

# New Beginnings and the Why

**Jennifer Malcolm** 00:10

Welcome to the Jennasis Speaks podcast. The Transformative Power of Women's Stories, a platform that empowers women storytelling, to promote collective vulnerability, acceptance and healing. I am your host, Jennifer Malcolm, self made entrepreneur, women advocate and life balance expert. Welcome to our first Jennasis Speaks podcast The Transformative Power of Women's Stories where every woman has a story and every story matters. I'm Jennifer Malcolm, founder and CEO of Jennasis and Associates. And with me today is Kelly Wait, who is our chief strategy officer. And for our first podcast, we're going to do something a little different than what we're normally going to do as we've launched through these. But Kelly is going to take the time to interview me and capture my story. So welcome, Kelly.

**Kelly Waite** 00:57

Hi, Jen, how are you today?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 00:58

I'm good. How are you?

**Kelly Waite** 01:00

Great.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 01:01

I'm so excited about this.

**Kelly Waite** 01:02

I'm excited to be here.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 01:04

We have been talking about this, the podcast for months, but we've been talking about a women's movement for years. And so excited that we're finally putting our dreams together and into action. So cannot get started. So now we're here and we got this thing called Jennasis Speaks. And we're talking about every woman has a story and every story matters.

**Kelly Waite** 01:29

Why?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 01:31

Oh my gosh, I'm already tearing up. Why? Why are we doing this?

**Kelly Waite** 01:35

Why are you doing this? Oh, it's good. Why are you dragging us all along? You're drinking I'm just kidding. We're going willingly cheerleading all the way up.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 01:40

Now the way I look at them already, I have tears. I don't know there's something burning in myself. That is the importance of women. The importance of women to have their cake and eat it too. The importance of women not being pigeon holed into a place women not being able to have a voice or not being heard. I am pro man. I'm not gonna say I am not a bra burning woman. I no judgment. No, I got remarried. Two years ago, my husband who's our spotlight guy behind the scenes. Guru today is, you know, one of my biggest heroes, if not my biggest cheerleader. So it's not about that. It's just about women giving voice and choice and that every story matters. I don't care what your background is, there is a deep gift of compassion in my soul that I can't deny. And at this point in time, I'm just allowing it to flow. And my team who's you and Stephanie and Jessica and Joelle and people behind the scenes, Christine has been here and my mom, who's one of my biggest cheerleaders are all just saying, Yeah, it's time for you to go like time for you to use your voice. And, and the whole point is that it unlocks when you tell a story. It's going to unlock things and other woman's hurts, whether that's courage, whether that's healing, whether it's compassion, or whether it's understanding, it's going to unlock something. And I think this pause with COVID has helped just slow life down. I just finished my business MBA in analytics, while running a business and being a mom and wife and one thing so the gift of time, the last several months has come and I think that piece of why not now kind of just came to the forefront.

**Kelly Waite** 03:48

So what what's the ultimate goal behind it? And you should talk about empowering women. But what do you hope that our listeners get out of it? What do you hope that you get out of it? Or that your guests? What? What kind of goals do you have for the podcast.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 04:00

So the goal is to capture women's stories. So when I share my story today, it's going to resonate with a lot of women, there's going to be parts of it that won't resonate with a lot of women. And it's not about that my voice and my story is going to impact every woman you know, in the United States or worldwide. But as we interview women through the process and talk through different stories, there's going to be something in your story when I interview you sometime and other people's stories along the way that unlock courage and other women's hearts. Maybe it gives them voice maybe it's a little bit of a path to healing. Maybe it breaks off some shame or regret or hardest on ourselves. And so that that human connection of kindness and empathy and coming together with other women is really the heart and the goal of it.

**Kelly Waite** 04:52

Awesome. Well, let's let's go right into your story. Okay, were born on what day you're how old just Can I just get a I know never asked a woman her age, right?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 05:03

No, no, no. Okay, easy one. Um, where do you think the story of Jennasis as an evolution really started. Um, so let's see, it'd be 11, almost 12 years ago, go now, I went through a separation divorce. I was a high school science teacher. Previous to that, and had been a stay at home mom, I had learned the work of virtual admin support during that time of having small kids. My husband at the time, worked, swing shift. And so I had the ability to work in the evenings, we have to put the kids to bed from eight to midnight and get work done. And so I learned the art of working from home doing impactful work, and having some flexibility on that. And so when Jennasis started, I kind of took that same semantic piece and asked to women in my life one was a neighbor, my neighbor Pam, and other was Shelly Solomon call who hopefully one day will be on this podcast with me. Just ask them if they knew if they needed or if they knew of anyone who needed some virtual admin work. So the idea that at that point, Reagan was in kindergarten, my now almost 16 year old was in kindergarten. And I knew that the opportunity to put on the bus, rush off to a job and be back on the back home to get off the bus at 1115. There's not many jobs that have a I can be there for two hours. And so you start using that time. They immediately Shelly Amelie hired me for some work that she needed done with her work and business. And Pam gave me a lead which that was January of 2011. February, I had six clients and March I had 12 clients. And I was like, Alright, we have something going on here. And the essence is everyone needed a little bit of help. At that point, the recession coming out of 2000-7-8-9. A lot of people had had laid off bootstrapped work and 2011 there was a little bit of wiggle room for additional work and services. And so I started partnering there. Genesis obviously has my name in it I spelt with the jem, a little bit of egocentric naming in that but it took Shelley Shelley was the brainchild with me on this one. We sat for weeks and just wrote out Jennifer's, VA, Jen's VA Jen's assisting Jen's this that the other and at one point, we just put it together and it was Genesis and for me that name obviously has my name in it. But for me, it was going back to New Beginnings, the Garden of Eden the story of that in the book of Genesis in the Bible, and really having a new beginning in life, and where creation can happen and things are born and birth. And so that kind of just when we finally need it. After weeks, it was like Ah, there it is. It took us forever. But so that was the essence of the birth child of Jennasis.

**Kelly Waite** 08:16

So you're telling us all the good parts or give me the highlights? What Okay, so let's start easy and say okay, what's the funniest, craziest thing that somebody asked you to do? Oh, I think I've shared this story with you before, but definitely dog walking.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 08:36

Definitely the dog walinging

**Kelly Waite** 08:38

teacher cup biology teacher

**Jennifer Malcolm** 08:40

turns dog walker and afternoon I had so much like, oh, okay, I need to I need to up my game or up. But it was one of those that I was on site with the client, which I really wasn't hardly ever. I did some initially in the beginning to go and get work and then bring it home and do it from home. But in the middle of this one work session, I had my client who had to jump on a call and she was like, hey, do you mind walking my dog and I was like my, like, dogs, hear the work, not walk your dogs and I was like so

humiliated at like age, I guess I was age 34 ish. And walking a dog. And I was like, This is not my calling in life. But we've had ups and downs. You've been on this ride with me for years. You came for a while you you left for a short period of time you've been back full force the last four or five years. And you've seen the essence and how we've grown and changed and evolved. And what we started with almost 10 years ago is very different than today. And that's the fun of the joy of being a business owner I guess.

**Kelly Waite** 09:53

So what can What can you share about the struggles because I'm sure that there's a lot of women out there You know, like yourself that found yourself in a transition? You know, I think a lot of the women that we're talking to now are finding themselves in transition for various reasons. And what, what did it feel like? What did you like? Did you cry? Did you? Did you journal? Did you? How did you get through the the transformation of going from? I'm going to school every day, taking my kids and I'm going to teach my class I'm going to come home and make dinner to, to come up with something out of nowhere, where you're, you're going next door to your neighbors? And hey, do you need any help? I mean, like, how do you cut? Where does that courage? Where did that come from? How did you? How did you get there?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 10:39

Honestly, I think part of it was desperation. Part of it was creativity, I think it's a mix of that part of it is, you know, courage to take one step at a time, one baby step at a time. And, you know, I've been very candid with you had I known then, and, you know, 2010 11 what I know now what our business would be, I probably wouldn't have the courage to do it. It's like the, you know, it's like the frog that's in a pot and you raise the temperature really slowly, and you don't realize that it's a boiling pot of water now and the temperature rose, we've been through hell and back in the business, you know, we've had lawsuits, we've had loss, we've had betrayal, we've had, you know, clients who have been assholes, frankly, or team members that turned in betrayed us. And so there's a lot of, you know, you're carrying this is like my fourth kid and, and so I'm and you know, me, I'm a deep feeler, I feel everything. And so to try to not to take it personally and have thick skin. But it's not been easy. It's just been taking one baby step at a time, the best of to the best of my ability, and making mistakes along the way, but being gentle to you know, continue to go forward as well.

**Kelly Waite** 11:56

Who did you lean on in that time period? I mean, I know that I know your story. But I think our listeners would love to hear like, you literally started this business from your kitchen table. helped you you know, what lessons did you have to learn? Um, you know, like, Who did you? Did you get support from your kids? You know, tell me a little bit about about the, you know, the inner tribe and the working of what was your life? Like, while you're trying to start this business?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 12:21

Sure. So, um, definitely, my mom was there, she has, you know, bookkeeping background, so she really jumped in on the, I'm gonna take care of the books and help with the financial pieces. And, you know, I always be entered with my mom that you can, you're going to obviously see all my, you know, financials. And if you ever tell me how to spend my money, you're going to get fired? Like, how does

that I might know, if I'm going to make decisions that are poor, or it's going to put the bet the company in a bad position, obviously, you know, heads up, but, um, with being a virtual business, we dine out a lot, we meet our clients out a lot pre COVID, not as much the last several months, but, you know, we're out and then the community. And that was the one piece I always said to her, like, you can't tell me how to spend my money. And but you can have the power of invoicing and bookkeeping and all that. But then I also had, honestly, neighbors, friends, anyone that could help. Um, because initially, the work was enough for me. And then I started getting asked questions such as, Oh, do you do graphics? Do you do web? And I was like, Yes, I do. And I know enough to be dangerous. I know enough to get into the back end, piddle around, get into graphics, but I'm not a graphic designer by any means. I have a good eye for things, but I don't know how to create them. And so in that, that space, I remember trying and trying really hard and being laborious on this one trifold graphic, and I took it to the client and they were like, yeah, that's that's not gonna work. That's how I got like, what I can get from that. Yeah, well, the concepts you have, and I was like, that's it. I have nothing left. And so at that point, I was in working women connection, networking group for women, here in Northeast Ohio. And there was graphic designers and web designers in there. And so I started learning the art of selling projects project, managing them, being the relationship builder with the client, and then having these women Julie and Xu do the work. And, and so that really was able then to take on more work, diversify our offerings. And then as we progress, it was being at the right place at the right time. I was at a chamber of commerce meeting I sat next to woman, Terry, and she was asking just what I did and We've seen her in, she's like, I've been looking for a VA forever. And I was like, Oh, she's like, What do you mean, she's like, at that point, she was working for the Plain Dealer and doing interviews. And she had all these recordings, and she just needed them transcribed. And I was like, yeah, that's absolutely something we could do. As simple as it is, people don't like to transcribe you, and I don't like to transcribe our own notes. And so pull that in, gave it to someone else on the team, and then ended up interviewing me and featuring myself and the business and plane in the plane dealer, January 1, on a Sunday paper of 2012. So we weren't even really one year under our belt. And here we are on the front page of the business section of the newspaper. And so it's just things like that, where that just really opened doors to new clients. People started calling in asking to get together asking, How do I be on your team, and I was like, Whoa, I don't even like I'm used to managing, like teenagers. So like I said, it taught high school science. And so in that it's just a dictatorship. You tell them what to do. And they have to do it. But I wasn't, I didn't have experiencing experience managing adults. And so really trying to learn how to be a leader in that regard. That has was a challenge. And still, at times, I don't like confrontation. I'm not a combative person at all. And so that piece of managing people was a new skill that I had to learn. And from there, we just kind of went down the rabbit hole, and here we are today.

**Kelly Waite** 16:32

So what was the hardest thing in those first couple of years? when you're starting out? What was? What was it? How was it on your family? I mean, you went from, you know, being a mom and having a normal job, right? to being an entrepreneur, and how did that sets your kids

**Jennifer Malcolm** 16:49

or so I always said that I created a business for them to have work life balance, and to spend the time with them. So not having to leave the house being there for them Valentine's Days being there to get them on the bus off the bus. And it was probably three years in that Remember, you know, hey, we're

gonna have family time, the four of us gonna sit down and watch a movie. And one of my kids was like, my, you always have your laptop on your lap, you're always in front of your computer. And I was in that and it hit me like, I've created this business to be with them. And to me, I was like, Well, I'm with you. Like I can knock out some emails and watch you know, Disney, I can do I can do that. But for them, the reality was I wasn't present. And that they always saw me on the phone working on something on my computer, and it was an eye opener, it was one of those that kind of like, you know, the busts that just hit me and and it made me pivot to say okay, and you have to have boundaries. Being a at that point, I was doing a lot of the work myself for our clients and being in the business and working on the business it's a it's more than a full time job, you know, you're working 60 7080 hour weeks, weekends, evenings, anywhere you can squeeze in time and that really that work life balance became off kilter. And so that became a little bit of an advocacy for them to put boundaries on and for me at that point shared custody with their dad I you know, really look worked long days on Tuesdays and Thursdays because that's when they were with their dad shorter days on Mondays and Wednesdays because they came home and you know was home by to 230 from from school so shutting it down not doing out of office meetings those days. So it's just a transition but really putting those boundaries around trying not to work weekends or doing it early when they're before they wake up or the weekends with their dad so it it I think they they're proud of me I think there's so at times like it was three years ago Reagan was like so what do you do again? Like like oh my gosh, I've been doing this for eight years and they're like she's like but you just always have like, pictures and words and papers everywhere. Marketing you know, like, we sell words pictures, ideas to people and just like people buy that like theybase right? Like Yeah, they pay for that and she's like, that's dumb. So you know that today, each of my kids have worked for me throughout the years for a little bit of this a little bit that filing notes. Kanda now is going is editing our videos for the podcast and so they are involved and I think they're proud I am you know, it's always that you don't always hear the accolades from your kids, but it's been a great journey with them and it has given me the opportunity to be around them. Way more than you know I would have I would be at a at a traditional downtown type of job.

**Kelly Waite** 20:00

What piece of advice? Could you give Jennifer back then? Or some of our listeners from that bet? That beginning part of your personal journey and Jennasis as an organization? You know, what, what kind of advice would you wish you would have heard or learned back then.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 20:20

Don't do it. Don't do it, that's not what I was expecting. I don't know. Um, I think it's that piece of courage. If you have a dream in your heart, you're only on this earth one to one time. And for you to have the courage. Now, I think there's wisdom in that. When I started, I was actually I picked up a side gig and I was working at a brewery doing serving tables. And so I knew I had money coming in there. And then I supplemented it with the work I was coming in for Jennasis. And then the more as more work came in from Jennasis, I cut back more of my hours. And finally, I cut you know how to cut the rope of being a server. But I think it's just that the pace of proceed with wisdom. But also proceed with courage and make good choices, you always have to pay your bills. So just don't jump out and be like, I'm gonna start my business and quit my job and, and now you're broke, or, you know, make yourself make sure you're setting yourself up for success. Long term, and not just a quick term, not a quick fix to jump into something, but live your dreams, I was talking to someone who's been on this team, you'll,



you'll recognize the story that works for a law firm, and she worked with us for a year or so. And she's now through COVID, learned the art of working from home and is loving it, and she's still still doing it in the legal legal world. And, you know, we were talking a couple of weeks ago, and she was like, I'm really enjoying this type of work. And, and I said, so put out to the network, there has to be there has to be other solo attorneys that have their own solo practice, who have overflow work, or things that they do nights and weekends, that that would be a huge resource for them, you know, for for in the legal community. And she was such a brilliant idea. And I was like, as simple as it was, and I and she's stepping forward with making that request and trying to pull in some additional work, you know, in the legal field. And, and so I think it's that piece of stronger people, surround yourself with people who are going to encourage you, who's going to give you good advice. Often maybe not what you want to hear, but some safety protocol there and, and live your dreams. So just go for it.

**Kelly Waite 22:47**

So you talked about the transition from a dog walker right here. And and I'm watching Disney movies, while you're while you're working in answering emails, how did you, you obviously have this influx, right, so all of these kinds of things came in how, and you talked about the difficulty of managing adults, you never had that experience before? What did that feel like?

**Jennifer Malcolm 23:17**

Like, I would say overwhelmed is probably an honest word overwhelming. Feeling the weight and responsibility of caring for my kids and jumping into something unknown. Not created. So I'd say there, there was uncertainty, there was excitement. I think anyone who knows me from you know, elementary school through now, I tend to be a perfectionist in what I do. And it has to be, you know, made with excellence, but pretty, pretty darn near perfect as well. And so that piece of courage and pride and joy to create something out of nothing. But there's you know, definitely self doubt when, especially when checks aren't coming in, and you need to pay your bills and you're waiting and waiting and waiting. And now you're in the collections of your, of your organization because clients aren't paying on time or for whatever reasons is delayed. So the feelings are I mean, it's a it's a bag of emotions of excitement and joy and freedom. You know, that free heart but a lot of uncertainty worry, staying up way past, you know, time I put my head on the pillow and, you know, just my mind racing of how am I going to do this and how many do this and how am I going to accomplish, you know, deadlines and be present with my kids. So there's I think it's a bag of mixed emotions from being honest.

**Kelly Waite 24:51**

I hear a lot of courage in your story. Not that word keeps coming up and You're you're talking, where does your courage come from? How do you find courage? How do you how do you build courage? How do you go from? You know, being a science teacher to being a divorced single mom, you know, like, I get it, I was a single mom to for quite some time and, you know, you it was constantly on your mind is like, you know, how am I gonna feed my kid? How am I gonna have a house for my kid, you know, like, you know, clothes, you know those kinds of things. So I can't imagine you having that. And then you're talking about Genesis as your fourth child, all of those things, it's going to be a never ending hamster wheel. So how do you find inspiration? How do you find courage? How do you? How do you say, okay, client, I'm good. I need you to pay me so I can pay my mortgage. You know, like, how, where did? Where does that gumption come from?

**Jennifer Malcolm 25:45**

I think, I think part of it is, is it's an innate characteristic of my life. There is, I would say, what's a banner word over my life is courage. Not that my knees aren't knocking, not that I don't have butterflies in my stomach. Not that I don't have fear. But it's walking through that fear. I do listen to a lot of podcasts and women and men that I listen to, that are inspirational to me that it's feeding my soul with positive energy and positive words and an overcoming spirit. And for me, I'm not a big risk taker. So you know, the courage, I have been labeled courageous by people on our executive team and friends. I don't see myself as a big risk taker, I just make calculated decisions. So I do a lot of research, I do a lot of educating myself on what's the pros and cons of things. And then I make the best choice I can make. And some of it hasn't led the right you know, down the right path, but really, just really taking a baby step. But I am Yeah, it's something that is just a fire in my belly of, of stepping through the impossible. And part of that's my faith, I grew up in a Christian home. And part of that is I have faith I have I surround myself with positive people who encouraged me who helped me who, when you're one of those when I fall down, and my knees are all dusty, and scratched up, you know, that cheer me on and say can do it and leave the impossible and, and I think that that gift of faith and desire to create something fuels the courage to walk through and to make those choices for the, for the business and for myself.

**Kelly Waite 27:40**

Is there a specific example that you know, you really had to dig deep to find the courage to walk through? is there is there? Is there an example that sticks out to you that you you're comfortable sharing with our listeners that really kind of you had it tested you and you really had to pull pull the courage up?

**Jennifer Malcolm 27:59**

Yeah, I would say, we've only been threatened with a lawsuit, I think, once in 10 years, and that was about five years ago. And for me, I'm like, What do you mean, I'm getting threatened with the lawsuit, you know, like, we did the work and, and the client wasn't happy. And then the client got really aggressive through text messages, emails, phone calls, and I was like, I knew this client wanted a full refund. And I was like, I don't know, like, I want and I at that point, I didn't even have the money to reimburse them in fullness, I would have to make installment plans. Be I had paid the team out for the work done. And see it just it was unjust, it was unfair, and that that that fire in me was like No, like it's wrong. And I've I talked to numerous people's people about the situation and my parents and Chad, who's now my husband and you and other colleagues and I had advice all over the gamut of this person's a bully and don't give it to bullies to reimburse the money it's only money just you know, cut the ties and let it go and and both are valid, both are very valid, you know, advice given in the situation and what because it was just causing so much turmoil in my in my mind and my heart and but the word kept coming in cases of bullying this person's a bully and you knocked down the bully once you hit them in the chin one time and they don't they're not a bully anymore and you overcome that fear and and so I hired an attorney and told him the situation and all it took was one email and one phone call from my attorney and it all disappeared like it just went away and and so for me, it was like, was a guarantee that was going to come out that way? Absolutely not. But for this situation that courage of like, Alright, I'm at least going to be an advocate for myself because it's unjust and and what he's



asking for is is not right. And, and having advocacy through people. And you know, I chose the legal route to at least represent and stand between me and the situation. That for me was one of the hardest situations I've worked through in business and I know listeners, you're gonna listen to like, as I did, that's really not that big of a deal. But for me, like, again, remember, I did not have a background in business, I was self taught, I avid learner, I got business coaches, I read, I studied, I took online, you know, mini courses. Recently, I finished my MBA and get some, you know, book knowledge to go with my experience knowledge. But for me, like that was a big deal. And now it's that muscle that's grown in me that other colleagues of mine who have had it like, Ah, no, like, at least I have advice, it may not be the right advice, but at least I encouraged to breathe into them as well to, you know, stand up for themselves and, and to protect themselves and what they built and grown, and not to allow bullies to take that away from you.

**Kelly Waite 31:10**

So you talked about, you know, surrounding yourself with with great people, you know, sharing, filling your mind with, with good thoughts and good things, books and education, stuff like that. How did that translate down in to just from you to a team? Because I know Genesis today just associate stays a little bit a little bit different than just Jen, doing some dog walking, knocking on the neighbor's say, Do you need any help? Okay, a lot different.

**Jennifer Malcolm 31:40**

So how it sounds so far? No, I don't know where that came from. But it worked. It worked back then.

**Kelly Waite 31:47**

Hey, man, everybody started somewhere. I mean, look at look at all the companies that are multi billion dollar companies that were started in a garage, right? You're, you're starting from the kitchen table. So maybe, who knows? Right? That's exciting part of encouragement to other women out there too, that it is possible and you and you can, you know, make your own path however you see fit. So how do you translate that down to a team? How do you recruit people? How do you find people because you talked about you're in a networking group, and you sell projects and things like that? So what types of people have you? Have you gone through? Let's say, yeah, through the gamut.

**Jennifer Malcolm 32:28**

So um, yeah, initially, if you had a pulse, and you had time, you were on the team, like, I just needed extra hands on deck, and realizing that a lot of those choices were great. They they served clients, well, they, they exceeded some of the things that I could do my skill level. And I've made some really horrible hires as well. So we've gone the gamut of hiring all across the board. And as, as we grew the executive team, and we saying, okay, I loving where we're going. But I really don't want to be in on every account, I don't want to be on every strategy session. And our multiplication like you, in order to grow, I have to let go. And, you know, reading books with the team, you helped spearhead some of that with EOS and traction and that methodology of you have to delegate to elevate, letting go the VI I remember having that conversation with you letting go of the vine The first time you got it, you're like, oh, you're like freaking out in sweats. You're like, How can I do that? How can I let go? I remember the insoles.

**Kelly Waite 32:35**

You know, I remember that evolution of even, you know, witnessing you going through the evolution of letting go the vine, Tell, tell the listeners a little bit more what you went through with that?

**Jennifer Malcolm 33:48**

Yeah, part of it is control, like fear of trusting someone else to do the work as good or the quality of work with my name, my reputation, my clients might connections and colleagues. And so there was that control factor of, well, if I do it, I know it's gonna be done well, and it's gonna be done with excellence. And so how can I trust someone else to do that same caliber and, and so for me, it was 2014 15 that I was like, Alright, if I'm going to do this, I have to start hiring people who are better, faster, stronger than me in lots of different areas. And whether that's finance, whether that's obviously we already talked about graphic design and web design, but I'm marketing and marketing strategy or writing and editing. I think I'm a good writer. I'm probably not a great writer, for you know, certain pieces. And so I had enough skill to be dangerous, and a hard worker and I'm a hard learner, but for me, it was just letting go have control. And again, it's that that courage and a breakthrough of right. It's like when you you leave your child at home for the first time with a babysitter and you go and you're like constantly looking at your phone. They're going to call it is everything okay? And, you know, does that worry and it's practicing, the more you practice those muscles grow of trust and rapport. And again, I don't think in 10 years I've ever yelled at anyone on this team for any work that was not done or late or I was disappointed, I think the harshest ever say is, alright, that's not acceptable. And I think people know when I say, okay, that's not acceptable. To me, like, Oh, yes, this has to be fixed and fixed now. But I've been on the receiving end. So those conversations, no, this is not what I was like, Okay, I'm sorry about that. Like, for me, the other piece was, I got out of my own way on hiring. And I remember having this conversation with you, and a couple people, probably three, four years ago, they're like, okay, you are just the worst interviewer ever, because you love people, like you love people, and you get snatched up with their story and their need, and you're like, Oh, we have to hire them. And you would go like, Where are you putting them on the bench, like, we don't have, we don't need that, that skill. And I'm like, they're fine. And so getting out of my own way, and realizing those certain things I just am not good at and we we set established our core values of passion, innovation, and collaboration, right. I was like, the See, that's all there was like communication now collaboration, and, and really hiring against those core values, you know, and, and doing reviews against those core values, and setting up some of that, that the quality of people on our team now has exceeded, you know, we're where we were 567 years ago. And, and then for me, it's just breathing into life into, you know, we have mostly women, it's women on women lead, we have men in the team, we're not anti men, we're not bra burning, you know, feminists, or by any means we love, we love the guys in our lives. But we love being an advocate for women. And this podcast and the Genesis speaks movement is being birthed out of that same advocacy for women to find their voice have passion, in what they're doing, have flexibility, have opportunity, have great pay, and to really succeed in the world. That can be it can be tough at times for whatever circumstances. So we kind of went through this evolution. So just give me the the the 32nd, you know, answer of how did you go through from, you know, being a VA and just doing all that you talked about marketing strategist, and you talk about websites. Now, what did that evolve to? How did you get to how did you go from VA to to where you are today? I think it was just the the the questions our clients were asking, of, you know, can you do? You know, social media became a large part of our organization strategy over the last decade and being educated in those those resources. And so I think it was more evolving with the times evolving with our clients growing them asking for things that maybe

we didn't offer, but I knew that we could offer was just kind of a one off from what we were offering. And so I think it was just growing up and getting into the next, you know, bigger pair of shoes, and growing through those shoes and getting the next bigger pair of shoes. And I think it's just growing with the times growing with our clients and growing with the way marketing was, is you know, continues to evolve. And I'm sure team in five years is going to be very different from what it is now and that we're going to grow into wherever the marketing trends, you know, lie and hire into those positions. So I think that's probably the biggest way that we grew.

**Kelly Waite** 38:51

Okay, so you did when you sat down and decided you are going to work from home and be able to be you know, with their kids when they got off the bus and go to people's houses and do their filing or or, you know, transcribing. Did you have a business plan when you did all that?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 39:10

back? No. No, in a business.

**Kelly Waite** 39:13

You didn't even see this path coming, huh?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 39:15

No, no, I did not. I didn't even know what a business plan was probably like. I remember like I was in academia and academia world and the business world are two parallel universes that don't cross over very often and the language and who you're with, so I was like, business plan. I don't know what that is, or what's a SWOT analysis or things like that, like, and you know, it's like business 101 like truly like freshman class 101 of some of them. I was like, I don't know what that is. But again, like, I got straight A's in high school and in college, like, I'm smart. And so I just knew like if I learned stuff, and studied it, I could do it and I was very confident that and you Again, I had coaches through the years I had people in my life who I would just take the luncheon and ask questions and be a sponge and, and really try to be humbled through the process of I don't know what I don't know. And I need to learn really fast some of this stuff and, and that's how a lot of this evolved. And I that piece I'm really proud of going from, you know, the kitchen table, and a condo that I bought after my divorce and to now you know, having a team of 35 plus people all across the nation, our clients are in Cleveland throughout the US international as well. And and that's really, really gives me great pride.

**Kelly Waite** 40:41

I got to ask him we I mean, come on. Oh, you are such Suzy sunshine and making this sound like yeah, the worst thing you said was don't do it. But But you've got to have some, okay, talking about the one hard time How did this affect this business? You know, and growing the business from from a one man band to you know, 30 people? roster, right, you got a bench a bench for you? How did that affect your personal life?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 41:10

Because I don't think it's not just about your kids, I think it's about you know, how did it affect your personal life, or, um, I think there's, there's, you know, there's healthy stress, and there's unhealthy

stress. And, you know, for me, there's times where I know that I'm out of balance, out of integrity with my friends, as far as time or follow up or conversation or even being present, you know, always having this 18 things going on my mind instead of really listening and being there. So, there's a lot of stressors, you know, overeating, over, drinking, staying up too late, you know, trying to numb some of the stress or pain through, you know, exercise, TV, alcohol, food, all those things, you know, all those come into our lives, at different points in time. And to really find that balance of an A far from perfect a name, you know, it's coming across as Susie sunshine. But as we continue to go deeper into my story, like, I'm a broken hot mess at times, and I'm just really taking one step at a time, to the best of my ability to live in integrity, to live a life that I'm proud of first, that my husband's proud of, of me, and my kids are proud of me and, and so that piece of I've gone through really dark times, you know, through through the years and dealing with issues from childhood coming into, you know, into my life years gone by of trauma or pain and loons that that come out sideways, because not dealing with them. And, and so for me, it's you know, I, I do surround myself with great people who encouraged me who give me hope, who give me encouragement. But there has to be that self activation to to heal to journal to you know, I, the one gift I asked for Christmas, especially, was a punching bag. Because when I'm angry, I went to go punch something and be punching a punching bag is a very healthy outlet versus me keeping all that negative energy inside. And so it's, it's finding things like I really want to hit something. And so I just beg Chad, I'm like, and it's only when for Christmas, it's a punching bag and gloves. And it's funny, because now that it's up, like it's almost like a symbolic representation, because I use it initially that first month after Christmas, and they haven't been using it as much, but it just allows that energy to flow. So you're like, I'm human, I, you know, I argue with my kids, I argue with my husband, far from perfect, you and I have had tension and stuff, but I choose to get up and be gentle with myself and to share the story with a friend. About six years ago, I got a tattoo on my foot that says unconditional love in Hebrew. And for me it was that was gonna be my foundation on my life is that I was going to deal with self forgiveness issues for making poor choices. And I was going to mark it in unconditional love. And that was my foundation of my body soul spirit. And if I could do that for myself, then I would be in a place to give that to other people. And so that passion of gathering women's stories, listening to them. None. We live in a world that is so judging and hard on people and to show compassion and deep empathy for for where people are. We're all just, you know, struggling in this world. We make bad choices. Sometimes we make them unintentionally sometimes we make them purposely but to really be gentle on ourselves and to love and to forgive quickly is apparent Mine? How do you share that with your team? Um, I think you don't beat you being the foundation and I can be on the receiving end of it, I can definitely say that. There are times where I'm in a dark place and you you don't bring out this, like, you do the same thing that you said I do for you, you do for the rest of us. If I'm speaking for the team, you do that for us and saying, like, yeah, you can do this, and he brings out the Superwoman kind of bracelet, and you kind of show that out. I hope what you're wanting you want for your team? Yeah, um, I guess it's that piece of walking in that perfect calling. And for that, my life, my mission is to build this organization to make it thrive, to make houses sustainable, and, and money flowing in through the work that we do. And, and so want that for other other women, I want women to walk in that freedom. And so there's a lot of times where someone on the team is going through some rough stuff, whether it's, I'm getting kicked out of my house, I'm going through a divorce. I'm dealing with a kid that is happy, you know, doing drugs, I just lost a baby, I had a miscarriage, my adoption fell through, we've all we've had so many things happen, cancer through through the last 10 years. And to really just be empathetic of I understand take the time you need your jobs here, when you come back. If you we just need to make adjustments. And

so I want that advocacy for me. And I want to create that community for me. And so I want that for the team as well. You need to you need to take time take time. What can we get off your plate. And I see that more now as a culture of Genesis where other team members are doing the same thing for others, like Tommy, Tommy can take off your plate, tell me how we can help out. Because we've all been there when we needed to have that help. And so I think that really has been a culture and a in a, a core value, even though it's not spoken out of really just lending a hand and being empathetic in, in the situations that we're walking through.

**Kelly Waite 47:18**

You know, you could be you could be pretty selfish, right? And say, like, I want to do this for myself, why do you choose to want to share it?

**Jennifer Malcolm 47:27**

Oh, it's a great question.

**Kelly Waite 47:28**

I mean, not just with your team, but I mean, even with this, this, this, this whole podcast thing like you, I know what the reason why you want to do the podcast, but you know, like, why do you want to share this stuff I need to accomplish?

**Jennifer Malcolm 47:40**

I think for me, it's breaking off the lies that are in our head and coming into truth. If I can be a small inspiration, a small spark in someone's heart life, that they then catch the spark, and they have a little bit of a flame. And then they can repeat it and be a spark in someone else's life. It's just, I just, I feel I'm so passionate about empowering women, giving them voice. And there's been times through my life where I felt helpless, I felt hopeless, I felt I didn't have choices, I was robbed of my choices, I was robbed of my voice. And when you come out of that, and you and you finally can catch that breath of fresh air, or you can drink that first taste of water after being in the desert. You You know what it feels like that desperation of coming out of something of a dark place a dark situation, and healing through that. And if I can be a catalyst in any woman's life, to bring that spark, and I don't care what the situation is, you know, I've talked to you know, as we're prepping for these podcasts, you know, every woman is beautiful. Every woman has a story and every story matters. And that's why the essence of that we're being so in your face about that, that it's every person and and it doesn't mean that there's not boundaries, there's that, you know, people are harming you or harming your house or there's healthy boundaries, but the advocacy for women to break off shame, break off lies, we all have self worth issues. We all have things that want to overcome. And we don't know how we get stuck and so we create a community that has compassion and empathy and acceptance right where you're at for who you are You don't have to be better to be to be in this group. You don't have to heal first to be in this group like we want you right where you are healing journey because we all have things that we're continuing to heal from. I still deal with issues of shame, I still deal with issues of unworthiness, I still deal issues with trust issues and and keeping things centered. And so if I surround myself with other women on this path to heal and to be better, then we're all encouraging each other along the way and when one falls, we can you know, pick them up Or, or sit with them and cry with them or hug them. And we all know what it feels like to receive a gift of unconditional love when we didn't deserve it, when we

didn't expect it. And that surprise element is what I want to continue to bring hope and healing into other women.

**Kelly Waite 50:20**

So if there was one thing, we're gonna wrap up, we're getting to the end here. So hang with me just got a few more minutes, right? Um, if you could have listeners take just one thing away from this episode from your story, what would it be?

**Jennifer Malcolm 50:35**

That you matter, and that you're enough. I think that that I started writing this week, and the phrase that I wrote over and over and over again, and it felt like it was for me, but more as, as I'm writing and journaling and podcasting that I have enough, and I am enough, I am enough who I am today is enough, I don't have to be better. We all again, we all want to grow, we all want to heal, we want to overcome, you know, the the crap is going on in our lives. But the gift of I am enough, I have a voice, I am important. I am beautiful, you know, just those healing aspects in that, and when we're vulnerable with each other, it opens up vulnerability in other people. And so if I can continue and you know, throughout this, you know, series, you know, elements of my story will continue to come out and, and I'm looking forward to as I'm interviewing other women, you know, some of them are really going to hit home with me of issues that I've dealt with in my in my life. And just really like we're not far enough. As a woman, I'm enough as a mom, I'm enough as a wife, I'm enough as a business owner. And just being in that place of rest of I am enough. Yes. Can I be better? Or could I couldn't make better choices? Or, you know, do I do I deal with other you know, issues of anger or frustration or being short, you know, tempered or? Yes, but right today, like who God created me to be who I am as a woman is enough. And that's what I want women to really hear.

**Kelly Waite 52:16**

So how what do you What's your? Because you You're such a great planner, you know, from Jennasis at your kitchen table to Jennasis & Associates today, at what do you see your path going next.

**Jennifer Malcolm 52:30**

So I really, my desire is this becomes a movement across for obviously, you know, across the United States, I hope it goes globally. I envision women's conferences, how that looks like with COVID and separation, all that I want to surprise women, I bless women, I want to be an advocate for women. I want people to come away feeling refreshed body, soul, mind, spirit, having courage having voice and so for me, I think it's me podcast, I think it'd be interviewed, I think it's going to be a women's conference, I think there's going to be breakout groups, I think there's going to be allied groups, there's going to be dream groups, there's gonna be dream teams, there's gonna be all sorts of things that come out of this and all of that it's not going to be done by me through me on my shoulders, but is that building that team of women who want to support women and encouraging and it's not about coaching people through to get them to the other side, it's just about collaboration and community and coming together and collective vulnerability that that we heal along the way, these are the things that I want to bring to women of joy of movement and dance and just dreaming dreams. And you know, and and even that piece of you and I had this conversation almost a year ago, I said I want I want to fulfill dreams on our team. I don't know those dreams are I may not be able to fulfill every one of them. But when we



have collective dreams, there may be something in your life connections path, you're like, ah, I can't fulfill my dream. I don't have the resources to build my dream. But I have something in my bucket that can fulfill your dream. And so that piece of collective dream sharing and and getting women just that surprise aha in their heart to bring them again the body, the soul, the mind the spirit all together that says I am enough.

**Kelly Waite** 54:21

Who that was that? Okay, so how does Jennasis tie it to all this? What What can how often are people going to be hearing from you on our podcast and what types of stories you have upcoming and how can other people engage with you? You know, and and in this Jennasis Movement worth?

**Jennifer Malcolm** 54:40

So the Our goal is we're we're gonna be dropping this podcast every Thursday morning. It'll be buzzsprout I don't know all the logistical pieces. That's what the team is for. It's called the big ideas and then I tell the team Okay, now that no good, no good, we'll make it happen every every Thursday that a podcast will be lunched, it'll be a lot of just capturing women's stories, we've already have a few under our belt that we've been recording over the last several weeks. Some of it, it has to do with dealing with being biracial, and especially in today's times of the sensitivity with the George Floyd and, and all that. So just dealing with biracial issues, disrupted adoptions where people adopt a child and then basically say, I don't have the skill set, or I don't want this child anymore. And so they break up the adoption. And so how people come in for and be an advocate for other adoptions in for infertility. moms who have gone and carried to and had a stillborn baby cancer survivors, but we want to also get into the nitty gritty of sexual molestation and rape and date rape and suicide and attempted suicide and eating disorders in image orders, disorders. And so we really just want to talk and into into bring normalcy, that we all have felt certain things throughout our lifetime. And who are we to judge through that process. So we want to get, we want to get into the nitty gritty, and it's not to show blame or shame it is to promote healing and collective vulnerability. We have others that are, you know, frontline workers through COVID. And how dealing with that and balancing life and some of it is just normal life of who I am as a woman. And but there, there's gonna be that alignment that women start really advocating and coming together to support other women.

**Kelly Waite** 56:47

Love it. They love it, too. Oh, okay, gentlemen, I think that wraps up about wraps us up today, unless there's anything else you want to talk about. And we can we could sit here for a little while longer.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 56:59

Oh, this is great. I am super excited. I cannot wait to get this going and continue to interview women. I've met some of the women I've already interviewed. They are the text messages of like, that was so much fun. Or I didn't know how much that would help me like that in of itself. If it was just for that one person being interviewed, being seen being heard, then that success for me because it's one person at a time. So I'm excited. I cannot wait for this to go live. And we're excited to be a part of the journey. It'll be on our website, our Genesis associates website, the links will be there. As we you know, build this out. Who knows what's down the road, but we'll have clips on there. We'll have articles on there. We'll

be starting some Facebook groups on there, through there. So check it out. And we'll we'll see you soon.

**Kelly Waite** 57:53

Have a great day Jenn.

**Jennifer Malcolm** 57:55

Thanks. You too.

**Kelly Waite** 57:56

Bye.

57:57

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