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## SPEAKERS

Edroy Odem, Anne Michaud, Scot McKay

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Edroy Odem 00:04

From the mist and shrouded mountaintop fortress that is x&y Communications Headquarters. You're listening to the world famous mountaintop podcast. And now your host Scot McKay.



Scot McKay 00:18

Alright gentlemen, welcome again to yet another episode of The World Famous mountaintop podcast. My name is Scot McKay at Scot McKay on both Twitter and clubhouse real Scot McKay on Instagram, the website is mountain top podcast calm and I invite you to join us on Facebook. Come on, guys, you got to join. It's the ultimate group for men who don't want to bitch and complain about their problems, but would rather enjoy what men enjoy talk about getting better as men and with women in our lives. Oh, yeah, you can join us at Mountain Top summit on Facebook. With me today is a new friend of mine, we were talking at length before we clicked record on this particular show, because she's very interesting and very charming. And her area of expertise is fascinating. This is going to be a different kind of show than we've ever really done before. And what I love about this particular episode is we're going to take her area of expertise, and we're going to apply it to what you guys find interesting. You see and Michaud from Long Island, New York is a longtime Wall Street Journal reporter who spent years on the campaign trail with various politicians. And she has taken a great interest in studying power couples in politics. And what we're talking about here is men of power, who probably had success and means before they ever ran for office. And the women who they not only married, but of course, who marry them in return, form a partnership with these gentlemen, and perhaps even stay with these guys when they're wracked by scandals. So when I heard about Amis show, I immediately thought about how we could take her expertise and her interests and apply it to helping us as men make wonderful decisions in terms of the women. We choose to stand beside us as we're high achievers. And as we move through life, making a name for ourselves making a difference. And you know, you can marry the right woman, you can marry the wrong one. And sometimes that isn't necessarily apparent at the start, but and is going to illuminate this particular topic for us in a way that, you know, might be unexpected. So with nothing further, and Michaud from Long Island, New York. Welcome to the show. Hey, Scott.



Anne Michaud 02:36

Thank you. Great to be here.



Scot McKay 02:38

Yeah, I'm happy to meet you. And I'm fascinated by your subject matter expertise. You know, as obviously you are you're the author of a book called, why they stay sex scandals, deals and hidden agendas of eight political why's. Talk to us a little bit about what drove your interest in writing such a book. And



Anne Michaud 03:00

well, I had covered a number of men who got tripped up by their own sex related scandals. Bill Clinton, Eliot Spitzer, who was Governor of New York, and Anthony Wiener, also a New Yorker who was a congressman. And I'd watch them sort of go out onto whatever stage for the Clintons it was a TV show, or the Spitzer's were behind a podium, and the wives would be there. And they would either just stand there beside the husband or say, you know, I love my husband, I forgive him. And I think he would be still a great candidate for office. And it seemed to me as though the women were being sort of propped up as political props by the party to help save their husbands candidacy. And I thought, wow, I knew some of them a little bit. I admired them. And I thought, these are actual human beings. And I'd like to get behind and look at what their stories are.



Scot McKay 04:07

Now, in your book, you break this all down into five factors of why these women would stand by their man, even visa V. Great adversity. Mm hmm. Politically or even socially. What are those five factors?



Anne Michaud 04:23

Well, I didn't set out to write a tell all book I set out to understand what these women were thinking. The five factors I found, after reviewing their lives in great depth was they were raised to have a very traditional view of life and marriage. They for some reasons in their past or maybe just their personalities, they emphasize security in their lives. They had a personal sense of patriotism, which often is what drew the couples together. They felt responsible for the Families emotional health. And finally, they had an ambition to build a legacy for their family for what they were doing together as a couple and also for their children. You know,



Scot McKay 05:11

as you were talking, I think of the Clintons and the Obamas, who respectively met while doing public service. Hmm. So what you're talking about is really representative of men and women getting together who have like minded purpose and ambition in life and are planning to act as a team. And I guess when scandal hits, it kind of rhymes with rich or poor or better, for worse, politically popular or about to, you know, get flushed down the toilet would be something you could add to their particular marriage vows, right?



Anne Michaud 05:47

Yes, I think that they feel very invested in what's gone on so far, what they've built and so there's a bump in the road.



Scot McKay 05:58

Now, your five factors, I have to admit to you and feel very optimistic, conspicuous by their absence, are really a lot of emphasis on women marrying for power, money or fame as opposed to love. If a woman marries for power, money or fame or if a guy marries a woman simply because she's hot, or she comes from a rich family or whatever, that really feels transactional. And we've talked on this show quite a lot about how transactional relationships tend to not only be shallow, but not very fulfilling. And ultimately, they tend to break off when the transaction isn't feeding the need anymore, or it's fed the need enough that the person can walk in perhaps go to greener pastures. So why is it in the face of how easy it would be for you know, either a man or a woman to marry someone because of the coattails or the financial benefits or the fame benefits? How come? It's so often the case that these women who are married to politicians, indeed stand by their man? I mean, you know, you can also point to Kamala Harris and her husband, I mean, he's standing by her now, isn't he? Visa V rumors and whatever. So really, these couples tend to stay together when one would think that the odds are against them every bit as much or perhaps more than would be the case for say, a Hollywood marriage. Yet, you look at all the recent first ladies in particular, you know, we're in the public eye. I mean, they're easy to recount and easy to keep tabs on right. And virtually none of them have divorced their husbands. You look at Hillary Clinton, who stayed with a man who was rocked by very embarrassing scandal, and indeed, fast forward to the Trump presidency. I think a lot of people were licking their chops that Melania was gonna leave this guy the day he was out of office, you know, divorce him and take half as well. And so far, that hasn't happened either. What is it with the staying power of these particular couples?



Anne Michaud 08:02

Well, I think you and I talked about Anthony Weiner before, his wife is Huma Everdeen, who was Hillary's sort of adopted daughter for a long time she was an aide to Hillary as a senator. She said that some of the advice that Hillary has given her was Don't ever let anybody tell you what to do about your relationship. I think these people live in fishbowl in a sense, and and they've got people writing about them all the time and tweeting about them. And, you know, they have to really look inside and decide for themselves what they want. And I think that was the advice Hillary gave Huma, and also probably followed herself. Elizabeth Edwards wrote a lovely autobiography before she passed away. And she said when she found out about her husband's affair, John Edwards affair that she worked harder on the issues that they had invested in as a couple because that became the glue that had held their family together for so long.



Scot McKay 09:05

John Edwards was a presidential front runner. Mm hmm. So that's significant. For sure. You know, despite what you just said, and the similarities between a lot of these power couples, they're not all cookie cutters. They're not all rubber stamped the same way, are they? I think of Hillary Clinton, and we've already talked about how she and Bill met during the course of their early public service and fell in love or whatever. She always had political ambition. I wouldn't say she necessarily or completely rode Bill Clinton's coattails, but she certainly leveraged her position as First Lady towards being senator and later Secretary of State and then of course, the presidential candidate for the Democratic Party recently. I compare that kind of outlook on life to say Melania Trump's I think anybody who has Common Sense and can look at something at face value, we'll see that Melania probably didn't marry Donald Trump to be first lady. It wasn't for political reasons. She either married for love or she married for the lifestyle or the goodies that Donald Trump would give her. And I think most of us in our heart of hearts are thinking ourselves. Melania never asked for being First Lady. And she probably really didn't want to be there. Because let's be honest, for someone who's leading a billionaire lifestyle, and you can pretend Donald Trump's broke or whatever, but let's put it this way. That's a couple who does not have to worry about where their next dollars coming from, regardless of how much Donald Trump's actual net worth is. That is absolutely the case. When you become president united states, your freedom is actually greatly diminished. You can't just go shoe shopping, or go out and be a socialite and

well, you know, show off the Secret Service and go do what you want. So that represented a huge lifestyle restriction for someone who was first lady had really had the world by the tail up until that point, socially. Right. So I mean, that's a different situation. What's your take on that?

A

Anne Michaud 11:05

Well, it's very different. And I think that Melania was here in the US, she had come pretty far from her Slovenian background, before she met Donald, but not doing great. I mean, she was a model, but not supermodel. I interviewed one political psychologist named Bart Rossi for this book and asked him about Melania. And he said she could have married so many different wealthy men. But what she got with Donald Trump, and I'm not saying they weren't, didn't love each other, because that's not for me to know. Honestly, what she got with him was more of a an instant profile, instantly famous around the world. And after that is when he became President, I'm not sure she ever expected him to everything I've heard or talked about what their associates who are close to them say that she wanted him to run, because that was something he dearly wanted to do when she didn't want him waking up at 89 years old and saying I wish I had. So I think she supported him that way. But I agree with you that being in the public eye like that must have been a real must have been difficult for someone like her.



Scot McKay 12:22

Yeah, especially the political pressures that they face from the competing party and et cetera, et cetera. Certainly something that to Melania is credit she had to kind of get through to make it to the end. Yeah. So I mean, you know, she has that going for for sure. But not every one of these power couple relationships is similar into how they're crafted or you know, how they play out right

A

Anne Michaud 12:46

now, and I think that's what made it fascinating for me, I think, before the Trump's, I had a certain view of political couples, which is more that they went into it as a team like the Clintons or the Obamas. And I think the Trump's sort of rocked my world a little bit. They're very different. They approached it very differently.



Scot McKay 13:10

Yeah, for sure. Because even if you think about this long train of first ladies in media history, since the radio was invented, you look at Rosalyn Carter, both Bush's Betty Ford, Mamie Eisenhower, best Truman, Pat Nixon, ladybird, Michelle Obama. And they all seem like they were standing side by side, ARM and ARM hand in hand, dedicated to patriotism and public service with their husbands, you know, in the parties, exhibiting those feminine gifts alongside a masculine man. Not that they weren't diminished in any way in terms of the public eye or how people respected them. I mean, time after time on the most respected woman list in the United States, our first ladies near the top. In fact, one of the most popular exhibits at the Smithsonian Institution, are the First Lady's inaugural gowns lined up one after the next. I mean, every woman in the world loves to go and see that exhibit. I know that firsthand. I've been dragged through it probably half a dozen times in my life. And yet, they kind of seem very similar, don't they, they all had a cause that they championed while they were in office gladly and continued to do so. After they were out of office. And they all had a very elegant, tasteful, dare I say classy flair to them, and dared not cast any pall of shame on themselves, let alone on the presidency. You know, you look at a Hillary Clinton visa V what happened with Bill and she really had to fight to keep that image. So sometimes it hasn't been necessarily easy for those women. You know, certainly Lyndon Johnson was known for being you know, kind of a hot tempered, loud mouth and sometimes

that got him into trouble and Ladybird had to stand by I mean, Pat Nixon, her husband resigned for God's sake. There's a lot going on there. And yet, somehow, those particular first ladies seemed somewhat uniform in their image to the world, don't they?

A

Anne Michaud 15:15

Know? It's true, I think you do see two people right next to each other. I think one thing that really shed a lot of light on Melania Trump for me was that she was raised in an Eastern Bloc country, and so was Ivana Trump, Donald's first wife. And I think that they have a lot more seem to have a lot more comfort with an authoritarian man. I also thought the other thing that really, I think about when I think about Melania, was her going to the southern border with that jacket that said, on the back, I really don't care. Do you?



Scot McKay 15:56

Yeah, that was a huge political mistake. That was a head scratcher.

A

Anne Michaud 15:59

It really was. But if you look at it from her, the world that she's in, and I think she and her husband are aligned politically, I think that she was trying to troll the press, troll the media and liberals and just kind of make them scandalized, and make everybody's here go on fire, the way that Donald does?



Scot McKay 16:22

Yeah, I would agree with that. And it was painfully easy for them as a couple to do. So. I think another thing that people miss about Melania. And what you duly noted, as her Eastern European heritage is there's a different set of sensibilities over there. If you've ever met anybody who has emigrated from Eastern Europe or Russia, or have actually visited those nations and met the people over there, they're wonderful and friendly, but you have to like people who are blunt, and say what they mean, if you're one of those people who enjoys mutually pissing on each other's legs and pretending it's raining, you're not going to like people from those countries. Because, you know, if you're doing something stupid, they'll say, why are you doing something so stupid, you should do this. Instead, it would be a lot smarter. And people go, Oh, my God, I can't believe I'm so offended. So Melania and indeed, most people I know, who have emigrated from Eastern Europe, are not the type who are easily offended. So if another person is it makes sense to me that they would greatly enjoy trolling them. I just think the public stage she was on that particular morning where she wore that coat was particularly large, and I still think it was a politically disastrous mistake for her to do that. Either way, indeed, Melania Trump is different than any other first lady in that respect, for sure, conspicuous by their absence so far is discussion of Nancy Reagan, and Jackie Onassis. Now, both of those women married men who were already socialites, the Kennedy family was famously aristocratic, long before Jackie O, Mary, JFK. And of course, Ronald Reagan was an actor for God's sake. He was Mr. Hollywood before Nancy Reagan, married him. And Nancy Reagan, of course, was Ronald Reagan's second wife, which some people either remember they don't. But I think it's significant here. What was the difference between Reagan and Jackie O as first ladies, as opposed to maybe other first lady so either kept a lower profile, or came into the relationship, perhaps knowing that their husband had political ambitions up front? And before I hand it off to you, I think it's probably fair to say that in many ways, Nancy Reagan in particular, and indeed, Jackie O, did exhibit those same traits that other First Lady's did, being very elegant and very classy. But there was a little bit of a difference there. Oh, no, it seemed like they were a little bit more in the public eye. Maybe it's because they were already used to it. Who knows? I'd love to have your take on that.

A

Anne Michaud 18:48

Well, I think you talk about transactional relationships. And I think I know that when Jack Kennedy was looking to elevate his political career, Jackie was someone who he could marry who was absolutely the right kind of woman, and was very comfortable in the public eye and really set fashion standards around the world in her time. I think also Nancy Reagan, as an actress herself. To me, she seems a little bit more interested in the politics and helping her husband behind the scenes than Jackie did.



Scot McKay 19:27

And she famously was, yeah, I mean, as the books were written after the Reagan era by insiders in the White House, time after time, Nancy Reagan was cited as a major influence on her husband's political decisions. Not you know, the First Lady's wouldn't be But indeed, that was especially true perhaps for Nancy Reagan. conspicuous by its absence. So far also has been talking about the infamous Netflix series House of Cards, which for heaven's sakes, and this concept we're talking about here is this central theme of the whole show, you know, you have Claire Underwood and Frank Underwood as president well as rising political stars in their party somehow becoming President. And I don't want to offer too much of a spoiler here, if you haven't watched the show, it's great show. Basically, the storyline recalls just the underhanded almost insane antics that politicians go through to posture and to build power for themselves. And indeed, Claire Underwood is very much leveraging her husband's political power to gain political power for herself. And the funny part, and I say this in all truth, despite Kevin Spacey famously cratering his own career, and therefore pretty much ending the show. Rumor has it very strongly that the writers couldn't keep up with the reality of the Donald Trump administration, because fiction couldn't possibly be stranger or more prurient or more interesting than the truth anymore. So he had a hard time writing to keep up with it. And people stopped watching because they could just sort of tune into Fox News or CNN and see reality that was more interesting and titillating than, than the fantasy. So all of this to say that the idea of how these power couples live, and even the pure politics of it is very fascinating to people in general. So it must be incredibly difficult and stressful to be in the public eye, not only for the wives, but for the husbands as well. And the strain on their relationship must be intense. Hmm.

A

Anne Michaud 21:35

Yeah, I think one of the things I found that was so set these couples apart from other private couples was that they were at times forced to go out and make a public statement about how they felt about their husband cheating. That's kind of an extraordinary thing to have to ask in a marriage.



Scot McKay 21:55

Yes, especially considering how politicized is going to be half the country is going to think you're wonderful and brave for saying something, and the other half is going to throw rotten tomatoes at you. Regardless. Yeah, brutal. Let's take this into a more personal direction for the guys who are listening. We have a lot of guys who are high achievers in this audience. And, and a lot of those men are either in a relationship with a woman who is going to be standing by their side, we hope and trust, they've married the right woman. And yet a lot of guys listening are still looking for that right woman to walk hand in hand with ARM and ARM with as they go through life together supporting each other. You know, I may have given the form away a little bit with that last statement. But what should high achieving men with ambition, think about when considering a life partner? How do you find a woman who will be just that for you, as you go through life achieving more, perhaps garnering more in the way of public spotlight, etc? What are those traits? What are men to be looking for?



 Anne Michaud 22:57

I think both people should really be committed to having the relationship be the center of their lives emotionally. And I think they should talk about beforehand, you know, what if this goes off the rails for? On the other hand? What if we're really successful at doing what we're talking about? If they're really successful as a couple, then how do you feel about being the person who's in the public eye? Or who's fighting the battles, you know, behind the scenes, or who has to go out and wear one of those gorgeous dresses and and just be the center of attention?

 Scot McKay 23:38

Yeah, it's kind of like you have to have 2020 for sight as much as possible. I would also think that any man who has long term ambition and is a high achiever would do well to get over himself, if he's intimidated by strong, smart, intelligent, successful women who are wise and make good decisions, because that's the woman you're going to have to have by your side. And of course, it has no bearing on her feminine nature. Because every woman, whether you like her politics or not, who we've discussed thus far has been that lady, very strong, smart, successful women, not a shrinking violet in the bunch. All of them intelligent, all of them, well spoken, all of them wise, and all very ladylike, very feminine. I mean, you could make a case for some exception here and there. But I think a lot of those attempts that exception making are politically loaded also. So we won't mention any names. But I think it's very important for us as guys, to think about our partnership with a woman we marry visa V. What we're going to be doing 1015 30 years from now, and for lack of a better way to put it and what we're going to be putting this woman through, and indeed, what is she going to put us through I mean some of these women who are smart, successful and ambitious in their own right, they have a way of fighting Finding their own path and doing something that we may have to follow them on, and perhaps peacefully coexist with in terms of their goals and ours. So it would be nice if we were all headed down the same path together as a couple women.

 Anne Michaud 25:12

That's a good point.

 Scot McKay 25:14

Yeah, I think so. What are the warning signs? What kind of woman do we stay away from? If we're planning to be president someday? And what to have the right personality by our side?

 Anne Michaud 25:23

Well, I think shrinking violet is probably a good warning sign, I think easily offended might be an issue. I remember when my husband and I, when he was first getting into corporate world after his service in the army, we had some really sort of parties with his his corporate friends. And some of the women were pretty Catty, and had sharp elbows. And so I had to just sort of step back and think about that a little bit and wonder if that's who I was gonna be.

 Scot McKay 25:55

So you actually did some introspection in that regard? I did. Well, that, that demonstrates a whole lot of wherewithal.

You know, in my opinion, the fact that you would be willing to even look at that as a possibility, or something that you should consider, probably speaks volumes about how you are a woman of character and really didn't want to become that. Right.

 Anne Michaud 26:16


Didn't want to become that. And I think it helped. We got married. I was 35. So I wasn't a kid. And I think maturity helps, too.

 Scot McKay 26:25

Yeah, for sure. I think a lot of times guys think to themselves, okay, I'm going to be rich and powerful. I want arm candy. I want this woman who's a supermodel on my arm, you know, cost Donald Trump right? And you have to have a smart woman, you have to have a woman who is in control of her mental faculties. You can't have a jealous woman. You can't have a woman who doesn't think quickly on her feet. And those women like men are rare. So when we find a woman like that, and we're intimidated, and we think for some crazy reason, that she's diminishing us as men that really signals we have a lot of work to do on our own maturity and our own wisdom, doesn't it? That's guys.

 Anne Michaud 27:07

Well, I agree with you there. I think those are words of wisdom.

 Scot McKay 27:11

Yeah, and I'm not asking you to throw my audience under the bus or anything. It Fair enough. Fair enough. Her name is Anne Michelle, and she is from Long Island, New York. She's a longtime Wall Street Journal reporter who's followed a lot of politicians and their wives along the campaign trail so she is a very informed voice for everything we've talked about today. She's the author of why they stay sex scandals, deals and hidden agendas of eight political wives. And you can get your copy of this very interesting book by visiting mountaintop podcast conference slash power couples, plural now make it singular or plural. I'm not going to ask you to spell Michelle we've already had an on the show so power couples, it is mountaintop podcast that conference slash power couples, you can also find why they stay and it shows wonderful book at the top of the queue at my Amazon page which is mountain top podcast conference slash Amazon once again and thank you so much for joining us today and giving us your insights on women who are powerful and stand by their powerful men. I think this is a wonderful show that guys are going to enjoy immensely and indeed a departure from what we're used to doing around here so thank you so much.

 Anne Michaud 28:22

Thank you so much, Scot.

 Scot McKay 28:24

And guys, I would like for you to take a visit to mountain top podcast comm where you can see what our sponsors are up to origin in Maine is Jocko willings company you know Jocko and he has the best protein powder that you will ever use pre workout. He's got kettlebells and plyo boxes and other appliances to help your exercise and your



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Edroy Odem 31:18

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