

Ep 136 V2 Julie Flakstad

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SPEAKERS

Julie Flakstad, Jen Marples

Julie Flakstad 00:00

Another big one is that there are no gold medals that they might have lived for a long time in their 20s 30s and 40s. Living a life where it was about striving and racing and achieving on all fronts, by the way, you know, with this idea that they were going to get to some sort of finish line and when some sort of metal but there are no metals, I think that the insight is that so many are understanding now at this intersection of 40s and 50s. That like what is it that I want pause, slow down, and they're recognizing that the pace is shifting, and they're allowing themselves room to think about what it is that they want.

Jen Marples 00:52

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 you 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 Marple show today I've got a beautiful guest dialing in from the east coast and her name is Julie Flagstaff. And she is the founder of the midlife Truth project, which is a really cool mission that she's going to tell you all about. And she is focused on women and their transitions in midlife. So we are all about that here on the marble show. But by day she is also a badass mergers and acquisitions advisor. So we're gonna get into it. We're going to talk a little bit about pivots and entrepreneurship and then dig into the midlife Truth project and then talk about all of our favorite things which involves midlife women, and that is why you listen to this show. So with all of that, Julie, welcome to the John Markel show. And thanks for being here. I cannot wait to dig into what you're doing.

Julie Flakstad 02:20

Thank you. I'm so excited to be in conversation with you. Yeah.

Jen Marples 02:24

And I just have to say the world is so small, Julie and I were connecting on Instagram and she reached out and then I went to go kind of see if we had anybody in common. And lo and behold, one of her best friends shout out to Jenny Schwartz is my son's best friend's mother. And so we live like two blocks away from each other. And there's also another friends who are for our kids are all friends. But she's in Greenwich, Connecticut, and I'm here in Tiburon, Northern California, so you never know who you're gonna meet.

Julie Flakstad 02:55

I love it. That's what makes the world go around.

Jen Marples 02:57

It's so small. And it's so fabulous and amazing. So I'm just so glad that we had the opportunity to meet Julie and I just love that we have Thank you some really wonderful people, really, truly wonderful people in common. So with all that, I know you're doing the midlife Truth project, and you've had startups and you've done a lot of stuff in the past. So take us through everything you've done, because it's very impressive and amazing. And I love for my listeners to also hear about pivots, expansion, day jobs, the nine to five, kind of keeping the lights on and then taking passion projects out for a spin. So you took all those boxes, so we're really gonna get into it. So tell us all the things where have you started? How did you get to where you are today?

Julie Flakstad 03:37

Well, I'm glad that it like sounds impressive or looks impressive, because to me, the insecurity reigns through that I think it looks more like an EKG. But I I've come to at the ripe age of 52. Except that, you know, EKGs are not that it's a journey. And there's lots of pivots and detours and starts and stops. And so it makes for a pretty colorful ride. You know, I believe that we're pretty much all a sum of our parts. And so I think that pretty much sums me up. But without going into the mom and the dad and the sister and the aunt and the crazy cousin. You know, I think it's fair enough to say that I'm very right brain left brain focus. And that's driven. A lot of the decisions that I have made in my career from a professional standpoint, and also some of the personal choices that I've made. From a right brain standpoint. I grew up my parents were divorced. I think it's, for me, it's an important part of my story. I had to, you know, take care of myself at a much earlier age than most and I don't say that from a woe is me standpoint, I just say it is more of a fact. But at the same time while I was young, taking care of myself, I think I did that a lot by lots of band aids. Making people think that I was in control when I really wasn't. And my way of coping was working hard was trying to show everyone I was super independent and I didn't need anybody. And by working really hard, I mean, I think in middle school, I think I had like two paper routes, literally two paper routes I was delivering those were the days where we used to have To put the stacks of paper on the 10 speed and go to 100 Physical houses and throw the paper on the walkway, not off the walkway, and then once a week actually collect the money go door to door. And if you didn't get the money you didn't get paid. So I just think that that is like a pretty like as an example, that pretty much sums me up in terms of working hard. And when it went on from there to you know, the first jobs I had, I think it was a lot about validation when I was younger, because I felt like if I worked hard and had the right names on the resume that somehow it validated who I was, it maybe it was the the abandoned child in me, but I worked for Sports Illustrated originally in sports marketing, I moved on to a big names like American Express, I went to Columbia Business School, I worked them seven years at IBM. I

mean, I literally everything is an acronym. They were well known. And although they were kind of more traditional jobs, I always seem to find the entrepreneurial aspect within those bigger companies, which I think is an important message to younger people too. So for all the moms out there listening, I think they can tell their children, you can still be an entrepreneur inside of a bigger firm, I called it being an intrapreneur. That's how I rationalized it. So that was very right brain and then left brain. I also think that there is a red thread through my life that does have to do with entrepreneurship and creativity. Again, that paper route was like having your own business. It was up to me to get the papers delivered, figure out what I was going to do it on my schedule, and make sure that the bills got paid, so to speak, that went on to a series of different entrepreneurial smaller ventures when I was younger, and then really took hold when I sold at the ripe age of 21. I think it was on my floor in my little tiny apartment living in Norway. I'm originally from Norway. I sold a million dollar golf sponsorship to ping golf. And I didn't even know what a par four was. It's been an interesting ride. But there was something about again, I'm a gatherer, I'm a connector. That's my superpower. And so I knew I had met people at Sports Illustrated that were from the ping organization. I happened to be in Norway, they were looking for a lead sponsor. So I kind of made that marriage come together. And then fast forward. I started my own business when I was later in my 30s. When I walked away decided to pivot from the traditional strategy marketing world to real entrepreneurship. I founded or co founded and launched the first blow dry bar in the US this is pre dry bar called blow the New York blow dry bar. It was in Manhattan's meatpacking district. And we were pioneers, like we literally were the first people to create a blow dry bar in the US, you know, our mantra was that blowout should be as easy as getting a manicure. So we ran that for 12 years, we raised a bunch of money, we had a few different locations, we had about 25 products that we sold it about 2000 doors here and in Europe, we sold that unfortunately, not enough money to go retire and drink margaritas on the beach. So I then parlayed that into mergers and acquisitions work. And figuring that, again, trying to find that creative loophole and follow the breadcrumbs because I knew I didn't want to go back into a traditional job. But I had to find something that aligned with my family's core values. Now I was a mom of two. And so that allowed me the flexibility to help other entrepreneurs get to the endgame and reach their goals without having to you know, necessarily go into a full time job because I was, you know, I work as a as a consultant for that firm. And that led to more coaching and advising outside of that company, which led me to programming. And I've done probably, I don't know, gosh, hundreds of events over the last 10 years all focused on women's based issues. And that led me to really understand at the, I guess, point of inflection when I really entered into midlife and honing in on topics and issues that women were curious about for that because I was going through it. And thus, you know, here we are having just launched a few months ago, the midlife Truth project, which I can't wait to explain a little bit more about.

Jen Marples 09:33

Well, I love it and you bring up a couple of things that I think are important to note and to highlight and one is that just that to be entrepreneurial within your organization. I think that's really important. I'm actually going to tell my son he wants to pursue entrepreneurship in college, but you can't be entrepreneurial in an organization and there's a lot of women listening, who are sort of have that proverbial nine to five steal but they have you know, something that they want to kind of take out for a spin and I I think what you're gonna get into it like kind of, you're kind of managing both. So kicking out the midlife Truth project, as well as sort of junior mergers and acquisitions and all the consulting that you're doing. But it's important to note a couple of things. One is that you can do a couple things at

once, and I help women and you probably, counsel, a lot of women do the same. Like when you have that nine to five, a lot of women feel and I was once they're kind of like, I just can't go on one more day. But it's like this reframing of looking at this nine to five job that you have, as I call it, like the startup funding, it's like, it's your funder, it's your funding source, into putting, you know, putting that money into your dream, because there's a lot of women right now who want to get out of what they're doing, kind of by day, sort of those old careers and really take something else out for a spin. So just having that sense. And that spirit of entrepreneurship, I think, is really important. And knowing that you can kind of design what you want. And then it's that reframe of sort of that nine to five,

Julie Flakstad 10:56

I just want to add one, one thing on that, because you're 100% Correct, I tell young, and people my age and older, you know, look, figure out what project you can align yourself up with in an organization or a job within an organization that has a skill set that you need to get better at in order to do whatever it is that you want to do, and figure that out. It's a great stomping ground. And these organizations have, especially the bigger ones have amazing training programs, and amazing, you know, continuing ed programs, so use it for what it's worth while you're there. And then the other little tip that I have that I do it myself, I've done it in the past. And I also advise other women to do is that if you're not necessarily in a nine to five job, and let's say you been a family CEO for years, and you don't know quite how to brush up on some of your skills, and whatever it is that you need to do in order to do what you want to do. Go volunteer, go volunteer your time for a project that allows you to get back in the game, and feel more confident in whatever the skill sets are that you need.

Jen Marples 12:04

I'm so glad you mentioned that. I don't know if I've ever talked about that. But you're bringing up something that I actually did a lot when I was younger, because I think we're both basically the same age and I entered the job market in the early 90s. And we were like in a recession, it was hard to find jobs, and I was pursuing things. And like, I guess that recession was like kind of early mid 90s. I remember it was a really hard time to find a job in like public relations, advertising marketing. The one thing I always did was I went and used my volunteer expertise in organizations. So I was I never stopped ever doing PR. So if I moved to different cities, which I did a couple of different times, I landed right away found organizations I loved and then offered up my PR and marketing expertise. So then I had that sort of on the resume wasn't paid, but you're still using your skills. So that's a really great bit of advice, especially for women getting back in everyone. First of all, you need to know you've got everything you need to get started. So there is that little bit of and we know talking to so many women on the show, you do lose a little bit of confidence if you haven't been in sort of that paid capacity for a while. But that's what I just wanted to highlight what you're seeing is gold. And it's above and beyond volunteering at the school. So many nonprofits will benefit because women who've been in banking, they've been just thinking the women I know, lawyers, bankers, marketers, every organization will be dying to have your expertise,

Julie Flakstad 13:27

project management running, and also this project management. I mean, 101 Yep. So I would just say for all the professional volunteers out there that have been busting their butts, on the PGA and the Junior League and the whatever else they've been doing, you can parlay that I know people who have

who do it on a daily basis, and I'm raising my hand right now I'm looking to learn a new skill set in conjunction with where I want to take the midlife Truth project guests who just volunteered to produce a documentary and got funding from the organization to go do it. Wha it's great. I'm project managing and amazing and initiative for an organization that needs it. And now I'm going to take that skill set, you know, and leverage that for what I want to do in my own kind of continuing career pursuits. You're just dropping

Jen Marples 14:15

gold jewelry, because I haven't thought about that for a while to be honest. And I think I have thought about the fact that yes, women you first of all, we all gotta take credit for what we do. Because women out there, we've all seen them. It's like you're raising money for the schools. It's like you raised \$150,000 you plan this auction. And because it's a natural skill set, you're not thinking that that's anything amazing, but that's not an ouch I mean, that's your natural skill set. But most people don't have that skill set. They can't go ask for money. They can't go browbeat vendors and people and companies and sales, sales, sales or core sales like you're giving me this money, honey, like let's go love it. You've got that. So it's like translating that experience. I love it. So we're gonna get back into that in a bit. I want you to talk about the midlife Truth project. So How did it come to be? And what is it? And how does it benefit midlife women?

Julie Flakstad 15:05

Well, first of all, I just thank you for being a platform to share what this work is because I truly believe that it is so important. So over the last 10 years, as I mentioned, I've taken a front row seat to produce and spearhead hundreds of different events around women's issues. And then as I entered into midlife when I was about, yeah, I guess well, by definition, 45. But when I really hit like hardcore perimenopause, and that transition into menopause, it was, as so many women have told you on the show, it was an incredibly lonely time. And I remember one of my kind of oak trees sitting on my back porch and being like, Oh, Jesus, like, you better buckle up, this is gonna get ugly, and looked at my husband, she's like, and you better definitely buckle up. Anyway, the point was, is I went through many, like, at least three years feeling incredibly lonely, not only in terms of what was happening with my body, but also what was happening with my friendships. And I really started to question Who are my real friends? Who can I talk to, and this is pre COVID, by the way, so the world was fully functioning, as well as really beating myself up about, you know, what I should have would have been could have done career wise and why wasn't further along, as well as mourning. My father, who I'd lost many years prior, but wishing he was in my life still, and then watching my mother age, all of these transitions that occurred during midlife that I felt alone about so at the same time, so I was working, I was consulting with an organization called everwell, which was a female based platform community at the time. And I proposed the idea called being 50 ish, which was going to be a six part series, it was going to be a zoom series that was really going to unpack exactly what I just said, you know, what is your story going to be? Number one, two, evolving friendship, three, changing family dynamics, for what's happening in my body five, what's next? And then there was another one at the end. And the response was incredible. I mean, like, dropped the mic. We had, you know, hundreds of people attend it was on zoo, I interviewed subject matter experts in each of those areas. And it was like, please don't want to turn on a light switch for people. And I realized in that moment, that okay, ding, ding, ding, entrepreneur, you know, this is a whitespace like, somebody needs to be shining a light on the whole story. And I think you

and I can both say that since then this was, you know, arguably, you know, four years ago. Since then someone's taking the lid off of menopause. Everyone's seemingly, it seems to be talking about menopause. But by the way, let us remind you, we're in this space. So we think everyone's talking about menopause. But they're not necessarily. But the fact that Oprah and Drew Barrymore and everyone now now is talking about menopause. It's more than it was. But my argument has been that it's a much bigger story. It's a much more complex story about a myriad of transitions that are happening seemingly at the same time. And that is why I launched the midlife Truth project is to better understand how women are thinking and feeling about again, the myriad of transitions that they are going through seemingly all at the same time, including evolving friendship, changing family dynamics, which means motherhood and what that means now, their relationship with their partner or spouse, as well as aging parents, the feelings and emotions and conjunction with loss and grieving, financial security, and Bing bing, bing, bing bing, the bigger question of what's next? Who am I today? What do I want? And how am I going to get there over the next, you know, decade or two or three or four. This is taking the shape right now of about 100 interviews in 100 days, that's the goal. And I'm knee deep in it. You can go to the midlife truth project.com Again, the midlife truth project.com and sign up to schedule your 45 minute interview. You don't have to prepare anything. And I will basically ask you questions across all of those different transitions to better understand how you're feeling and thinking about your journey and midlife. The goal of this work is to really help demystify and de stigmatize and hopefully reframe what aging looks like today, because it's not your mother's midlife, right we know that and collectively that these truths which that's why I'm calling them truths Collectively, these truths be they vulnerable truths, inspirational truths, hard truths, that we can better support and empower Women who are approaching midlife so younger than us the next the generation before us, their male counterparts, as well as women in midlife to really live their best next decade. I feel like this tapestry, this capsule of voices is going to fuel more research, more events, more program, ultimately, a documentary series, which I'm working on now, as well as you know, books in the like.

Jen Marples 20:29

So with the 100 interviews in 100 days is that turning into a documentary and a book, so that's the foundation for everything you just mentioned.

Julie Flakstad 20:37

That's where it's directionally flowing right now. But you know, the the documentary The Docu series, is going to use these interviews as sound bites to validate what the truths are, and that these are issues. Again, it's not just about menopause, menopause makes the other transitions more complex because of what we're going through emotionally. And physically. It can make all of these other transitions feel more intense, but it's really understanding all of them that helps women feel not alone.

Jen Marples 21:11

Well, I love it because the more of us talking about it, the better and you bring up a point where yes, we are dialed in our feeds deliver us each other because we are just we are in the whole midlife, menopause, all this this transitional world. But I will say, I want to say for every one person who's dialed in, there's five who aren't my own sister. We'll use her as an example was like, I'm learning from perimenopause. Do you have any resources on like, you know, I've got a podcast, right? But it's the truth.

Julie Flakstad 21:40

I can tell you that I'm interviewing people in Kansas and Washington and all over the United States and some abroad. And you'd be surprised. I mean, it is a truth that people feel alone. And no matter how many resources we constantly are tapping into, that's not necessarily happening in every small town.

Jen Marples 22:00

No, and I actually I just interviewed a female founder who's dialed into selling Mueller, the founder, co founder woman is, and she said that they had some data, I can remember where the research came from, but there was something like almost close to 300,000 women surveyed. And their number one pain point was friendships.

Julie Flakstad 22:20

Well, I'm happy we didn't we didn't plan this, folks. But I'm happy you said that because no matter what we do professionally, I will say I'm a writer. That's where I find flow. And I was just recently published in Maria Shriver's Sunday paper, an essay that I wrote called Finding Your people. And it was an essay that basically starts with the vulnerability of how alone how little bit of shame that I felt not a little bit, a lot of bit of shame, about not having this close knit group of friends in my own zip code, and my feelings of waking up and wondering who are my real friends. And then the essay goes on to talk about this unbelievable experience I had with this diversity equity inclusion coach, who talked about finding your people and where that led me. And then all of these other resources and advice that I really harnessed in my inventory of friendships. It was so unbelievably validating, for me, number one, that Maria Shriver who I really respect, her publishing the piece, but the feedback from women all over the country, and men, who said, Oh, my gosh, like, I feel that way, too. Why don't I have more friends in my own zip code. Now I have, I am lucky enough to have what I call oak trees. And I learned there's a great analogy in the article about oak trees and flowers and weeds as an analogy for friendship and that I was told from my life coach and friend out in LA Paige Nolan, and I have those oak trees, they just don't live in my surrounding area. It was really interesting how many people reached out to me personally, and that it's nice women, we just need to know that we're not alone.

Jen Marples 24:06

100% And that was my theory. I think we have such aligned paths because when I started hosting events and tapping in on just on this theory, again, it was pre COVID I think we kind of started everything around the same time. I was sensing that women were feeling super disconnected and alone even in this connected world. And seemingly connected like we're showing up at events and things are you know, people are, are you know, connecting but they weren't deeply connecting. So everyone listening you've heard me tell this before, but on a whim within two weeks notice. It ended up having 20 Women at my house I did dinner and coaching light and we didn't get through introductions before people were crying and stating the big dramatic things happening in their life like cancer and bankruptcy like really big, juicy things. I was like, oh gosh, okay. It was proven within five minutes. This theory of everyone feeling really disconnected and not having as authentic deeper relationships. Because if we're not speaking the truth about every aspect of our life, we do feel disconnected. And then we tend to think falsely that everybody else has it figured out. And nobody has it figured out. And that's why we need each other. So it's really, really important that we're talking about this. And I talk

about this all the time, like the best investment of our time. And our one of our priorities should be finding these female connections, you don't need a lot of them either. You need a few that are really deep, like these oak trees, the oak trees that you're talking about deeply rooted, deeply rooted. And then conversely, if they're the time suckers, or the energy vampires, we all had them. You got to prune the garden, we'll just we'll keep on this a garden like, nature thing. I

Julie Flakstad 25:40

just, I mean, I will just I will add that like, I do think it's important because in the garden, just you spend 30 seconds on that analogy. Yes, the oak trees are these deeply rooted friendships that provide support and shelter in a storm that are there for you over time, that really kind of weather your friendship that you can lean on. The thing is, though, that there are these flowers in the garden too, right. And there's maybe perennials and annuals, we won't go too far down the analogy. But flowers do play a role. They're bright, and they're Sunny, and they can be inspirational, and they can smell good. But they just may not last forever. We just need to be intentional, it comes back to just recognizing like, if you are a flower, maybe I'm not going on the four day weekend with you. But can I have a drink with you? Or can I take a walk with you? Yes. So I just think it's really helpful to understand how that relationship is serving you. And being able to understand the difference between a flower and an oak tree and then the weeds that like no matter what you do, you pull them out, you pull them out, and yet they keep on coming back. So taking inventory is incredibly liberating. And that was what the article was about.

Jen Marples 26:47

I love it. That was a nice tangent that we went on, because I talked about it a lot, the community that connection, and it's actually a predictor of longevity, 100%, it supersedes everything else. So we've got to go all in. And I'm glad you brought up the men because I've been having this conversation too with a lot of women and you know, women really want to lean in or they'll be more apt to go to a group exercise class. And there's just to, you know, meet people and have these connections. And then everyone's kind of having the same conversation about the guys how they'll maybe go for their run, or they'll do this, but they're not doing some of the same things that women are and it's equally as important for them. And I think it also helps our relationships, if like our guys, and the men in our lives also have their strong friendships, because we can't be the end all be all for each other.

Julie Flakstad 27:31

Well, it's more if they have to connect. That's the thing is you are connecting with people. They're just not talking. They're not talking about meaningful things. They're talking about the things that they know how to talk about sports and jobs and the kids in law, but they're not getting into it. So we as women need to kind of help them by starting at home by having some of these conversations with them and being vulnerable and seeing what happens.

Jen Marples 27:55

And because it's they look at us. And it's yeah, we have sort of on the speed dial and we're more asked probably to ask for help them they are. So that's a whole other conversation. we digress. So you talked to so many women? Have you talked to so many women to date? What are the top three to five things you've learned about midlife women? Like what are the top pain points or the top challenges that the women that you've talked to are experiencing right now.

Julie Flakstad 28:17

There's so many of them. And that's why it's going to be so interesting is beginning to truly distill down what the key learnings are. But I would say the ones that come to mind, since we're talking about friendship is that friendship matters. That's number one. And that so many of the women I've spoken to echo the same sentiment that they have less time for surface level friendships. And they are want to prioritize friendships where they can have meaningful connection and conversation and where they can truly be their authentic selves. And so that is a priority for them. Some are further along on that path. But most of them, I would say, have a clear understanding that they're kind of done. And that's part of the beauty of these interviews is that the emails that I get back from folks that say, you know, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to pause and reflect and really thought about all these different transitions that I'm going through and now my brains really thinking about it. So anyway, without to digress and number one, friendship matters. Number two, I would say that age is a mindset that many of the women one of the questions I asked is, you know, I know how old they are from the form that they filled out, but it's how are you in the How old do you feel? It's interesting how many women say oh, you know, I'm you know, 49 or I'm 52 When they say but I feel either 26 or 72 like depending on the day. And what that is that they in spirit. They often feel so much younger because they're so excited about so much that is to come and they're just coming out of a fog in terms of being so darn good. busy and so hectic at the pace is like shifting so they can look forward in a new way. But then there's this reality that isn't Oh, like, My shoulder hurts and my knee hurts my hip hurts on certain days. And that's just like a part of it. But in this age, as a mindset, there's this undercurrent of focus on less about how they look, and more about how they feel. So it's less about vanity, and it's more about, you know, what, I'm going to be strong, I'm gonna, you know, keep on lifting my weights, because I'm interested in my health span, you know, not my lifespan, you know, I really want to be healthy, I want to feel good, I want to be there for my kids and my grandkids and all that good stuff. So ages, a mindset would be number two, three, another big one is that there are no gold medals, that they might have lived for a long time in their 20s 30s and 40s. Living a life where it was about striving and racing and achieving on all fronts, by the way, whether it's in their careers, whether it's in their communities and volunteerism, as a mother, in their marriage, socially, just striving, running, running, racing, racing racing, you know, with this idea that they were going to get to some sort of finish line and win some sort of medal, but there are no medals at the pearly gates. They're not handing them out. I think that the insight is that so many are understanding now at this intersection of 40s and 50s. That like what is it that I want pause, slow down. And they're recognizing that the pace is shifting, and they're allowing themselves room to think about what it is that they want. I just got off an amazing conversation with a woman in Washington literally two hours ago, where she said that she left she works for a big, very well known company, and she left her directorship to go into kind of a regular band level job within the organization, because she didn't want to work in technology and what she wants to work in HR. And she's like, I'm done. I'm done hustling, licenses and this and that. I just want to be in a people facing job talking to people helping people. Three is gold medals. I would say the last one even though I like everything in odd numbers, I'd say the fourth one that really sticks out is time is finite. There's a greater all around appreciation for seeing their kids adulting for recognizing their kids for who they are, although that's a really big one, which was a whole other episode, by the way, is how women are still very worried about their kids regardless of age. And that's, that's heart wrenching. But there's you recognize seeing your parents age, really realizing that their days are numbered with them, if they're still with us, their need days with kids living at home

are numbered, and some some of them are already free birds, I like to call them free birds, not empty nesters. So I'd say time is finite.

Jen Marples 32:56

Well, I love all those and those have definitely all popped up on the show, I will say the one with the gold medal. That one is really big. And I talked to a lot of women and I went through that myself, of this deconstruction of actually going towards what you want. And it's really stripping away the ego of what maybe we thought we wanted because we were all achieving, achieving achieving. But it's trusting and breaking down knowing that if you're going for what is meaningful, like the gal you just talked to is like I don't want to be the hustler tech person, I just want to go do that and HR, go for it. There isn't the gold medal. It doesn't matter. If you have that on your resume. Is it making you happier? Are you are you living day to day Joe and I know that that is really present and pops up for so many women. Definitely the friendship thing that we talked about. And the time is finite. And I talked about this a lot too. It's like every day we got to be thankful and present every day. Tomorrow's not promised our lives all of that we were going to do all the things you want to do be healthy, a lot of everyone's tapped into that looking at longevity, but knowing what it's all going to end that's above our pay grade, we are not in control of that. And so if we can just adopt that mindset, you're going to climb Everest, but there's going to be these other mountains to climb. So you've got to enjoy that journey.

Julie Flakstad 34:08

The day to day thing I work on every single day control and illusion, you know, like I because I think we've been so engineered to control and deliver. And we live in a very individualistic society. And in full disclosure, I'm reading this book. It's called us by Terry real if anyone is struggling in relationships, it's unbelievable. Because we live in this individualistic world we don't think enough about like us in a collective

Jen Marples 34:38

universe. Yes, we actually evolved to be with people. We're not supposed to not be with people. So this you guys this can be a whole entire other conversation. But I'm so glad you brought that up because we were told by grinding and this and that and it's what society was driving and like trying to achieve those gold stars that that's somehow going to make us happy getting to the Everest or getting the promotion or getting the new thing or the new client or that that I like that somehow all that stuff was gonna make us happy was the end all be all so keeps us on that hamster wheel.

Julie Flakstad 35:09

Yes. And I look even as I'm talking about this and I'm talking about the midlife Truth project, I have very, very distinct goals for where I want that to go. But I, I need to remind myself also that I've got a junior in high school, I've got to figure out how to balance Yes, I want to get to that 100 number. And yes, I want to find that executive producer for the Docu series and blah, blah, but I just need to kind of temper this feeling of like, I gotta get it done tomorrow or today with, Okay, follow the breadcrumbs. Believe in the universe, chug it forward. But don't forget the balance and the other things that are important to you.

Jen Marples 35:49

I'm like nodding and I was laughing internally, because I'm having this conversation with myself every day. And this was actually something that popped up because we same age, kids just celebrated 25th wedding anniversary, all this stuff. And actually a friend of mine who was on the show, somebody had sent her the quote, especially for all of us type A overachievers who did a thing a certain way, which is most of our generation, we did a thing a certain way. And it was the grinding and the hustling that can we basically achieve what we want to achieve in a different way, not the way that we did it, knowing Damn, well, these kids are out of all my kids are completely out of the house in three years. That is real. So it's looking for those moments of the Can we just sit down and have dinner for 10 minutes. Not that let's sit at the desk till 10 o'clock at night. And then also talking about the universe and manifestation visualization. That's, that's another podcast episode. But I love that. And I do that and,

Julie Flakstad 36:42

and let's not forget, like focusing in on partnership, like, again, in the spirit of vulnerability, like I'm have to invest time in my marriage, I gotta read that book, I gotta show up for therapy, I gotta like, it requires work. It's not easy work transitioning into new phases of our partnerships, and we need to be present for that.

Jen Marples 37:03

I'm glad you brought that up, too. Because yeah, just celebrating 25 Our commitment to each other wasn't like diamonds, and this and that. And the other, it's exactly what you're talking about. It's investing in going deeper as a couple because we're gonna we're looking at these different transitions that are coming up, emotional intimacy, all of it, but all of it. And it was funny, I were talking to this sort of therapist, last coach slash like magician, and he basically said, couples, individuals and couples will come to me with all these different things at the end, all of us want you to set it, intimacy. That's what we all want, right. And so if you have the core, you guys, I will have another podcast episode recorded about relationships, because this is top of mind because it was a big aha that I had on a retreat that everything we want rests in our relationship. And this doesn't even mean if you're in a if you're not in a relationship, right now, it could be the relationship with yourself, it's just being very clear on who you are what you want, and just kind of doubling down on all these relationships in your life.

Julie Flakstad 38:01

Let me know when you do, because I'm a few people I would tee up to be with that would be great to interview.

Jen Marples 38:05

Yeah, just like, gosh, Julie, we could talk forever. I know. But I'm gonna ask you this question, because we've danced around it a little bit talking about friendships and like support. So we've got, you know, let's assume if we're talking to our spouses or partners, whom are a long term sort of support, when when we look to each other and collaboration, because this is a big thing for me is like at midlife, we've been kind of taught the one way of the lack and the fear and the scarcity. So women were naturally pitted against each other. So one of my huge platforms, above and beyond, you're not too fucking old students. Lucky One is that we have to do better supporting each other as women, we absolutely have to do better. What do you think that we can do better right now to support each other?

Julie Flakstad 38:47

Be vulnerable? Share, I mean, I've heard you say it so many times in your podcast, is leading by example. And so I oftentimes, I'm a fairly direct person, but I, I took it as take, I'm really practicing it is a muscle, I do it carefully. I test the waters with someone who I don't necessarily know exactly where my footing is with them. And I will share a small thing, and I will see how it is received and if they can hold space for that. But I do fundamentally believe that how we can support each other is by saying we are human. We are going through different things. Nobody is perfect.

Jen Marples 39:30

I love that nobody's perfect. Nobody's got it all sorted out. So if we can do those two things show up vulnerably. And just get right to it, and have open hearts, that's probably going to solve most of the problems. Like leading with love and vulnerability. And like you said, and holding space for people. I love it. That's how I show up. I love that I just ran into somebody yoga was going through a very tough thing and we just we had a little cry together. Five minutes after yoga, but think of how profound that is if we can have all those little moments because it all goes to this midlife soup. And her thing was with an aging parents. So it's like there's always something going on. But if we can do that and have that connection, it's what we all crave. It's what we all crave, we have to be vulnerable and actually get over the fear of like exposure. So I like your advice to testing the waters like a little bit, because I'll come in hot and be like, tell me about the bleeding out and this and that and the other and I'll go and hop and maybe not everyone's ready for it. But so it's kind of take it at your own pace. But everything gold is on the other side of all of that.

Julie Flakstad 40:32

And just like a little add on, it's not what we can do for each other. But in that spirit of leading with vulnerability is when somebody shares a vulnerability with you is oftentimes I find that we feel a need to kind of jump in and be react and like to what they're saying. And I am learning that it is great to say, Do you want my advice? Or do you want me just to listen, because I'm here for you. Because not everybody wants my advice. They want to feel connected, and they want me to meet to ask more questions, and to let them speak. But so I just, I just feel like it's another kind of learning, you know, as you Kelly Corrigan, who's like one of my biggest I'm super super crush on her. I'm actually going to see her tomorrow night in an event, so I'm super jazzed. But in her book, tell me more. There is that kind of she does it with her teenage daughters, but it's like that ability to stat Tell me more like tell me more about how you're feeling. Tell me more about how's that going? How's that making you feel? Or what is that like or, and it's sometimes people just need to talk.

Jen Marples 41:39

There's so many synchronicities, like it's a kind of freaky because I'm having yet again, this exact same conversation came up. And I was actually literally no shit thinking about this this morning, because there was yet another person I was talking to who's going through a hard time. And it's the same thing. So this advice is gold for working with your teens, your friends, your spouse, and I had to say it to my husband, the other night, I was kind of dumping and vomiting everything out. I said, this is one of those times where I just need you to listen, I don't want a solution. I don't want a roadmap. I don't want a path. I need to rant and rave and vomit all of this out. And I just need you to listen. That's it. So if we can do that for each other and just say, Hey, Julie, do you need my advice? You just want me to listen? Yeah,

tell me more. I mean, I think that would just that's, that's just like gold right there. Take that away and use it for everyone. Because we deal with our kids a lot too. We want to problem solve. So this is probably gonna be the most even the most impactful with kids want to jump in and solve? And it's like, no, just tell me tell me more about we could go on and on and on about that. But oh my God, in the interest of time, I have to ask you one more question. And I'm bored. I

42:47

love it. I can talk forever.

Jen Marples 42:48

So my final question for you from before my final final is what do you think the best thing is about being at midlife?

Julie Flakstad 42:56

I think it is the best thing about being in midlife is becoming more deeply rooted in myself.

Jen Marples 43:06

Because to your oak tree analogy, getting to know

Julie Flakstad 43:09

myself like the new this is this is who she is now, you know.

Jen Marples 43:13

And that could even change like nothing has to be rooted so far that you're not you can't rip up those routes and try something new.

Julie Flakstad 43:20

Oh 100% I know that you always liked that expression. Like I'm not too fucking old to what and that's it. I'm not too fucking old to change. Thus therapy, and we were talking about you know, couples therapy like it's, I'm not too old too, or too stuck in my ways to repair, learn how to repair and listen more like I am not too fucking old to change. I'm not I hate that expression. Like, you know, you can't teach an old dog new tricks like yes, you can.

Jen Marples 43:47

You absolutely can. Yeah, you beat me to the punch. Do you finished my last my last? Like I'm not trying to change so that's uh, we're gonna leave it. So where can we find you find more about the truth. Midlife Truth project follow you on the Instagrams, LinkedIn where are you?

Julie Flakstad 44:01

I love it. Yeah, so I would love it. If people who have listened to this would sign up for an interview and be a part of this time capsule of voices around midlife, you can sign up at the mid life truth project.com And of course please follow me on Instagram where I share more about the project but also other midlife musings and, and resources and the like. And that is simply at Julie flax dad. So ju li e, last name FLAKST ad at Julie Flagstad. And then of course, I'm on LinkedIn on the same name.

Jen Marples 44:36

Awesome, really all that in the show notes. We didn't get to talk about

Julie Flakstad 44:39

m&a. But I mean, there's so much it's so much midlife is so much more interesting than mergers and acquisitions. But if anyone is interested in mergers and acquisitions like and there is a founder looking to exit their business, they can always reach out to me on my email, which is Jay T fallax. Dad at Gmail, the easiest way to reach me

Jen Marples 44:57

fabulous. So we'll have all that in the show notes. Oh my god. Julie I could have I could probably talk to you for three hours

Julie Flakstad 45:03

well i Let's do this again and I can't wait to see you when I come out your way all right take care thank you so much