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SPEAKERS

Jen Marples, Dr. Sophia Yen

Dr. Sophia Yen 00:00

You know, the squeaky wheel gets the oil. So if we're like we need something for menopause, we need something for menopause then people will give us something for menopause. And if we demand that our elected officials support reproductive rights, support menopause support research and women's health, then we hopefully will get that but we need to make sure that we ask that of our elected officials and that we prioritize that and we make it known.

Jen Marples 00:35

Hello, and welcome to the Jen Marple Show. I'm your host Jen Marples, a former public relations agency owner turned business a life coach and motivational speaker dedicated to helping female entrepreneurs achieve the business and life they desire in their 40s 50s and beyond. Each week, I'll be bringing you conversations with incredible women who are rocking entrepreneurship, and taking courageous action while also dealing with all that midlife entails. I'll also be dropping in solo to share thoughts, advice, tips and tricks that will help you live your best life. If you are thinking about pivoting in your career, starting a new business or looking for a second act, stick around as I guarantee you will be inspired. And know that you are not to fucking old Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Jen Marple show today I have a bad anus on the show. And her name is Dr. Sophia yen. And she is the co founder and CEO of Pandia health. And that is an online birth control delivery system. And she's going to tell you all about that and it's fabulous. She's also got a master's in public health. And what you really need to know about her is that she's extremely passionate about women's rights. So we love that here on the general show. And she believes that taking care of our health, and specifically birth control and family planning is going to benefit women in life and business. And I think ya know, if I'm letting the cat out of the bag, but coming soon, she's also going to be having menopause products. And those will be launching early next year. So she's got something for all of us. And I'm just so happy that women like her are taking charge and taking a stand and coming up with solutions that we all need. So Sophia with that. Welcome to the Jen Marple show. I'm just so honored to have you here.

Dr. Sophia Yen 02:25

Thank you so much for having me, Jen. I'm excited to share what we've built at Pandia health and where we're going next.

Jen Marples 02:32

Can't wait to dig in. And you also need to know she had a TED talk, just a little thing you might have heard of a TED Talk. Amongst other things. She's extremely, extremely talented. And she's going to share all of that with us right now. Obviously, you're a doctor, and you've got a specialty and adolescent medicine. So take us through sort of your career sort of where you started. And then how you got the idea for Pangea health and how you got it going.

Dr. Sophia Yen 02:59

I went to MIT undergrad as a pre med as a major in bio and then I came back to the Bay Area to UCSF, one of the top medical schools in the world, loved it there, then went to children's Oakland to do my pediatrics residency, then back to UCSF for another three years doubling my training in adolescent medicine, what we call sex, drugs, rock and roll a little acne in some sports medicine, and then did a master's in public health specializing in childhood obesity at UC Berkeley just to get all the degrees in the Bay Area. And then went down to Stanford, where I'm currently a clinical associate professor in the Department of Pediatrics in the Division of Adolescent Medicine. And as an academic, you have to focus. And so my focus has always been birth control, and emergency contraception and people's knowledge and awareness of it particularly high risk youth, as well as physicians. And so that has been my passion. But about eight years ago, I was giving a talk to a bunch of physicians because as a professor at Stanford, I teach future doctors how to take care of young people and to kick the parents out of the room have some private time to talk about sex, drugs, rock and roll, little acne and some sports medicine but more than Sex, Drugs rock and roll, and came across the statistic that one of the top reasons why women don't take their birth control is they didn't have it in their hand, didn't have time to go to the pharmacy every single month from age 14 and a half until 50. And I actually coined the term pill anxiety. Anyone who's taken the birth control pill knows about the for week seven. And as you get to that last week, if you don't get to the pharmacy, there is a dire consequence. You will end up pregnant you can't have sex, or you'll be bleeding when you don't want to bleed. And I'm for that hashtag. So hashtag better things to do than worry about this run to the pharmacy every single month. And so my friend and I were like If we can solve this, we will just ship women birth control and keep shipping it until they tell us to stop. set it and forget it. Let Pandia worry. So you don't have to. We call that Pandia peace of mind. Can we purposely chose Pandia because we're about women's empowerment. She's the Greek goddess of healing light, full moon. And then I came up with the definition, pan is every India is day. So we want to be with you every day, take care of you every day again, set it and forget it, let us worry. And then we ran ads, free birth control delivery. 60% of the women that responded didn't have a prescription. And it's like, Dude, you know, you need a prescription in the United States for the birth control pill pattering. And luckily, I'm a physician, I can write prescriptions, and thus Pandia health was born if you have a prescription and insurance, under the Affordable Care Act, there should be no copay, no deductible for any FDA approved method of birth control. So you pay us nothing. And in return, you get free delivery. And if you can see the package behind me, but this is a podcast, every package comes with a freebie and the default is hide you people love that. But sometimes condoms, sometimes stickers sometimes make up and then three packs, six packs a year supply depending on what your insurance will allow, or your doctor wrote for. And then a postcard. We call that Pandia PSA public service announcement. So did you know that if you make periods optional, you decrease your risk of ovarian endometrial, colorectal cancer and anemia, so little

tidbits, little facts to keep you going and make everything kind of delightful. And then if you need to use our doctors, it's just \$25 once a year to use our expert birth control doctors and you get unlimited follow up questions for 364 days, from a physician about anything related to your birth control, not about acne, not about your other half just birth control because for 25 bucks, that's quite a steal. And that's what we're here to help you with for now.

Jen Marples 07:03

So let me ask you this, because this is a show about entrepreneurship. How many partners do you have? And how was it sort of getting it off the ground? Like how long did it take you from sort of inception to launching it? And did you guys do that yourself? Did you have to go fundraise to get it kicked off? Take us all through how you actually sort of the mechanics of how you got it going?

Dr. Sophia Yen 07:23

First, it was Purlin, me and I and we you know, started it off, we started looking for the other members of the team. And because I think we're women and we're more conservative, we wanted to make sure we had all the elements necessary to make this successful. So we had a founding team of six people. Often you have a felony demons, six people, but I believe in sharing the credit, I believe in making sure we're going to succeed. And so we had Pirlo, we had myself the physician, we had a pharmacist, we had a head of marketing, we had a ceo and we had a CTO, and unfortunately we've had to diary's some of these people over time people needed to pay mortgage people couldn't, it's hard to start a startup. And luckily, some of us had support from our significant others. Some of us had money from previous startups, it is hard to start it without money. And so luckily, we were able to kind of bootstrap it and fund it from friends and family, that's always the first round, you have to beg your cousin, your brother, your aunts. And as I like to say, I would rather die than not pay back the people that I've taken money from, because literally, it is my cousin. And it is my brother, and it is a person I went to college with, and people that I've met throughout the years, and you know, I just would rather die than not pay these people back. Because I am that kind of person. I don't want to take your money. But it absolutely happens in startups. And it's totally fine. It's just, you know, a risk that you need to take. And so then we launched in March 2016. And our CTO being amazing and brilliant, was able to get something that we were asked to put out there with pharmacy partner by July 2016. So I'm just always so impressed. In four months, he put out a platform that serves five different people user. So we have the customer, we have the pharmacist, we have the physician, we have our patient care advisors, and then we have our marketing administrative and so our electronic medical record, we built ourselves, doctors love it. They're like, Oh, made by a doctor, for Doctor, this is exactly how I want it. And I was like, that's why I made it. I made it easy for us as doctors that we could feel safe. The pharmacy was made by a pharmacist for pharmacists, and then the customer service marketing etc. are, you know, by your UI UX people and over the years, we've only improved it. That's the beauty of a startup. You can change things today, though, now that we're older we're trying to only change things once a week,

Jen Marples 09:58

once a week versus like 20 Two times a day. So let me ask you this, do you still practice medicine? And was that shift? I mean, I'm assuming maybe you can't see as many patients sad because you're running a startup. So how was that because I know a lot of women listening to get something going, it's

like, you've got to keep the nine to five and take sort of the passion thing for a spin out on the side before you can kind of give up the day job as it were. Take us through that a little bit.

Dr. Sophia Yen 10:23

I was lucky that I was coming from academia. And in academia, I was only in clinic three half days a week. So it was Wednesday, Thursday afternoons, and Friday mornings. And so the other days were research and advocacy. And I didn't like applying for grants and whatnot. So the research and advocacy was on my own time and dime. And so when the startup started, I just dropped that and filled those days in with startup. And as the startup got even busier, I really couldn't have Wednesday and Thursday, taken out by a clinic. So then I dropped that, and I'm only one half day a week at Stanford, in the weight clinic on Friday mornings, and all the other days 24/7 devoted to Pandia health, because just a word of advice for anyone going into startups, VC accelerators, all want to hear that you are in this 100%. And so if you are, as you said, you know, halftime in your day job and halftime doing this, they're not you know, as excited, they're scared that you're gonna have issues. And I find that really unfair for people who don't have the financial support from their family, or from other areas. But you do have to get together this, you know, war chest to keep you sustained while you're living a life of poverty as a startup entrepreneur, unfortunately, that is how I made the shift is, you know, I did part of it than I did the other part of it. And now it's 24/7, pan dx and for one half day a week, and that's to keep my finger in academia, because the residents and medical students and fellows keep you on your toes. They're like, Hey, doctor yet, why are you doing it that way? The latest paper says excellent hope, okay, we change it, we're going to x because that's what the latest science is. And that's one of the huge differentiators of Pandia health, we were the only doctor led birth control delivery company, the only academic Doctor led birth control delivery, and we pride ourselves on expert evidence based cutting edge care, the latest and the greatest.

Jen Marples 12:27

Ooh, I love it. And obviously, you're very passionate about women and women's rights. So because I have you here, and there's a political climate, and this is gonna run right before the midterms. Take us through a little bit about your activism, because I know you're super passionate. I am too. I mean, everyone probably listening is as well. And we know our rights are slowly getting taken away. And I was just telling you, before we got on that I just read a big article about the pink tax and how women pay. It's something like close to half a million dollars more over our lifetimes, just because we're women. And that's, you know, aside from just sort of feminine care products, and of course, we have babies and all these things, but our shampoo costs more, everything costs more, because we're women

Dr. Sophia Yen 13:08

a cleaning, right cleaning

Jen Marples 13:10

makeup, everything. So it's like, okay, all right, we get it, you know, we have so far to go as a country. So how do you think that sort of family planning and birth control and all of this plays into this landscape of women being able to sort of have equality in the workplace, and be able to really get ahead and not have been sort of subject to the pink tax, as it were?

Dr. Sophia Yen 13:36

I absolutely do believe that birth control, and actually calling it hormonal treatment is how women can level the playing ground and advance in this world. And one easy example I give is how many women you think you're gonna get through high school, college, grad school without getting pregnant, if they didn't have birth control, I like to say you literally have to be a saint, because you'd have to abstain from sex. And certainly there's a big push for abstinence in this country. But the reality is that 60% of high school seniors have had sex, and probably by the time you get through college, it's 95 99%. And so if you we didn't have birth control, thank you birth control, for letting women get through college, get through med school, law school, be school, run a startup do what we need to do. And not just women, but families because my significant other doesn't want me getting pregnant when it's not convenient for our family, or that we want to have as many children as we want to have when we want to have them not earlier when we're not expecting them. And then the part that I'm bringing in about leveling the playing ground as a Asian American tiger mom in Silicon Valley, I like to ask, Is your teenage daughter going to do better on the SATs, bleeding or not bleeding? Is your daughter Gonna do better on finals bleeding or not bleeding? Are they going to do better on their volleyball championship bleeding or not bleeding because I'm willing to bet not bleeding and I have two teenage daughters and part of the reason I built Pandia health is because I need it for me I need it for my daughter's and I'm building it for anyone with a uterus to have expert quality care but the point is my daughter's is going to be crushing all of their competitors around them because they won't have a one in four chance that they will be bleeding during finals during their SAP and just another help people picture this I was MIT pre med biochemistry final had studied pulled an all nighter the night before, and I'm in the middle of my exam and all sudden I feel the trickle and the cramps. Oh, blood in the middle of my final do I run to the bathroom? Or do I finish the exam? And any pre med pre health knows the answer you finish the exam. But was I a little distracted? Yes. I look to my left I look to my right to people without uteruses doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo not a care in the world. And I realized would that I were they you know and I want my daughters to be like them in every exam. Do not a care in the world. Let's just level the playing field.

Jen Marples 16:27

We've got so many midlife women obviously listening to the show, because the tagline is you're not too fucking old. And actually just came off of going to a whole conference on menopause. And I heard all these doctors talking about, you know, just the many, many symptoms. And I want to know how the pill can help women in perimenopause concern I have shared with you my personal story, and I'll share it for everybody that I was always on the pill because I have horrible and Dmitry osis. So I had to take it, you know, after having babies to what is the word so when grow

Dr. Sophia Yen 17:01

suppress the endometrial growth?

Jen Marples 17:04

Thank you, that was spoken like a doctor suppressing endometrial growth. And so I was around 45 or 46. And my doctor was like, okay, you know, you're safe to go off of it. And let's see what your body's going to do and all that. And then I went off, I gave it a college, try Sophia of about nine months, maybe less, and my body freaked out and I was what I was experiencing was perimenopause, which I didn't

really understand. And that's why we're here to educate all of you guys on listening, because most of us don't even understand what's going on with our bodies. I felt suicidal, I had a period of three weeks, then it was six weeks, and it was five weeks. And so talk about bleeding. You're like you couldn't even plan for when you're going to get a period and from all the women I talked to and it's not even a period are like hemorrhaging. Yeah. Oh, there's like little dribble drabble flood, a flood. And then I started breaking out, I was getting acne on my neck and my chin and like, excuse me in my 40s acne, that's not okay. And the list goes on. And I suffered. And I went, I did like, I tried some acne medicine, I did this, this, that and the other. And I said, Okay, I'm crying uncle, I went back to my doctor for the annual, it must have been almost a year then because I went back from the annual I need off the roller coaster because I don't think I'm going to survive. Yes. And in the midst of that, and I want everyone to hear this is that that's also when I was dismantling my business, so called a midlife crisis, or rebirth, whatever you want to call it, all these things were happening at the same time. And that was parenting and children and running. Just like it shut down the business going, what am I going to do now? And I felt like I was going crazy. But no one ever I've never heard anybody addressing the hormones and the fluctuations and that you could go from feeling normal to like, I notice suicidal person, I haven't had bad depression. And it all comes back to that. So this is a long winded way of saying, I want to hear your take on this, and especially coming after this menopause conference that all of this was talked about. And I never learned any of that most people listening. None of us have heard this. So how can we sort of manage those perimenopause, crazy years of the ups and downs by staying on birth control?

Dr. Sophia Yen 19:10

Yes. So I'm all about hashtags that the hashtag for this one is hashtag stop sucking it up. So we as women, we all think we're alone, we are not alone. Everybody with a uterus and ovaries is gonna go through this at some point. And each person goes through it in different ways. But my theory is that if you go into menopause, on hormones, it's going to be a lot smoother ride than off hormones. And so the example I give is a car running out of gas. The car could just be like, did you know and that is your your menopause, but other cars, maybe leg, too, to walk up and down with the hormones and whatnot. And all of the symptoms of perimenopause are from the withdrawal of the estrogen and then the increase in the testosterone ratio the testosterone the higher it is, the more the zits and the munchies and the receding hairline and the hair kind of problems. And so I have had a lot of women use our platform. In the perimenopause stage, they haven't hit menopause, we can treat people up until 50, even though their husband has a vasectomy, but they're coming to us to make hashtag periods optional. If you are bleeding longer than seven days, there is no reason for that, on or off the pill, patch or ring, just like any more than seven days of bleeding, please see a doctor and either get on the birth control pill patch ring or a lot of people are going on the IUD with hormone. And that can also be used as you go into menopause. If you decide to go on to estrogen treatment, then you have to take progesterone to prevent endometrial cancer. So having an IUD that's just there for seven years is so much greater than having to pop a pill every single day once you enter menopause. And so my take on menopause is go into menopause, on the birth control pill. And if you want to check, you can check hormones, or you can every three to six months come off and be like, Am I there yet? Am I there yet, you know, the horrible thing about menopause, it's defined as not having a period for a year. So you have to come off and wait a year of note periods to do that. And I think we can better define it as in check your FSH level and other stuff like that. We don't have to suffer for a year. I mean, a year is a very long time. And particularly startup world my joke is every day is like a month every week is like a

year and every year is a decade. So a year of suffering menopause symptoms just to see if I'm in menopause. Seems to me cruel and unusual.

Jen Marples 21:50

Because when I went off the pill I was I was 50. Because then my doctor was like 50, you got to stop. And then I just never had a period again. And it was great. And I was exploring some of the patches in this and that just trying to manage some symptoms. And I'm still trying to figure all that out to see what best works. But the whole What did you say hashtag, you don't have to suck it up,

Dr. Sophia Yen 22:11

don't suck it up, suck it up. So

Jen Marples 22:12

many of us women do that. And we're not talking about it. Some time we're having this discussion. So we need to be talking about it. And we need to be informed. Because once everyone opens their mouth, I mean, again is at this conference. And I've talked to so many women. Soon as we're talking about it, everyone's got something different going on a different phase, a different stage. And then we'll receive an analyst who was like, paying too much for something over here. And it was just so many things going on. And so the whole point is we've got to talk about it and share it and know that we don't have to suck it up. And that's exactly what I was doing. I was sucking it up and suffering in silence, almost unable to get out of bed. Should we be doing that? No, no. That's why I'm so passionate about educating women and doing what I'm doing. I don't want anybody to be that person. I was like 4546 writing this crazy perimenopause wave. And I didn't even know the name. I didn't even know what I was experiencing. So we're here to demystify that.

Dr. Sophia Yen 23:12

Yes, I want to say the door is always open with Pandia help. And as I always say, there is no stupid question. The only stupid question is the one that wasn't asked, because you had a question. And you had the opportunity to get an answer and you didn't ask it. And you know, the squeaky wheel gets the oil. So if we're like, we need something for menopause, we need something for menopause, then people will give us something for menopause. And if we demand that our elected officials support reproductive rights, support, menopause support, research and women's health, then we hopefully will get that but we need to make sure that we ask that of our elected officials and that we prioritize that and we make it known and so my proposal to all you listening, and if we can get it to Kamala Harris as well as President Biden, is as I alluded to before, under Obama Biden and the Affordable Care Act, they passed what I like to call V one version one or vagina one, or any FDA approved birth control is available with no copay, no deductible. So I propose v two, version two or vagina two, whichever one you want to call that any FDA approved menopause treatment should be available with no copay, no deductible. And if you don't agree with that, then you're sexist and ageist.

Jen Marples 24:33

Yeah, because there's 50 million of us who learned all these stats, there's 50 million of us right now that are in menopause or menopausal who's 50 million, and all of us are working. And so there's all these stats to about how hard it is to go to work and some you know, women are suffering for all the reasons

we talked about. And so gone, we can have a whole episode just talking about women's rights and how they're under attack. But I think you guys understand what we're trying to say. So we've got to show up.

Dr. Sophia Yen 24:59

Vote. Bring your friends the vote.

Jen Marples 25:01

And if you don't want to do it for you got to do it for our daughters. And I think that was one of the biggest takeaways. A lot of tears were shed at this conference I was at because we realized a lot of what we're doing in suffering. And it's like, if we're suffering then and we're not showing up to make big change. What legacy Are we leaving for our girls and then our grandchildren? So will it be our daughter's generation that sees these big changes? Or is it going to be the next generation? Our grandkids? Probably that I mean, we have a lot of work to do

Dr. Sophia Yen 25:27

on it for my daughters. I'm not going to wait that long. We're startups, we can do things.

Jen Marples 25:33

Yes, we can. And we're going to be loud. And that was what was so inspirational. It's talking to you, and all these other women that were there. And all these doctors, like everyone's standing on the ledge, and we are just, we're all united together to make this big change. So I am so fired up about it, because it's important, because at the end of the day, it's sexism. And then of course, some, I mean, that's huge. Like, we don't exist. And of course, everyone has heard me rant about this. And we all know the Oracles motto is you're not too fucking old. Because you're not and we want to live vibrant, healthy lives, because we're living longer.

Dr. Sophia Yen 26:05

Oh, yeah, we all want to live to 80. If not 100 120?

Jen Marples 26:10

right there with you. We are going to do it. So I'm going to flip it a little bit. What do you think some of the biggest challenges are for women in midlife,

Dr. Sophia Yen 26:19

I think you spelled it out well, that we have so many responsibilities, right? Everybody's always talking about work life balance, and all that stuff. And the reality is, you can't have it all. And that you need to be present in the moment. So when I'm with my kids, I try to be with my kids and not distracted by the cell phone, I will put the cell phone down, I will put it on Do Not Disturb. Um, as a physician, you know, you have to be on a call, and there's a pager and all that stuff, but not so much for my telemedicine product and not so much for my startup, though, again, my startup is 24/7. And if there's a real emergency, it's really not usually me, it's the CTO that has to deal with it. But I think our biggest challenge is still working that quote, second shift, we still have gendered roles. And so my tip out there for the younger ones listening here, one example of making it clear that we're going to do everything 5050, at least is when my first child was born, I had the rule as long as I did input, breastfeeding, then

you do output diapers. So I didn't do diapers for three months. And people like that to me and you make your husband wake up every two to three hours, take your the baby and life is 50% his baby and he needs to love it and suffer as much as I suffered. So a little shot and frightened. But that is a way to make it clear that we're doing this 5050 Because as you know, a person with a uterus, I ended up doing all the activities. I'm also the one that loves activities, but like Girl Scouts and do we do ballet? Do we do taekwondo? Do we do Mandarin? What do we do plan all of that playdates and all this, like so many scheduling, and then we have to take care of our parents, we have to take care of their health. As an entrepreneur, I sometimes wonder, you know, if I had my husband pitch my company, male, MIT Apple background, would he have gotten more money than I would have? Because I've seen the other competitors out there. Two dudes out there pitching a birth control company, and money falls from the sky. And I come with 10 times the amount of customers or at least three or four times the amount of customers begging, and people like oh, well the other two dudes already got the money. No, there needs to be room at the table for women founded women led companies there's got to be something said that we will provide better care because that's where we're coming from. With that interest. And then precisely to your podcast, older women can do a ton of crap. The example I give is, once your youngest is five, you get all this time back. And you look at everyone without children. And you're like, how come you're not double productive because you finally got pack your evenings, your weekends, and you're asleep. But before then you look at you know, all the people that our children are like, you have evenings and weekends, there are so many hours in the day in the week, there's so much you can get done. And so as an older woman with a better network, a more powerful network, and the ability to juggle the home and life and all that I think we make better CEOs, we make better entrepreneurs, and the statistics have shown it that you know, if you have a 40 to 50 year old CEO, you do better than if you have a younger CEO, and that if you have women at the table, that company is more likely to be profitable.

Jen Marples 29:46

Ooh, boom. And you're not the first and you won't be the last person to say that I know it. First of all, I know the data is really sad and scary when it comes to investment dollars into female owned companies. And then it's even smaller for women of color. So I think it's something like 3% of investment dollars go to women, and it gets exponentially worse based on how many boxes you check are being marginalized. And we have to change that. And thankfully, women are out there changing it, thank God, we're gonna keep fighting.

Dr. Sophia Yen 30:16

And I just put in a pitch for two organizations that are amazing helping women. Actually, there's a bunch, but she, which is rebranded as coreless, you can donate \$1,100 a year, and then they put 500 of that together half a million dollars, pick five companies and give out interest free loans for five years. So that's a cool way to support women with a tax deductible donation, I believe. And then there's Springboard enterprises, which is an amazing group all about getting women into entrepreneurship. And then there are investing groups such as Astia, and portfolio and pipeline angels. Okay, well,

Jen Marples 30:57

we're gonna link all that in the show notes that's like fabulous, fabulous information for everyone to have. The second thing I was gonna say is that women at midlife and you brought up this point are

we're seasoned. We've been around the block, and so many of my other entrepreneurs on the show have said it, that they would trust someone in our age range, you know, every day of the week and twice on Sunday. Because you have even if you've taken time off of work, you still have all these life skills, you didn't lose those. And women really discount, you know what they've done, even if they stepped out of the corporate world. So I just had somebody on Laurel Rutledge, who is actually was in HR, she was a couple guests ago that she just gave really fabulous advice. She's like, we just we do a really great job of underselling ourselves. Because we all know the whole stat, like, there's the job description, 15 points, the man has one or two, he's like, got this, the woman says, I need another PhD. I have 15 points, but I need five more advanced degrees. So we'd have to stop that. And that's a whole reframe. So I could go on on that. But the whole point is, yes, we've been around the block for a couple of four to five decades. And we're great at juggling. We're also great listeners, and were great leaders and the data reflects that. And of course, we can always refer back to like ageism, and you know, sexism and all that. So we're gonna fight that we're going to be like banging down the door, finding that. Thank you for saying all that. So here's another question for you. So to the woman's specifically who has stepped out, because there are a lot of, you know, midlife. There are like I've got you know, I've got teenagers, I've got probably all have collective friends who have kids already off in college. And then we have a lot of friends who started having kids a lot later, I thought I was, you know, 37 when I had my second, and third, but there are a lot that it didn't start to 40 41 42. So we really run the gamut of the age range of kids. And then of course, you mentioned there's all the aging parents. But a lot of women, like you said, like a lot of kids are fending for themselves. And they're asking themselves, alright, I want to get back into the workforce, maybe started a business, have no idea how to begin, what would you say to those women?

Dr. Sophia Yen 33:05

I would say that sometimes joining a company seeing how it's done, seeing how it's run, and then opening your own. I mean, that is actually my advice for anybody going into startups. Don't be like graduated out of school and do a startup, but go learn how it's run, and then grab your team from there and take it from there. But that is one way to go at it. That is not necessarily the way I went about going at it. It's also build your community, right? Get help. And I love all of these women helping women groups. So exactly. Springboard, exactly. coreless. There's also alpha out there and other groups, I'm sure that I'm forgetting to mention, but there's like, female founders collective. And there's also female Founders Fund. And there's lots of Facebook groups you can get into for free, where there are women starting companies helping each other. And then I think there's also like NABO, right National Women Business Association or organization.

Jen Marples 34:09

Those are really great points. And the whole point of this is that there is support out there. So no matter what you want to do, if it's like bigger visions of a huge startup, or you just want to follow a passion project, you've got to put yourself in the room. And this is what I'm I constantly say is if you've got to put yourself in the room, with women doing the same thing. And women do want to help each other. And you've got to, especially if you've taken that time off, just get back in and slowly it's one step. I've actually had a client who was figuring out exactly what it was going to be nice to just show up to the join a networking group, why not you don't have to have a business bank to join a networking group. And then you just have to take one step than another step than other steps or join these groups and

following passions following those little breadcrumbs as it were. And then one day you're gonna wake up and go, it's been years later and you're going to be doing the thing whatever that thing is. is. So I love that every single organization Sophie has mentioned, we're going to link that in the show notes, it's gonna be a library of resources in the show notes and make sure you guys check those out.

Dr. Sophia Yen 35:10

I'm all about dropping resources, like learn from me learn from what I've suffered, but also all the wonderful organizations that have supported me. So Stanford StartEx, is a great accelerator, they take no money. However, they do require that one of the founders has a Stanford affiliation, either a professor or alumni, they can't be an advisor, but there's also a 10% diversity. So women and people of color fit in there. And then you just have to know two or three former starred actors to upvote you when they when they do the voting,

Jen Marples 35:44

such great resources. So what would be your number one, like? What is your number one business tip that you would share with other entrepreneurs listening?

Dr. Sophia Yen 35:54

One tip is Get everything in writing. So I've heard many people do verbal agreements. And theoretically, a verbal contract is binding. But really, if it's just the two of you, and you didn't record it, then it's very hard to do. Also, if somebody offers you something, don't feel pressured on that phone call to agree or disagree, you know, say, I'll get back to you, I need to check with my lawyer or something like that. And then if you're doing startups, generally you need a CTO. So it's very hard to do it without a CTO to hire a CTO, many of the accelerators, if you don't have the CTO, they don't want to talk to you because they may disappear into whatever country and steal your code I've had that happen to at least one friend. And the person took her code hostage because he was in a foreign country. And he's like, unless you pay me \$50,000. And that was not the original agreement, then you're not getting this thing back. And so she just had to shut the thing down because she didn't have 50,000. And she didn't want to pay the guy 50,000. So it was a lose for everybody, because he didn't get his money, and her company went nowhere, what it just, you know, and having a CTO, co founder who's gonna be working on it 24/7 with skin in the game is very useful.

Jen Marples 37:11

That's great advice, getting it in writing. So what do you think women can do better to support each other,

Dr. Sophia Yen 37:19

I actually started website, f f, f l.co, which is full.co, female founded female lead.co. And so I want our heartfelt, the sky full, the table full. And none of that is full unless women are at the table. So when you have two products, and you have equally the same, please choose the female founded female lead product. Because exactly as you stated before, only 3% of VC backed companies are women founded or it has a woman founder involved in that situation. And so that's how the community can help is being more aware of who you are buying from who you are using. Ask who is the founder? Who is the CEO? And what are those values and that comes into play with telemedicine. I'm the only CEO of a birth

control company that has taken the oath, do no harm. Can't say the same of others out there. And when you're looking at companies, you want somebody who has your interests at heart, I like to say I live, breathe, eat and prescribe birth control. And as I move into menopause, you can bet you're gonna get the best menopause care for myself. And I'm going to share it with all of you. And if you don't want that level of care, we'll give you something less. But it's in my interest to make sure we get the good stuff. And if anyone else was delivering care at the level that we deliver, I would step aside but they aren't. And so I need this company for me. I need this company for my daughter's and anyone else with a uterus.

Jen Marples 38:57

Well, I love women supporting women owned and I know so many founders go out there because we've gotten as a society and this is a whole thing you know, with Amazon and everything and I'm guilty of it. I'm guilty of the late night shop trying to get something going for the kids but especially as we're going into the holiday season just so much purchasing about to happen. We have to remember to support the women own business big and small because that how are we how are we going to do it and make change if we're not doing that?

Dr. Sophia Yen 39:26

fashion makeup? I really love Winky Lux and that CEO is awesome. And we just have a partnership with them and they gave me some free product.

Jen Marples 39:36

Why? No I was just at this event in Miami well it's just started this company and it's like female led the President's also female there's so many wonderful female founders, like you who saw a need saw a problem that they needed to solve for themselves and then built a company. So they went out there and they're doing all this hard work. So like if you like the product, let's go with a female owned businesses. So I think we killed that one. I think you guys need to know that we need to all support women on businesses. So one of my final questions for you. What do you wish for women at midlife?

Dr. Sophia Yen 40:05

I wish optimal health and happiness, count your blessings. I'm always like, thank goodness, I don't have COVID Right now, because I did catch COVID. And that was horrible. So thank goodness, I have food on the table. But I also want you to be inspired, I want you to aim I want you to achieve, I want you to feel loved and supported by other women and the community. There are so many allies out there. I'm so thankful for those without uterine that are supporting those of us with uterine or vaginas you know, however you want to go at it. And so I wish the same for everyone is I want everyone to have the best health everyone to have the best health care and to feel happy.

Jen Marples 40:51

I love that because but our health we've gotten nothing and so we can talk about all these other things. But if we're not healthy, then we've got nothing. So that means this is why I've been focusing in on women's health because it is well this will run in when you're listening to this. It'll be November but we'll have come off Breast Cancer Awareness Month menopause Awareness Month. And so you know, I'm doing my part, I want you all to have the best information and resources so we all can live this healthy,

vital life. I'm so glad you brought that up. My final question for you. What do you think the best thing is about being at midlife.

Dr. Sophia Yen 41:25

I think I'm at the top of my game, like I am done with college. And I have so many years of experience under my belt. And all my friends are like power people now they're like CEOs of the company, head of the department, head of the division and gods of marketing and you know, just everything and so, being a mid life realize the power that we have as a collective, and to use that to do good and use that to help each other and use that to bring somebody beneath you up somebody behind you up and offer yourself as a mentor as a sponsor as the support for somebody else.

Jen Marples 42:09

Oh, I love that. That's a big thing. So we need to be very cognizant of what is it throwing out the not the lifeline but like the rope behind the women behind us like we're paving the way. And I've always I've loved that's been always my favorite thing when especially when I had my PR firm was mentoring and I love working with younger women. So they can they can avoid some of the steps some of the missteps but it's all again, it's all information. So you know, we're there to guide and support and certainly with our daughters, I mean, those are the most important ones in our home so they're watching us they're seeing how we're doing things. My final question for you is where can we support you find you find more about Penza health and find more about you Sophia

Dr. Sophia Yen 42:50

Pandia health is on Twitter, YouTube, Tik Tok Instagram Linked in. So it's at Pandia health PA and da health all one word. Best place to find me is probably linked in if you want to get political my Twitter is teen M D 10. M D where I raged tweet about reproductive rights, but also throw down a couple of health gems here and there. Pandia health.com Our website is chock full of health information. Our YouTube has some videos with 300,000 views with no promotion simply because we know the questions women ask and we answer it with the doctor was personally use that product and can speak to that pain point. And we hope that you'll follow and share us on all your socials,

Jen Marples 43:41

I love it. And Sophie has also offered my listeners \$5 off a telemedicine visit which with the code Gen 22. So we're going to link that in the show notes. If you're interested in want to explore going back on birth control and want to talk to a fabulous doctor about it, then you've got a little discount code there for you to use that Sophia, thank you for all this really important information. I mean, I just you know we have so much work to do in this country, we have to stay healthy, we have to keep fighting. And we have to keep you know putting women's health and women's rights at the forefront. And thank you for being a leader and a huge voice in that regard. And so I know I'll be seeing you at events, we're going to be locking arms, you know, before the elections. You know, everyone we've got to show up. So if it's a member know, nothing you do is you know too big or too small. So anything that we do, it all adds up in our collective of bringing all of us forward. So thank you, Sophia for being so loud and proud about it. And thank you for sharing all this wonderful information today. And you've just been a fabulous guest so thank you so much for joining us.

Dr. Sophia Yen 44:42

Thank you so much for having me here and always happy to come back and talk help anytime.

Jen Marples 44:48

Thank you