

# Relationship Rehab Show

## **Episode 34: Marriage & Parenting; Schools for Personal Growth**

I thought that my first husband's purpose in life was to meet my needs for love and understanding. For about two plus years I tried to tell him how to do that...and that he was failing miserably. Then I imagined a baby would love and adore me without question! Steven didn't get the memo. He was fussy, didn't sleep well, resisted being cuddled and had allergies that made him frequently ill.

Two-and-one-half years into my plan and I could see nothing but misery ahead. I lay down on my olive green carpeting one day and in desperation told God, "I will do anything to change the trajectory of this marriage. I'm even willing to change if you'll just tell me how."

Thus began a journey of personal growth that I didn't want, but eventually brought me a wealth of understanding and ultimately met my deepest needs for love as well as a life of meaning and purpose.

In my master's degree program at the University of Santa Monica, they taught that life is a school. It brings lessons to us that we were destined to learn when we came into Life on Earth. We can either embrace the lessons and cooperate with the process of becoming our best selves, or we can resist the lessons and suffer the pain that comes from trying to make everything and everyone around us change to suit us.

A sampler of the lessons learned in this Earth School:

1. To be grateful for all the good in my husband rather than complaining and nagging about what I wanted him to change. Results: I became happier and the marriage improved.
2. I began to develop my own voice when I challenged my original pediatrician's blasé attitude toward Steven's frequent ear infections and found a pediatrician who valued my observations. My pursuit of health began in earnest...a pursuit that continues to this day. Steven's health improved.
3. When my first husband died unexpectedly, I began to learn how to manage my fear of the future and multiple anxieties by controlling my fearful

thoughts by memorizing promises in the Bible. Whether you believe in the Bible or not, the skill of identifying negative thoughts and taking control over switching your mind to more positive thoughts is valued by every religion, every culture. It eventually led to publishing [Your Inner Child: a Path to Healing and Freedom.](#)

4. My troubled marriage to Jim Landrum led to learning how to be respectful to each other 24/7, a Master's Degree, teaching classes, and ultimately the book, [How to Stay Married & Love It!](#)
5. Our struggles with stepfamily dynamics eventually led to the book [Stepping TwoGether: Building a Strong Stepfamily](#) and recognition as one of this country's foremost authorities on stepfamily strategies for success. That understanding has also led to the healing of relationships with my step-children...blessings beyond measure.
6. The challenges of a drug addicted son led to a painful journey away from enabling codependency that brought freedom to me and my son and another book, [Pungent Boundaries.](#)
7. Difficulties with my other son taught me lessons about parenting and the importance of listening that I may not have learned any other way. The healing of that precious relationship is one of the crowning achievements of my life!

I started this Life journey as a wounded, self-centered woman who wanted everyone to meet her needs. I certainly have not "arrived" and am nowhere near being spiritually enlightened, but I handle situations and relationships with far more grace than I did in the beginning. And I have amazing meaning and purpose as I help others through the passages that I have navigated in the past. My most powerful teachers were my two husbands, two children and three step-children. I am deeply grateful for all I have learned, and all there is in my future to learn until I complete this Earth Journey and move on...

You have my support and best wishes,

*Nancy Landrum*

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