

# mindfulness-and-the-me-hour-with-denisha-parker

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

life, yoga, people, single mom, women, meditation, nisha, started, years, teacher, dream, teaching, practice, mom, experience, love, work, week, center, navigate

## SPEAKERS

Denisha Parker, Jennifer Malcolm



Jennifer Malcolm 00:10

Calling on women who are curious and called to be women warriors are rising in this day of age, to heal and grow together. I am your host, Jennifer Malcolm, self made entrepreneur, women advocate and life balance expert. Welcome to the next episode of the Jennasis Speaks podcast where every woman has a story and every story matters. And yes, I keep saying this week after week, that means you. I'm your host, Jennifer Malcolm founder and president of Jennasis and Associates and visionary officer at Jennasis Speaks With me today is Denisha Parker. And I got we've never formally met, I got introduced to her through my friend, Liz, and she highly recommended that I should capture Denisha's story. And as we enter into this new year, and starting to really focus on self care and self love, we just thought this was a really powerful story to bring at the beginning of this year. So, welcome to Denisha thank you. I'm going to read your bio, so that everyone kind of gives a little bit of some summary about you and then we're just gonna jump into your story. Perfect. Denisa Parker says she's been busy since she was a young adult. Now the mother of five children between the ages of seven and 22. She's balanced raising children as a single mom while obtaining a bachelor's degree in social work, and having a full time job and having a part time job. She then obtained her master's degree in special education, and has been teaching in the south Euclid school district for the past 12 years. Denisha discovered yoga while looking for a way to decompress her hectic life. As she moved from class member to instructor she wondered

why she was the only woman of color in yoga classes. Denisha believes now more than ever, women of color need what she calls the me our time when they can make their self care their priority. That's why she launched Yoganisha, a program that makes yoga more accessible to diverse communities. It's the first step toward her next goal, creating a wellness center for diverse communities. Welcome to Denisha.



Denisha Parker 02:26

Thank you. I mean, I just love I love looking at you and you're smiling from ear to ear. Love your energy. Well, thank you. Children. So and they're seven from ages seven to 22. Yes, the youngest is seven and the oldest is 22. I have an eight year old twins in between and a nine year old.



Jennifer Malcolm 02:55

I said plus working and you know, yeah. A lot of your success stories, while being a single mom. And then you're currently remarried. And I was a single mom for 10 years as well. So I know that pain point. Yeah.



Denisha Parker 03:10

Yeah, it's a little bit of both. It's a little bit of both.



Jennifer Malcolm 03:15

So why don't you start with just sharing a little bit about who you are. I don't know if you were born and raised in Cleveland. I don't know if you were a transplant, just the woman who you are that maybe be a little bit on top of the bio that I shared. And we'll go from there.



Denisha Parker 03:29

Great. Perfect. Well, yeah, like Jen said, I'm a nice to Denisha Parker. I'm 42 years old. And I was born and raised in Cleveland. So I've been here my entire life. You know, I grew up in the inner city of Cleveland. I went to Cleveland public schools. You know, my mom was a single mom for a while and she remarried. And so my dad, I call them my dad, like, he's still you know, a huge part of her like, he raised us from young age. I after, you know, after college, I mean, after high school, went to college, and then I got pregnant with my first son. And I said, Whoa, whoa, what do you do from here? You know, I'm like, 20 years old, and I'm pregnant with my first child. And, you know, I took a break from school, and you

know, to try to figure out my life so I worked as a teller, you know, I had a little job to navigate it. And being a teller just like that, it for me, I was like, Okay, well, let's try something else. So I, I started to work at Progressive Insurance. And I loved it. And by 23, I was pregnant with a set of twins. And one wasn't enough, and then I wrapped my mind around to how about three Denisha? Let's do this. You're 23 years old. Now you have not one not two but three children at 23 while you're trying to figure out your life. And then shortly after me in her dead split, so at 23 years old, I'm single mom with three kids and I didn't have an option to fail, like failure was not an option. The my son twin, he was a preemie. And so I spent a lot of time and nicu, you know, it's like, Whoa, maybe I'll become a nurse. You know, so I took all of the, you know, the science classes to become, you know, the prereqs to get into nursing school. And I didn't get into nursing school that year. So I'm like, I don't have any time to waste, you know, in my 20s, I have a 30 children, they need me because all they have is me. And I went to my counselor and like, what can I do? Tell me, what can I do where I won't lose my credits will continue to push forward, because I don't have a year to wait to redo this. And she was like, well, you can go into social work. What did that entail? Tell me tell me a little bit more about that. While it's like, well, I'm still helping people to the max capacity. So sign me up. So I ended up getting my bachelor's degree and social work. And I bought a house in between that navigation of, you know, going into social work a bit. My internship was at the Center for families and children wrapper, so the nonprofit in Cleveland, Hades. And I feel so much in love with it just working with, with students with the flexibility of you know, not being tied to a desk, but really getting in there and working with children, who had social emotional issues, who was working on, you know, drug prevention, that was the whole bias of this program. And I fell in love with it. And so, you know, I graduated, and they offered me a job a month before I graduated with my bachelor's degree, contingent upon me getting the bachelor's degree, of course. And it was phenomenal. I just thought I found my spot. But I was like, you know, I'm gonna hold on to progress, though, because I'm a single mom. And so that's how the evolution of the two jobs started. Yeah, so I went full time at the rap Art Center, and I went part time at Progressive. And I'm like, you know what, I'm going to just take some time to figure out what I want to get my master's degree in. By this time, you know, so I'm plugging through I decide to go to get my master's in special education intervention specialist full time. And the wrap Art Center provided as opportunities to go into local school districts to have groups with students to, you know, enhance their social emotional to, you know, teach them about alcohol and drug prevention. And all the students that I would get, they would be, you know, have behavioral issues, they will be low academically, it was all those things, students, they were bringing it to me, and I loved working with them. So in between that year off, I said, You know what, I'm gonna go to school for special education. And I never wanted to be a teacher. I never thought that I wanted to be a teacher. And my life just kind of took this path, and I followed this path. And so I got my master's degree in special education. And that's how I started teaching.



Jennifer Malcolm 08:21

That's awesome. And what I really loved hearing is, I put the power of pivoting as you were talking, cuz it was like, Alright, I'm in my undergrad. Now, I'm a mom, pivot, I now at age 23, have, you know, three children pivot. I'm now a single mom. And it's just that life gently navigated you down a pathway that you probably didn't lay out for you some people, you know, like, when they're four, like, I'm gonna be a teacher, when I grow up, I'm gonna be an attorney. When I grow up, I'm gonna, this is what my life's gonna look like, and they just do it. But I love that you just allowed life to really guide you in a gentle way to bring you to the woman, dynamic, powerful woman that you are today.



Denisha Parker 09:07

Thank you. Yeah, Yes, I did. I, you know, I'm the first and the first woman or the first woman or man to graduate in my family from college. My sisters follow after I'm the oldest of three girls. And, you know, it wasn't, I didn't have that figure in that or that person in my head saying you have to go to college. You have to do this because that was something that my family hadn't experienced. I did really well in school. So my counselors were saying you had to go to college. But I didn't really know what that looks like. You know, I didn't really know how to navigate that. And so



Jennifer Malcolm 09:47

That's how I was my husband is a professor at Baldwin Wallace University and I talked about him a lot on the podcast, but from an early age, he was like, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. His mom was a professor, in a university, his sister's a teacher in Gatlinburg. Now, his brother's an engineer, and so is very, very academic focused, you know, he got his undergrad, then he got his master's, and he's got his doctorate. And for me, I was the first graduate college, graduate in my family as well. And again, my cousin's have followed beyond, you know, there are several years younger than me, and they've, they followed that path. But when you accomplish something in your space, and family that hasn't been accomplished before, there is that, that joy and that pride, to change the narrative of a family tradition. And again, I'm looking at my f2 in college now. And college isn't for everyone, there is, you know, all sorts of different pathways that universe God higher power navigates us to and through, but it is powerful when you do have that first change of direction from what your family history has been, because I did experience that as well.



Denisha Parker 11:03

Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.



Jennifer Malcolm 11:06

So I had the phrase in, in the notes here, that you describe yourself as having a layered life. What is layered life mean to you?



Denisha Parker 11:17

Well, we are like it, being able to, you know, have that mind body awareness. You know, I am very busy all the time. And so sometimes, for me, that looks like I'm working a lot of helping other women find their path, sometimes it looks like, I'm deeply rooted in being a mom, because my children need me or my husband needs me. And my life looks different from day to day. And I just allow myself to have those moments, those different spaces within my life, to kind of navigate to kind of see what I need. But I put myself at the top of that means I'm at the top of the pyramid, and for a long time, I didn't understand what that meant, you know, people like oh, Joe, Mom, you know, you have to be there for your kids or your wife, you have to be there for your husband. But I was like, well, when do I have time to be there for myself, I've been a mom for a very long time, you know, and then I got married, and I started this second family, or the second, you know, generation of kids, right? So you know, I call him the bigs and the little, my bigs and my little, um, but it's like when you you navigate this space of being a single mom, and then you go, you get married. So shortly after my master's degree, I got married to my husband. And so I'm starting a new career, I'm starting as a teacher, now I'm a wife. And now I'm starting to have additional children. And so I am trying to navigate all of this, and we are all full of layers, you know, we are all full of layers, we go through these different times in our lives of, you know, hardships or celebrations, you know, we have all these these ebbs and flows. And I just allow myself to be in the present moment, and I allow myself to give myself what I need. And that means I need to rough around, that means I need to go full force, I go full force. And I, you know, I haven't always been this way. I mean, this is a, this is an experience that has gotten me to this point, where we're all like onions, we're all peeling back layers all the time, you know, you you never knew know who you're talking to, or you get. And so for me, I have to be grounded and rooted in myself, to be able to be the best version of myself. And that makes sense.



Jennifer Malcolm 13:47

That's beautiful. And there's a lot of common threads from season one of last year, different speakers, and people who were on the podcast about how important it is to put your oxygen mask on first before you can help others. Or there was one that was like, Alright, name, you know, the top five people in your life, and you name them the responses, why aren't you listed in that top five, and we don't navigate it from saying, Well, I have three children and a husband and I have a career and me is never inserted. And I

love the perspective because I think it's so healthy. And as women we feel so guilty for doing it, of putting yourself at that top of the pyramid and saying if my if I if mom's not doing well, if Denisha's is not doing well, if Jennifer is not doing well, then I'm only not in a healthy space when I'm trying to help navigate everyone else around me. And it's not selfish to take care of yourself. It's self care and self love. And women don't see for that. And I want to break that mantra of you know, getting us to a place of, hey, if I need to do yoga, if I need to go do take a walk. If I need to take a nap if I need to, you know not get up on Saturday morning to take you to work. Because when you get your brother can do it. That's self care and self love.

D

Denisha Parker 15:05

Absolutely, it absolutely is. And that's what I'm trying to teach. And it takes a long time to get there. You know, it's not easy to say, I mean, most people look at it as selfish, you know, this is selfish of me to take this time for myself, it's selfish of me to take a nap in the middle of the day when my kids meet me. I have learned from experience that you cannot pour from an empty cup, you just can't do it. You have to replenish and restore all the time so that you can continue to show up. That's good, whether it's for you or for someone else.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 15:37

No. And the difference too, that you're saying is like, I have three kids. I was a single mom. But I had them all young, and I had them close. So by age eight, I was done having kids. So I'm now 45. And I have like two and a half years until I'm an empty nester and everyone's in college. So that's a different space to say, right? I have my bigs on my littles, and I have I have this mom energy and need to be there for my family for another 11 years. And so then you can't wait another 11 years to breathe or to self care, self love. And I'm hoping that the listeners you're hearing this, because I want it to be very clear, it's not selfish. It is self love, self care. And we don't feel guilty. there's a there's a piece, I love how you said it. Denisa there's times that you know, you have to kick it into high gear, and you have to get shit done. And there's other times that you're like, you know, I can pull back and I can rest. And that's okay, too.

D

Denisha Parker 16:37

Absolutely.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 16:38

I love you like this glow about you like this?

D

Denisha Parker 16:40

No, I could add this is a three. So happy when I get to talk about doing this. I mean, it's been a long time coming. And everybody who knows me personally. I mean, they generally say, how do you do at all? How do you find time? You make time. And I mean in my day starts really early in the morning, but most days, I'm up by 4:30, just so that I can. And that's how it all started. You know, I like my me time was early in the morning. And that was the only time I could get me time is if I got up early before my family started to move. And so that started, I don't know, maybe a couple years ago. But today is my 500 and 69th day of straight meditation. Every day, I meditate for 569 days, I have not missed a day, whether I'm out of town, or you know, I'm busy. I get up that is how I start my morning for the last 569 days may have been a game changer.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 17:37

What does that meditation look like for you, like, describe just what that practice for you looks like how long it is, you know, just so that the audience maybe be able to visualize that a little bit with you.

D

Denisha Parker 17:49

Okay, so when I first started, day one, I started with the Calm app, the Calm app, and it was like a 10 minutes started with bad and then 10. And so every day, I would just do this. And so that streak started to grow. And I think that's what it was for me at first, like keep this streak going. This is good to do it so to speak, streak started to grow, which is fabulous. And then my year membership. Now your subscription was up. I tried to do this before probably got 250 days, like Okay, I'm done with it. And then I went back so I did it for the entire year to my membership was up. And I was like I think I can do this on my own now. So after that I started to meditate on my own like so I can meditate when it's quiet. Today I did a 30 minute meditation. So it just depends on how much time I have five minutes is like way too fast. For me, I need it. 10 minutes is a good time. 20 minutes is perfect if I have the time. So and I'm trying to give myself at least 10 to 20 minutes every day to sit and stillness.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 18:51

That's awesome. So you're gonna laugh because last year at this time, my husband and I decided that we are going to start meditating together. I live in insanely busy, packed life schedule. He's a professor that's hit or miss like he's either on or he's off. And so we went out and bought two meditation pillows. And we downloaded Headspace. And so we're

doing this and I think we're like 45 seconds in or both like peeking. Like, dear Lord, when is this five, five minutes going to be up? And we probably did it for maybe two to three weeks. And the pillows have sat there all year. And a few weeks ago our dog came in and she was like fluffing you know, at the end of the bed. And we looked over and like the two pillows are laid out perfectly. She's sitting in between me I'm looking at us like okay fools. When are you going to start you know, like just silence in your mind. And I know the importance of it. I've heard you know the features and benefits of meditation and breath therapy and just centering is so powerful? And why do you think that women don't take that time where people don't take that time?

D

Denisha Parker 20:06

It's hard to sit still, it's hard to be with your thoughts, it's when you get still things come up, you know, things come up maybe that you don't want to deal with, or you don't think you have time to sit and get steel, but it is not easy. It is a process and I still have those days where I'm sitting and I'm like, Okay, it's time to get up. You know, and I'm, you know, over 500 days in so it's, it's just depends on, like, what's going on in your life, but I really think I'm being here we have so much mind chatter, you know, we have so many things coming at us from the outside world, you know, the news, the media, you know, life, life in general. So, to be able to fit feel and just to be with your thoughts can be sometime intimidating.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 20:55

No, that's no, no, that's right in the nose. And I know that I get in there. And I'm like, Alright, I'm going to lose track of these thoughts. I should have a piece of paper next to me so I can jot down the 40 things going through my mind. And Headspace has is a great tool. I'd be curious, I'm gonna look up this Calm app one. But you know, it's that your mind does drift. And that's okay, acknowledge it, acknowledge it, and just come back to your breath or come back to silence and knowing that we're all wired, you know, some people, I think that to meditate, you just have to be that 100% in Zen the entire time. And that's not how most humans are wired. And that we do, it's a still a continual practice. And it's encouraging to hear like, there's days that sometimes you still struggle of, let's let's, you know, get these 10-20 minutes done. And it can still work.

D

Denisha Parker 21:49

Absolutely, it absolutely does. And I love that you said, You know, I need to have a piece of paper to jot this down, because journaling is another thing that I do. And so, you know, journaling hasn't been as consistent as meditation. But for the last three months, everyday after I journal, I mean, every day after I meditate, I take the time to journal, and just to



write down my thoughts, or what came up for me, or sometimes it's just about life in general, you know, what I'm feeling the emotion that I'm having. And sometimes it's just like future plans. It's so random, what I journal, but it is, it is so great to have the two together, they complement each other very well. And I'm determined to stay on that journaling streak as well, because it really helps me to kind of get some of those thoughts and emotions and feelings out on paper and stuff on the inside. Do you view meditation, as a spiritual practice of physical practice of an emotional practice, or combination of all of those, I look at it as combination of all of them, it's a combination of all of them, I think, you know, controlling the breath is, you know, is so powerful in itself. But when one can sit down, and your mind will wander, you know, I've done headspace before too, so and calm, it is the same. They teach you like your mind is going to wander that is a natural part of life for you to have these random thoughts, and then to be coming back. So each and every time you come back, they encourage you to come back to the breath. And the breath is the thing that brings you back to your center each and every time. So when we are, you know, we need energy, we're encouraged to breathe, we need calming, we are encouraged to breathe. So when these thoughts and these outside distractions start to come in while you're trying to be still and cultivate stillness in your life. You come back to the breath each and every time. And so for me, it's not about it's great that I can sit still, but it's how can I carry this meditation practice outside of this pillow? How can I carry this into my life? So when things get hard when life gets chaotic? How can I come back to my center to find my home so that I can get through those hard times? So yes, it is all it's all of that it has literally changed my life.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 24:21

That's awesome. So let's get into your now work because this was really what I was the introduction from Liz, to you. Not only that you're a dynamic and beautiful, powerful woman, but that the yoga practice that you practicing yoga for yourself personally, and then transitioning that to be an instructor. How did that dream or desire begin and just get the audience up to like what you've done over the last year.

D

Denisha Parker 24:53

Okay, so I had to start a little bit before the last year just to kind of get to there. So um, I met Liz at Bar Three. So bar three will be open six, six years and February will be at our six-year mark. And as luck would have it, because I don't know love destiny, whatever you want to call it. I was at school one day and I walked into another teacher's classroom and she said to me, Hey, we're gonna try this new studio studio out call bar three. And would you like to go there having free classes all week? Now, I had never been into group fitness. I had never tried bar, I'd never heard of it. It was totally out of my realm of things. And so I

was like, Sure, I find out that day, opening week, I went, I fell in love. I mean, I fell in love. And then I then and then I came back down to reality. And it's like, you can't afford this. But it was part of that self care for myself that I was just like, you know, I was on this journey. I was starting this journey. And I was like, but you can you will, you are going to make this happen because you need it. And so I did, I became a founding member advisory was incredible. I met Liz, and she was my only instructor forever because I was a teacher. So I have to go at night. And he was always teaching at night. And I want to say that opened in February and March she asked me to be an instructor. Now, I had never done group fitness. I had never done dance. I've never done anything. Anything remotely close to that. I'm a teacher, yes, I'm a teacher. But I'm not a teacher a fitness, you know. So, me being who I am like, you know, I will. So she's like, Okay, you got to go to Portland. And so anyway, worked out. I went to Portland in May, I became an instructor for bar 30. So good, totally out of my comfort zone. But I loved it. I love and I love teaching. I just love teaching children. So, you know, I didn't know what I didn't know, then. Sure. So I go into it, I become an instructor. I've been teaching for five years. Now. It was five years this summer. In between that time, I did, by the way, did a story on me. And then I started going to Portland to do their online videos. So I will fly to Portland and do videos. And it's just been an incredible experience. Again, something totally out of my comfort zone that many years ago, I wouldn't even dream of being in front of someone's camera and trying to teach a fitness. So, um, you know, kind of fast forward to now. You know, teaching bar three, I was loving it. Now, I've been trying to get into yoga, I don't know, maybe for a couple years. And I didn't realize it then. But just going into this phase one I didn't feel like I was I didn't fit the prototype of what yoga resembles, right? Most of the time I'm in the room. I'm the only African American woman I'm very curvy. You know, I'm very, very curvy. I can't do handstands, you know, I feel like I'm pretty strong. But I'm not going upside down and effortless flow upside down, you know. So it was just never really connected to the yoga practice. And I think part of the reason that I didn't connect one is because I was trying to connect for the wrong reason, I was more looking at it as a physical practice, which it is very physical. But now I realized that it's more mental is more of a mental component more of a spiritual component. And so I made the decision to go teach yoga. So I went to a third yoga teacher training last September. And, again, the pandemic started right toward the end. So I made it through all of his training, and we got to the last month and April and everything was shutting down. And I said, Okay, all right. What does this look like now? What do you do with it? It's, you know, I'm still teaching at school, but I was teaching at home for school. And you know, we started livestream at birth three, and I'm like, What do I do with this, you know, like I was, I started teaching yoga. And so in the midst of the yoga thing happening, all of you know, the racial inequality in the world started to shift in a way that I wasn't prepared for. I'm gonna be totally honest with you didn't I think I was harboring a lot of emotions that I didn't know that I have. And it's all the things started to happen in the world. You know, the riots. The you know, I wasn't

prepared, like I was not prepared. I was not emotionally prepared to deal with the conversations that I had, I had a lot of friends reaching out saying, you know, that I support you. And this is something that we've always had to deal with as a black family, you know, living in this world, especially having a black husband and black sons, it's been, you know, it's been challenging the conversations that we had to have, no one should ever have to have, you know, and so during, so all of this, all of this was happening around that time, and for the first time ever, and most, in most cases, I'm the only, again, black woman in the room, because of what I do. Um, I started to question and rethink everything that I thought that I knew, or, you know, everything that I thought to be true. I didn't know anymore. And, you know, I started to teach yoga online, just to all my friends, all my family. I mean, cuz for years, people would come to take my class, but then they won't come back. And I'm just the person that I can get along with anybody. I can show up in any space, I just, I love those who love me. And even if you don't love me, I still love you, because it's just who I am. Yeah. Love each other out. And it was just one of those things where, you know, I was like, I want everybody to experience the love of movement. And it started off, it wasn't even about yoga wasn't about bar three, it was the love of movement, the love of connection, the love of being able to love oneself, you know. And so what happened was, I started teaching these free classes online, to all my friends and family, everybody that would come, everybody that would show up. And for two classes a week, probably from the last day, beginning of May, all the way till June. So I didn't miss a class to two to three classes a week, and they max out wrong moving furniture around, you know, happened into my train and really don't know what I'm doing. I'm just going for it. But it's good for me. Yeah, I just experienced this. And introducing my friends and my family to yoga, in the comfort of their own home, they can cut the cameras off as they want. And, you know, me and Liz started to talk a little bit and she's like, what are you going to do with this? And I was like, No, I would love to have more bring more diversity, to the practice of yoga, it's so great. And mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually. But how can I get other people to realize that to see that, and I'm like, if, if these bonus spaces aren't inviting, and not that they're not inviting, but I mean, it doesn't look like me, you know, so everybody doesn't have the personality that I had, you know, everyone can't walk into a space, when no one looks like that. And be comfortable with that. And I in that, I had to acknowledge that that was part of my acknowledgment of all the things that I didn't even realize, bother me, you know, in all of this, all of this, this process. And so, you know, she was like, well, you need to do something with this, you know, you need to, and we laugh, we would get together and we hobbies conversation, there was like these little sessions we would have, right? I don't know what this is gonna look like. And so that's how Yoganisha kinda was built. Like, I knew that I wanted to have a platform where I can invite all all women and all people into this space for us to move to breed to connect together, you know, to have this one common thing. And that's pretty much how Yoganisha was born. We we laugh because Yoganidra is a thing, you know. And so we were like,

Yoganisha how cool would it be yoga, Yoganisha, and we laughed. I mean, it was it was a funny thing. And it ended up sticking and not so Yoganisha came out.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 34:33

That's awesome. And that's, I love that. That's very similar to how Jennasis was named. Because it was like Jen's this Jen's this Jennifer's this Jen this and then like after like two months it just some someone was like Jennasis and for me that was you know, I spell it with my name, J and n but it to me meant like, going back to the Garden of Eden and going back to recreation is good. Where creation and ideas and new beginnings, all that start. And when it finally came out, we're like, that's it. So I love the Yoganisha because it pulls your name and it pulls in the practice that you want to grow. And I think it's pretty clever.

D

Denisha Parker 35:17

Thank you. We thought it was pretty clever too.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 35:21

So you talk also about the me hour and I know that we we've hit a little bit about your practice and getting up at four in the morning. I dear Lord, I don't know how to do that. I am like a 6:30am. Girl. And I go to bed about 930 like I'm Early to bed I say early to rise, but not as much as you. But that me Our is it always the same? That you take that time? Does it look different from day to day? Does it look different from season to season? Describe to the audience what it is for you, and what it what it looks like, because I want people to start imagining what that me hour could look like for them.

D

Denisha Parker 36:02

Okay, perfect. Um, so the me hour actually started back when I found Bar Three. So that's how long this has been going. And just during that time, just a little background history, because it's always the things that get you to those places, right. And my youngest son, my seven year old, was speaking. And being a mama of five and a teacher. I know the developmental milestones, you know. And so we had all these testing done, and we thought he was autistic, you know, and so I told my husband, I'm gonna have to quit my job, because I can't do this at home. And I can't do this at school too. Like, I have to have some type of balance. And, you know, we went through all of these things. And being a teacher and a mom, I was able to advocate for my son. And he ended up needing to, to cut here. So for 20 months, he couldn't hear us. And that's why we call his name, he

wouldn't respond. And so hence, all of that stuff was happening in the beginning of me finding Bar Three. And so that was the time for me to step away from home life, just to give myself that hour that "Me Hour" where nothing else matters. You know, it was just a time for me to tune in and tune out all of the things that I had to deal with on a day to day basis. Fast forward to now, you know, it does look different. I mean, for instance, today, I got up and you know, I did my meditation, I did my journaling, I got on my bike for an hour. I've eaten already, so I haven't done and then you know, I do guided meditations as part of my practice. So I do guided meditations for people. So I prepped for that for the week. But yesterday, I listened to a book, I was reading a book, while I'm listening on Audible. And the book is "Stillness is Key". And I can't think of the author's name. But it's a really good book, a friend recommended to me and a lot of these things I'm already doing. So every day was different. I mean, sometimes I need to journal at night before I go to bed, I definitely have that hour for me in the morning, sometimes hour, could be hour and a half, it could be two hours. And then you add it at night and it's all good. So it does. It's just whenever you can carve out that time for yourself, you know, it's not. It just depends on what my body needs and very aware of what I need emotionally and physically and spiritually. So with that, I tap into that, and I give myself those things. And it looks different from day to day.



Jennifer Malcolm 38:53

And I like that because I know that I've struggled with it, I've talked about it in season one, that you know, when you're like I need to meditate, I need to journal I need to write, I need to work out, I need to read a book, I need to do this, I need to do that all for self care all about that for self care. And I'm like, I don't have four hours in a day. And I like that you're tuning into your body soul spirit, to listen and pause and say what does my body need today? What is my soul need today? And maybe it is you know, listening to an audible book on practices that you're familiar with, but it just reaffirms and re you know set that foundation of bring it to the forefront of your memory. And my I'm bringing this to light in the forefront here because I want women to be encouraged that that hour, or that half hour can look different every day. Because I think I look at like alright, I need to meditate seven days a week and I have my little check boxes did I read every day of the week. You know, do that check boxes and just allow it to flow allow the energy and your body and soul and spirit to really guide you have what you need? And I like that you flow through that.



Denisha Parker 40:06

Yes, absolutely. And me again, it's always a practice is never completely perfect, perfect for me in that moment because I really tried to live my life in the moment and I in the past

or in the future, like literally the here and then now like what's going on with me right now? And so those closest to me, it's, it's always a joke? Well, Denisha, you can find time everybody can find time to do this. And your time doesn't have to look like my time, you know, it could just be just giving yourself some time in a day to really tap in to that inner that inner being that center. Because if you lose sight of that all the time, it's so hard to get back on track when things are not ideal.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 40:56

I agree. So what would you say to women who say, you know what, I need accountability, or I need someone to, you know, practice with me, or to ask how I'm doing. Because if I try to do this on my own, I feel like I'm gonna fail. I've tried it before, you know, I don't have the self drive right now to just get up and do these things. You know, we have our Inner Circle that we're launching in 2021. We've done content on being in a community versus being isolated, what would be some, some tools or things that you might advise, that says, hey, this is a good way to keep this at the forefront of your mind. And you're also building relationship or community through that.

D

Denisha Parker 41:47

That's a good question. I think, you know, having an accountability buddy, is great. I mean, I've done you know, people do these little press resets and. And I've done that, like I kind of tapped into, I've met a really good friend that was doing it online. And we just had a kind of she's also a yoga teacher, we didn't really know each other had some common friends. And I was like, I would love to do this with you. I know, she's like one of my very best friends, like we just connect on this great level. But just having accountability, because I can guarantee you, if you're not able to do these things on your own, you have friends and family that are not able to do these things on their own as well. And so if you just have someone where you can be like, okay, so for this week, this is what we're gonna do, I set out this lack of time. And I mean, I know splitting time as everybody has screen time now, but zoom, it's like, just get on zero, you know, and let's hold each other accountable. I also add started doing that's how the guided meditation started. For me, like doing guided meditations for other people. I had someone reach out to me on social media, I was like, I see you've been meditating for over 400 days, how are you doing this? And would you be willing to help me through it, and so once a week, and we've been doing it since the summer, before, and I get on a zoom, and I need her. And she's like, it has helped her so much, because she's like an app, you can cut it off, you know, but if someone like is sitting there, you know, and so what I, what I recommend for her after we get off, is okay, when you wake up in the morning, give yourself two to three minutes. It doesn't have to be this grand old thing. You know, even if you're writing down a couple

sentences about how that made you feel. Or if you miss meditation, how did it make you feel to miss it, you know it. So I think that is the important part, you know, have accountability buddies and start small and don't beat yourself up. If you don't stick to the plan, best laid, plans fail. And that's how we grow, right? We, we come into these situations, we want to be like the best that we can be. And then we consider we fail or whatever we consider failure. But I've learned that failure is remarkable if I hadn't failed so many times and I hadn't become a mom at 20 and then again at 23 and then found myself a single mom or having to work and I wouldn't be where I am my experiences have led to all of this growth, all these different paths and journeys and roles that I've taken, that led to this moment right here. And for that I am 100% grateful.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 44:27

And that is beautiful, because I'm so passionate about that peace when people disqualify themselves because of failure, or their version of what failure is. And I would prefer not to go through the failures that I have in life. But I know that they've also cultivated the woman and forged the woman that is here today. And those experiences that give me authority to speak life into someone else's heart, or to give encouragement into someone else's situation is because I failed and when you fail, and you learn, and you get those golden nuggets of wisdom, experience, I know some of the roadblocks, that I can help others, you maybe miss those marks. It's powerful. And I think that women were so hard on ourselves. They were like, Oh, you know, we didn't meditate this week or I got another I got a running this week or I haven't read. And so we're like, well, it's unobtainable. And it's that dusting your, your knees off and be like, no, they're just get up and put a Yes, in your heart and keep going.

D

Denisha Parker 45:32

Absolutely, absolutely. And so when you, you know, when you when you feel like you missed the mark, you missed that streak, as I call it, that streak that I love so much. And it's just like, Okay, why I didn't do it. So I might as well stop. No, you don't, you get up and you start again. And you start over, and you continue to start over. And that's what life is about. Starting over reinventing yourself, in these, these experiences, these circumstances to make yourself stronger, and wiser and brighter and to keep moving forward.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 46:06

Good. That's really good. So tell me about the wellness center that's in your dream in your heart that you are, you know, hoping that 2021 is a lot better than 2020 in regards to just be able to meet and to gather, what does that look like that dream in your heart look like?

D

Denisha Parker 46:28

Well, I mean, you know, I this is like a newer dream, you know, and I and I just think about all the things that I would love to have in one place, you know, a place where I can go experience movement, a place where I can go experience meditation place where I can go get a massage, you know, a place where I can experience sound goal, healing, all of these things that I hold really dear and dear to my heart, I would love to create a place where women are not even not women, people, men do, Okay, come and experiences these things in one particular place. But I want it to be so diverse, you know, I want it to be, you know, where people feel comfortable, where everyone feels comfortable coming to this space. Everybody doesn't look like me, everybody doesn't look like you. It's a place where we gather and we're human, to just human. And we can be in this space and celebrate ourselves while celebrating each other. Because really, that's what it's about. It's about being able to, you know, tap into your center be the best version of you. But also be this bright light in the world that is sometimes so incredibly dark. And that's what I that's what I want. Like, that's what I want to bring to the forefront for people to explore, explore is the best way I can explore all things. Great. And when things are not so great. Explore that too.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 48:04

Right? When I had the opportunity to just to evolve and to grow. And even your journey when you said you went into bar three, and you went from being you know, a participant to an instructor. And then somewhere along that journey, yoga, you know, came up, you're like, I don't necessarily fit the normal demographics of a yoga teacher. And you're like, Who cares? I'm going to still play I'm going to still explore. And I think that we, as women, box ourselves in based on our physical abilities, or age, our experience, and we need to start looking through different lenses that says, We're not too old, we're not disqualified. And the uncomfortable or the unknown might be some of our greatest strengths, experiences, joys, if we just get through that wall of fear or that wall of uncertainty and and cross to the other line. And it sounds like this Wellness Center is going to be a sanctuary for that space.

D

Denisha Parker 49:05

Yes. Thank you very indeed. And I love how you tapped into fear. You know, when I did my, a couple probably like last weekend, I did a yoga class. And you know, I said to the one of my favorite quotes is, you know, courage isn't the absence of fear is the ability to move forward despite the fear being there. And I think that stops A lot of us from moving forward. It's fear. You know, I don't have a lot of money to have this Learning Center. It's a dream. It's in my mind right now. But I believe I can manifest this to this space, this



sanctuary for all people to come and to enjoy. And that's what I want to do.

J Jennifer Malcolm 49:49

So I love that you just hit on this because I do a lot of reading, whether it's a physical book, audible book podcast, about manifesting money. And the thing about that I follow Jennifer Sincero his work, which is You're a Badass, You're a Badass About Money, or Oh, no, I wrote all about, but part of it through her work and some other people's work that I really tap into, is that if you can dream it, if you're if your physical spiritual body can dream, something, everything is there already created in the universe to manifest it. And so it doesn't mean that it comes to you on a golden platter, it doesn't mean that it's not going to take hard work or potential business loan, or whatever that looks like. But if you can dream it, you can manifest it. And I listen to that I'm like, I have such big dreams. Like, if I can dream, this, I can manifest it, and I have to believe it and activate it through, you know, doing work and putting pen to paper and making a dream board or whatever that stuff looks like to begin making steps to make that dream happen. So I'm infusing life into your dream. And then if you can see it is going to be there and the money will come. It's just it's a commodity, just like tires, just like people, you know, there's, there's all these things that we don't have enough time, money, or, or, or time, money or people. And I say you have enough and it's all going to come through.

D Denisha Parker 51:16

Thank you so much I received that everything, all of that, well, not

J Jennifer Malcolm 51:22

So good. As we close up today, what would be some closing thoughts or advice or inspiration that you would want to leave to the listeners.

D Denisha Parker 51:37

Um, I would just say, you know, part of what you say like, if you can believe it, you can achieve it, if these are things that you want to do in your life, or whatever you want to do in your life, you know, start smile, you know, you, you can dream big. But if you've tried and tried again, and it didn't work, don't stop, just keep going. You know, I think my story is a testament of, you know, through hard work and perseverance, you can push through, you can achieve a lot of things, you know, a lot of people would have counted me out. A lot of people would have counted me out being such a young mother and, you know, not having the things set up to have children and being a single mom, you know, at 23 I have

three children, I think a lot of people would have said, Oh, this girl is gonna fail. And I had a lot of bumps and bruises along the way. That's part of my story. And my journey, but I never gave up. And at that point, my, my children, were my inspiration, my children, were the reason that I push so hard. I'm not saying that, that they aren't now. I just have a different outlook. And now I'm at the top of that pyramid, and I know how important it is to take care of myself. And so I want women to know that you are important and you matter. And put yourself at the top of that pyramid no matter how selfish that may look. Because in the long run, you're your family and you will be so much better for it.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 53:14

So good. Well, thank you so much. I like this is a fun, I'm gonna carry this energy with me all day today. Feel that light force that life force, just being grounded my feet like I normally have feet crossed, my feet are like solid on the ground and the studio here just to really center and be so it is such an honor to have you on our podcast. We will give information to our listeners too. If you are interested in asking Denisha and more questions about guided meditation, what what she's doing with the Wellness Center, and we'll get some contact information as well for you. But thank you so much. Thank you so much for having me.

D

Denisha Parker 53:56

It was such an honor.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 53:59

Well thank you for tuning in today to listen to Denisha's story. We are honored that you're having you're here with us. We are here to culminate and bring together and gather women who are like minded or who are curious if you're listening to this and you're just curious, like how do I start this self care? How do I start identifying obstacles or blockages in my heart soul mind that we can start moving away that Jennasis is here for you. I know our speakers throughout the season one and two are excited also just to connect. So please don't hesitate to reach out because the world is a beautiful place and we want that light to shine over and over again. Have a great day. Be safe, and we will catch you next week. All right, bye bye. Thank you for listening to the Jennasis Speaks podcast. If you love the show, one of the best things you can do is to share it with a friend. Tell them what you like about it, how it inspires you and invite them to listen. Subscribe to the Jennasis movement. Power women's voices and reclaim the power over your own narrative.