

Hey there, beautiful! 🌸 Before you dive in, a quick heads-up: this transcript is a super close-to-verbatim buddy from our podcast, but it's got its quirks! We didn't call the grammar cops on it, so you might bump into a typo or two. But hey, that just adds character, right? 😊 Embrace the wild side of language and enjoy the read! Happy exploring! 🚀



From Wrongly Convicted to Legal Reformer

Carmen Hecox: Imagine spending 36 years in prison for a crime you never committed, only to walk out and help change the laws for countless of women. That's exactly what Judy Henderson did. And now in her new book, *When Light Finds Us*, she shining a spotlight on how prison didn't break her. It empowered her to champion the battered women's syndrome defense. How does someone go from the darkest place imaginable to becoming a beacon of hope for others? Stick around because you are about to find out.

Introduction to Judy's Story

Carmen Hecox: Judy Henderson, welcome to Create the Best Me. This is an honor and a privilege to have you on the show because you are exactly what this show is about, creating the best version of yourself.

Judy Henderson: Yes, well, thank you, thank you, Carmen. It is such a privilege and I'm humble to be here. Um, I love the title of your podcast. I think it's, that's what everybody needs to do. That needs to be one of their goals, create the best you that you can be. And that's what I've been able to do because I've been in a position to do it.

Carmen Hecox: Mm-hmm. And the reason I invited you to the show, Judy, is because you have written a wonderful book. A book about your life, *When Light Finds Us* and it is about, well, I'll let you say what it's about. Why don't you tell us a little bit about what this book is about?

Judy Henderson: Okay, so Carmen, uh, [“When The Light Finds Us from, Life Sentence to a Transformed Life,”](#) it is about a journey that I never expected to take. A journey, that when people look at me or I'm getting ready to speak, they have no

idea and have no concept of what I'm about to say. And then whenever they hear about my journey, their eyes get big. Their mouths drop, their jaws drop, and they sit up straight, like, oh my gosh, how can this happen to somebody? But you never know, don't ever judge a book by its cover. Because the first thing they look for, they said, are tattoos. I said, oh, well, I have none.

And so, they're amazed at where I've been and what my journey has been about?

Carmen Hecox: Yeah.

The Unjust Conviction

Carmen Hecox: And first of all, I'm going to say I am so sorry for the journey that you had to go through. Where you were convicted and sentenced to 50 years

Judy Henderson: Yes, life without the possibility of parole. Mm-hmm.

Carmen Hecox: for crime you didn't even commit.

Judy Henderson: Yes, yeah. And that was very hard for me to not be, well, I'm not going to lie to you, I was very angry, and I was very bitter. But I, after going through some therapy and a lot of other issues that I had to deal with about why I got there, I wanted to know, because how does this happen to somebody that's a, lives a normal, modern-day life. Two children, picnics, dance recitals.

And then you end up in a world that is so foreign. So, the language is different, the dress is different, the mannerisms are different, the rules are different. It's like somebody just dropping you off into a foreign country and you don't know how to navigate it. That is enough to make somebody angry, you know, whenever you know you did not commit something and you're put into a, a place where they consider us as the lowest people of society.

Choosing to Get Better, Not Bitter

Judy Henderson: And, but I decided, you know, on my journey early on that I could do two things with anger, either get bitter or I could get better. And I chose better to create the life I wanted it to be.

Carmen Hecox: And what fascinates me about your choice is that you are in a place that is full of anger, negativity,

Judy Henderson: Yes.

Carmen Hecox: and where people are trying to empower, you know, to have power over you. Whether it be fellow inmates, guards, or the warden. And yet, through all of that bitter, not bitterness, but through all that chaos, you chose to be the light.

Judy Henderson: Yes, yes, I did. I didn't, of course, live this kind of life.

Navigating Prison Life

Judy Henderson: I'm the oldest of eight children and none of us had ever experienced the judicial system, jails being arrested, the police officers, any of that. So, everything was totally foreign.

How do you get a good criminal lawyer? How do you do this? How do you navigate that?

You know, it was even for my family, it was, uh, my mother was a businesswoman in the town where this, crime occurred, and it was devastating for all of us. But never once did they turn their back on me. Never once did they step aside and say, no, we can't do this. They gave everything they had to give up until some of my siblings and my parents passed away.

They never gave up that I wouldn't be home. You know, it saddens me that, um, some of them cannot be here too, for us to have the memories that we would like to make together or talked about making together. But I have my daughter, my other siblings, and I have my son and nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. So, I do have a, still a large family.

Carmen Hecox: Mm-hmm. So, tell me, you had this small village of people that knew you to the core, knew that you didn't do this.

Judy Henderson: Right.

Carmen Hecox: How were you able to keep going when you just had this really small village of people?

Judy Henderson: Because that small village of people was my heart. These were my family. These were my children that, um, I loved and adored, and I dedicated my life to whenever I was with them. And so, I could not give up. I mean, there's times that you're going to read in the book where I did attempt suicide, but once this happened, it was like, oh no, you are not, you are not going to do that again.

You are going to stand strong. You're going to figure out how this happened and you're going to get out of here. You're going to go home to your children and your family, so I, I didn't know where to start. I didn't know what to do.

The Clemency Process

Judy Henderson: But then I heard about the clemency process, uh, where you petition the governor, and I thought, that's what I'm going to do.

And I had no idea how to put a petition together for a governor. And no lawyers, it's amazing, but no lawyers know how to do that either. Uh, they're not taught in law school how to do clemency.

So, whenever I did come home, I did sit and do a round table with law students to talk to them about the clemency process, what you have to do, how you have to be very transparent. You can't even miss a traffic ticket if you got one in your lifetime. You have to tell it all whether you like it or not.

And so they were very amazed at, you know, all the details and everything you had to do to make a very good petition. And, but it took me years to, be able to navigate that and to perfect it, to where the governor's office, their legal team would want to look deeper and find out what all the details were. Because it was a complicated case. We had a conflict of interest with one attorney representing both of us, my co-defendant and I. Which was never heard of, you know, that's something that is not supposed to happen.

However, the court said in in my appeals that I always lost in the last appeal, the federal court said, what happened to you should have never happened. However, we cannot overturn your case because it would be retroactive, and it would affect

too many other cases that would cost the state too much money. So, I was denied, and I had no other option except the governor's office.

Carmen Hecox: You know that got me angry, when I read that in your book. It got me so angry, cause I started thinking this is a human being. This a mom. She left behind two babies. You ripped; you ripped her life away. She's got two babies. She's got a family.

Judy Henderson: Yeah,

Carmen Hecox: Who cares? Who cares, the ripple effect. Fix the wrong.

Judy Henderson: I know, and you know what's amazing is this governor that did come and release me, and that's the one thing he said, he said, I want to apologize for all the years Missouri punished you. And you had to suffer for something you didn't do. He said, I apologized for our state. They should have never done this to you.

And I thought that, that he was very humble. And very sincere with what he had to say.

Life After Prison

Judy Henderson: And for a governor to come in his first term, his first year to come to actually come walk inside a prison, um, and release an inmate and then later, give me a full pardon, that made history in Missouri. That's something that governors just do not do.

Um, they feel they're way up here and you are down here, so I'm not going to step in that environment where you're at.

And, uh, we are still friends, great friends to this day. He mentors me. He helped me find my writer. Um, he said, Judy, I just want you to have the best life you can have. And if I can help navigate that for you, cause you, the, the world had totally changed.

And, I had to learn so, so much. I didn't know anything about seat belts. They didn't wear seat belts whenever I was out there. So, my daughter had to keep

telling, mom, put on your seatbelt, mom, put on your seatbelt. And I said, Angel, I said, you got to remember, I'm like a baby, I'm taking baby steps. And I don't remember these kinds of things.

I mean, Carmen, let me tell you, whenever I first stepped into my bedroom, because my daughter has like a five-bedroom, four and a half bath home. And I went into my bathroom and put my tooth; well, I started to put my toothpaste and toothbrush up and I was looking around and I thought, oh my gosh, there's so much room in here, where am I going to put it where I can find it the next morning? And it was crazy.

I thought I'm not supposed to have this much room because for 36 years I had just a little metal locker. And it always went on the top shelf to the right top shelf to the right. It was the itty-bitty space. And, uh, now I have all this other. And girl, whenever we went shopping, I'll tell you, it was fun because we had, we could have six tops and, uh, no, six bottoms, 12 tops, and two pairs of shoes.

So now I don't even, I'm ashamed to even tell you what I have. Oh,

Carmen Hecox: So, Judy, you talked about that when you first went into prison.

Judy Henderson: mm-hmm.

Carmen Hecox: This was not no like fancy place where you know you're around regular people. You're around serious criminals, and this was an environment that you weren't used to. And you said that you were bitter. You admitted that, yeah, I was angry, and I was bitter in the beginning. But then you choose something better.

Judy Henderson: Yes.

Carmen Hecox: You choose to be different. Let's talk about, I know that in the book you talked about, starting out with your appearance,

Judy Henderson: Right, yes. I well, my mother was always like that, she always was fixed up. I can't even hardly remember her wearing anything but dressing heels. I, I vaguely remember, cause we did live in California for a while. And we'd go up to Big Bear and she would wear, well then it was called pedal pushers, which now are crop pants, just different term, different era. And um, but normally she always kept herself done up, always hair done, makeup done. And so that's

how I was raised. Take care of yourself, your appearance, you're outside, what you look like and be neat. Be nice, be polite. So those were the things that I were, we loved people in my family, so, we were friendly.

My mother would take food to the homeless, to the railroad tracks in her Cadillac. You know, and go under bridges and take them food and, and clothing. So, walking into this and me still being polite. I didn't know I wasn't supposed to be polite, you know, but they take that for weakness and they, you don't just speak and smile and, you know, be like that.

But too my smiles were covering up a lot of fear, a lot of anger. It was a mask whenever I was in there. And I did hold on the one thing they couldn't take from me, they could take my name and give me a number, but they could not take my appearance. So, I kept putting makeup on every morning. I kept doing my hair. I kept trying to look neat in what few minor clothes that I had. And that was something that, that brought attention. You know of course to even staff, I had a lieutenant call me down to the office one morning about, I don't know, early in the morning at one, two in the morning, said, Judy, I just want you to know you're going to have a hard road to hoe in here. And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said, because the female officers are going to give you a hard time cause they don't like how you look. I said, what? I couldn't comprehend that. I couldn't understand that concept. Will why? Why does it matter how I look?

And I had a captain that was probably six, six, big woman, and she took her hand to my throat one day as I was walking down the hallway and just pushed me over to the side and said, I just want you to know if I had my way with you, I would take away your makeup and put a prison dress on you. And scared me to death. I thought, oh my God, they really are after me. They really do want to.

And not all officers are nice. I mean, there was some, let me tell you that I would lay down and give my life for that. I, you know, that were in there and that were so kind and sweet and nice to me, but they're very few and far between.

So, you have to even learn how to navigate, how you are your personality with staff and then different with the offenders. And then you're different with your family. So, it's always, always, things are changing, confusing. So, there's a lot you have to do and there's no road maps that tell you how an inmate's supposed to be in prison.

Carmen Hecox: But you trying to be yourself. You said ok, you know what, I'm going to be here for 50 years, so might as well be myself. But my guarded self, as you said, cause there's different ways you behave around the correction officers and different ways that you present yourself around your fellow inmates.

Judy Henderson: Correct, correct. And that is one thing that's, it's just a real narrow line, you know that you have to walk because you don't have much space to, to switch back and forth. And you always have to be on your guard because they did away with mental hospitals. So, they send mental patients to prisons. So, you're dealing with all kinds of personalities, all kinds of mental diseases. And it's sad because you don't know when one of them's going to click out or, you know, attack you.

So, you're always on guard. And they say that inmates like to sit with their backs to the wall so they can see who's coming. And that's, that is very true. You do, you have to watch, and you have to read. You learn how to read people's bodies, you learn how to read their expressions. And you just always have to be on guard and that's very stressful. Very stressful.

Empowering Other Women

Carmen Hecox: I know in your book, you talked about that other women were curious about the way you looked, and then you started to share that. You know, you started making them up, making them feel pretty, making them feel like more than just an inmate or a number more in as an individual. And that became an infectious ripple effect. People started; you started to see change. You created change in a very negative environment.

Judy Henderson: Correct, correct. Because in the early years when you first came to prison, Missouri didn't have enough money to put us in uniforms or anything, so at that time we could have clothes sent from home. Well, my mother decided that she was going to send me ultra suede suits and a fur coat and, uh, all these nice things.

And I said, oh my gosh, nice lingerie, you know. And I said, mom, no I can't have, uh, you know, these are not good to have in here. But I started sharing them. You know, with, with the other ladies and I started doing their hair. I started doing their makeup.

Because let me tell you, and this is something I haven't talked about to anybody, and, and actually it's not even in the book, I don't believe. But hopefully there's going to be a movie, and we will see how, if that's in the movie. But, whenever I was in there, we would do, it was a co-ed prison. My first institution was a co-ed prison, so it was male and females, and we had dances once a month in the gym. Yes, and of course, everybody tried to look as good as they could. And so, I always tried to fix the women up in my clothes and use my makeup and do their hair and just make them look and feel like somebody they hadn't been before. And it was contagious. You know, they enjoyed that.

And then I became a fitness trainer, a certified group and personal trainer. And so, then we started working on their bodies. Clean their system out of drugs. And if you get them working out and they see such a big transformation. So, you don't want to go back to that lifestyle. All the hard work and blood, sweat, and tears you put into this. And I'm a, I'm a tough trainer. So, they would always say, oh my gosh, if you really want change in your body, get Judy because she is going to work you to the bone. She will put you in the sand pile and you will do pushups. You will run in place and do all kinds of stuff.

But they have to love each other. They have to love what they look like when they look in the mirror, and that's where you start. You have to start from the outside and then start working on the inside. But you do have to be careful because they will take kindness for weakness and try to take advantage. So, there again, it's a thin line. You have to navigate.

Carmen Hecox: Mm-hmm. And so, you started helping women start to love themselves and see themselves as bigger than what they envisioned they were.

Judy Henderson: Right.

Carmen Hecox: Let's talk about how the criminal system or the prison system, how they saw that.

Judy Henderson: Well, for one, they feel threatened if you're educated. They feel threatened if you're looking better than they are. They feel like, you know, they're superior and you're not supposed to do anything or look any certain way that could be better than what they are. So, they don't receive that well. And I think that's what the lieutenant was trying to tell me. You know, Judy, you've got to tone it down. You've got to, you've got to keep a low profile, they would say.

I wasn't doing anything to highlight myself, I was just being normal. I was being who I was whenever I came there. And I had a lot of people tell me through the years, oh, she can't, she's not like that on the street. She's not really like that on the street.

And now I am happy to say that whenever offenders that get out on parole and they come to Catholic Charities and need assistance with housing or food, they see me, and they said, oh my God, Judy, it's you. I can't believe it. Look at you. And I'm of course better out here than I was in there.

So, they said, you really are the same in both places. I said, I tried to tell everybody I wasn't going to change who I am. Because of what happened to me. If anything, I was going to get better on the inside and in my heart and love who I was.

And I didn't do that in the beginning because I was so beaten down from a 12 year abusive marriage and I didn't even know who I was. And that's what got me there. I had to understand what got me there and understand why I did not see the red flags. I wasn't addicted to alcohol. I wasn't addicted to drugs. I was addicted to love, that was my drug. And that was sad.

Because I wanted to be the caretaker. I wanted to be what they wanted me to be. And so, Carmen, I did not know who I was. I really didn't whenever I went to prison.

So, this journey has been a true blessing in so many ways, as hard as it may have been, I found a lot of joy. I found a lot of blessings in the walk that I had to, to walk, and I found my purpose, and that was the big thing.

I created what was already my purpose, but I didn't know it until I was put in this situation.

Carmen Hecox: You know in reading your book, what I noticed is it seemed like where you were at you were different. You were different than everybody else. And it almost felt like, like people were people, whether it were fellow inmates or it was the warden, or a guard, they wanted to tear you down and you were being punished as

Judy Henderson: Yes

Carmen Hecox: a way of tearing you down. But through whether you were in solitaire or, or wherever you were at whatever that punishment was, you came back instead of angry, you came back stronger, you came back with more purpose.

Judy Henderson: Exactly. And that's what I, it's funny you brought that up because that's what they told me that we're going to break you down and we're going to build you back up.

And in my mind, I was already as broken as I could possibly be. Nobody could break me any more than what had already been broken. And now I was picking up the pieces. I was going to put myself back together. I was going to fight, I was going to be free, and I was walking out of there. And in the meantime, I'm going to take advantage of every program you have, every education I can get, and I'm going to be able to fight King Kong when I walk out this gate.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah. And do you believe that sometimes, God puts us in places that we don't understand why we're there or why we are suffering, but then you, when you look back 36 years later, you see what your purpose was, what your suffering meant. Cause I kind of saw that, because you were in at this prison and then you were sent out of state. And when you went out of state, it was horrible because now you were thousands of miles away from your loved ones,

Judy Henderson: Right.

Carmen Hecox: but that prison had things, had tools and resources that were making you a better person. We're giving you more of what you needed to heal in here.

Judy Henderson: Yes, yes. That's where I started blossoming. That's where I knew I was healing. I was acknowledging I was able to take responsibility cause regardless of what the situation was, and I did not commit the murder. I was there, there was, I have to take responsibility for my presence because I did not watch the flags.

I did not pay attention. I did not see what was coming. But my choices led me there. I chose to stay with him. I chose to be blind to what was going on, and for that, I have to make amends for that. And I wrote a letter to; we had a victim's advocacy department that worked with the victims of crime, and we were allowed to send a letter to our victims if we chose to. But it was critiqued. I mean, every

dot, every period, every word was closely paid attention to before they would send that letter on to the victims. Because it had to be about them, not about us. It had to be about us apologizing and being humble and sincerely, being sorry for what they had to go through because of our actions.

And I never got that letter back, so I know it was sent on. And that was a good therapy for me, you know. Cause I felt like I was able to forgive myself for not paying attention. For being stupid, for not loving myself. And, blaming myself for other people's behaviors, all those years that I was molested and, blaming me because I thought I did something wrong. No, they did something wrong, not me. Uh, but I'm paying for it, but I'm going to get gifts out of it.

This is not going to be for nothing, it's going to be for something, and I'm going to create that, and I'm going to make it happen, and I'm going to leave my mark because I'm going to continue to help these other women.

We're going to get some programs going and we did Women Against Violence Programs in Arizona where the Governor's task force came and sit in on our sessions about battered women, and then they, created a battered women's task force in their state. So that was very rewarding. I love that it was helping women.

Then when I came back to Missouri, we crafted and created a bill and testified in front of senators and state representatives that came in and held hearing session and, it passed into law. So battered women now have the battered women's syndrome defense. So, whenever they go to trial, they have something to help them.

Carmen Hecox: Yeah, and it's because it's through your healing. Through your healing, you are able to help other women out there

Judy Henderson: Yes,

Carmen Hecox: that maybe, committed a crime due to battered women's syndrome.

Judy Henderson: Yes.

Carmen Hecox: The other thing I wanted to add in here is that, or I wanted to ask is when you went back to Missouri, because they didn't want you there,

Judy Henderson: No.

Carmen Hecox: but you got there.

Judy Henderson: Yeah.

Carmen Hecox: How difficult was it? Because you're a very strong woman, very strong, very resilient, and when you get your head fixed on, this is good. I know it's good. This is why we need it.

Judy Henderson: Mm-hmm.

Carmen Hecox: How did you have the courage to go back to the warden or to the powers that be in a place where you know they don't like you to say, we need to implement this program and here's why.

Judy Henderson: I had to prove myself. I had to show them, hey, I know how to write a proposal to you. I know how to do a mission statement. I know how to do a constitution and a bylaws to make this one of the best programs that will go forward and be here for years for you. It's all about how I can help them create things to help the offenders that will help them better control these offenders and keep them engaged in positive things.

And so, once they listened to me, once they read my proposals, and saw that I was willing to put in the work to do this. To take the time to counsel and write letters for these offenders. To help them with their children, to help teach them how to be mothers. Then they listened and they implemented these parenting programs.

They implemented parents and their children visits to where they had visits without the prison setting. And so, I think that's how I got started.

Carmen Hecox: And, you know, what I think is so awesome is that you weren't gaining anything from this, I mean, like for yourself. But it grooming you up to prepare yourself to be able to defend yourself for something that should have been done 36 years ago.

Judy Henderson: Right?

Carmen Hecox: And slowly it connected you to the right people.

Judy Henderson: Mm-hmm.

Carmen Hecox: The right people that would get you in front of the governor.

Judy Henderson: Correct, little did I know a while ago, Carmen, you did say something about, God allows us to walk through these things and do these things; and that's one thing I was really mad at God for. Because I knew he had the power to change anything in a blink of an eye, and he didn't.

And so, I was really pissed off, you know, and angry. And we had a lot of heart-to-heart talks about why are my children out there without their mother? You know, why does my siblings, and I'm the oldest of eight, that nurtured them and helped them because we were three older ones and then five smaller ones. And it was very difficult for them because they looked up to me. I was the big sister. And so, it was painful. It was painful for them to go through this.

But as I started looking at the spiritual side of this and looking at the different characters in the Bible and all they had to go through. And then they came out so much better on the other side. It was like, this isn't going to end up being a gift for me. I don't know how I'm supposed to use it. I don't know what I'm supposed to do with it, but you keep putting these people in front of me that need this or need that. And so, I just went with the flow, and I followed the navigation, and I followed the signs that God gave me, and I had a verse in my cell. I had a wet cell with a stool and sink. And I put a little verse up there that says, Jeremiah 29:11, I know the plans I have for you, plans for a future. And I kept saying, every day, this is not a future. This is not your plan for me. You have a plan for me, and I know it, and I'm going to stand on it, and I'm going to fight until it comes to fruition.

And I even did a vision board. And I started putting little clippings of up there about a pardon, about time served, about going to Anguilla where my daughter was married. And getting to see that island where she took her vows. And all the things that I'd missed all through the years and my grandchildren being born.

And they all started coming to fruition. And I had on their book, but I really didn't think I would write a book. I'll be honest with you. I, I don't know that I ever really thought I would do that because it was so painful to have to talk about and go

through. But everybody kept saying, Judy, you have a message without a mess, there's no message. Without a test, there's no testimony.

So, I said, okay, I'm going to do this. So, Jimmy and I, we've been working on this for six years. And it's finally transpired and I just love being able to share the story with everybody, and hopefully they can get something out of it that can take them into the next phase of what their purpose is going to be.

Carmen Hecox: Well, I would say Judy, you and Jimmy did a phenomenal job with this book. Because this book says that you can see someone who had a really bad situation and how they came out so, so much better on the other side. And you know, and that where you don't see hope, hope exists.

Judy Henderson: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely, Carmen, it does. Hope is probably the one thing that people can say, but they don't know how to get it. You know, they hope they don't know how to get that to transform into anything. But you do it one step at a time is what you do. And it's going to get you to where you want to be and the things that you need to have to give you and show you what you were created to be. And you keep fighting, you keep going, you love yourself.

You have to start loving yourself first and know that you are worthy. You are worthy, you are intelligent, you're smart. I tell my little grand babies, my little girls, whenever they're, I am beautiful. I am fearless. I am courageous. You know, and we go back and forth with this conversation almost daily.

Cause I want them to drum, I want to drum it into their heads. They are beautiful and they are courageous, and there's nothing they cannot do in this world if they set their hearts to it.

Judy's Advice and Final Thoughts

Carmen Hecox: Judy, what are three pieces of advice that you would give that 32-year-old single mom who's just starting to feel like she's getting on her feet and Mr. Wrong comes right in front of her?

Judy Henderson: Oh. For one, if they come on too strong, slow it down. Don't dive in. Take your time and watch all the signs. If you start seeing red flags, come up that they're trying to control you. Or I have to be with you 24/7, and you can't

be with your friends, or you can't be with your family because they think that that is showing them less love and less attention. That's a flag, hello!

You know, I've had teenagers read the bio and different things on the book and the description of the book, and they've come to me and they said, Judy, I will keep this book forever. Sophomores in high school, saying, I know I'm not, I haven't went through any of this yet, but I, whenever I do, I'm going to know what to do by reading what you had to go through.

And I never thought that age group would ever be interested in something like this, but they were really moved by it.

And, so I want people, I want women, men; even men have been in tears whenever they've talked to me about this because they see their mother going through this, and they want to save her, and they don't know how. And they said through your book, this is helping my mother.

And it's been people that's navigated this, what our project, you know, once they read it and they said, oh my gosh, you know, here I am a director, I'm a producer or something, and this struck me as hitting home. You know this is my mom. This is my mother.

And I would tell women just be cautious. Love yourself, and take it slow, when you get into a relationship,

Carmen Hecox: That is great advice. And if people knew your story, I think it would resonate a little bit more, and that's why I honestly think everybody needs to read this book. I don't care if you're a man, I don't care if you're a female.

And not, not just purchase the book and read the book yourself, but purchase copies for your daughters, your sisters,

Judy Henderson: Yes

Carmen Hecox: that one girlfriend who finds love in all the wrong places.

Judy Henderson: Yes,

Carmen Hecox: Give her a copy and they can pick up that book. They can pre-order the book now. The book is released on April 15th.

Judy Henderson: Correct, yes. Because you wouldn't want your daughter to go through this, so educate her now. Let her know what can happen, just by being in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong person can lead you to a lifetime of horror inside a prison cell.

Carmen Hecox: And honestly, Judy, you're lucky to be alive.

Judy Henderson: I am I; I really am Carmen. There were two contracts put out on me. So yes, I am very lucky to be alive. But it wasn't my time and God did save me. He did not let me die. He let me have this message so I can give it to the world and whoever wants to hear it.

Carmen Hecox: Judy, thank you so much for coming on the show. Thank you so much for blessing me with a courtesy copy, advanced courtesy copy of the book.

Judy Henderson: Thank you.

Carmen Hecox: I will include all of your information in our show notes so that people can purchase, pre-order your book, purchase it, read it, comment, and, and also learn a little bit more about you because there's more about you. You are also helping women who are coming out and get reacclimated

Judy Henderson: Correct, yes. Oh yes, I'm out here helping them and one of my lifer friends was just released by the governor December 20th, 2024. And so, I'm happy to keep doing the advocacy work that I'm doing and Survivor's Bill, we're working on that with senators and legislators as we speak here in the state of Missouri to get that passed. And that will help a lot of people.

Carmen Hecox: You are truly a blessing.

Judy Henderson: Well, thank you Carmen. And people like you give a blessing to us because you allow us to share this and to spread the information and how to touch other people's lives. So, thank you for what you do.

Carmen Hecox: Thank you.

Judy Henderson: You're welcome.

Conclusion and Next Week's Preview

Carmen Hecox: And there you have it. The remarkable story behind Judy's unbreakable spirit and how her time behind bars fueled a movement for justice. If you want to learn more about Judy Henderson or connect with her, head on over to createthebestme.com/ep110. And don't forget to pre-order or buy your own copy of [When Light Finds Us](#) available everywhere. April 15th, 2025. I love Judy's book, and I know you will too.

And don't forget to come back next week as our guest will be Jennifer Wilson, who will be here to discuss how to recognize when you're feeling burned out and strategies to overcome burnout.

Until then, keep dreaming big, take care of yourself, and remember, you are beautiful, strong, and capable of creating the best version of yourself. Thank you for watching. Catch you next week. Bye for now.