Ep 212 Dina x Dina

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SPEAKERS

Dina Aronson, Speaker 1, Jen Marples, Dina Alvarez

Jen Marples 00:10

Jen, hello and welcome to the Jen Marples Show. I'm your host. Jen Marples, founder of the Jen Marples agency, mentor to women worldwide, and your number one champion and cheerleader dedicated to helping you embrace and rock midlife. The Jen Marple show has one goal, to empower you so you can go out empower the world. So each week, I'll bring you conversations with incredible women who will inspire us, educate us and motivate us to live our best lives. I also pop on solo to share my best advice, tips and tools to help you unapologetically go for your midlife dreams, embrace your age and become unstoppable. If you are looking for a change, ready to up level your life in business or pivot into something new, then this is the show for you. And know this, you're not too fucking old to step into the midlife spotlight and claim all that you desire. It's your time to shine, and I am so glad you're here. Hello, beautiful, beautiful ladies. Welcome to the Jen Marple show. I am so glad you're here today. We have got a double team. We've got team Deena. So we've got Dina times two, Dina Alvarez and Dina Aronson on the show today to talk about their new fabulous anthology, and it is called midlike private parts, and it is releasing in June 2025 and I was able to read this book, an early galley of it, and I can attest that the stories included in this anthology by many different writers are fabulous and fabulous in the sense that it is not all cheerleading. It's that women are going out and speaking on a couple different topics and sharing really deep truths within those topics. So from empty nesting to career pivoting to menopause raging and being on the brink of divorce, to living life on your own terms, to rediscovering pleasure. I mean, they really cover so much, and I just really loved this book so much because y'all know my theory about everything, and that is when we share our deepest truths and do life together, we feel more connected and less alone. And that's what this beautiful book does. It makes you feel more connected to other women and less alone, because there's no sugar coating in this book. There are no there's no sugar coating. There are deep emotions. There are women talking about cancer journeys. They are talking about parents dying. They're talking about literally being on the brink of divorce. Women talking about empty nesting, I mean, getting really into it, but it's all very hopeful as well. So it's like with everything here and on this show, we talk about the yin and the yang of everything, of like, how midlife is a both, and it's the yin and the yang. It's good and it's bad, but it's good. We're here, we're alive, we're doing the thing, and we simply need to know that other women are dealing with the same things we are. And we also need to see what women are doing in the future of what they're

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thinking for their lives, and so how we can think about how we might want to do something, and so we could find some inspiration and hope in other women's stories. I love a book, and I'm so glad that the Dinas have put this book together. It's hysterical. They both, they're both Dina A's. They're both located in New York, by the way. So Dina Alvarez has been a writer forever. She is a freelance writer. She co founded somos padres, which is the first only bilingual parenting publication for Hispanic families in New York. She works for a financial firm by day, and she writes by night. So I love this, and she's super passionate about helping women. Dina Aronson went from being a lawyer to a couple different things, and has pivoted now into writing full time and supporting women through her Instagram and her sub stack called patina, and she is fabulous. I've met Dina aaronson, both of these Dinas via Instagram, and then Dina and I, probably, I don't know, six months ago, got on a zoom and had a really deep conversation, and she told me all about the book. And I said, Okay, you guys have to come on this podcast, because this book midlife private parts, which is, by the way, on sale in June. So go get your pre order now and help women writers out. You know me, let's support women. Let's support women in business. So please buy the book. Yeah, I'll have those links in the show notes, but I'm just so glad that they're here. I knew that they needed to be here because we just cross over. And there's so many similarities. We're basically doing the same work in this world, and that's wanting to empower midlife women to go do the damn thing and live the life that they want to live and don't let anything hold them back, and know that we ain't got time for sort of superficial we got to go in deep. We got to lean into the relationships that sustain us and surround ourselves. Themselves by you know this next wave of cheerleaders in our life, which could be completely new people. So without further ado, let's welcome them to the podcast. I know you're gonna really love this conversation. You're gonna love the book again. I read it. Highly endorse it. It will soon be on my wall of women. So please go out and buy it. It's called midlife private parts on sale. June 2025, and let's welcome them to the show. And I hope you love my conversation with them, because it's amazing. Dina's Dina times two, welcome to the Jen Marple show. So all y'all listening, you know, we've got Dina aaronson here, and they're both brunettes, and we've got Dina Alvarez. So if you are watching on YouTube, and they're kind of wearing the same colors, both like real necklaces, and both have middle parts. So Dina Aronson has got the colorful photo behind her, or print rather. And then the other Dina, Dina Alvarez just has the midlife private parts their book behind they both got the books in play. So anyway, two gorgeous ladies, you're here. We're going to talk about all things in midlife. We're going to get into midlife private parts, which goes on sale or releases. Rather, it's on sale now for pre sale in June. So we are on the cusp of your book baby being birthed, and I'm just thrilled to have you all here today to share everything about the book with my audience. And I want to hear how you guys met. I want to hear how you guys thought about the book, and then I want to dig into some of the stories within the book, because y'all listening. This is a book you're going to want to have refer back to as soon as it's published. It's going to go back on my wall of women. On my wall of women, if you watch this on YouTube. I've got my wall of women behind me on my set here, which is my inspiration. All the women lift me up every day. So Dina, times. Dina, first of all, how did you guys meet? Because two Dinas, two writers, both with the last name starting with a How did this all happen? I

Dina Aronson 06:57
just want to say first, Jen, thank you. I cannot wait to be on your wall of women. This is so great. We're so excited to be here with you and to chat about the book. Dina and I think our story and how we met is super emblematic of what we're trying to sort of say with this book, which is, it's never too late, or, in

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your words, you're not too fucking old. Dina and I are a social media love story. We did not meet until we were in our 50s. It was during the pandemic, many of us had taken to being online. We ended up at a dinner together. We didn't really know each other, even before, I don't even think we were following each other. We ended up at this dinner and Dino walked in and you know, in life, sometimes you have an instant connection, Dina, would you say that that's, that's, yeah,

Dina Alvarez 07:46
I walked into the restaurant and Dina was sitting down, and she got up right away and said, I feel like I know you my whole life, and it was just such a kindred spirit kind of moment. The connection was so real. I can't say I've ever experienced that before, and I love that it happened in midlife for me, because I think we're always told it's hard to make friends as we get older and friendships change, and you have your legacy friends and you have your work friends, but it was such a beautiful thing for me, personally to meet Dina, and so it is kind of like a social media love story. She's absolutely right. That is exactly how we met. But

Dina Aronson 08:22
Jen, I also want to tell you later that week, and we're in New York City, it's pretty big here, and later that week, I'm walking on the street, and I ran into her. We ran into each other on the street in New York City. So there was, I don't know, sort of a faded meant to be, kind of quality to this relationship. Well,

Jen Marples 08:43
I love this for several reasons, and I've talked about it on the show here too. I know people feel like it's hard to meet people at a certain age, but I feel like ever since COVID happened, I've met the most amazing women, A and B. As soon as I decided to step into this whole new realm of the podcast and just stepping up and out and deciding, okay, I'm gonna go out there in a big way and support women. It is opened up. I've met you guys. I've met so many beautiful women, so many of whom are in your book, and who have been on this podcast and who have become dear to me. And I know that these women are very special. So the same you kind of met and fell in love. I have so many of those people. I mean, Gina, when we you and I first connected, you've been online just in our in the virtual streets, like, oh my god, I love her. And it's a true love. It's not like, Oh, love you. I really, truly feel like there's this elevation happening in this world, and women are really being called to step up in new ways. And the fact that you guys met in your 50s. I mean, it's just a beautiful way to kind of set up talking about your book, because so many women are sitting around going, is it over? For me, I'm in midlife. Can I have a next chapter? You can have 25 next chapters. That's what you're going to realize after you listen to this conversation. Everyone but the fact that you met over 50, you have a bonafide. Published book, about to be birthed in a month, because of this connection. And you leaned into the connection too, which I love. You're like, there's something here, so let's explore it. And then now you've got this beautiful book, and then this book is also shining light on these other women, these beautiful women who you featured in the book, and they've got their own essays going really deep, talking about their own transformations or different points in time. So I just love how all of this you all know listening, this is what gets me fired up and why I wake up in the morning. Women, women supporting, women, sharing our truths, leaning into each other and realizing that this phase is filled with possibility. I just want to give a shameless plug to some of the authors that are in the book, because these are women that are either, let's start with all the ones that have been on the show. And I'm going to link those fabulous guests here later in the show

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notes, so you guys can go back and listen to them as you're purchasing your book on Amazon. So you get that ready to roll. So that's dropped in June. You have Katie Fogarty, Sarah Milken, Gabriella, Espinosa, Christine, Morrison, Dr Mary, Claire Haber and Julie flaxtad. They have all been guests. And Rachel Hughes, who's a friend who needs to come on, Rachel, you need to come on. This is your Hello, your rallying cry, Rachel, let's go. I was just so thrilled when I was reading it that there was all these beautiful familiar names, and I did not know some of these women's stories that were being shared. And I just love that so much. So let's get into the book. Why this book? Where did it come from? How did it come to be? And like, I love this question that an epic agent friend of mine always asks, like, why this book? Why? Now I'll just

Dina Aronson 11:35
start by saying I was already sort of writing in this space, and one of the motivations for me to make my midlife pivot and get into this space is that there was really no content that was reflecting what was going on in my life, the good, the bad. There's just all of this stuff converging as we move into midlife, and some of it's pretty amazing and some of it's pretty hard. There's this really kind of paradoxical thing happening. And so I had already been starting to write in that area, and then when Deena and I met, we were both writing. And so we just started having a conversation that went on and on and on. And so I'll let you, Dina, jump in.

Dina Alvarez 12:16
I think it was for me also part of write the book you want to read. It definitely felt that way for me and also for Dina. And when I first met Dina, she had this idea for a book already. She was kind of already machinating This idea that she wanted to put a book out. And she shared some thoughts with me. And then I had a separate idea for a book. And then we started looking around, and we started seeing all the Mary Claire havers in the world and the Rachel Hughes and seeing all these women not having anywhere near a midlife crisis. In fact, they were having a midlife reawakening. And again, as Dina said, you know, it's not perfect. It's not a Pollyanna kind of book, but we thought it was important to share the stories along themes that we're going through to emptiness. Some people are getting divorced relationship being in the last place you ever thought you'd be figuring out your style, right? What do we wear? Our bodies are changing. Who are we now? So it was just in terms of being the right book at the right time. It really was just an organic thing. It was two women coming together and saying, look at all these amazing women. I think it's time to really put their stories out into the world. And it was just really an organic conversation for the both of us.

Dina Aronson 13:26
I felt like too sort of, mercifully, we were finally talking about menopause right when I started researching for my blog, which I started in 2020 so was researching for a couple of years before that, all of those articles were coming out of the UK, and I was trying to figure out what's going on with me and my crazy perimenopause journey. So we were finally talking about that stuff. But partly the thought was like we're so much more than that. It's such an important piece. But there's so many other things that we still weren't really talking about. There was just a lot to say, and I think that that's really the way to connect with other humans, is through our stories. So it just felt important to do it and to share these things. I love it

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Jen Marples 14:05
and what I love. I just, I love books. I just shout out to books. English major here, I read the whole library in junior high. Like I've got my books here. I've got the books on my bedside table, and there's an underneath stack of books. I love books. You're never going to see me reading a digital book. I have to have my books. They make me happy. I love books. So shout out to books. And shout out to stories, because we can talk a lot about all the kind of technical things that happen, if it's menopause or we're pivoting careers or dating or this and that, but nothing really brings it to life and really teaches the lessons unless we're like, listening to people's stories. I mean, that's how I attach and get really invested in it is if I'm hearing somebody's story and I feel less alone. And so when I started doing all the work I'm doing, my hypothesis was pre COVID, that women were feeling disconnected, and that by being connected and sharing our deepest truths, we feel more connected and less alone. So this book. Uh, fits right into that, because just after reading it, and I, you know, I read it really quick, and I'm like, oh, and I know I'm going to go back to it time and time again to read different stories. So I had, you know, I went through it the one time, because then the book's going to be on my shelf so I can refer to it. So tell me how you set the book up and what your intention was, just like the way it's I know how you structured it, but let everybody know what they can expect and what kind of stories unfold in midlife private parts.

Dina Aronson 15:29
It's really sort of set up broadly along the shifts of our lives, right? The emotional shifts, the relational shifts, the physical shifts, and all of the things that sort of are connected to those things. So we talked about menopause. Dina mentioned empty nests, the grief and loss that we will all inevitably feel all and go through as we get older. Dina, you can share some more use of the last place we ever thought we'd be, whether

Dina Alvarez 15:55
you're feeling invisible or not. Style at a certain age, late blooming, that's important too. We sometimes come into our best selves later in life and discover who we really are. So that was important to put in as well. And we have Gabriella, who wrote about sexual pleasure and rediscovering herself in that moment of midlife where she'd kind of lost her way. And we thought it was important to put it in chapters, and some chapters only have two essays. Others have four and and that's the beauty of anthologies too, is that you can pick it up along the way. As you said, You'll have it on your shelf, and you can read a story and put it down and then come back to it. And I think we included enough topics that will keep people interested in going,

Dina Aronson 16:38
Look, there's 1000 topics we can include, and maybe there'll be a series of these, I will say, to Dina's point, of like, some chapters have three, some have four, some have one. We actually addressed that in the introduction. It's kind of like mid life and life in general. There's not perfect symmetry, but we sort of let it unfold organically. And I think we ended up with this sort of beautiful combination of just emotion and stories and humanity that I just think will make women feel really seen in a way that sometimes is hard to feel as we move through some of this stuff in life. I hear you on that,

Jen Marples 17:15

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were there any surprises, like when the authors submitted their essays? Were there any that kind of were like, Oh my God, you were just so blown away by the story. Or did it move you in some way? Or just leave your jaw on the floor. I definitely have mine, and I will share those, but I'd love to hear how that was for you. Dina,

Dina Aronson 17:33
why don't you talk about Natalie? Because she was really the impetus. Natalie

Dina Alvarez 17:37
was the catalyst. So make sure you don't miss the last essay, the last place I ever thought I'd be by Natalie Wester. She actually had placed. It's the only reprint we have in the book. And she actually placed in a writing contest. And I'd met her on Instagram. She posted and said, Oh, I placed in a writing contest. And I DM her and said, I'd love to read it. She sent it to me, and I was sitting on the couch, and I will never forget how I felt after reading it. I literally put it down, and that was the moment where I said, we have to do this book, because we meet these women through these little squares on social media, and we think we know each other, but it's such a small view of who we are, and I don't want to give it away, but it still gives me chills when I think about her essay. It's so eloquent. And when you look at Natalie, the story she tells you, would never in a million years imagine it is such a touching moment in her life. And then all the things that she ended up becoming a whiskey intern after she retired, and she traveled the world at 60, and she went on to do all these things after an incredibly difficult time in her life. So for me, I love all of them. I've learned something about every woman in this book by reading their essay. Like every single one, I've been like, kind of like, reeled back. Oh, wow. I had no idea. But Natalie's, for me, was really like the moment where I said, these women have so many stories to share. We have to put their voices into this book and out into the world.

Dina Aronson 19:06
It's really hard for me to say, because they all blew me away and for different reasons. I think for me, what blew me away was really the willingness to be so raw, the willingness to be so vulnerable. That's what blew me away. Like story after story, and I know you read it, Jen, like it's really what we wanted, but you don't know when you reach out and say, Hey, write us a story. You don't know what you're gonna get. As much as we tried to be clear and tell them what we wanted and what we were trying to accomplish, I was just so moved every time we received an essay, we dive in. And I just was blown out by all of them, honestly, like they were just so willing to go there. I think that's what makes the book just so special.

Jen Marples 19:45
I agree with you that it is so special. When I was going through I just kind of was like, because I had to read a galley, y'all. So I don't have the book on my shelf yet, but I will once it comes, because I like to write notes and put my stickies in books. So I have to screenshot. I had to do it like the tech way. Yeah, but I remember, you know, I was sitting on the couch reading, and there was the one please, please me by Laura Friedman Williams. That one just blew me away. And it's kind of about sexual awakening. And so, you know, her and Gabriella were very strong and provocative in that sense. And I think for me, the reason why that one, and probably gabriella's essay, were so strong is we don't talk about pleasure a lot. We don't talk about coming back to our own and actually doing things and have our body be in

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service of us and not for other people. And that was like, wow. So that way you know that y'all that was just one essay, but even reading the essay is just about fashion, so it really, perfectly underscores, really how midlife is, and it's that happy sad, it's the both, and it's the beautiful and the fraught. And so each essay we can go into, like Christine's essay, kind of thinking about fashion. And I know she's writing her a whole book about fashion coming out in her essays, and how she's lived her life through fashion. And so you read that, and then you read the one about sexual awakening, and then you read Julie's sweet one about the neighbors leaving, and then just that feeling of being an empty nester and how things change. I mean that one because I'm on the verge. I got a year and a half with my baby girls, until they leave, and then, so that's me. So I'm on the verge of being an empty nester. Yet I know reading a book like this, listening to all the stories, oh God, who was the gal who did the one on the broads? Very clean. So she said, what's her thing? Like glorious broads or something? Oh, my God. I thought that was amazing. That also just summed up midlife for me, because I feel like I just when we find somebody special, you guys found each other, we're in it. Let's do this together, and let's do life together. And I think y'all, I'm getting to a point here, trust me, is that reading a book like yours and listening to so many different perspectives, different at different ages, and you all kind of define midlife as 40, 5060, we don't know when we're gonna drop dead. It could be tomorrow. I don't freaking know. So that live for today, but let's assume we're going to about 95 or 100 we have so much time left, and it ain't over. Let's talk about Katie's on rage, because I found that one to be really powerful too, because that was like, Whoa. That happened to me. I had a point in time when I almost blew up my marriage. So shout out to Katie for being super transparent with that one. Have you gotten feedback from a lot of people who've read early copies of the ones that probably the personal stories were the ones that probably smacked him in the face?

Dina Aronson 22:32
That's just starting to happen, because we just got books we've just started doing, sending out for early readers, but I imagine we'll be getting a lot of that. I will say I think Katie's has the most powerful first sentence. Honestly, like I was gripped from the first sentence of Katie. I don't want to give anything away, but gripped, and I think that that's another thing, the pleasure rage like these are things that I think as women, it's shameful. We're not supposed to be angry. We're not supposed to have pleasure. These are things we don't talk about, but these are just integral parts of like our being, our emotional state. And Katie, like all the stories, goes there, and she's willing to open herself and to really share what this felt like this period in her life. But we don't stop at the suck. Through all of these stories, we sort of get to the you know what suck. But there's the other side, and there's this thread through of just resilience and reawakening that comes through all of these stories, regardless of topic,

Jen Marples 23:40
and all these stories, I did see myself and you all listening, you will see yourself, a part of yourself in all of these stories, trust me, because it's this universal experience that we're all going through. So I'm so glad you can you put all these stories together, and they're not all sad, they're not all happy, but they don't all leave you like, Okay, I'm sort of done, like, I'm done with midlife, it's actually this okay with the hard work and putting yourself first, whatever it is, what that looks like, you can go on and at the end of the day, which is the most important thing, is that it makes women feel like they're not alone, and we're having this universal experience. So if you know all y'all, we happen to be kind of tapped into this. And I feel like I see opportunity around me, but if you're not this book, I feel is that one that is going to make

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you go, Okay, I'm not alone. And everyone feels like this. I want to bring up Skyler Liberty Rose's essay on appearance. I found that one to be very, very powerful. That's one that pops up a lot. I see people talking about on social media. I just hear it in friend groups y'all. Skylar is lovely, and she's on Instagram, and she talks real about aging and looks and all of this. And I think for all of us, that's a big one. It's one of these ones that can take you down a rabbit hole where there's no winning or this acceptance. What'd you guys think about her essay I just. Loves that one.

Dina Alvarez 25:00
I just love her honesty. First of all, she's a wonderful writer, and she's very compelling. We wrote something which said, when Skyler wonders, we wonder too, because her essay is all day, I wonder briefly. And she really puts everything together so nicely for us so that we it's like holding up a mirror to ourselves. How many of us don't have days where we're like, Oh, look how I look, or we're kind of damned if we do, and we're damned if we don't, we're judged no matter what. And Skylar really comes down to the crux of it, which is self acceptance at the end of the day. And she kind of lays it out and is very honest about how she feels about the standards of beauty and growing up and how she felt. And I think many women will read her essay and definitely feel seen, that mirror will be held up for them to to know that we all go through that we all feel this at different points in our lives. Some days are better than others, but she just really pulls it all together beautifully.

Dina Aronson 26:00
It's funny. We literally just posted a quote from her on our social media today and talking about this paradox of on one hand, because of these impossible societal beauty standards, because of this disproportionate valuing of like youth and beauty, oftentimes we can feel invisible. Now that juxtaposed with many of us feeling more visible than ever to the people that matter to us, what does it mean to be invisible? You know what? I can't get noticed. Sometimes, when I'm trying to get the attention of somebody at a bar, I was trying to plan a little pizza party for my son last year, I talked to the young hostess. She said, come back in an hour. When the managers here, I came back, it was like she never met me. But you know what? That's okay like that. You have to just deal with that stuff. Because, on balance, I think this idea of being really seen by yourself for the first time in a very real way and by the people in your life that matter. That's very powerful. But I think Skylar just sets that up in such an incredibly thoughtful way.

Jen Marples 27:07
You made me think of something. And I can't remember with Skylar if it was in another essay about appearance, but it was stopping to kind of maybe it was in Skylar's living for like, the male gaze, and actually realizing when you hit midlife, I do feel like it's a freeing aspect, like I don't walk around going, is someone looking at me? I'm actually too busy looking at other people, like I'm looking at you. And I just happen to think everyone's so beautiful. And I tell people all the time I'm like, everyone's so gorgeous, because everyone I'm surrounding myself with are women on a mission and doing great work. So it's like the beauty from within. And having said that, oh, Jen Pollyanna, yeah, I do look at my neck in the mirror. Like I look at my neck. We all look at our freaking necks. I spent a lot of, a lot of time in the sun in Hawaii, where I grew up with no sunscreen. And hello. Okay, I feel like that would have taken me down in my 30s, but it does not take me down in my 50s. I'm like, I'm too busy doing other things and trying to just change the world, like y'all are. We're just all just trying to change the world. No

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big thing. But I do feel like there is that shift, and hearing people talk about it, because, again, you said, we only see what people put in little bubbles and squares, and we get five sentences from people, but to have proper essays, I just learned a lot about my friends reading your book all these beautiful women that are in here. I was like, I did not know Rachel dance for Alvin Ailey, I don't know how I didn't know that, but now I know that I just love this book so much. You all, it was more than I could have ever thought it was gonna be. Well, I gotta talk about your two essays. So, Dina aaronson, you write a very poignant essay about your mom and losing your mom, and you've written about that before, and that's where we are. And you'd mentioned it at the top of this interview, that's where we are. We're losing our parents, and we're blessed. I still am blessed to have both of mine, but literally just two weeks ago, a dear friend just lost her mom right before that, another friend lost her mom a week before that. It's just it's starting to happen really quick. Now I'm 55 so how did that feel to write your essay. It was so beautiful. Yeah, it was hard.

Dina Aronson 29:03
As soon as we knew this book was happening, I knew that's what I wanted to talk about. And I think in large part because when my mom died, it left a lot of space in my life, and I started to feel very compelled. Once I sort of could see it all, I started to feel very compelled to use that space to create something to honor her and something that would be meaningful and impactful. And I also thought a lot about the idea of almost losing her when I was a very young woman, and then losing her 30 some odd years later, and what those differences are. And the truth is that it was still really, really hard. And think these sometimes we get to this point in life, and we think we're supposed to have it all figured out, and I can handle it, and I can do, you know, what, like, we're gonna fall apart sometimes. And you know, I fell apart a little bit. I wasn't expecting the disorientation. Position that I felt that was a surprise to me, like I just made this sort of career pivot over the last few years. I was feeling super connected to my work and what I was doing and rooted, and then suddenly I was, like, questioning everything. Who am I? What am I doing? It really. It threw me. I didn't think I'd be questioning my identity, because everyone's going to go through this in some form, and I want people to know that you have permission to fall apart, like you have to allow yourself to feel through this, because if you don't feel through it, and you don't allow it to process and metabolize like you can't move forward, yeah, you shouldn't feel bad because you don't know how to handle it, because nobody knows how to handle it, but it's like this is the first time you go through losing a parent or a friend or whatever it is, and it was important to me to honor her, and I wanted to be able to help other women that were experiencing like the profound sense of just disorientation, identity, shifting, all of those things. Thank

Jen Marples 31:02
you for sharing all that, and it's part of that. The whole theme of this book in midlife, it's a huge identity shift and change. And I think you just made me think about something that you know it's coming for all of us. Those changes are coming for all of us. And by reading a book like yours, we know everyone's dealing with this, A and B, but we can also see what's possible and what's next, because it is hard. I think a lot of people get stuck in the I just want it to stay the way it is. I want everything to stay the way it is. And all we can be certain of is that it's always going to change. The kids are going to leave. Our parents will not be with us. At some point in time, we will lose people close to us. That's what's happening. But it's not a doom and gloom thing too. It's moving through it, surrounding yourself with people reading books like yours, and then knowing there's this other beautiful life waiting ahead of you

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now. Dina Alvarez, I loved your essay because yours was about it was called notes on invisibility. But that was not about, oh, I'm invisible. It was your stepping into being more visible, which I love. So can you tell everybody a little bit about your essay? That's

Dina Alvarez 32:11
funny. I agree with Dina. She said she knew she wanted to write that essay as soon as we talked about doing the book, and I wanted to write about that I no longer feel invisible, that I feel that I'm living my life in reverse. This book has been one of the greatest gifts of midlife for me. I never had a single photo of myself on social media or on any account ever until I was I think I was 52 was 2020, and my son said, Oh, you like photography, why don't you post a picture of yourself on Instagram? And at that time, we were all so bored to tears, I think we would have done anything, and I did it, and my family was like, what? Who are you? And so that kind of began the story of not feeling invisible, which is through the connections I made on social media. I started writing again, and I started really coming into myself and who I am, and really kind of growing in a way that I had never anticipated. And to Dina's point earlier, being visible to the people that matter, the male gaze is of no interest to me anymore, and it's a beautiful, freeing moment, but the people that matter see me, and I am more curious than I ever was. I ask more questions, and I'm very compelled to listen more, to learn about people. I'm very interested. And so when you're interested in that way, you become more visible, because you become more interesting, the more interested you are in others. And so I think I suddenly came out of being shy and quiet and the introvert, thanks to COVID and wanting to finally feel seen, heard and understood, which is the basis of this. It's something I went through on a very personal level, and I never expected it at midlife. It has been such a great experience. And and meeting Dina and feeling like, you know, all these women that we've met, I could have never dreamed it in my 40s, my 30s or my 20s, I would have said me like, No, I'm not the person you're talking about.

Jen Marples 34:08
Oh, God, I love this so much, because so many women I talk to, and in my world, the biggest fear is being visible and being seen. I said, if no one sees you, no one sees you, and you can't make the impact you want to make in the world. I happen to be surrounded by all these like badass women, but we're still, because of all the programming of saying we've lost our value once we kind of hit 40, which it's hysterical, because I'm 5540 feels like a baby to me now, like a baby like, Oh, you just turned 40. It's like, for me, it feels like, Oh, you just turned 25 because we see all the possibility. Now we're talking about it. We're changing the narrative, changing the paradigm. So it's time, and like you had that bravery to go out and do it, and that's a big part of the reason I do this show is just to obviously know you're not too fucking old and just go take the chance. Because you take the chance. You that at the dinner party you saw each other on the street, you guys. Took the chance for like, why not us? Let's go do a book. Why not? We've got to just shed those old narratives and old beliefs. And I loved also in the book that you you know, you have a couple different pivot stories and just women. Sarah Milken is one of them, just taking that time to remix your life and pivot into something new. You guys are doing it. I've just done it just a few years ago. Anything is possible. Anything is possible. Now you've birthed your baby. It's about to be officially launched into the world. Like, how are you feeling right now? Are you feeling happy? Are you feeling sad? Are you feeling like overwhelmed? How are you feeling? I'm asking this question too, because there are people sitting on dreams right now listening, and I want them to know that by going for it and doing the thing that you thought was something that people wanted and

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what you wanted, let's take them through like and then where you are right now. So everyone listening, this is like your your permission slip to go do the damn thing. So how's it feeling right now?

Dina Aronson 36:05
Really, above all, it's exciting. We unboxed some books last night, and I held the book on my hand, and I was like this. Just it feels magical to know that, like you have this idea, and some of this has been a slog, Jen, but like a joyous slog, though, because all along the way, there was connecting and community and building that together, and so it's just so gratifying, but yes to all the things happy sad, because I know we're gonna get to a point and we'll be done, and you need those moments to sort of regroup and Say, Okay, what's next? And I think we experienced a little bit of that when the manuscript was first turned in, because we essentially, this has been going on a long time. We started this in January 2023, in terms of ideating and putting it into motion. And when we turned the book in in October, I didn't expect, like, I hit send on the manuscript, and like, I burst into tears, which were like, happy tears, sad tears. My cat died on me the week before, there was just like this release of emotion. And so I think we started to feel that, I don't know if sad is the word, but that sort of like space of like, Oh my God. And now we're sort of back in Go, go, go mode, because we're in promotion and publicity mode. But like I would just say, above all, it's just really exciting and it's gratifying. And I'm so glad that we did this. And there were so many times where we weren't sure this whole thing evolved from, well, we're gonna self publish this little book into, oh my god, a launch party with she media, right? So it's just trying to enjoy it, and it is joyous. And yes, there's all the other things. It's not easy. None of this is easy. Don't not do something because you think it's going to be hard, or because you think you might fail, because at the end of the day, you get there somehow, right? Or you shift gears and you find the you find another thing, but super excited. Okay, now I've just hog that whole thing. Go ahead, Dina Alvarez, look,

Dina Alvarez 38:03
it's been the greatest learning experience of my entire life. I have nothing this big that I could compare it to. I am happy that I had this opportunity to do it and to do it with someone like Dina, and has been just great. And I would tell anyone who's thinking about doing something to really just take that first step and take action and see where it goes. And if it doesn't go where you think it's going to go, you can 100% pivot and do something a little bit different, take a different vein. Sometimes we start on one path and we end up somewhere else. And I think one of the great things about working with Dina is we had each other to bounce things off of, right? But if I had been doing it alone, I probably would have been asking people a lot of advice, and I think that when I tend to do that, I get confused. So I think it's best to, like, really just listen to yourself if you want to kind of take that leap and jump and sure, you know, ask your friends and get advice, but like, don't overdo it, because then it just it will confuse you to no end. If you have an idea for something and you you want to do it, take that step and just see where that goes and see where that path leads you. But I would definitely say, take a chance.

Jen Marples 39:16
I love that. Take a chance. And you said something. You don't know where it's going to go. It could pivot, it can turn, but it's all great information. I could come with up all the platitudes, nothing ventured, nothing gained, but enjoy the process too. And I hope that's what you all are saying, too. Enjoy the process, because you're learning. You're connecting. You've met so many great people and gotten

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deeper connections with people along the way. I say this all the time on this podcast, if there was a parting sort of rallying cry for everyone to go out and buy midlife private parts, what would you say to everyone right now?

Dina Alvarez 39:48
Do it? You won't be disappointed. You will see yourself. It's like holding up a mirror, and you'll meet some really wonderful women that you can eventually follow them on Instagram. And who knows? Because. A part of the community, just like Dina and I have, and also for girlfriends and read it together and compare. What do you think about this one? What'd you think about this essay? I think it's a really lovely book that midlife women and even younger women will enjoy because it shows them what's on the horizon, and that there is good and bad, but that we all get through it. I

Dina Aronson 40:20
also want to say because I think we've all been there, and I know when I was trying to figure out what was next, as I was moving through my 40s, I needed, like, hope, like I needed to see stories of women who had done the thing. And so if you're feeling like, what's next, if you're feeling stuck, these stories, I think, will inspire you. They really are inspiring stories because there's no sanitizing or sugar coating the hard stuff in these stories. There's no attitudes like they're laying it out like this, as I said before, this part sucked, but you know what? I went through it, I had the reckoning, right, and I figured it out. So I would just say, if you're looking for inspiration, you will find it in these pages. Oh,

Jen Marples 41:04
I love it. Well, I was certainly inspired, and I'm inspired by both of you. I'm just so excited that you wrote this book. A couple final questions for you. It's my favorite question. What do you think the best thing is about being in midlife? I

Dina Aronson 41:17
will jump in because I have this meditation that I love to do by this guru named David G, j, i, and one of the mantras is om, moksha, ratam. And Moksha is emotional liberation. And that is really, I think what I like the best about this time of my life is having shed so much of that crap that really stopped me from making moves and taking risks when I was younger, like worrying about what people thought. What if it doesn't work, what if I fail? What if it's not perfect? That stuff, I'm not saying that stuff doesn't creep back in sometimes, but mostly it's gone, and I just feel free, and that's really unlocked so much in my life, and particularly like my creativity, this book would have never happened, at least on my part, if I hadn't sort of let go of so much of that stuff.

Dina Alvarez 42:09
I think for me, it's just the personal comfort level that comes with being in midlife. It's just like a very peaceful, honest you know, I know when to say yes, I know when to say no. I know my energy level today is not the same as tomorrow. I feel that I'm a better decision maker. I trust myself more, and I do also believe there's a sense of freedom now that I've never had before, and I love that, because you can make better choices when you feel a little more free, as opposed to when you're younger and you have so many things piled on you and you just really can't think straight. And that's not to say that we're not busy, we're not taking care of elderly parents, but there's a certain wisdom that comes with the

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stage in life that really should not be kind of tossed out. It's definitely something that we should harness and appreciate and trust.

Jen Marples 43:01
I love that. Trust it as you know, every guest gets to yell the Jenn Marple show railing cry, which is, you're not too fucking old too. So Dina aaronson, you're not too fucking old too.

Dina Aronson 43:14
You're not too fucking old to be a beginner. Because you know what, you're not a beginner at this stage of life. You might be beginning a new task, but we have this launch pad that is our life, lived experience, our perspective, that's so much broader than it was when we were young. We can connect the dots in ways that at least I couldn't when I was younger. And so you're not too young to be a beginner, you're not too fucking old. I'm sorry. Did I say you're not to you. You're not too old to be a beginner.

Speaker 1 43:43
I love

Dina Alvarez 43:44
it. I'm not too fucking old to remain wildly curious. That's all I want to hold on to as I get older. I just want to care and be curious and continue to want to learn. That's kind of my goal. It may like you say you love books. They make you happy. Why? Because you're constantly learning something new. For me, it's just, I want to grow old with a strong sense of curiosity. Oh,

Jen Marples 44:10
I love it. Okay, ladies, it has been amazing talking to you all today. So tell everybody where they can find the book, where they can find you. Get more of you and get into your worlds.

Dina Aronson 44:22
So we have a website for the book. It's www, dot midlife, private parts.com, and you can pre order the book from the website. And you can also learn all about our amazing contributors. There's links to all of their bios on the site, and you're going to want to learn about all of them, because they're all incredible for me, I'm on Instagram at, it's the name of my newsletter, patina. So it's at patina underscore life. And my sub stack is patina with Dina aaronson. And

Dina Alvarez 44:51
I have a sub stack called a few good things. And I'm also on Instagram under at the right styles. I love

Jen Marples 44:58
it. So we're gonna. Pop all that in the show notes. So all of you run out by the book, we need to support women writers. We need to support women in business. Let's all go buy a book. It's a really easy thing to do, and this is a really good book to buy for friends, because I love the fact that it's not just centered on one topic. It's really holistic. So this is a book that you want to go buy five copies of and have it in your closet. Great hostess gifts. Somebody has a birthday. Pop out this book. I love to give books as birthday gifts. So buy lots of books. Buy them often. And that's really what I really wanted to send

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everybody off to just this rallying cry that we need to hear women's voices more. We need to share our stories. We can't be afraid to share our stories, because by doing that, we get the thing that we all want, and that's to feel more connected and less alone. So thank you two. So much from the bottom of my heart for doing all this hard work to bring this beautiful book to life, and I will be cheering for you from afar and hopefully near. I'm hoping to make it out to New York this fall, so I will let you know if that happens, but just I adore both of you so much and thank you for being here. Thank

Dina Aronson 46:06
you for having us. Thank you so much for having us. This has been so fun. Thank you so much fun. Bye.

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