

MASTERS Podcast Club, December 2020
Marie Osmond
Entertainer, Mother, Philanthropist & Warm, Wonderful Woman



Marie Osmond has spent five decades as a singer, dancer, actor, author, television performer, and entrepreneur. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, this legendary celebrity and philanthropist discusses her five-decade career and how she has balanced worldwide fame with motherhood and giving back. While some celebrities only want to focus on their fame, Marie holds nothing back as she reveals her personal struggles with divorce, depression, losing a son to suicide, and more. This interview is mixed with tearful moments, lots of laughter, and powerful stories of overcoming, personal empowerment, and hope.

Winn: Hi everyone, Winn Claybaugh here. During these uncertain times, there's a lot of unknowns, fears, and anxiety in the world but there's also a lot of stories of hope and inspiration. One story that really inspires me is a teenager named Colton, who is one of 10 million kids treated every year at Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Children's hospitals are on the front lines of the pandemic and committed to serving their local communities. The reality is, kids can't wait for a cure or for an economic boost. They need children's hospitals now more than ever. I want to share Colton's story with you as an example of the incredible work happening at local children's hospitals. And if you're inspired like I am, I invite you to support Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and kids like Colton.

[music plays]

Announcer: In an effort to make sure no miracle is untold, Children's Miracle Network Hospitals is honored to share Colton's story.

Colton: I was heading home when my back tire blew.

Woman: His car rolled about 10 times, and on the third roll he was ejected through the front windshield, head first.

Colton: I blacked out on the first roll and then I woke up on the ground. Couldn't move my legs and I knew I was paralyzed.

Woman: They were pretty close so I was able to get there before the helicopter. He grabbed my hand and told me he was sorry because he didn't have his seatbelt on. And I gave him a kiss and he told me how much he loved me and I told him how much I loved him, and that was pretty much all we had time to say. He was air e-vaced away. His leg had been de-gloved, he had

a broken back and then an aortic tear, and it just kept piling on and the nightmare just got bigger and bigger and you don't know, is he gonna make it? Every doctor that came in said that scientifically he never should have survived that car accident.

Announcer: Colton was determined to walk again.

Colton: I made a goal and that was that I wanted to walk across the stage for graduation to receive my diploma.

Announcer: He walked across the stage to a standing ovation and, not long after, moved out on his own to be completely independent.

Woman: It's amazing how far he's come.

Announcer: On May 8 of this year, Colton began testing a new bionic brace for his left leg, and the future looks bright.

Woman: He's going to walk again. He's going to do some amazing things in this life, that's for sure.

Announcer: Children's hospitals are severely underfunded but sick and injured kids can't wait for a funding solution. We know that these are difficult times, but your gift of any size makes a big difference. Text 4MIRACLES to 51555 to give now. That's the number 4 MIRACLES to 51555. All donations go directly to your local children's hospital and every donation counts. Again, text 4MIRACLES to 51555. On behalf of Colton and the more than 10 million kids treated at children's hospitals every year, thank you.

[music plays]

Winn: Hey everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to this wonderful issue of MASTERS and I'm sitting with a beautiful woman, a wonderful celebrity. Everybody knows the name of Marie Osmond, the fact that she has had hit records, a hit TV show, number-one show in Las Vegas, spokesperson for Nutrisystem, mother of eight, a grandmother. Just as a—

Marie: Seven. *[laughs]*—

Winn: What's that?

Marie: I'm a grandmother of seven, almost eight.

Winn: Really?!

Marie: Yeah.

Winn: If you're going to be anything like my mom, you're going to have somebody on the way—as a grandparent, you're going to have somebody on the way at all times, correct?

Marie: I hope so *[laughs]*.

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Marie: I love it so much. Oh my gosh.

Winn: I bet you do. I bet being a grandma—oh, everybody, first of all, welcome Marie Osmond! Welcome, Marie.

Marie: *[Laughs]* Hi Winn.

Winn: Hi, sweetheart.

Marie: I adore you. I do various interviews and have done them throughout my life, but it's so fun when you get to talk to somebody who you esteem as a great success themselves. And you are truly one of my dearest friends and one of the greatest people I've ever known; has one of the biggest hearts I've ever known. Your charitable soul, it should be channeled to every person on this planet, and you do that with your fundraising and the things that you involve and being an example to your students and, anyway, it's an honor to be with you. You're a visionary leader, you're just an amazing person.

Winn: Thank you, sweetheart. You know I realized a very, very long time ago that I'm energy sensitive. Whomever I'm hanging around, I take on their ideas and their moods and their energy so I made a very clear goal years ago that I would surround myself with the right people, and you were at the top of that list a long, long time ago.

Marie: You know, that's a really great statement. I like that because maybe I'm that way, too, because I, growing up—and I mentioned it briefly in the video part of this, that I've worked with everybody and I've always—I observe. I don't let them affect me but I see what affects me and either I'll take on a characteristic or I'll make sure that I never, ever channel it and really avoid the obstacles of that. Being a child star is one of those; being an entitled child is one of those things that can channel negativity so you have to be super careful growing up, especially in my business, where you're served and taken care of, that you don't become that person, you know?

Winn: Well, I remember you telling a story of, how through your experiences of what you've been through, you had made a decision that you didn't want to be high maintenance, and I loved that. You don't want to be high maintenance.

Marie: Oh but I try, but my husband tells me I still am. But you know *[laughs]*. I don't, I don't want to be. I wanted to be the mom that goes and takes care of this. I

want to be a celebrity that goes and talks to craft services. I want to know who the crew is and I want to know—you know, celebrities have relationships but truly, honestly, Winn, it's the people that surround you. Everybody puts together your show. That's why I don't understand when people get mad at hair people or makeup people. Usually I believe it comes from their own insecurities and so, you know, I try to be compassionate and forgiving and whatever. But you know, when you just look around and realize you can't do what you do without everybody involved, it's a good place to be, I think. Humble, you know?

Winn: You know, before we get into this I just want to remind everybody of this career that you have had. You've been in this industry; you started when you were three years old, had a hit song when you were what 14, 15?

Marie: Twelve; I was 12. Twelve and a half.

Winn: Twelve, oh my gosh!

Marie: [Laughs] That was "Paper Roses." I've been very blessed to have many number-one records on my own as well as with my brother Donny, and I went on to have country hits and songs like "Meet Me in Montana" was a CMA duo of the year. And I went on to do Broadway. I was a Rogers and Hammerstein girl for a long time and I just keep morphing [laughs] and I love it. I love to keep challenging myself. It's fun.

Winn: Well, you come from that era where people had talent. You had to know how to sing, how to act, how to dance. I mean, nowadays you can be famous just for nothing, just for being famous. But back then, how you grew up with these greats, I remember you talking about that once, where you felt like you were trained by the best of the best and that you really had to work hard for that.

Marie: You know, I was a kid and grew up in this family that were on *The Andy Williams Show*. I was introduced at age three as the youngest Osmond brother and it's interesting because when I got to know the Jacksons—and you know, it was the Osmonds and the Jacksons—I remember, I believe it was Janet or LaToya said that their father used to make them sit and watch those Andy Williams shows to study my brothers. And so, you know, we've been around forever, but being a part of that family and being the only girl—I have eight siblings, eight brothers—it was a different run for me, Winn, because—and I've talked about this: while they were safe on stage, I was not backstage. I had some sexual abuse and different things that I believe can really destroy you as a person if you allow it. And that's the key word, is to allow it. If you let people have that power over you, you will forever be a victim. And so I decided at age—it was really about 10—that if I was going to be in this family, that I was going to be good at it. And I learned—Sammy Davis, Jr. taught me how to walk on a stage. I worked with Frank Sinatra. Lucille Ball taught me lighting and said, "You want to last as a woman, let me teach you what you need to know about this business and being a woman." I mean, I really was back when it wasn't

equal rights, when we were really fighting to get paid the same. And now, I mean, I see it too, but I see a lot of angry women that feel like they got left behind and I would love to talk to them and help them understand the power that they do have. We only let people take it away. I sit with some of the greatest corporate people in our country and the world, with these CEOs and everything else, and I'm respected not because I'm a woman and I have to be but because I appreciate what everybody brings to the party. But I've learned so much from so many people that I'm just so grateful. I mean, pick a decade and I'll tell you a story. It's that insane [laughs]. You know? But it was the things, like for example, okay, so I did *The Love Boat*. Yes—

Winn: [Laughs]

Marie: Yes I did. But I did the real one where we went on to Rome and Capri, Venice, all those. Donny was in the studio when he did his. But [laughs] we did this one and Shelley Winters, who I was back studying with Lee Strasberg and he was the one that said he knew when Shelley Winters had made it as an actress because he said, "Be a dog," and she went over and peed in the corner and I went—

Winn: [Laughs]

Marie: "I don't think I want that kind of acting experience." But she was a very unusual lady when I worked with her and she was tough and she was not happy. And I remember, I was getting ready to be married the first time and I was in Rome, when I had bought this beautiful christening dress and I brought it back to the set and she just belittled me and demeaned me and told me I was stupid to be married and my career was on the uprise and how dumb I was to give it all up for a child, and this and that. And I mean, [laughs] she really hurt my feelings because I was really quite excited to act with her. And Ernest Borgnine was there; we had a great cast of people. But they were my grandparents and I remember we—I think it was in Venice and I got a knock on the door really late at night and it was Shelley and I thought, *Well, do I let her in? Is she going to rip up my dress or what?* And she came in and she had been drinking and she sat on the bed and, just to make this story shorter, basically she said, "Can I hold the dress?" and she sat and just rubbed the lace on that dress and touched the little sleeves and the neckline and everything and she started to cry and she said, "You know, I have a daughter," and I said that I didn't know that, and she goes, "She hates my guts."

Winn: Hmm.

Marie: She goes, "I wasn't there for her." She goes, "You know, I was the most beautiful woman in Hollywood at the time. I could have had anybody I wanted." And she said, "All I—," it makes me sad. She said, "All I'd like right now is to have my daughter's arms around me."

Winn: Wow.

Marie: And then she switched into another person and raised her glass to me that she had put on the table and said, “Well, here’s to your marriage and I hope you have a billion brats.”

Winn: Wow!

Marie: And she walked out and that was lifechanging for me, Winn, because I realized it doesn’t matter what your portfolio says. It matters at the end of your life who you are surrounded with. Like you said, that quality of person. And it’s like my mother said, she said, “If your children love you and want to bring their children to see you when you’re older, then you’ll know you’re successful because they love you enough to have their children around you.”

Winn: Wow.

Marie: And that was a lifechanging, teaching moment for me.

Winn: I’ve been the type, and I think a lot of people are this way, when we think of a celebrity and we love their music, we love their films, we love their TV shows, I’m the type of person that I also want to know who they are behind the camera and if what you find behind the camera isn’t substantial or it isn’t real or isn’t a celebrity who uses their name and their resources to make a difference in the lives of other people, to give back, then I’m not as attracted to them as I used to be.

Marie: Well, that shows with the things that *you* do. Like you help those that are less fortunate, you help those that are generous. I love one thing that you do, too: you mentioned that you don’t just pick causes. You mentioned—I was listening to some of your podcasts—but you don’t pick the causes that *you* feel passionate about; that you support all good causes because you look for their passion.

Winn: I do.

Marie: I think that’s what you’re saying right now is you want to see what the authenticity is behind the smile.

Winn: It’s always about a relationship.

Marie: Yeah.

Winn: It’s about the relationship with the cause, with the charity. It’s a relationship with the people who are involved in that, and that’s what I’m attracted to. Which brings me, in addition to, your celebrity and all the things that you’ve done, it’s because of your story of founding Children’s Miracle Network Hospital, which by the way, has raised over seven billion. That’s B—

Marie: Yeah.

Winn: —billion dollars to date, serving 10 million children a year and 170 hospitals across the U.S.

Marie: So once again, I think it's those pivotal—so people think their lives are tough or they're going through something difficult. We all go through difficulties; different levels. Some people, I just don't even know how they get through it but I do believe this: we don't become who we are because of the good times, we become who we are when we're going through the bad times. And I remember I was at, I think it was a People's Choice Award, and I ran into the back of Tom Selleck and I thought I was going to die. I couldn't breathe, he was so beautiful [laughs]. And John Schneider was there, who also was a very dear friend of mine at that time and he was doing the *Dukes of Hazzard*. And this person came up and said, "Oh, you're all so fabulous," you know, "Could you do this charity?" And I love doing any charity I could to bless anybody, but I was especially fond of children because they were always left behind. They were always last on government funding, they were always last when it came to teachers should get paid a lot more than they do because they're educating our future, right? And so I was like, "Sure I'd love to do it." It was some children's charity and they said, "Well, we'd like both of you to do it, but Marie we can't use you," and I was like, "Why?" and they said, "Well, you know, you just did this other charity and that's in direct competition with us." And I went, "That is wrong. That is so wrong that I can't use my celebrity to bless children and to help causes." And so that's really where Children's Miracle Network Hospitals came from, was what I realized, whether it was Make-A-Wish or cancer or accident victims, burn victims, muscle diseases, blood diseases, in all those ranges, they all had to be treated at their local children's hospital and so there were four of us that got together. I remember going to my mom and talking to her about this because she wanted to help children that were deaf, and maybe that's where I got my love, is big family and everything else. But I just, I love kids and we said, "We need to do something different." And so when you hear that \$7 billion total, you and I both know that maybe 30 percent makes it to most charities because of costs and overhead and everything else; maybe 40 percent. And it's getting better in certain charities and those are the ones that I like to benefit and help. But in Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, our charity, 100 percent of the money stays to local and goes to the cause, the kids, which it's like nothing out there. And the reason that I is because we're one of your people that you love to bless in your FUNraising and I love to let these kids know that. When your local person comes in to get their hair done or whatever they're doing at a Paul Mitchell store, whatever—that money that they're raising, all of it, goes directly to your local children's hospital in your area to bless your kids because statistics prove that every person will use a children's hospital at some time in their life and these hospitals aren't just hospitals. I mean, they go out and train your pediatricians and educate your schools in wearing seatbelts and safety helmets and all these kinds of things. They really are wonderful edifices for your communities and yet they're last on government

funding and they won't be there. And somebody may give, you know, \$2 million to cancer research but maybe that hospital needs more hospital beds or maybe it needs a helicopter for life support, to carry people. And so that's what we do is, these are undesignated funds that go to bless your community and it's just so fun, Winn; it's the greatest—I love it! No one's going to know who I am in 50 years. Nobody. The young kids barely know who I am. You know what I mean? It's like you have to kind of find where you are again and that's so fine with me but you know what? My children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren will know that their grandma did something that made a difference. So that's important to me, you know?

Winn: I remember hearing a story when Disney came on board as one of the sponsors to help raise money and awareness for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. I remember you telling a story: you were at Disneyland and you were doing a live broadcast and you overheard a mother having a conversation with another woman, thanking that other woman. Can you share that story?

Marie: Yes, one of my most touching stories where it was like the fifth year that we had started and Michael Eisner, who was head of Disney at the time, was actually one of the ABC executives over *Donny and Marie*, the variety show. So I went in to Michael and I said, "Michael, I have this charity." And Bob Hope, who, I did a lot of USO tours with Bob and he was like a second dad to me and I said, "I've got Bob Hope on board. Can we please get Disney on board?" And Michael did it. And it was the first time Mickey had ever lent his name to a charity because we had all charities involved, all causes, and he liked that because it wasn't a segregation or a division in any way. It was: this is your community, all the money goes to the kids, and Disney wants to be a part of it. So I'm sitting there thinking, *God is so amazing and I'm so blessed to be a part of this thing that's growing*. And it was the first time we had live, because back then everything was done live, it was a telethon and they said it was a 24-hour. I said, "No add two more hours onto that for hair and makeup for me," and that's how long I was up.

Winn: [Laughs]

Marie: [Laughs] But it was one of those things that, I was sitting there and I believe it was Merlin Olsen, who was talking to some corporate sponsors and I believe it was Duffs, which was our first underwriter, that made sure that that first show—we donated the studio and everything. So we were honoring Duffs, and Merlin was kicking it over to me, and on my lap was a little boy who was the first survivor of a heart transplant.

Winn: Wow!

Marie: He was sitting on my lap, on a stool and just the sweetest little boy. And, oh gosh, I wish I could tell you his name but it had to be like 30 years ago, at least; 32 years ago. And I could feel his heart beating, because my hand was on the

back of back, and I just thought, *What an era of miracles this is*. And right up was the camera and they were counting down and I saw two women standing by the camera and I could hear them talking. And the one said, "Thank you so much for being here," and she goes, "No, thank you for being here," and she goes, "No." And I assumed it was the doctor of the mother, because I knew one was the mother and she goes, "No, you don't understand. Thank you so much for giving my baby life." And that's why I thought it was the doctor. And this woman, right before I went on air said, "No, *[Marie is crying]* sorry Winn, said, "No, thank you for letting my child live on through yours." And her child was killed in a car accident. And I sat there and I couldn't talk, Winn. They came to me live and I just sat there and sobbed. And the miracles go way beyond the hospital. The miracles go beyond family. We don't give you back a half child. These children go on to live beautiful, healthy lives. And the ones that struggle, man, they're my heroes. These are the most powerful children. I remember one of our little guys, he had his leg amputated; I believe he was seven at the time. And I just thought, *Gosh what a tough thing, right? To live with that*. He had cancer, bone cancer, and I thought, *What a tough thing to live with*. Well, this beautiful soul he went on to become a Paralympian, a motivational speaker, and he ended up marrying one of our Children's Miracle Network staff members at one of our hospitals. I saw him just a few years ago, before Covid, and he was treated at our New Mexico Children's Hospital, but anyway to date he's still unbelievable. And he has gone on to motivate so many people that have had to deal with amputations and cancer and I just think maybe God knows what he's doing, you know? To help us help these kids to help others, which is what you're all about. I could tell you a billion stories; you know that, Winn. And I could talk for hours but I don't want to do that because I want for everybody out there listening and who have been listening—what is it, like 20 years now, you've been doing this, Winn?

Winn: Yeah, 22 years I've been putting these interviews out there; long before there was even the term of a podcast. Again, I knew that I needed to sit down and hear these stories. I'm not a big reader. I wrote a book but I don't read; there you go. And how I've always gained my knowledge and my experience and my wisdom is by talking to people and I one day decided that I needed to add a microphone to record the answers that people were giving me so that I could share them with other people. And that started 22 years ago.

Marie: Well, just for everybody listening, you know you talk to everybody else about the things that we do, but to everybody that are your regular listeners that may not get to know who you are, I just want you to know, for your benefit, that this man, I could talk on and on about the countless awards and accolades that you have received. I mean, just name some of them; like your school fundraising program. I mean you've won so many. Didn't you win the Ellis Island Medal of Honor?

Winn: I did, a couple of years ago, which was just that whole ceremony right there on Ellis Island, to receive that acknowledgement along with some other Americans

who had done incredible, incredible things and knowing that I was there representing the fact that—

Marie: No, you received it, my friend. That's huge.

Winn: [*Chuckle*]

Marie: And the kind of compassion and you received it for your leadership and lifetime achievement. How you revolutionized education and your humanitarian work and how you unlocked hope and what an exemplary model of philanthropy and giving back to the community and this generosity of spirit. You guys, you're listening to Winn. Winn is a winner [*laughs*] and I don't know anybody who motivates me more than you and just your heart. I mean, you have suffered yourself. You've been through terrible things and yet here you are, a light to others. And I just think, I mean just some of your heart. Tell them about what you had to go through.

Winn: Well, telling your stories of these children, I'm over here like with sniffles and Kleenexes and so I'm glad this is not video right now but I want to be a storyteller and so I'm 19 years clean off of drugs, I had a brother who died of suicide, and I just feel like it's important for us to talk about these stories because these stories give people hope. I think that people are looking for their "why" in life. I believe that it's a basic human need to have a purpose.

Marie: Yes.

Winn: No matter what it is that you can do; whether you're a celebrity or you're a doctor or you're making pizzas. It doesn't matter what you do in life as a career—

Marie: Tell them, too, about—

Winn: —you need to have a purpose.

Marie: Winn, please tell them about your eye, too, and your daughter and, oh my gosh, I just love you. I love you. Do you know that?

Winn: [*Laughs and cries*] Yes, I do know that because you're so generous in letting me know that the love that you have for me and I appreciate that and it certainly goes both ways.

Marie: I mean, Sofia, how cute are you. You wrote her name; you have to tell them [*laughs*].

Winn: You know, oh my gosh, now you're exposing things; this is funny. So yes, I was damaged with one eye and so I have a prosthetic eye. Marie, I've never told anybody this story. I have a prosthetic eye and every couple of years I have to go in and get a new prosthetic because my eye socket changes and so they

have to make a new mold and so when I was getting my last new eye—I have to take it out every so often to clean it and I was telling my doctor that when I put it back in, sometimes I put it in upside down. I'm like, so on this new one, he said, "Well, I can paint a dot at the top of the eye so that you know that that's the top." I said, "Well, rather than painting the dot at the top of the eye, how about if you paint my daughter's name? So write my daughter's name at the top of my eye?" So some people tattoo their child's name to their body; I've got my daughter's name on my eyeball that I can show people.

Marie: The apple of your eye; I remember you told me that story. Winn, I'm—seriously I'm going to cry. I went home, Winn, and I went, "Can you love a child more than you love Sofia?" No. And the way you show your love to your beautiful daughter is by teaching her your passion to give back. And I believe if we could teach this next generation that formula that you have—and she's got her own charities. She's so fabulous, you guys. But to see that; you could have easily gotten bitter but you got better and you made it better for other people and you used these stories of your life that could have shut you down. It's like I said, I don't parade the horrors. I like to find the—and you gave purpose to them and you give purpose to other people in their lives who are going through challenges. You're one of the greatest men of service, and I mean that. From the people that you highlight, from just all the charities that you do, I just hope people understand who you are because I know who you are.

Winn: Thank you, sweetheart. I heard it once said that service is the rent we pay for room on this earth and since we are all taking up space, we've got to pay rent and how we pay rent is by giving back. You know, I'll tell you Marie, you were the one who said, "Hey Winn, you're raising this beautiful little girl, when are you going to throw her into philanthropy? When are you going to give her her own stage?" You know, up until that point, yeah, we were exposing her to the homeless on skid row in downtown L.A. She has seen the worst of the worst as we walked those streets and see those tent cities, so yeah, we were doing that but you were the one that said, "Winn, you've got to give her her own platform," and that was pretty easy to do and she came up with her causes, which are homeless and animal health and rescue. You know, one day she went into the office and she was in there, I'm not exaggerating, for five hours and—

Marie: *[Laughs]*

Winn: —she came out with this whole campaign for her new charity called Animal Rescue. And it was so funny. She had this clipboard where people—"Save Animals"—and then the next column, where people could sign their name, "Save the Animals," and then the next column said, "Or Don't Save the Animals." Like which side are you going to sign? And she would go up to total strangers and say, "Here, sign this," and so that's how she got started.

Marie: Okay, so for one of these podcasts I want to sit by you and interview her because she's powerful. She's precious and she's compassionate and your mom is still alive. How old is your mom now, 90?

Winn: Ninety-three.

Marie: Yeah, and she—

Winn: Yeah, 93.

Marie —has just been right by her side. And I mean, you just come from great stock; just people who care and love and give back and it's wonderful to be around because you've been bitten by the bug. And once people can stop feeling sorry for themselves, or justify in their mind why they're suffering and turn it to that "There's always somebody who's worse off than you, so go find them and help them," and when you can grasp that concept, that something to pull you out of bed in the morning to go help someone, the depression leaves, the anxiety leaves, the sorrow of your own hate. I know sorrow, you know sorrow, and people don't even know all that I've been through. I don't think I've ever shared everything because I don't see the point in it. But I know sorrow. I know hardship. But I guarantee you, it's like when the fires burnt down all these homes, my heart just cried for these people. I know what it is to lose my house to fire.

Winn: Hmm.

Marie: I also know that it was probably one of the most freeing things that ever happened to me because I realized this home that I had created was a façade to a marriage that wasn't happy—

Winn: Wow!

Marie: —for 20 years and it was really, I believe, God's—you know, they call it the burning within and I just went, "I can't do this anymore," and my children came to me and said, "Mom, please leave. We got to get out of here." So sometimes these things happen to wake us up and I've been woken up. Maybe I just needed a lot of waking up but I know that all the experiences that I have been through in my life has given me such compassion and empathy and love to other people that go through struggles. I just love them, Winn; I love them.

Winn: You know, Marie, you've made a choice to do something that most celebrities rarely do and that is you've made public your darkest and most challenging life experiences for us to learn. You put ego aside, you put appearances. The easier pathway of creating a false image, which you just kind of talked about, that false image of happiness and perfection, to engage others in dialogue. I read not only what you post but I also read how people comment; the comments that people make to your postings. And again, the responses are not about you as a celebrity; the responses to you are you're a mentor to them,

you're like this hero for people. You give people hope, and I think that that's the biggest commodity that we can offer, that we can sell to people, is hope.

Marie: It's true. Look at you. I'm telling you, the people you speak to, they talk about hope and usually it's something difficult that they've overcome. And I mean, I've had—name it: eating disorders. I went through all of that because of my sexual abuse I didn't talk about. I think the greatest thing you can do is to try to love yourself, to forgive yourself. Even in some of the choices that I have made, the hardest thing was when my son died. I said, "Honey, I'll be there Monday." Depression doesn't wait until Monday. I should have been there. I should have flown out that Saturday night after the show in Vegas but I had to take care of some other things, I thought. I could be buried under the covers the rest of my life and not function. I was criticized deeply because I went back to work after a couple weeks. What people don't understand is my children had to see me get out of bed and keep living my life so they would, too. They lost their brother. I'm a celebrity. These children are very protective of me and each other, and so when they were writing all these terrible things about their brother, that was ripping my kids' hearts apart and I said, "Come on. We've got to rise." The greatest things, and this is one of the things—you got all your Paul Mitchell—*[crying]*, I can't talk—you got all of them to send thousands and thousands of letters to me. And do you know, Winn, that my children sat in our living room on the floor, and went through all of them and it just, it made them feel loved. And people saying, "I lost a sibling" or "I lost a parent" or whatever. "I'm struggling myself." And hearing your mom say that, "It doesn't make it better, it makes it worse to take your life," because you forget all the people that are left and hurt and that loved you. And the hard thing about that kind of depression—you know, when I went through postpartum depression, I told my son, I said, "Maybe I needed to go through this so that I would understand what you're going through," because I don't know that I ever would have. But I mean, I remember sitting there driving my car down the California coast and thinking, *My family would be so much better off without me*, and I got my wheels really close to that cliff a couple of times. Yet I was old enough; how old was I? I was almost a 40-year-old woman who was suffering deeply with postpartum and I had the years of experience to make me know that I wasn't thinking clear, even though I felt I was. Does that make sense?

Winn: Yeah. Your son Michael was 18 when he died?

Marie: Yeah, he was almost 18, and children at that age don't understand those things and God does. And I know God will be loving and caring, and nothing should be judged; nothing. My mother told me, she said, "Someday God will take a microchip out of your brain and plug it in and you will judge your life how you judged others so be careful." *[laughs]* And that's how I was raised. That's before computers and everything but my mother just was so ahead of her time and she goes, "You do not know all the components in someone's life. You do not understand the genetics, you don't understand anything, so just love people."

Winn: Because you lost a son to suicide and you're in the spotlight, did people expect that you would have the answers for this?

Marie: Well, I did *Oprah*.

Winn: Right.

Marie: I went to work; did a Christmas show because I didn't want to be home for Christmas and I was going to go do mine. I had done a Christmas show for years without Donny and he said, "Well, I'll go with you." So we did our first Christmas show in New York and I talked on *Oprah* and I said—you know, I was honest and I said, "But I don't want to keep talking about this over and over for a while," and so the press and everybody, I think, were very understanding. I know when I went through postpartum, Winn, I wrote the book and I think I was one of the first celebrities to write about it and then a lot of people came out with it after. But when I wrote that book I remember standing until stores closed, signing and talking to people, and I'll never forget this one couple. They came to me and they just started—the lady threw her arms around me and she said, "Oh, I wish you would have written this a year ago because maybe we'd still have our daughter."

Winn: Wow.

Marie: And I remember thinking at that time, *My gosh, there's a lot of people out there suffering that need to know they're going to be okay*, and that was when my son passed away. I remember going to the funeral of one of my dear friends. He was my kids' dentist and his wife was one of my best friends and I went to their son's funeral; same reason. I never thought a few years later I would be in the same situation.

Winn: Wow.

Marie: Just don't. And with Covid and everything that's going on right now, the suicide rate is insane. With social media and people comparing themselves to others, the suicide rate is climbing. It's a very unhealthy thing that's going on and, Winn, I truly believe that serving others is the way to get out of this. Get off our phones and get right into each other's faces and love each other and listen. You know?

Winn: We need to talk about suicide as a health issue—

Marie: It is a health issue.

Winn: —that it's preventable, which is why we need to be informed, we need to educate about its warning signs and risk factors and even the language that we use. You know we say somebody "committed: suicide. You know, you would never say somebody committed cancer, so there's just that shame and stigma attached to it and we have to remove that.

Marie: Well, that's why I said, you know, a lot of people shame and we just don't know. I know that President Monson—he's the president of my church, Church of Jesus Christ—and he spoke at my son's funeral and he said, "You do not know and you should never judge it, ever," and I thought, *Thank you, God. Thank you*, because that's truth, that is absolute truth, and it is not my place to judge nor am I to judge anyone else of what they are going through because we just don't understand.

Winn: I saw a social media posting that says: *Today you could be standing next to someone who is trying their best not to fall apart. Whatever you do today, do it with kindness in your heart.*

Marie: Oh, I'll tell you, Winn. Okay, so I don't know, I've never really spoken about this but you talk about kindness. So I believe it's something you have to learn; it's not a natural tendency in humans but to be kind, maybe start as children and then things happen and you start to defend yourself. So my mother always said, "You spend the last half of your life fixing what the first half did to you."

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Marie: And I believe that, because I have learned to make—she always said it was like a groove in a vinyl record and it would keep playing over and over and the more it played, the deeper it got. She said you have to practice being kind until it's such a deep groove that it just comes natural to you, you don't think about it. You don't think, *Well, I should go out and be nice*. So during the Flamingo, which I think was an absolute gift from God, because a lot of people don't know that I was very sick during that 11 years. At some point I'll explain all of it but they finally figured out that my jaw, for 30 years, was poisoning my body; my upper and lower jaws from fillings that were so deep, and root canals, that they were poisoning me. And I remember I got on my knees one night and I said, "God, I just can't do this anymore, it's too hard," and I broke a tooth the next day and they put a cap on and my whole face blew up. You could actually see my face go up and down around my jaw area over those 10 years in Vegas, from fixing teeth and whatever. Well, they finally figured out what the problem was, after I put two houses of mouth payments *[laughs]* —

Winn: Oh my gosh!

Marie: I had to go and get all of my root canals pulled out and I now have posts put in or whatever they call them. What do they call them? I call them posts but they're—anyway, all of a sudden my face is going down, my neck is going down in size, my head. So I wore wigs in Vegas and I was in talking to brain people and heart people and organ people, just to see what was going on with me, you know? The wigs I wore in Vegas, because if you do your hair that much every single week—because we were there five days a week—you burn your hair off. So after I had all of my teeth pulled out, I went back to look at

some of these wigs, because I was going to give them to charity or whatever. My head had shrunk three inches in size.

Winn: You're kidding!

Marie: No, that's how much inflammation was in my brain and my face from the poison in my body. And literally it's like putting a small pin in a balloon and just having it slowly decompress. That's what my head feels like. And my doctor in Vegas, who does all of the Cirque du Soleil people—Randy Peoples, who is a neurologist and a brain surgeon—he said if any of that poison would have gone to my brain I'd be dead. And I think back over the years of just pushing through and the thing that pushed me through every night was my love for people, and I knew—it didn't matter if I went off stage and threw up three times in a show and came back out and sang—that those people moved heaven and earth to be there that night and I was not going to cancel. And I loved it. I remember one night I was so sick, I had vomited the whole show. I don't know why; obviously I know why now, it was the poison in my body. But I remember I went upstairs in my dressing room and I just fell to my knees and I said, "God, I can't go to the meet and greet tonight, I'm just exhausted," and it was this overwhelming feeling like, *You have to go* and I went, "Are you kidding me?" [*Laughs*] And so I did and I drank a caffeine drink to try to get me through it and it was a Saturday night and I went there and I looked at the room and it was packed. I knew it was going to be at least two hours and I went through and I met every person and I thought, *Well, I don't see anything dramatic here but I know God told me I had to be here tonight. I just knew it.* You know, it's like my mother said: those people that feel that prompting, it's a muscle, too. You have to learn how to feel it by trying to feel it. So I knew I was supposed to be there. Winn, after two and a half hours, next to the last person, a woman threw her arms around me and just started sobbing. I had to hold her up and she said to me, she goes, "Thank you, thank you, thank you. I could tell you didn't feel good tonight but you're here." She said, "I got the last part of the show. I flew in late because I had to work Friday. It was tough to get in town, into Vegas; I came from back east." She said, "I knew you were the only person that could be here and talk to me." She said, "My son committed suicide six days ago—

Winn: Mm!

Marie: —and I have no one to talk to and I knew you knew what I'm going through." And so I signed for the other person and I stayed another two and a half hours talking to that sweet lady, my age. And those are the things that get us through our illnesses, our hardships. When I lost all of our money financially—I mean, at that time when I was 20 years old, I was worth probably 80 million; myself. All of it gone. I was a single mother, I had a child. My mother looked at me and said, "Grow up honey, you have a child to take care of. Get to work." Best thing that could have ever happened. She didn't say, "Oh, you poor thing, you have every reason to feel bad for yourself." Whether you're sick, whether you're broke, whether you lose your house, you lose a child, you lose everything,

there's two things you can't lose and that's your faith—your positive attitude—and your belief—your structure, your belief in a God, whatever that means to you. No one should take that away from you; no one. And that's your right as a human being, is to stay positive through those aspects.

Winn: You mention your parents a lot, which is great. Is it true that like in the height of your success with the *Donny and Marie* show—here you've got this hit TV show, you're a major celebrity all over the planet, and Mom would tell you that you had clean the bathroom *[laughs]*?

Marie: *[Laughs]* Oh my gosh, so here's the other thing my dad did. We could have easily taken out bankruptcy but there were a few of the siblings that trusted in advisors and signed over power of attorney while we went on a world tour; came back to nothing. And my dad said, "Look, this is your fault. This isn't all the people you owe money to's fault. So you're going to sell everything and pay them all back. You're not taking out bankruptcy." And I was like, "What?" And we did and we lost everything. And that was the greatest thing that ever happened, Winn, because I remember going home one night; what was I, 16, 17 years old, and our show was dubbed into 17 languages. More people saw the *Donny and Marie* variety show on a Friday night than the entire run of the blockbuster hit of that year, which was *Jaws*.

Winn: Wow.

Marie: One night more people saw our show than *Jaws*.

Winn: Jeez.

Marie: And so it was crazy, we were everywhere. I remember being in Vegas and a person said, "We lived in Russia; we had to go underground to watch your show." I was like, "What?" But anyway, so I came home one night—I mean I worked hard. I had, what was it, about three and a half days to memorize 350 pages of script and then some weeks we doubled so this was a 700 script week and it was insane. These were 20-hour days and I had come home. I said, "We're taping in the morning. I need to get to bed, Mom," and she says, "You haven't done your chores," and I said, "What?" And she said, "Well, you need to get your chores done before you go to bed." I said, "Mother," I'm like, "I'm Marie Osmond." *[laughs]*

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Marie: "I need to look good in the morning," and she goes, "Oh, really? Well then, you can also clean the toilets besides the dishes so you better get to work or I'll have something else for you to do." And I did. And she said, "That's a job; this is reality. Get to work."

Winn: Wow.

Marie: "You will always have reality but you won't always have the job."

Winn: Wow *[laughs]*.

Marie: *[Laughs]* So yeah, I had awesome parents.

Winn: You modeled your own parenting after theirs, correct?

Marie: Well, I've tried. I think this generation's a little different than our generation. I think every generation is, you know? But yeah, I believe in consequences. I think you have to teach children consequences. My mother always said, "If you promise reward, you'd better give it to them. If you promise them a discipline, you better dot it." Because I hear people, "I'm going to spank you, I'm going to ground you. I swear to you, I'm going to—" and they never do.

Winn: Right.

Marie: Well then, don't say that. Don't say, "I'm going to ground you." Just say, "You have an option. Either you can go get your homework done, or tomorrow night you don't need to go to the party. That's your choice. Which one do you want?" And then they don't feel like you're trying to beat them up or control them. And sometimes it's just because, "I'm Mom, because you're not old enough to understand that you can't do this right now." And I don't believe in spanking but I do believe that when my child went to run out into the street, I grabbed him and popped him on the butt. And really that's the only time: when they're going to hurt somebody else or they're going to hurt themselves, cause life to be taken. Then I believe that you have to do something that shocks them a little bit.

Winn: Right.

Marie: Because it's like, "Oh honey, please sweetheart, don't run in the street, a truck's going to hit. Oops sorry." Yeah, I'm going to shake you up; I'm going to scare you to death because I don't want you to run into the street and get killed. So, I'm a little old school that way *[laughs]*. But like the other night I was coming home and I was very tired and I got back to the house and my little granddaughter was waiting to watch—it's called, oh, I can't remember. It's a show on Netflix right now, something about the Magic Cookbook and it's about a grandma and her granddaughter and they cook all these magical recipes and she's like, "Grandma, that's our show," and I remembered I had told her I'd watch it with her and I said, "No, I promised her and I'm not going to break that promise with my granddaughter." And I just think those are the kind of ethics that are important in society, where your word is your honor and when you say something you mean it and it's your integrity. My dad said that that's worth dying for; is your good name. So I hope someday when I die—I'm not afraid of it whatsoever. I know my son will be there to see me and my parents and I know that is true. I don't just believe that, I know that.

Winn: Can I ask you, so you have eight children, seven grandchildren, and another one on the way.

Marie: Yeah.

Winn: So you obviously made a choice to have that many children as well as pursue a career. Was there guilt attached to that? Because whenever I have a powerful—

Marie: Winn, that question anybody has ever asked me. I have never been asked that question. A lot of people say that when you're sexually abused, you're trying to find the inner child within you and so you end up having a lot of kids, you get blah, blah, blah. There's all these things and I even asked myself that question, like, *Why did I have all these kids?* I had all these children because when I had my first child, Steven, I felt other children in that room that needed to come to me.

Winn: Hm.

Marie: But I really was very happy with four and I remember going in and talking to my mother and I said, "You know, I just don't feel like they're all here. Is that just a weird thing or what?" She goes, "No, that's your God-given right as a mother to know," and I said, "Yeah, but you know, what if I'm wrong?" And she goes, "You're not; trust it." I said, "You're the intuitive one, Mom. I'm not intuitive." She goes, "Yeah, you are. You just don't know it yet. You got to work on it." And so I had another and then it was like, *Well, they're not all here.* And I got to number seven and I went to her and I said, "You're duping me because you want grandkids." [Laughs]

Winn: [Laughs]

Marie: And it was the craziest thing, when I got my Abigail and she was put in my arms, I can't even tell you the feeling of, *They're all here now; they're all accounted for. You have them all.* You know? *Good job, Mom.*

Winn: You are very intuitive; like you are very, very much connected to all of that.

Marie: Well, I don't believe I always was and this is one thing my mother said: "When you don't feel like praying is when you should. When you don't want to get on your knees and ask a question for intuitive, that's when you should," because darkness doesn't want you to feel light but light is always there if you can challenge yourself to feel it.

Winn: So I reached out to a dear friend that you and I have in common, Leeza Gibbons.

Marie: I love her. Isn't she the best?

Winn: Oh my gosh.

Marie: I love her.

Winn: She really is. You know when they say “the nicest woman in Hollywood”? She really is the nicest woman in Hollywood.

Marie: She is and she’s intelligent and she’s so articulate and her heart is beautiful. You know, she’s married to one of my husband’s best friends in high school.

Winn: Really. Steven?

Marie: Right.

Winn: And Steve—

Marie: Steve, yeah.

Winn: —were friends—

Marie: Steve and Steven.

Winn: Ah, that’s great.

Marie: We’re actually going out to dinner here really soon. We’re going to go to L.A. soon and go to dinner with them and also Alan Nierob and his wife Tobi. Yeah.

Winn: She knew that you and I are doing this interview today and so I reached out to her a couple of weeks ago in preparation for this and she says, “Oh my gosh, you have to ask Marie about this and you have to ask her about that.” So I’ve got a couple of Leeza topics and questions here. And one of them, which was—

Marie: [*Laughs*] Well, let me tell the audience something else. You are a big advocate for her and her charity. You invited her on and gave her a platform to tell her story about her mom and so, you know, I’m curious to you, because you always say you find things that intrigue about other people; you don’t just do causes that you love. But what was it about her with her mom that intrigued you to develop your relationship with your mom? Because I know you had mentioned that there was something there, right?

Winn: Yeah, well, Leeza lost both her mother and her grandmother to Alzheimer’s and I don’t have any family members, any loved ones that I’ve lost to that horrific disease but Leeza tells the story that she lost her mom in 1999 to Alzheimer’s. Even though her mother was still alive, she couldn’t connect with her anymore. Her best friend. She couldn’t connect because Alzheimer’s had stolen that from her mother. And when Leeza was sharing that with me I was thinking, *Wait, my mom is still here. My mom still has all of her senses and she’s lucid and she’s*

vivacious and yet I wasn't connecting with her on a regular basis. And I made a commitment then—and this was a long, long time ago—that I would connect with my mother every single day, and I do. I call my mother every single day.

Marie: Oh, wow!

Winn: Yeah, I need a good mother but I also need to be a good son. I believe in that scripture that we're supposed to honor our parents.

Marie: Did everybody out there hear this? Because what is amazing about you is you take all of these things that you talk about and you apply them in your life, Winn. To me that is a hero, that's a success, that's a leader. To always say, "How can I be better?" And this is what I was talking about earlier. That's why I brought up Leeza is because that story just touched my heart so deeply: that you took something while she was—and she still is, she's so amazing. But the reason I wanted to bring up that story to your listeners is I talked to your mom at the last event that we were at and she was sitting there in her beautiful jewels and her beautiful dress and had her hair done, and I think she was 90 at the time. Wasn't it her birthday?

Winn: Yeah.

Marie: And Sofia was dressed up so beautiful and I went, "That is such an honor, to do that for your mother and to hear her tell me how much she loves and adores you." And how you took that story from Leeza and applied it in your life in such a deep, rich way that—you're right. We don't know when we're going to lose our parents. And to have those, *I wished I would have*s. You will never have that, Winn, because you're that kind of guy. I love you.

Winn: Thank you and that's been a mantra of "no regrets." I want to live a life with no regrets. I mean, years ago I had a life that was full of regrets. It was that drug addiction and many years ago I had this regret that I didn't have a relationship with my father and I knew that he and I needed to figure that out. And I also knew that it needed to be on his terms because I was just always so angry that he wouldn't have a relationship on my terms. And somebody says, "Yeah but you don't love and accept your father for who he is." I was like, "What?"

Marie: Wow, so powerful, Winn. And tell everybody what happened from that.

Winn: I became interested in things that my father was interested in. Meaning, he loved four-wheeling and so I remember visiting there in Utah and, "Hey Dad, let's go four-wheeling," and he's like, "Wait you don't have to work today?" "No Dad, I've taken the next couple of days off; let's go 4-wheeling." He knew I didn't like four-wheeling but that's what he loved and so I just needed to enter his world and the second that I did that, all of a sudden it just seemed like he was interested more in me and the things that I was passionate about. But I had to get off of my campaign of what I needed and what I wanted and instead

focus on what he needed and what he wanted and that's when things turned around.

Marie: The reason I wanted you to share that story is because, for those that are listening, they can listen to me say forever to get out and serve others and it changes your life. Right here, you guys, is a perfect story of serving your family. Another thing my dad always said, "If you can get along with your family you can get along with anybody." That is truth. I can pick my friends, I cannot pick my siblings and I would lose a couple of them if I could. No, I'm teasing, but [laughs] —

Winn: [Laughs]

Marie: But when you can find a way to appreciate what other family members love and to do what you did, you change generations. You changed your family bloodlines, you changed DNA and this is the perfect example. So the reason I love that story for your listeners to hear is because they can hear me say forever "serving is the best" and they can go out and try to serve a charity or whatever, and there's so many great causes, but look in your own backyard because look what you did for your family and your parents and your relationship with them and how that has blessed your daughter.

Winn: You talk about how we need to look in our own backyards. You're exactly right. It's funny because people say—we raise money for Food 4 Africa and we dig clean-water wells and so people are like, "Oh Winn, I want to jump on a plane to fly to Africa to feed those orphans, to feed the hungry." I'm like, "Have you checked with the local agency organization, the soup kitchen in your own backyard?"

Marie: I could not—

Winn: "Because there's hungry people in your own neighborhood."

Marie: I could not agree with you more. One of my favorite things to do was to take my children to soup kitchens Christmas Eve and have them—and I'll tell you, Winn, another powerful experience in my life. I went to Salt Lake, I don't remember, maybe 15 years ago I was there. The kids were in the kitchen. It was safer because some of them were younger, you know, and I went out and I fed these beautiful people that were homeless and I went up to this one man. You know me, Winn. When I say, "Have I met you before?" I'm usually right. I remember faces. I don't remember names all the time but I'm really good with faces and I looked at him and I said, "Do I know you?" And these big tears went down his face and he goes, "You know me," and he told me his name and I said, "How do I know you? I know you." He said, "I used to be one of your light riggers at the *Donny and Marie* studio, for *Donny and Marie*."

Winn: Wow.

Marie: And then he said, "I lost my job, I've lost my family, I've lost my home, and here I am."

Winn: Hm.

Marie: You just don't know what life will bring people. And obviously I helped because that's what I like to do. I don't like to tell people everything I do but you just don't know where you can be. They say most of us in the United States of America are a couple of house payments away from being homeless.

Winn: Right.

Marie: And you're right, we need to look in our backyards. Because right now, I look at the Native Americans, who I love, I love them, and you've got some of these that are so wealthy and yet, right where I live, there's a place I go all the time and take U-Haul's full of coats. And it's like the government went in and put the plumbing but they never hooked it up. They have outhouses, here in our own country. And these are the things that, boy, if we all just got involved instead of picking each other apart and destroying things, if we could build people up and bless their lives, what a world we would be again.

Winn: Hey Marie, can I ask you about Covid?

Marie: Yeah.

Winn: Going through being quarantined. Somebody said, "Oh, it's almost like God sent everybody to their room; the whole planet, just go to your room." *[Laughs]*

Marie: *[Laughs]* Do you know, it's interesting, one of the things that I said about it when it first happened. It was supposed to be for two weeks, right? When it first happened, you know me, I'm an observer like you are and the first thing I observed was, oh my gosh, parents are having to teach their children. Huh! Isn't that interesting? They're connecting with their children again. Oh, isn't that interesting? I had a friend say, "You know, my teacher complained all the time about my son. Oh my gosh, he's a handful." She wasn't connecting with him because she didn't see him enough. Our jobs removed us from our families and Covid put us back as families again, and I hope we never go back to the other in a lot of ways. I hope that jobs come back but when families go home they go home and they play games again and they make puzzles and they eat meals together and they connect with each other. Because I think we're going to get through Covid; I really do. We know now that it attacks the elderly and people with preexisting conditions the most. I know that we've been through these things before in our country and we'll get through them again. I know we will. Once again, we learn who we are by the hard things we go through, not the good things.

Winn: I saw some of the postings that you did during Covid and it was family game night. What are some of the things that you experienced and that you learned

through Covid and everything else that's happened with social unrest in this country over the last six, seven months? What are some of the things that you've experienced that you are going to take away, like, "This is what I learned and I'm going to live my life, the rest of my life, this way because of what I gained and learned."

Marie: Well, I was quarantining in my home here in Utah and my children were all in Vegas and I was a little bit worried because my husband and I are that age and, especially, my husband has diabetes and so you get worried. But this was the first time—a few months ago we took our two youngest off to college and it's just the two of us and I thought, *My gosh, it's been since 1982 that we've been alone, the two of us.*

Winn: *[Laughs]* Wow!

Marie: And we're having so much fun, Winn! *[Laughs]*

Winn: *[Laughs]* Oh my gosh!

Marie: We're having a ball here. For those people that may not know, so I remarried my first husband. I hadn't seen him for 25 years and went to Vegas and fell madly in love and he is my best friend. We just have fun together. And I think Covid was one of those things where you can either be afraid or you can be prepared. I prefer to choose faith over fear. Faith to me—my mother always had a blackboard painted on one of our walls in our kitchen and we would diagram sentences and do math equations and Pi and all these different kinds of things; work on our just basics. One thing she put up there was: "If you take faith down to its least common denominator it means have a positive attitude, for heaven sakes." I guess it rubbed off on me because you can always find the dark but I prefer to choose the positive.

Winn: Yeah, there's just so much fear on the planet and the—

Marie: Yeah.

Winn: —opposite of fear, and fear has many faces—

Marie: Yes, it does.

Winn: —but the opposite of fear is love. That's it, it's love.

Marie: It is love and it sounds so simple and yet it's taken me several decades to really understand what that word means. And I love everybody but then there's another level of love and another level of love and another level of love. It's my faith in God, and I do believe in God, and I hurt when people don't have that kind of faith for what is it? Why are we here in this life? What is it for? You get to be—I turned 61 and you go, "My gosh, I've lived most of my life now, I don't have—so why am I here? What's the purpose of this existence?" It went really

fast. You don't think so when you're 40 but then all of a sudden it flies and you go, "Oh, that's why I'm here, that's what love is. That's why I'm here: to learn." Like you said, to take stories like Leeza's and say, you know what, I'm going to spend time with my parents more. I'm going to be a kinder son. I'm going to help other people get their messages out about what changed their life to be good people, to give back. I don't want to hear the negative. I'm sick of it and I don't want to be lied to. Do not lie to me. You know?

Winn: I know you're a very religious, spiritual person and I've heard this before and when I think of this I think of you. And the line is, "Preach the word of God and, when necessary, use words."

Marie: That's one of my favorite statements.

Winn: I think of you because I've been beat up over the head. People will beat you up with their wealth, or with their celebrity, or with their religion, or with whatever and that's not what spirituality is all about. So I know you're a religious woman but it's how you live your life; that's how you're preaching the word of God, so to speak.

Marie: Yeah, I had somebody once say, you know, "You're one of those Christian people," and I said, "Well, if it means that I love people and I try to be kind and be a good person and give back and work hard and have integrity, then yeah, I'm one of those people."

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Marie: *[Laughs]* Because sometimes people will think you're naive and stupid and goody-goody because you always are happy. It's a choice; it's a choice and there's no naïveté in it. You choose it. But, for example, I do these Sunday posts. Every Sunday I write something and in one of them I wrote, "I wish we'd just quit fighting over denominational differences and realize that we all believe in the same God and we all have the same Bible. And whatever extra points of view we have, we have that commonality. It's like sticks. We can do more together as a group than we can ever do individually; we'll all get broken." Because of that one post that I made every Sunday—I've been doing it for several years now, every Sunday. And you can go to my website marieosmond.com and go into Sunday Messages and you can read some of them over the years. But one of the people on the United Nations Council read it and that's what got me to speak to the United Nations on loving each other.

Winn: Wow.

Marie: And not finding a division with our various beliefs but to realize that we're all children of one God; whatever our denominational differences are. And those are the things I like to preach, Winn, is let's try to be better people, let's quit looking at the mote in our own eye and cast the beam on someone else, when we should just be really saying, "How can I be a better person?" And if

everybody would just turn that scenario around, we would become an amazing civilization, wouldn't we?

Winn: Yeah. I haven't gotten that phone call from the United Nations to speak but I'm certainly glad they called you.

Marie: *[Laughs]* Yeah, well, I don't have—

Winn: At least they called you.

Marie: —an Ellis Island Medal of Honor either, okay? *[Laughs]*

Winn: *[Laughs]* Hey sweetheart, as we start to wrap this up, Leeza wanted me to ask you about the gifts of aging. How has your lens changed because of aging? And that came from Leeza, so I'm not talking about your age here.

Marie: It's interesting because, you know, we're women and, see, I think age is beautiful. I look at Betty White, who I love. She's like a mom to me.

Winn: Oh God, I love her.

Marie: I'm probably going to be that celebrity that you'll see on Broadway stage that's 190 coming out to do the comic bit. That will be me. And I was literally talking to Olivia, Olivia Newton-John, yesterday about it, and I called her. I was sitting out on my deck watching the sunset and she was sitting out on hers watching the sunset and we're both in the same place. It's like life is so beautiful, and she said, "To wake up every day to another beautiful day is everything." It's everything. It's the simplicity of life that is so meaningful at this stage. And if you could just learn that when you're young, that it's the relationships, it's every day, what do you do to bring joy and happiness into your life? I can't be around negativity. I refuse to be around backbiting, demeaning. I can't do it. And like I said, don't lie to me, because don't say one thing to my face and something behind my back. I can't go there because that's not who I am and I can't surround myself with it.

Winn: I'm with you because it breaks my heart to see TV shows that are that way. Beautiful, powerful women with wealth and they're done up in the best outfits with the best hair and makeup, and what they're spewing out to the universe, what they're saying to each other is just so demeaning and heartbreaking and I just can't be a part of that.

Marie: I don't want to be a part of that. Life is too short. That goes back to Leeza's question and Olivia Newton-John and myself and all these women who've done things with their lives. That's not what life's about. The other thing that I won't do, Winn, is I won't do politics because why would I divide my audience in half? I don't care what people believe politically and I know 1,000 percent that they could care less what I believe politically. I'm a celebrity. You know? At least

Leeza has some commentary that she can add from a political standpoint and authenticity, but I don't want to hear any of that crap from—

Winn: Yeah.

Marie: —celebrities. We're so blessed as people. And to give back the way that you do, the way that I try to, the way that all these people try to do, to me that's using your celebrity for what's important, and that's to help other people.

Winn: Wow. I knew this would be exactly how it's turned out to be. I'm glad you brought up Betty White, by the way, because you and I were battling on stage—

Marie: *[Laughs]*

Winn: —once about who is the bigger Betty White fan as we introduced Betty White out on stage. Remember that?

Marie: Yeah, isn't she the best? Oh my gosh.

Winn: Oh, she's the best.

Marie: Yeah. So she is a love and she is a treasure and she's been working for years and years and years. And there's a woman who comes prepared, does her thing, doesn't get her time zones mixed up and call you late—

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Marie: *[Laughs]* I try so hard to do everything on time and I messed up with you—

Winn: It's okay.

Marie: —my dearest friend.

Winn: It gave—

Marie: Well, I love you.

Winn: —me more preparation for you.

Marie: *[Laughs]* You're just the cutest.

Winn: Before we wrap this up, I really want to mention—the people that you have surrounding you are just the best people, so Greg and Darla and Lorraine, thank you. I just had to put their names—

Marie: Aren't they wonderful?

Winn: —in there because they're so beautiful. Oh my gosh, they're wonderful.

Marie: They're my dear friends. Yep, I love them all so much. I am blessed, I have great—you know, and not always. Sometimes you had people who've used the child star thing and whatever, had agendas. But I can honestly say that the people who are around me at this point in my life are just good people that want to love people like I do and help other people like you and it's a great gift.

Winn: Well, Marie, not that you can top anything you've already said so far, but do you have a final message for our listeners?

Marie: Oh, I don't even know if they hung in till the end of the interview, but if you did, thank you *[laughs]*. Do you know what? So you usually do this, right? Don't you usually ask people if they have a final message?

Winn: I do.

Marie: I think the final message is kind of what I tried to bring up with your thing with your parents. You just don't know who's struggling and it could be the person at your laundromat or the person at your food store. One night, it was 12 o'clock and I was like, "Oh, I'm so tired," and something in me said to ask her. And I said, "You know, I'm tired but I bet you're really tired," and I talked to this lady who was a single mom, checking out groceries until two in the morning. There's always somebody you can lift and love and listen to; not talk to. Don't talk at them, listen; just listen. It will make you realize your own life is pretty incredible and we are blessed to be going through this existence with the community of people that we find and associate with, and we get to choose those people and to uplift those people around us. And I have a question. I want you to answer the same question because you have never answered that question. And I would love to hear your comment. With everybody you've interviewed and all the things that you've seen, Winn, and all the challenges in your life, what would be something you would want your listeners to feel?

Winn: That everything happens for a reason, especially what we're going through right now; just to realize that this is all for a reason and the reason is always to make us better, to make us stronger. I want to be part of the solution. There was that popular saying in the '60s that if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem, and I just want to be part of the solution. I want to be a really, really good dad and that's what I want my legacy to be; that this lives on through my beautiful daughter.

Marie: They're lifechanging aren't they?

Winn: Oh my gosh! And you did it eight times.

Marie: Oh, you know what, you just throw on another potato for dinner; it's the same.

Winn: *[Laughs]* Well sweetheart, thank you so, so much for this. I just can't thank you enough. I know our listeners are going to gain so much and they're seeing a side of Marie Osmond that they didn't know was there.

Marie: Oh no, that's scary.

Winn: Can I just tell you something? Remember I used to drag like huge groups of people to the Donny and Marie Show in Las Vegas? Remember I'd show up with like—

Marie: Oh yeah.

Winn: —80 people?

Marie: That was so fun.

Winn: I'm just telling you, the wives were always excited to be right there but the husbands would be like hiding their faces as they walked into your show, like, "Why are we here?" And after your show they would walk out like they're your biggest fans: "Oh my gosh, everybody, you got to go see this show. Donny and Marie are amazing!"

Marie: Well, you know Winn, it was such a fun place. I think people leave you where they last left you, whether it was *Paper Roses* or *I Only Wanted You* or country music or whatever, Donny and Marie, whatever. In Vegas we got to highlight a lot of things and I did my opera. And not to make this longer but I'm finishing an album right now, probably my last album; I think I'm good, I've done a lot. But this one is all legit and operatic. Hardest album I've ever done in my life. Because I don't want to just half do it, I want to really do it. You heard "Nessun Dorma." Did you hear "Flower Duet" that I did in Vegas, where I did both parts?

Winn: Oh yes, of course I did.

Marie: Anyway, it's such a fun album but that's the thing. If people—and I know, I saw the guys come in and I'd give them a bad time and it was really fun to switch the audience over.

Winn: [Laughs]

Marie: I learned that from Sammy Davis, Jr. I learned that from Elvis; that you follow the audience, you don't follow the set list.

Winn: Interesting.

Marie: You gave them a show according to what that audience needs, not what you have down on paper. And that's something that a lot of artists don't do anymore. Just know who your audience is. Look at them; get to know who they are. I don't know, it was just such a fun format and I loved it but mostly I loved the people that you brought. I got to meet a lot of them. We'd come over to your events, too, and I loved that too. And will you please tell all of the people at Paul Mitchell how much I love and adore them?

Winn: I will.

Marie: These are kids that are just starting out. Follow Winn. Follow his work ethic, his heart of love. I know that people who—my daughter went through Paul Mitchell; Rachel, changed her life. I have another daughter that wants to go through it, too, but you're all these beautiful, caring individuals. And I think hairdressers are some of the best therapists on the planet—

Winn: *[Laughs]*

Marie: —because they sit there and listen while you download. And God bless you, for all of you who are listening and blessing people's lives because you're really terrific people.

Winn: Thanks, sweetheart. I love you and I appreciate you so much for doing this.

Marie: Oh heavens, it's a pleasure. You're so sweet. I love you.

Winn: Love you, too, dear. Thanks.

Marie: Okay. We'll see you around the corner!