

# BOLD JOURNEY

---



## Life, Values & Legacy: Our Chat with Rosa Santiago Zimmerman of Santa Rosa Beach, Florida

September 24, 2025

Rosa Santiago Zimmerman shared their story and experiences with us recently and you can find our conversation below.

**Good morning Rosa, we're so happy to have you here with us and we'd love to explore your story and how you think about life and legacy and so much more. So let's start with a question we often ask: What do you think others are secretly struggling with—but never say?**

Rosa Santiago Zimmerman – I think most people are fighting quiet battles of identity. The world is loud with rules, how you should act, how you should look, what success is supposed to feel like, and so many people bend themselves into shapes that don't even belong to them. Underneath it all, they're wondering, "Who am I really when nobody is watching? Who am I without the weight of expectations?" That internal tug-of-war between who you truly are and who you're told to be is exhausting, but people rarely admit it out loud.

**Can you briefly introduce yourself and share what makes you or your brand unique?**

I am Rosa Santiago Zimmerman, the Founder and CEO of RSZ Design + Development, a premier turn-key firm specializing in interior design, residential construction, and project management. With over 28 years of experience, I have built a reputation for excellence, leading a woman-owned, bilingual, and Latina-led business that values creativity, collaboration, and craftsmanship. Known for my grit and passionate leadership, I have cultivated strong industry partnerships and assembled a talented team dedicated to transforming spaces into functional and meaningful works of art.

Beyond RSZ Design + Development, I expand my impact through Build with Rosa, a dynamic lifestyle brand that blends design, construction, and storytelling. Through my YouTube channel, social media platforms, and bilingual children's book, Rosita's Design Adventures – Las Aventuras de Diseño de Rosita, I make design fun, accessible, and inspiring for all ages. My book follows Rosita, a spirited Puerto Rican girl, on creative adventures that introduce children to design concepts, teamwork, and cultural identity, inspiring them to see the world as a place of limitless possibilities. Through my engaging content, I empower DIYers, design enthusiasts, and young dreamers to tackle challenges, embrace creativity, and turn their ideas into reality.

Right now, I'm especially excited about Wisteria Canopy, a brand new, no-HOA development in Defuniak Springs, Florida. Think Yellowstone grit meets Santa Rosa Beach charm—10-acre parcels surrounded by trees and fresh air, just 40 minutes from the sugar-white beaches of South Walton. We still have lots available, so check it out!

At the core of everything I do, whether it's building homes in Florida, Alabama, and Georgia, mentoring the next generation, or creating content that makes design accessible, I want to inspire people to dream bigger, push boundaries, and prove that with passion and perseverance, anything is possible.

**Amazing, so let's take a moment to go back in time. Who were you before the world told you who you had to be?**

RSZ – Honestly, I've always been authentic to myself. Different. Even a little extraterrestrial, like I didn't come with the same wiring as everyone else. I was never one to conform; blending in was never my story. My presence has always been strong, my energy undeniable, sometimes misunderstood by people who felt they disappeared in my light. But that is never my intention. My power has always been rooted in just being me, not in overshadowing others. I've always stood out, even when it made others uncomfortable, and I've learned to embrace that instead of dimming myself down.

**When did you stop hiding your pain and start using it as power?**

RSZ – Pain and power have always danced together in my life. There were seasons where I tucked my pain away because survival demanded it. But every season, without fail, brought me a new lesson in resilience. Right now, I'm in one of those seasons. The difference is that with age and wisdom comes even more clarity and grace of who I am, of what I've lived, of the scars I carry. That acceptance turns pain into something else: a steady, quiet, authentic power. My vulnerability is shining, and I no longer see pain as something to hide, but as a teacher that keeps reminding me of my strength.

**Alright, so if you are open to it, let's explore some philosophical questions that touch on your values and worldview. What's a belief you used to hold tightly but now think was naïve or wrong?**

RSZ – For the longest time, I believed I had to control everything. Every detail, every outcome, every piece of the puzzle. I don't think that belief was naïve, I know it was survival. Control was my way of creating order in a world that at times felt chaotic and unpredictable. But slowly and with time, I have realized that clinging to control was holding me hostage. As life shifts, priorities shift. What once felt essential becomes irrelevant. Today, I've released some of those old skills and coping mechanisms. I've learned to trust the flow a little more, to embrace clarity and calm instead of control.

**Okay, we've made it essentially to the end. One last question before you go. What do you understand deeply that most people don't?**

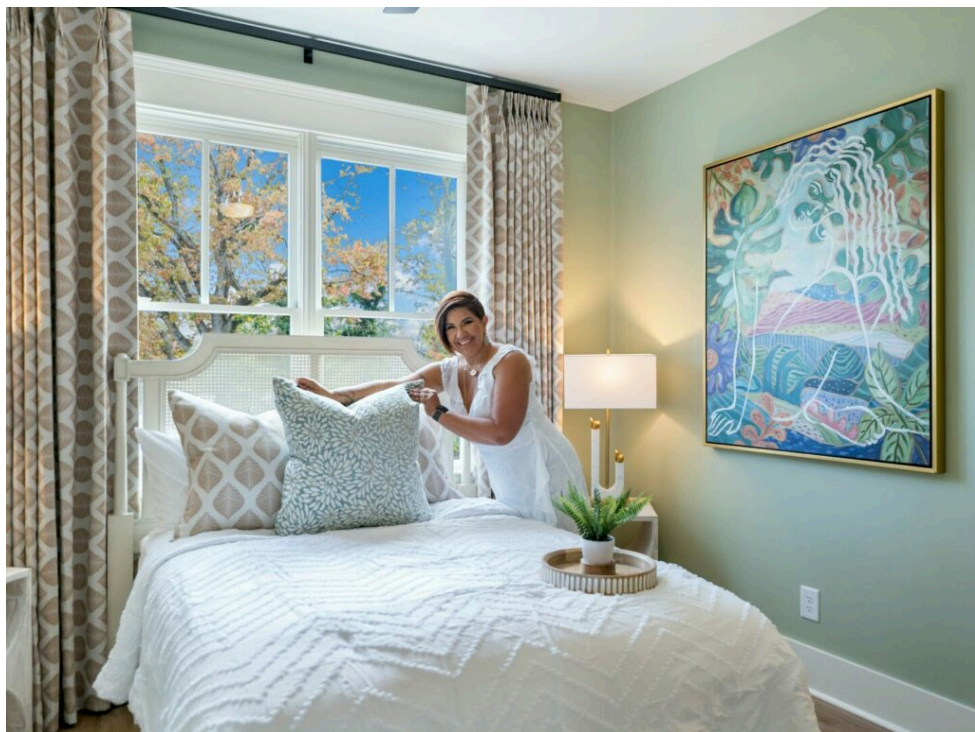
RSZ – I understand people, who they are at their core, even when they're still hiding from themselves. And I understand myself in the same way, fully and unapologetically. I know the good, the bad, and the ugly within me, and I don't shy away from it. I see my flaws, my humanness, my evolution, and I still choose love, grace, and compassion for myself. That same lens lets me see through others' facades. I can often spot someone's authentic self before they can. It's not judgment; it's clarity. And that clarity has been both a gift and a responsibility in how I move through the world.

**Contact Info:**

**Website:** <https://www.rszdesigndevelopment.com/>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/buildwithrosa/>

**Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@buildwithrosa>



**Image Credits**

Stephen Moore, Kaptura El Momento, Yaritza Rodriguez Lopez