

## EPISODE 1341

[INTRODUCTION]

**Julia Barbaro (JB):** Many times he would come up and he's like "we just got another deal" and I was like, "oh, that's nice", and I would go off and do what I had to do. I didn't realize that he hated that. He felt like I didn't care; because I didn't understand it. I didn't understand what that meant because there wasn't that communication of here's what it means.

**Whitney Sewell (WS):** I'm excited about our guest today. We are going to discuss something that's not talked about often enough as entrepreneurs, as business owners, as people who are very driven. We don't talk about what happens at home enough. We don't talk about our spouse enough and the support that we need from them and that we need to be offering to them as well. As we pursue our entrepreneurial journey, our businesses, those things, we can be so driven in our business and just let the ball down or let it drop at home. It's just not worth it at that point. It is not worth it. You're gonna hear me say this in the show but I'm willing to give it all up and work at McDonald's if it means my family, if it means us staying together and my wife knowing that our marriage is solid and that we love one another. If that's what I'm here that's fine with me because it is not worth worldly success to lose everything at home. So, you're gonna hear our guests today dive into that.

Julia Barbaro, I'm so impressed with her and Gino. I've known them for a good while now, a number of years and I've just always thought so much about them personally and their family. But, she's a mother of six and obviously, the wife of Gino Barbaro who has also been on the show a few times. He's an entrepreneur and co-founder of "Jake and Gino" which most of you know. But, together with Gino, they host the Julia and Gino podcast where they focus on raising a family and running a business. Julia is the author of "The Cannolis Exploded!" and "A Gelato Blast!", books for all ages encouraging responsibility, creativity, and decision-making. She's going to talk about those books a little bit in the show. But, I encourage you to look them up. I think books like that have helped me to bring up hard topics with my children. It encourages questions from them and allows me to be able to share things with them that I

want them to know and educate them about but in a way they can understand so much easier. So, today she's going to break down many things about the support you need from your spouse when you're pursuing a business and some major struggles that she and Gino had early on. The decisions, big decisions that were made to make "Jake and Gino" what it is today that had to happen at the home and between them too. The communication that they lacked and how they accomplish that, even how they communicate these things with the children. She's going to help us with that today.

[INTERVIEW]

**WS:** Julia, pleasure having you on the show. I'm honored. You and I have already talked about a couple of things, including how our families have connected years ago in this industry. And it's so neat how things worked out and how the Lord does things. But, your heart in the business that you have is so crucial. It's not talked about very often. And when I speak often I talk about my wife. I talk about how she supported me and how it just wouldn't have happened without her. So, I love your part in this story, how you're helping people to think through these things, you know, the family level, the children, the spouse. It's so important but it's not focused on enough. Welcome to the show.

**JB:** Thank you, Whitney. I just want to first thank you for inviting me on. I want to create value for the listeners and I just want you to hear me out a little bit. As Whitney said, I have the other side to this story. A lot of you know my husband, Gino. He's very successful in what he does. But there is a second part to it, and it's the struggle. Well, we'll talk about it through the podcast. I definitely want to get into some of the details in the difficult moments but it's there. And I just want to give value to your listeners.

**WS:** Wow, awesome. I want us to just jump right in. I want us to talk about some of the hardships and difficulties and how your role in that is so crucial. And just the family component, the spousal support, all those things that, like I said, are not talked about. Let's just jump right in there and maybe even go back to some of those struggles or when you were starting your

business or some decisions that had to be made. How you all stayed on the same page and what that looks like with children. And you know, let's jump in.

**JB:** When we're talking now, one of the things that really stood out is when my husband, a lot of you know, had a restaurant, and he struggled with it, and I would watch him. So here's the other side of the story. He would come home from the restaurant dirty, smelling like garlic, and he would take off his chef clothes, and he just looked defeated. He looked like he was done and he couldn't do it anymore. And this went on for a long time. And I watched it and so I became aware of it without talking. We had a really difficult communication. We didn't have the best of communication and I'll get to that in a second. But, I was very aware of where he was and I could see he needed to change. But I didn't know what that meant. And so when the day he came to me and said what if we sell the restaurant and move to Florida and we pursue the real estate? I thought, holy cow, in my head, there's like a little window of time between you get the information and what words you speak. There's this little window of time that I think we take advantage of. And that moment, it felt like five minutes that I was thinking - you want us to leave everyone and everything we know to go somewhere because you needed a break from your life here? You know what I mean, and I was thinking, oh my gosh, how could we do that? And I looked at him and I saw the struggle that he was having. He needed a separation. He needed something different. And the only word I came out with was, yes, of course.

And I thought, holy cow, did I just say that? Is this what we're going to be doing? Because here's the thing. In the meantime, as he was doing the restaurant, what he was doing is he was trying to figure something else out. And that was real estate. And he didn't just come home from work and sit on the couch, watch TV, do video games, whatever anyone does these days, go out, go out drinking with the guys. He came home and educated himself. And I saw that with my own eyes. I saw him trying to get to a different path of his life, away from the restaurant and into something else. And here's my thought to the listeners out there - if you're trying to explain to your wife or get their support, are you showing? Are you putting in the effort? And do they see it? A lot of times we just talk, hey, I'm doing all this work. But do they see it? And I saw it. That's why it was more easier for me to say yes, let's take it on, because it's scary. I had trust in him because he was putting in the work and I saw it.

**WS:** That's so important. I think about lots of guys who do not have support or there's so much fear and taking a leap like this. It's so easy to get burdened, sobered by the fear, and really just hold you back. I just want to stress, if you and your spouse are not on the same page, it's going to be such a struggle. It's probably not gonna work. Because it's difficult getting a business started and it's so time-intensive. So, speak to, Julia, about how did he express that? Was this before he said, hey, why don't we move to Florida to do this thing? And that seemed like, oh, my goodness, can we really do this? Was he already putting in that time ahead of time as you already see this happening? You just saw this is something he's gonna be serious about, something that he's definitely dedicated to.

**JB:** It was going on at the same time. Because he was struggling, he was doing real estate and he was meeting Jake at the same time. And that was all happening at the same time. I didn't meet Jake, by the way until far into "Jake and Gino" which is interesting. I didn't even know who he was. I knew the restaurant had a dish named after him. It was called "Jake's Chicken". I'm like, who is this guy, Jake? Like, there's a dish named after him. But here's the thing, my husband, he showed me. And this was before our communication which I told you we're gonna get to and I guess we'll get to it. He showed me that he was very cautious on who he did business with. Now, he made a lot of mistakes. He chose a lot of the wrong people and he realized that after. But he was very cautious about who he went to business with. In this case, it was Jake. He knew what his values were, and what his work ethic was. And I think that's really important. So I knew that. And so I trusted him making the decision. But when I look back, I think I put a lot of trust in him because of that work. But what I could have done and this is how we plan for the future in our future conversations or our future decisions is we will look back and we say - I should have done, I should have said Gino, tell me why you want him? Let's open up the communication. Like I said, our communication really stunk. I just watched him and I said, okay, let's go. But what he could have said to me is - Julia, can you trust me? You see me I'm putting the work in. And that's what we can ask our spouse now is, could you give me, I need your encouragement. We don't ask for our spouse's encouragement half the time we just expect it. They don't know. I didn't know how to. I didn't know what he needed from me because I never asked him. But now, in our communication through life

coaching and through talking with a lot of people, I realized that I can actually ask for it. I can say, Gino, I need your support at home. I'm overwhelmed, I'm stressed out. Here are my struggles, and he will reciprocate, he will give me his struggles as well. We forget that we can ask the person for that encouragement. And I think it opens the door to a really solid relationship.

**WS:** Asking the question can go so far right? And even just expressing that you care that you know this, those things. It's interesting, you mentioned, you know, being overwhelmed at home. It can be overwhelming, this big leap and all the unknowns. And you obviously supported him and all this process. What about communication? It's so key, crucial, in every relationship, especially at home, husband and wife. Did you all develop any kind of communication cadence? How did you all improve that? I would love the listener and myself to improve this right at home even now, as entrepreneurs. I mean, we're pursuing big things. You know, we're pushing, pushing, pushing, depending on your level of drive. I mean, it's hard to shut it off sometimes. And we don't even leave time for communicating with the most important person in our life. How did you all improve that communication cadence?

**JB:** Well, it's funny, Whitney, because a lot of times we don't communicate because we don't know how and so when we don't know how to do something, we avoid it. My husband and I were married for 15 years. I think at the time when he went to a life coach school. He mentioned you wanted to do this life coach now I'm going to be honest, I thought it was just cookie nonsense life coaching where, you know, you think positively and everything will work out. And I was just like, go ahead. But what happened was amazing. We just had our fifth child and I was sitting there and I was exhausted and I was overwhelmed. He must have done this course on listening because he came to the couch and he sat down next to me and I just haven't vivid in my head. He sat down on the couch and he looked at me and he looked into my eyes. And he asked me these personal questions. He asked me one question, and as I was answering him, I was so uncomfortable. I was uncomfortable because he was listening. And I was so uncomfortable. I said, Gino, is everything okay? What are you doing? Like, I'm just listening. And I thought, holy cow, we've never done this before in all the years that we've been together. When we listen to someone half the time we're busy, we're doing something else.

And especially as a mom, you're you know, you're taking care of kids, you're cooking, you're straightening, you're doing things at the same time of communicating. And we forget that we literally have to 100% focus on the person in front of us if we really want to listen. Because we're used to talking all the time and no one's really listening like we should.

That was the start of it. That moment was, I think, the biggest breakthrough in our marriage because it was the first time I felt listened to and the first time he actually sat and watched me talk in a new way. You know, we always have conversations but this was different. And I thought, wow, this life coaching thing might be a good thing. Then, it progressed from there. And sometime later, I noticed all the people he was helping, and I thought, wow, this is incredible. I actually want to learn this. And so when I went to school for it, it was like this awareness thing. This is amazing because not only it's the listening part, it's the communication. How are we communicating with each other? And so now when I talk to Gino, I'm very clear on what I'm trying to get through. A lot of us women babble, it's reality. We go off emotion sometimes, we don't really make sense. And my husband can say, Julia, what's really going on? He can ask me the question. And I think that's part of the communication, the back and forth, the understanding of what the person is trying to get out. Because a lot of times we leave the conversation, and a lot of times our husbands are confused and so it doesn't go well.

And that's the moment guys where you could say, do I have this right? Is this what you mean? Is this what you're feeling? We can communicate that back to the person and they can say yes or no. If it's a no, we can clarify it. And then it goes into our reaction to what's being said. My husband wants to come to me and tell me things. But if I'm going to overreact about everything he does, well, guess what, he's not going to come back. He's gonna go to someone else and talk to them. I have to be responsible on how I react when he's trying to tell me something. Am I being aware of it? There were many times he would come up, he's like, we just got another deal. And I was like, oh, that's nice. And I would go off and do what I had to do. Now, I didn't realize that he hated that. He felt like I didn't care because I didn't understand it. I didn't understand what that meant. There wasn't that communication of - here's what it means. Let me sit down and show you. Because a lot of times, being on the other side, I don't understand

what it means to get another deal. I get it, you bought something, eventually, we'll make money off of it. But I want to share in his excitement but I didn't know how.

**WS:** You didn't know how that deal affected you and the kids?

**JB:** Yes, really. I know that sounds ridiculous to a lot of you. But we really don't understand. I needed him to show me, look, now we could do these things. Now we can help these people that we couldn't do before. And that was the biggest thing was when we moved to Florida, we were by ourselves. It took me a few years into being here, which is only like three years ago, that he's like, listen, here's financial freedom, here's what it means. Guess what we can help your mom move down to Florida. We can help her with finding a place because we have the money to do it. We can fly the kids' friends down and take care of them for two weeks. You know what I mean? And so for a second, I was like, oh, I understand now. My husband had to make it that I understood, not another real estate investor but his wife who doesn't do real estate. I needed to understand it in my language. And it took a while for him to figure that out and me but I'm just putting it out there that if your wife or your child or your parents or somebody doesn't understand the excitement behind what you're doing, explain it to them in their language so they could understand it. And then they could share in your excitement.

**WS:** It's like painting the vision that he has in a way that you can and the kids can understand. Now, on that note, I want you to be able to elaborate a little bit on managing the kids during this time as well. I mean, you said you had five kids.

**JB:** We have six.

**WS:** No small feat, right? I mean, planning to move, all this change, kids that already have friends and are established potentially in the community and church and all these things that are so important to us. And now it's like okay, now we're gonna move everyone. Speak to managing the kids during that time, maybe setting expectations for them, encouraging them. We're talking about him communicating with you, but you have to communicate with kids, as well, but maybe in a little different way, write or paint that vision for them. How did you all do

that? Maybe there was massive fear, maybe they were excited. But you know, how did y'all do that?

**JB:** It was a huge challenge. And I think every time we get into a situation like that, you know, we mentioned it to the kids, it was devastating. I want to be clear, it wasn't like, hey, we're moving to Florida. It was really a challenge for each one of them and very differently. We have to remember that each of our children is so different. They handle things differently. We need to talk to them differently. They're not one-size-fits-all.

**WS:** So you couldn't just like sit everybody down and have one conversation. Everybody's ready to go right?

**JB:** It was not. There were surprises. My oldest was like, oh, that might be fun. And I thought, oh my gosh, you are the one that is connected with all the people here. But we did an all in a group say, this is what we're going to be doing. But then, I had to go separately to each one of them. And it was a challenge for years. It wasn't, once we got down here, everything was fine. There's still - I mean we've been here for five years - and there's still tears once in a while, that they miss what they used to have. As a parent, we want to take care of them. We want to fix it. Our desire is to make it where nothing's wrong, and everything's happy. It was always great and joyful at home. What happens when we do that is we're just masking up what they're feeling. And I had to experience this and learn it. So, I didn't know this ahead of time but I had to realize that I was devastated too and they needed to see that. They needed to see their emotions and know what they were feeling. Sometimes, we try to avoid it. We try to avoid the pain, we try to avoid the fear and so we pretend like we're okay. But it's okay because we have to be in that moment for a little while. We have to be devastated and painfully miss our family up north and just like our identity up there. So, I had to figure out over the years, how to say, you know what, I'm upset too. And let them see that piece of me where it's difficult.

But one of the things too, is that when we're the parent, we're the leaders, right? We're guiding our children, and our communication between our spouses is super, super crucial. My husband and I had a lot of disagreements, a lot of arguments throughout the time, and a lot of us want



to hide in the other room, so the kids don't see it. But it's good for them to see that. It's good for them to see that we disagree and we argue and then we make up and then we talk about it. Because otherwise they're gonna grow up thinking, well, marriage is perfect. There are no arguments, everything should be fine. Then, they get into a marriage and they're like, wait a second, this is not what my parents had. They had the perfect marriage. They're expecting it as well. It comes back to the responsibility. As for me, as the mom, I'm here to guide them as best I can and to say it's okay to be upset. It's a challenge. It really is. And everything, every decision we make affects everyone else in our life. You know, when we decided to move, it affected not only our family but everyone that we left. And that's something that we forget.

**WS:** I always like to ask how people like to give back. And maybe you can share how you all like to give back. But also share about, you know, the books you're writing and how you're helping in that way as well.

**JB:** Well, giving back, you know, I think goes back to giving to those who need help. A lot of times we think of the other side of the world, we got to go do a mission trip on you know, who knows where. But there are people in our community, there are people even in our own homes that need support. Start with our children. Sometimes we're so focused on trying to help everyone else that we forget that people in our house are suffering. A lot of times what I have to notice is, okay, I'm trying to help all these people around, am I focusing also on my children? Am I being there for them? And so yes, I am. No, I'm not. I have to reevaluate very often and my husband as well. But then outside of that, sometimes it's the person that lives next door that just needs to be listened to. We think so big that we have to do these amazing things in the world. But sometimes, it's just a person at the grocery store that just wants to talk and talk and talk. Meanwhile, we're in a hurry to get out of there. But it's that acknowledgment of this person who just needs to be heard. That's really giving back in my life. I can't go on a mission trip somewhere else. But what I can do is go to the grocery store and hear the person bagging tell me their life story. I can ask them one question and they feel like you leave with a smile on their face. That does make a difference. I think we forget that it doesn't have to be this great big thing. It can be something so tiny.

But through that, I have these great ideas that I tell my husband. And every time I have this great idea, he does more work which is what I try to avoid. I try to balance my great ideas. You know, I'm being half joking here. But one of them was a children's book. I said, you know, you have a lot of great books. You have all this education for adults. We have kids, and we know a lot of people that have children and what better way to show just decision-making. Decision-making responsibility with a children's book is geared towards seven to ten-year-olds. We have two books, it's "The Cannolis Exploded", and also "A Gelato Blast". It's basically something bad happens and these three characters, we have Responsible Rhino, Creative Caterpillar and Pity Party Pig, they have to decide what to do. So, all of them take different paths. Obviously, the responsible one, he gets educated, you know, and he goes down that road. The creative Caterpillar tries to create something different, like kind of like an entrepreneur, and then the Pity Party Pig feels sorry for himself for way too long. You know what I mean? It makes really bad choices.

It's interesting because this is literally what I talk to everyone about but we just put it in kid form. It's so important as parents or even you know, we don't have to be parents to read it to children. Grandparents, aunts, uncles to open the conversation to children saying, hey, by the way, your decisions matter. Your decisions that you choose to take will affect your future. And so it's great. In the back, there are questions to ask and which I love because it's not just a book. It's like it's a thought-processing one. Then the second book, they have Mentor Moose. Who are you listening to? That's how important that is for children, to know that when we're trying to get advice from somebody, who are we listening to? Who are we asking if the kids are struggling with their mother. let's say, 'cause that happens. Are you going to someone who has a really bad relationship with their mother. Or are you going to someone who respects their mother? So, we have to think about who we're getting advice from. Because if we're getting advice for money, we're having a financial issue, are we going to someone who has a solid foundation in finances? Or are we going to someone who is in the same situation that we are? That's something to talk about. And so this is just a kid's version of it. Yeah, it's super fun.

[END OF PART 1 INTERVIEW]

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