



THAN Transcript S3E40 – Saying No to Sexual Harassment

With Alreen Haeggquist

Heather Drago Welcome to That's a Hard No, the podcast about learning to say no and set boundaries to live our best lives. I'm your host, Heather Drago. You may think because of this podcast that I'm a boundary setting expert, but I'm not. I'm an expert at struggling to set boundaries, but you know what? I'm working on it and it is getting easier. Follow along with me as I learn from fellow strugglers and experts so that you too can start saying no without feeling fear, guilt, or FOMO.

Heather Drago Only obligations got you feeling low You're not sure what to do Weight of expectations is coming down on you

Heather Drago So today we're going to start with a little bit of a content warning, guys. We're going to have a meaningful, deep conversation that is going to include some issues that might be difficult for some people, especially those who are survivors of abuse, sexual abuse, assault, sexual assault. Um, these are some heavy topics. Um, you may find this to be a very helpful discussion, but if this is something you're not in a place to receive, then, you know, I welcome you back to our next episode, which will be about something else. So, um, with that in mind, let's begin. So today I am so pleased to introduce my guest, Alreen Hedquist, who's a seasoned lawyer on a mission to support women who face sexual abuse, harassment, or discrimination. She founded her own firm, HeadQuest & Eck, LLP, in San Diego in 2008, which has helped hundreds of other women stand up for themselves. Alreen has challenged high-profile entities, including the Salk Institute, Trader Joe's, Kaiser Permanente, the San Diego Sheriff's Department, and a president-elect. So, Alreen, thank you so much for joining us. Welcome.

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, thank you for having me.

Heather Drago So let's start with your story and why this became such a mission for you.

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, sure. My father growing up was a terrifying presence. Every day of my life, I lived in fear of him and fear of what he was going to do. Oh, I'm so sorry. Oh, thank you. whether he was going to be verbally abusive, you know, emotionally abusive, physically abusive or sexually abusive to me as a young child was just scary. You know, your parents are supposed to be the ones building you up. And he was tearing me down. And I was wanting somebody to protect me. I was hoping somebody would. And typically that person is your mother or a parent. And my mom never said anything. She saw what was going on in the house and she stayed silent. And so that had, you know, a tremendous effect on me of seeing somebody just be quiet, you know, in the face of abuse. I felt really hopeless and helpless during that time and trying to commit suicide at a very young age, you know, once at 11, you know, again at 16, just because I didn't know there was any way out of it. And there was nobody there to save me from what was going on. And, you know, the sexual abuse stopped for me when my sister spoke up. And, you know, he was abusive in all the other ways, but at least the sexual abuse stopped in my house. And my mom staying silent, my sister, you know, speaking up and protecting me at, you know, around the age of of 12, that really fires me up to not stay silent anymore.

Heather Drago I just can't stay silent. You saw the impact of that immediately.

Alreen Haeggquist Correct. And it's just in me to not allow that to continue anymore.

Heather Drago So first, thank you for sharing that. I have so many feelings and thoughts about this. As many of our listeners know, I'm also a survivor of childhood sexual abuse. Totally different situation. Everybody's story is unique. The one thing that really pops to mind is the issue of your mother staying silent and how much of a betrayal that must have felt like as a child and that sort of existential threat at all times. Because that's, I know based on some of the experience I had as a child that when my mom was threatened or I thought something was, you know, the stability of my mom wasn't there, then it just was literally an existential threat. And so I can only imagine what you must have been going through. And I'm also wondering, you know, was she as much a victim or was she complicit in your mind?

Alreen Haeggquist No, as a child, I thought she was another victim, you know. He was abusive towards her as well. I mean, she had an arranged marriage when she was 17 years old. Okay. And, you know, he wanted all these children. And so she complied. And, you know, we had 10 kids, I'm the youngest of 10.

Heather Drago Oh, wow. Yeah.

Alreen Haeggquist Okay. So she was in this household that is a very young child herself, you know, seeing this, so I saw her as a victim, I think, as I got older, and I had a daughter of my own, that's where or I got mad that she stayed silent. But as a kid, I didn't think about it. And her solution, when we were young, was just to pray, you know, just pray to God, and everything is going to be all right.

Heather Drago Yeah.

Alreen Haeggquist But That's not how it works.

Heather Drago You know, so I wasn't planning on talking about this, but so my, so I'm part Lebanese and my grandmother's parents were both immigrants from Lebanon, arranged marriage. When my great grandmother was five, she was arranged to marry this man who was 35, right? They ended up having 10 children. Wow. We're pretty sure that every girl of the 10 children in that household was molested by their father. And my grandmother's first memory is of being molested by her father. And so the only reason I'm bringing this up is like, I'm sure you are not the only victim in your household. And this is generational. Unless the cycle is broken and someone does step forward and save children or help children or as adults go through therapy and advocate for themselves and break the cycle, this stuff keeps happening, right?

Alreen Haeggquist Correct, that's why I'm doing this, right? It's not easy to put all your stuff out there in a book and to share your story, but I know how important it is, and this is the way to do it. I have to share mine so I can get other people to hopefully come forward with theirs.

Heather Drago Yeah, so tell me about the, you don't have to go into details, of course, we want to respect privacy, but tell me about the types of people you help, the situations they come from, and how you help them.

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, so primarily we help women in the workplace. to go to work every day to provide for your family and have a light livelihood is paramount. And when a woman goes into work and they're being abused sexually by their boss, and if they stand up, they're worried about losing their job and not putting food on the table. That shouldn't be the case, right? Like you shouldn't ever have to make a choice of being abused at work or providing for your family. And so we help women in the workplace stand up for themselves against their abuser, who's usually somebody who's rich and powerful and has all the resources. We're here to tell them that the laws apply. It doesn't matter how much power you have, how much money you have, how much influence you have. These laws tell you you cannot do that in the workplace. And that's primarily

the women we help. The other group of women is those who have been sexually abused and assaulted by other members who they trust, whether that be the doctor who you go to, the dentist you go to. You're at a care facility. So women who put their trust in somebody, and when that trust is broken, that's when we come in and help them stand up for themselves.

Heather Drago Do you find that some people, some women don't necessarily, I guess this could be male or female, some people do not always understand immediately that they've somehow been violated?

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, for sure. I mean, they, again, I think, They take it on themselves like they did something wrong. They asked for it. You know, they shouldn't have been in that situation. They should have said no. They should have pushed him off like they think it was their fault. They got them in themselves into that situation. They're worried nobody's going to believe them. They're worried like, well, why would this person with all this power want to do that to me? And so that is their first thought of. You know, I don't want to rock the boat. I probably did something. You know, let me just move on and continue working. And either it happens again or they just can't live with it. You know, it starts causing a lot of mental ailments. And they come to my office really trying to understand what their rights are and to understand what happened and what are their options to primarily put it to an end. And most of them do try to do something on their own, right, going to HR or another supervisor or trying to like resolve the situation without going to a lawyer. And so we're almost like a last resource if they've tried other avenues to help themselves and it hasn't worked.

Heather Drago Okay, so when should someone try to handle things themselves? Who should they talk to? When should they go to an attorney like yourself for help? Like, I guess, help us understand what boundaries are legally enforceable and when someone should go to authorities or go to a professional like yourself or, I don't know, tell me. That's a lot, okay. Stop, stop, that's one question.

Alreen Haeggquist In the workplace, if somebody is verbally harassing you, making inappropriate comments, making noises, won't stop asking you out, you should tell them no. But like I said, some people don't feel like they have a voice or they feel really scared to do anything. And so if you can't do that, you do go to somebody above the person harassing you. If that person doesn't exist, right, if this is a top person at the company and there is no HR, there is nobody else to go to, then you can go to a lawyer to help advocate for your rights, right? The lawyer can stand up to that person. Same with if it's physical, right? Step one is try to say no and say you don't want it, and if you can't, go to somebody else, and if that doesn't work, then you come to a lawyer. You

can also go to a lawyer straightaway, But like I said, sometimes people just want to try to resolve it on their own and take some action. I mean, the company has a duty. That's the thing. Our society has said this is unacceptable behavior. There's no society you would go into and they would say, yes, this is appropriate in the workplace. Your boss should be able to grab your butt or send you these nude pictures. Nobody says that's OK. And you have an option to tell them that that's not appropriate, or you have an option to get a lawyer involved to make sure they understand that's not appropriate. And the laws are there to protect you. With respect to your question as to when to go to authorities, sexual assault, so we're talking about physical contact, you can report to the police at any time when there is actual physical contact involved. Or if there is stalking involved, you can go to the police for that. where the person just like, yeah, shows up at your house, shows up, you know, is waiting for you outside, and you just can't seem to escape that situation. You know, the police are there for that as well. So what I do is all civil, like all the work that I do is trying to get you money for the harm that you suffered and to get this conduct to stop in the workplace. But I don't have any authority in the criminal realm, and the police are there for that.

Heather Drago So as you're speaking about the kind of more harassment type things, I'm thinking about my mom, who worked in a male-dominated field, was the only woman in the plant where she worked. Things would happen like one time someone, they put in her locker like knitted nipple warmers, or they did like a cake that was boobs, or they, They just did all kinds of like quote-unquote jokes, right? It was just the joke and they were just being jokey and at the time Ridley wasn't discussed in our culture and she just put up with it because she didn't want to be seen as a quitter. She wanted to be just as tough as the other guys. She was raising me, you know. And I think now that kind of humor is no longer acceptable. But I also know that there are lots of women who have difficulty speaking up and saying, hey, that's not OK. So can you help some of our listeners with language maybe of like sometimes some things that happen? And I talk about this a lot. People who push your boundaries, people who do weird, inappropriate things. Like sometimes they do it in a way, and this is true with narcissists too, like that is so sort of weirdly vague and undefined, it's really hard to put your finger on it. Do you know what I'm saying?

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah. So we talk about those as either microaggressions, you know, all the little tiny paper cuts, you know.

Heather Drago Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So when does that, like, does that, is that like a black and white in the law? That is harassment. You cannot do that. That kind of joking thing or.

Alreen Haeggquist You know, I feel like nothing in the law is black or white. You know, I feel like we live in this, in the world of gray, but if it's making you feel uncomfortable at the work and it's not necessary for the workplace, then it's not appropriate. You know, does it rise to the level of filing a lawsuit? Maybe not. But the example that you just gave of having to, you know, have a cake of nipples and it's just, you know, female parts where that's kind of the humor. It's like, what does that have to do with, you know, building a part? Nothing, you know? And so I think in that situation, that's when you can talk to HR and just say, hey, this is making me feel uncomfortable. It has nothing to do with workplace. And I think it's inappropriate. And it's very, you know, gender based.

Heather Drago Oh, yeah. Just making this woman feel, yes, uncomfortable, right? Like, yeah, that's all that she's there for, right? And yeah, and they thought it was hilarious. Yeah. So I keep going back to your mom. And and I'm, and I'm wondering if you could elaborate a bit about silence versus advocacy. And how sometimes silence or complicity is a form of gaslighting. It's a form of saying this isn't so bad and this isn't really happening. Sometimes people just deny terrible things by just saying it's not really happening. And then the role of advocacy and your sister standing up and what you do.

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, so with my mom's silence, not only was she silent, but she you know, told us we should get over it, right? Like, he wasn't that bad of a person because he didn't kick us out of the house and he was providing us with food and shelter and, you know, buying us clothes. And so that made him a good father because he didn't throw us out on the street. And so that was actually even worse. It's not only that she's not saying anything, but she's excusing his behavior for this reason that didn't make any sense, and it still doesn't.

Heather Drago I mean, he was wanting credit for like the baseline most bottom thing you do as a parent, right?

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, yeah.

Heather Drago I don't know.

Alreen Haeggquist And he would still say that today, you know, just would try to justify his behavior that he was, you know, okay. And just like, we have it better than other people, right? This idea that you should get over it. And I have those beliefs, like I felt guilty for even wanting to talk about my abuse when I have a successful law firm, I'm, you know, a lawyer, I went to law school, like, get over it. Because it isn't that bad. Some other people have it so much worse. And that was this belief that was instilled from as a young child. And it's like, wait a second. It doesn't, it's not whether somebody had it

worse than me or better than me, like, This was not OK. And by you just not being able to talk about it and almost accepting the behavior like it was acceptable behavior in the house, that was the problem. And so, you know, maybe my mom didn't have the voice to stand up to my dad. Right. I told you I have a lot of empathy for that. Right. She had an arranged marriage, so I can have empathy for that. But she took it a step further, you know, by excusing his behavior. It wasn't like she was there and says, I know, you know, sweetheart, this is really hard. You know, I don't know how to get out of it myself. You know, I don't know how to stop it. I don't know what to do." Instead of saying that, she just was like, you should be okay with it.

Heather Drago You don't have it so bad. Yeah. Yeah. It's not. Oh, man. That's awful. Yeah. Yeah, and I think I can only speak as myself as a white woman, right? Like just as women, I think we blame ourselves. And it wasn't until I was a mother looking at my seven-year-old at breakfast one morning, literally there was one morning where she was eating breakfast before school saying something silly that a seven-year-old would say. And this epiphany hit me and said, that's how old I was. There's no way I was responsible for any of this. And up until that moment, I had always held this sort of, what did I do to cause this, right? So I think we already are saying those things to ourselves. It's not that bad. And then to have an adult who we trust say those same things, unimaginable to me. Okay, we'll be right back with Allerine. And we're back. So advocacy, I cut you off before you could answer my very long, long question.

Alreen Haeggquist No, I was just gonna say with respect to advocacy, I mean, obviously, I don't wish that happened to me. And I'm not happy that it did. But as a result of what happened to me, I am a tremendous advocate. I had so much anger when I was a kid that I couldn't let out, right? I couldn't be angry at my dad. I couldn't stand up to him. I couldn't say anything to him when I was a kid. And so I had all that in me. And now that comes out in the courtroom, that is a great place to, you know, project your anger onto those who are abusing, you know, my clients. And so I have learned through a lot of years to, you know, hone in on that anger and focus it to where it belongs. Before, you know, I was just angry at everybody and everything. And now I'm able to focus it and be a really compelling advocate for my clients when they've been abused.

Heather Drago So my little agency works with an organization called OAESV, which is the Ohio Alliance to End Sexual Violence. They're an umbrella organization that supports rape crisis centers around our state. And one of the campaigns we help them with is called Be the One. And it is targeted towards teens and tweens to help them become active bystanders and advocates and to know when to step in when they see bullying or sexual harassment or sexual violence. And when they say sexual violence, it's not just

assault, right? Sexual violence can be words. It can be harassment. It can be a lot of things. So I'm wondering if we should take a minute and talk about how to be a good advocate for someone if you suspect or see something going on. What's safe to do? What's not safe to do? Do you have any advice in that realm?

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, same thing. I mean, if you see something, say something, right? We've heard that slogan many times. But sometimes it's complicated. It is complicated because your own job might be at risk. But I think if you can't say something in the moment, if you see somebody being abused and you don't want to confront the situation yourself, being able to write it out, maybe send an email about what you just saw or document what you just saw, or go back to the person that you saw being abused or hurt and saying, hey, I saw what happened, how can I help? Those are all ways, because a person, again, thinks they're all alone and they have to go confront it themselves. So having somebody on your side, maybe to help you, you know, is another way you can be an advocate without having to step in and confront the person yourself.

Heather Drago What are some important things you think people should know, things that you confront every day working with people who are, you know, confronting harassment or workplace sexual violence?

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, I mean, one of the things I notice is it's always sometimes like a lead up, like a lot of little small things happen and then something really big happens and they kind of don't know how they got there. And so my recommendation to people is like when something starts making you feel uncomfortable, even if you're not ready to say anything, start writing it down, you know, start taking notes of it, start, you know, either sending an email to yourself or keeping a journal about what's going on. That's always really going to be helpful because if something really big happens later on that you do want to say something about and you do, you know, want to take it to HR or you want to file a lawsuit, you know, having that history of what was going on throughout the time is really helpful.

Heather Drago Right, like a provable pattern.

Alreen Haeggquist Exactly, as to how it's been. If you see, again, somebody else that's, you know, in your situation, and again, if you can't stand up you know, for them by themselves, maybe take them aside and say, hey, I saw what happened. You know, what can I do? If you need any support, I'm here for you. You know, if you need a witness to what happened, I'm here for you. And kind of working together is how we're going to stop the problem. Right. And again, I know how hard it is to speak out about something.

But if you don't speak out, not only is the conduct going to continue, but it's probably also going to happen to somebody else after you.

Heather Drago Absolutely. Yeah. And one of the things I'm always trying to be mindful of as a woman entrepreneur, business owner, and you are one yourself, what are some things we can do to kind of instill a workplace culture where not only do people know those kinds of things are not acceptable, but people know that you are welcoming their feedback, input, like that it's a healthy space to communicate.

Alreen Haeggquist Yeah, I mean, I think it's important to lead from the front. There's lots of laws that require a lot of sexual harassment training in the workplace that everybody has to go to.

Heather Drago But a lot of people roll their eyes at that stuff. Exactly. And like you have to, you have, you need to know or let people know that it's like you sincerely believe this and it's not just you're ticking a box.

Alreen Haeggquist Correct. So as a leader, you need to show up. You need to be in that same room and that training's happening. Right. They can see you attending the same training, being serious and taking in the information and having a discussion about it, how to make sure your workplace is not one that tolerates this conduct. Every company I think in the country has a policy against sexual harassment in the workplace. The policy means nothing if you don't act when the behavior occurs in your workplace. What are you going to do when it happens? And are people trained to do something about it? That's the other thing. Lots of workplaces have these policies, but managers and supervisors, they don't know what to do when the conduct is occurring. They don't know who to go to, what actions should be taken, what steps they should take. And so having people not only trained on what conduct is acceptable and not acceptable in the workplace, but also when unacceptable conduct occurs in the workplace, how they're going to act, what actions need to be taken. And leadership needs to say that it's important and be part of those conversations. not just let somebody else run it for them.

Heather Drago Right. No one is above the law.

Alreen Haeggquist No one is above the law.

Heather Drago That is correct.

Alreen Haeggquist No one is above the law. And so it doesn't matter if the salesperson that brings in the highest amount of sales to your company, if you're going to let that guy harass your female employees, that's a really bad message that you're sending in

the company because you're telling your company and your employees that, you know what, how much money you make is way more important to me than how you are feeling in the workplace and whether you're being harassed or abused. And that's not a message you as a leader wanna send.

Heather Drago How can we help people who are survivors and are in a process with someone like you? How can we show up and support them?

Alreen Haeggquist You believe them, right? That's like the step one.

Heather Drago Number one.

Alreen Haeggquist Number one, right? Believe what they're saying and not try to poke holes in everything and how they're telling their story and the way they're telling it. Minimize it. Minimize it and questioning why they didn't act a certain way when it happened and not telling them what you would have done if you were in that situation. That's not helpful. Just listen, believe what they're saying, and then ask, what is it that I can do to help you? Instead of putting your predetermined concept of what you would have done in the situation. That's not helpful. like steps you can take to kind of get on the path to healing. I think that's really important. You know, like step one, like, what do you do? It's like, we can't heal ourselves from the abuse if we don't acknowledge that it happened, right? Even though it's easier to just push it aside and say, you know what? I just, I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to deal with it. I've moved on from it. Until you acknowledge that it is something that happened, you can't even be on the path to healing. And so, you know, It's not that you don't know that it happened, but it's that you haven't like let it out from your mind. And I think step one is like maybe just journaling it. If you're not even ready to voice it, to tell another human about it, you know, start journaling to yourself. You don't have to share the journal, but just letting it out. You're taking the first step to say, you know what, this really shitty thing happened to me and it wasn't okay. And I don't want it to define the rest of my life. That's the thing with abuse. It's like, it's already taken so much.

Heather Drago Yeah.

Alreen Haeggquist It's already done so much harm, but you keeping it in, it's just continuing. It's adding more harm than already existed.

Heather Drago So as a survivor, I used to brag all the time about how good I was at compartmentalizing. I'm like super good at this. I can put that away and do this other thing. And so to kind of piggyback what you're saying is like, if you don't deal with it, if

you don't like face it and start processing what happened, it will find a way to process whether you like it or not. And so for many years, I put it in a box. I talked my way out of having to go to therapy for a while. Like I was really good at being like, I'm super well adjusted. I'm fine. Right. Put it in a box and didn't think about it. And then I went to art school, and I was a young adult, and I was trying to live my life, and it came out. It came back as some terrible PTSD, and I had to stop everything, leave school, get a job so I could have therapy, and then I worked for nine years with therapists to process. It's one of those things, at some point, one way or the other, it's going to affect your life. And it seems to me it's better to address it head on and be in the driver's seat than let it misdirect you in all kinds of different, unhelpful ways.

Alreen Haeggquist I couldn't agree with you more. I mean, you know, college saved me. I was able to get out of my abusive situation, my abusive home, by going to college. And then I went to law school. And I felt great because I was free. Right. And I thought I'd left it behind. What's the big deal? It's life is great. And it came when I had my daughter, you know, it came back and it came back roaring. And I couldn't figure out what was wrong. I was depressed. I was really anxious. So I went from a complete high. Right. to a complete low. Yeah. And I had an ulcer, I had a bleeding ulcer that would not stop. So not only did I have a mental, you know, emotional manifestations, but I had physical manifestations. Yeah, I could not escape. And I still like didn't think about going to therapy because I couldn't connect the fact that what happened to me as a kid was causing these things now. And I couldn't understand that my physical manifestations were being caused by trauma that occurred a long time ago. And so when I first started therapy, I went to therapy because my daughter was the one that was triggering me, you know, having a baby, you know, was was having triggering effects on me. And so I went started therapy because I just wanted to be a better mom to her. I wanted to see what I could do to not have those triggering effects. And so when I went to therapy, I was like, okay, I'm just, you know, I'm going to have four sessions and that's going to be the cure to, for me to move on from this. Um, obviously I still see my therapist now. It's not four sessions aren't a cure. Um, and what I have learned throughout the process is I can shove it down as far as I want, but my body remembers it keeps score it's coming out. And so, For me to share my story and have these discussions allows me to show up in the best way possible for my daughter, for my husband, for my clients, for you, and for myself. But I had to learn that, you know, and that's what I kind of go back to. I had to learn that I had to acknowledge what happened. It wasn't like, okay, that happened to me. These are the effects of it, and now I'm going to do something about it. It was recognizing, like, I wasn't 100%. I wasn't my best self. you know, like feeling happy and joyful.

Heather Drago Right, right.

Alreen Haeggquist And I needed to figure out, you know, how to get there. And so that's why I started trying various different things on my healing path to really just be a better person and to show up for the people that I love the most. That was my why. Those were the reasons that I wanted to make a change and, you know, do something about it. And that's why I share my story now. So I'm writing this book because I have realized by talking about it, by sharing it with other people, not hiding it, not repressing it, that is how I healed myself. And I want to have other people do the same so they can live their best life, so they can show up for all the people that they love, including themselves.

Heather Drago Fantastic. So one last little thing, and maybe it's not so little, is I wanted to talk about boundaries that survivors should set for themselves. Not should, but can set for themselves. I, for one, have a boundary, which is I don't go into details. People ask me what happened. I'm like, you know what? I don't really want to relive it at this moment. I don't want to walk through everything. You don't need to know all the gory details. And I have a few others as well. That's a pretty firm boundary for me. What do you say about boundaries and survivorship?

Alreen Haeggquist So, you know, my boundary now is, you know, I'm not going to stay silent, you know, like, I'm, I'm not going to continue to just keep this inside, you know, right now, for my family, this is hard to understand. They're not understanding why I need to talk about it. Why do we need to share with the whole world what happened to us? They're not understanding that. And I'm saying because it's going to continue causing you harm. We have a lot of side effects because of the trauma. So we can't stay quiet anymore. That's the boundary I've now created is I'm not going to stay silent. I was silent for a long time. I kept the secret. I kept the family secret. And the only person that was hurting was us. So why do we need to continue doing that to protect what? What are we trying to protect? That's the boundary that I have set is I am no longer just going to be quiet about it. Because I don't know what I'm trying to, I don't know who I'm trying to protect.

Heather Drago Right.

Alreen Haeggquist Well good. I'm staying silent.

Heather Drago We need people like you to speak up. That's good. Good, good, good. So tell our listeners more about how they can find you, what you're up to. Tell us about this book you're writing.

Alreen Haeggquist Sure. So the book is out. It's called Fired Up Fueling Triumph from Trauma. And I talk about, you know, my my childhood of abuse and the consequences it left behind and then my path to healing and how to get out of it. And now I have how I have flipped it. And now I represent the same people that I was. Right. I was an abused person. I helped those who had been abused and sexually and in the workplace. And I stand up for them. So I've flipped everything around to use it as my superpower. And the book's now available on Amazon. You know, my law firm is called Hank was the neck route in San Diego, we represent women, you know, all across the state. Because they have the voice I know they have it inside them we're just here to help them and stand up for them, and you can find me, you know, at. That's a law firm. I'm here, I'm here.

Heather Drago Yeah, we'll put all the links on our show notes so everyone will be able to find you and find your books. Yeah, thank you. I'm so grateful to you for spending time with us and sharing your story and talking about advocacy. I truly appreciate what you're doing.

Alreen Haeggquist Thank you for having me, Heather, and thank you for sharing your story with me. That was really important as well. Thanks.

Heather Drago Got questions or a boundary-setting success story or flop? It's easy to get in touch with us. Send an email through our website, hardnopodcast.com, DM us on social, we're at Hard No Podcast, or leave a message at 216-370-3410. We'll be featuring some of our favorite questions and messages in future Mailbag episodes, so get in touch. You can find show notes and a transcript of today's episode on our website, hardnopodcast.com. Make sure to like and subscribe on your favorite listening platform so you don't miss any new episodes. And if you liked what you heard, please give us a rating and review, especially on Apple so others can find us too. That's a Hard No is a production of Clever Grow Marketing, my strategic marketing agency based here in beautiful Cleveland, Ohio. You can learn all about us at clevergrowmarketing.com. It's written by me, Heather Drago, and our amazing marketing and production coordinator, Mara Del Rosario. Production support, Evergreen Podcast, Noah Fouts, producer and editor extraordinaire. Our awesome new rock anthem was written by Noah and performed by his band, The Big Leagues. I love it so much. Thank you, Noah. Shout out to Jake Donnelly, the videographer and photographer who's the creative force behind our YouTube videos. You da man, Jake. You can find him at rjdonnelly.com. Until next time, thanks for listening. And remember, saying no isn't just okay. Saying no is the key to living an authentic, fulfilling life. So do it. Find your no and say it unapologetically.