

Ep 104 Gabriella Espinosa

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SPEAKERS

Jen Marples, Gabriella Espinosa

Gabriella Espinosa 00:00

Science tells us that we need arousal before we can have desire. So what is going to get us into that arousal state? It is not pushing and striving, like we are so conditioned to do striving to be the perfect mom, the perfect wife, the perfect entrepreneur. That constant doing and striving instead of being and flowing in the moment is what is keeping us from connecting to our body so, so much about the female experience disconnects us from our bodies

Jen Marples 00:42

Hello, and welcome to the Jen Marple Show. I'm your host Jen Marples, a champion of midlife women and cheerleader for all women dedicated to helping you embrace and rock the second and best half of life. Each week I'll bring your conversations with incredible women who will inspire us educate us and motivate us to live our very best midlife. I'll also pop on solo to share my best advice tips and tricks to help you unapologetically go for your dreams, embrace your age and become unstoppable. If you are itching for a change ready to pivot or looking for a second act, stick around as this is the show for you and know this you're not too fucking old. Hello everyone and welcome to the Jen Marples show today I have a beautiful guest Her name is Gabriella Espinosa, and she's just lovely. And I have a girl crush and you're gonna have a girl crush to Gabriella is a certified midlife empowerment and sexuality coach now let that sink in. We're gonna have a great chat today. She guides women to reconnect to their body's own their power, pleasure and purpose. Gabriella, welcome to the show, I can't wait to dig into all of this. You are the very first guest I've had that is going to go into the territory of female pleasure. And I couldn't be more excited. So well. Oh

Gabriella Espinosa 02:03

my goodness, thank you so much. It is a pleasure to be here with you, Jen and the girl crush. That's back out too.

Jen Marples 02:12

So you guys have heard me talk about that wonderful conference, I went to New York last October the new pa symposium. Gabriella and I had known each other online for a long time and then finally got to

meet in person. It was just it was just girl crushes come true, we got to hug each other and break bread and have drinks and eat with each other. And it was so amazing. And so I just want to say again, everyone, it is possible to meet the most fabulous women online it is very, very true. So I just need for all of you to know that. So Gabriella, tell us how does one become an midlife empowerment and sexuality coach, that's super interesting. But I know that's not what you always did. So take us through sort of where you started and how you got to where you are today. And then we're gonna really dive in people we're gonna really dive in, she's gonna give us some great advice today.

Gabriella Espinosa 03:01

Well, thanks again, Jen for having me here. So, you know, way back when I did have a professional career, pretty much like yours as a PR and marketing specialist, I worked in the corporate world, traveled around the world, and worked long hours and was pushing and striving and was very, super ambitious. And then I met the love of my life then got married 21 years ago. And I went straight into having kids, three kids in under five years. And I applied the same pushing and striving and ambition that I had in my career into motherhood and my marriage, right? So I made the choice. I'm like, if I'm gonna make this perfect. If I'm gonna make this the ultimate thing, I can only do this. So I decided not to work. And I focused all my efforts on my family and my marriage, I at the time, we were traveling quite a bit. So I moved countries. My kids were born in New York City, and then we moved abroad to the UK. So that was a big project. But my project was just to guide these little humans into being the best versions of themselves. And I strive to be the perfect mother, the perfect wife. And you know, at the time when I met my husband, I forgot to mention this piece. It was those beautiful, passionate sparks. I had never felt anything like that before. It was amazing. And we went quickly from dating to living together to planning our marriage and having our first child all within one year, within one year. So we went from this big passionate relationship to then having kids which was full of all these oxytocin highs, but then it really impacted the essence of our relationship. Things started to change because I was so busy being that perfect mom And I had to put aside, I kind of forgot about my sexual self, right? That person who, you know, had this fire, this passion, and all in the service of my kids. So all of a sudden my desires, my wants, my needs didn't matter anymore. And I was all in the service of my kids, I was pushing striving until I hit burnout, and developed an autoimmune condition. And so as they say, your pain becomes your, your passion or your purpose. And so I realized it was, you know, a sort of wake up moment to think, how am I going to really move forward and I got curious and learned everything that I could about the root cause of my health condition. And I then pivoted and really started focusing on health and wellness, how to take care of myself, not only my family, but how to take care of myself. And I became a yoga teacher. And then I became a nutritional therapist. My kids were a little bit older. So while they were in school, I was in school. So I kind of pivoted and really studied as much as I could learn as much as I could about health and wellness, really upskilled my learning and try to become an expert in that area of health and wellness, especially for women. Then I started, you know, as some of us do, experiencing those telltale symptoms of perimenopause, right, the night sweats or sleepless nights. My libido totally tanked. It wasn't going so long before because I was already focused so much on the kids, but my libido totally tanked. And then that was when I was like, who am I, I looked at myself in the mirror, and I thought, Who am I as a woman who am I as a sexual being who am I is essential being she's checked out. So I went looking for her, I went looking for my sexual self, because I had totally orphaned her. She didn't fit, you know, the cookie, baking, soccer mom mold. And that's where I

started diving into this fascinating field of female sexuality and pleasure. And that's what I've been doing for the past 10 years.

Jen Marples 07:17

So there's a lot there to unpack the burnout, you're not the first you're not going to be the last, sadly, woman who's come on here and said, We, because I had my own burnout, and you had burnout. And I think it's because we were living on are living by society's standards of the kids. And you said that you applied everything that you did at work and the control and the managing, and we put that on to our kids, it's like, they don't want that the husbands don't want that we don't actually want that. And we can't control humans, we can't control husbands. We can't control much. But it's sad that so many of us have experienced that. Because, well, I know a lot of what I want to do with my work, and I know with your work is to save women from having to go through that and go through that burnout. So I wanted to say that one thing, you're not alone, and hopefully especially this next generation coming up won't be where we used to be. Because no one was talking about this when you had your kids when I had my kids, no one was saying or asking the question, you know, how's it going? Are you okay? No one was sort of extending out a hand saying, Is this okay? Are you doing all right? I think we were all just kind of doing it, doing it doing it, you kind of wake up one day, a little bit burned out. So I want to just acknowledge that. Number two, the pleasure part, you said like the carpool and does, there's nothing that is more repelling or being a mom, carpool, doing all the things. And if you're working or not working, there's nothing that says sexy about that. At the end of the day, or at least in my experience. You said it in your experience. Like how did you decide to tap back in where you're like, gosh, I miss having sex? Or why don't I want it? Am I this woman who's doing all these other things? Because maybe your husband was tapping you on the shoulder? Because I know that was happening in my marriage. And I'm like, Are you fucking kidding me? I don't know, time to think I don't feel sexy. So I'm curious to know how you got to that.

Gabriella Espinosa 09:12

Yeah, I mean, I just felt this nudge from within, right, this nudge? You know, part of it was maybe that also tap on the shoulder. From my husband. It's like, what happened to that woman I met you know, those years ago, what happened to her and I just felt this nudge. I felt you know, I love my husband. I love the life that we've created. We have a happy life together. But there is something missing in that missing piece of the puzzle was my bringing my sexual self forward to the relationship and and expressing what I actually desired and needed. And so I realized that at that point that were so little, I knew and I think, you know, this may resonate. For many of the listeners. There's so little we've been taught about female pleasure and sexuality, right? You know, when I was going through my early adulthood, you know, you kind of had the Cosmo, you know, magazine covers how to please your man and you know, his desires come first it was always about your partner, right. And that was what I, you know, I sort of grew up in that their pleasure came first, there was just this very kind of Hollywood version of pleasure and sexuality, also informed by, you know, soft porn. And what I learned was that, and I'll just give you a little bit of the sciences that, you know, we're wired for what's called spontaneous desire, right? When we're searching for a mate, we want to reproduce, that's what we're here on this earth for, right. And so we have that spontaneous desire, which is fed to us by images of Hollywood, right. And that's that fire that spark, that physical attraction, that lust. And all of that sort of starts to wane for women, especially within six months to two years of a relationship, because we then have to

shift into multitasking, looking after children, child rearing, serving the needs of other, meanwhile, our partners, still are able to maintain that spontaneous desire, especially if your partner is a man, right? So I'm talking about male female relationships here just to you know, heterosexual, male female relationships, for men that spontaneous desire is the default. That's why, you know, they're tapping you on the shoulder, because, you know, they still, they're wired for that spontaneous desire, women are different, we're wired, yes, to have that spontaneous desire at the beginning, because we want to have kids, right, and mate. And we then sort of then transition into this more responsive desire, which means, you know, we need more time, we need more pathways to light up, we need touch, we need sweet talk, we need, you know, other things that light us up. It's that type of work, which I called awakening pathways to pleasure, we need more time to awaken those pathways to pleasure to then lead to that desire and meet meeting our partners in the same place. So that's the difference between responsive and spontaneous desire. And, you know, science tells us that we need arousal before we can have desire. So what is going to get us into that arousal state, it is not pushing and striving, like we are so conditioned to do striving to be the perfect mom, the perfect wife, the perfect entrepreneur, that constant doing and striving instead of being and flowing in the moment is what is keeping us from connecting to our body. So so much about the female experience disconnects us from our bodies, the modern female experience. So there's that productivity, pushing, striving, Kid rearing, there's the constant being in our heads, and not taking the time to relax and be in our body. So a lot of my work is about, you know, guiding women to reconnect to their bodies and discover that there is goodness, there is pleasure to be cultivated and explored and experienced every single day, we just have to give ourselves the time and the patience to do them.

Jen Marples 13:32

I love that. So I have a question for you. Tapping back into our own pleasure, it really doesn't even have to have anything to do with a partner or a spouse. It's more about tapping into sort of why we're here. Right? So this is what I've been contemplating this and I hear you talk about it here, other people out in the world talking about it that I think we tamped down our pleasure, like you said societally. And we've been told, you know, it was always for the man, I read those same Cosmo magazines you did. And it was all about this external. We were never taught that we can have that for ourselves just for ourselves, right? So it doesn't even need to be because I want to be in some relationship and make him happy. It's more about us, right? So I'd love for you to talk more about, like how we can tap back into so no matter what situation that we're in, because I do full disclosure, everyone i This is the one part of my life, and I'll have to go to one of your classes or seminars that you do Gabriela that is lacking, like all around, and I'm probably I'm not the only one you know, and then you throw the menopause into it like I'm postmenopausal. So there's that stuff too. And I know, there's a lot to unpack. So what like where do we begin? How do we start? How do we tap back into our pleasure?

Gabriella Espinosa 14:49

You're not alone, Jen, and I've been in your shoes. So because pleasure and sexuality has been seen as taboo. There's this sort of intense and fear around it and what can happen if we get closer to the true nature of our sexual energy, even though we've all been brought into the world with that sexual energy, which is then you know, created these layers of shame and unhealthy narratives around our bodies and our sexuality, you know? So I always say the truth is your sexual energy and pleasure is essentially energy. Right? It is what they call chi vitality, Spark, your life force, whatever you want to call it, and

connecting with our bodies and connecting to our pleasure is fundamental to connecting with this life force that feeds all aspects of your work of your life, your work, your relationships, family dynamics. So it's how we get out of this constant striving, flight, fight, freeze, and cultivate the resilience that moves us into thriving. And so and I want to be clear, this is my mantra is that pleasure has no age limit or expiration date. So just because you feel you've reached midlife doesn't mean that you have to forget about it. I think a lot of women feel like okay, um, you know, my fertile years are over, I can just forget about it. But no, when we tap into that pleasure, we tap into this incredible, potent energy that feeds how we show up in the world. It feeds our creativity, it feeds our passion, our power and fuels our the second half of life. So I often talk to women about prioritizing pleasure, right? Prioritizing pleasure is not selfish or indulgent. And when you take time to invite pleasure into your day, you expand the capacity to feel more of it. And this has those lovely rippling effects into all aspects of your life. So we start really, really simple. If you're shy about if you a little bit nervous or apprehensive about like, I don't want to go there because you have some stories that you've inherited around pleasure and sexuality, some shame, right? Then we start on focusing on the things that bring you joy and make you feel vibrant. That's what I the first question I ask my clients what, what makes you feel alive and vibrant, and it can be wearing pink like you do? Bright Pink, right? Sipping that first cup of coffee in the morning, moving your body or dancing to a favorite. So I know these things feel really simple or maybe trivial. But it's when you bring mindful attention to that. How does it make you feel in your body? Notice the feelings, the sensations when you do those things. And that helps you bring natural pleasure into your life as a state, rather than another thing that you have to do on your to do list. So yeah, I would invite you, Jen, you know, every time you see that color pink, or every time you wear that bright color pink or wear that bright pink lipstick, you know, what is it that you feel so allow yourself to tune in to the sensations of that, and really stay present to those sensations throughout your day. So that when you get to the end of the day, and you're feeling exhausted, tired, overwhelmed, and your your mind is buzzing with work and ideas, it's like okay, I can return I can just pause and remember, what did it feel like to drink that first cup of coffee? What did it feel like to move my body or take that walk in the park? So those simple pleasures that I call when you focused on them mindfully, you know in a mindful with awareness, and they expand your capacity to experience more pleasure and other types of pleasure if that's where you want to go.

Jen Marples 18:46

So now that we've done that, how do we tap back into actually having the desire? Because I know I know, a lot of people listening. And this is you guys. This is making me sweat. And it's, you know, it is because it's not something I talk about. I have deep down stuff. There's probably stuff from my past my childhood, which is you know, how the striving, the achieving, like everything you said about getting out of your brain and because I'm I'm like that half day, I'm like, I just want to beat myself over the head with a baseball bat. So I just stopped thinking. So what what can we do? So we've stepped into our players. We've enjoyed that coffee. We're like, gosh, I feel good with pink lipstick. But now it's like date night or Gosh, I really should pay attention to my husband. What do we do to get revved up for that also, not just to like, tick something off the list. But to actually enjoy it and look forward to it.

Gabriella Espinosa 19:40

Yeah, I say it all starts with you and getting to know yourself and what lights you up. And again, because of the messaging that we received when we grew up, you know, it's your partner that's

responsible for your pleasure, or don't touch yourself there or don't do that right. Do we have this aversion or this, this shyness with getting in touch with ourselves in a more intimate level. So I always start with simple very simple practices. For example, a focusing on the senses. Touch is a very important practice, I say, literally take matters into your own hands touch has been proven by numerous studies to lower cortisol levels, it raises your love hormone, oxytocin, and provides you this sense of like feeling comfortable in your own skin. So taking pleasure into your own hands, lights up sensual engagement with yourself, and allows you to have more meaningful connection with another person. So I often guide or encourage women to explore their pleasure zone, your whole body is capable of experiencing pleasure explore areas of your body through simple touch, you know, you can explore things that are first you don't even go to the genitals, if you don't want to, you don't want to go there first. So I say, explore other areas that are sensitive, sensitive to pleasure, because we have sewn so many access points to pleasure in our body. So I say, use the tips of your finger and explore with light, soft, sensual touch the areas of your neck, behind your ears, your inner arms, your breasts, your abdomen, your pelvis, your inner thighs, your feet, what areas in your body light you up, when you touch them. And then when you explore those areas, and you think, Oh, wow, that feels nice, or I really love that, then you can, you know, have a conversation with your partner and say, you know, I tried this type of touch, right, I explored this type of touch in the shower, or, you know, when I was putting on lotion, or body oil, and I really like it, do you know, Can I can I show you were that spot is that I really like to be touched, and you can guide your partner's hand to that area. And, you know, be compassionate, you know, your partner is also on a learning journey to re explore your body, especially as our bodies change in midlife, we have to get to know ourselves and create new pleasure pathways, because we tend to tread down the same path that's gotten worn down, for lack of a better word. So explore new pleasure pathways by taking matters into your own hands and exploring these different areas that create that arousal within your body. And you can also do that through touch. You can do that through reading erotica. You know, there's an amazing app out there called Dipsy that has, yeah, erotica, for you to listen to. And, you know, like I said, when you focus on the senses, listening to beautiful stories, sexy stories, you know, there's the whole gamut from very kind of sexual to very sensual stories on gypsy. And when you listen, notice what's happening in your body. Again, what is happening when you listen to these very sensual erotic stories, and try to keep that alive within you, as you move throughout your day. And then you'll be more you'll be better resourced, in terms of you know, that capacity for pleasure when you're then meeting with a partner or with another person or with a with yourself, right, it doesn't necessarily have to be with a partner, you you'll notice you know, something lights up, you'll notice a tingling feeling or a buzzing feeling or, you know, even a moist juicy feeling. Right? Notice that and don't shy away from that welcome those sensations and see where that takes you what that does for you and how that informs your creativity, your work, your relationships, how you show up in the world. So just take a moment to notice what lights you up. And that starts with you getting to know yourself.

Jen Marples 24:11

Oh, this is such great information. I know everybody is probably riveted because I am taking mental notes. We're gonna link that app that you talked about in the show notes. Oh, for sure. Don't worry.

Gabriella Espinosa 24:24

I love that app. And again, touch you know touch is a great way watching you know, there's a lot of ethical porn now out there. Or even Netflix has some nice you know, sexy movies if that's what it takes, you know to explore different things that open up those pathways to pleasure and that's going to create start opening those those arousal pathways and then spark that desire to be with another or with yourself.

Jen Marples 24:54

I love that I'm Top Gun came to mind that last three releases like it Like frost in the 80s. And what can work for us again now, for sure when he's 23. So we're doing number one and number two, and then specifically for women who are like perimenopause, menopause, and we're all kind of dried out. Yeah, yeah. And sex can I know sex can be painful for a lot of women. Certainly, I've had my issues. And I also have a double whammy of having endometriosis. So that also packs a little bit of a punch and something that I need to deal with. What can we do to sort of get to that juicy phase that you had mentioned before?

Gabriella Espinosa 25:33

Yeah. The reality is perimenopause and menopause does cause changes to our vulva and our vaginas, right to our intimate parts. So I always encourage women to befriend their intimate parts, right? And this is to be honest. 10 years ago, when I started this work, I hadn't even taken a mirror looked at myself, like I had, like, I hadn't looked at myself, I didn't know what my intimate parts have looked like. And so I say start befriend your vulva. Know what you can look at a diagram all you can in a book, but you have to know what it looks like for you. Right your vulva, but your vagina isn't going to look like what it looks like in and when some of those diagrams because they're too perfect right? The vulva you know get to know all the parts of you your all your intimate parts and you can take a good look in the mirror. This is not only for you know pleasure purposes, but also to know what changes you may be experiencing. So estrogen decline affects the collagen and elasticity of the vulva which leads to thinning, dryness, pain and discomfort known as genital urinary syndrome of menopause. And these changes leads us to disconnect from pleasure and intimacy because yeah, we feel pain, we feel discomfort. So explore what your vulva looks like. Mirror and hand. Take time to know what is normal for your vulva. So if you notice any unusual changes, you can report it to your doctor. I big advocate of moisturizing daily having like an intimate care regime. So so important, moisturize daily to alleviate that dryness and discomfort and it does help. It does help maintain the integrity of the vulva tissue. Use lubes find a good why it was done recommend a waterbased new because that's healthier for it for Volvo's that are changing especially in perimenopause and menopause. Use a wide and water based lube and there's so many nice ones on the market right now. introduce that into your intimate time sexy time with the partner and use it also to explore for yourself right what feels good to you. So I had to take time to when I had reached this wall and just couldn't feel anything and to really get to know myself intimately. You know, really, it means exploring for yourself, what areas of your vaginal area feel good to you. And I guide women through certain self touch practices, certain massage practices, you can massage externally. Also with the same kind of touch practice I talked about earlier with the nice quality loop. You don't have to go internally if you don't want, I then also provide guidance of how to massage yourself internally. And quite frankly, ladies, you know, we have this issue. Also in menopause with pelvic floor dysfunction, our pelvic floor can either be too tight or too lacks, which can lead to areas like incontinence or also pain during sex. And so the only way to tell what condition your pelvic floor is to

explore internally, like literally taking your fingers internally and having a little feel around. And so I guide women how to do this. So we're not only doing this for sexual purposes, for arousal purposes, we're doing this to really empower ourselves with knowledge in terms of what state is our intimate health and if you find that there any changes that are happening, definitely see a doctor I always recommend seeing a doctor. I'm a big fan and advocate of vaginal estrogen, which is topical estrogen which can help rebuild tissues in the vulnerable vaginal area. Those are my three top tips in terms of befriending your vulva have a good look, moisturize, use lube and go see your doctor in case you need vaginal estrogen.

Jen Marples 29:43

Oh, these are all such great tips. I mean, y'all I hope you took notes and you're gonna want to listen to this one again. And like I said, it's making me sweat, but it's also giving me it's giving me hope and it's giving a pass. So I hope all of you listening are getting started. There's a pathway And that we do need to put this first because again, it's all about putting ourselves first. And this needs, like you said, it's like this needs to be number one on our list, and it's putting yourself first and pleasure because I know it's a societally, I don't know what it is. But you know, we're giving, serving, serving, serving, and you literally feel like it can be sometimes really self indulgent, just to get a manicure much less like, worry about your own pleasure and putting that first I'm trying to think of just a world where we're all like 100% in our pleasure, I can see how that'll have a ripple effect. You know,

Gabriella Espinosa 30:37

I mean, the World Health Organization, you know, has declared that your pleasure and sexual health is fundamental to your overall health and well being. And I truly believe that, and I just don't think we think about it enough. We don't,

Jen Marples 30:54

and we're talking about it today. And so if the World Health Organization said it's the number one, so then we're going to put that on the top of our list, ladies, thank you so much for all that information, my God, I've got some work to do. Hopefully, some of you gals out there like that. I just feel like the doors a little shot. To be honest, I just wanted to Doris little shot

Gabriella Espinosa 31:14

in there, the issues around you know, body confidence, you know, we can feel frustrated and betrayed by our bodies as we're moving through menopause. But you know, the truth is, our bodies are meant to change. So, I often coach women to instead of blaming their body, try building a more compassionate relationship with your body and appreciating all all the things your body has done for you. So we explore what gets in the way of that some limited beliefs, some, you know, society informed also by society and the culture that you grew up with. And, you know, learning to regard your body with the, you know, the respect and gratitude of a dear friend. So I've focused a lot on helping build that body confidence, that body positivity, shifting, limiting beliefs, and really tuning into how you feel in your body, not necessarily how you feel about your body. And that's really, really important. So I work a lot with positive affirmations a lot with this interoceptive ability of tuning into what feels good, because we often it's so human to when you know, when you think when someone asks you, you know, what are you feeling or feel your body? What are you noticing, and we often gravitate towards pain. I'm tired, I am

tight and tense. And I'm not asking you to bypass that, yeah, acknowledge that you're tight or tense or stress. But what can you drop into that feels good already, because our bodies are inherently wired for goodness and pleasure, right? They're inherently wired for that. But we don't allow ourselves to feel that. So I when you're able to access that goodness and pleasure, you feel better about your body, and you stop blaming your body, you start you start thinking, better thoughts about your body, and you have a more compassionate relationship with your body.

Jen Marples 33:13

Oh, I love that reframe. That's powerful. You hear a lot of people talking about what's wrong. And I'm very conscious myself to have the words that you use because your body in your cell structures paying attention. Somebody was saying, oh, you know, I'm old. And I'm just this is why I'm having pain. Because I did yoga. I said, No, you're having pain because you it's just repetitive views. You're a strong athlete. That's not because you're old. So it's kind of that that same lines of like, we have to be really careful about how we talk to each other, or talk to ourselves or other.

Gabriella Espinosa 33:42

Exactly, yeah, we need to speak to ourselves more kindly, for sure.

Jen Marples 33:47

I love that. So I'm going to mix it up and ask a little question that's, we're going to move away from this just a touch. But for the women's specifically, because you were one of them once who's sitting on the sidelines, who's been busy parenting, who's maybe taking some time off of work, she knows there's something burning on her heart, and she wants to kind of jump back into something but doesn't know where to begin. What would you say to her?

Gabriella Espinosa 34:11

So the question that I asked earlier what to really reflect what is it that lights you up? You know, brings you joy puts a spring in your step. You know, what is your big why I've heard you talk about it. What is your why what is what is going to get you up out of bed in the morning make you feel excited. And you know, it takes a little bit of inner reflection or a lot of inner reflection to really allow yourself to tune into those feelings of like, yeah, what is it that I really love to do? Because I think we've been so busy suppressing those things in the service of being a mother, a wife, career woman. We've suppressed those desires and those wants and needs and so I think midlife reaching midlife is a wonderful opportunity to You just allow yourself to reflect, you know, if I weren't doing if I weren't pushing away, my desires, my wants and needs, what is it that I really, really want? And love to do? What is it that lights me up? And focus on that and put all of your energy and passion into that and, you know, mastering that, you know, and it could be anything, it could be teaching yoga, if that's what you want to do, being a life coach, or you know, helping others in a life coach capacity. It can be starting your podcast, you know, what is it going to get you up out of the out of bed every morning and make you super excited?

Jen Marples 35:38

Great advice. I just had this conversation this morning with a mastermind group I ran, and they beat me to it. I said, I have a little bit that I wanted to share with you. And somebody else beat me to it and said, My mantra for the year is to lead and do only things that bring me joy. Wonderful. And I said that is just

money. And that is exactly what you're saying. Because if we're contracting, and it feels like oh, no, go towards the things that bring us joy. And then that's going to take you I firmly believe down the right path.

Gabriella Espinosa 36:07

Yeah, I say something very similar. I say what can I do to make pleasure, my driving force, right? So my pleasure is my purpose? How would it feel or look like if I stayed present to pleasure in everything that I did my work, my relationships, how I speak to myself how I show up in the world. So making pleasure, my driving force, and everything that I do. Whoo, that's

Jen Marples 36:36

powerful. And what came up for me too, is even with parenting, because I've got three teens, and that can get tense. But to reframe that, and just go, you know, I get to do this, I get to be with these kids and make that a pleasurable experience. Instead of a one. You're like you didn't put away your laundry or this is that in the other. I'm going to miss that those laundry heaps when they're out of the house, but putting that pleasure first, I love that Gabriella and love that are the guiding force it would you say it's a pleasure as the guiding force? Yeah, your driving force driving force. I love that. So what do you think women can do better to support each other?

Gabriella Espinosa 37:13

Oh, wow. I was thinking about this question earlier when I was listening to your podcasts, and it's something that that you have done, Jen. And it's because I'm a big advocate for inclusivity, right, look, and see who's not sitting at the table with you and invite them in. Right and invite them in. And you've done a great job of this, Jen inviting me in, I'm you know, Latina woman, you invited the lovely Sherelle. The other day, see who's not sitting at the table with you, you know, we can create these echo chambers of our beliefs and our and our communities and so broaden, open up the table to and to invite other people there, regardless of their race, ethnicity, body shape, or size or economic background. That's something that I feel very passionate about. And something that I strive to do. In a lot of the work that I do, sometimes I invite open up my group coaching courses, and I give two free places, every time I open up my my courses, I give two free places to people who either can't afford to join, or two people who this kind of work is less accessible to. So that is something that I'm very, very passionate about, you know, inclusivity

Jen Marples 38:36

I love that. I'm glad you brought that up. I don't know if anybody's said that. But that's a big passion of mine too. And there's some some women, I want to connect you with Julie Castro Abrams, who is one of my early guests, she runs an organization called how women lead and I bring this up because everybody just needs to know about it. She's Latina, and her whole mission is to bring well, all women, but specifically women of color to the table. So she wants to get more women on board seats, and specifically women of color. So that's like her whole mission. And then she has another part of it. That's how women invest to then further get women into the investment pool to support other women owned businesses. So we've got to be better get those hands. You know, we've got to reach up for when we need help. And I'm a firm believer of like reaching back and grabbing people up and using platforms, whatever platform you have to help. And it can be in the form of service. I'm happy to hear that you give

out your free spots. It can be working with nonprofits. I think I was raised by my mom, I grew up that way. It was just that we've got to give back and we better always be thinking outside of ourselves. So I'm really glad you brought that up. It's so important.

Gabriella Espinosa 39:39

We all learn from each other. When you broaden and expand your table. It is incredible how you realize you respect your differences. But you realize your similarities and resonate with each other in the stories that you have to tell and the stories that in the experiences that you share. And there's always a touch point for connecting with other people.

Jen Marples 40:02

We could talk about that one point for an hour. So as we go into, I'm just gonna say my one plug as we go into midlife and I talk about this a lot women feel like it's harder to make relationships. And again, it goes back to what you said about being intentional, like we have to be intentional about everything that we're doing. And when you open yourself up, there are these beautiful relationships and connections. I've made relationships and connections with people all over the world. And it's not just women, it's men. I made a new friend at an event who's a 25 year old guy working in like an Balenciaga, one of these boutiques, and you just never know who think your message is going to resonate with and just keeping your mind open. Like you said, all ages, shapes, sizes, socio economics, because what happens when we're at midlife, it's kind of like the typical, you're in the suburban sort of setting. In general, I know not everybody is, but in general, and those the kids in the life can become very small. You can live within the same couple circles. And what we're saying is, you got to be intentional about busting out and it's amazing when you bust out of those circles, you meet the best people. What do you wish for women at midlife?

Gabriella Espinosa 41:09

I think I mentioned it earlier. I really wish for women to get to know themselves intimately, right to get to know themselves intimately and understand what gives them pleasure, what lights them up, right? Because we cannot be in relationship with others. And unless we know ourselves first, you know, that sometimes requires some inner work. Some, you know, digging up some uncomfortable truths, but it's in that discomfort that our greatest learning lies. So I am a big advocate for doing some inner work and really getting to know yourself

Jen Marples 41:47

powerful. What do you think the best thing is about being at midlife?

Gabriella Espinosa 41:53

Yeah, I think midlife is an incredible gift, right? And you get to choose what it looks like for you what it looks like and feels like for you. And we all have lived experience that is valuable to someone. It may not be valuable to everyone, but your lived experience is going to be valuable to someone. So I think, you know, appreciating this time of life as a gift. And your lived experiences valuable is a great driving force for moving forward in the second half of life.

Jen Marples 42:30

I love it. And we both think that the second half is going to be the best half. Let's just Let's just say that. Okay, I want you to finish this sentence. I'm not too fucking old too.

Gabriella Espinosa 42:41

I'm gonna get really really, really bold. And I say that I'm not too fucking old to have great sex.

Jen Marples 42:49

Yes, I was hoping. I was hoping you're saying something.

Gabriella Espinosa 42:55

And has no age limit or expiration date.

Jen Marples 42:59

Oh, my God, we could I could talk to you forever. I just adore you. Thank you for sharing all this wonderful advice. It's so informative. And I hope everyone takes away what Gabriella was talking about and putting your pleasure first and going through her steps. Getting help if you need it. The tools support whatever you need, reach out to her. Just do it. We deserve it. We deserve it. God dammit, we deserve it. We deserve to have pleasure. And I'm saying all of this to you because I'm saying this to me. I'm saying this to me too. It has been so lovely chatting with you let before I let you go. Let everybody know where they can find you support you get more into your world of pleasure.

Gabriella Espinosa 43:39

Well, my website is Gabrielle espinosa.com. And I have my group coaching courses there as well as one to one coaching opportunities. I also lead retreats twice a year. And I'm on Instagram at Gabriella Espinosa and also venturing into LinkedIn under the same name Gabriella, as you know, some

Jen Marples 43:59

awesome so we're going to link all that in the show notes. So you can go stalk her online and reach out to her. She loves to talk to everyone. So if you have a question, let her know and she'll guide you in the right place. It has been so lovely chatting with you and I hope I get to see you in real life soon. So we're gonna manifest something to thank you.

Gabriella Espinosa 44:15

It's a pleasure.