

This is the **DO IT SCARED PODCAST** with Ruth Soukup, **EPISODE NUMBER EIGHT**. Today we are going to talk to author Abby Rike Rockenbaugh about overcoming an unthinkable tragedy and stepping into the unknown.

Welcome to the Do It Scared Podcast. I'm your host, **RUTH SOUKUP**, and each week on the show we will talk about how to face your fears, overcome obstacles, and most importantly, how to take action and create a life you love.

Hey there and welcome to the Do It Scared Podcast. My name is Ruth Soukup, and I am the founder of Living Well, Spending Less, and the Living Well Planner as well as the founder of Elite Blog Academy and the New York Times bestselling author of five, soon to be six, books. For those of you who already know me from either LWSL, or from EBA, or from my weekly email newsletter, let me just say that I am so glad to have you joining me here on this podcast. For those of you who are new and just finding me here for the very first time, welcome. We are going to have a lot of fun together. In today's episode, we are going to be talking to motivational speaker and author Abby Rike Rockenbaugh about losing everything that mattered to her in life, when her husband and two small children were killed in a car crash. Then somehow managing to pick up the pieces in the most unexpected of ways on a reality television show.

You might remember her story from The Biggest Loser, but you've probably never heard it like this before. Guys, it's raw and it's candid, and it will change you. But ultimately, that's what this podcast is all about. It is about taking the steps that will help us move past our fear and create a life we love. Because courage doesn't mean that we are never afraid. Instead, courage is being scared but taking action anyway, despite our fear. It is putting one foot in front of the other, even when we're not quite sure where that path is going to lead. Okay, one more quick thing before we dive into today's episode. You can download your own Do It Scared manifesto to remind yourself to start living your own life of courage right now. You can get it by texting **DOITSCARED** to **44222** or by visiting **doitscared.com**. Once again, either text **DOITSCARED**, all one word, to **44222**, or visit **doitscard.com**.

Also, if you haven't already, be sure to leave a review on **ITUNES** because I will be choosing reviewers at random to receive Do It Scared mugs and T-shirts. Also be sure to subscribe on **ITUNES** to be notified whenever we have a new episode.

RUTH SOUKUP: Now, without further ado, I am so honored to introduce you to our guest today, Abby Rike Rockenbaugh. Abby shot into the spotlight

10 years ago when she found herself a contestant on The Biggest Loser. But it was her personal tragedy that had everyone rooting for her to succeed. She is truly one of the most inspiring people I have ever met, and incredibly beautiful both inside and out. All right, welcome to the Do It Scared Podcast, Abby. I am so excited to have you here today. Thank you for being here.

ABBY RIKE R.: It is my pleasure. I'm so happy to be here.

RUTH SOUKUP: Let's just dive right in. First of all, for those of our listeners who have never heard of you before or didn't watch The Biggest Loser and weren't completely obsessed with it like I was. Just tell us a little bit of your story. Where you've been, where you are at right now, how you got there. Fill us in.

ABBY RIKE R.: Well, it's a long story.

RUTH SOUKUP: We've got time.

ABBY RIKE R.: Awesome. I think everybody in their life has that defining moment, right? That moment where you have the before and you have the after. My defining moment was 11 years ago. I was a high school teacher, I was living the life I loved. I was happily married. I wanted the life I had. Then on October the 13th, 2006, a man going 100 miles an hour hit my husband and children head on. It's real. I was told there were no survivors. On that day I honestly thought that that included me. It was at that point where you have to do a lot of soul searching and, "Do I believe what I think I believe?"

It was through that grief journey that my faith exponentially grew. Also as you walk through that grief journey, you realize that there are people hurting everywhere. While it may not be as sensational as all at one time, the feelings of devastation are real to women everywhere. Through the course of all of that, I found myself in those first two years just existing my life away. I always felt like I made a difference, I felt like my life mattered. Then all of a sudden, every role that I cherished, it was gone. It was just ... Life as I knew it ...

RUTH SOUKUP: Ceased to exist.

ABBY RIKE R.: Done. It was done.

RUTH SOUKUP: Can I just ask, what did that look like? How do you ... What does that even look like? I think every person listening who listens to that story goes, "I don't know how you move on from that." For day-to-day what did that even look like for you?

ABBY RIKE R.: That is a great-

ABBY RIKE R.: That's a great question. If you pretended to write your worst nightmare, I don't know that you would have ever thought what actually happened would have happened. My daughter was five and half years old in kindergarten, and my son was two and a half weeks old. I was still on maternity leave. It looked like ... Like I said, everything changed so much. My husband and I taught at the same school, so we rode to school together. We just liked each other. We were one of those weird couples that liked each other. It looked a lot ... I can remember holding it together for my students. It was a family. We taught speech and debate, and they were a Godsend to be honest. Because adults sometimes, they either overcompensate by trying to fix it by saying just the right thing, but kids will just sit in the ashes with you. After that initial few week period where I literally stayed in pajamas all day, I actually went back to school after Christmas.

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow.

ABBY RIKE R.: Finished out the school year, because I needed my students to know that everything that I had believed before I believe more now. The kids were just amazing. They were such a Godsend. Then because I like to stay busy, I found that idle time was just too hard. Then I got my master's degree in a year.

RUTH SOUKUP: Oh wow.

ABBY RIKE R.: I just full-force worked on that. Then I went back to teaching, and it was in that going back to teaching that the reality set in that this is real. Grief is ugly in that because people don't know what to say to you, they avoid you.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes.

ABBY RIKE R.: Mine was so ugly, that it was one of those things. My husband was my best friend and our kids were just ... That's what we did. That's what we valued. That's what mattered. That simple life was everything I wanted. Then you are lonely because you don't have gym to go to. You don't have the person you rode to school with every day. Then people avoid you. It's ugly. That's not to be, "Poor pitiful me," because I know if someone had told me my story, if it had happened to someone else, I would have avoided them like the plague.

RUTH SOUKUP: It makes you so uncomfortable because you just don't know what do it.

ABBY RIKE R.: You don't know what do with it. There's this mix of pity and then you have this, "Thank God it's not me," feeling. There's just this conglomeration of emotion, but it's very lonely. I think everybody's like, "Get through the first year, get through the first year." I was ... I'm an achiever and so I thought, "Just get through that first year." Then it was like, "Oh. I did not get a gold star. I did not get a certificate. But it was in that second year that I literally found myself waking up every day thinking, "Abby, just get through today. Just survive today. Just get out of bed."

It was during that time that I literally just hit what I call the rock bottom day. It was February the 13th, 2009, what I call my rock bottom day, because I say that's when God and I had a really long conversation. It wasn't churchy at all but it was basically, "Either make this better or take me home," one of the two. I was a 32-year-old widow. Here I am now at 34 and I thought ... Everybody's like, "Life's so short. Life's so short," but when you're grieving life is very long.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes.

ABBY RIKE R.: Very long.

RUTH SOUKUP: Then that was your rock bottom. Then what happened then?

ABBY RIKE R.: The strangest course of events. Where I was living at the time, there were some Biggest Loser contestants. I joke that I went to the gym, I paid my membership, on time and I did it. But I went one time.

RUTH SOUKUP: I think all of us can relate to that.

ABBY RIKE R.: On that one time, lo and behold, I ran into the couple that had been on Biggest Loser. It's a small town in South Louisiana. Through that, on February the 12th, I'd gotten this thing about these Biggest Loser auditions. That next day, whenever I literally was sitting on my back patio, crying to my mother, I was like, "I think I'm going to try out for Biggest Loser. I don't know how to fix myself but maybe if I get healthy ... "

RUTH SOUKUP: That will do it.

ABBY RIKE R.: I so desperately wanted to feel better. I so desperately wanted not to exist out my days. We joked that I was willing to get naked on national television in order to do that.

RUTH SOUKUP: Which you do on that show, basically.

ABBY RIKE R.: I did.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes.

ABBY RIKE R.: I was like, “I am smarter than this.” But I did it and I am so ... Then you have the whole audition process, and all this stuff. If nothing else, they asked questions that made me reflect and figure out a lot of things. Then-

RUTH SOUKUP: Were they trying to pull out the story? Because obviously that makes compelling television, or were they trying to vet you and make sure you weren’t going to go off the deep end?

ABBY RIKE R.: I’m sure it was a combination of both. Right?

RUTH SOUKUP: Probably.

ABBY RIKE R.: It’s so funny, because people that ended up trying out for Biggest Loser typically try out more than one time. They want to be on Biggest Loser. Here I am and I’m making it to next round and then I’m making it to the next round, then all of a sudden I find myself and I am in California. I’ve gone. At first you’re like, “Oh I hope they pick me. Oh I hope they pick me.” Then all of a sudden after the interviews, I was like, “Oh my gosh. I think they’re going to pick me.”

RUTH SOUKUP: What have I done? Good lord.

ABBY RIKE R.: What have I done? I panic. I have full-on panic. You want to talk about being scared?

RUTH SOUKUP: Yeah.

ABBY RIKE R.: I literally ... You know how you can convince yourself of things, like, “Oh, I’m really not supposed to do this because surely I would not feel like I’m going to vomit every second of every day if this is what I’m supposed to do.”

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes.

ABBY RIKE R.: I literally left California telling them that I probably wasn’t going to do this.

RUTH SOUKUP: They picked you, and you’re like, “Yeah, just kidding.” “I don’t think I’m going to do it.”

ABBY RIKE R.: I don’t think I really want to do this. I was just joking. [inaudible 00:14:16] through a series of events. I did a lot of praying. A lot of praying. It has never been so clear that that was the path I was to take.

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow.

ABBY RIKE R.: Whenever you talk about you're ... I'm sorry. Go ahead.

RUTH SOUKUP: I was just going to say, so how long after your rock bottom moment was this moment?

ABBY RIKE R.: That was until May.

RUTH SOUKUP: Okay, so same year?

ABBY RIKE R.: Actually it was May the 13th. Three months.

RUTH SOUKUP: Three months, so fast. Between rock bottom and then all the auditions and getting picked for the show was three months?

ABBY RIKE R.: Three months.

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow. That is God moving in a big way.

ABBY RIKE R.: [inaudible 00:14:59]. But I talk about the scariest moment for me was when my parents drove me to the airport, and I had to get out of the car. Because at that point I knew life as I knew it was going to change, and I had no clue what that was going to look like. Here I am, leaving to this complete unknown. I think for so many people, they get to see everybody's end of the story. They get to see that, "Well, of course you got out of the car, Abby. Look. Look how much better your life is." I could've just as easily gotten out of that car and it could have gone totally wrong. I am so naïve when it comes to Hollywood and interviews and all that kind of stuff.

RUTH SOUKUP: They cast it ... You know it. They cast the villain and they have their narrative that they're going to tell. You probably didn't know it, didn't realize any of that going in. It was just terrifying to think, "Oh my gosh, everybody's going to be watching me on national television."

ABBY RIKE R.: Here's the biggest irony or the dichotomy of how it all worked. I'm so private.

RUTH SOUKUP: That you are.

ABBY RIKE R.: When anyone would ask, "How's Abby doing?" The company line was, "She's good. Everything's great." Because it wasn't anyone's business. That was mine to work out, and there was a lot of pride involved too that I didn't want people to think that I was struggling to the degree that I was on that struggle bus. But once I knew ... Let me say this. The whole outfit was completely mortifying. I did cry the first time that I put it on.

RUTH SOUKUP: You mean the spandex shorts with the tank top?

ABBY RIKE R.: That's just wrong.

RUTH SOUKUP: It's not a good look for anyone, really.

ABBY RIKE R.: It's not. It's really not the good look at 247. But as overwhelming as that whole part was, it was that I knew I was not going to be able to hide, that everyone was going to know I am not okay.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes.

ABBY RIKE R.: One of the things that I'm really grateful for, I was very grounded when I went in. I was used to not fitting in or having people uncomfortable, so I think I was at an advantage on that because I knew how to survive in that kind of environment. Then lo and behold, God was so gracious, my roommate, Shay, she's amazing. I'm sure I wore her out with all my talking, because it was like having a captive audience in the room late at night, "Let me tell you everything." It was so liberating. I was eating well, I was working out. Blood, sweat, and tears are healing waters and they're necessary. They're so necessary. When I look back on that time, I am forever grateful for that opportunity.

RUTH SOUKUP: Then what happened after that? Obviously the show went live, everybody fell in love with you, and that was probably crazy for ...

ABBY RIKE R.: Crazy.

RUTH SOUKUP: ... years, right?

ABBY RIKE R.: I've been off the show now for nine years. But I'm so thankful that I went into knowing that this is for a reason. Let me tell you, I got to do some of the coolest things ever. Sometimes I wish I would've enjoyed, allowed myself to enjoy them more, but I kept thinking, "Don't get used to people doing your makeup. Don't get used to flying to New York to go hang out with Hoda and Kathie Lee. Don't get used to ... "

RUTH SOUKUP: Good for you for keeping a good head on your shoulders, though.

ABBY RIKE R.: Well, I always had a very realistic ...

RUTH SOUKUP: This is the season.

ABBY RIKE R.: This is season. Quite frankly it was very illuminating that people are just people. They just happen to be on television and everybody knows them. I was thankful that I was grounded enough in that so

that then when it's over you're not like the high school quarterback at 42, saying, "The good old days." I didn't want to have that.

RUTH SOUKUP: No, okay. Onward and upward.

ABBY RIKE R.: Absolutely. When I got off the show and it aired and all that kind of stuff, the coolest thing was that it was this amazing way to rejoin life. I can honestly say I don't feel like it was the TV thing for people with me. It was more the keep going and it was something so positive to reconnect on. That was just this great gift that I had no clue. But that's what happens when you take that step and you don't know the outcome. It's that you don't know the blessings. You look at the ripple effect of your life. Whenever you let fear keep you from taking that step, it's not just you that misses out, it's the people around you.

RUTH SOUKUP: Think of the millions of people that you've inspired with your story since then. To have that opportunity is just ... It's because you took that step. When you can pinpoint that moment of feeling terrified but you step out of the car, just take that first step. Just whatever the step that's right in front of you. You don't know the whole path, you don't know where this is going to lead, but you take that, that is it. That is in a nutshell, that's Doing It Scared and in the biggest possible way. That's when it happens. Your story, it's incredible.

It's incredible to see because it is that thing. I know why people avoided you, because I probably would have too if I was your friend. I would have been the worst friend ever, because I would have been so overcome by just all of the emotions that you were talking about, that I wouldn't have known how to deal with it. I think that's ... We all know that about ourselves. When we look at you and go, "Wow, if she can overcome that and make this beautiful life and inspire all of these people, then there's no excuse for me." I think that's the way I look at it, for you. It's incredible. It truly is. I'm getting all emotional and I don't like getting all emotional.

ABBY RIKE R.: I think what it ... For me, it was that if it's possible for me, if it's possible that if God can do in me what he's done, then it's possible for anyone. Because you can't get up from that on your own strengths.

RUTH SOUKUP: So true.

ABBY RIKE R.: When people are like, "Oh you're so strong," I'm like, "Well, catch me at three a.m. sometimes." That's not it. It's that everything that I thought that I believed, I experienced it tangibly. Then this whole life opened up for me after the show. Again, that you think, "I just got out of the car and now people want to hear this story. They're

not uncomfortable.” I always joke, I’m like, “Oh my gosh, it’s hilarious that people avoided me for years, and now they pay me to talk to them.” It’s amazing.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes. Talk about this. What in the nine years since you were on the show, where has that brought you?

ABBY RIKE R.: Gosh. After the show, then people just started reaching out via Facebook. I always say that Facebook changed my life. Because it made you accessible, and then I just started going and sharing my story. Because basically the whole point of me sharing my story is that it doesn’t have anything to do with me. It has to do with the fact that there are too many women existing out their lives. There are too many people that get up and they’re so ... It’s robotic and it’s just mundane. There’s no joy. You can fake a smile, but you cannot fake joy.

RUTH SOUKUP: No.

ABBY RIKE R.: You can’t. When people meet me, they know this is not an act. It’s not a pretend. What you see is what you get. It does show them what’s possible. Then I just ... I’ve traveled, I’ve gotten to travel all these different places and my mother and I got to go to Alaska and do an event there. People are so kind, they let us stay longer and took us to see the Northern Lights. Just the gift of what my mother and I got to do during that time. I’ve spoken on and off for years and years, and then a crazy thing happened about six years ago. I didn’t think I’d ever remarry, because I loved my husband. I adored my husband. The way you grieve different relationships is different. The way you grieve your husband is different than the way you grieve your five and half year old child versus your two and a half week old child.

That took a long, long time to work through. I think too many people avoid pain at all costs. It’s like, “Well, I’m just going to have another baby,” or, “I’m going to remarry.” I’m so thankful that God took that desire away from me, because I knew a baby was never going to fix the hole. It was just never going to fix it. Being in a relationship was never going to fix or heal me. I took five solid years of growth and finding out, “Who am I now?” Because if you spend all your time looking in the past, you never see what’s right here. I thought, “This is not what I picked. This is not what I would have picked. But this is where I am and I will make the most of every day that I’m here.”

RUTH SOUKUP: Was there a point for you when you did that you felt where it was an active choice, like, “I am going to take responsibility for my life.” Because I tell my kids that all the time. I was telling my 11 year

old this morning, she was mad because her younger sister made them late for school, and she was mad. I said, “Honey, you’re never going to be able to choose what happens to you. There’s always going to be things that stand in your way. There’s always going to be bad things that happen, but if you let her ruin your whole day, that’s on you, not her. You gotta choose your attitude today and make it a great day.” I don’t think she listened to me, so it was a pointless lesson. But was there a point for you that you said, “Yes, this happened, but I choose this,” or did it just happen? When you tell your story, obviously that is what you did. I just was curious, am I making sense, if it was conscious or not?

ABBY RIKE R.: I think it was more reflection whenever I looked back. Because the fact is that we’re never promised an easy life. To think that’s everything’s going to magically fall into place at one time, you are wasting your life. You are wasting your life. Because we can’t control our circumstances. All we can do is choose how we respond. What you told your daughter this morning is what I tell people all over the world. But it’s so true. For me I think it had to get from a very temporal ... Because if you focus on the situation it’s very temporal. Your circumstances are temporal. Get more to eternal. When I fixed me eyes eternally, there is a rest in that, that you cannot strive for. You can’t read enough books, you can’t stay busy enough, you can’t be smart enough, you can’t be pretty enough. That is where you just have to rest.

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow. That’s hard when you’re an achiever. I’m an achiever and I think, “How do you do that?” I always want to know how. Tell me how, and you’re like, “No, no. You’re not supposed to do anything. You just have to stop doing.”

ABBY RIKE R.: I think mis-perception of that rest means inactivity. It’s an active rest. That’s what I’ll call it. It’s an active rest. You don’t just sit back and say, “Oh God, come save me.” When he sends you those opportunities you take them, because that’s the saving.

RUTH SOUKUP: You take the step. You take the step.

ABBY RIKE R.: Yes.

RUTH SOUKUP: You get out of the car.

ABBY RIKE R.: I get out of the car. I think back and I think, “What if I had let fear keep me from that?” Would I still be sitting on my back porch nine years later crying to my mother that my life is horrible? Probably. That’s where it’s scarier to stay where you are than to take the next step. That’s where I was. Because I grew up in the church, but my relationship was very surface. When life is perfect, you don’t

really need God, right? It was, “God is my everything, God is my everything.” It wasn’t until I had nothing. Stripped away, nothing, that I thought, “Okay God, are you that big? Are you real?”

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow.

ABBY RIKE R.: That’s been affirmed over and over and over.

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow.

ABBY RIKE R.: Because the next steps never end. You see, I couldn’t just say, “Well, I’m Biggest Loser.” I think it’s on people’s minds especially ... Six years ago, I did remarry.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yeah. Tell me about that. We got off track.

ABBY RIKE R.: No, no. But I just think of everything that I would have missed out on. My husband, T.J. is my husband now, and he and Rick are totally different except the way they loved me. You can never replace someone, but that I fulfilled my vows. I honored my vows and just like I didn’t stop loving Macy when I had Caleb, I didn’t stop loving Rick when I married T.J. I think for a lot of people though, with grief they can get really stuck in it, and it’s almost like that becomes their identity. I want to tell people, “It’s okay to be okay.” Obviously you’ve got to go through the grieving process, but you gotta go through it, and that you’ve got to give yourself permission ...

RUTH SOUKUP: To be okay.

ABBY RIKE R.: That is the next step.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yeah. That’s taking that ... That’s an active choice too, then, at that point, to just as much as getting out of the car, to say, “I’m going to live my life and be okay and step out of this grief cycle. Even though it’s never going to fully go away.

ABBY RIKE R.: Sure. It never goes away, but again, I think whenever you are being obedient to where God’s called you next, for me it’s the piece that doesn’t make sense. You can’t invent it, you can’t pretend it. I tried for a really, really long time and there was no peace in me. But like I said, what I would have missed. I’d have missed a lot. That’s what we were. It was joy. If I thought that grieving out the rest of my days and crying every day and being pathetic would help or prove that I loved them the most, then I would do that. I would be the best griever you have ever seen. But I think I honor them by laughing and knowing joy and loving people and serving and making the life that I’ve been given matter.

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow. That's really powerful. Because you have done that in such an incredible way. Well, we've gone totally off-script of all these questions that I was going to ask you, which is okay. I don't care. What are you doing now? We've made it through the last, what, 10 years.

ABBY RIKE R.: I'm sorry, we went and had a little therapy session, didn't we?

RUTH SOUKUP: What are you working on now that's getting you fired up and getting you excited? What's the next step?

ABBY RIKE R.: There's always a next step.

RUTH SOUKUP: There is.

ABBY RIKE R.: Two years ago, we started an online ministry called Rock This Revival. My last name is Rockenbaugh now, and that's hence where the "Rock This" comes from. Throughout the course, we've built this amazing community of women that are hurting. Social media can be horrible or it can be amazing. For us it's been this amazing supportive community. We are having, we are launching, a Revive Conference in July.

RUTH SOUKUP: Exciting.

ABBY RIKE R.: We're going an hour outside of New Orleans and it is in Houma, Louisiana. But the coolest part is that we're doing a livestream virtual as well.

RUTH SOUKUP: Awesome.

ABBY RIKE R.: Regardless of where you live in the world you can come ...

RUTH SOUKUP: That's amazing.

ABBY RIKE R.: ... and hang out.

RUTH SOUKUP: What will be the topic? Will it be all main-stage presentations? What's it all about?

ABBY RIKE R.: Great question. The whole theme is Revival. The whole thing is Rally, Restore, Rise. That it is a process. We're going to be ... Basically your faith is your whole life, and so it's revive your home, revive your soul, revive your faith. It's main-stage presentations, and we actually have a professional organizer that comes in. You know a little something about that?

RUTH SOUKUP: A little something.

- ABBY RIKE R.:** Number one, you've got to figure out why it's important enough. Is it worth the cost? That's the first thing you have to ask yourself about anything. There's a cost to everything, is it worth it? Once you decide it's worth it, then you need the action steps. It's this really great mix of when people say, "Okay, I'm going to revive my faith, but how do I do that?" Well, we're going to walk you through. Number one, I think that you'll realize that reviving your faith will do something that nobody else can do. It has nothing to do with me. But you gotta know God to trust God. You really need to be in [inaudible 00:36:20] and so you're really busy. You don't know how to read the bible. It's really overwhelming, it's really ... Doesn't make sense, so that doesn't help. I've created, actually published a book about 15 days ago ...
- RUTH SOUKUP:** What? 15 days ago?
- ABBY RIKE R.:** I've been busy since Activate.
- RUTH SOUKUP:** Congratulations. Yeah, you have. Oh my gosh.
- ABBY RIKE R.:** Basically I created a steady method for busy women that actually makes sense. And it's not a feel-good, "Let me pat you and tell you you're beautiful and that," whatever. It's more about these are actually steps, how to read the bible, you will learn because the Holy Spirit is real. It will make sense, it will come alive and you will be changed.
- RUTH SOUKUP:** That's amazing. You just published this? What's it called?
- ABBY RIKE R.:** It's called Resurrection Sunday: Prophecy Fulfilled.
- RUTH SOUKUP:** That's amazing.
- ABBY RIKE R.:** You only look at a few scriptures a day, but it's the Old Testament prophecy and how Jesus fulfilled it. It's preparing your heart for Resurrection Sunday.
- RUTH SOUKUP:** Wow. Perfect timing.
- ABBY RIKE R.:** Yeah.
- RUTH SOUKUP:** That's amazing. That's amazing. Congratulations on that and congratulations on the conference. It sounds really incredible. This is going to be live-streamed? Is it going to be live-streamed to different homes? Private homes or churches? How are you doing that?
- ABBY RIKE R.:** Well, it's going to be amazing, because all the people that we're in community with, it'll be live-streamed through my website. You can

purchase the ticket.

RUTH SOUKUP: Oh cool.

ABBY RIKE R.: Watch it.

RUTH SOUKUP: That's amazing. That is amazing.

ABBY RIKE R.: Then because people are busy and all that too, you get access to the videos for a full year. You can go back. Yeah.

RUTH SOUKUP: Get filled up again, which is important. Because I think that happens a lot with conferences and events. Like you go and it's amazing because there's the energy of being there and being present and being part of it and part of something. Then you go back and you're like, "Now I have to deal with my life." To be able to have access to that again, that's amazing. That's really cool.

ABBY RIKE R.: Our goal really is ... I want people to have a great time. I think anytime there is nothing that replaces a live event, right?

RUTH SOUKUP: Nothing, no.

ABBY RIKE R.: There's nothing that ... Face to face, you can't replicate it. The women that are there, I think it's going to be absolutely incredible, but the goal is not just to have this rah-rah, whoo-hoo weekend. It's more about that when you walk out of here, that's the next step. That's when life gets good. Maybe not by worldly standards, but it's going to get so much better if you just take that step.

RUTH SOUKUP: Take the step.

ABBY RIKE R.: Yes. It's just a precursor to, it sounds cheesy, but it's so true, but to the rest of your life. Quit existing. We've all got gifts and talents. Use them.

RUTH SOUKUP: So true. That's I think one of the real reasons that I started this podcast, and why I'm so passionate about this message, and why this is where my heart is, because I feel like I see so many people, but women especially, who it seems like they're just sitting on the sidelines of their own life. They're almost watching it go by, and they're the passive observers. They're doing everything for everyone else, but not really going after their own thing and daring to take that step, daring to step out of what feels safe and known into something that feels a little bit scary but can also just reap the rewards. I see that. You have demonstrated that in what we've talked about today in such a visceral way. It's so powerful and it's so incredibly moving and motivating to watch that and to see that and

to listen to your story.

ABBY RIKE R.: You're so nice. I wanted to go back to what you said, though, about women sitting on the sidelines and whatever, but I find too with that, that then there develops this bitter attitude about it. When you have this perspective shift of when I serve these people it's actually a great thing instead of it being this down-deep that women don't want to admit, where it's like, "I have to do this and I'm going to do it," but there's no joy in it.

RUTH SOUKUP: It's the responsibility thing that we were just talking about. When you're choosing to own whatever choices that you decide to make. There is nothing wrong with taking care of your family. That is when you look at it as the obligation and not as a joy and a choice, then that's where the disconnect happens.

ABBY RIKE R.: A million percent.

RUTH SOUKUP: Whatever you do, do it with joy.

ABBY RIKE R.: That's the real thing. I think that for a lot of women, they have this thing inside them and it's almost this guilt, because it's like, "I've ticked off all the boxes. I've done those things but there's no ... That didn't make me happy. That didn't make me joyful and so here I am." It's almost like you become a victim in your own life.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes. Yes, that's a good way of putting it.

ABBY RIKE R.: The thing about it is, as believers we are more than conquerors. You're not a victim. Yes, bad things are going to happen. I can say these things because I've lived it. But it is a choice how you respond. That does not mean that there are not going to be days where ...

RUTH SOUKUP: It sucks.

ABBY RIKE R.: .that it's hard and that you deal with that day, but you don't let that be every day.

RUTH SOUKUP: Yeah. Yeah. Wow. Along those lines, what ... You've been full of truth bombs and great advice for this whole interview, but tell me, what is the best piece of advice that you have ever received, and why?

ABBY RIKE R.: I think the best piece of advice is to stay true to who you are. In the business world, because there's a ... We do an online ministry, but there's a business to ministry because it costs money to do the ministry, right?

RUTH SOUKUP: Yeah.

ABBY RIKE R.: I think that it's just paramount that you learn from the people that have gone before you, but that you're not obligated to take that same exact path. Never, never do anything that you can't look yourself in the mirror and say, "I'm good with that."

RUTH SOUKUP: Yes. So, so true. That is amazing. I think that all the time, too. That is something that I honestly think about a lot on my business. I never want to do anything that I will look back and go, "Oh my gosh, I can't believe I did that." That I wouldn't be able to look at myself and know that I operated with integrity. You know this as much as anyone, you've been out there publicly. There will always be people who criticize. There will always be people who don't agree with you or don't like what you're doing or have some sort of aversion to the number of emails you send out, for instance. But at the end of the day, you have to be able to look at yourself and go, "I did what I know is right and I can sleep knowing that."

ABBY RIKE R.: It makes everything different.

RUTH SOUKUP: It really does.

ABBY RIKE R.: Whenever I left Biggest Loser, I told them to vote me out.

RUTH SOUKUP: Oh really?

ABBY RIKE R.: I did. I told them to vote me out. It's the funny part of it. In Hollywood ... It's really funny, and I used to laugh at them all the time and tell them that I never knew people hated fat people til I came here. What is wrong with y'all? I've been fat my whole life and people love me. What's wrong with y'all? I had known great success, I had known great love. I had been a high achiever. If I set my mind to it, write it down. Not to be boastful, but it's just that I work really hard. You gotta figure it out. You gotta make it happen sometimes. But so here I was on this team, and we had this 19 year old girl who had not had success. We had Shay, [inaudible 00:45:32] take a bullet to this day for her. We just had a lot of people that had never experienced, and I thought, "They need this legitimately. They need the wins. They need an opportunity to see their gifts and talents."

Whenever I told them to vote me out, there was no martyrdom in that. It wasn't like, "Oh vote me ... " It was nothing like that. It was that I assessed the situation, this is the truth of the situation, I'm going to make it when I go home for sure. Make sure you will too. When I made that choice, I had no idea how it was going to air. I thought, "Oh, people are going to think I'm a quitter. They're going to think whatever." I thought, "You know what, I don't care. It doesn't matter to me." Because I can look in the mirror and not flinch. There's no truth in it. I was very fortunate. People did not say

that. At least they didn't say it to my face.

RUTH SOUKUP: I think that's just as good.

ABBY RIKE R.: Because at the end of the day, I serve an audience of one. You do it what's right, and either people will like it or not, but it really doesn't matter. I always say, "Don't go looking for trouble. Don't read the comments. Just stay off that. Do what's right and move on. Keep your head down and go."

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow. So true, so true. The words to live by, oh my gosh. I love just hearing your story. You exude this confidence with who you are and what you're doing. Clearly you were able to go put black spandex pants and go on national television so you have a lot of confidence.

ABBY RIKE R.: It's a fine line sometimes.

RUTH SOUKUP: How do you keep that and maintain that and build that and protect that? Is there anything that you do to practice self-care in your life or just to ... As an entrepreneur, it's really important to protect that. What do you do? What's your secret there?

ABBY RIKE R.: I don't know that I have a secret. I think that it goes back to that integrity. When you do things and when you have a pure heart in what you're doing, you're going to make mistakes. It is going to happen. Say you're sorry and move on. Don't get bogged down on the mistakes. It's not a big deal. I think that's one of my gifts. I see what's important and I see what's not important. Not everybody can. There's a lot of things that people care about that I just can't get there. Can't get there. Just doesn't matter. The biggest thing is know who you are. I know who I am in Christ. I know who I am. Does it sting when you see followers drop because you've talked about your love of Jesus, or does it whatever? No. Who cares? The impact that you make, that's what matters. I sent out an email, and apparently someone signed this woman up for my email list. They did not sign up, used her email address. I'm searching for it, and cannot figure out why [Ms. Jean 00:48:53] is getting these emails. She's of Universalist faith.

RUTH SOUKUP: I don't know what that is.

ABBY RIKE R.: Basically that all religions are good and valid.

RUTH SOUKUP: Okay.

ABBY RIKE R.: I don't really believe in coincidences. I emailed her back, and just said, "I've removed you. I finally found what the problem was," a dot in the email address. Anywho, that's neither here nor there. But I

emailed her back and I just said, “I’ve removed you because I never send out things to people that haven’t wanted to hear them. I would never be disrespectful to who you are and what you believe.” But then I did tell her I didn’t believe in coincidences and sent her the digital copy of my bible study and told her, “Obviously do with it what you want, but know that I’m praying for you and that I’m glad that we connected, so you have a great weekend.” She emailed my back and told me that it was the kindest email she’d ever received. Just it was really neat. When you stay true to what’s right and you do things honestly and authentically, then you know what?

RUTH SOUKUP: Yeah. Do you feel like you had that perspective when you talk about ... I have a hard time getting fired about other things. You clearly have a lot of life perspective that a lot of people don’t have. You know what matters and what doesn’t. Do you think you had that before all of this happened?

ABBY RIKE R.: I think you can have a characteristic like that. I think that was always probably ... I can remember *Our Town* was my favorite play of all time by Thornton Wilder and it really bothered me that people always missed their lives. They’re just too busy. I always had that inkling, but I think as you grow and as you experience things you know things on a much deeper level. While I think it was there, it’s a different level.

RUTH SOUKUP: Just take it to a different level. Yeah. I can totally see that. Abby, is there anything else that you want to share with us? Can you let us know where to find you, where to find information about your conference?

ABBY RIKE R.: Yes.

RUTH SOUKUP: All of the things.

ABBY RIKE R.: All the things, all the things. Our website is rockthis.org. You can go there and if you want to find out about that conference, it’s rockthis.org/revive.

RUTH SOUKUP: Okay.

ABBY RIKE R.: Like I said, we’re just continually growing. I never want to stop taking the next step.

RUTH SOUKUP: Never do.

ABBY RIKE R.: Never.

RUTH SOUKUP: Just keep taking that next step. Action is the antidote to fear. It truly

is. Just take the step. I love that. Well, thank you so much Abby, for being with us today and for coming on the podcast. We'll have to have you back and follow up and all of the things. It was so great to connect with you and thank you just for your honesty and for sharing your story. I know it's going to continue impacting a lot of people.

ABBY RIKE R.: Well, you're very kind and I appreciate it. I have to thank you. You impact a lot of people.

RUTH SOUKUP: Thanks.

ABBY RIKE R.: When I started this blog I didn't have a clue, and signed up for EBA without a website and started it that way.

RUTH SOUKUP: Look at you now.

ABBY RIKE R.: It's been a ride.

RUTH SOUKUP: Throwing your own events. It's amazing.

ABBY RIKE R.: Doing an event.

RUTH SOUKUP: Wow. Well, thank you so much.

Okay guys. That about does it for today. Once again, don't forget to grab your own Do It Scared manifesto. You can download it at doitscared.com or by texting **DOITSCARED** it **44222** right now. Once again, that's doitscared.com, or by texting **DOITSCARED**, all one word, to **44222** on your phone right now. Before I go, I just want to say that I would absolutely love to hear from you. If you have to any questions about what we talked about today, or any other topics that you would like to see addressed here on the Do It Scared Podcast, or any other guests you'd like me other interview, please feel free to reach out via email at ruth@livingwellspendingless.com or by filling out our form at doitscared.com. That about does it for this episode of the Do It Scared with Ruth Soukup Podcast.

Thank you so much for joining me today. If you liked what you heard, please, please, please, please be sure to leave a review on **ITUNES**. I will be picking reviewers at random to win Do It Scared T-shirts and mugs, which are super cute and which can also be found in the Living Well shop at livingwellshop.co. Also be sure to subscribe via iTunes to be notified of new episodes. Speaking of upcoming episodes, be sure to join me next week as we talk about something that we all seem to think that we need more of in our lives, which is balance, and why all that balance we think we need might actually be overrated. Am I crazy for saying that out loud? I might just be, but I am also going to break down some of the biggest lies that we've been telling ourselves. This might just be the episode that helps you breathe a big sigh of relief. I will catch you then.

