

the dots

a podcast about connecting.

Maud Simmons Transcript

Announcer: [00:00:04] Welcome to The Dots. A podcast about connecting. The dots is a series of conversations with artists, community leaders, entrepreneurs, and change makers who talk about how they connect the dots and bring things together for their communities, companies, and themselves for a better life. And now you're host, Digital Strategist, speaker, and entrepreneur Kathleen Buczko.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:00:31] Teacher, spiritualist, and painter. Maude Simmons has built a life as an artist and on that journey learn how to define success. Maud, welcome to the dots.

Maud Simmons: [00:00:41] Thank you so much for having me.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:00:43] Talk about your journey. Where do you grow up?

Maud Simmons: [00:00:46] I grew up in the Bronx in New York. I was born in 1952 and in 19 in the 1950s and the 60s the Bronx was actually a pretty nice place to be but down in Manhattan of course was a that was the hub of everything. And in the Bronx was a rather suburban neighborhood. You know the outer boroughs were different then than they are now.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:01:12] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:01:13] So yeah the Bronx. I wanted to get out of there.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:01:17] Why'd you want to get out.

Maud Simmons: [00:01:18] I thought that there was a bigger life somewhere else very far away and I never liked the winter. I always felt that if I were indoors too long I would go a little crazy and there was something about the lack of light in the winter time that was depressing.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:01:37] Well and what they actually know is called SAD, Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Maud Simmons: [00:01:41] I'm sure I've got it.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:01:42] Well I I'm certain the entire two thirds of my family growing up in northern Michigan.

Maud Simmons: [00:01:49] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:01:50] And kind of all of the trailing effects that that family had. Had the same thing. We were never outside.

Maud Simmons: [00:01:57] Yes. And of course you don't want to go outside. You can barely walk from one block to another.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:02] There there is some will and that's where it's very interesting now

because that's not the experience in those areas. It's dark because of the season but it's not because of the snow.

Maud Simmons: [00:02:15] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:16] It's not because of the kind of changes in the season that we experienced growing up at that time in the east and the Midwest.

Maud Simmons: [00:02:24] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:25] For anyone who looks to the 10000 degrees that it may be outside in Los Angeles they need to begin to look at places like the Bronx that no longer have snow days for the kids to go to school.

Maud Simmons: [00:02:37] Is that true? I did not know that.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:38] They did not have snow days last year.

Maud Simmons: [00:02:41] I had no idea.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:45] Now the year before, Boston had to extend their school year because they had so many days off you.

Maud Simmons: [00:02:49] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:02:49] So the cycle is one swinging pretty significantly.

Maud Simmons: [00:02:55] Very interesting. But I did. I hated it there. It seemed uncomfortable, small, townish, gossipy. It was ugly outside. Although we lived across the street from a park. Devo park. And I used to walk across the park to the Catholic school across the street and.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:16] St who.

Maud Simmons: [00:03:16] Oh St. Nicholas of Tolentine.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:19] Oh. OK.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:20] And I think that that's Mary St. Nick.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:23] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:03:23] Although my experience in the Catholic school was anything but merry.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:27] Or a different Mary is what they go for usually.

Maud Simmons: [00:03:30] That's true.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:30] Yeah. yeah. Well we've talked about this. You know we both have a compunction we believe to be early because if you were just on time you were late.

Maud Simmons: [00:03:40] That's right. And anything that you did, you were bad.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:44] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:03:44] And that is definitely still with me. Certain things don't you can make a lot of progress spiritually in life but certain childhood beliefs just stick around for ever.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:03:56] Yeah. Your input in imprinting like a duck.

Maud Simmons: [00:03:59] Yes. Yes you're absolutely.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:04:01] Kind of following because that's what the imprint says to do you.

Maud Simmons: [00:04:03] Yes. And so the best thing to do is just accept that and when it comes up just say "Oh here you are. I know you. Here you are again." Even this morning I was having some of those voices. Who do you think you are? Nobody wants to hear what you have to say.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:04:22] Right. Why would your journey be anything to help anyone or give.

Maud Simmons: [00:04:27] Absolutely.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:04:27] Any indication of what you've been through?

Maud Simmons: [00:04:30] Plus you can't talk. Which is anything but true.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:04:35] No that hasn't been my experience of you Maud. But how does a Catholic kid in the Bronx become a painter?

Maud Simmons: [00:04:47] Well in the beginning it was for escape. It was my salvation. And because in my family, family you know I have an older sister. My parents hated each other. They fought all the time. Was very "Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf."

Kathleen Buczko: [00:05:03] Oh nice.

Maud Simmons: [00:05:03] I remember seeing that movie and thinking well this is just reality.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:05:07] Isn't this normal.

Maud Simmons: [00:05:08] Yes it is really. And I would hole up in my room. In the room that I shared with my sister actually and I would draw pictures of myself. So I could feel that I was actually visible. And I had this right from the start, I had this talent where I could copy anything. I could make it look exactly like the thing, whatever it was.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:05:29] Wow.

Maud Simmons: [00:05:29] So I would set up a mirror in front of me and I would draw myself. And it comforted me and it gave me a feeling of presence. And in addition to that, I have my mother was, both my parents were wonderful in their ways. My mother was a little engulfing. My father was a little distant or very distant. And it was a way for me to get attention from him. Although he didn't pay attention to me. He would pay attention to the painting or the drawing. So it would be look at me. And it would be a picture of me and so and he would say "that is terrific". Never, you are terrific., but that's terrific.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:06:14] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:06:14] And that's the way it started. It was it was a coping mechanism in in an uncomfortable and unhappy childhood.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:06:23] Wow and how did you believe your talent then could evolve.

Maud Simmons: [00:06:29] I felt that, you know I got self-aggrandize at an early age.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:06:35] And how did you do that?

Maud Simmons: [00:06:37] This is that bad news. You know I think that when you're a kid with very little self-esteem what can fly in the ego flies in to protect that vulnerable self. And I was filled with delusions or illusions of fame and fortune. And and I loved reading about famous artists you know that you know who had troubled lives like I did, but they became loved by all. And they were in the books. I was going to be that. And and it was a lot of it was you know I'll show them. I'm going to be famous. You know my talent was tied up in that kind of attention because I had so little. I was so riddled with self-doubt and self-doubt actually is better than - self-doubt actually was something to aspire to. It was it was more like self-hatred. Maybe. It was not pretty whatever it was, was not good.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:07:48] You know I describe those things as you just have a hole.

Maud Simmons: [00:07:51] Yes. Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:07:53] And the whole can be different colors for different people. But it's a hole.

Maud Simmons: [00:07:58] And a real emptiness inside.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:07:59] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:08:00] That that needed to be filled. And so I filled it with fantasy. You know fantasy of the the famous, fabulous artist that I was going to be and I was really going to WOW the world!

Kathleen Buczko: [00:08:13] Really? So how did you do that.

Maud Simmons: [00:08:17] Well it hasn't happened yet. [laughter] And I think that that, as it is for most people who have that it's a set up for I think a life of disappointment and longing. When you are, when you attached. You know even if you're extremely talented and very capable, which I've always been.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:08:41] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:08:42] If you've attached your star to the outside success it's almost as if the universe won't allow it to happen because the lesson hasn't been learned. And so for many many years, I was wondering like where is mine? When is this. When is this fabulous thing? When am I going to have my miracle?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:09:05] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:09:05] And you know I thought if I prayed about it hard enough or was really really a good girl that I would get that I would get that. And you know the real fact is that I've had plenty of success but it wasn't what I thought it was going to be and it certainly wasn't ever a comfortable life for me as long as I was waiting for somebody to come and fill that empty space inside. That that, the sad little girl who felt so lost.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:09:39] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:09:39] And, and you know I filled that empty hole with many things. Many things. You know, lots of boyfriends. Lots of alcohol. Any drugs that would come my way.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:09:53] Sure.

Maud Simmons: [00:09:54] Not that I would Even enjoy these things too much. But I just thought this will fix it.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:09:58] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:09:58] And for a moment it did. And and I feel sad for that young girl who was so lonely and needy that she you know she wasted a lot more or you wasted a lot of time doing those things. You know so my journey and I like to say this and I probably wouldn't say it if I didn't feel so comfortable with you. You know it's been a journey from sort of skank to none. [laughs]

Kathleen Buczko: [00:10:27] I think that's that's a that's a good journey right. That's a good journey of self-discovery. I mean I think people and things are put in your life for a reason.

Maud Simmons: [00:10:35] Absolutely.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:10:36] You know and to a certain extent that's very Catholic but I try not to be.

Maud Simmons: [00:10:41] Yes it is, isn't it?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:10:42] It just kind of what you do with it is is the journey right.

Maud Simmons: [00:10:48] Yes absolutely.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:10:49] And I could have easily become the biggest drug addict known to mankind and one I had an illuminating moment and I had done very similar things at an illuminating moment with one of my oldest friends. And we were friends because we both ended up at the same college. It wasn't as if we had been friends. We were friends. We were in the same high school. She was a pompom girl. She was you know on the float. I was on the debate team, right? [laughs] Quiz Bowl was my big thing in high school.

Maud Simmons: [00:11:23] I see.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:11:23] Right. So polar opposites. We both ended up in downtown Detroit. From relatively suburban areas and I didn't know anybody else and I needed a roommate. And I was fortunate from the standpoint that she ended up in nursing school and I ended up with a bottle of vicoden and said "This stuff is great"! And she was like it's really great until you stop breathing. Because it had never occurred to me that that would happen.

Maud Simmons: [00:11:58] Of course.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:11:59] It never occurred to me.

Maud Simmons: [00:12:00] As a young girl.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:12:01] Yes. With a giant hole. It never occurred to me that you would stop breathing.

Maud Simmons: [00:12:08] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:12:09] It was just really about that bright shiny thing. That filling that void.

Maud Simmons: [00:12:14] Yes. Yes. And feeling comfortable being yourself. You know those are all of you know I could never take. I took vicoden once and I threw up for three days so fortunately that didn't work.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:12:27] Right. No it worked really well for me.

Maud Simmons: [00:12:30] I understand totally.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:12:32] I can see the progression to the opioid experience.

Maud Simmons: [00:12:36] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:12:36] Based on relaxed regulations because at that point, she was in nursing school and she was like "How did you get this?" Talk about connecting the dots. One of my varied employment stints was inoculating rats with malaria in the medical school.

Maud Simmons: [00:12:53] Oh yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:12:54] And you put this in context the late 1970s early 80s and I was making \$9.50 an hour.

Maud Simmons: [00:13:01] Wow.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:13:02] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:13:04] You were.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:13:04] \$9.50 an hour. All I had to do is take the rodent out of the box put it in the tube and put the malaria in its back. I did that for a couple hundred a night. They paid me for the rest of the night and every single medical student who worked in that building had access to drugs.

Maud Simmons: [00:13:22] What a great job.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:13:24] It was.

Maud Simmons: [00:13:24] That's like a dream.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:13:25] How I didn't become genetically unemployable. Was. Was that exact

experience. Because it really illuminated to me how little I believed in myself.

Maud Simmons: [00:13:40] Interesting. So you you had the "aha moment.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:13:45] Crazy young.

Maud Simmons: [00:13:46] Oh that's so fortunate.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:13:48] Crazy young. Crazy young because the universe put this person in my path who ended up in nursing school.

Maud Simmons: [00:13:54] Isn;t that interesting.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:13:55] Who said A, B, and C to me. And you know fast forward years, years later, we're still friends. Her life has gone through some interesting twists and turns.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:08] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:09] And I'm still in her life. And she has said this to me because she had seen the train wreck of my life.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:16] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:17] So that when it started to manifest in her life she could recognize it.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:21] Isn't that fantastic.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:23] It's really odd.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:24] Well that's a beautiful thing though and I think that if you think hard enough about your various relationships you see why all of them had to be exactly the way they were.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:35] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:36] And even the even the ones that are painful and and don't end well.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:40] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:40] Like all those boyfriends.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:42] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:43] And a husband,been there. They all served a great purpose in terms of my recognizing what I had to do.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:14:53] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:14:54] You know which was to stop looking outside to fill up that hole and to start looking inside. To first of all acknowledge it, accept it, and then to find something that was appropriate and loving to fill it up.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:15:16] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:15:16] You know and every now and then it it's there. And I feel it. But most of the time I just think oh you know this is what this does is this tendency to feel unsure of myself. To feel like I'm not enough is a great motivator to do stuff that I wouldn't really do otherwise. You know help other people in the same spot.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:15:39] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:15:39] Really listen hard. When someone confronts me with a problem that was like mine. You know because I know OK there's I know that there's an answer to this.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:15:48] Right. A.

Maud Simmons: [00:15:48] Nd it's not certainly not about being written up in a book or an article, in The New Yorker.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:15:58] Or being or being the solution.

Maud Simmons: [00:16:02] Yes.

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Kathleen Buczko: [00:16:21] You know I think I think we spend a lot of time trying to find external solutions.

Maud Simmons: [00:16:26] Oh sure.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:16:27] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:16:28] It's the American way.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:16:30] It's the American way [laughing] what motivates you at this point?

Maud Simmons: [00:16:38] Well, I think that my main motivation, the thing the thing that I love the most in my life are my relationships. And you know I definitely my painting serves a tremendous purpose in terms of my spiritual reality and my connection to you could call it God. I was thinking what do you call it. You could call it Elvis. Anything you like.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:17:07] The universe.

Maud Simmons: [00:17:08] The universe. You know there's a dialogue that I have while I create. That's very always interesting and I feel so grateful I can have that for the rest of my life. That dialogue will always be there. You know take the big canvas. Smack something down on it. Break the ice with the surface of the painting and then you ask the question. Well now what do I do? So all of those things are extremely important but even more important are my relationships with other people. Which was something that when I was looking for fame and fortune I didn't care about other people. Life and it didn't look that way. I must say always looks like I had a lot of friends. I didn't care about them. I spent a lot of time avoiding them because who really needs that?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:17:59] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:18:00] But now I find that my, the times in my life that sparkle, that have sparkle, there are other people there.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:12] Really.

Maud Simmons: [00:18:12] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:13] And people you're connected to.

Maud Simmons: [00:18:15] People that I'm connected to in a very deep way. You know people who understand me and they accept me for whichever Maudie's shows up that day. You know they will, you know. I'm a big texter. You know I love to, you know when I got my cell phone I started texting I just thought this is the best thing, you know, ever. I don't have to pick up the phone.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:39] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:18:41] And of course the it's not the best thing ever. But I do find

Kathleen Buczko: [00:18:45] As an introvert I have found it to be the best thing ever. I if I really never have discovered anything else about myself it's one, being an extroverted introvert.

Maud Simmons: [00:18:58] That's exactly what I consider myself. Yes you know I have my you know I love to go to a party but I have a shelf life of four hours and then I have to go away and lay down.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:19:11] Yeah. No absolutely. It is not the energy inviting environment for me. I can do it.

Maud Simmons: [00:19:21] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:19:21] I've done it. I have done it forever. We'll continue to do it forever. But I have to lay down after it's over.

Maud Simmons: [00:19:29] Absolutely Ditto all the way. So yes you understand exactly my situation.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:19:34] Well I think it's like everything. Maybe it's the American way. I don't know. We've decided that everything is black and white right. You're gay or straight. You're extroverted or introverted. There couldn't possibly be any gradation associated with that.

Maud Simmons: [00:19:48] Isn't that something?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:19:50] And the fact that I can go out and interact or you could go out and interact and be fine but recognize there's just a peak time and that's it.

Maud Simmons: [00:19:59] And then you start thinking how do I get out of this.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:03] Exactly.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:04] I have to you know it's almost a panic stricken feeling of oh I've got to

I've got to go lay you down.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:09] Yeah. No absolutely. And I think there needs to be that category of extroverted introvert.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:16] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:17] Those who have either gone through the adaptation I have a therapist one time that said you build the skill set you need to survive.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:24] That's right.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:25] And I think if you're naturally an introvert and you've gone through things in your childhood or your teens or whatever you do develop this skill set you need.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:34] Yes. To survive, yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:34] To get through that, Not to just survive but also to get through it.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:38] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:38] Right. Not just survive.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:39] But thrive. Actually yes. Right.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:41] You know you you you learn drawing and painting to be with your father.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:47] That's right. Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:20:48] And it's become this creative force and dialogue that you have the ability to indulge yourself in.

Maud Simmons: [00:20:57] Absolutely and it is of course the most important. I've done many things to earn money. But the painting has always been there. That's the that's the baseline for my entire expression. You know I mean I cooked for a long time. I was a caterer for many many years. I taught. That was really hard. I really had to lay down after class.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:21:26] Oh yeah, no I taught ninth grade English and I taught for two years.

[00:21:32] And on the second year I was called into the principal's office and I thought oh good I'm going to sign my contract for the next year. And I kind of like the whole rhythm of the school thing. So I was there for, it wasn't like today where you're off for a day and a half and then you're back in the school. It was you had a full summer off. Gave me a chance to decompress. And the principal looked at me he said "Have you ever considered doing something else?"

Maud Simmons: [00:21:56] Oh were you shocked?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:22:00] Not entirely.

Maud Simmons: [00:22:02] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:22:03] I was. It was a very exclusive. It had been a boarding school, had become a day school in Gross Point Michigan. Yes. My first day at school I pulled up in a 1973 orange hatchback Pinto with a flammable sticker on the back. And my father had been on the engineering team for the Pinto, so it was even more of a dicey situation first driving around Detroit with an orange hatchback Pinto with a flammable sticker.

Maud Simmons: [00:22:35] Unbelievable.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:22:38] And half of my first class first period class was dropped off by their driver.

Maud Simmons: [00:22:42] Yes I understand.

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Kathleen Buczko: [00:23:37] So I am doing this somewhat, performance dance for students who really see this as just the you know the means to the end. The end will be they will inherit. They will redefine their biz, their family's business.

Maud Simmons: [00:24:00] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:24:00] Whether autos or steel or whatever and you're just a cog in the wheel.

Maud Simmons: [00:24:06] You know I went to a fancy private school high school in New York. And you know why. I don't know? You know I mean there are was you know from a family in the Bronx. My father had aspirations towards larger more sophisticated things for his daughters. So my sister, my older sister, went to the school and she was so traumatized by it. But then they sent me.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:24:29] Assume. Yeah. Good choices.

Maud Simmons: [00:24:31] It was very good. and I just thought, you know and I would take the subway from the Bronx to 89 Street and Lexington and everybody else was dropped off by their chauffeur. So I understand exactly at the strangeness of that.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:24:45] And so I'm sitting there in the principal's office and I was like well you know my degree is in rhetoric and communications. So I always thought I'd be a debate coach or some kind of teacher. So not really, I hadn't really considered. He explained to me that there was not going to be a third year contract. But again people are put in your path for a reason.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:25:11] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:25:12] So again going to a graduation party and then Bloomfield Hills Michigan is with the family of my mother had given birth next to the mother of this family it was

the only connection we had. And over the years you know as people had died and we you know were on the list to always be invited to the graduation party and to the shower and to the wedding. It was a huge huge party and I'm sitting on the edge of the pool with a giant beer and the oldest of the family who at that point was kind of assuming although his father was still alive was assuming the patriarchal position.

Maud Simmons: [00:25:55] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:25:55] And he sat down and said "So what are you doing?" And I said "Well I was teaching school until you know yesterday" and he was like "What are you doing now?" and I said "I don't know I think I think will date it. I think I want to do music videos. I don't know why." I don't know why. I was like you know I think, you know, I liked music. It was TV. It was good. He was the Director of what was then called ABC News Spot which was the precursor to breaking news and all of those things.

Maud Simmons: [00:26:27] Isn't that interesting.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:26:27] I had no idea that's what he did. And he was just Jay. And he said "Come to my office and I'll see if I can get you an internship." Absolutely. The complete total definition of nepotism. I had no experience whatsoever.

Maud Simmons: [00:26:42] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:26:43] And I ended up becoming a reporter.

Maud Simmons: [00:26:47] Isn't that fantastic.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:26:50] Yeah it actually was because it enabled me to go out and feel comfortable in my own skin finding out what was going on.

Maud Simmons: [00:26:58] Oh I love that.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:27:00] And if for not that conversation I would probably be one of those horrible teachers in the Midwest just trying to get through the day.

Maud Simmons: [00:27:07] Yes, who hate it every day.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:27:08] Every single child that came in the door because I was already feeling that after a couple of years and that was again in a very exclusive environment where it wasn't just the average kid coming through the door. And so to kind of have that cosmic reset on where you ended up being.

Maud Simmons: [00:27:28] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:27:29] It was really a very fortunate experience.

Maud Simmons: [00:27:30] That's so wonderful. You know I wish that I could say that the rejections that I've had in my life have been turned around into something.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:27:38] Oh no. I've been fired a lot more since that. That was easy. That was the easy part. I mean because you end up in media. There was a time and part of the reason why I ended up in press and publicity was I literally was traveling with the cardboard Baker banker's box

in the trunk of my car. Because I would show up at a station or show up at a newspaper and they would have been sold or acquired by you know ABC blah blah blah.

Maud Simmons: [00:28:05] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:28:07] And half of the newsroom was being fired that day.

Maud Simmons: [00:28:11] What's so wonderful about that though is that you realize it's not personal that these rejections are.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:28:17] Oh no you always feel like it's personal because you know they're going around. Oh yeah. You always feel like that it is the you get to a point where it's like you know you can take your job and shove it.

Maud Simmons: [00:28:27] Yes yes yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:28:28] But it's always personal.

Maud Simmons: [00:28:30] Is it?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:28:31] It's always personal.

Maud Simmons: [00:28:33] You know I find that.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:28:35] Unless they hand you a giant check. It's personal.

Maud Simmons: [00:28:41] Because I have dealt with a lot of rejection with my artwork. You know people don't like the paintings for I never I don't know why. And I just.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:28:52] They expected it be greener.

Maud Simmons: [00:28:54] Something really that has nothing to do with me. It really does and I'm and I'm also surprised at the work that sells to. That's also that's just that's as surprising as the rejection. And I find that I've said that the way that I learned to deal with rejection. It's just like learning to drive. How do you learn to drive? By driving.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:29:15] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:29:15] And how do you learn to deal with rejection by dealing with rejection.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:29:18] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:29:18] I'm almost surprised when I don't get rejected. I think you sure you want it?

Kathleen Buczko: [00:29:25] Yeah. No I always I always I was at that weird point in real time going to be the next you know ABC or whatever anchor person involved where people just would pick up and you know go to an entirely new network. Right. So.

Maud Simmons: [00:29:43] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:29:43] You'd see Channel 11 6 o'clock news now at CNN right.

Maud Simmons: [00:29:51] Yes.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:29:53] And so it gave the tenor and tone of those changes a very personal note because when you didn't show up someplace else quickly, you always began to look at yourself and go "Well, why did Susie end up over there and not me?"

Maud Simmons: [00:30:11] And you know she's just nothing.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:30:13] Right. No exactly right. And you know and I think there is that dynamic as an American you're taught that you have to compare yourself to everyone else.

Maud Simmons: [00:30:20] Oh Definitely yes of course. And that's a that's a wicked business. I think you know I do it.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:30:26] Sure.

Maud Simmons: [00:30:27] And being older in L.A. that's a that's a very strange kind of situation. I had was having lunch with a friend of mine who teaches acting and she said you know I really like young people and I just looked at her like, you do? I couldn't believe it. And and I wish that I felt that way. But it is the compare and despair syndrome where you know your skin doesn't look that great and and in L.A. of course this is you know in New York there are plenty of young, gorgeous, glamorous, people but they're more covered up.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:31:06] Well and they're always covered up because it's cold nine months out of the year. And then but there's also the bridge and tunnel people.

Maud Simmons: [00:31:14] Those people.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:31:15] Right which you know their foreheads move. And they they rejoice in their ability to have a laugh line. Yes and we do you know in Los Angeles we are an embodiment of what you see in the movies and what you see on television. And of that kind of nature that we've created around it.

Maud Simmons: [00:31:38] Yes yes absolutely. I mean this is another reason to not ever go outside. This is another reason to be a definite introvert. And stay indoors because then you don't have to see them.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:31:49] Never do you never do. But I'm going to ask a serious question Have you had to give someone some advice as they were facing some challenges. What would your advice be?

Maud Simmons: [00:31:59] I would say first of all that nothing happens by mistake. And that and you know I'll use the word God because it's a convenient label but I don't think that anything is wasted in God's economy. This is not an original statement of mine. I heard it somewhere. I thought oh that's good I'm going to keep that. And of course as a person who's facing challenges, they don't want to hear that they want to hear you know it's all going to be OK. And sometimes it's really not ok. I've also heard people say you know there are no big deals. There are big deals and you know I just watched my father die. He was 92 years old. I was it was in New York it was in Manhattan. And and it was a terrible thing to see. And he had been ill and bedridden for a long time. And this has left me with, first of all, a tremendous humility about the about life. You know it's such a fragile thing. So I if someone were facing a challenge that was a life and death challenge, I would just say

find your inner compass and be around love. You know I think that the message would be surround yourself with love and find the love inside of you because that's the thing that will carry you through any kind of situation. And definitely don't base your happiness on what things look like. You know when Dad was dying, I was there the last week of his life. And he has had a big apartment on the upper west side and you know lots of rooms and you know walked into his bedroom and there were a lot of nurses in there. There were a lot of, he had a lot of help and it was bad. And I walked out into the den, the study and I just said you know "God where are you? What what is this?" And I looked out the window this is the 15th floor 80 second and Broadway and I looked out the window and then there were these bubbles. Not a couple but maybe 50. Like you know you blow bubbles.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:34:14] Right.

Maud Simmons: [00:34:14] Bubbles passed by the window.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:34:17] That's awesome.

Maud Simmons: [00:34:18] And I thought that's there He is. That's where, you know, He. She, or It is there. So in a challenge look for something spiritual. Something that you could call anything you want but it's going to be there but you have to seek it.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:34:35] Yeah.

Maud Simmons: [00:34:35] And I think even sometimes during the worst challenge is because you're seeking. That's when the stuff becomes visible. You know that's when the stuff or you'll hear a little voice. You know I always think that God's voice is very quiet and it and you have to really listen hard. But you know something well you'll hear something and it's like oh OK I get it. I'm OK.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:35:02] Thank you for being OK Maude.

Maud Simmons: [00:35:04] Oh thank you.

Kathleen Buczko: [00:35:06] Your journey. You're thinking outside of the box and your beautiful art. Thank you for joining us.

Maud Simmons: [00:35:12] Thank you so much for having me.

Maud Simmons: [00:35:22] The Dots is produced by Chapelure Media at The Network Studios. Follow The Dots Podcast on Facebook, Twitter, and on our web site at The Dots podcast dot com. Please subscribe and review on iTunes, Stitcher, Google Play, or wherever you tune in to your favorite shows.