

HOPSam

[00:01:04] **Mickelle:** Hello everyone, and welcome to the House of Peregrine podcast. Today, I'm excited to be welcoming SamFrearson-Tubito, a global nomad and memoirist who has written *Beneath a Borrowed Sky*, a Memoir of Her Life as a Global Nomad and Mother of Four Children.

[00:01:20] **Mickelle:** Sam, thank you so much for coming on. I am really excited to talk to you. I hunted you down on Instagram and I really wanted to have a conversation with you. So thanks for coming on.

[00:01:32] **Sam:** Yeah, thank you so much for having me, Mickelle. It's great to be here.

[00:01:35] **Mickelle:** Thanks. So I just want you to start by introducing yourself and you have an actually really incredible life because you have been a global nomad your entire life.

[00:01:44] **Mickelle:** Um, from when you were a child on up and now you're writing about that in your book, but I want to start people back with how you grew up. So can you maybe just tell us about that? You're growing up as a global nomad.

[00:01:55] **Sam:** Yeah, of course. So, so I don't know whether you're familiar with the terminology third culture kid.

[00:02:00] **Mickelle:** I am, but please explain to our listeners.

[00:02:02] **Sam:** Yeah, so, um, a third culture kid is a kid who's been raised in a culture other than, other than their, their parents, uh, culture, and who has lived in, um, a country other than their nationality. or more than a few countries actually, and has lived in different environments during a significant part of their childhood and their childhood development years.

[00:02:27] **Sam:** So I basically, I was born in the West Indies in St. Kitts and Nevis, a tiny little island in the Caribbean there for a couple of years. Then we moved to Bordeaux in France. Should I just go through the list?

[00:02:39] **Mickelle:** Yeah, you might as well. Yeah. You've lived a lot of places, so just list them off for us. So we have, paint us a picture.

[00:02:45] **Sam:** Yeah. Um, then we went to Zaire, so, um, it's actually the Republic of Congo. Uh, we lived in Kinshasa, the, um, the capital, and then we actually moved to Lumumbashi. So we were there for quite a few, quite a few years, about four or five years, I think. And then that's when my parents decided to send me to boarding school.

[00:03:06] **Sam:** Actually, sorry. We then moved to Cote d'Ivoire, Ivory Coast in West Africa. And then, um, so I went to local school there. So French speaking school. And You know, my, my parents were like, Oh, what are we doing? You know, we're kind of raising this child. She's becoming a bit wild. You know, she's speaking better French than English.

[00:03:24] **Sam:** This will not do. I probably should say that my dad, the reason for all these moves was because my dad was an international banker. He worked for Barclays Bank and we would move every two to three years to different postings. Anyway, so that's when my parents decided that they wanted to send me to boarding school.

[00:03:40] **Sam:** My mum is Catholic, she's from Gibraltar, which I don't know if you guys know where that is. It's right at the tip of Spain, and it's actually a British territory, but it's its own little country in itself, like Malta.

And so she's from there, very, very Catholic upbringing, and she was kind of worried about the whole Catholic thing, and she wasn't able to sort of bring us up, bring me up properly in that way.

[00:04:03] **Sam:** So yeah, boarding school came along. And so I was sent to the UK, hence my British accent, and every three months I would just go back and forth, back and forth to wherever my parents were, or wherever home was, because home was always wherever my parents were. It was never in boarding school, because the UK, for me, has always been You know, that's where I was institutionalized.

[00:04:26] **Sam:** I would say, I mean, boarding school, I was okay. I had fun, but you know, it wasn't home, so I would go back and forth. So after the Ivory Coast, we, we then moved to Hong Kong. We were there for a year and a half. And then after that, we went to Lusaka in Zambia. And then we went to, I feel like I'm missing a couple of things.

[00:04:44] **Sam:** Anyway. Oh yeah. And then after that, we went to Egypt. So I think that's eight countries in total.

[00:04:50] **Mickelle:** Um,

[00:04:51] **Sam:** In the middle of all of that. So I think when I was six or seven, we went to the UK for one year, just in between postings. I think it was after the DRC, the Democratic Republic of Congo. So yeah, so that's my, that's where I've lived up until the age of 18.

[00:05:07] **Mickelle:** Wow. Yeah. And so there's people who consider, I mean, third culture kids is something people use a lot.

[00:05:13] **Sam:** Mm-hmm .

[00:05:14] **Mickelle:** In your case, the culture of your family, the culture, the third culture was moving like it was. Planned, moving, that was a choice that your parents made for a job. And so how did that, how did that manifest in your family?

[00:05:28] **Mickelle:** Was it just kind of like, where are we going next? Or was it exciting? Or did you ever, you didn't know anything different, I would assume.

[00:05:33] **Sam:** Yeah. Well, I'll always remember that exciting feeling every time my dad would come home from the office and say, Hey guys, guess where we're going next? And we were like, Oh my God, where are we going?

[00:05:42] **Sam:** Where are we going? So it was always very exciting up to the, up to a certain point. So in my teenage years. That was a lot more difficult to, to be happy to be excited about because of course I'd be making friends wherever we were living. You know, I remember, um, when we were living in Lusaka, I made a really good bunch of friends.

[00:06:01] **Sam:** I mean, we had so much fun there and I was devastated. I was devastated to be moving away from there because Yeah, I was a teenager, I was 16 years of age and I was like, no, don't take me away from this place. This is my home. So yeah, a mix, a mix of excitement, a mix of, I hate moving, but that was more of a teenage thing.

[00:06:22] **Sam:** And then, and also. A lot of confusion. And that's what happens with a lot of third culture kids because you're basically moved from one country to another. A lack of identity. Yes, I sound very British, but I'm not, I don't feel British in any way whatsoever because I think, well, I'm 53 years of age and I've lived three years in the uK.

[00:06:44] **Sam:** I'm not including the, the, um, the boarding school time because. That wasn't home for me. It was just, I would literally go from the airport straight to school, spend three months there and then I get back in the, in the bus, go back to the airport and go home.

[00:06:58] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:06:58] **Mickelle:** Do you think that was your parents attempt at making you British?

[00:07:01] **Mickelle:** Like Oh, she doesn't have enough British because they're, are they, they're

[00:07:04] **Sam:** British. Oh yeah. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. So my dad is British. Actually, fun fact, my dad is also a third culture kid. Oh. And. My grandmother is a third culture kid. So, I'm actually third generation third culture kid, and my kids, who we'll talk about later, are fourth generation third culture kids.

[00:07:25] **Sam:** So, it runs in the family. My mum, she wasn't a third culture kid, so, yeah, it was different for her. Uh, but my dad, it was just like, yeah, okay, yeah, just go to boarding school, then you come back, and it was just like

[00:07:36] **Mickelle:** This is what we do.

[00:07:37] **Sam:** The thing that we did. Yeah.

[00:07:39] **Mickelle:** Yeah. Yeah. That makes so much sense because you, whatever you grew up with is just normal, right?

[00:07:43] **Mickelle:** And that you either, you either want to do that or you don't when you, when you move on. So I find it really interesting that you have lived in some, more than, more countries than some people have actually traveled to, but all of them I've never, like, Travel to, they're not normal, traveling to countries.

[00:08:01] **Mickelle:** So I think that your upbringing was different in that way, where, were there a lot of people internationals where you were, or were you more kind of the outlier?

[00:08:12] **Sam:** No, there were, there were a lot. It was at the time. Where, yeah, there was, there were a lot of international companies sending their expats to these places.

[00:08:22] **Mickelle:** I see.

[00:08:23] **Sam:** And, yeah, we were kind of surrounded by an international community. No.

[00:08:27] **Mickelle:** Absolutely. And so everyone was kind of doing the same thing.

[00:08:30] **Sam:** Yeah. And the majority, because, you know, we were expats with Barclays Bank, a lot of the people that we were hung out with. were British expats and French expats that would send their children to boarding school.

[00:08:44] **Sam:** So I wasn't the only one that was being sent off.

[00:08:46] **Mickelle:** Yeah, okay.

[00:08:47] **Sam:** So what we would do is we would find, find each other again back at home during the holiday time and that was, that was fun.

[00:08:55] **Mickelle:** Nice and that's, so that is kind of your culture in a way. is that little, those people, wherever you would go with the company.

[00:09:02] **Mickelle:** And how was that, how was that for you? Did you find that, I mean, when you look back, not a lot of people grew up that way, but it's the only thing you knew. So you were just adapting. Was that what you would say? Or you were just doing what your parents?

[00:09:15] **Sam:** Um, I think, yeah, you just adapt. I mean, you just, okay.

[00:09:18] **Sam:** So until the age of me being sent to boarding school, I was just doing whatever my parents We're doing yeah, you know, we were moving around as a family and then when I was sent to boarding school Then I kind of had to I created these two different personas the one that was in the UK in boarding school And the one that was home in whatever country we were living in at the time So it became yeah again, that's how I grew up.

[00:09:46] **Sam:** So it was just the way it was I did You know, because obviously, you know, during boarding school time, you have a lot more freedom. I mean, everyone thinks, oh my gosh, it must have been so strict and everything, but you're kind of left to your own devices a lot of the time, because you're just living in an institution, you're living with a bunch of, uh, a bunch of other kids the same age, it's fun, you do whatever you want to do, kind of, to a certain extent.

[00:10:10] **Sam:** Um, but then when you go back home, there are rules that you have to follow. Even hard, difficult rules. I mean, my parents were quite strict, just very traditional parents of that age, of that time, and, you know, children should be seen and not heard, kind of thing, and it was difficult. The whole, sort of, you know, changing, okay, I can be really free away, but when I come home, which is where I really should be, Be myself.

[00:10:37] **Sam:** I need to actually be careful with what I do and with what I say and I can't really be me. It was, it was a challenging time, but at the same, again, it was the way it was. And, but, that is the reason why. When we decided, we as in my husband and I, decided to do this expat life as well and have children along the way as well, we decided to do it very differently.

[00:11:02] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:11:02] **Sam:** So tell me about that. But we can talk about that later. Yeah.

[00:11:04] **Mickelle:** So, so tell me, I really want. to understand. So I'm asking for myself too, because our kids, like all of us who listen to this, and if we have kids, we're all wondering, how can we do it differently? How can we make it more on the positive end than the negative end?

[00:11:20] **Mickelle:** You can't get rid of all the negatives of being from a different culture and learning how to code switch. There's positive and negatives to all of these things that our kids, these skills that our kids end up learning as a result of being from a different culture. But it's very rarely you get to talk to someone who has done it and then had such a generational way of like part of their family.

[00:11:42] **Mickelle:** So I really love that. And so were there any last question I want to have for you is like, did your dad have any things that you passed on, like from that culture that were like things you did as an international person who are a nomadic person who that made it so you knew that was part of your heritage?

[00:11:58] **Sam:** Do you know, I get asked this question a lot. I think. He didn't really pass anything on. It was just The way it was, the fact that he grew up that way too, I mean, he lived in, he was born in South Africa. He lived in Canada. He lived in New Zealand. His dad was a Royal Air Force pilot. Um, and it was just like, yeah, you just get on with it.

[00:12:22] **Sam:** Very British, you know, stiff upper lip. Just get on with it. And, uh, you know, you're not allowed to be, to complain about Missing family or, you know, miss it. I want to come home. Yeah. I guess, I guess it was, you know, the resilience, you know, he's passing on the resilience to just, you know, keep going. You've got this, um, no matter what challenges brought to you, to you, you can, you can deal with it.

[00:12:47] **Sam:** Yeah. Which is a really great thing to have.

[00:12:50] **Mickelle:** It is great. Everything with a positive has a negative, right? So if it's a positive, it comes with hard things. And this is what we talk about with our own kids and on this podcast all the time is you have to Know that what you're doing has an impact and it's both going to be negative and positive and everything in life is that way but so when it came time you met your husband now husband of many years and Surprise surprise.

[00:13:13] **Mickelle:** He also wanted to live this life. Tell us that story.

[00:13:17] **Sam:** Well, yeah, so we met in London the few years that I was living in London was when I met my Italian husband from the south of Italy in Puglia and You know, he's had, he had a very different background to me. He was born and bred in Puglia, in Bari, in Puglia, until he moved to the UK.

[00:13:35] **Sam:** So, he was 23 when he moved to the UK. So he had 23 years, you know, the normal thing of just living in his, in the town where he was born, the town where his parents were born. And so he was very, very Italian. It was, he was embodying. That Southern Italian persona, you know, that was hidden. So I was really attracted to that because, you know, at the age of 20, 22, I was kind of lost, you know, I was now living in London.

[00:14:06] **Sam:** Um, everyone just presumed that I had was born, you know, had, had spent most of my life in the UK because of my accent, which I hadn't at all. And I just really felt like a fish out of water. So, yeah, he and I, um, got together and I actually, he told me, he was like, you know, I'm really done with living in London.

[00:14:27] **Sam:** I'd love to go and do something else. I'd love to, you know, travel. I said, okay, I'm up for that because that was familiar to me. I was, you're like, yeah, let's, yeah, let's do it. Let's do it. So we ended up actually going, moving to Italy, which kind of worried me a little. It, it excited me. Because I was leaving the UK and I was going to be doing something else, but at the same time we were moving back to his country.

[00:14:53] **Sam:** And I was like, Oh, okay. Well, I'll do this, but I don't want to be there forever. So anyway, two years later, he got a job with Nike and we were sent to Bologna. Which, um, so, uh, my eldest, my eldest son was born in Milan. That's where we, we, we moved to Milan first. And we were both working in advertising agencies, different ones, in Milan.

[00:15:17] **Sam:** And then I got pregnant, had Alessandro, and then we got moved down to Bologna. And I kind of, I was kind of feeling the same sort of vibe as my childhood vibe, and I was getting excited because of the moving. But, you know, still, it was like, oh, we're going to be here forever, blah, blah, blah. And then we got asked to move to Holland, and I was like, okay, yeah.

[00:15:39] **Sam:** This is, this is good . So we said yes to Holland and we were actually, we were in Holland for eight and a half years. And I got serious each of feet for the whole eight and a half years that we were there, to be honest. And uh, one, you know, it's the typical thing that happens, you know, when you're kind of feeling settled and you're like, you know what?

[00:15:58] **Sam:** I'm accepting that we're gonna be in Holland for the rest of our lives. Yep. I, by the way, I'd had two kids by two more kids by then. Wow. Nicholas and Sophia were born in Holland. Of course we were like, okay, yeah, we'll, we'll, we'll become locals here. We'll learn the language and everything. And we were, we were asked to move to Tokyo.

[00:16:15] **Sam:** So, um, yeah, it was exciting when we moved and we, it was amazing. We had, that really reminded me of my childhood and I was in my element there because, you know, again, I was in, in my, in the international community. And, but the difference is that we did not send our children to boarding school. The kids.

[00:16:34] **Sam:** Remained with us.

[00:16:35] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:16:35] **Sam:** They stayed with us. I wanted them to, even though we were moving them from one place to another, and we were uprooting them from one place to another, they were with us the whole time. And that was their identity, was our family, the six of us together.

[00:16:51] **Mickelle:** Tell me about those discussions.

[00:16:53] **Mickelle:** Like, I think you and your partner probably, because you were both working, obviously you were traveling before you had kids, or you were moving to different countries, the decision, Tell me about that decision, because I think you made it pretty. Like, you made a pretty stark decision.

[00:17:07] **Sam:** Yeah. So, okay, the first decision was, what about my career?

[00:17:11] **Sam:** Because I was working, I was in advertising, and it became pretty obvious that Paolo's career was sort of, you know, moving, moving forward quite quickly, and he was doing well, and we were just like, okay. And we were having children at the time as well, it just made sense that he would, um, You know, hold the fort in terms of the moneymaking and I would hold the fort in terms of everything else.

[00:17:33] **Sam:** So that was the first decision that we made and we were very happy with that. I was very happy with that because I wanted to make sure that even though we were going to be moving around, I wanted to make sure that the kids had one parent at home, they had that one focus at home that was with them all the time.

[00:17:51] **Sam:** And because my husband also traveled a lot with his job. So,

[00:17:56] **Mickelle:** yeah, and it worked really, really well. And that conversation is something that a lot of people maybe don't have, but I think when you're moving around and, or maybe not, maybe it's different. For me, it feels like that's the model that has to be, or else you have to have nannies, like you have to have a lot more support.

[00:18:15] **Mickelle:** How have you seen, how did you see it play out in other families around you as a child or as an adult? That's like the expat model, like the old school. The expat model. Yeah.

[00:18:26] **Sam:** Yeah. I mean, I think families who move around as much as Paolo and I did with kids tend to have, tend to choose that one, one parent needs to be at home because of stability.

[00:18:41] **Sam:** There are, there are some parents that. Both work, both travel, then they tend to have, you know, a, a nanny that comes along with them just to create that stability. It's all about creating a stability for the kids. And because I, you know, I had a very different upbringing, you know, I was sent to boarding school.

[00:19:02] **Sam:** I was sent away.

[00:19:03] **Mickelle:** Yeah. And that, that had a huge, that sounds like a pivotal moment for you. Like it was like, that was not moving. Yeah.

[00:19:09] **Sam:** I didn't want that for my kids. I did not want that for my kids. Because. You know, I, I understand why my parents did it, you know, they did it, you know, 40 years ago, 50, no, yeah, 40, 40 odd years ago, back then, you know, the international schools weren't as great as they are now.

[00:19:27] **Sam:** You know, we were, I lived in very, very different countries. compared to the countries that my husband and I have been sent to. So, you know, we have, we were living in very Western countries, easy countries to find a good international school and a good community. Well, this is very, very different for my parents.

[00:19:45] **Sam:** I completely understand why they did it. But, I You know, I knew that I didn't want the same thing for me, for my kids, and I wanted them to be with us. So yeah, I'm 100 percent happy about that decision.

[00:20:02] **Mickelle:** And I think it's one that's a little bit more. So, this is my, my, what I've seen, and maybe, and you can tell me if you think, it's different.

[00:20:10] **Mickelle:** Companies have planned on that. They planned on that one person staying at home, one person, if that employee had, had kids or a family. And so that becomes part of the company, in a way. Like you, your friends, your social, da, da, da, da. And that's changed quite a bit over the years. Not only are companies unwilling to pay as much for people to move, also it's easier to work remotely, all this stuff, but people actually want this life.

[00:20:39] **Mickelle:** They aspire to it instead of it being a hardship or something, um, or you have to, you have to live in these countries. So we're going to, you know, and so. I see that changing, but the recognition of the job that you did for the company, if you will, is not recognized. And so that's becoming a problem in a place in the world where actually households take two incomes.

[00:21:04] **Mickelle:** And so,

[00:21:05] **Sam:** yeah, absolutely. I think it's really, really difficult nowadays for families to make that decision, especially when both partners are working and, you know, and. Like the partner who's maybe earning less money or whatever's earning the same amount of money They're not willing to give that up. Then it becomes so much harder to make these moves and No, and I you know Paulo and I we made that decision together and he He is very thankful and grateful and understands what I gave up.

[00:21:39] **Sam:** That's the key, isn't it? That's the key right there. It is the key. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly. He understands and he appreciates and he, and actually now he's, he's almost, he's giving back to that now because now I'm, I'm, I'm spending so much time with my book and, uh, I'm now going to be doing, um, a world tour with the book and everything.

[00:21:58] **Sam:** He's totally one hundred percent. in because finally I'm getting to do something for me rather than, I mean, of course, you know, we're bringing up children together. I love my kids. I had a wonderful time spending time with them moving from one place to another. It was great. It was very enriching, but it was.

[00:22:16] **Sam:** It was all about them, you know, I didn't have time for me. I mean, this is, this is, uh, this is so typical of a mother and a woman, um, and particularly for families who do decide to go on this expat ride going from one country to another, it tends to be the woman who forgoes. Their career to be the family care of the carer for the kids.

[00:22:43] **Mickelle:** Yeah,

[00:22:43] **Sam:** but I did it willingly full Full heartedly very happy to do it because I wanted I wanted to see if I could really help the kids You know make sure that they you know have this amazingly culturally diverse upbringing But at the same time have a very, very close knit family and this, um, you know, have this very strong identity about family.

[00:23:09] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:23:09] **Sam:** Um, that was like your, that was like your thesis.

[00:23:13] **Mickelle:** Yeah. Yeah. I love it. I love it. And I love what I'd like to highlight is that. I love how intentional you were. I love how much your, your partner appreciates, your husband appreciates what you've done and that I see is the key to this and I've spoken also on this podcast with, um, lawyers who handle international divorces and all these things about the agreements you should be making about this because oftentimes you If you are the person who doesn't have this agreement like you did or doesn't do it as willingly or with as much knowledge or appreciation, that can get really ugly financially for you or the person who has been doing that work.

[00:23:51] **Mickelle:** And so I love how intentional you were. And again, that recognition. back from your partner that you were giving to them and you were both giving to your family. And this is a conversation that's really fraught always. So when you say I was doing some, and now I'm doing something for me, that's super important because you were wanting to do what you were doing.

[00:24:12] **Mickelle:** And that's, this is one of the reasons I wanted to talk to you so much because this is often missed in women's lives, I think, is you are doing something that you want to do desperately and you're there and you're in it. You're raising the kids, you're doing all the stuff for the house, happily, willingly, totally in it, but it wasn't for you and your partner was doing something for him, but also for your family, right?

[00:24:39] **Mickelle:** He was taking care of the financial stuff, but his career doesn't transfer to you. So he takes his career wherever he goes and his success there, but that's what we mean when we say we're doing something for us now, right? For us now. And it's so fraught in many circles, Oh, don't you love your children? Oh, you got to be a mom.

[00:25:00] **Mickelle:** Oh, you're so lucky. You don't have to worry about money. And it's like, yes, that is so true. But there's this other part that is super important and it must be acknowledged. And that I think is so lovely. It must be acknowledged in the household and within your partner. Yeah,

[00:25:16] **Sam:** absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. And of course, don't get me wrong.

[00:25:19] **Sam:** I mean, you know, we're like any other couple, you know, we had our ups and downs and with every single move, anyone who has, who's listening to this, who has made an international move with kids knows how stressful. It is, you know, and that really takes a toll on the family and a toll on the, on the couple and the couple's relationship.

[00:25:43] **Sam:** But the important thing in my experience is to talk about these things. And I do feel incredibly lucky that I, I was brought up in the way that I was. So I can actually bring that into our relationship, my relationship with Paolo and, um, you know, make him understand that no, this, you know, Okay. Yeah. You can go off for two weeks, but you've got to come back.

[00:26:06] **Sam:** You've got to be with us for a little while. You've got to be with your kids. You've got to, you know, you need to want to do that. Of course he does. Yeah. Yeah. But yeah. You're giving him the perspective and he's listening. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I feel very, very lucky to have. Being brought up in that way in order

to bring something really, really good and important and supportive into our, our relationship and our family, our family unit.

[00:26:28] **Mickelle:** That's amazing.

[00:26:29] **Mickelle:** Yeah. And so is there, if we can pause here before we move into the next part, is there any advice you'd give people with this knowledge? Like what is the, how did you, what your thesis was you wanted to make this culture for your kids? And what are some of the tips to do that if you're moving around?

[00:26:45] **Sam:** So yeah, if you're moving around, so basically. Do your homework in terms of when you're moving from one place to another. Really read up about where you're going. Learn some, you know, ten sentences of the new language if there's a new language involved with your kids. You know, make it a fun thing. That's what we did when we moved to Tokyo.

[00:27:07] **Sam:** I was lucky enough to have a friend, a Japanese friend, and I asked her, Hey, can you, can you give us some lessons about, because it's so important to be able to communicate in the new place, in the new language. When you've moved to the Foreign country where you don't understand anything. But if you have the tools, if you have the ability to say something, it empowers you so much.

[00:27:25] **Sam:** And if you can empower your kids, no matter how young they are, I mean, my youngest was four when we moved to Tokyo and she could say 10 sentences. You know, it was amazing listening to her in Japanese. So yeah. Um, do your homework in terms of culture. I mean, a lot of these. Companies that send you will help you with this, but we didn't have that.

[00:27:46] **Sam:** We just did it ourselves. And again, I was lucky because of the way I was brought up that I knew that this was important. So yeah, learn about the culture. Learn ten sentences, um, before you arrive. You know, so you are there. And then also have goodbye parties. Really important to have a goodbye party.

[00:28:05] **Sam:** Before you leave the place with your kid, you know, each, because I have four kids, so we had four goodbye parties, we didn't just have one goodbye party, it was one, each of the kids had their own goodbye party, because it helps them grieve there, and then create space for new friendships in the new place.

[00:28:25] **Sam:** What else? Yeah, just a lot of conversation.

[00:28:28] **Mickelle:** You had some tips for your partner, they, he had to, he didn't have to. You, you wanted. to have that culture where he was gone for a while, but then he would schedule time to be connected again to the family. With a busy travel schedule and a family, that was probably really important that you guys had agreements that way.

[00:28:44] **Sam:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Um, making sure that, uh, we do spend quality time together, um, as a family, but also individually, you know, with each child. I mean, that's not easy when you have four, um, but it's super important. Um, even if it's, Half an hour. It doesn't have to be a whole day, it doesn't have to be a weekend, it doesn't have to be a week, whatever.

[00:29:04] **Sam:** Half an hour. 20 minutes. One on one. Yeah. Super important.

[00:29:08] **Mickelle:** My partner traveled a lot when our kids were tiny and I demanded, not demanded, after a while, I brought it to his attention that he needed to have a first class ticket on the way back so that he was ready when the kids got home because they were all toddlers.

[00:29:21] **Mickelle:** And so when, when he got home, I needed to sleep and then, so he needed to be ready to be on. And so that was part of our agreement was he had a first class ticket so he could sleep on the way

[00:29:31] **Sam:** back. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's a great one.

[00:29:34] **Mickelle:** It seems extravagant, but it's, it's, it made everything possible. Um, well, maybe it seems extravagant, extravagant to us at the time, but now I see it as like barely, barely helping.

[00:29:46] **Mickelle:** Um, so I think it's really helpful for people to ask for these things, especially since companies are not actually providing as much support anymore. And people are often doing this on their own. So this structure and this wisdom you have, I think, is so helpful. And so when you made this decision to do this, it sounds like it paid off.

[00:30:03] **Mickelle:** Tell us about, what I want to know about is, did the age of your kids change how you experienced each place? As a mother and as the family, um, cause I can imagine like you were learning different kinds of sentences in Japanese than you were in other languages. Um, when Mike, when we first moved here, we taught our kids the word Cinesopolisop, which you know, is orange.

[00:30:25] **Mickelle:** And so that was the first word they learned in our kitchen when they were like 18 months, three and four. Um,

[00:30:31] **Sam:** yeah. Amazing.

[00:30:32] **Mickelle:** So I learned very. Elementary school Dutch, that was my first, I speak like a child because I had children that age when I moved here. And so I wonder if that, how, how did that work for you going to different countries?

[00:30:46] **Sam:** So actually, interestingly enough, um, so when we moved from Tokyo, we went to the States. So we all, obviously we all speak, spoke English, so we didn't have to learn English. And this is when I say, I really do say, it's so important to do your homework, no matter where you move to, even if you think you know the culture.

[00:31:05] **Sam:** I did not do my homework when we moved to the US. We didn't do it because I thought I knew it. You know, with all the TV and, you know, films or whatever, and I knew the language. And wow, did we get a massive culture shock. It was incredible. What was your

[00:31:20] **Mickelle:** biggest surprise? Or several of them?

[00:31:24] **Sam:** Yeah, there were a few.

[00:31:26] **Mickelle:** You're not going to offend me, I'm American, but I've lived here eight years, so I get it.

[00:31:30] **Sam:** Well, I guess, you know, so I, we were in Portland, Oregon, it's a West Coast, kind of new ish, very new worldly, um, a lot of street malls. Yeah. Everything, you cannot walk anywhere unless you live in the center of Portland, which, you know, my kids were the ages of, you know, eight, 10, 12, and 14 when we moved to the US.

[00:31:57] **Sam:** So there were no schools within walking distance in, in the center of Portland. So yeah, that wasn't an option. Driving everywhere. A lot of people, I mean, also my accent, all the Americans love my accent. So every time I spoke anywhere. Everyone would constantly try and imitate me and, and it was, it was cute initially, but after a while it was like, okay, no, no, this is enough.

[00:32:24] **Sam:** And yeah, I, there are so many. How did driving everywhere affect you? What did you notice? I actually hated it. Yeah. I hated it so much. I, sorry, yeah, it was awful. I was not prepared for that. Having four kids, those ages, they were all very sporty, so, you know, after school activities, that was a lot of driving.

[00:32:46] **Sam:** I think. You know, most days I would be in the car for eight hours a day.

[00:32:49] **Mickelle:** Yeah, I remember that moment. That's a moment I, we decided to move. I tell the story often where it's like, I was sitting in my car realizing I was going to be in this car, this minivan for the next 18 years, eight hours a day. Cause I had three kids and that was going to be my full time job.

[00:33:03] **Mickelle:** There was going to be no time for anything else.

[00:33:05] **Sam:** Oh yeah. And that was the other thing was that I, I had, I was working in Tokyo when we moved, I was actually the admissions director for an international school and I absolutely loved. My job and I really wanted to do something like that when I moved to the US, but I didn't have time. Yep, there's no way I had no time.

[00:33:23] **Sam:** I had no time for that. Yeah, so that was another oh my god Yeah, what am I gonna do? And I remember and I forget that not my finest moment as a mother. I pick my kids up from school One afternoon and they're like, you know jumping in the back and super excited. Hey, mommy Can I go for a play date? Can I do this?

[00:33:41] **Sam:** Can I do that? Can we do it? I don't know what you said. Okay, first, can you all just stop talking? What we're going to do now is we're going to go right straight back home and I am not Getting in the damn car again until tomorrow morning, until tomorrow morning. And they were so disappointed and so upset and I said, no, sorry, no, I can't do it.

[00:34:04] **Sam:** I cannot do it. I felt really bad.

[00:34:06] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:34:07] **Sam:** Kind of. Not really.

[00:34:09] **Mickelle:** No. No, but that's no playdates. Yeah. No playdates because then you have to go to and from and dah, dah, dah. Yeah. And. As a mom, like I've seen that massive difference as a mother, how you're treated in different places, how things are set up for you or not.

[00:34:24] **Mickelle:** I mean, obviously the Netherlands is an amazing place to be a mom. That's why we live here. I noticed the difference immediately in how the system works, how the city's set up. I'm very passionate about the subject actually because when my, when I had kids, my life immediately changed. I also worked in advertising and basically I got fired.

[00:34:44] **Mickelle:** They're like, Oh, you're pregnant. Great. Bye. This is before me too. Right. They're like, Oh, great. You're going to not have time for this job. They just like showed me the door. I was like, Oh, wow. Incredible. Yeah. But we all know it now. I know it happened all the time, but at the time I was just shocked. So, um, But, so my journey has been very much that, but what I've, I cannot be a mom in the U.

[00:35:04] **Mickelle:** S. Like I am American, but I would never want to be a mother there simply because I've been shown another way. It's so hard there in a lot of ways. I love where I'm from. I love my family and everything, but like for this part of my life with little kids, I feel so spoiled to have lived here and taking my bike everywhere and not, you know, everything.

[00:35:26] **Sam:** And you can have, you can have a life.

[00:35:29] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:35:30] **Sam:** As well as having your children. It's not just about everything to do with the kids. Really funny story here. I don't know if this has ever happened to you before, but One of the first things that happened to me when we were in the US Francesca, my number two She, um, wanted to play volleyball.

[00:35:47] **Sam:** Yeah, volleyball. And, um, first of all The first match was on a Friday evening. Okay. And I'm like, okay, that's weird, but okay, we're going to do this. Yeah. Um, so it's in the back of nowhere, back of beyond somewhere and I get lost and we're late and you know, typical thing when you first moved to a new country and we go into the gym and you know, the team's getting all prepared.

[00:36:14] **Sam:** Oh, Francesca, Francesca, quick, quick, quick, quick, quick. So she goes off to her, with her team and I go onto the, the bleachers and I see these parents and they're sitting and they've, a few of them, quite a few of them have got these trays on their laps. And Oh, what's this? And, Oh, it's, it's our dinner. We're going to have dinner in front of, watch, you know, in front of the game.

[00:36:39] **Sam:** I was like, Oh my goodness. And I couldn't help myself. I was like, God, why, what on earth possesses these people to arrange these games on a Friday evening? I'd so much rather be out with my husband, having a glass of wine, you know, at dinner with some friends. And he looked at me horrified. As if I was like the worst mother in the world.

[00:37:00] **Sam:** How can you not appreciate this moment? Oh no, we love this. This is okay. That was a, that was a culture shock moment. Yeah. Okay. I know I'm not a bad mom, but this is not, this is not my idea of fun on a Friday night.

[00:37:14] **Mickelle:** Yeah. Love equals sacrifice. Love for your children equals sacrifice. Yeah. Ultimate sacrifice.

[00:37:20] **Mickelle:** Yeah. And, and. For me, it took me a long time to realize that that wasn't selfish, that that was actually life giving. Um, and that's how I could best, best give life was to be alive myself. And so I think that that's a lot easier to do depending on which country you're in.

[00:37:35] **Sam:** Yeah.

[00:37:35] **Sam:** It's a very European thing, you know, to just, you know, go and have some fun with your friends and with your husband and go out and yeah, the kids are going to be fine.

[00:37:44] **Sam:** Yeah. You know, you've dedicated X amount of hours to, to your children. Now it's your turn.

[00:37:50] **Mickelle:** Yeah. It's normal. Yeah, it is normal. And actually, it was so foreign when I first arrived. It was insane. Um, but, and so is it that way also in Tokyo? How did you experience being a mother in Tokyo? So it was different because we were very much in the international community.

[00:38:05] **Mickelle:** Yeah. Because, I mean, It is Were you right in Tokyo? You told me where you were, but tell me again.

[00:38:11] **Sam:** Yeah, we were right in the center of Tokyo. Um, we were in Motozabu, which is, uh Do you know Tokyo?

[00:38:17] **Mickelle:** I've been a few times, but not well.

[00:38:18] **Sam:** Yeah, so very close to Roppongi. Oh, yeah, okay.

[00:38:22] **Mickelle:** Yeah, I've been to Roppongi.

[00:38:22] **Mickelle:** Yeah. I got lost there and used all the Japanese I have. Yeah,

[00:38:25] **Sam:** within

[00:38:25] **Mickelle:** walking distance of Yeah.

[00:38:28] **Sam:** Within, uh, within walking distance of Roppongi. Oh, nice. So, yeah, super, super right bang in the middle. So, yeah, we weren't really part of the Japanese community there. So Although, because I worked there, my whole, the whole team that I worked with in this international school was actually a Japanese team, which was wonderful.

[00:38:45] **Sam:** So I really got an, yeah, I sort of, you know, was allowed in a little bit into the Japanese. And my husband, his entire team was Japanese. So, um, that was great. We had some fun stories to, to tell each other when we got together. Came back from work, but we, the reason why I was able to work was because I had a full time nanny.

[00:39:03] **Mickelle:** Mm hmm.

[00:39:04] **Sam:** And that was actually provided by the, um, by the company. So I was very, very lucky and

[00:39:10] **Sam:** it felt really, really good. Yeah. To, because it was a, it was a part time job. It wasn't a full time job, um, to just spend 16 hours a week doing something for myself. Yeah.

[00:39:20] **Mickelle:** Yeah, and it feels like the change from Holland to Tokyo would be a big one.

[00:39:25] **Mickelle:** That would be a big one.

[00:39:26] **Sam:** It was. Yeah.

[00:39:27] **Mickelle:** Yeah. It's huge. It's when my kids, my kids want us to go to Tokyo. So that's why I'm so interested. But

[00:39:34] **Sam:** it, I mean, Japan, Tokyo is amazing. I really recommend it. It's a, they're such an amazing culture, beautiful people, um, such an interesting culture. The language is amazing.

[00:39:47] **Sam:** There's so much history. It's really, it's an incredible place.

[00:39:51] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:39:51] **Sam:** I recommend it. Amazing. Amazing.

[00:39:53] **Mickelle:** So. So Holland to Japan to the United States, like that's a lot. And then where did you guys go? I mean, it's not a lot, but if you hear that, and that's the life of your kids, that's, that's a lot of cultures they were going in and out of.

[00:40:07] **Mickelle:** Do they have a favorite place that they've lived? Japan. Japan. Oh yeah. That's really nice.

[00:40:12] **Sam:** Yeah. It was, it was a good, it was a good place. Um, we, we, we did a lot of, um, traveling and, uh. They, they actually went to an amazing school, Tokyo International School, which was fabulous. And we met some really good people there.

[00:40:26] **Sam:** So yeah, it was.

[00:40:29] **Mickelle:** And as a family, did that change when you had a nanny? I mean, that's normal for most people I know to have a nanny because they don't have family around. But for your family, that was new.

[00:40:38] **Sam:** It was. It was. It was, it took a while for the kids to get used to it.

[00:40:42] **Mickelle:** Yeah, of course.

[00:40:43] **Sam:** Um, my daughter, my youngest at the time, she had a few meltdowns and, you know. The good thing was that I was actually working at the school that they were at. Oh, that's

[00:40:53] **Mickelle:** perfect. Oh, so you went

[00:40:54] **Sam:** to school with them. Yes. So we would go to school together. Yeah. Yeah. It was amazing. Yeah. Um, but they didn't like the fact that I wasn't home when they got home.

[00:41:04] **Sam:** Yeah. Yeah. So I had to do a few little changes with my job and stuff and not that I would. Immediately change, but you know, just sort of balancing all these balls, just trying to figure out what works for you, what doesn't work for you as a family.

[00:41:18] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:41:19] **Sam:** But yeah, it was good. And actually, it was actually really important for the kids to see me in my element as well, where I was working and see me.

[00:41:30] **Sam:** Um, as something other than just mom. Yeah,

[00:41:33] **Mickelle:** and that's so important. It's so important, but I think it's such a fraught thing. And so the clarity of the choices you guys made inspires me. Because I think, at least in my circles, people are really fighting for this balance because being a stay at home parent, isn't safe.

[00:41:51] **Mickelle:** It isn't possible. It isn't, it's almost a luxury or something to be looked down on. Like it's, it's very fraught. I would say to be a stay at home parent at it in my circles. And I spent eight years as a, as a stay at home parent. And it's super interesting, but the amount of work my partner and I have done to come to this new balance is insane.

[00:42:13] **Mickelle:** To have that clarity from the beginning is, is I can't imagine the amount of. energy that we could have saved by having that clarity. And so I love how methodical you've been about this. And so when you decided to go back to work, was that a decision you took together? Was it just like, okay, I'm going to work now in Tokyo because we have a nanny.

[00:42:31] **Sam:** Um, we got the nanny after I decided to go back to work. It wasn't a decision. It was kind of like a, it was very organic. Organic. Yeah.

[00:42:45] **Mickelle:** Okay.

[00:42:46] **Sam:** Yeah. So I was. a volunteering at the school. I was very much involved, you know, doing part of the PTA, blah, blah, blah. So I knew a lot of the, I knew the head, the head of the school and he approached me.

[00:42:59] **Sam:** They were looking for an admissions director and he approached me.

[00:43:02] **Mickelle:** Yeah. Perfect.

[00:43:03] **Sam:** And yeah, I, I went, I spoke to Paolo about it. I said, I think I'd really Like to do this, um, what do you think? And yeah, it was just, well, you know, let's get some help in and yeah. As I said, it was very organic and it, and it, it, it wasn't like, oh my God, I really need to work.

[00:43:22] **Sam:** It was. Yeah. I really want to work. And of course I've always wanted to work, but at the same time, I knew that it wasn't possible and we'd made that decision initially, right at the beginning. That's so much peace. That I wasn't.

[00:43:33] **Mickelle:** Yeah. Yeah. So much peace. Like your story is so peaceful. And I know there's ups and downs, like that's, I'm not saying that you're, but the peace that comes from this clarity is, is really beautiful.

[00:43:43] **Mickelle:** Um, so then the, did your kids go to any local schools or did they mostly stay in the international?

[00:43:52] **Sam:** They went to local primary school in Holland. Oh yeah, nice. Okay. Um, and then, uh, not primary school, kindergarten. So they did kindergarten in Holland and like preschool in Holland. And then they switched to an international school in Holland.

[00:44:11] **Sam:** And then, yeah, Tokyo was International school. Yeah,

[00:44:15] **Mickelle:** you have to.

[00:44:15] **Sam:** And then the U. S. was just, you know, an American school. I really, really wanted them to continue with the IB program in the States, but, you know, with a ton of research, I realized that the IB in the States was very different to the IB in the international schools that the kids had been to.

[00:44:35] **Sam:** So we just decided to go full on U. S. system. And that was, that was a massive change for the kids.

[00:44:42] **Mickelle:** Yeah, I can imagine. Yeah, we could have a whole podcast on that. Maybe we'll have you back because that's a fraught decision. Local school or private school is a fraught decision always is as long as you're lucky enough to be able to afford the school if you're not with the company.

[00:44:55] **Mickelle:** Um, but then, um, You told me something when we spoke earlier that I really wanted to bring out as a last thing and then I want to talk about your book. Um, Never tell your kids something. Do you remember what you said? Never tell your kids the world they can go anywhere in the world or the world is their oyster.

[00:45:10] **Mickelle:** Oh

[00:45:10] **Sam:** yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh my god. Never, never tell your kids the world is their oyster. Oh my gosh. So right now I have three kids. Um, so one of them is living with us, a 23 year old. He's just graduated from college and he's looking for a job. The other three are spread all over the world. I have one in Portland, Oregon.

[00:45:31] **Sam:** He ended up going to university, Oregon State University, and he did mechanical engineering, he's working for Intel. So he stayed there. Then my number two, she went to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo in California and is now working at Disney and she's living in San Diego. And my third one is the one that's here in Madrid with us.

[00:45:50] **Sam:** And my number four is the one who I told the world is your oyster when she was looking when she was, um, uh, applying for colleges and she ended up, she ended up applying to colleges in Australia. Oh, so far away. Yeah. So she's, she's in Sydney. And she's studying marine science and she is absolutely loving it.

[00:46:10] **Sam:** Definitely the place for her. I was absolutely devastated when I heard that that's where she wanted to go. But, and I said to her, as long as it makes sense. Because when she asked me, she goes, Mommy, where can I apply to? And in my head it was like, Okay, she's probably going to apply to somewhere in the States, because we just moved from the States.

[00:46:26] **Sam:** This is when we were living in Modena, um, after the States, um, or she'll apply somewhere in Europe. And I said, darling, your world, the world is your oyster. And then she comes back with five different, uh, places in Australia, but I said, as long as it makes sense, darling. And, um, yeah, it did make sense. She wanted to do marine science and, uh, she's at the university of Sydney right now.

[00:46:50] **Sam:** She's, um, about to start her third year. And currently she is at the great barrier reef doing research projects on the octopi that survive. with, like they have a symbiotic relationship with the coral reef. So it's fascinating stuff, amazing stuff. Well

[00:47:09] **Mickelle:** done. So yeah. It sounds like your kids are, you don't get to see them every day, but you're, they're doing amazingly with this.

[00:47:16] **Mickelle:** So I think your, your, uh, thesis paid off. And how do you stay connected? How do you stay connected now that they're adults with this little family nest?

[00:47:25] **Sam:** Yeah, so we, we basically see each other twice a year, uh, Christmas time and summertime. I'm super, super, super grateful and happy that They still want to come and see us twice a year.

[00:47:37] **Sam:** They're still spending their time and money, their precious holiday time coming to visit their parents. So yeah, we do that. We just, uh, had Christmas time. We, they all came to Modena and, uh, we spent time in Modena. It was amazing. And then this summer we'll probably meet up in the South of Italy where we have a.

[00:47:56] **Sam:** a home there, summer home there. So yeah, and of course FaceTime. FaceTime is amazing. Yeah.

[00:48:03] **Mickelle:** Thank God for FaceTime. Yeah, when you give your kids the world, they take it. Luckily, that sounds like to me.

[00:48:10] **Sam:** Absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, Paolo and I knew that the kids were not going to be around the corner. We knew that.

[00:48:18] **Sam:** But yeah, Australia was a, whew, was a hard one to swallow. But I, I've actually just come back from visiting her and um, she was so excited for, for me to come. I spent three weeks there with her because she just wanted to show me just how much she loved it and why she loved it. And yeah, I completely understand, completely get it now. So yeah.

[00:48:39] **Mickelle:** Every time my mom comes, she goes, I can see why you live here. And she's still so mad that I moved, but she's like, but you're happy here. So I'm happy. And then she's still, yeah, she's still, it's been eight years. She's not okay with it. But I, I get it because now I look at my kids and the years we spend together are so precious.

[00:48:56] **Mickelle:** Like when I see my kids, they're now 13, almost 12 and 10. And I'm like, this little nest is going to get a lot bigger. And so enjoying those years when they're under my roof is, is basically my job. Yeah.

So I want to talk about your book. Tell me, with the time we have left, I want you to tell me all about it, like why you decided to write it, because I'm so inspired by your foresight, your life story, everything about it.

[00:49:24] **Mickelle:** So tell me about the book.

[00:49:26] **Sam:** So I have been writing a blog for probably about six years now. The blog is called WonderingIdentity.com and, you know, The blog is basically little snippets of my life, you know, stories of my childhood, um, little moments in time of what happened when I was younger. And, you know, I started getting quite a big following and a lot of people were like, my God, you know, super interesting.

[00:49:50] **Sam:** Yeah, you should definitely write a book. I had absolutely no plan of writing a book, but you know, with all these people constantly saying you need to do it, you need to do this, this would be great. So when we moved to modern art, um, which was, Three years ago, after the U. S., I decided to play around with it and yeah, the book is actually, it's about, it's, it's a memoir and it's about a woman searching for the true meaning of home.

[00:50:19] **Sam:** I actually talk about that, obviously, but I talk about the relationships and the differences between how my parents did it and how I'm doing it and the reasons why. Um, the backstory is All about, you know, my childhood and the places that I've lived in, um, when I was a child, so if people get that sort of adventure outlook, you know, with living in the Ivory Coast and in Hong Kong and in Zambia and things like that, but, but really the most important thing is about, it's a woman's search for residence, about deep connection, belonging, meaning finding places and people and experiences that truly resonate with my soul.

[00:50:58] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:50:58] **Sam:** That's what it's about.

[00:50:59] **Mickelle:** And you have, we've talked a little bit about this, but how do you describe home now?

[00:51:05] **Sam:** Home is a feeling. It's not a place, but it's a feeling. It's really something that's inside of you. I actually have a quote here from a writer called Pico Aya. I don't know whether you know him, but he's amazing.

[00:51:20] **Sam:** He has this amazing Ted, Ted, Ted talk. Look him up. It's about home. And his quote is, Home has less to do with a piece of soil than a piece of soul. So that to me is what home is.

[00:51:33] **Mickelle:** And do you think that's something you've honed with your life experience more than maybe others is identifying that feeling?

[00:51:41] **Sam:** Yeah, because I mean, okay, the dreaded question, wherever I go, and you know, the first person I meet is. Where are you from? Do you make the list? Do you lie? Do you?

[00:51:54] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:51:55] **Sam:** Yeah, exactly. Um, the original title of my book, actually, Funny Feeling, was, um, You're Not From London because I used to lie about where I was from.

[00:52:07] **Sam:** I used to always say that I was from London, just to sort of, you know, just cut the conversation. And one, um, particular time, this is actually in my book. One, uh, one time my daughter was there. She was about seven at the time. And I said, Oh yeah, I'm from London. And she just looked at me and said, Mom, you're not from London.

[00:52:23] **Sam:** This is in front of the person. And I'm like, Oh my God. Shush, shush. You know how it gets. I was so embarrassed. So yeah, from that moment on I decided, you know what, I really need to figure out what I'm going to, what I need to say. So I just say, you know, it's a bit, it's a bit long winded and complicated, but I'm a little bit from all over the place.

[00:52:43] **Sam:** I have a British passport, but I did, I wasn't born there and I didn't grow up there. That's pretty much it. And then if people want to know more, they'll ask more. Yeah.

[00:52:51] **Mickelle:** Yeah. It is so fraught and it's so, it gets more fraught the more countries you go to. That question. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:53:00] **Sam:** Yeah, it does. Um, but I'm beginning, I think, actually this, writing this book has really made me feel okay with it.

[00:53:08] **Sam:** It's, it's sitting a lot better with me now because it's always been Okay, where am I from? What's my identity? Well, my identity is lots of things, lots of places, lots of people.

[00:53:19] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:53:20] **Mickelle:** Yeah, that's

[00:53:21] **Sam:** beautiful. It's this amalgamation of so much. It's not just one thing.

[00:53:25] **Mickelle:** Yeah. And it really shapes who you are. So you are that.

[00:53:29] **Mickelle:** So when people say, where are you from? You're telling the truth just because it's more than one. It's who you are.

[00:53:34] **Sam:** Yeah.

[00:53:35] **Mickelle:** There's nothing to be done about it.

[00:53:36] **Sam:** Luckily. Yeah. And I, and of course we know that, you know, it depends on who's asking the question. If it's a fellow global nomad, then of course I can be completely and utterly honest.

[00:53:46] **Sam:** But if it's someone who has lived in one place, like for example, my experience when I went to the, to when I was living in Portland. It was very difficult for a lot of them to wrap their heads around.

[00:53:56] **Mickelle:** Yeah.

[00:53:56] **Sam:** Who I was.

[00:53:57] **Mickelle:** Yeah. Yeah. It's so true. It's so true. I want to ask you one final question if you have another second.

[00:54:03] **Mickelle:** So we spoke before and I wanted to bring this to this, to this conversation, living as you have as a global nomad, um, at least in my relationship and my, in our family and the circles I'm in, we're always talking about, are we going to do this for the rest of our lives? Are we going to move around? Are we going to live outside of our own country?

[00:54:20] **Mickelle:** Are we going to go back or What is our plan in 50 years? I, we call it like our final place or our family place. How have you conceptualized that problem? I know you said you have a summer house somewhere that your family comes to. Tell us that about your plans that way or how are you thinking about that?

[00:54:39] **Sam:** Okay, I, I mentioned earlier on that, you know, Paolo has this, you know, very, very strong sense of identity in terms of, you know, where he's from and everything. So, and that's what attracted to me, it attracted me to him, you know, all those years ago, 29 years ago. Um, so, you know, the fact that I'd never had that and he was, you know, his, he's such a strong Southern Italian man and such strong, deeply set roots.

[00:55:05] **Sam:** We would go back to. It's a lot because that's what he wanted. That's what he needed. And in the 29 that this has been like the most, the most I've been anywhere near returning back,

[00:55:18] going

[00:55:18] **Sam:** back to Italy. So when the kids were growing up, I could feel and I could tell that the kids were feeling a little bit unsettled and unrooted and, um, unstable.

[00:55:30] **Sam:** And that's when we decided to buy a place down in the South of Italy, which is where he's from and our own place. Just to call home away from home and we would return, we still do every year, we go back to that place. So that place has been in our life for quite a long time now, for about 15 years. And it's the one constant that has continued, you know, that is, that has been there for 15 years.

[00:55:57] **Sam:** So I have that, but at the same time, I think to myself, oh my goodness, there's no way that I can be in one place. For the rest of my life, there's no way so why do I have to actually decide so we're kind of just Going with the flow and just seeing what happens. We haven't made any decisions. And yeah, we'll see what happens.

[00:56:19] **Mickelle:** You'll live your life as you've lived it. And it sounds like you'll have four wonderful places to visit for your kids. Exactly.

[00:56:27] **Sam:** Exactly. So if we do end up with my husband, because I think he'll be the one that will end up saying, uh, I think we need to kind of just settle or whatever. And I'll just go with the flow.

[00:56:37] **Sam:** Like I always have done with him. What's going to be, it's going to be easier for me to be able to do that because I have all these wonderful places to go and see my kids. My kids are all over the world. We'll go and be able to, we'll be able to travel. They'll be able to come to us. So it's not like, okay, I'm back there and that's it.

[00:56:54] **Sam:** Yeah. No

[00:56:56] **Mickelle:** Yeah, we always talk about We wish our parents would come like have have like visa like you don't have a house you just travel with us for three months and then our sister my sister with three months and my brother with three months and Just go around and be with us. And so sometimes I partner and I talk about that like maybe we don't need to have a home When the kids go, we just spend three months, three months, three months, and then three months alone.

[00:57:21] **Mickelle:** And then three months, we have three kids. So that's

[00:57:23] **Sam:** exactly what we're, that's exactly what we're going to be doing. So we are going to be going around the world and hanging out with the kids. I mean, this last three weeks with, with, uh, with Sophia, my youngest was amazing. Cause we were just hanging out and my, my parents did the same, you know, when my, when my children were younger, my parents would come and they'd spend two months with us in Tokyo, two months with us in, in, in the U S.

[00:57:50] **Sam:** Yeah. So that's what we would like to do. That's if they're, that's if they want us.

[00:57:54] **Mickelle:** Yeah. I mean, that, that is predicated on this very strong relationship, which I think you've done a really, I mean, you've made a path to have that be very, very possible. So, um, I can't wait to read your book. I hope so. Yeah. I mean, there's still more life to be lived, but thank you for sharing this, this snapshot of your life right now and how, you Just how mindful you've been about your life and how respectful you have been about your past, too.

[00:58:18] **Mickelle:** I think a lot of times it's easy to say, I'm, my parents did it this way and I don't want it, in anger. But with respect and reverence, you are doing it, you have done it differently and I think that's really, it resonates very strongly with me. So thank you for sharing your story today. I cannot read.

[00:58:33] **Sam:** Oh, thank you so much, Mickelle

[00:58:34] **Mickelle:** I cannot wait to read your book. For having me. Yeah, I cannot read, wait to read your book and share it with others. And, uh, tell everyone where they can find you.

[00:58:41] **Sam:** Uh, but yes, you can find me on Instagram, uh, underscore wondering identity underscore. And, um, please look on my website, which is WonderingIdentity.com.

[00:58:53] **Mickelle:** Right. And we'll put that in the box below as well.

[00:58:56] **Sam:** Wonderful. Thank you for this conversation. Well, so much, Mickelle yeah. Thank you. This is great. I think, I feel like we can chat and chat and chat forever.

[00:59:02] **Mickelle:** I'll be calling you again. Like you're, you're now one of the wisest women I know. So thank you so much.

[00:59:07] **Mickelle:** Oh, thank you so much. All right. Talk to you later. All right. Take care. Okay.

[00:59:12] **Mickelle:** That's it for today. I hope you've enjoyed our show. For the latest insights on living internationally, join us at HouseOfPeregrine.com to find out how you can connect with our community. Let's craft our life story with intention, together.