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SPEAKERS

Jen Marples, Julie Castro Abrams

Julie Castro Abrams 00:00

There's a big difference between transactions and relationships. And the faster you learn that the better off you are, it is a transaction. If I contact you and say, will you introduce me to XYZ person? Or can you give me an answer about this question? It's a relationship. If I say, Hey, tell me what's going on for you. Or if I remember that you have kids, like whatever those the hooks are, it's like that I actually I care about you. And as much as I'm trying to get my needs met. I also am paying attention who you are as a person.

Jen Marples 00:45

Hello, and welcome to the Jen Marple Show. I'm your host Jen Marples, a former public relations agency owner turn business a life coach and motivational speaker dedicated to helping female entrepreneurs achieve the business and life they desire in their 40s 50s and beyond. Each week, I'll be bringing you conversations with incredible women who are rocking entrepreneurship and taking courageous action while also dealing with all that midlife entails. I'll also be dropping in solo every week to share thoughts, advice, tips and tricks that will help you live your best life. If you are thinking about pivoting in your career or starting a new business or looking for a second act, stick around as I guarantee you will be inspired. And know this, you are not too fucking old. Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Jen Marple show today I have a most fabulous guest. Her name is Julie Castro Abrams. And she is the founder of how women lead. And there are a couple different buckets underneath that and I'm going to let her explain that to you. But all you need to know about Julie is that she is a fierce supporter of women. And I'm going to read sort of their little manifesto from how women lead. When women are in positions of power and influence. It is better for people profits and the planet. Can I just get a hallelujah. Amen. Julie is also just launched a podcast and that is called how women inspire, invest, lead and give. So thank God, you started that podcast, Julie, because we all need to hear more from you. So with that, welcome to the show. Julie, thank you for joining me today.

Julie Castro Abrams 02:24

Thank you for having me, I am so excited to be here because we care about the same group of women in the world. So can't wait to dive in.

Jen Marples 02:33

Yes, we do. We know empowered women empower women. In our spare time, we're just gonna change the world, we are going to get women in positions of power leadership, starting businesses standing in their power supporting other women, and we're going to make it better for those behind us. It's going to get a little rah rah here today, you all just get prepared, but it's going to be amazing. So Julie, take us through sort of where you started in your career, and then how you ended up starting how when and leave?

Julie Castro Abrams 03:01

Sure, well, I really consider myself a social justice warrior, I actually started my life sort of really sort of crafting a change management, sort of a frame for how I wanted to be in the world. And a strengths based approach to poverty alleviation was the beginning part of my career. So the whole idea that if you have somebody who's let's say a bit of a domestic violence survivor, if they continue to define themselves as domestic violence survivor, that's a negative frame that they're always sort of starting from. So I ran a micro enterprise and microfinance organization helping women start their own companies, that woman then would become a CEO, the founder of her own company, even if it was modest and small. Just think about the difference in introducing yourself in the world, you know, in the way people respond to you, when you have a new frame, and what that means for the reinforcing mechanisms we all get by showing up differently in the world, and, you know, showing up in our power and what's possible for that aspiration. So that sort of was the beginning of my career is how do I really change inequity and really working with lower income women, frankly, for the beginning part of my career, it was amazing. I worked with over 6000 women to start their own companies. A lot of these women are still running those companies. I get beautiful love notes from people all the time about their successes. But it was really it's really hard to run nonprofits if you know anyone running a nonprofit love on them, thank them support them, because it's brutal. And I had to raise six to \$10 million a year from scratch, you know, on my knees, asking everyone to be supportive and it was it was wonderful and hard. So I actually like a lot of us in my early 40s, early to mid 40s. There's an interesting life stage that happens where you you actually realize life isn't vertical often. You know a lot of us you know, you start your career to go coordinator and then an associate and then a director you move on up right in your mid 40s. We all sort of look up. And we think one, the cost might be too high to work in that structure. Or it's time for me to create a whole different frame of portfolio career, why that happened to me. And I also looked around and I was my daughter had said to me, she's like, Mommy, you're not like the other mothers. I was like, I know, because I, I carried myself in a different way in the world, as a leader, as a CEO of something. And I really, honestly felt like I didn't have my people around me, I had a lot of women I knew, but they weren't necessarily my peers, they hadn't really, that journey of running something is a whole different thing, as you know, very well. So I started being a student of what happens to women in that starting around 45. And some people call it middle essence, and really found that people, one, women are so much happier, if we're doing things with other women. And if we're having an impact, there's all kinds of other things that happen for us in how we, you know, how we see the world and want to show up in the world, it starts to feel like time is getting more limited. And we

really don't want to be bothered with people who are ugly and doing yucky things, right. So integrity starts to evaluate start to become even more prescient than they were earlier in our lives. And as a student of that life stage, I actually brought started bringing women together just to connect them with each other, and realize they were so hungry, and desperate to be with other women like them, who have been ceiling breakers. They've been the only woman in the room for most of their careers. And they wanted to have an impact together. So we started saying, Okay, well, what can we tackle that we could actually have an impact on? And we're like, Okay, well, why don't we look at the lack of women in corporate boardrooms, and started to create a whole structure to disrupt that whole ecosystem. And in California, we've gone from 10% of women on corporate boards to over almost 30% 29 and a half percent of public company board members are women as of September 2021. So really started realizing the lever of these in this generation, first generation ever of women, professionals, who have reached a certain level of success and have some influence and power and even some, well, you can activate those women to change systems for our daughters, and the women coming up behind us. So that's the game I'm in right now is how do I take the level highly leveraged influence of getting these women together to make change happen together?

Jen Marples 07:20

Well, I love it. Because we are, we are speaking the same language. And I often consider myself an activist, to I just think we all need to be activists at this point to kind of break down how everything has been to build something new for how it absolutely should be, and just the equality. You brought up an important point. And that was about how women are thirsty for being with peers and or folks that are even farther ahead of them. Because it's at the interesting that midlife stage and you said that your daughter's like Mommy, people aren't like I had the same thing with my kids just can't go to the picnic, I'm dealing at the time at my firm and like I've got a crisis, a union crisis, I gotta go do that. I'm sorry, I gotta go. But also, conversely, at that time, when my kids were younger, there were some really high powered women in the city. And they're like, incredible. But there is this point in time where you're like, What am I doing? Like you said, what's the impact? Is it supporting my life? Is it making a difference? Do I need to be working this way? Because like you say, it's the next thing, the next thing, your 20s to your 30s you're ticking things off the box. And all of a sudden, you're like, why am I ticking? None of this is even making me happy. And I think that's what a lot of women have looked at coming to Jesus and that middle of the 4040s, kind of when that starts to happen. And also what I'm seeing isn't let me know if you how you see this is women who did take time off who had high powered jobs, they decided to step out because it was simply too much to handle doing both. And now they're trying to get back in. That's its own challenge. Because of ageism in the workplace and everything you just said like there's no women on board, you know, just all of that. What do you sing with those women? Do you encounter women? I'm sure you do that have taken time off that want to get back in? Is that really challenging for them to do that? Or is it seamless? Or what do you sing?

Julie Castro Abrams 09:13

Oh, I don't I mean, nobody's story is going to be the same and CLS probably be a far stretch. I do think today, there are both organizations and structures put in place to really help people make that transition back into the workforce of this what they want. And there's a talent crisis. Anyone who's got a team of people, a staff is really in this moment, right now, knowing that talent is really scarce and finding people

who really want to work. There's a bit of this entitlement cancel culture that's sort of happening with younger employees. And I think it's causing a challenge for employers in this virtual environment. So I think, frankly, a lot of us are looking for grownups, you know, you can teach skills. It's harder to teach work ethic and attitude. So I think if in the last 20 years This is the year to come back into the workforce, if you've been a, you know, if you stepped out, I also think working for somebody else, it's a whole thing, you have to fit within their culture, you have to meet their expectations. So I think what I'm seeing is a lot of women starting their own companies, you know, you can start, you know, even if it's just gonna be a two or three person shop, in, start your own company, set your own rules, do it on your own time, you know, just because you are not going to be the official 100% stay at home parent anymore. If you stepped out to do that doesn't mean that you can work 90 hours a week, like often you're still balancing and juggling. And so I think for a lot of people, creating your own thing, or doing consulting can be a great alternative. But, you know, women entrepreneurs hire six times more women, they pay them equitably, and they put them in leadership positions. So getting women entrepreneurs, to build companies and hire those women who they get is certainly another thing that I think can solve a lot of the problems that we're seeing, and that's a big commitment of mine.

Jen Marples 10:59

Well, and I happen to agree since this is a show about entrepreneurship, and women being in charge and creating their own opportunity, because that is for everything that you said. That's why it makes so much sense. And it doesn't have to be hard. It can be just consulting, or it can be starting something completely brand new and going for it. But what I have found to to your point, and I've done the same my whole team is women, women who have come on we had someone who came on who Stephanie Breitbart, who owns art galleries, she hires all midlife moms. Yeah, there's the moms that are gonna go out there and do it and hire other moms or even if you just start something for yourself, and you're providing for your family, and you're doing everything you love. It's just a win win win when women are running businesses. My opinion, what do you think the biggest challenges are for women in midlife right now?

Julie Castro Abrams 11:44

Well, regardless of who you are, this is a virtual environment, and every single person has to pivot. And I think for a lot of us, you know, making sure that we have figured out how do we want to work virtually? And how do we make a pivot both with tech skills? And just how do we want to show up in those environments, I think is critical. But you know, I'll tell you, you know, my, I have kids in their 20s, they're, you know, they're also trying to figure out how do they want to show up? And how do they want to be in, in the work environment. Now, they, they're digital natives. So they've got a little bit of a leg up. But I think, I think for all of us, it's sort of what's your value proposition that you're bringing. And if you don't have a certain type of skill set, and you aren't necessarily planning on growing that skill set, immediately, you got to figure out how you do talk about the value, you're bringing in a virtual environment, because there's no pen and paper anymore. And I think for a lot of us, sometimes I'm just like, oh my god, I have to learn another frickin platform. Like I already checked WhatsApp, and text and email. Now I gotta check slack. And, you know, all these other, you know, obviously, LinkedIn and Facebook and so many platforms, right, it can feel, you know, exhausting. So, you know, you have to

understand where you fit, and be able to clearly articulate your value proposition depending on where you're at with that journey.

Jen Marples 12:57

That's a great point. And we had another guest on this show, saying to women, if they are even if they're still sitting on the sidelines and waiting, it's like, it's the perfect time to make sure you're dusting off skills and or just taking some type of training to be we have to be on social media. It's not like oh, a, a nice to have, it's a must have. And I'll save everybody from all the data and the research I've done. But resumes are going away. Everything's going away. It's how you're showing up online and about your personal brand. I know you know this, but it's really staying relevant. But it can feel overwhelming to so many who have stepped back. Well, even

Julie Castro Abrams 13:33

if you didn't step back. I mean, you know, you got a woman who has been in the C suite in a tech company, any company, right? In your in that age range. 4565. A lot of people are like, You know what, I want to step out and go on corporate boards, well, you may have not had a resume for 30 years, you might not have had to look for a job, you've been just been promoted and moved up, right? You have to make sure you optimize your LinkedIn, you have to make sure that people can find you like how are you being? What is your search engine optimization, when people when people Google what do they hear about you? What are the assets that you have developed? So being on a podcast, like your podcast is an asset, writing an article doing different kinds of things where you're your show up, and you're seen as somebody who has presence and impact is something every single woman needs to be looking at, especially if you're looking at pivoting from being the CFO of something to being on public company boards or whatever that pivot is having a really powerful brand is something you cannot can't underestimate. Everyone needs it. And no one knocks on your door. You have to put yourself out there and you have to be clear, what is my value to whoever I'm trying to talk to? And you can't say well, I want to go in every but I could go in any board or I could take any job. Well, that's not how that works. You know, people always open the aperture and expand what they think you're capable of or where they'd like to recommend you. But you have to be memorable. So what is that narrow thing that someone's going to remember about? You,

Jen Marples 15:00

that's really good important advice, because I do see that too with some of my peers exactly what you're saying been at companies for a long time. And I remember just kind of looking at people's LinkedIn, some are doing things better than others. Others are all over Twitter, Instagram, they're doing the things. So they have their own brand that they can take, wherever they go, they start their own company, if they're expanding within an organization, but I know a lot of women too. In this one particular friend I'm thinking about wants to be on board. So as part of her journey, she wants to be on the next five years, she's got some specific goals. So it is important. I know black people look at me, like, Ah, I'm like no. And for anything, if you're starting your small business right now, if it's a fitness business, if it's interior design, whatever it is, you got to be really present in people's faces all the time. So I'm really glad he brought, that's I talk about that in my mastermind groups all the time you've got no one's going to know you're there.

Julie Castro Abrams 15:54

Right, they're not going to come look for you, you have to be responsible to discipline networker and make sure that you know how to communicate with people. No friend of mine, Mary Stutz was doing research for a book that ultimately was called the missing mentored she interviewed me, and I'll just never forget her talking about the fact that, you know, people will kind of say, Oh, would you mentor me? And then they'd show up and have no questions. And no, if you want someone to actually mentor you or sponsor you, it's like, can I have 15 minutes of your time, very narrow window. They'll give you more if it's really Jazzy. And you know, they have the time, but something super narrow like, and here are my three main questions. Now, they may end up going off in different directions, other things they can help you with, but just even knowing how do you show up and ask people for advice? Or ask people for support and doing in a way that's respectful and disciplined in how in how you think through that?

Jen Marples 16:46

That's a really great point. And I know other guests have said that, the quickest way to kind of, for the woman out there who doesn't know what she wants to do next? That's a very good way just like exactly to your point, like, oh, what you're doing seems interesting. It's, you're in a different industry, here are some questions and just starting to do that digging. But you also you need to just go for and do that. And don't be scared to do it. Because most women I do you do, I want it, we want to help people. And people come to us all the time. But you've got to be kind of specific, and really think about how some thought behind it of maybe where you want to go what kind of questions you want to ask. So I'm really glad you brought that up.

Julie Castro Abrams 17:23

And I would say there's a big difference between transactions and relationships. And the faster you learn that the better off you are, it is a transaction, if I contact you and say, will you introduce me to XYZ person? Or can you give me an answer about this question? It's a relationship. If I say, Hey, tell me what's going on for you. Or if I remember that you have kids, or that you were in PR previously, and you know, Lee care her right? Like, whatever those hooks are, it's like that I actually I care about you. And as much as I'm trying to get my needs met, I also am paying attention who you are as a person. And I think for those I'm pretty visible in the world. And it's really obvious to me when someone is it's all about the transaction for them. And they don't really care about what's important to me. And, and it's okay, sometimes, but if you want me to remember you kindly and think of you, beyond this one conversation, you need to actually think about how you manage relationships. So I'll send people a little love notes, or a little poem that I think is relevant for them or a picture of my kid, or, you know, I know your daughter's looking at different colleges that here's a little a little tip or something or, you know, how can I help to being ready to show up for other people, even while you're asking for help is super important. And I think a lot of people get so caught up in their own anxiety about being an imposter, especially if they're trying to get back, let's say back into a corporate role or something, you kind of think there's nothing you could possibly add to the other person's life. You know, you should have a second guessed yourself, and you get nervous. Relax, we're all humans. In a frankly, to me, I treat the CEO of a company the same as I do the janitor, like, everybody, there's value in everybody. And you never know,

you know, when a relationship is going to end up becoming really important to you. And if you live long enough, your friends don't run in the world. So that's kind of fun, too. So don't burn any bridges, you know?

Jen Marples 19:24

And then it gets really scary when it's your friends, kids.

Julie Castro Abrams 19:27

Right, exactly. Next level. I think my daughter, I think she knows more than I do about just about everything. 29

Jen Marples 19:35

I'm glad you brought that up, because that is the truth. And if you're not sort of maybe wired that way, but it just goes it's at full circle. It's like, Let's date each other. It's that whole we used to live we lived in Asia for a couple years. When I was married we were in Taiwan and said hold the Chinese call like the Guan G it's like the getting to know each other. You're getting to know each other before any businesses done because it's just it's just offensive. Like you're not going to come in and ask something so It's that same thing. And yeah, I've had it to where you see the people, there's an interchange, how can I support you someone like sharing something that you're doing or sending you a link to something, hey, I know you're doing something with that person or can making a connection. That's certainly how I operate. So it is jarring if someone just comes right at you. Hey, and can I get a hello? How are you? So that's really, really good advice. And yeah, just stepping back.

Julie Castro Abrams 20:27

Yeah, I think sometimes it's someone's own anxiety to that person, like a human being, that's like, well, sure, I have power over because I can make a decision, let's say about investing in your company, but at the same time, like, Don't treat me like I'm a transaction, because that's gonna make me want to help you. You know, I can make introductions to other VCs, even if I can fund you. You know, there's all kinds of other things you can get from somebody, if you treat it like it's a real relationship.

Jen Marples 20:53

100% and I think it's just it's kindness and grace. And yeah, trading every interaction, no matter who it's with, I think was like Gary Vee was just like, he's always just like kindness. And that's how I've always been. And you never I'll never forget an old boss way back when I was in my early 20s. Whenever they were interviewing for new people, she's like, I'm always nice, always follows up. And it's just weird that people go Stan, because you never know. She's like, the gal I reject today could be our clients tomorrow. That's something like that, when you learn that in your 20s, that sticks with you, forever. But that's really good advice. So ladies, if you're listening, just know that everyone out there is human. And if you want to make connections and have coffee, or five minutes of somebody's time, everybody's going to would love to give that. But just, you know, say hello, and how are the kids or something like that before? See if you can make a connection. This is another question. I'm going to ask you a little bit later. But it's how we can do a lot better supporting each other. And so I see that a lot. And I'm always saying this, if you can't buy someone's product, or you can't take part in a service, you can certainly

share it with people, something, just little things like that, but we need to be conscious of it. So here's a question for you. Do you think women can be successful in the second half of life?

Julie Castro Abrams 22:04

I don't even know why that question would even ever be asked to it. Frankly, I mean, to me, there's no question I am at the prime of my impact. I have been around the block and know enough people that I can make huge impact. And I'm 54 years old. In fact, there's a there's research has now come out this as at 70 years old, you actually have one of the greatest moments of creativity in your entire lifetime. Because you know, you know, you're sort of left side right side of your brain. At 70. You actually use both sides of your brain equally. It's a brain event in so the creativity that people can think that people can envision and birth at 70 can be so tremendously powerful for our for our world. And, you know, I just think it's a mindset, the suggestion that somehow it's 60 hour guy, right? Like, are you kidding me, like 60, were supposed to retire? That makes no sense to me. So I think especially women, who have had to spend so much of your life one raising kids, let's say, but also blocking and tackling all the objections to who you are in the world, right. While you're not good enough, or, you know, I think there's a, there's a beautiful awakening that happens. We talked about that earlier at 50, where you really sort of, you're like, I'm going to live the life that I want to live and create things the way I want to create it. Therefore, all these things are open to you that maybe weren't when you were 30. Because when you're 30, you're learning and you're playing in somebody else's office, you're playing into somebody else's field right in their pool, you're now at this age, sort of able to create, you're able to create it for yourself if you want.

Jen Marples 23:51

I'm glad you and I knew what your answer was going to be. But I always like to hear what everyone says because there's so many women I talked to and they're just so scared to start and they think the ship has sailed. And so that's why I'm so impassioned.

Julie Castro Abrams 24:06

Yeah, thank you for bringing that up and helping demystify this. And I'll tell you, I created this countercultural framework, we call it credo, and everybody who comes in gets involved in our organization, we ask them to do this, you know, a girl, our version of a girl scouts pledge. And it's, it's basically, I looked at all these things I feel like are negative for women, and who felt the things that culturally they felt very bad to me and turn them on their head and invite people into being the opposite. So no more mean girl behavior. We asked women to be fierce advocates for each other. Can you imagine if you walked around the world thinking every woman had your back? No one was stabbing you in the back. In fact, they had your back and they were going to be your advocate? Like, what a gift. So when we invite people to reframe. Everybody looks around at each other like Oh, those are the rules of the road. And magic happens. We also ask people a lot Women you talk to the corporate women in particular will be like, who's made the most introductions for you in your life. And generally, it's men, because women somehow culturally hold their context really close to their best. I'm sure there's good reasons for it. I don't know all the reasons I could make it up. But the bottom line is we need to make introductions to other women, we need to actively connect her and say yes to helping her. We also know that often women are the only person, the only woman, the only person of color, whatever in the

room, and they speak up and people don't hear them. So we invite people to be her echo chamber and make sure she's heard whether you're next to someone in a meeting, and you're like, Wait, let's make sure we give her the airtime. Or you're amplifying this great podcast, you know, we need to amplify each other. And finally, probably the hardest for a lot of women, I'm sure you see this is we invite people to be unabashedly visible. And we all are taught, it's better to be in the behind the scenes, it's more elegant. It's whatever, we got all this weird baggage, at least women in my cohort of age, but I always say to women, like my daughter's getting her cues from you, do you want my 20 Something daughter to be hiding behind the screen and doing the behind the word behind the scenes work only, like, if you're not gonna do it for yourself, do it for my daughter, like be unabashedly visible? That sort of invitation for that countercultural frame is quite magical. And so I would just say to women, like, what is that frame, you want to see, you can take our credo, or you can create your own. But I think if you tell people what the rules of the road are, and you invite them to be their best selves, whether you're a leader, or you're someone who who's entering into a new community, and you want to be, you know, be seen as a positive force. That's my recommendation for people think about how big powerful that would be, if you could show up and invite people to be better.

Jen Marples 26:56

Oh, I love it. i This just came up in this conversation series I just hosted because we were talking about this. And he said, Imagine a world and I'm sure it's the patriarchy, it's if all of us are fighting for what we perceive are the scraps if it's husbands bits, jobs, if it's this, if it's that that's just kind of what we were all taught. And it's interesting. I've got two girls and a son. And then they're dealing with some other stuff, because it starts so young, when they're teens again, some of that exclusive behavior. And it's like, oh, like you're friends with that person can't be friends with you. It starts that young and then it Bennett.

Julie Castro Abrams 27:29

But they're scared to get rejected. It's not that they innately right.

Jen Marples 27:33

Yeah. So but we had conversations about, you know, expanding circles and just trying to start while we're, they're young. And then when you're saying about how we I, my kids look at me, son, it's very important for my son to see it too. And they see a quality and sort of our marriage, and they see that mom is stepping up and stepping out. Actually, when I started, I was here recording my podcast at the beginning. And I'm like, am I gonna say you're not too fucking old? Am I gonna do it? And I have my girls going? Yes, queen, like, all right, I'm gonna do it. So we're doing it. And so by you being strong, me being like in our kids, and then we're seeing everything behind. I think we'll take this on a road on the road and have a march, I'm sure I'm certain about it, but just yet what a world it would be. If we were all constantly amplifying each other, supporting each other. And if the woman next to you does the exact same thing you do having no fear that if you promote her, there is more than enough for everyone to go. Right. Exactly, exactly. That's a really big thing. So what would you say to the woman who has either had a corporate job and is desperate for a change? And or she's been on the sidelines for bets and wants to get into the workplace or start a business, but just has no idea where to begin?

Julie Castro Abrams 28:47

Well, I think first, it's what gives you energy. We all have things that zap our energy and things that get us give us energy. If you know when you're in your zone, like, I love talking to people, and I can get lost in the spreadsheet. I love organizing things. So what are your things where you get lost and you forget time? So once you know that, I think then the next step is how do you define what truly is your value proposition that you bring to whatever work environment that is? And then I would say third, what kind of environment do you want to be in? And how do you test against that? Because if you're going into if you haven't worked for a hot second, and you're going back into work, and you go into an environment that's negative and not good for you and not a good fit, you're going to start to beat yourself up and think somehow that has something to do with you. And it very well could have nothing to do with you and everything to do with the environment you're in. So I would just say set yourself up for success by making sure you're doing work that's aligned with what you're good at, what gives you energy where your core values are and In an environment that is going to support you to be the best that you can possibly be.

Jen Marples 30:05

I love that. Um, that's a really good point. I think I've heard that as far as women going into a workplace that might not be aligned, because you're thinking, Oh, that was offered to me, or maybe I'll work with a friend or, and but they know maybe it's not the right thing, because it's gonna We're kind of trained to suffer way back when to just kind of do it. But now, especially if you're getting back into something, that's a very good point to be really cognizant about. I'm glad you brought that up. Julie, what do you wish for women at midlife,

Julie Castro Abrams 30:34

I wish that women got it all get as quickly as possible to a place where you let go of your imposter syndrome. You have structures and things that you have put in place for yourself. I just had an interview with somebody yesterday was telling me how she meditates every morning. This is a serious corporate woman. But I was asking, I was like, How are you so fierce and courageous and always pushing, you know, she's often pushing against the green. And her whole thing is like, I'm so clear about my value, and where I stand, and then I give myself that time to center and, and quiet all the noise and get clear about what I'm doing today and how I'm showing up. And she's like, and then I can sleep at night, and I can throughout the day, I can keep grounding in What's my goal here. And especially if your goal is greater than yourself, you know, if you can, can think about how what you're doing is contributing to making the world or somebody else's life better. You get out of your own all that story. So many of us, honestly, I literally talk to women still at age 4550. And they're carrying out some story that someone told them when they were eight years old, like you're too loud, or you're too this or too whatever it was, that might have never served you. But even if some stories served you at one point in your life, you better be reflecting on what are those things I'm carrying around with me that are dead weight, and no longer serve me and take my brain energy. So I just I just want you to love yourself to know the value you bring in the world. And to shed that negative stuff that is 99% of the time untrue.

Jen Marples 32:18

You're so right. And I love everything that you just said, there are those stories, and it's just, we've all got them. Just throw them away. Yes, throw them away, because it'll stop you before you get started.

Julie Castro Abrams 32:30

Yeah. And you know how we all have those friends that introduce us, like, Oh, my God, you get, you have to meet my friend, Jen. Let me tell you all the things she's doing in the world. And you're like, Oh, that makes me feel great. I can't, I should. I've heard people say I should take her with me everywhere to introduce me. It's like that friend, you need to embody her in your body like she sees you. She wants to know if you could see yourself the way she sees you. If she doesn't see the fact that your hair was out of place. They know something that she doesn't see that stuff that you carry around with you. She only sees the great beautiful value and how you make her feel how you make her feel seen in the world. So just embrace what what other people see in you a little bit more, I think,

Jen Marples 33:14

Oh, I love that. I love that. I've got a couple final questions for you. Do you have a favorite book or resource you would like to share with our listeners?

Julie Castro Abrams 33:24

Well, I read a lot of poetry because I feel like it's sort of a short and simple way to sort of ground me and center me in what I'm what I'm standing up for, and where I want to show up in the world. So so there's certainly quite a bit out there. And I because I'm really a social justice warrior. In many ways. You know, there are people like Audrey Lorde and, you know, bell hooks and some other people in the world who I who I would say I like to sort of ground in and listen to that. There's also some books that I think are everybody should read in a Good to Great by Jim Collins is fantastic. It's just a really good frame. And there's a book called forces for good and it's how do you make a big impact in the world. And it's a good, it's it sort of demystifies a lot of the things that we think are important about how to have an impact and really, right sizes it and so those are just a couple things that you know, I'm not really a self help gal so much as I am more like poetry and in sort of business book frameworks. Coming up with some shared language you can have with your team on a book like good degrades really valuable. Oh, I love it. Why are we all going you know, whatever those concepts are, you get shared language. It's helpful.

Jen Marples 34:33

Amazing, and we're gonna link all that in the show notes. Do you we talked to that year, you spoke with somebody who did meditation in the morning? Do you have a ritual or a practice that gets you set up for your day?

Julie Castro Abrams 34:45

Well, I wish I could say though, that I was as good as she was in that way. My husband is my practice. I have to tell you, I met my husband when I was 22 years old and I am a big voice With big vision, and he is an introvert, he is centered. He is simple and grounded in what he thinks is most important. And he gives me that sense of grounding and unconditional love. That gives me such peace. And so I know that sounds a little funny, especially coming from someone who I only work with women, right? But he has allowed me to fly and all throughout the day. He's my centerpiece where he does it for me. So someday, if anything ever happened to him, God forbid, I'd have to learn how to meditate. But for now

it's available. My beautiful sweet husband, we're celebrating 30 years being married. And the greatest gift in life is, is having that partner who gives me that sense of peace and centeredness. For me today,

Jen Marples 35:51

that is beautiful. And you are the first person to say that and I'm just I'm so touched, shout out to roll. He's probably like my husband. I think there's the ones it sets in an important, you know, we're probably like this and they bring us down to reality,

Julie Castro Abrams 36:07

find a man who actually is jazzed about a woman's fear success. Like, he doesn't need it. He does, he doesn't judge me by it. If I'm if I if I wanted to step off, and just like, you know, eat bonbons and sit on the beach side, he be fine with that too, which is lovely, because it gives me freedom and an out. But he loves my success. He just wants me to be happy. I mean, how great is that? Because so many women, I know they, their partners are not happy with their success, it's somehow it makes them feel less important. I know, that's a problem we have with a lot of strong women. Mm hmm. So, you know, finding a life partner to find somebody who sees you respects you is and just wants you to be successful with ever, whatever that definition is. That's different when you're 22 than when you're 54, I can tell you my definition of where I want to how I want to be in the world very different. And he's okay with both of those. Oh, my

Jen Marples 37:04

God, I love it. And it's so important. And I know and you probably know there, there's so many very successful, wonderful women right now who are either looking for a partner because marriage wars, they haven't been married. And it's very much a struggle for kind of for everything that you stated. But I'm a firm believer that everyone, there's someone out there for everyone. So

Julie Castro Abrams 37:24

Well, I think you got to be a little careful that you don't have I have friends that have a very long list of their requirements. And I think you have to be careful with those long lists. Now, somebody you know who's got their own enough financial success that they're not pulling on you is one thing to look for somebody who's had massive wealth and success. Sometimes wealth and success comes with ego, most of them. And so you have to know that they might be the center of attention that like yeah, you know, I don't know, they're in my when I got married, you know, 30 years ago, it seemed like you couldn't have to high powered careers and raise a family for example. I felt like I'd have to make a choice to step back and be in to be the support spouse more even if I had a job. So honestly, I'm the I'm the big career big vision big power player and my partner is the is you know, he's really not that ambitious. His whole goal in life is to help me

Jen Marples 38:21

what a great goal. All right, we're gonna carbon copy your husband and we'll report back to everyone.

Julie Castro Abrams 38:30

He's 60 years old. Yes. Good abs. Let's

Jen Marples 38:34

just keep getting better. He's got abs. Oh, gently, Jesus. Love this final question for you. What do you think the best thing is about being at midlife,

Julie Castro Abrams 38:50

just this sense of like, I know enough, and I know what I want to accomplish. It's just super clear. And I'm not going to ask permission from anybody else. I get to be in charge and decide. And I you know, by knowing who I am, I think in it being confident in that it attracts other people to you. Which is super fun. I love hanging out with my girlfriends. I mean, these women I know are so fierce and wonderful and and that's so beautiful because I've got enough of I don't have to shrink to make them feel you know, there I'm sure you know what I mean there have been leading stuff in your your strong, big personality. Sometimes you have to shrink so you don't make other people feel insecure or uncomfortable finding a group of women where you don't have to shrink because they're all as powerful as you are is such a gift and I found my people that make me feel like I can just wholly be who I am without apology. Oh,

Jen Marples 39:47

I love it. The power of amazing girlfriends cannot be understated. I love that. Yeah, go friends. final final question, Julie. Where can we find you support you follow you and consume everything about how women lead.

Julie Castro Abrams 40:02

Well how women lead is a nonprofit, it is a network, which means there's no membership fees, you just start showing up to events. So www.howwomenlead.com is the where you can find all the different events that you might want to engage in, you could go, you can learn about going on a corporate board, you can join a philanthropy circle and give grants to women and girls organizations with us, you could start investing in venture with only \$6,250 a year for four years. I think a lot of people think like, oh, those venture capitalists, that's for the other people, we make it accessible. We want women to be able to come together and make the change and that they want to see in the world so So yeah, that go to how women lead calm. You can find out information about our podcast and learn and listen to these beautiful inspiring women leaders who are sharing their perspective and their tips. It is literally life affirming and altering to hear their perspective.

Jen Marples 41:02

We're gonna link all that in the show notes. This has been an absolute joy, I need 10 more hours with you. I'm going to stalk you and somehow figure out you know, maybe an hour Okay, well, I'll turn it down a little bit. But it's just been an absolute joy. You have just shared so much with our listeners today. And I know everyone's gonna walk away and hope everyone follow how women lead and get involved and see what all these other ladies are doing. And obviously listen to Julie's podcast, because it's fabulous. So Julie, thank you so much.

Julie Castro Abrams 41:30

Thank you for having me in for all of the things that you're doing to help women find a path that's right for them and feel more powerful and connected to the impact they want to have in the world.

Jen Marples 41:40

Amazing. Thank you for saying that.