

finding-new-roads-with-sarah-chahy

📅 Thu, 1/14 4:24PM ⌚ 50:22

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

women, van, life, travel, relationship, starting, closing, people, pivot, podcast, talking, friends, doors, trip, feel, sarah, married, bakery, realized, story

SPEAKERS

Sarah Chahy, 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 Jennasis Speaks podcast where every woman has a story and every story matters. And yes, that means you when you're listening to this, I'm Jennifer Malcolm, your host, founder and president of Jennasis and Associates, and visionary officer at Jennasis Speaks. I know I keep changing my title when I open this podcast, but I'm just trying different shoes on to see what fits. Today we have someone from my team, Jennasis, Sarah Chahy, and she's been with us a brief time, I think just this past fall, she started joined the Jennasis team. But she's got a really unique story. And it's powerful. And I'm really confident that it's going to resonate, rather directly with her story or indirectly through just pivoting through life. But welcome, Sarah.



Sarah Chahy 01:12

And thank you



Jennifer Malcolm 01:13

Welcome. And I have a short bio here that I'm going to read. And then we're just going to jump in rock and roll together.

S Sarah Chahy 01:20
All right. Sounds good. All right.

J Jennifer Malcolm 01:21
So just everyone knows in 2021, we are being purposeful with our podcast to also bring team members in from Jennasis. And we're not just interviewing outside women. But we also wanted to look internally to some of the women who are wanting to share their story as well. We're celebrating our 10th anniversary at Jennasis this year, and we're entering a lot of different achievements. And so that was one of the reason why that we're featuring Sarah as our first real Jennasis, team member featured speaker. And like I said, She's been a part of the team for about four or five months. She's on the digital marketing side and web development side. So welcome, Sarah. She is an eloquent storyteller, even though that she's going to say all over the point, I may not speak with a professional background that is covered everything from managing the office for an in person dating service, which sounds interesting to establishing her on pet sitting business. Along the way, Sarah, like many women have come to terms with letting go some choices, life choices, and pivoting and finding some new ones for story will resonate to many. So welcome, Sarah.

S Sarah Chahy 02:34
Thank you, that's really official.

J Jennifer Malcolm 02:40
And it's funny. As I prep when I read BIOS, there's always like things that are not and the like subject or what we're supposed to be talking about that just ring you know, like piques my interest. So the in person dating service one is hilarious. And then the eloquent storytelling because right before he started, like, I'm not a great storyteller. So we'll see how this goes.

S Sarah Chahy 03:04
I don't consider myself a great storyteller in speak, maybe in writing, but yeah, speaking might be might be a challenge. So we'll see how today goes.

J Jennifer Malcolm 03:13

There you go. So I want to just start at the beginning. Just give the audience a little bit of understanding of who you are. Maybe some of the study, like what you studied in college, some of your passions, and then we'll get into an incident that I believe was at a bakery A while back and just kind of go down the road from there.

S

Sarah Chahy 03:31

Yeah, the infamous bakery incident. Yeah, we'll talk about that. Yeah, so I like you said, I've had sort of a weird, you know, winding road to get where I'm at. I think, my path, I've always been interested in lots and lots of things. I studied, believe it or not Women's Studies in college, so that my parents were like, what are you gonna do with that? And I was like, I don't know, but it seems interesting. So, um, so I went for that I was actually going to be a sign language interpreter for a while. I went to school for that. So I've been all over the board. And I did work as an office manager and in person dating service, which is very interesting. This is before all the dating apps, you know, it was a whole nother world. And I could tell you many stories about that. That was super interesting time. But yeah, so I sort of just wind my way through life. And I, I've always been presented somehow with new opportunities. And someone told me once, if someone comes at you with, with an opportunity, really listen to what they're saying, Don't turn it down, because they may be seeing something in you that you don't see. And so I really listened to that person. And that person got me a position in the IT world and it sort of changed the direction of my life. So since then, I've been Working sort of in it related field in addition to starting my own pet grooming business side so again, yeah, I'm all over the place. I love to travel. I love food, huge animal lover. What else do you want to know.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 05:16

And I think the part that the dating in person dating service really resonated because my husband Chad, and I, who will be celebrating our third wedding anniversary in June, we met on an online dating service. And I was so anti meeting someone online. And I was like, I live, I run a virtual firm, I do not want to meet someone in a virtual capacity or room. And when we met, it was just instant, like it was an instant. Yes, this is great. So I will have to go offline at some point and swap stories of the horrible dating experience. And then but which culminated into finding my husband. So

S

Sarah Chahy 05:56

That's so great. Yeah. And I wish I wish that that was my experience right now with the with the dating apps. But as you know, offline, hasn't been there. I haven't gotten there yet. But I wasn't charged with success stories way back when at the at the in person

dating service. So there was success.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 06:14

So let's go to a few years ago, I believe, maybe it's more recent than that, that you really had, you know, you've It sounds like you're you're pivoting and flexible to really engage in your career, trying new experiences loving to travel, there's so many similarities between you know, you what you like to do and what I like to do, but you were in a serious relationship, and really was like I am the prize like, this is going wow, can you share what you're comfortable with? With the audience? Just, you know, what that relationship was? And where it went every five years?

S

Sarah Chaahy 06:51

Yeah. So I, I had expressed to you a story that happened to me quite a few years ago, now, probably about eight years or so. And it just, you know, when you were looking and kind of interested in hearing women's stories, this one came to mind. I was in a pretty serious relationship for about five years with someone that I thought that I could see a future with. This is pretty common, right? I'm not not saying anything revolutionary here. That relationship ended. And at the time I was in my early 30s. So just gave myself away. They're older than you are by, you know, everyday, I'm feeling a little bit older. But yeah, so you know, it's in my early 30s. And I think it's important, just to note here that, like I said, I've had a winding road, and I've never really been the type of person to say, you know, I want to get married, I want to have kids, like, it's never been a serious goal. For me. It was always like, cool, if it happens, great, if not great, you know, so for me, I never had that dead set idea. But with this person, I thought, you know, what, if he was interested, I feel like we can move in that direction. And at the time, of course, my friends were all you know, getting married, having babies type of thing. And I was starting to feel the relationship go a little bit downhill, you know, towards the end. And I think I was already starting to feel a little bit of loss before it actually ended. So once it ended, you know, I was in that like, foggy, hazy, a place where nothing really feels real when you're at the end of a relationship. And I was just kind of going about my day, get, you know, through the motions. And I remember going to this bakery that he and I had gone to pretty frequently. And it was like everything I had to just get through the day and not cry at work, right. So I'm standing in this bakery. And I just remember, you know, all of a sudden, I see this gorgeous kid, little toddler, like perched up on his parents, you know, shoulder, making googly eyes at me and being super cute. And I just had a total breakdown in this bakery that is, you know, pretty embarrassing. But I was just like, all of a sudden, you know, ugly crying in this bakery and had to leave without my scone and my coffee. And finally, you know, after some digging, I think I just realized that, yes, I was upset about the loss of the

relationship and all that that could have been. But I also realized, oh my god, you know, I'm in my mid 30s, early, mid 30s. And all of a sudden, you know, the reality was starting to settle in that maybe I wouldn't ever have kids, you know, even though I didn't necessarily want them. I also didn't not want them. So this idea that that door was somehow closing or potentially closing in my mind started to become a reality for me and sort of freaked me out.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 10:24

So it sounds like it was like a double loss, it was a double potential loss a from the relationship that you've been with and potentially moving forward to having a marriage and a family, who knows how that might have turned out. But, but then also just realizing that, you know, as a woman in her mid 30s, that the idea of motherhood in the fashion that we traditionally see it might be coming too close as well.

S

Sarah Chahy 10:54

Yeah, and I think to like, you know, your whole life, you're kind of told that you can do whatever you want to do just put your mind to it work hard type of thing that no one ever tells, I mean, people say, you know, you're getting a little bit older, maybe you should start thinking about these things, right, every Christmas that that comes around with the family. But But yeah, I guess in your mind, you know, you still feel young, you still feel like you have a long road ahead. So when that door suddenly feels like it is closing, it is a little bit of a harsh reality of Oh, my gosh, you know, I just, I guess you want what you what you don't want to have, right? Yeah.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 11:33

And I think that society, and were some of the podcasts that are in production for season two, also just talking about infertility issues, talking about health issues that prevented someone from having children and singles choosing not to have children saying, I that's not something that I would like in life, someone like yourself that says, I think I might I don't know, if it happens, great if it doesn't, but that motherhood, you know, can come or not come from all different types of choices or things that happen to us health reasons, etc. And I think that stigma, though, that society puts on women like well, why aren't you you know, like you just said, Every Christmas comes around and like, Hey, don't you think you should make this important? You're like, No shit, Sherlock, like I'm trying to is important. And but I think that there's such an insensitivity where people feel like they're trying to be supportive or encouraging. But it's like those little like, no arrows of like, hurt that just come in and say, like, I am trying, or I did not want to have kids, or you don't

know this, but I couldn't have kids because of health reasons that that women face? Do you feel like that's still the loop in your family and circle of friends.

S

Sarah Chahy 12:50

So ironically, my family and friends have stopped asking, which is also a weird burn, you know, because all these years, I've been like, Hey, stop asking. And now I'm like, wait a minute, like, aren't you? Why aren't you asking anymore? Right? Like, I think they've given up which is appropriate. I think you hit on something like this assumption that a lot of times I'm running, I run into people who kind of assume because I live a single life, and I travel a lot. And I'm pretty free. That is something that I actively chose. And that I said, this is absolutely I don't want kids, you know, and it's not quite back. And I think that, although I've made peace with it, at this point in my life, it was never like a super conscious decision of like, I absolutely don't want kids. But I also know friends and family who have chosen from the start, this is what I want, and I'm going to find a mate, whether I love them or not. And, and we're gonna have kids, because that is our number one priority. And for me, it's always been the relationship first. So not to get too mushy, but that's kind of how I operate. I think Oh, yeah.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 14:10

Cuz my first marriage and I opened up season two, sharing a little bit more about if you are encouraged to see the woman who is here today, running Jennasis Speaks, can't get enough about advocacy for women and women's voices and women's choices. That, you know, there's a lot of pain and bad choices that also happened in my life trauma that I had to work through and I had to heal through and I had to come to peace with but my first marriage I, I was 20 when I met him engaged at 21. married at 22. He was the frog. He was the first person who said I love you, will you marry me? And I was like, Yeah, that sounds great. I want to start a family and, and so you know by the age of 28 I have three children and what In a marriage that I was really struggling with, because that relationship wasn't there. And so when we got divorced, and I was like, I will never get married again, like, that just took so much pain and heartache. Yet, when I married Chad, it was totally different, like the the relationship piece. So I love that you said, you know, that relationship piece for you? has to be number one, because if that, isn't there, the sustainability of a future a family, you're already starting that on a rough foundation.

S

Sarah Chahy 15:34

Yeah, and I think that's my personal, you know, like he said, that's my personal thing. I know, plenty of you know, friends or family that has kind of made the children a priority.

And that's always been their goal. And I, you know, in a small way, I wish that I was so decisive, right? I wish I could be like, Yes, I want to be a lawyer. And then I went to school for loitering. And then I became a lawyer, and I loved it. You know, like, I, some days, I wish that my life was linear. But it's not. And that's okay. You know, and I am where I am. So, yeah.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 16:05

And I think what I would just say our interactions over the last few months, you have a very free soul, hippie spirits, but not like, and it's beautiful. Like, there's so much that there's so much in my life that is linear because of the choices I've made. But there's so much that's not linear, that allows me to dream and to continue to bust out of the bubble chat, and I love to travel extensively, we try to get out of dodge every four to six weeks, even if it's a three day three day weekend. And I see that and when I said, I feel like you and I have a lot of similarities. I see that and I think that's golden. You and you know that some people do that linear track. And other people just go through life, experiencing things growing, evolving, pivoting. I think it's powerful.

S

Sarah Chahy 16:59

Oh, well. Thank you. I appreciate the hippie comment. That's something that I provided. Yeah, I I love it. I love traveling. I love I love your experience. So yeah, thank you.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 17:12

Well, the hippie comment was either going to like make your heart saying or you're gonna like like, thanks a lot, Jenn.

S

Sarah Chahy 17:19

Oh, oh, I'm saying yeah, it's singing. So thank you so much.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 17:23

So you describe yourself as someone that didn't follow a straight path? Or is that something from childhood that you always feel like you are free spirited? And that was just the way that you're wired? Or was it a conscious decision at some point to say, you know, I just want to really embrace the fullness of life, and see where it takes me?

S

Sarah Chaahy 17:47

Yeah, that's an interesting question. I had to think back, I think I've always been a little bit of a free spirit. And my, if you asked my parents, specifically my dad, he would talk about my stubborn streak. And that has definitely been around since day one. You know, I, but I was in a very serious, super long relationship for nine years, right out of high school, where I was really traditional. My parents have been married for almost 40 years now, they got married right out of high school. So that's what I knew. And that is kind of what I was basing everything off of, you know, we stayed together a bit too long. But I learned a lot about myself in that relationship. And after that ended, obviously, my world fell apart. Because my, all my formative years were with him. And at that point, it just became obvious that I needed to take some time and learn who I was as a person as an adult person. And so I realized with with him and in that relationship, I was very, I would say no a lot. I was really conservative I in more of a not willing to take risks type of way it was really reliant on him. And so once that relationship ended, I think it became more of a conscious shift where I said, You know what, I'm on my own now. I still want to travel. I still want to do fun things. I want to say yes, more. I'm going to do it. So I just took a took a turn I think after that,

J

Jennifer Malcolm 19:27

No, and that's powerful because it sounds like it's from his early childhood. You had some some seeds of a free heart and a free spirit and then went more traditional route. And then you know, after that those seeds were able to you know, blossom into the free hearted spirit woman that you are. And and I get that because I love that when you talked about your formative years being in this nine year relationship, because in my first marriage, there was so many things that I know that I did not have muscles in because I went from Being a btw student, but I lived with my parents because I lived in Berea at the time, so I just lived at home and, and commuted in or walked across the street, basically. And then literally at 22 got married. And so there are muscles of how to take care of a house on my own how to do things on my own, not that I couldn't run to the grocery store, I couldn't make a meal, or I couldn't do those things. But that's a different muscle than running your own household and, and having choices that, you know, you're not being responsible to. I wasn't being responsible to my parents, you know, like, because I was not married and, and my husband and I had that relationship. But again, he took care of a lot of stuff that I didn't have to learn. And hindsight, that didn't serve me. Well. You know, there was a lot of things that I just like, Alright, it is what it is. And I think it's, I think it's very powerful that you are able to really learn some things about yourself during that nine year relationship and set some you know, goals, boundaries, but then realize, alright, now it's time after that, because that's where I feel like once I got divorced, it was like, Alright, what do you want to be when you grow up? Who do you want to be with? What do you

want to do? And that's when I started Jennasis and Associates. And, and so it's just that new newness. And I think that you articulated it really well with the seasons of life that you've also walked through.

S

Sarah Cahy 21:25

Yeah, thank you. I do remember going on my first solo trip after that relationship ended, because we had traveled a lot together. And you know, you always have another person in the room, you always have a person driving or, you know, you can take a nap while they're driving, whatever. Well, that's all on you all of a sudden. And I remember flying out to the Grand Canyon hiking habits Sioux Falls with a hiking group. And I'd never met them. I just signed up randomly. There were five strangers on this hiking trip. And I had a few breakdowns during that trip, because it was my first trip after the end of a huge relationship. And I was just really bummed that he wasn't there experiencing that with me. But the people on the trip were amazing. We're still friends today. And yeah, it was a it was such a cool thing. I remember sitting in the hotel room the first night alone, and thinking, wow, like, I can do whatever I want. I can go not that he restricted me in any way. But obviously, when you're in a relationship, you know, you're always thinking about the other person. Um, and now I love both travel. I mean, that's, that's my jam. That's too much.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 22:33

No, and I and I love that because I never traveled alone either. Until I was divorced in a single mom. And then I was able to travel, some for work, or for leisure. And it is different even navigating through an airport by yourself being responsible, like instead of saying, Hey, can you hold my passport with yours? Can you hold my ticket with yours? Can you whatever, you know that, you know, looking at the boards together, whatever that is driving, you know, just doing that stuff navigating. And it is scary. But it is also exciting. There's an excitement. And I remember going to Philadelphia on a trip and I foot toward Philadelphia for three days by myself going in and out of the places that I like to do that. It wasn't like, oh, let's go see the you know, war field or war battlefield. That sounds boring to me. Just finding you know, live music, finding eclectic shops, boutiques. And like, if I wanted to sit for two hours and read, I could sit for two hours and read and it was beautiful. And so any of you who are listening, ladies, whether you're in a significant relationship, or not, and I know that Sarah is really passionate about this, but I would encourage you even if it's a three day weekend trip somewhere, to just not even take a girlfriend because in with a friend, you're still pivoting like what do you want to do? Where do you want to eat? What do you want to do together? But just to really experience some things alone, because it is freeing and the after side of I can do it. And it's fun is really powerful.

S

Sarah Chahy 24:06

Completely. Yeah. And I have to agree. Even if it's a weekend trip, just you get in the car and go, you'll thank yourself, you'll feel so much stronger, more independent. And the one thing I flew to Asia a few years ago by myself. And now I'm at the point where I just don't even tell my parents until it's already booked. You know, I'm in my 30s I'm like, come on, but they still worried. But anyway, I booked a trip to Asia for three weeks. And I was just going to go by myself for this I've ever gone. I was a little nervous, but I knew I could do it. So I'm in the airport. And of course, you know, I'm sitting next to an older woman probably in her 60s. And she, of course, I've heard this so many times. You're so brave. You're so brave. And I was like Why? You know I'm young. I'm healthy. I have the means thankfully, and I'm here. You're brave. I'm like you're in your 60s 70s you've been here For 30, some years, I just, you know, lost your spouse, and you are now picking up and going to Asia by yourself. That's amazing. You know, so I just think it's, it's nice to see women like that, who their whole life has been partnered, suddenly take that risk, it blows my mind too. So I've met some amazing people on my, on my travels.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 25:25

And, and I have a lot of girlfriends who you know, are in their late 30s. And I'll go up to 50, that they have been in maybe a significant relationship, maybe they maybe they've not, some have some have not, they do desire to have a companion to have a spouse to have children. And so I'm hoping that this the seeds of encouragement, that you can still do so much. And that a partner in life is something that a lot of people want. And, and I understand it's not for everyone, you know, having kids in life is something that a lot of people want. Again, it's not for everyone. But knowing that that window is you know, really coming to more of a shut, period, I'm conscious of my girlfriends who you know, are 44 45 46. and wanting that. And so I like I want to like, let's all just plan a single travel something and get out and do like these solo trips and meet up like every four or five days to like, talk, decompress, but my heart is I don't even know how to articulate correctly, because my heart is full of hope. And my heart is full of compassion. And it's navigating, you know, the loss of potential dreams that you had as a younger woman, as a child. And it's okay, like, you're gonna be okay. And I and I have, you know, being a single parent for 10 years, you know, I navigated a lot of my own, and it's tough. It's really tough. And, you know, being, you know, weekends where the kids were dead, like being their dad being lonely and dealing with, you know, cooking for one, that's a different reality than, you know, full family life. Do you have any words of encouragement to single women, you know, your age up, or that may still be wrestling with disappointment, emotional heartache, grief, about being single and 40.

S

Sarah Cahy 27:32

You know, I think, as you were saying that, like, we all have so many hurdles in it, especially with this year, obviously, it's been a crazy year for so many people. And I feel like even talking about the closing of doors still feel so trivial, especially. I mean, it is an issue that I've had in the past, and I've overcome, but like, you know, I just want to point that out that in 2020, it does feel like people are dealing with so much bigger, so many bigger things. But But, you know, it's worth talking about. And I think too, you know, in my mind, I do think about this as initially as a women's issue, but then the more I thought about it, I'm like, wait a minute, are there men in my life, friends of mine, you know, there's so many singles now. You know, as, as people are aging, people aren't getting married as frequently, you know, and the single culture is growing, the older that we're getting. So I, I'm curious if, if other men, other women, other people, you know, are experiencing these same types of moments in their lives, where they're realizing the doors are closing, and sort of how to adjust to that. And I don't think that we are talking about it together as often as we should. For example, I have some friends who are in their early 30s now, and I was starting to see like, Hey, are you okay? Like what's going on? You know, are you at that point where you're starting to feel some doors closing, and we just start to have those conversations. One of them is married, and you know, they're trying to figure out whether they want to have kids or not, and she was kind of in the same boat as me. You know, she has the relationship, but but she kind of never really wanted kids and also didn't, didn't not want them. So she's starting to see that door closing and is, is starting to grieve that a little bit too. And it is a grief process. You know, sometimes you don't even realize you're going through it. You might be super depressed. I mean, at least for me, that's how it felt. Yeah. Yeah. So I'm just talking to other people who are in your age group, especially other singles, you know, and asking them like, have you experienced this, you know, is this something that you even realized that you went through? I have a friend who's in her late 40s and she said she had a hysterectomy and she she went through a massive grief after that, and that was an obvious adjustment. Right, something physical happen to her body. So she knew she couldn't have kids anymore. But she definitely grieve that loss and had to pivot her life in a new direction. What does it mean now that I don't have kids? I can never have get the What now? Right now. Right?

J

Jennifer Malcolm 30:15

And I like this theme that we're talking about, though, because as you're seeing, you know, doors starting to close the conscious awareness that there's so many other doors that are opening, and it may be in different avenues, totally different veins than the door that close, you know, but it sounds like for you, it's life experience. And it's traveling and it's listening to your heart. And, and I'm not saying this door in your life, by any means is closed. Because I'm determined to like at least hook you up with someone at some point.

But that being said, That being said, though, that there are different things that the doors do open in different capacities. And I know for you travel is a huge one. Do you want to share with the audience about your van that you're working on dreaming about? converting? What does that look like?

S

Sarah Chahy 31:09

Yeah, so for years, I've always loved like tiny things, Tiny Homes, tiny vans, stuff like that. And I finally bit the bullet, ironically, last December, right before this crazy year hit. So in a way, it was sort of a blessing. Because I ended up going up to Canada, long story, but I purchased a van up there, I worked with a builder. And that was quite quite the process to get, you know, a van built out to my specifications up in another country. So it was a bit cheaper. By the way, a little tip, if you're looking to build a van, go to Canada. So had it built out and then you know, had to bring it over the border. So all of that was a big challenge in and of itself. And got it over the border and then COVID hit so really glad that I got the van because I was able to do a lot of travel in it this summer. You know, the goal was to actually leave my apartment and live in the van. You know, get rid of my I've been here 11 years. And I'm just I have the itch to go and I love it out west. So the goal was to be traveling and living and and head out. Obviously COVID hit and things got a little crazy. So yeah, I still have been able to do quite a bit of like weekend travel short trips, here and there. And I did go on a three week trip out west, which was phenomenal this summer. So

J

Jennifer Malcolm 32:43

so so when you say like, leave your apartment, are you saying like get rid of your apartment and fully van live or just you know, put your your apartment on, you know, low heat and low water return in a month or so?

S

Sarah Chahy 32:58

Yeah. So ideally, I I wanted to transition to fully remote work. And I wanted to get out there and live the van life for as long as I can. I've been following a bunch of Van lifers on Instagram. By the way, this is a very popular thing out west. It's picking up speed in the Midwest, but people still look at you like you're insane when you talk about it here in Ohio, especially because of the weather, right. And nobody wants to live in a van. Exactly. So the whole point is, you know, you live in this van, you're mobile, so you can you can go to beautiful places and kind of chase the weather. So yeah, so that that was my goal, and still is there the benefit of renting, you know, you can leave and move elsewhere. And so hopefully, eventually I'll get there, and I'll be able to head out west again.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 33:53

That is awesome. And so I know some of the resources that you also supplied that will we'll put on the website when your podcast comes out here is the community of women travelers and finding converted vans, do you want to talk about the women travelers? Like what does that group look like?

S

Sarah Chahey 34:11

Yeah, so um, there's a bunch, like, I mean, I follow women bloggers, there are so many women out there, especially, you know, single women, married women, whatever you can find a ton of women that are traveling solo, and some of them internationally, some of them doing van life by themselves, which is really cool. There's a lot of YouTube channels out there that you can follow women who built their own bands from the ground up. I have mad respect for those women. You know, I could do it if I wanted to and had the time and resources but that was not an interest to me. so mad respect for them. So yeah, so I would say if you're interested in Van life or solo travel or travel in general, there's a community called wander w a n d e r f u l. And that is a women's focused travel community. They also have a, I believe it's a membership that you can sign up for. And it's sort of like Airbnb, but for women across the globe, so members, you know, have rooms in their houses, that they rent out using go state with another woman and another country or whatever, and you're all part of this community. So it's a really safe space. It's a really cool, cool thing. And, yeah, really cool. And if you're looking for a prebuilt van, if I'm promoting van life here, you know, there's a ton of websites and a ton of a ton of Van life instagramers out there that are doing it. But there's a website called conversion trader.com you can look on Craigslist, you know, it doesn't have to be anything fancy if you're just looking to hop in your van and go, but lots of options. So fun.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 35:59

So when you converted your van and you you did the specifications that you wanted from the Canadian connection, like does it have a bed? Does it have a stove? Does it have like what does it look like interior Do you have like, you know, a cupboard for food? And I was gonna ask like what about bathroom shower? All that so what does that your van look? Yeah.

S

Sarah Chahey 36:19

Yeah, so it's a Sprinter, which I always said I would never get because it's so expensive to maintain. But it is a great vehicle and I love it. It is 144 which is the smaller so it doesn't

never infer a shower unfortunately, but I do have a shower hose off the back. Again, you're supposed to be somewhere warm when your family thing. When I was traveling out west, I showered plenty just in random parking lots or whatever. There is a bed made to my specifications. So super short. I just fit I have a fully functioning thing. With the water tank. I have solar panels on the roof. I have a you know a fan with events. I have Windows I have a couch. I use like a cook stove to cook. So cooktop. Some bands have, you know bathrooms installed they can get really fancy almost like RV. Yeah. But just depends what you want. You know what your limits are?

J

Jennifer Malcolm 37:18

So fun, because it's like, I grew up camping. My husband's family loves the outdoors, they do a lot of outdoor camping kit, you know whether it's cabins hiking, etc. My kids are interested here and there. But we keep talking about renting an RV and you know, going on the road for two weeks. And I get the mom no way roll eyes type scenario. But I think the freedom of being able to create stuff when you want to, you know, it sounds like the van is a high functional, glorified tent that you can go and be and have food and provision and comfort and safety. And that you can just kind of create that which you want.

S

Sarah Chahy 38:01

Oh, yeah, like I saw, I went three weeks Southwest this summer, Wyoming, South Dakota and Colorado. And I basically never left the band other than to hike, which was great for COVID time, you know, I didn't really need to go into a restaurant, I had everything I needed. And I would stop wherever I wanted and sleep. You know, the van kind of just looks like a standard van on the outside. So that's the cool thing. If you're boondocking you can you can sleep wherever. So look great.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 38:31

No, it's so good. And, and I know that we've pivoted from you know the initial fakery story into camping. But the goal on that is to see the the continuum of your life and to see the joy that you know, going from that picture except remember when you sent this and like, I don't know if this is going to resonate, Jen, if this is aligned with the stories that you are, you know, hoping to gather. But it's just it's fun to see how life continues to take you down that journey. And you pivot and you can grieve, you can hope that you continue to move on and evolve. And you are a beautiful example of that work.

S

Sarah Chahy 39:13

Well Thank you. I appreciate that. Yeah, I would just encourage people, if you feel like you're hitting a roadblock, like grieve it, you know, figure out why you're sad about letting that thing go. And then try to find a new avenue because, you know, life. Life does not go according to plan. And I think that 2020 can show us that for sure. Yeah, and just finding a way to pivot, you know, what's the worst that could happen? Try something new. Right? Go in a new direction. Yeah.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 39:44

I did want to ask just here briefly about your women's study, you know, that your undergrad studies and that you were intentional about that. Just curious like what what was in your heart to want you to study that and be what fruit Or things have you done even if it's not a, you know, set job on women's study or women's empowerment? But what have you? Or how have you used that those studies in the last 18 years since?

S

Sarah Chahy 40:17

That makes me feel so old, but yes, it's true. Um, well, so I took women I found a gray the other day,

J

Jennifer Malcolm 40:27

my hair done and had all my gray, like, fully gray. So I go over.

S

Sarah Chahy 40:33

There's some up there. Um, yeah, so I, you know, I don't know, I've just always been really, I guess I have always been really stubborn, really feminist oriented. Even before, I probably knew what that word meant. I have a funny story where my dad used to ask me to make his coffee for him. And I don't know why. But even as a little girl, and he'll tell you this, as a little girl, I would get so mad about it. And I would say make your own coffee. And I was just, I was, it was not a good look for me. But I was so stubborn about it. So yeah, it's always been really strong willed in that way. And I think when I saw women's studies on the program list at Cleveland State, I was like, let's do this, let's see what this is about, you know, it was quite a while ago, I have never actually worked. In a field that focused specifically on women. Um, I did get my management, my nonprofit management degree from case recently. So you know, women's studies, nonprofit management, social work, that sort of all blends together. And I volunteered a lot over the years with nonprofits and

things like that. Um, I think probably, if I look at what I've, how I've been able to apply my Women's Studies stuff, it's been more so probably in my personal life, with friends and family, and, you know, just encouraging people. So I think I was saying in my, in my personal life, I think is where I can see the reflection of how my Women's Studies degree has sort of played out more than anything. And just, you know, I have two nephews, and I love them to death. And I want to make sure that they know that women can do anything that they can do. So that's been a super important role for me. You know, they've seen me drive, I'm five foot two, they see me driving this huge Sprinter van around traveling, you know, we talk about adventure all the time, I'm telling them that they need to get their adventure fund in place so that I can take them on a trip when they turn 18. You know, it's just really important for me, I've done them in, you know, push up contests, like, they need to know that women are here, and we're equal, you know, footing. So, for me that that's how I've seen it play out, just in the way that I interact with the people in my life, I encourage I love to encourage my friends and my family to sort of get out there and, and live their dreams and, and be fearless.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 43:13

Yeah, that's beautiful, because that is 1,000% aligned with the Jennasis Speaks movement. And that it's not, I'm not anti men. I'm not anti, you know, what men can do, or the, you know, the partnership between men and women. But there is this advocacy for women to arise in their God given rights in a god given talents in a god given equality, that is essential to me. And I think that, as you're, you know, putting those seeds into your nephews, you know, they're going to remember that for a lifetime of, you know, when they maybe if they have a spouse, and, you know, they're like, Well, you can't do your girl, we always have the argument here at the house. They're like, I can't open something. The joke is, Oh, do you need a man to do it? And me and my teenage daughters? Like, no, we don't need a man to do it. We can, can you please open it. So I love that your life. And the phrase that you use, it's a reflection around those around you. And that peace of being that reflection on a day to day manner. And that consistency for people to see is huge, even probably more so and more impactful than, you know, writing, you know, copy or writing pages of content and putting them somewhere but to really just live that lifestyle and to change the culture around you. from the inside out. That's beautiful.

S

Sarah Chahey 44:39

Yeah, I just I hope that I can. I mean, everybody wants to make a little bit of an impact in their life, right, in one way or the other. I think that's all we're after. We want to be kind of remembered and make a little bit of an impact. And if I can do that for a few close people in my life, awesome.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 44:56

Well, as we close up this podcast, do you have any more Words of wisdom or advice to women who might be hearing this. And, and again, we're talking about being a single woman. But there's other doors that have closed in people's lives. We've talked about, you know, motherhood, it could be a career, it could be whatever that is. There's lots of different doors, that closing our lives or in the process of closing that, that we grieve. Are there any remarks of wisdom or closing statements you'd like to share?

S

Sarah Chahy 45:30

Yeah, I mean, I don't know if I'm wise that it might mid 30s. But I guess I would just say, for me, it's been, like I said, before, you know, if something happens, and I've learned to look at it, kind of logically, Now, remove a lot of the emotion if possible, and, and look at it and say, okay, you know, what's the worst that could happen? That method seems to work for me, doesn't work for everyone. What's the worst that could happen here, play that scenario out and get to the root of what my actual fear is. A lot of times being alone, or, you know, dying alone, we're gonna go really deep. But you know, play that out and learn and figure out if you're okay with that end result. And then grieve whatever it is that that you're losing. Give yourself time to do that. And then pivot, you know, every time I say pivot, I think of that, of that episode of friends when they're pivoting up the stairs with the couch. Sorry, not much here. But yeah, so pivot, right. I made like, you know, find a new thing. Life. I don't know, sometimes my dad can be dad and calling me out. But sometimes my dad can be a little bit, you know, things should be a certain way. And I'm like, why did you ever think that? Why? Who told you that? Who told you that life should be a certain way? Because it's not. So you know, just realizing that be a little entrepreneurial. Try it. Who cares? Life is so short, I don't care, you know, give it a go.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 47:08

Oh, good. And I do think that you are quite wise, you have a lot of wisdom. And you and I think through your life experiences, and the things that you've chosen to embrace, heal from pivot, grow, evolve, it's shining through you. So you are wise.

S

Sarah Chahy 47:25

Thanks. Thanks. I appreciate that.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 47:28

I'm gonna ask a few closing questions. That'll be like, just quick popcorn. And then we will wrap up the session. So who inspires you whether it's a podcast, a book, an author and artist who a relative? Who's someone that inspires you?

S

Sarah Chahy 47:44

Oh, god, I'm not good with quick questions, as you can probably tell. So, okay. I remember my uncle being a big inspiration. He was a really hard worker, he all he wanted to do was have a little bit of land and live on it in quiet solitude. He didn't make it past the just, you know, passes 53rd birthday, I think. But every time I travel now, I just think about him. And, you know, I think he would be proud of where I'm at, and the things that I've done.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 48:19

That's awesome. And in 2021, what are a few places that you hope to travel to?

S

Sarah Chahy 48:27

Man or other? Oh, gosh, in an ideal world, when things are wonderful, and back to normal, I would love to go back to Asia. I fell in love with Southeast Asia, and I wish that I would have stayed much longer. So yeah, that would be my first trip back.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 48:47

Then you can't take your van there. But

S

Sarah Chahy 48:51

I couldn't ship it. But yeah, it would be an expensive. Yeah. Normally I say in hospitals are much cheaper. But

J

Jennifer Malcolm 49:00

Well, I appreciate truly appreciate your time and your willingness you reached out back to me, I think, late fall mid, you know, before I think it was before Thanksgiving, just to say I think this might be something that resonates and honored to have you as a colleague as someone on the podcast, someone on the Jennasis team, and I look forward to deepening our friendship in the years to come.



Sarah Cahy 49:23

Awesome. Thank you, Jenn. This is really fun. And I appreciate you know, all the conversation and you allow me to be on the podcast.



Jennifer Malcolm 49:30

You are most welcome. So thanks, everyone for joining in today and for listening to Sarah's story. I hope you're inspired and provoked to realize that doors open doors close. But life is a journey and life is short and for us just to continue to pivot and evolve and grow and to embrace that which life does give us is an honor and a blessing as well. So enjoy your afternoon. Take a walk with us and listen to the next podcast coming out next week and we look forward to connecting with you. All right, talk to you later. 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 to empower women's voices and reclaim the power over your own narrative.