

S1:E14 - a-new-reflection-restoring-self-image-jennifer-with...

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SPEAKERS

Shelley Cull, Jennifer Malcolm



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 the next episode of Jennasis Speaks podcast, The Transformative Power of Women's Stories, where every woman has a story and every story matters. I'm Jennifer Malcolm, your host, founder and president of Jennasis and Associates. And with me today is a lifelong like when I say lifelong friend, Lifeline friend that I think I've known since I was around five years old, and Shelley Solomon call. And today I'm going to just read a little bio about her and we're gonna just jump right into her powerful story. So this is a woman I am in AWS, the woman has had more than 25 years of successful business experience. She established a multi million dollar veterinary practice and a leading consultant in the restaurant industry. But through it all, and despite appearances, Shelly struggled with ongoing criticism from her mother that for many years affected her self image and some sense of self worth. Shelley is here today to share how she found the strength to turn away from the distorted image her mother saw and created a new image that reflects the real Shelley. So welcome, my friend. We're gonna cry, I think this is the one that we are going to cry our way through today. So

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Shelley Cull 01:44

I know, thank you so much for doing this. For me, you know, and for other women. The theme of this is so profound, and you know, to be able to share and be vulnerable. You know, I was nervous to do this. But all of my dear friends said it's not, it's for you, but it's not for you. It's for others and and share the story just like your other guests have because we if others cannot suffer the pain that we've suffered, then Amen. Let them jump to their joy sooner.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 02:27

I love it. So, context for the audience listeners, Shelley is my second mom. She's also my aunt's my friend, my colleague, my partner in crime. She is one that I've gleaned such wisdom from over the years. And we found ourselves in reconnected in divorce court many years ago. And the last 1215 years has just jumped down the rabbit hole of joy and connection laughter, tears vulnerability, and here today just to capture your story. So we're going to talk about and jump right in, I know that you and I have had intimate conversations about body image and body perspective, just to share with the audience like we're that original, you know, broken mirror the broken reflection and looking at yourself came from,

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Shelley Cull 03:18

you know, I know that it came from my mom's words. And what I'd like to convey is, you know, they say, sticks and stones, stones will may break your bones, but words will never hurt you. It's so the opposite. It's so the opposite. Um, the words that she spoke, just killed me, and were rooted inside of me, you know, for most of my life. And it started early on because my mom was a Jewish, attractive, on educated, smart, you know, smart but not educated. She was married at 17 she had an abusive father. Everything was about your looks, everything was about your appearance. And when I was born, I have two brothers when I was born, she just was wanted this girly girl. And I remember having an Easter portrait picture done at a photographer, and she dressed me up with a dress and Lacy gloves, and a little hat. And I was so mad and I just resisted that whole thing you know of being dressed up like this girly girl and all I wanted to do was build tree houses and play kickball and be a tomboy right now. So I know that all of the words She said, From that time, maybe 910 11 years old, all the way till today, her message is still the same. It's just that I came to understand where that message came from

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Jennifer Malcolm 05:17

originated from. So did that cause you to struggle outside of your mom and your relationship? So I know that was one view from her, did that end up capturing over into other relationships, boyfriends experiences as you were growing up?

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Shelley Cull 05:31

You know, it's amazing how I hit it. And how it didn't. Wow, it's, it's almost like I felt it. And I saw it. And I didn't think I look good enough. I didn't think that I was smart. I didn't think that I was. My body was right. But it's like it. Interestingly, it never proved itself in life. I never had a bad girlfriend. I never had a bad boyfriend. I never I always achieved my goals. So I suffered in silence. Wow. Wow. No, yeah, that's That's

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Jennifer Malcolm 06:24

powerful. Because a lot would, you know, a lot of the stories that I'm hearing it, it reflects in your outward relationships. So whether it's harming I'm getting I will get into an unhealthy relationship because I need the attention. I need the the validation. And you on the opposite. Just let it fester within you.

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Shelley Cull 06:46

Yeah, it's, it's really quite interesting. Now, it may have helped that I was Daddy's little girl, and that he thought I could do no wrong. Um, he was a little chauvinistic. And that's, I think, where my intelligence part came from. My, my dad never thought that the woman women had to go to college or, you know, have a career. So I was really certainly never directed from my mother, who never finished high school. And I wasn't really directed by my father, who didn't think it was really important. So, you know, that may have helped in my own, like, such a conflict, confidence. But yet, deep down inside my soul, I would look at myself and think, no, but yet, it didn't show on the outside.

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Jennifer Malcolm 07:43

So when you were when you were a teenager and a young woman, as you would look in the mirror? Where did you see beauty? And hey, I could because you're such a polished woman, you always are put together and you look beautiful. You always have a sassy hair, your nails are done. And, and but did you? Did you look in the mirror and see that and walk in that? Or did you look in the mirror and be like, you know what, I should probably put on a different color lipstick? Because my mom's you know, words are ringing in my ear. Or maybe I should put my hair differently? Or maybe I should do something. So how does that like when you were, you know, a teenager into early adulthood?

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Shelley Cull 08:20

Yeah, it was so sad. I just thought I looked ugly. I just would look in the mirror. And every time I would see her, she would say maybe the next time you come home, we can go to my girl and she could fix your hair. Or she would say, I am not going into that store with you unless you put some lipstick on. Or she would say, Are you going to you're going to wear that. You know, and I you know, I didn't become her? Yeah, um, I really was sad that I didn't look good. And when your mother says it, you think that she's the only one telling the truth. Because usually a mother is the one like I am with my kids and you work with your kids. It's like they are fabulous in every way. So when my friends would tell me that I look great, or that I was smart. I really wouldn't believe them. I believe that. My mom's message was the one so I was always kind of trying to fix my hair and fix but everything was really pretty together. Like I wore makeup and I dressed up when I had to be dressed and I didn't really care. I'm not the kind of go to the grocery store and put makeup on and wear a nice outfit where my mother was you don't go out and let You're dressed. Right. So I don't think I reacted that. You know, that's kind of a in between. I think I was normal in always trying to have the best haircut or the best makeup and the best clothes. But I didn't do it. Because of her. Like, I almost like dismissed what she said. I believed it. But then somehow I carried on. That's so cool.

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Jennifer Malcolm 10:27

I never thought about that was really interesting. And it and I think it's really imperative, the distinction if someone complimented you, you might be able to say thank you, but the word, like my mom's words have to Trump that, like, they'll see something that you know, this person isn't seeing.

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Shelley Cull 10:47

I mean, every time I would open the door to see her and go to see her, she would greet me with you look so tired. Like a what value? Could that ever be mothers out there? Tell your child that they your daughter, you know that they look tired? Or they need a haircut? Right? I mean,


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Jennifer Malcolm 11:16

I I remember. I know. You know, I'll ask her apology to my sister later. But when I got remarried, two summers ago, we were in Florida. And again, Chad has seen he loves me for me. Yeah, he loves me. No matter if I have makeup on, if I have a hat on, if I have sweat pants on, if I have stilettos on, he doesn't care. All he sees is good. And it's and it's,

it's been a relationship that I'm now seeing my worth. I'm seeing my value. I'm seeing that it doesn't. It's not to it's not tied to other I have a haircut or I have gray hair, or Hey, and pounds overweight. Never. That's never the issue in his mind. He always uses it. And so that we go is getting married, my sister was like, are you gonna like do something with those, that grace, where you get married. And I was like, I honestly wasn't going. I wasn't going to. But that's all I thought of all week was the pictures. And again, it was my my wedding. But I knew Chad didn't care. I knew he didn't care. And so they all went out one night and I went to the store and I got my box, you know, hair, hair color to do my roots. And I was like miserable. And I was angry. And Chad was like, Who cares? Just come and play with us? And I was like, No, someone said this, and I need to fix it. And yeah, and I love you, Sis, I know you're gonna listen to this. I love you. But it hurts it you know, like there's a piece of you know, words have the power of life and death.

 **Shelley Cull** 12:49
Yeah.

 **Jennifer Malcolm** 12:50
And if you are saying things that, hey, you know, next year in town, I'm gonna take you to get a haircut or, you know, always trying to nitpick. That's, it doesn't

 **Shelley Cull** 13:00
Yeah. I mean, you hit the nail on the head. You heard the words, you knew intellectually. That didn't really matter that Chad didn't care, like Ray says to me, how could you wake up and look just as beautiful as you did? And then, you know, he would say, I'd say Well, I'm not putting any makeup on for this. And he said, why would you like why mess with like Rembrandt?

 **Jennifer Malcolm** 13:28
I love it. Now and

 **Shelley Cull** 13:30
I love our men and I just him. And another big thing was, would we ever judge anyone else based on? I know, I wouldn't based on their hair or their body or their lipstick. Right, I would never judge and I have the most beautiful and spirit beautiful friends in the world. And I know the value of that. And so for me to have always been so critical of myself. It's

just like, duh, like, it's like this misconnection there that I've been always trying to work out.



Jennifer Malcolm 14:16

So when your your when your mom was saying these things, what hurt words that she would did not see the value of education or your mind? Or was it that she was picking on your hair, your lipstick, your clothes, all that or was it but well?



Shelley Cull 14:31

No, it was definitely the appearance and she really never spoke to my mind. It was only my dad's lack of conversation and direction. And this is another story but it turned out that when my son was diagnosed with a DD I laughed and I said, I know where that came from. And so I didn't think I was smart because I didn't number one. I didn't have goals. My parents never talked to me about goals, which I think is an important conversation. And like, what do you want to be when you grow up? Never had that conversation. And so then when when I didn't take honors classes in high school, and when I went to college, and I thought I should major in dance. I mean, dance. Okay. Um, I just thought that I wasn't on that right track. So it took a while before, you know, I got there. But when my mom would criticize my appearance, and it happened, and it still happens, the last time I was with her, before COVID started, she said, I said, Come on, mom, I'm going to take your she's in a nursing facility. And I said, we're gonna go out to dinner. And she looked at me and she said, aren't you gonna put up in your face and do your hair and change? And I said, you know, Mom, I'm good. I said, I'm dressed. I've got on my face, and I've got my hair. Let's go. I mean, I'm 68 frickin years old. And she's still saying, Are you gonna go out like that?



Jennifer Malcolm 16:20

I've met your mom numerous times, and I adore her. But that would have to be like nails on a chalkboard? Like, no, let's just go eat some food.



Shelley Cull 16:30

Yeah, yeah. And, you know, it was interesting, you know, one of the questions we thought about was, um, have you ever tried to talk to her about this? And I remember just about four or five years ago, that I was deep into fixing this, you know, and getting over it. And ultimately, you know, we'll talk about like, this bright line eating, which is a community of love, a community of love, and, and helping each other. By supporting each other and someone in that community. I posted something about body dysmorphia disorder, this

BDD. And I said, has anyone ever, you know, experienced that. And of course, I got so much profound acknowledgement and love and that people never would talk about it. And they thank me for bringing it up. And someone had recommended this book, the broken mirror. And it's five like this. Katherine Philips, Dr. Philips. And it's a thing. It's a thing like body dysmorphia. And it's, it's an obsession. There wasn't a day that ever went by in my life, that I didn't have some negative feelings about my body or my face, you know. And so I went to the doctor, and I read this book, I went to my doctor, and I just started crying. And I just said, I've been doing some research, and I think this must be like, what I have, um, and she really listened and really acknowledged it, or the first time I'd ever talked about it. And she gave me a low dose like anti depressant, she said, they that takes away the obsessive thoughts. Yeah. And so I went on that. And I went to my mom's and I brought the book in my hand. And I wanted to have another discussion with her about how her words hurt. And what's important in life, you know, and what, what, you know, more meaningful discussion. And she greeted me with you look so tired. As soon as I walked in the door, and I am such a calm person, I rarely get angry, raise my voice. Like, I screamed at her for the very first time in my life. Wow. And I threw the book, the book at her, like, at the counter, like, and I said, I can't believe you're fucking saying stuff like that. After I'm 65 years old, and you're still greeting me with you look tired. You don't look good. You need a haircut. What are you wearing? I said, See this book? This is what you did to me. Wow. And, you know, she kind of heard it. And then she cried. But then nothing ever changed. Right? You know? Yeah, and I understand That now I understand. She was only trying to help me succeed in life. Because she ran away from home to get married get away from an abusive, horrible father that scrubbed her lips with Brillo pads, because she had lipstick on, she could never bring friends home. She was an only child, her mother was really narcissistic. And she basically was raised by herself. Always lonely, always sad. And she just wanted me to be beautiful, because her beauty got her where she needed to go.



Jennifer Malcolm 20:40

Wow. Which is powerful, closing the loop. Because as you are dealing with your shit, your mom, your mom is operating out of her wounds out of what she knew how hurt how she was surviving. And then her dysfunction, dysfunctional communication with towards you. It was her way to try to have you survive. Have you thrive, have you and all you felt was the opposite of I'm not good enough. I'm not pretty enough. I'm not thin enough. I'm not put together enough. And it's an again, when we talk about, you know, the why of this podcast. It's like breaking those loops. And those chains that bind us to our past stories, the things that, you know, we you know, whether it's wordiness, whether it's beauty, whether it's shame, whether it's voice, all those things, that we break the cycle of the lies that have captured our heart, whether it's been to us or whether we chose to be you know, situation, but it's there. But your mom, I mean, there's a compassion in my heart like your

mom did it for some reasons that serve that served her well in her her life. Wow. But Wow, super dysfunctional, and super harmful to you?

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Shelley Cull 22:10

Yeah. Yeah. That's what she knew, and that she was trying to help. So that really did help me to forgive her. Yeah. Yeah, you know,

J

Jennifer Malcolm 22:21

so as you entered, because I know that you've had several, you've had decades of successful careers, in business and in coaching, and in your consultative work with the restaurants and in your collaboration and co partnership with your first husband, with the veterinarian practice. So in that though, you're you you appear, you're very articulate, you come across very put together poised intelligent, you're smart. But where were you also still struggling with this, this dysfunctional beauty or the shattered mirror syndrome? As you are seeing success as you are becoming a mom as you are raising strong boys? You know, were you able to ever separate those two things?

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Shelley Cull 23:10

You know, again, I'm so thankful that, and I don't even really know what it was, but I never gave it that power. I never thought I couldn't figure something out. You know, I don't know why. You know, one time someone said, if you had like a magic wand, um, would you change your life? And would you, you know, my goal to be beautiful and skinny, was just as crazy as my goal of wanting to be four inches taller. You know? You know, and, and I couldn't, I think that success breeds success. And so, I've always loved one of my favorite quotes was you must do the thing that you think you cannot do. And once I started to tackle this things from when Scott was born, my little one and almost died and had a year and a half of medical struggles. And I rose to that occasion, when Jim my ex, like, wanted to stay in his area of expertise as a veterinary specialist and travel. I'm the one that said, you know, if I can run a restaurant, I can run a veterinary practice. Why don't you have your own practice? And, you know, he was like, I don't know anything about business. I just know how to take care of the animals. Why? I thought that I could figure everything out. I don't know. Thank you. Word. Yeah, but every single thing I had to figure out, I did the research. I got it done. So it was interesting that you know, thanks for asking everything that I kind of set my mind to do. I did whether it was I mean, I spoke in front of 400 people when I was like 24 years old, like at a national restaurant convention, like I was too young to know to be scared, right? Um, so I had a presence and professionalism, and a lot of motivation. So where did that all come from? And why didn't I like cower like that I wasn't

smart enough, or there wasn't attractive enough. Thank God, I just kept going. And then every success that I had, I did it even on purpose. Wow, I could do that. Wow. And like, even when I ran a marathon, I did it to see if I could do it. Right. And then to motivate others to say, if this person can do it, at 45 years old, you know, then you can do it. You know, and then again, I had good men in my life. And when Jim heard me say, I don't know, I'm not really smart. Have you ever graduated from college? I got a two year degree in Restaurant Management. He said, What are you talking about? You're smarter than I am. I couldn't have done what you did. I mean, I got a \$600,000 loan. You know, when we started our practice, after four banks turned us down. You know, when I was the one that wrote the business plan, did everything. We I built a building, you know, we have 30 employees. And he said, we're smarter than I am. I'm like, No, and he and I. And I said, Well, why didn't I graduate from college? Why did I graduate? He said, Well, you said you had a DD or something if you want to graduate from college, like go back to college. So I went back to college when I was 45 at bw, and shared alma mater, and I graduated, like, when I was 50, um, with a business degree and everything I learned, I already knew, because I had figured it out. No.



Jennifer Malcolm 27:34

And that's, that's funny, because, you know, I just got my MBA this I finished this spring from Vaughn Wallace. And it was interesting because being in business, 10 years, there was a lot I knew, there was a lot of like terminology. They didn't know or the things that I didn't know was like economics, or some things. I'm like, you know what, I will hire someone in that area. Like I wasn't, I never, I never want to master that areas. So your dad was a strong male voice in your life. Jim, yes, strong male voice in your life, right now is a strong male voice in your life. And that continuum of you know, having people that support and breathe life into your dream and who you want to be is amazing.



Shelley Cull 28:20

Thank you. Yes. And you know, I remember the day that I started this bright line eating, which is like a weight loss, but community for support and growth. And I was going to be getting on this call, like a boot camp call. And I remember Ray coming home from work early. And I was just about to get on this, this call. And it was going to be talking all about like body image and things like that. And I was afraid to get on the call that he might hear me talking about this stuff. Because I never told him. I really never told anybody. And I remember him saying I said, Can I talk to you for like two minutes because I have to hurry. I have to get on this call. But I have to tell you something. And I said, I have a terrible like body dysmorphia, like appearance dysmorphia. Like I suffer all the time with all these things my mom ever like said about me. And I think I found like a solution. And I have to

give him this call. But I just want to after the call. I want to talk to you about it. Yeah. And he didn't have a clue. And he ended up saying to me, if I ever had one wish for you, it would be for you to see yourself through my eyes. You know, he was so loving. And, you know, even my girlfriends, I've had girlfriends since I was five years old. And I couldn't even talk to them about it because they thought I was stupid, like, not stupid, stupid, but ridiculous, stupid. And I've never really been overweight more than like 10 times in my life. And yet, I thought I was obese. And I thought I was ugly, and my girlfriends dismissed it, because they couldn't even imagine that, I would think something like that. And then I just started to meet more people that had the same problem. You know, so, that was a big day when, you know, I always had good men in my life and good women in my life. And I just finally had to, like, take the covers off, and come forward with that.



Jennifer Malcolm 30:55

So let's transition into brightline. Because I know that is a daily practice for you now. And you found a tribe that works you that acknowledges your pain points, that doesn't, you know, it's one of the things they don't dismiss you, if you say they don't dismiss you, it's getting to root issues is getting to healing, body mind, soul spirit, altogether. So share the your work with them and how you practice.



Shelley Cull 31:31

Well, this woman, this woman who leaves this organization, her name is Susan Pierce, Thompson, and PhD, and she is a cognitive brain science. She taught at the college levels, on obesity and brain science and, and all of this so. And she is a self self made success. She was an addict, and she was obese, and she was a prostitute. And she, she was homeless. And now, even though she was a professor, she gave up tenure, because she felt called to bring this to the world too. It's about food addiction. And it's about our our, how much our brains are affected in our bodies by the food that we eat. So when she does her, her speaking her vlogs, her, you take a test on the susceptibility scale, and it's on a scale of one to 10. Because what I think I'm trying to say is that bright line eating is first about the addiction of sugar, about the addiction of certain foods like flour and sugar. So we don't eat any flour or sugar. We eat, it's ordered eating, for some reason. Like I've been on every diet in the world, every diet that ever existed. And this brought me not only a diet, but a calm, mindset, the theme is happy, thin and free. So no flour, no sugar, three meals, no snacks. And when you eat this way, your brain stops to have all this trauma and buisness I know I'm not explaining it really well. But to me, thousands of women that actually did this were successful like me. Um, it just brought the biggest change to my life to date.



Jennifer Malcolm 34:02

Which is powerful, because when I came down and visited you guys back in January or February, and you're like, Alright, there's no flour, no sugar, here's here's great, here's raised cheat door. I was like who is going to be a crazy few days, but it wasn't like the meals were you know, you you always have a bountiful of fruits and vegetables and eats and you eat, you know, a great portion. You and I went on walks and so it is a lifestyle of, you know, getting certain toxins out of our body that don't serve us or make us sluggish. And so it was a it was an interesting few days because I came home and I told Chad that we were going to give up sugar and flour and I think he lasted until well the first morning he lasted till breakfast because he said he forgotten he had a pop tart. The second day, he he I think he made it till about two or three and he was like Yeah, I don't know. But he kept saying he was trying. And I was like, trying when you go and get a handful m&ms, that's not trying. But it's deliberate to like sabotage.



Shelley Cull 35:10

But it didn't. It's all excuse me for interrupting, but it's all about pain. It's all about pain. And if you're in mental pain, and I'm not saying physical pain, like, I will always really ate healthy. Um, but for people that really eat a lot of sugar and flour, often, it leads to medications that you have to take and aches and pains in your bodies. And the thing about bright line eating is that it's not a diet, it's a lifestyle. And she has had more people that have lost 40-50-100-150 pounds than any other like program, and have maintained the weight loss. That's her goal is for people to live like happy, thin and free. It is so glorious to see people like I only lost like 18 pounds, I'm I'm unique, like most people lost a lot more. But I lost it four years ago and never gained it back. So that's, that's really a success. And to see people, so many of my friends there were literally obese, and they're not anymore. And so they're living a whole entirely different life, right.



Jennifer Malcolm 36:32

And what I really appreciate awesome when I was with you, is that you have a group of women that you get on a call every day, and you every morning at 8am. So it's it's also that like soul and spirit connection that is beyond just the eating and the accountability. There is a community and I'm intrigued by it. And I did a little bit of research when I came back from Florida with you. But that peace of a community of friendship, of authentic relationships of going through life's challenges. And you've really built that beyond just yeah, flour and sugar.



Shelley Cull 37:09

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. And, you know, people there's a vlog this week, she does a Wednesday blog, and this one like is bright line eating a cult. Because we all kind of jokingly call it a call. And what happens on it's not really called but



Jennifer Malcolm 37:28

for clarification, it's not a cult.



Shelley Cull 37:32

Because see, they're no ble police, like we she says, do your own research, you know, and make it your own. But the light, the world eats differently. And we have to face life on the road, we have to face I just experienced something where I was in a family's someone else's kitchen. And it wasn't my family. It wasn't I mean, it was my family. But it wasn't where I felt really comfortable. Like at your house, I could say I'm taking over your kitchen. I know exactly. I'm making some green beans, I'm making some asparagus, she would be making all this food and I wasn't going to eat it. And then how awkward is it to say, I'm going to make some green beans? And then they say why are you made a break green bean casserole? You know? So when when we talk to each other every day, there's four of us and we do you know a video call every morning, we talk about what's coming up, how we're going to handle it, how we're going to prepare our food ahead of time, how we're going to have certain conversations, you know, and then of course, it goes beyond that, because we're just dear friends and we did meet even though it's an online community, we did meet at the reunion, one of the reunions and then we all click together. And we've been talking on the phone together every morning at eight o'clock for two years.



Jennifer Malcolm 39:05

Amazing. And I think that's the piece that's different too. Because we often go into social settings where we know it's coming. We know like, Alright, it's gonna be fat foods or things that aren't, you know, in our butt. But we don't come with prepared foods, you know, we'll be like, well, let's figure something out. Or we don't practice the words that we need to practice in order to empower. So that ability to say, all right, I might need some help on some language. And yes, sound and practice that so that you go in empowered versus reaction reactionary.



Shelley Cull 39:40

Yep, exactly. Exactly.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 39:43

So how today I know that that I get to see your mom via you know, your Facebook posts now and since she moved to Florida, I really haven't seen her much but how is your relationship with her today? And I know you and I talked about this, when I was down about, you know, at what point do you just really just completely let go and let it be, and just love her. She's in her 90s. So just love her where she's at, and enjoy the, you know, the last remaining years with her, or feel like you need some closure.

S

Shelley Cull 40:23

You know, um, I had to do a really hard thing and move away from her. So, she lived near me in New York for a while, and it hurt our relationship. And so, when I moved to Florida, I never thought my brothers would step up, you know, and, and they did. So we all have our roles. My brother is there in person, he's in Westlake, then my older brothers in Michigan, so he's a doctor so he can do, he's in charge of her health care, then, of course, I'm the administrator, so I can take care of all the finances and all the her stay in the facility and all and I think I've made peace with her. And with it. I'm glad that I don't have to be there taking the abuse, like every day. And it It's so sad. It's so sad that she's so negative, still lonely still. And complains still. And so I have a lot of empathy that she will leave this world. Never having felt. Love fun and friendship and faith. Right, you know, so I do have, um, I always used to say, which wasn't very nice, but I would say I don't like her. Nor do I love her. I never remember her being a mother mother. I'd never read that she never babysat for my kids. Never ever. She never. I don't think I was ever read stories, you know, is a I don't. It's just I feel like she was my nanny. And so I've reached out to others for my love. Yeah. So now, I'm rather detached with love. Yeah. Yeah, no. And

J

Jennifer Malcolm 42:30

Mm hmm. And it's interesting, because you said fun, faith family. And there was something else? And I know, those are your pillars. and friendship. Yeah, I know, those are the pillars of your life that you are. You have the friends that you have the fun the community, the family. I know, faith is important to you. So those are like your foundational principles.

S

Shelley Cull 42:50

Yes. And, you know, um, this is what I, what I taken away from all of that, is that, you know, a question is like, what would you recommend to to others that might be going through

this? And at first, I thought, fix it. You know, like, when I fixed mine, I set up a strategy. And I'm like, I didn't think I was a good way. So I'm going to get fit, you know, and I did, and I was in a women's fitness competition, and I won all the medals at 49. Like, because I was the oldest one there. But I didn't care. Like I was still doing cartwheels and splits at 49. Right? And then I decided to go back to college. So then I got straight A's and everything, like statistics and corporate finance. And I'm like, Oh, I guess I smart. And then because I felt smart and fit my whole appearance, belt, you know, better. But what do you take away from that is not just fix it. But I became a better mother. I became like the opposite of my mother. And I let the kids spill the milk when they wanted to pour their milk at the table. You know, I was the one that had the home full of kids. I was the one my my one another saying was my motto was whenever your kids ask you to be somewhere, you always say yes. You know, because some parents have children that don't ask their parents their mother to be somewhere. And so all of this pain made me a better person.



Jennifer Malcolm 44:45

You know, and you are a phenomenal mom. And I mean again, Jimmy and and Scott were I mean, I was there when you brought Scott home from the hospital and just watching you just mother with wisdom, with compassion, with friendship, with understanding with compromise, like you You love unconditionally your boys. And it's been you know you that's evidence as you watch, and I know that you brought a letter today of a if you can read it read it without crying, I read it, yes. gifted one of your boys, and I know you wanted to share that.



Shelley Cull 45:31

Thank you Well, my son, both of my sons, they never want for anything. And I don't know where that ever came from. They never want money, they never want stuff. They're just so down to earth, you know? And, and so one time for his birthday, I said, this got what do you want for your birthday? And he said nothing. And then I said, Now come on, what do you want for your birthday? And he said, All right. Write me a letter. Write me a letter telling me how to be happy in life. I'm like, Okay.



Jennifer Malcolm 46:09

All righty, here we go.



Shelley Cull 46:11

So here's the letter that I wrote. Happy birthday to my cherish son, how to win at living a

simple strategy. Who finding joy is an interesting task. Putting some thought into this question you asked. For me, I found that changes good. Doing things I thought I couldn't but could help me see what was truly in me. And doing the thing that you think you cannot do was key, whether college at 50, Europe at 20, climbing a mountain speaking to 400 or 26.2 mile run, achieving the impossible was extremely fulfilling and ultimately, upon reflection brought joy and fun. Another key to joy for me and living life completely, is having dear friends and family near who seemed to help complete me different kinds of friends and different kinds of views on topics far and wide. enrich my life and help me grow and filled me up inside. So if I was feeling sad and blue and losing my perspective, one special person from this group would help me be objective. And soon, I'd say with clarity that all would clearly be well with me. Bad things happen in life, for sure. And we may struggle to understand why. And we just want to break down and cry. But looking back on my life, I've realized that when I was rejected, I was actually being repositioned and simply redirected. So again, joy comes from having faith and keeping your perspective. My last component that comes to mind for happiness in life, is to live each day with gratefulness. And to find a loving wife. I found that joy is better shared with people you adore. And children are the greatest joy you'll ever find. By far.



Jennifer Malcolm 48:33

Those of you who are listening, we're both tears streaming down her face.



Shelley Cull 48:40

Oh,



Jennifer Malcolm 48:41

and what came to my mind, as you started reading was what we were talking about a half hour ago about your mom and the things and breaking that chain and cycle like she did the best. But you broke you broke some chains of of stuff from her past, and the gift that you are to your boys. And now the gift that they're going to be with their children. Yeah, you've reset the entire direction. Thank you painful, and I know you struggled, but you now have grandchildren that are going to rise up and call you blessing and your boys are going to call you blessed and the strength that you have to overcome, you know, just wounds that pierced your soul at a hurtful relationship yet you've changed the toxic toxicity of it.



Shelley Cull 49:36

Thank you. Yes, I believe that and I'm so full of joy for that.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 49:44

So we've created this podcast as a safe place for women, a place to come and get encouragement, a place to come and find someone that aligns with my Heart aligns with my wounds aligns with my past aligns with my hopes or my dreams? And what would be some words of encouragement that you would want to gift to women who will be listening to this?

S

Shelley Cull 50:16

No, I thought a lot about that. And they need to, to tell to tell someone, well, they don't need to. I felt that by talking about it, and bringing it out of myself. I found comfort and love and advice and cherished authentic relationships by just revealing my truth. It brought me closer to my own husband. Um, and then I did set out to fix it. I said, I'm done with this. You know, if I think a, then I'm going to prove it's not true. If I think be, I'm going to prove it's not true. I think See, I'm going to prove it's not true. And then I'm going to take away what did that pain, teach me on how what to value in in my life now for my children's life. So really, to come up with your own FIX IT strategy, because life is too short. Life is too short. You know, you deserve we all deserve to find, to feel complete and in joyful.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 51:46

Yeah. And that's powerful. And they and I will, I will validate the part about speaking it and sharing it. It doesn't have to be in a public manner. It doesn't have to be in a therapist office. But sharing it breaks down the lies, sharing it brings the truth to the surface sharing it makes us have community and it's not about someone else fixing it. But the things that we push down and we bottle in and we don't use our voices because of anger business, ugliness, dysmorphia, whatever those things are, we lock them in. And when we start talking about them, writing about them, acknowledging that they exist. That's the first step of healing. It's that first Yes, of, of taking as a one small step of courage to heal. And and I applaud, I think I I absolutely agree with you and beginning to share that journey.

S

Shelley Cull 52:48

Thank you.



Jennifer Malcolm 52:49

I know you also inclosing brought another piece of work with you that pourtant. And that speaks a lot and this will be a familiar one. It's not an original piece by Shelley. But one that is powerful, that really aligns with what we've discussed today. So why don't you close with this?



Shelley Cull 53:09

Thank you. And this was something that my dear friend Victoria sent to me this morning after our call with our our mastermind group, to just let her know that it would go well and that she was thinking of me and that this will not only perhaps help me but all the women that listen to your your podcasts. Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us, we ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous, actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And when we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. And then



Jennifer Malcolm 54:36

and then famous passage from Marianne Williamson and powerful speaker and so as we're closing today, I would love to challenge the audience to speak out your fears. Take take five minutes to either journal, something down, something that you want to work on something that you know is locked down in your soul, your spirit, whether it's image, whether it's insecurities, whether it's fear, fear of failing, whether it's shame worthiness issues, whatever that is, write that down. And then also write down one thing you want to see or do. So whether that is I want to go back at 50 years old and finish my college degree, I want to run a marathon at, you know, my age, I want to lose 20 pounds. I want you to do two activations today, one, start on bottling that which is deep down within you that you know, is screaming and wanting to come out. And number two, let's take a time to write down one dream, something in your heart that you can visually see. And let's put that into activation today. So, thank you, my dear heart friend, I have like a studio full of Kleenex around me of tears of truth. And I always I always say, My tears are my strength. They are not my weakness, my tears. They are not. Yes. And I am honored to call you my friend, and grateful that you had the courage to come out today. I know when I first asked you, you're like, Oh, hell no.



56:13

I know. I wanted to say no. And then I just knew that it was for the greater good.



Jennifer Malcolm 56:19

It is. And I knew that if I give you enough time, you would come around. So I just need to give you some time to let it sit with you. But I'm honored that you were here today. And thanks for taking out your time this morning to be with us. really grateful for you.



Shelley Cull 56:33

Thank you, Jenn and thanks for doing this for all of us.



Jennifer Malcolm 56:35

You're very welcome. So thanks, everyone for tuning in. today. I am honored that you took your time to listen to our story, Shelley story, which is powerful, and we look forward to connecting with you next week. All right, have a good one. Bye. Subscribe to the Jennasis Movement to empower women's voices and reclaim the power over your own narrative.