

Ep 207 Katherine Kennedy

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SPEAKERS

Speaker 1, Jen Marples, Katherine Kennedy

Speaker 1 00:10

Jen, hello and welcome to the Jenn Marples Show. I'm your host. Jenn Marples, founder of the Jen Marples agency, mentored to women worldwide and your number one champion and cheerleader dedicated to helping you embrace and rock midlife. The Jenn Marple show has one goal, to empower you so you can go out and empower the world. So each week, I'll bring you conversations with incredible women who will inspire us, educate us and motivate us to live our best lives. I also pop on solo to share my best advice, tips and tools to help you unapologetically go for your midlife dreams, embrace your age and become unstoppable. If you are looking for a change, ready to up level your life in business or pivot into something new, then this is the show for you. And know this, you're not too fucking old to step into the midlife spotlight and claim all that you desire. It's your time to shine, and I am so glad you're here, Catherine, welcome, welcome. I am so glad you're here, and I cannot wait to dive in with you today. And if you all are listening to this without the visual, Catherine is dialing in from her beautiful house on Stinson Beach, but I had the opportunity to experience last week, which is absolutely magical. So I'm just going to give Catherine a big plug right now, that if you ever have a chance to go to any one of her retreats, run, don't walk to one of them, not only for the beautiful beach, but because Catherine is a master retreat leader, holder of the space. Well, Catherine, welcome, but I wanted to tell the listeners all you beautiful women. This is very much a continuation of my podcast from last week. So if you haven't listened to last week's podcast, where I sort of bear it all, I was very raw, and I'm still kind of, I'm still having this halo effect, or the tremors or the whatever the lingering effects, rather, of this childhood trauma that I talked about last week, the stuff with my father that really popped up the very next day after I recorded that, and the day the actual podcast dropped, I was on retreat with Catherine and some other friends, and we went Deep. So it was kind of like I walked into Catherine's house, she had listened to the podcast, and she was like, Oh my God, and gave me the tightest hug you could ever imagine. And she was like, Thank you for recording that. And y'all I told you last week, it was one of the scariest things I did, but it's opened up this new thing, and that's why Catherine needed to be on the podcast this week to follow that up, because what we're going to dig into today is the power of speaking our truth. And Catherine has written a book called speaking to what matters. I mentioned that before, and here it is. I'm holding it up, and you're all going to want to go get it. And the power of when we tell our truth, when we speak our truth, it opens up connections, and it opens up possibility like really

nothing else can and so we're really doing this in active, real time of this is not a therapy session today, everyone but Catherine's on because she bore witness. Basically, I was so raw that day. I cried. Cried, cried, cried. Well, we all were crying for different reasons. Because, you know, when you're on retreating in circle with women, you cry because we go deep. But it's been this series of kind of miracles. And I always like call them God winks of when you really sink in and allow the world, or like God, to throw you a life raft, the exact right, people come into your life and that retreat, Catherine, like that day, it was the exact right time, and it was the most beautiful day. And I'm getting all the feels again right now everyone, but that is why you're here, Catherine. You are dear to me, and that was a really transformative day. So I want to share that magic in that day and that process and what you do with everyone listening. So thank you so much for being here today. Jen, thank

Katherine Kennedy 04:01

you. I'm so happy to be with you. And you walked in that day. Well, first of all, let me just say I was driving across the Golden Gate Bridge because I live in San Francisco, and you talked about how someone said you were killing it and how you felt inside. And I thought, oh, that's how I feel. And I said, Good for her. She's being honest. She's being vulnerable. She's saying it like it really is, and it just made me love you even more. Actually, the thing we think we're afraid to share is the thing that actually will draw us closer to people, and that was the moment I'll never forget that I'm going Gate Bridge, and then when I saw you, I gave you a big hug, and I said, this is going to change your life. And that can mean a lot of things. It can mean the big change. It can mean the small change, but it was significant, regardless of the size. I just know it so thank you for having me. I'm happy to be here, and I'm excited to dig deep with you. I'm

Speaker 1 04:49

so happy that you're here, and Catherine's got the best hugs, and she has the best laugh. And we're probably gonna, you know, hopefully hear your laugh today.

04:57

We gotta have them laugh. Yeah.

Speaker 1 05:00

Do that. But exactly, I think this is just the beauty. It's always it's the both. And, you know, it's like I came in just a weeping mess that day, but we all, we laughed, we cried, we did everything. And I just think that just sums up life. It sums up especially this time in life. And, well, I also want to tell everybody that Catherine spoke to my mastermind group last fall, also just about the power of storytelling, and she's just masterful. So I'm just going to give you another plug. We're going to put all this in the show notes. But Catherine leads writing retreats. She leads women's circles. She works with people one on one. She goes for storytelling. Just Truly, this woman is a gift. You are a gift, Catherine, to this world. And angels are all around us, everyone. And so Catherine is an angel, and I just want to acknowledge you also for sharing your truth in your book, speaking to what matters. Again, I'm holding it up because that has allowed you that's really changed the course of your life and everything that you're kind of doing. So let's start there. Let's start with the power of this book and how your and you said something to me before we recorded and you will have to say it again because it went out of it just slipped out of my mind. But something to the effect that really, when you do have that courage to speak your truth, it

really, truly can change everything. So take us through how sharing your truth has changed everything for you?

Katherine Kennedy 06:20

Well, I'm not going to go back into way, back into my background, but I want to give you one little snippet of when I was 17 years old and I was running through the hallway. I was student council president, and the high school counselor called me into his office. He said, Catherine, Hey, I see you running around the school. I hear you laughing in the hallway, but sometimes I look at you and I wonder, are you okay? And the Catholic school girl on me thought I was in trouble. I had that, you know, intense fear inside of my body. I couldn't speak that day, but the tears started rolling down my cheeks, and I cried and I cried and I cried. I didn't couldn't find the words that day. But that was in a significant moment, because this book okay, I was 17 years old, and now I'm 53, years old. I published it two years ago, but the writing of it happened in 2020 and the writing of this book was, in a way, me finding my words. After so many decades, I had spent 20 years as a nonprofit leader and mentor of low income high school students at a program called Summer search. I was the founder's first hire. I helped her build this program into this force of change and good for good. I learned how to help kids tell their story. So I spent my two decades investing and opening up learning how to the skills to help someone share who they really were with somebody else. But it wasn't until 2020 my dad was dying of pancreatic cancer. My husband had just finished a year of colorectal cancer treatment. The pandemic hit. I had left this program that I loved immensely in 2015 and had been coaching and helping people with storytelling. I didn't know that there was a hunger for storytelling. When I left summer search, I walked away with some skills. It was a hard thing to leave a place that I loved more than myself for many, many, many years, but leaving was a pivot. Was one of the first pivots in my life, because I started to invest in not just my clients, but in my own storytelling abilities, and using my voice writing blogs, just trying to speak more of my truth. Finally, in 2020 I sat down and I set out to write my story. Now it's 2025 I didn't publish it till 2023 it took me a long time to have the courage to share my story. So sitting down to write your story is one thing, but sharing it with even your inner circle and then your outer circle in the so called world. That took an enormous amount of courage for me, and it did change everything you mentioned, retreats and storytelling, circles and writing. I'm teaching a writing course. I mean, so much has opened up for me, and not just for me, but for me to make an impact. And that's what I'm so excited about. I love that.

Speaker 1 09:10

And thank you for showing that story. And you said something really important at the beginning when you were 17, and that story of that school counselor coming to you and saying, is everything you know, is everything okay. And that was very much the theme from last week, you know, it's okay to not be okay. And what we talked about at our retreat with the other women that were there is that as women, especially our age group, we've just soldiered on and carried so much, and we feel it viscerally that the women around us are not okay. We're putting on our brave faces and showing up to do the things. But that's why, like with that podcast I dropped last week with what you're doing, we can see that women are craving this deep connection. The question Catherine is, why is. It's so hard for us to share our truth, because you've said it, if we share, and I've said this too, it's like if we share our deep truths, we feel so much more connected and less alone, but unless we really go there, we can't experience that. So it's almost like doing your most scary thing. Yes, it's going to be the thing that brings you most relief,

Katherine Kennedy 10:20

right? But we spend a lot of time hiding. We spend a lot of time, especially growing up, pleasing others, putting other people's needs first. You know, the word empath is kind of thrown around, but what a lot of us feel other people's feelings. I listen to your podcast about high functioning codependency, and we spend so much time on navigating other people's feelings, we don't even know what our own needs are. I mean, there are a lot of reasons, and you talk a lot about that in your podcast, we spend a lot of time trying to stay safe and belong so speaking out and saying something uncomfortable or that might hurt somebody or might upset somebody that in our body that can feel as scary as being in danger. So we stay quiet and we don't use our voice. No one's really taught the skills of how to really share what's inside. These aren't skills that we learn in school. It's usually about performance or achievement. It's not about connecting. We have to most of us, if we're lucky enough, go see a therapist or get coaching or some kind of counseling help. I didn't seek help until my mid 20s, until I started coaching other kids and realize, Oh, wow. Like, if I'm going to be a really good mentor, I've got to walk the walk. If I'm going to ask him to talk to his dad about something real, I've got to do the same. I mean, I didn't have to, but I wanted to. I was inspired by their honesty, and felt like the greatest gift I could give the students I was working with was to walk the walk and do the work, the inner work, and work through my people pleasing tendencies and get out of hiding that which is like these deeper feelings that we feel inside, that we're afraid to share because we're upset, we're worried that it might hurt somebody.

Speaker 1 12:03

You mentioned something when I went to your book circle a year or so ago, I think was like two years ago now, I think it's been a while I remember you shared with us how it was hard to actually hit publish, because this is your life. It's your family. These are very personal stories, and I know that holds it holds a lot of us back, or there's the what are people going to think? So, not even our own family unit. But what are, oh, gosh, what are my friends going to think? I mean, there's going to be a lot of that stuff, that noise, that's going to keep you from doing what you want. So what was that like, and how were you able to sort of have that courage? Because I know the thoughts of just even confronting somebody about something is terrifying, much less writing a book or like telling a story or being very public about

Katherine Kennedy 12:53

it. Well, some deep part of me felt like I had a story to share, which I think that's the first Hiccup and challenge to get over. Most of us feel like we don't have a story. To share. We dismiss our story. It's not hard enough. I haven't suffered enough, so it took me a long time to own that I actually had a story to share. I was proud of the connection and the relationship that I developed with my dad, and in the process of him dying, I wanted to kind of make meaning from the relationship that we had created. So that's one thing. So believing that you have something of worth to share isn't the first the second thing is, was intention, and I was very intentional to write the story with the idea that someday I might share it, but I put that on the other side of the river in those eight months of writing it, and I made it about this personal quest to go deeper into the story of who I was. And it felt indulgent. It felt like who takes the time to find and shape and share your story with even with yourself, and to go through the story arc. I mean, it was some story mapping and then writing every morning. And it was, it was a lot of work, but I was relentless. And I had seen through my work at summer search that when you share your story,

doors do open up to you. There's the capacity to get closer to people. I had that under my belt, which was very lucky, and some level that kept me going, but I kept it on the other side of the river that I would sometimes share it and make it into a book, because for that first year, was just about getting clear and coherent with who I was in my own story. And that was an frankly, it was like a friend of me to me during COVID. I mean, writing became like this creative outlet and this compulsion, and I could wake up the next day to do something and not let myself, you know, not just feel the anguish of the moment. I felt a lot of the anguish of COVID, but I gave myself that time and space, and then in terms of the courage it took to actually share it, I think what I'm most proud of is that I did it with intention. My story is very personal, but my intention was not to throw in. Buddy under the bus. It was again to make meaning of my own life and to see my own growth and to see myself as to see the arc of my own story and who I would had become in these moments in my story, there are moments where I am courageous. I asked for help in my marriage. I talked to my dad about some things. There are some things that I do that earlier on in my life that I'm not so proud of, but over the course of my life, and as a storytelling coach, I knew how to coach myself to see how my choices led me to become more of the brave person that I am so in terms of it was intention. And so then I when I wrote it, when I so called, finished it. It was a Google Doc, and I shared it with my sister. I shared it with Molly, and she was floored. She loved it. She felt like I had she understood my truth, and so I got a lot of initial validation. That was huge. I shared it with my husband. He didn't read it for two weeks, and I thought, Oh, my God. So I put on his calendar lunch with Catherine to discuss story project. I didn't even call it a book, because, again, it wasn't about what a book could give me. It was more like that. This was about my story finding and story sharing with the people who mattered the most. And eventually, Duncan, my husband, was so proud of me, he thought he was a little worried that I would expose him too much I do on some level, I expose us in the book, but it's for a higher purpose, to help people possibly dig in deeper to their marriage and into their intimacy, in a way. And he was proud of me and what what I'd written, I won't go through everybody, but I finally felt like I had done the work of sharing it with people who mattered most, and I put it away because I thought that's enough. It's enough. It brought some very rich conversations my mother and my brother and these people and some friends, and I put it away, and then about a year later, I thought, wait a second, I'm a storytelling coach, like completion is an act. I tell people, Completion is an act of self love. It's like writing a toast, but not actually standing up at the wedding to say it. I need to see this through. This might help people. I took a while. It was like my central nervous system needed time to get courageous. But I had felt good about the process by which I shared my story with the people who mattered. And I had done it with the intention to get closer. And I felt like I had done that. I took some time to incubate and then I turned it into a book. And the thing that I'm most proud of is that this story is written in a way to teach somebody else to tell their story. It's like a mini memoir, but it's really in service of you, like I wanted you to walk away Jen, having read my book, thinking, Okay, well, what are some things I can do to deepen my relationships with people who matter. What is my story? What am I still overcoming? What challenges have I faced, and what choices did I make in response to those challenges, and who am I becoming because of it? By the time that it became a book, by the time I hit submit, I was still scared shitless, but then the next day, I was like, oh, it's out it's out there. It's out of my hands. It's in service of others. And I shared it with my kids. That was the scariest part. I shared it with my kids that year, leading up to the September 26 the day that I published it in 2023 and my oldest son at the time was 20, and now he's almost 20 or 21 maybe he said, Mom, this is going to change my life. And I said, really? He said, Yeah. He said, I would always known that pop is an amazing person, but I've always thought that you have to be perfect to be amazing. It's okay to not be perfect. And you

and dad, what you guys have created like you seem like a great team, but it's nice to know that you had to work for it. My second son thought it was amazing, because he was the only one I told that I was working on it, and he was just so proud of me that I completed it. He liked the second half better than the first half. The first half is up to the things I'm up to when I was a teenager and in my 20s. So he liked the second half a little bit better, but he was really proud of me. And then my daughter was incredibly proud of me too. She said, You know, she's didn't know that I had an abortion. And I said, Well, how do you feel knowing? She said, I'm glad to know, mom. I'm sorry that you didn't, you know, have your mom to help you in those moments? I said, I didn't, but I had my sister in that moment, and and Granny B and I have since talked, and we've healed those wounds because we've had the chance to talk about it. So I said to Kate, I said, I hope you know that you can come to me for anything. And she said, Absolutely. The one other thing that my daughter said, she said, I loved it because it was felt like it was in your voice, mom, like it didn't seem like you were trying to be like smarter than you are. She wasn't putting me down, I promise. But she was just acknowledging that for the story to sound like who I really am like, she was admiring that the book and the story felt like me, and that was like the greatest compliment, because if we want our daughters and our the women around us to use our voices. Yes, and to be authentic, I just felt like that was the greatest gift she could tell me that it sounded like me,

Speaker 1 20:06

Wow, there's, there's so much there. First and foremost, I was with the kids like that really, really impacted me. Like that really hit my heart, and it's making me think too. If I should probably share that podcast episode. First of all, I need to share it from last week with my sisters and my brother. I had meant to do that. I have, just haven't done it yet, and my mom, because I know that'll open up a conversation. And that Terry Cole episode that you listened to, either we had a conversation about her. Maybe it was on that episode, I honestly can't remember, but she had said, I'd heard her say maybe was she was on another podcast, but she basically said that we all have different parents, because it's based on your temperament and how you come out of the womb. Like we're all different people. I'm a highly sensitive, empathic person. Brothers five years younger, sisters that are 10 years younger, and our lived experience is probably the same conversations you had with your siblings. Our lived experience is just different. And then, of course, within we don't understand each other, and we're all just, of course, just thinking about ourselves as we do as teens. So that's kind of one thing. I think that's a beautiful thing. You had that to expand with your personal relationships, because that's so important. But then with the kids, it was so incredibly vulnerable to share that with the kids. But what a lesson for them. Like we try to hide things from kids, and we've known like, I've heard parenting coaches talk like they gotta see conflict and resolution. They better see us as real human beings. They better see us crying. They better see us knowing that life isn't perfect. And like for a teenager or daughter to tell you that it sounded like you had a high praise, high praise. But the deep point here that I really want everyone to walk away with and to just really drive this home, is that we've got to have the courage to speak our truth and not sugar coat and not think about what. And this is so important right now for all of us. And this is if you have a business or if you don't, if you just want to live a richer life and have a deeper relationship with your people, your partner, that it's we've we can't sugar coat it. We can't use somebody else's voice. We can't live life through the lens of this is how I think I should be doing it. You can catch yourself or think about how it's going to be received. That very same feeling you had when you put your book out into the world. I literally felt that. And I've had over 200 episodes, but I really felt it during last week's Yes, because in all when I talked about past traumas and breakdowns and things, it

was coming from kind of this healed place that was me being active in sort of a traumatic breakthrough, earn awareness. And so I was very shaky, and shaky and emotionally hung over the next day, but it opened up all these things, and your book opened up so much, and so you all listening. This is why I wanted to have this conversation with Katherine today, because truly, like the only way out is through. We can't walk away from the pain it's going to show up. We can't walk away from relationships. We have to embrace and we have to speak to what matters, and this is what you're all about. Catherine, I do want to talk about just a little bit going into because, you know, you talk about going to marriage counseling, and you talk so some really deep stuff with your husband. And you know, I've talked about my husband on here a lot, but not that deep, nothing that deep, but it made me so happy, and it got me just gave me the chills that he said he was proud of you, and that's a hard thing. I mean, it's a hard thing to talk about the people we love in service of a mission and in service of clarity and all of that. Can you go into that just a little bit deeper? So

Katherine Kennedy 23:40

he'd read it as a Google Doc, but then about a month before the actual publishing of the book, I gave him the author's copy to look at and to read, and he and he read it, and we were flying down to take our second son to college, and he read it on the plane. It's a short book, so, you know, there was he had, he's like, Oh, I'm all in chapter, two more chapters. And when we landed, he's like, and so we took Joey to target. I went in with target, and Duncan sat in the parking lot and read the rest. And we were, you know, we were in target for like, 3040, minutes, and he finished the book. We got back into the car. He's like, I loved it. He said, You know, I just have never met a couple that hasn't had struggles, and if this helps them in some way, get help. And just then, he basically said, Fuck it like that's it's a beautiful thing. Catherine, so, I mean, I like to think Duncan's pretty evolved. We've done a lot of work together. He knows how much I care about helping people, and I was really grateful to him that he didn't want to censor it's our story, even though I tell it as my story, and

Speaker 1 24:50

that just gives it, gives everybody permission to have those conversations and do the work. And hello, I mean, you've been married a long time. So have I. A lot of us have been married. Long time. And this is, this is our reality. And also through marriage, we're also married to what five or six different people throughout our marriage, because we all change so much, and we have to constantly evolve and change. And anyway, that's a whole other conversation. What I want to know too is when you sit in circle with all the women, because you said, or I know that you've sat in probably 50 or something circles to date because of this book. And you did this beautiful thing where it kind of took on a life of its own, and everyone had these author reading circles, what were kind of some of the breakthroughs that you saw with the women you spoke to. I'm going

Katherine Kennedy 25:33

to bring it back to myself just for a minute in the book. It's a loose framework, but it's a very specific framework of storytelling. I call it the three C's challenge, choice and change. And in these circles, I would spend the first anywhere from five to 20 minutes talking a little bit about my process of sharing my story and how scary it was and how much I in a way, I didn't stall, but it took me basically two or three years to get my central nervous system strong enough, clear enough, brave enough to turn it into something of service for others. And it's the thing that I am most proud of, that it is in service of others.

But in these circles, I really made it about everybody else's story, which is what was so thrilling about it is because you share your story so that someone walks away close to their own, at least that's what I believe, and it's what connects us. My circumstances might not completely narrow your circumstances, but there's the way that I've talked about, either shame or struggle or something that I've overcome. You see me and you maybe you even see yourself more clearly. It's like what I felt driving past Golden Gate Bridge last week with you. I was like, Oh, I feel the same way. What happened in those circles was I would offer this framework and give depending on the amount of time we had. The context of the circle, people would write or reflect on their challenge in their choice, the choices that they made in response to the challenges that they've experienced growing up, and then the change that came from it. It was impossible not to notice how hungry we all are for connection, how much we're aching to tell the truth. And the truth is a big scary word, because it's really what's your emotional truth of your upbringing. The beautiful thing I think about this framework is you get to see your trajectory. You get to see your life as a story. You get to own the choices that you're proud of, and you get to kind of work through the things that you're not so proud of. But at the end, it's not about tying up your story in a pretty little bow, but there's always learning from anything we go through. And I think these circles people got to see each other for their essence, got to we got to see each other for who we truly are. Everyone I know has the same fears around sharing their story. My story is maybe boring, why does it matter if I share my story, who's going to be upset with me? Will I be judged? The fears are all very much the same. And I don't mean to say that in dismissive way. I mean in a we all carry those same fears, and in the circles we in a way, it was a chance to put those fears aside. I like to spend some time really unpacking shame and how it talks to us, and how it criticizes us, and how it keeps us small and keeps us from using our voice. But then, coupled with the framework, magic happened, like so much love and so much support and so much stripping away of things that just aren't important, just getting to the essence of who we are, that's what I saw over and over and over again.

Speaker 1 28:48

Oh, I love that. And everyone's heard it here. And this is, you know, how I started everything was years ago. It was 2019 it was actually, how many years ago is that? Six years ago being 2025? So it's six years ago. I held my first event on a hunch that women were feeling disconnected and really alone. Pre COVID. We've talked about it on the show. It's the same thing. Women want to be heard and seen. And this is what we talked about at our retreat last Thursday. And we were all, you know, in tears, every single one of us, like when we you get deep and we just pull down the layers we knew in that moment, just the four of us together, that it's so and we have all, all the four of us there, have this big commitment to serving women that's bigger than us. I think it's been placed on on our hearts by God himself, for whatever you believe in. And yet it's still so hard and so scary. Because what if I say this a little part of your armor in the facade that we've all been taught to kind of have, and we all had to look pretty and perfect in this, and we have it all together, and you're not going to be successful. And it's really truly the complete opposite. And one of your quotes you said in the Epilog, I had to write this down. Well, two, two quotes that I loved, y'all. One is when you share what's deep inside. Side, you're never truly alone, because only when we do that can we really build these connections. And then number two, I loved this one is telling your story to the people you love the most can create the intimacy that you long for. Those just struck me like arrows in my heart, like little truth, arrows of we're so scared to do the thing that's going to be life changing, because we're not sitting here saying telling you all that you need to go write a book. It's just telling your truth and telling your story and how that's so freeing.

Katherine Kennedy 30:32

Jen, let me ask you a question, what did you learn about yourself over the past, since last week? Like, what? What are you seeing about yourself?

Speaker 1 30:40

I told you guys, she was good, so she led the circle and asked piercing, piercing questions. I learned, and I'm being very honest with everybody, I learned that I think I started putting up walls, and if they're protectionary or it's because getting too much, leaning into the corporate gen of things need to be a certain way, versus just truly speaking from my fucking heart and doing truly what I want to do. Because we all, y'all like I say all this stuff, but I had to really sit with myself and examine like I felt like I walked away. And those of you listening if I used to write newsletters that were like a Tuesday newsletter that was more from the heart, and tell funny stories and this and that, and for some reason, I stopped doing that. Why? Why did I stop doing that? And so there's things that are on the table now that I want to bring back, because of that and the power because so many women reached out like I needed to hear this today, and oh my god, and I know I'm not alone like and that's when I started this whole fucking thing, Catherine. I didn't want women to feel alone. It wasn't about your not too fucking old. None of that was at the very beginning was I didn't want women to feel alone. We're all feeling disconnected. It was in service of me too, because I was feeling alone and disconnected, and we need to get to that deep, deepness, this richness, to feel connected. It's not about how your kid's playing soccer in handbags. I'm not going to get that.

Katherine Kennedy 32:12

I do love your handbag common well,

Speaker 1 32:15

and I do have the my auntie uncle handbag now, but, oh, I can speak from here. I don't even have to say it anymore, but like, that was a huge eye opening truth I told you guys last week, and I told it to this group that day, like I almost didn't impress record. I uploaded and my podcast manager, I was scared. I was really scared. And I said, Do I sound crazy? And she brought me back in. She knows me. She's been producing the podcast for three and a half years. She's like, No, this is exactly what your community wants to hear. It's like, thank you. So thank you, Alesia, and boom, here we are.

Katherine Kennedy 32:50

Yeah. So what I'm hearing, though, is that by you being vulnerable and really you that you got more clear on really who you are and what you really want, right? And you receive, you're able to receive love and connection, which is, which is part of what you want. Can we

Speaker 1 33:06

talk about that for a minute? That's really powerful, the receiving, because we talked about this at the retreat. And that's what's so beautiful about retreats and circles, and it's making me double down on what I want to provide for all of you listening and bringing women together. That is when, even 10 years ago, when I went on my first solar retreat, bringing women together, the very first event I ever did, we couldn't even get through introductions. Women are crying, telling their deepest truths, because women

are desperate to be seen. We are all each desperate to be seen, and I think that's where we have to allow ourselves to be held and be seen, because we're the strong ones and the ones in our community that our people are coming to for the advice, and we've done the things, and we've ran the things and and that's where I feel like that podcast was like, but I'm the one who's always the strong 1am. I allowed to be the one who's crying and breaking down and saying, I need help. Of course, the answer is or the answer to that question is yes, but that's one of our intentions from today, is talking so you see this a lot, because it's hard charging women that come in and you're like, I come in, and we saw that happen at the retreat. We're not going to go into so many details, but excavating, because we have excavate and go deep, because sometimes we don't think of our struggle as a struggle, and it's really a struggle. So in order to really be seen, be held, and to speak to what matters, this is the whole thing. Oh, this. I wanted to read you guys the subtitle, my story of learning how to share what's inside. So I love I just wanted to make sure I read that, because we're all trying to learn what's inside. And it doesn't mean you have to write a book, but women are listening, and they're like, Okay, maybe I listened last week. Now they have to go back and listen to that when they're listening to this conversation. **It's scary. It's daunting. What can women do? What is the first step to take to truly start to tap in, to literally tap in so they can speak? To what matters in this micro way. Or some women are like, I'm ready to go in a macro way. We all know everyone's terrified because I'm still terrified.** Yeah,

Katherine Kennedy 35:08

I hear that. I hear that I'm going to answer with a thought, but also something else, I just thought of this too. I wonder if you some maybe lost your way because, and this could be projection, but in doing all the shoulds, I should be this, I should be that. I should do that. It sounds to me like what happened last week. It's actually, I think you're incredibly strong, and your vulnerability. I think vulnerability is a is a sign of strength. That's a muscle that you've been building actually like, but authentic strength, like strength from the inside, that you had the courage to be that vulnerable, and so in doing so, it almost helped you be more clear on what you need and what you want. And **I think as women, we struggle with what we need and what we want, and naming those so how to tap in, to speak to what matters. I think first of all, noticing when you're going against your yourself, like when you're not in alignment, noticing when you say yes, but you mean No, when you act nice, but you're seething under, underneath it all, it's noticing your behaviors, noticing your feelings. It's acknowledging what you feel. Because I think we dismiss our feelings. We are taught to dismiss our feelings. And so how can you tap in? You start noticing, I think talking in community and finding women who you can really be yourself with and like stripped off the layers. I think that's huge. I do believe in not just journaling, like what you did today, but asking yourself reflective questions to get to the truth of what's inside of you. We really do even like starting off with like what pisses me off, start that tomorrow, write for six minutes about what pisses you off. And let me tell you, by the end of this minute five, you might even get to what you are so grateful for. It's the darndest thing. But I think finding ways to be reflective in your writing, in any kind of expression with people who matter, but the person that matters most in all this, I guess I believe in finding the courage muscle to be more honest with people you love, but the person that's most important is you right, is yourself. And so whatever you can do to learn about who you are and start to gain some really deep awareness, and over time, you can interrupt those behaviors of people pleasing or whatever your thing is. I think that's one way to tap in. The greatest thing you can do is to share your story. I'm not saying to write a book either, but to take the time. It feels indulgent, but it will help you get clear on who you are and when you're clear on who you are. Everybody, everybody benefits around**

you, and everybody gets shift and change and grow when you change and grow. So you're not just doing it for yourself, you're doing it for the people you love.

Speaker 1 37:57

That's powerful. And you said something just now that reminded me of when you talked about that writing exercise in the circles, and reminding everyone that there's this journey to heroine's journey, because we are, you know, the one all the women you sat with, I'm guessing, but I know the circle I was in, everyone's in midlife. And there are stories there. And we are the heroine. We are, we are the heroine of the story. And I think we tend to, and I'll speak for myself, for sure, tend to discount what we've done and oh, it's just, oh, it's that thing. It's this. Because it's always like, next, next, next, next. This whole process of from last week to the retreat to speaking with you today, like I'm going to take on that prompt myself. Everybody knows I also want to write a book and to answer your question that you asked me before too. Like what has changed? What I want to write about has changed. So that's profound, because I've already I started writing a book proposal a long time ago, and I thought I wanted to write one thing, one way, and it's everything has changed anyway. It's very powerful. So I hope you all just walk away and maybe do that exercise. And I love just like starting off with your pissed off about because most of the time we won't even, we'll just hold it in. We'll just so I'm gonna bother anybody and then that I love that that can actually lead to gratitude. But the writing piece of it is so important, and nobody ever has to see it either, right? So it can just be something between you and you and

Katherine Kennedy 39:25

the three C's the challenge, choice change if, if you're struggling with something, write about all the the challenges that you're experiencing and what choices you're making to deal with it, and you'll, you'll catch yourself if you're making the choices you want, if they're in alignment with who you are, and if they're not, because when you take the time, and time can mean six minutes a morning. I have a class, a writing to what matters class, and I ask people to write six minutes in the morning. It's such a short amount of time, and so much can you can cover so much, and you can just feel grounded in who you are. So challenge, choice, change. Would say that's a great little storytelling framework for anyone listening, and I offer that up for anyone to use as a way to work through an actual challenge that you're facing or or the challenges from your upbringing. And of

Speaker 1 40:12

those, there are many, because I haven't, I haven't yet met somebody who doesn't have something from childhood. We're

Katherine Kennedy 40:19

all overcoming something. Well, my mom even said that when she read my book, she said, No one gets out of childhood without some wounds, and good for you for expressing yourself. Catherine, thank

Speaker 1 40:30

you for expressing yourself because of your book. We met each other.

Katherine Kennedy 40:34

I know, I know. I'm so grateful. I'm so grateful. What

Speaker 1 40:38

a gift that is. So everyone speak from your heart, in certain baby steps, in safe spaces, and we're safe spaces. I just I love this conversation so much, and I don't want it to end, but I have two final questions for you. What do you think the best thing is about being in midlife?

Katherine Kennedy 40:55

Well, I can only speak post sharing my story, but it's funny, my heart is so big. I care so deeply, but you just don't care what other people think the same way. You just don't. I, at least I don't. And I think hitting submit and having my story out there helped in that. But I think there's just some some freedom.

Speaker 1 41:13

I love that. And well, you know the mantra, you're not too fucking old, so everybody at the end of the podcast screams out of you're not too fucking old too to motivate everyone and inspire everyone. So Catherine, you're not too fucking old to

41:27

share what's inside.

Speaker 1 41:30

No, you're not. I love that. So where can everybody find you? Get more of you tap into what you have to offer and get connected. So yeah, thank

Katherine Kennedy 41:40

you. Well, my name Catherine Kennedy, K, A, T, H, E, R, I N, E, Kennedy, s, f.com, because apparently there are other Catherine Kennedys out there in the world. Through my website, my Instagram is at speaking to what matters. Come look at both of those places, especially, I have a speaking what matters guide on my website and join my email list. It'll walk you through challenge, choice, change and reflective questions. It'll help you with if you want to start journaling in a reflective type of way, there's a guide that will help you. So you should download that. And I'm doing retreats. I have one on Thursday, which is probably when this is going to drop. So I'll be out back here at Stinson working with eight women. I believe in the power of storytelling. I and I believe in small, intimate groups where we can really go deep. So I hope so people will either join me at a retreat or a writing class or a circle. I love that,

Speaker 1 42:37

and you know, this is a 1,000% endorsement. And also get Catherine's book, everyone we're going to link all that in the show notes.

Katherine Kennedy 42:44

One more thing I will say about the book. I read my book, and I will say people love the audible version. So, I mean, people love reading the book, but I read it, and I read it with a producer who was a former summer search student, and I felt so safe. And you'll just, you hear my voice, but and you hear me. I

laugh some, I cry some. It's just, I think it's a beautiful journey. If, if you don't want to read it, or if you wanted an alternative to sitting down to read, Oh, I love,

Speaker 1 43:13

well, thanks for sharing that. I love that complete and total cyber I haven't ever, if you can believe this, I have tons. I'm just, it's not Luddite. Is Luddite the word I don't know I have the 1000s of books. It's English major in me. I need, I need the book because I put sticky notes, I underline them, I share them, I refer back to them. That's me in books, but with the girls and I listen to it ends with us on our last road trip 11 hours. But it's a completely different experience. Listen to an audio book. But that wasn't, you know, read by the author, so I can only imagine, because this is autobiographical, how powerful that is. I'm going to go listen to the audible version now, Catherine,

Katherine Kennedy 43:49

yeah, it's pretty cool. So, but yeah, so in the book, you can get on Amazon or through my website. I love

Speaker 1 43:54

it, so we're going to put all that in the show notes for you all, Catherine, you are a gift. Thank you for being here today. This was the perfect sort of next step after that vulnerability hangover and thing that I did last week, and you held space for me, and you saw me, and I wanted to share you with my listeners, so you guys, you know, take advantage of everything Catherine has to offer. Download her free guide. Just get up in her world. You won't be sorry, but thank you for being you, for being vulnerable and having the courage to speak your truth and to speak to what matters, because it fucking matters.

Katherine Kennedy 44:29

It does. Jen, thank you so much. I love getting to know you, and what I've learned about you is how truly, how the inner strength that you carry and how big your heart is and how much you care about helping other people, I just feel grateful to be in your orbit. So thank you. Oh,

Jen Marples 44:47

my God, I received that. I'm gonna start crying. Thank you. Bye.