne Somers, Suzanne is a former... Actually, we'll talk about whether you're a former actress or not but-

Suzanne Somers:

Okay.

Gene Marks:

I think a lot of acting in the past, but now really Suzanne, you're, you're a huge entrepreneur. You've written tons of books. I have in your biography you've penned a dozen books, but then I have another number of like, 27 books, which again, I'm going to ask you about in a minute, but you've got a very successful website at SuzanneSomers.com. You're really well known for the Thigh Master back in the day as well. I mean you've really just completely pivoted from the acting world to being an entrepreneur. And it's a really, it's a fantastic thing to see. So I guess you're selling skincare, you're selling makeup, you're selling hair products, food products, jewelry, a Gut Renew program, right? Fashion products, health. First of all, tell us about SuzanneSomers.com. What is it all about? Give us a history of it and what you're doing.

Suzanne Somers:

It really is a natural outgrowing of all the books I've written. I have written 27 books.

Gene Marks:

It is 27. I knew that.

Suzanne Somers:

27, 14 New York Times Bestsellers, but who's counting. [Chuckles.] And what a privilege it is to write books. At first, when I started writing books, people liked to take shots at me, but it's interesting, you live long enough, you hang around long enough, you have enough success and I finally got what I probably always wanted, which was respect. And when I wrote these books, it first started because I ... Well it first started as a child of alcoholic. Nobody had ever told this story on herself. And my childhood was rough. I spent more nights hiding in the closet to get away from the monster downstairs than in my own bed — it seems like anyway, probably that's an exaggeration — but most nights my mom would come in: "Get in the closet, get in the closet, get in the closet." And when you're a little kid, your heart is pounding.

Suzanne Somers:

And we had a lock on the inside of the door to keep him from getting in. Sometimes he'd rattle the door and yell and ... So you go to school and you didn't do your homework. And you can't say to the teacher, "Well, you can't imagine what went on at our house last night." So that was, that book that I wrote was called "Keeping Secrets." And that opened a floodgate that blew me away. I was the first one who said, "I'm not alcoholic, but I was so affected by the alcoholic, I didn't know what was wrong with me." And when I, when I detailed things like I didn't drink, but I would buy things I couldn't afford. For the moment, it would take the pain away, just like a drink, takes the pain away. And then I'd go through the, "Oh my God, how am I going to pay for this?" I was always in trouble that way. And man did that hit a chord when I started lecturing.

Suzanne Somers:

So what this, what this did was start the Adult Children of Alcoholics movement. It's a big, big army. And then my books just kept kind of following what I was going through in my life. I did a book on abuse and I did a book on gaining weight. You know, you reach a stage in life where you gain weight. I wrote nine of those books, sold 9 million of those books because I was the first one, again, who said high protein, high fat, high vegetable, leave out the carbohydrates and sugar until you get to the weight that you want. And it started a movement called Somersizing, so big that we had cruises, Somersizing cruises. We would take the Fantasia and things like that.

Suzanne Somers:

And then I lost my hormones. I looked everywhere around the house and couldn't find them. And nobody ever talked about like, when my mother and your mother were ... we were kids. You'd hear your mother and your aunt and their friends go, talk about "the change." Remember that conversation? "The Change."

Gene Marks:

Yeah, of course.

Suzanne Somers:

It was too shameful to even talk about. And I remember when I first started writing these books on hormones, I thought, do I want to be known as the menopause queen? And then I thought, why not? Why not? It's a natural process. And I used my fame to get to the best and the brightest doctors and really learned — so much so that I got an honorary doctorate for it — really learned how the hormonal system works, and how it's a communication system.

Suzanne Somers:

So to answer your question, how did the products come to be? Well, where's this? Excuse my ... I wrote this book called TOX-SICK — one of many — about the effects of chemicals on the human body and why,

if you look at a graph, cancer is an epidemic. They don't want us to know about that, but it's an epidemic. And I thought we put chemicals on our skin, we have food that's sprayed with poison. I don't know who thought that was a good idea. We have chemical cleaners in our house. The makeup we women use is all chemicals. The lipstick we use is loaded with lead. So I decided, category by category, to make a brand, the Suzanne Organics, all organic. Each has an insignia on it, certified toxic-free, which means guidelines are very stringent: has to be grown organically, extracted organically, and nothing up wind or down wind of the product can be toxic to contaminate it.

Suzanne Somers:

Kind of hard to fulfill, but it struck a chord, and my constituency grows and grows and grows. They buy the books, they buy the, the, all the organic brands. And that has turned into three shows weekly on Facebook and Instagram where — I don't know if you've ever seen — but they come, and the lure is a tequila. Because nobody likes to drink alone. But if you can have a tequila with Suzanne and Al, they like that, [chuckles] and you sip your tequila and then I get talking. I don't know what I'm going to talk about. Like you, you don't quite know where you going to go.

Gene Marks:

Sure.

Suzanne Somers:

And I enjoy it so much. And so that just keeps building into something bigger and bigger. And at this stage in my life, I'm thinking, "Hmm, wow, what an interesting life." And here, I thought getting older was going to be this terrible paradigm that we all see, you know, frail, decrepit, and out of it. And I'm more alive than ever. I've done, like you, I've raised my kids. I've married them off. I've paid for their educations. And now it's about us.

Gene Marks:

It gets better and better as you get older. And plus, if you have some years behind you and experience as well. I mean, you didn't know about any of this stuff. You sound like you were self-taught. And when it comes to your website where you sell all of your stuff, you didn't know anything about going online, I'm assuming, right?

Suzanne Somers:

Nope.

Gene Marks:

You're not a web developer. How did you learn this stuff? What can people learn ...?

Suzanne Somers:

I didn't go to college. I got a scholarship to college and the first time I ever had sex at 18 years old, I got pregnant. Well, the nuns at Catholic school didn't feel that I was a good fit. So I left college to have the baby and then I was in the process of, you know, you've gotta ... food, shelter, and clothing. But what I now realize is not everybody is college material. We now can find out anything we want to find online and you just have to get good at searching and digging. I remember I gave the commencement speech to a really interesting school called National University. And they called me before, you know, how many degrees do you have? And I said, none, because they wanted to know how many tassels to put on.

Suzanne Somers:

So I was sitting up there with the chancellor and all the professors and they gave me a fake tassel to hang. And I was thinking about what I was going to say. But while I was thinking about what I was going to say,

I was watching the people walk in. There were 13,000 in the audience graduating, graduating, but they weren't college age. They were more like young — much younger than me — but say 40s, 50s, maybe 60s. Mothers holding hands with their three children on one side, and two on the other. And while I was thinking about what I was going to say — because I don't speak with notes — I got up and had a completely different talk about, for whatever reason you couldn't or wouldn't, or weren't ready or couldn't afford or whatever, life kept you from going to college in the natural order of things, you seized your window of opportunity and that is why you are here today. I admire that more than I can possibly express.

Suzanne Somers:

It was a very good talk. I was sitting back at the dais thinking "Hmm, that was a good talk," and I noticed this silence and the chancellor was at the podium and he was looking at me. Finally I said, "Me?" And he said, "Yes." So I went up there and he said — which I didn't know about beforehand — he said, "We want to give you your honorary doctorate, because the books you've written constitute a thesis." And I thought—

Gene Marks:

Wow.

Suzanne Somers:

Wow is right. So just one more connection.

Gene Marks:

Yep.

Suzanne Somers:

I was discovered by Johnny Carson. I don't know if you know that, in the commissary at NBC. I was sitting there all by myself, and he walks in and I'm all by myself. I'm waiting to hear if I got this part, my first time I ever auditioned, and he said, "Hey, little lady, what are you doing here?" And I said, "I have a callback." I just found out an hour before what a callback was, and he said, "For what?" And I said, "Well for a Dom DeLuise show." And he said, "Well, Dom DeLuise is a good friend of mine. So I hope you get it." So I didn't have a picture or anything, but I had written this little book of poetry. It's 1973. And I handed him the book of poetry because I didn't know what else to give him. That was Wednesday. Friday of that week, I made my television debut on "The Tonight Show," when it mattered. Remember the Johnny Carson Show, everybody watched it every night.

Gene Marks:

Sure.

Suzanne Somers:

And I thought, "Wow, they must really love my poetry," but I only had one credit. And I hear Johnny ... I wrote a bad check for the dress because I didn't own a dress — that's how stupid I was at the time. \$75. You know, when you're 20, everything looks good on you, and I'm standing behind that famous curtain. And I hear Johnny say, "Well, we've all been wondering who the mysterious blonde in the Thunderbird is in 'American Graffiti.' Well, we found her." And the curtain opens and the audience goes, "Woo." I hadn't even seen the movie, because I couldn't afford it at that time. And he liked me. He had me on every month. He never came on to me, just to clarify that.

Suzanne Somers:

I was too, really too naive for him to probably even think about, but he'd have me on every month to read him these poems and then he'd have an isolated camera on himself and he'd make face takes. Well that

year, my little book of poetry became my first bestseller. It was the best-selling book of poetry in America. So that eventually led to Three's Company. They had two other girls and they did pilots and neither of them tested well, and Fred Silverman, as he says, he's sitting in a meeting because they got to now go to series, they got pickup. And he said, "I got the girl. I see her on the Tonight Show all the time." And that's how I got on the "Three's Company."

Gene Marks:

How did you pivot from acting into business though? I mean, why didn't you just stay in acting? It's such a lucrative career.

Suzanne Somers:

And I was so good at it.

Gene Marks:

You were good at it.

Suzanne Somers:

I was really good at it. That character that I did, Chrissy Snow, on "Three's Company" is actually—

Gene Marks:

Not you. Not you in real life.

Suzanne Somers:

No, no. And she's beloved, and when you sign on, first time, you sign on for anything, and I didn't care. You don't have to pay me. I'll do it. But by year six, it was the number one show in the country. I was, I had the highest demographics of all women in TV at that time. And all the men were being made, paid 10 to 15 times more. So it wasn't a feminist thing. It was, my contract was up and I thought, "I'm selling the most tickets. Why am I getting paid the least?" So we went into negotiate, but Laverne & Shirley had just renegotiated and they gave ABC a colonic, and they had to put an end to this. And so when my husband walked in, they weren't even open to listening, he said. Because in the morning he said, "This could all blow out of the water."

Suzanne Somers:

I said, "No, we asked for this. They come here. We counter, you counter, and we'll meet in the middle." So there was no negotiating. They just said, "She's out." So I'm waiting at home because this leads — to answer your question — I'm waiting at home, and there are no cell phones at that time, imagine. And it just felt like hours and hours, probably like two or three hours. And there's a way the front door opens when it's good news, and there's a way it opens when it's bad news. We had a lot of stairs. I hear the door go ... 'ernhrrrr'

Gene Marks:

[Chuckles] Not a good sign.

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah. Then I heard him padding up the stairs. So I met him at the landing and he looked at me and he said ... "You're out." I said, "I'm not out. What do you mean I'm out?" He said, "They were not even going to negotiate." And he said, "They're going to make an example of you." And then he put his hands on my shoulders — and this is going to answer your question now — and he said, "From here in, we're not going to work for anyone. We're going to work for ourselves. We're going to make this work for us." So the first thing that happened was I bought a pair of Manolo Blahnik shoes that were almost \$600. Plain, nude, pointy toed, had a little bit of toe cleavage. This is not guy talk, but high arch, and five-inch heel and you put them

on, it made your legs look amazing. So I'm standing in my dressing room, in my bra and underpants, and I put the shoes on, I think, "Oh, Alan's going to think I'm so stupid for spending so much money on a pair of shoes."

Suzanne Somers:

So maybe this is a little manipulative. I walk out in my bra and underpants, [laughter] and my high heels and I said, "Like my shoes?" And he said, "Great legs." I went, "That's the commercial! That's the Thigh Master commercial." So if you remember that commercial, it started on my feet on those shoes, which I was able to now write off —

Gene Marks:

It's true. It's true.

Suzanne Somers:

— so they're free! And the camera pans up my leg with him off camera, going, "Great legs." And we stopped counting after we sold 10 million of them. And we thought, "Hey, this marketing entrepreneurship is kind of fun." And so that one thing led to another.

Gene Marks:

Okay. So let's go back to the Thigh Master just for a moment. So how was the ownership of the Thigh Master broken up? Like were you just sort of the sponsor, the figurehead of it? Did you have equity in the company itself? Did you and your husband, were you guys running the show? I'm curious about that ...

Suzanne Somers:

How much of Thigh Master did we own?

Alan Hamel (Husband):

Half, and now 100%.

Suzanne Somers:

Half. And then our partners went spending like drunken sailors and we ended up having 100% of Thigh Master. So it's all ours.

Gene Marks:

Got it, got it.

Suzanne Somers:

It still sells. It still sells. We used to make them in China. I refused to make anything in China anymore, so we're making them in the United States.

Gene Marks:

Fair enough. There had to have been, at some point, you were selling millions of the Thigh Master. The brand that you were created was one of physical fitness, you know, and health.

Suzanne Somers:

Right.

Gene Marks:

And obviously you fast forward, you know, years now, all the things that you're selling that, right now are around that same sort of wellness brand, you know. At what point when you were selling the Thigh Master, did it occur to you, there's a lot more that we could be doing?

Suzanne Somers:

In life, I have found that most often the worst things that happen to us are opportunities in disguise. So 25 years ago, I got a very virulent kind of breast cancer. And I remember thinking, what have I done in my diet and lifestyle to play host to this terrible disease? So I decided I would change the way I ate, change the way I sleep, change the way I think. I put my priorities in order, I used to stay up late, like 3:00 in the morning writing my books because it was quiet and I thought I was ahead of the game. Sleep is a game changer. Sleep is so important. So I changed my whole lifestyle, started growing my own food.

Suzanne Somers:

Then that's how all the toxic-free hair care, skin care, color cosmetics, household cleaning products. That all just organically came out of it. And when you're ready, the right person appears for you. I don't know why that is. It's just incredible. So being fired was an opportunity if you look at it that way. I really felt that Chrissy Snow, that character was cut short. I had a lot of plans for her but maybe that's all that she was ever going to be. Getting cancer was a gift in disguise. I'm finding that more and more and more in life and aging, aging is not an issue for me. I'm 75 now, and I wake up happy every day. I have such great love in my life. Alan and I have, we're in love after 54 years.

Gene Marks:

It's amazing how one thing leads to another. I'm not someone who believes that life is planned out for you or things happen for a reason. And yet I can't tell you how many times in my life things happen that I do say to myself, "This must have happened for a reason."

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah, yeah.

Gene Marks:

Pointing you in that direction. As you're growing this business, you know, you realize that you're building a brand for yourself. This is way before the Kim Kardashians and you know, the influencers, and the people that started all this stuff on media, you were the one that started doing this and you were doing it through books, which was, I guess the best media at the time, you know, to use. So then you start selling other products. So I have specific questions about your businesses that I think a lot of my listeners, a lot of my viewers would be interested in hearing. So first of all, you sell many products on your website. You have a brand that you have spent a million years of effort building up, right? First of all, how do you make sure that the products that you're selling on your website are going to meet the standards of your brand, you know? How do you know that?

Suzanne Somers:

Probably hard to see that, but this is our Organic Tanning Serum, there's a little spot right there, that's the toxic-free insignia. That's what's so hard to achieve, and it has to follow these stringent guidelines. So there's, the other arena that we're in are supplements, because you know, you wish the soil had all the minerals and nutrients in it that it once did. But we are now living in an era where we have the advantage. It's not expensive here, we have the advantage of putting back what your body is missing. And my most recent book, I've got only a couple of them here — sorry to come out of frame — is this one. It's called "A New Way to Age."

Suzanne Somers:

The significance of that book to me is — I don't know what I'm writing when I write it because I've used my fame to get to the best and brightest. And they love giving me everything in these interviews because they have the info, but I have the loudest voice and the largest constituency. There are 25 million books in print around the globe. So I don't know until ... I, I just collect the most interesting doctors, scientists and

professionals. I'll read something and think oh, "I'll put him in a file." I read this, I think "I'll put that in a file." And then I start calling them. And if we click, we decide to do an interview and I give them full ... what word am I looking for? Control. I write it. But they have the right to make sure everything is ... approval. Couldn't get that word.

Suzanne Somers:

I give them full approval. So there's no ... and I've never been challenged on any of my books because before I send them to print, I send them to the Life Extension Scientific Advisory Board. And a lot of them are doctors I've interviewed — doctors, scientists, and professionals. So I've never been called, and I think so a doctor or a scientist actually wants to be in my book because it's valid. And I learn so much. I learn, it's just an incredible thing. The other place I learn is from my constituency, these women, these wonderful women, and my women are an underserved demographic, and yet they're the ones with the money. You know, women who've raised their children, married them off and educated them, are now free to live the lives that they never could afford to live.

Suzanne Somers:

And so they come to my shows, the Facebook and Instagram, and then they talk. And for the last couple of years, they all are saying — not all, but most all — are saying the same thing: "I am so bloated all the time." And I know when I lecture, I go, "How many in this room are bloated?" And there's a silence and then a giggle and then the hands go up. I'm bloated, I'm constipated, I'm dog tired. My stomach hurts all the time. And so we created through our Scientific Advisory Board, this smoothie powder. So everybody's got a smoothie powder, right? Not like this one. For lack of a better explanation — and you have to be real careful what you can claim with the FDA. So I found this interesting, the GI tract is the length of a tennis court. I never knew that before I did these interviews.

Suzanne Somers:

And around that, let's imagine it's a rope, the rope the length of a tennis court. And around that rope is mucus and that mucus is our immune system. So when you put chemicals on your skin, and eat food with chemicals and breathe in chemicals, you can't do anything about outside, but in your house you can do HEPA filters or IQ filters. But when the chemicals get in your GI tract, they eat through that barrier wall, that tennis court. Now you're degrading your immune system, because you have to eat through that mucus and now the toxins leak out and that's what's called leaky gut. And leaky gut is at the base of autoimmune diseases, fibromyalgia, MS, what's the third one? There's a third one. Macular... But aside from that, macular degeneration starts in the stomach, eye problems start in the stomach.

Suzanne Somers:

The stomach and the brain are connected, and when the chemicals get into the bloodstream, they go on a rampage. They love fatty organs and glands, our brain being the fattiest it's from 65 to 85% fat.

Gene Marks:

Right, right.

Suzanne Somers:

So imagine the chemicals get up into the brain. The brain, the hypothalamus and pituitary has to shrink to make more room for the chemicals. The more chemicals get up there, the more the brain shrinks. The more chemicals, the more brain shrinks. I envision the brain up there going, "There's hardly any room left for me." But could this be, could this be why there's an epidemic in kids of ADD, ADHD, OCD, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dementia. And Alzheimer's now ... one in three ... I read a report recently, one in three seniors and now has Alzheimer's. So if you—

Gene Marks:

It's environment, it's chemicals–

Suzanne Somers:

Yes, chemicals.

Gene Marks:

It's the food that we're eating, right?

Suzanne Somers:

Yes.

Gene Marks:

It's all these things that are infecting our digestive systems, which ultimately roll up to our brains. You know, you remind me. So my cousin, she runs a company up in Washington and she goes through the exact same issues that you have. She also has a Scientific Advisory Board because you need outsiders–

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah, absolutely.

Gene Marks:

- kind of to validate. And she struggles also with just making sure she stays on the right side of the FDA. She's a younger woman. I'm, I'm curious, Suzanne, so you've been through all this. What advice would you have for someone like that, who is growing a company? I mean, she's selling organic products, very similar to yours, but for any young, particularly a female nowadays, knowing what you know, knowing what you've learned, what advice do you give young female entrepreneurs that are starting or growing their businesses in 2022?

Suzanne Somers:

People sit around thinking, how can I make money? That's the wrong approach, the approach is, where's my passion. What do I really care about? What makes me stop when I'm watching TV? What's going on in my life, how could I fix that? When you sell the truth, the people smell it. And it's like everybody with "I'm bloated and I have gas and I'm dog tired." The protein smoothie powder is called Gut Renew. And this is where I want to be sure I don't say anything the FDA doesn't want me to say, but if you got all these leaks in your gut, in your barrier wall, you got to seal them up. Well, Gut Renew smoothie powder has all the stuff in it that you and I have not eaten today. And it helps ... Here's FDA language. It helps support healthy gut lining. Okay?

Gene Marks:

Okay.

Suzanne Somers:

Okay. Here's the booklet that comes with it and you can make ... They're really good. The smoothies are ... These are not penance kind of drinks–

Gene Marks:

Right. This is a product that you believe in. This is a product that you use.

Suzanne Somers:

Passionate.

Gene Marks:

This represents a line of products that you do have a passion about. I got to argue one thing. I know you said it earlier, that it's not about the money. And I realize it's not all about the money, but I mean, you have to have a business plan, you have to make a living doing this. So you had to give it some consideration when you were first starting out. I mean, I'm assuming you didn't go into this blind, right? I mean, you knew there was a market out there of women who needed these kinds of products. Am I right?

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah. When you consider how many Thigh Masters we sold, all of a sudden this money's coming in, that I wasn't getting on "Three's Company." And also you can't stay mad. I watch "Three's Company" reruns and I love them. I don't get one penny in reruns. I didn't get anything, but I got the fame. The right kind of fame.

Gene Marks:

It was an asset to leverage.

Suzanne Somers:

Totally. I remember ... Do you ever hear voices? I think we all do.

Gene Marks:

Sure.

Suzanne Somers:

And we rarely listen. So I remember after I was fired, I was so despondent. Here I had the greatest job in television, the greatest character. I created a dumb blonde that you liked. Because you usually don't like dumb blondes. I remember sitting in my living room, "What did I do, and why wasn't I just happy with what I have?" and I hear the voice.

Gene Marks:

Right.

Suzanne Somers:

"Why are you focused on what you don't have? Why don't you focus on what you have?" And I thought, "What do I have?" Now the voice starts talking. "You have enormous visibility, everybody in this country and most of the parts of the world, they know your name." And I went, "Oh, right."

Gene Marks:

In a good way too, by the way.

Suzanne Somers:

In a good way. Yeah. Yeah, and she was missed. I still hear today, "Oh, I never watched it again. I missed you so much." But I went to Alan. I said, "You know what I'd like to do? I've got this name. I'd really like to do a Vegas act." And I always sang and danced. And so we put together an act and in 1985, I was named Las Vegas Entertainer of the Year, along with ... Frank Sinatra.

Gene Marks:

Wow.

Suzanne Somers:

[crosstalk]. Entertainer of the Year I'm sitting there. I was so nervous around him. Thanks.

Gene Marks:

Okay. He still had it going on then, by the way, I don't think he ... Yeah.

Suzanne Somers:

Until the day he died.

Gene Marks:

He was still pretty [crosstalk]. Yeah.

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah. I used to see him driving around in Palm Springs, and he just wanted to be a normal person. So, he was ... "iconic" doesn't even cover him. And he had this old beat-up Chevy truck that needed a paint job, badly. He'd drive around town in that with a baseball hat. So you still could recognize him, but you gave him his respect. If you went out to dinner with him, there's a place he went to here, Dominic's, and he'd be in the kitchen, and "Here, have some clams and here, have some clams. And what do you want to drink?" And he just was that guy. He's the guy you hoped you would be.

Gene Marks:

All right. So Suzanne, come on, female entrepreneurs, you got to have passion for what you want to do.

Suzanne Somers:

Yes.

Gene Marks:

You got to have a little bit of capital. Your capital was whatever you had in the bank. You had goodwill, you had a big audience, a big fan following. Anything ... I mean, I'm trying to get out of you as much advice I can get from you. I mean, think about young women. Think about people that are starting up their businesses. If you were 20 years old again, and let's say you didn't have the Suzanne Somers brand, or you weren't on the top-rated TV show in the country, but you really did have passion for selling healthy products like you're selling now, and it's 2022. What would you be doing?

Suzanne Somers:

One of the first things you have to do, if you are a broken bird, as I was, you have to fix yourself. And I went to the community mental health center, where a therapist charged me according to my ability to pay, a dollar a visit, to dig in and reparent me and help me to find out that I wasn't this piece of crap that my drunken father always used to say. So you have to figure out what messaging did you get that's holding you back. Because if I still thought I was a piece of crap, I could never succeed.

Gene Marks:

But it also sounds like you got some help as well. You went and saw somebody, you had somebody to talk to about yourself to get your act together.

Suzanne Somers:

Most people are afraid of therapy. Therapy is medicine for your feelings.

Gene Marks:

It is.

Suzanne Somers:

And we are our feelings.

Gene Marks:

It is.

Suzanne Somers:

Every city has a community mental health center where if you can't pay, you can't pay. If you can pay a dollar, you can pay a dollar. My son was run over by a car. I'd like to say that I was smart enough, but at five years old, he was run over, and given a 50/50 chance to live. These are all things that worked in our favor because eventually, he went to therapy, and she said, "In order to work with him, I need to work with you." I said, "I'll do anything for him." I remember the day I had been going for three years, and she said, "I don't want you to come anymore." And I said, "Why?" She said, "You're going to be okay."

Suzanne Somers:

And I said, "But I come, and I pay, and I'm on time." And she said, "I know, I know." But she said, "We have gotten to the bottom of why you had such low self-esteem." And she said, "I want you to go live your life. I'll always be here, but go live your life." And I got in my car and I was crying, because she meant so much to me. Then the closer I got to home, the stronger I felt, and the better I felt and because of her, and because of his accident, that's when I decided to move to Los Angeles, A, to be with Alan Hamel. But also maybe I could make it, you know? Before I never thought someone like me could ever make it, but maybe I could make it. When I went on interviews, I had a lot of confidence, because I wasn't a piece of crap like I had been programmed. [crosstalk]

Gene Marks:

It's a matter of believing in yourself, is what you were saying.

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah, and knowing your excellence, and what you bring to the table. I have a good personality — that's what I sold at first was my personality. That's how I got my jobs and things like that.

Gene Marks:

Sure.

Suzanne Somers:

Then when I had fame and then lost the fame, but I invested almost \$600 in a pair of shoes because I was worth it. [Laughter.] One thing leads to the next, so there's no ... I wish I could give your viewership a one to 10.

Gene Marks:

Understood.

Suzanne Somers:

There isn't.

Gene Marks:

But you are ... I mean, what I'm getting out of you is that, again, it is passion and believing in what you're doing. It is having the self-confidence to do—

Suzanne Somers:

Correct.

Gene Marks:

- what you feel is right. Surrounding yourself with people. I mean, you use the example of a therapist. I have many clients that go and see therapists as well, because it is a very, very good exercise to do, but people have coaches, people have friends, they have mentors. That's also very, very important to do. Really, this information is really great. You've shared a lot of great stuff with us. I got to ask you as well. You have leveraged social media, you're 75 freaking years old, and here you are, you're doing Facebook Live like three times a week.

Suzanne Somers:

And Instagram.

Gene Marks:

And Instagram as well. Give me some thoughts on Facebook Live and Instagram, what have you learned? What do you think of it? What would you tell other business owners about using it? Both those platforms.

Suzanne Somers:

Wow. Wow. The pandemic worked for me. None of us could go out. I'm a worker, and that's when we started putting these shows together. Another thing, at 75, always have somebody in your company who is between 40 and 50, because they really understand the internet. So we have Caroline, my daughter-in-law, who is also the president of our company. And she's so smart, the right man for the job. And then we have head of sales, Jason, who just totally understands it. And taught me things, like if you have a quarter of a million people watching, but then you pay money to Facebook to boost, wow, there's no end in sight of how many people you can pull in. And what you'd like is to sell one thing to everybody. Yes. Yes, what?

Gene Marks:

I have to stop you right there because I, yet again, this is another piece of advice where you're saying like, you've got ... You know what you want to talk about and you know that's the medium you want to be there. But you just said, you really weren't very knowledgeable. In fact, you're probably clueless about Facebook and Instagram-

Suzanne Somers:

Totally.

Gene Marks:

Promoting whatever.

Suzanne Somers:

How to turn on the computer. [Chuckles.]

Gene Marks:

Yeah, right. But you surrounded yourself with people who did know what they were doing. Right?

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah. And pay attention to the younger generations. Because they are raising it. My youngest grandson is the one who bought me, all my apps on my phone initially, like 10 or 15 years ago. So this is their language. When my son, every once in a while, when I don't know something on the computer, and he rolls his eyes and I go, "Look, I taught you to walk."

Gene Marks:

[Laughter.] That's right. I wiped you when you were a baby, I don't want to hear it.

Suzanne Somers:

Exactly.

Gene Marks:

Just tell me what I need to know.

Suzanne Somers:

Exactly. But it is surrounding yourself with the right people. It's telling the truth. Tell the truth. There's an interesting book out right now called "Lies" by Sam Harris. I just recently read it because one of the first-

Gene Marks:

He's fantastic.

Suzanne Somers:

Fantastic. One of the first lines in my book "Keeping Secrets" was, "I am an adult child of an alcoholic. My childhood and that of my brothers and sisters was robbed by a terrible disease no one wanted to talk about." Then in that same page, I said, "A child of an alcoholic will lie just as easily as to tell the truth, because you're keeping a secret." And so you get in the habit of telling little lies, and little lies have impact. And I don't lie. You know, I was telling someone that when we left our house of 45 years — we sold it this year. And the day that we left, the bighorn sheep all came down and I've seen as many as 19, but I corrected myself.

Suzanne Somers:

I said, "But I know there were 15." But I wasn't sure there were 19. You don't want to exaggerate at all. Because if you exaggerate, then you'll exaggerate about anything. If you lie, you'll lie about anything. So tell the truth, have passion for what it is that you do. Go out of your way to have love in your life. If it's not a significant other, a pet that you love, we all need love. And there's a interesting thing that happens between live beings. If I touch your shoulder, we're exchanging electrons. When I pet my cat, we're exchanging electrons, and that is very meaningful.

Suzanne Somers:

It all is signals up to your brain, and understand that your brain believes everything you tell it, it's without emotion. So if you tell your brain, "I am so happy." Your brain goes, "Good." If you tell your brain, "Oh what a crappy day," the brain goes, "Yeah, it is." So you're in charge. And we are the product of our choices. Every day we make good choices. Every day we make bad choices. To get to the point at 75, and I hope 110, that most days my card with "I made good choices for myself and those I love" outweigh the bad choices.

Gene Marks:

I believe that you have. So Suzanne, what do you got planned for the next 75 years? Well, you know what, for the next five years, let's say. What's coming up?

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah. I do have a plan. I told my husband, I want him to make me another Vegas deal for my 80th birthday.

Gene Marks:

Cool.

Suzanne Somers:

Will you come?

Gene Marks:

Yeah, I would love to go. I'm in Vegas all the time. That sounds like a great show. So you would get out there and say, unfortunately, Frank won't be able to make this one.

Suzanne Somers:

No.

Gene Marks:

But I'm sure you can get some people to join you, right?

Suzanne Somers:

Yeah. Or maybe I just want to be all by myself with my great musicians. I love ... My favorite instrument is the alto sax. I love singing from the Great American Songbook with some great sax player. I've had quite a few. It's great. I love my life.

Gene Marks:

I can tell, I can tell. Suzanne Somers is at SuzanneSomers.com, selling skincare, makeup, hair, food, jewelry, all sorts of products.

Suzanne Somers:

Gut Renew. Got a bad-

Gene Marks:

Oh, yeah. And of course, Gut Renew to help you live a much healthier life. Suzanne, thank you very much for your time today. It's a great conversation. I think a lot of us have learned a lot about your life, and some tips and some advice on becoming entrepreneurs ourselves. So I appreciate your time.

Suzanne Somers:

Thank you and great questions.

Gene Marks:

I appreciate that very much.

Gene Marks:

Do you have a topic or a guest that you would like to hear on thrive? Please let us know. Visit [Payx.me/thrivetopics](https://payx.me/thrivetopics) and send us your ideas or matters of interest. Also, if your business is looking to simplify your HR, payroll, benefits, or insurance services, see how Paychex can help. Visit the resource hub at [Paychex.com/worx](https://paychex.com/worx). That's W-O-R-X. Paychex can help manage those complexities while you focus on all the ways you want your business to thrive. I'm your host, Gene Marks, and thanks for joining us. 'Til next time, take care.

Announcer:

This podcast is property of Paychex Incorporated 2022, all rights reserved.