

from-amish-to-acceptance-laura-geideman-s-journey

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SPEAKERS

Laura Geideman, 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 back to the next episode of Jennasis Speaks podcast The Transformative Power of Women's Stories where every woman has a story and every story matters. And yes, that means you. I'm your host, Jennifer Malcolm founder and president of Jennasis and Associates and Jennasis Speaks. And with me today is Laura Geideman. I've known Laura, I think we're talking pre show sense of when I was like 13 or 14 years old. So welcome, Laura. And I have a short biography. Thank you. You're welcome. I'm so excited. I feel like it's like Christmas all over again and getting busier face over zoom. And we were already laughing and crying before even started this podcast, so but Laura has a powerful story in and a unique story. And this is her first time publicly. At this level of platform. She shared her story before in privates, private sectors and private conversations, but really her first opportunity to share her story publicly. And I'm going to read a biography and we're just going to jump right in at age 18. Knowing that she would be shunned, and things would never be the same, and she would be rejected. Lauren left her family, her Amish faith and her rural Amish community. The term culture shock doesn't do justice to Laura's first experiences outside the Amish community. She moved into a county from the country to downtown Cleveland neighborhood that had seen better days, she found work first in McDonald's

than at a law firm. She worked hard to obtain her GED, and then worked as a nanny for an Ohio family that then relocated to California. Returning to Ohio, she met and married her husband in 1999. She's now a mom to two beautiful girls who are now at age 16, and 18. And Laura continues to face challenges. And this past year, when she relocated to Texas, from Ohio, emits the global pandemic. Throughout all of her life changes, Laura remains committed to her her relationship with God that she says gives her strength to trust her choices. So welcome, my friend, it's so good to see your face. It's so good.



Laura Geideman 02:42

Thank you so much for having me. It really is an honor Jen. And I have to say, seriously, start from the beginning, what you are doing is incredible. Like, I really believe that we are in a season where many women are rising up. And healing is coming to women just through their stories. And so the fact that you have this platform, I think is incredible. Because it for me, you know, it comes in pieces I find, oftentimes, I wish it came with one big package. But it comes in pieces, and I just love what you're doing. So thank you so much for having me.



Jennifer Malcolm 03:21

You are so welcome. And it's fun. I was telling Laura that I had lunch with a actually joint friend of ours I haven't seen in years. And I know that the flow is is really calming people, women, whether it's publicly on the podcast, or privately in coffee, conversation, conversations, or just phone conversations are willing to step up and be vulnerable. And it's it's powerful and that peace of unlocking our voices letting go of our shame, letting go of our our allies of unworthiness, or my story's not important or right. It's just time to break the silence. So I'm excited.



Laura Geideman 04:02

Amen. I'm excited too.



Jennifer Malcolm 04:06

Honestly, between you and your sister, Lily, you're the only two short or past Amish with people that I've ever been really, I mean, I've gone to the Amish community. It's very normal in Cleveland, for those of you who are not in Ohio, to drive about an hour, hour and 15 minutes and get into an Amish community to buy local, buy fresh buy, you know, really quality goods. But I'd love to hear just a glimpse of what life was growing up for you pre 18. And then we'll talk about your transition from 18 on.



Laura Geideman 04:36

Yeah, so just to give you a little bit of an idea. So like Jen said, I lived in the Amish community until I was 18. So it's a very sheltered community for the most part. Obviously, there's multiple different what you could say districts within the Amish community. I was There's a family of eight. So I was kind of in the middle, the middle child. And within the way that now I'm just going to speak speak from my experience, as far as this is your story. Yeah, this is my story. And I will say from the beginning that a lot has changed. Even in the Amish community, which is a good thing, I believe that there's much more freedom than there used to be when I grew up. But when I was growing up, you know, we, we believe there was a god. But a lot of our belief was around the thought process of earning our way to heaven, we had a lot of rules, a lot of just traditions, traditions handed down, you know, so, from a very young age, I, I was a natural, I wanted to please people, you know, and so, we had a lot of rules, and one of the things that we had to follow, and I honestly don't know, it wasn't like, my parents verbally, like, had these conversations with me, but I just had a tremendous fear of just fear, anxiety, fear of fear of what would happen to me if I died. So I've had a whole lot of striving at a very young, very, very young age, and I just remember, like, going to bed at night and being like, okay, so I obviously didn't do everything that I should have done today that, you know, to the, that was my best. So therefore, if I die, what is going to happen to me, so those are kind of my thoughts that for whatever reason, at a very young age, that all kind of changed, then, you know, at the age when I was right around 12, that changed a little bit for me. But that was kind of like my back, you know, as far as like, you know, how we grew up my thought process. And, you know, if you think about it, whenever you're striving, or there's a whole along with that. And I just, that was something that I couldn't shake at a very, very young age.



Jennifer Malcolm 07:19

Isn't amazing, though, because you said it wasn't something that your parents put on you, it was something that either through cultural, cultural experience, through whatever, you know, adolescence mind, that we we tie on to something at a young age, and it manifests so mine from mine growing up, it was a perfectionist mentality of I had to be perfect, or I wasn't good enough and, and my parents never, ever, ever put that on me. But it was something that I self adopted or self inflicted, that even at 45 years old, I still have the battle of like, Alright, it's good enough. It's good enough, like you don't perfect Christmas cookies that have not, we had Cyclops reindeer. For those of you who who have been on my Instagram, we had Cyclops reindeer pretzels, instead of the two, I did reindeer. And I was like, okay, it's good enough, like, but I feel your pain point of like, that piece of fear or striving that somehow just takes a hold of you and hooks into your mentality and your reality. And you're just locked in that your grid locked into that. So I understand that and from a different hook in my soul that I had from a young age. Right, so at 12, you're you're

identifying this, but life with you and your family was pretty normal. You just followed? Yes, I mean, normal is normal.



Laura Geideman 08:53

Yes. I can't say at that point that there was a whole lot of strife within our family. So it was you know, we did our, our rules and our traditions and went to church every other Sunday. And we didn't really talk a lot about, you know, our belief. But yeah, I would say for the most part, it was pretty what normal Amish lifestyle would look like.



Jennifer Malcolm 09:15

Sure. So throughout this experience, though, you started to find faith in a different way. That was different than how you were raised. I don't know. And I don't remember this part of the story. So I don't know if that was your older sister Lily, you know, sharing your her faith with you, if you guys you know, kind of identified that together and that journey, but can you just share with the audience, you know, that transition of going to church every other Sunday, following basically the rules, regulations, traditions, and also walking in that striving to now becoming confident in something that you were an advocate for your voice and, you know, pivoting out And that takes a lot of courage. So you want to talk a little bit about that?



Laura Geideman 10:04

Yeah. So, you know, because our community was very sheltered. I mean, we did have some outside interaction with non Amish people. So it wasn't like we didn't see them. But we didn't have that much interaction. But at the age of 12, though, my sister, and honestly, I don't even know if she knew exactly what I was processing. I don't know if I shared with her, like my fears. But one day, she came to me and she just said, wouldn't it be awesome if you knew that someday if you died, that you could go to heaven? And I was like, Right. Sign me up. And so she just kind of threw that out. And I was, I mean, I was, you know, when you're desperate, you're very open to like, I was desperate. I was like, Yes, I want to know. And so she shared a little bit with me, and just a little bit of backstory with that somebody had shared with her outside the Amish community. She's three years older than I am. And so she had several jobs outside the Amish community, which was allowed, okay, to some extent, and our family had to be a certain age, but so she had found several jobs they had shared with her, how it wasn't about striving, it wasn't about, you know, earning your way. And she shared with me and so that night, I just remember that night, I had no idea what I was getting into. But I was like, Yeah, I definitely want more, I was so excited. And I did I had this piece in this interface. However, shortly after that, and

yeah, shortly after that, we quickly discovered that that was not something that my parents or the community was happy about, or approved of. And so that kind of just totally changed the our not only our home atmosphere, but whenever we went out within the community, or were around how I like to say it was just very conflicting. A lot of grief started because I was excited. Because that was my inner fears. And my inner anxiety that I you know, was, I knew that there was more, it's kind of like my theme line, if you will, in my life, I know, there's, I know, there's more no matter where you are in life, there's always more, it's good. I just remember being like, Oh, you know, what's going to happen, where we're going to go from here, because I obviously can't share it. Because it's not approved, but I want to know more about it. So that went on for like a short period of time where my sister and I, we would read the Bible together in her room with our doors locked, and that kind of became suspicious of what we were doing inside there. And you know, she's three years older, so she kind of got the brunt of it with my parents, as far as they're the ones or she was the one that they would always approach asking her questions, what she, you know, what's going on what she's doing, and so that when not, not for very long, I would say for five for a couple months. And it came to a point Finally, where my parents were aware that she was sharing with me. And they were concerned that she was infecting me in a negative way, and influencing me. And so they basically told her that she needed to believe the way that she grew up the Amish traditions, or she had to leave. And she chose to leave. I wasn't aware of this conversation until afterwards, but she chose to leave. I was aware. I do remember the day though. And I knew something was happening. But I didn't know exactly what was happening. So she left and so that is added a whole nother dimension of instability and stress and anxiety for me, right? Because I didn't know what was going to happen to me because she was given the choice, but obviously I wasn't. And I was much younger. And I really I would have to say I was pretty quiet about my faith back then they were aware that I was influenced at that point, but I hadn't shared a whole lot with them. Right. I will back up and say to like before she left. You know they did try to talk to Lily mostly myself. And when that didn't work, they also like had a sit. You know, I mentioned before that our church service was like every other Sunday. So they chose the Sunday that it was at our house where the whole community was there. What I would there's usually like four pastors or deacons within the community, they all sat down and had a little chat with us. It was very, very intimidating. It was very, not only was it intimidating, but it was also very, you know, the whole community saw it wasn't like it was just will take you off to the side on another day when no one's there. But it was in front of the whole community. So we were talking about a lot prior to my sister leaving, like something was wrong with with the girls. Something was wrong with the girls and so. So yeah, things switched or changed even more after my sister left. For me personally, because I saw how it affected my parents, I saw how the community reacted to my parents. And I was still hungry, but I really did not have anybody to talk to, or what to do with that. And I was only I mean, I think about it now. Like, I was 12, I think, almost 13. And I

think about my girls now. And I'm like, I can't imagine like I don't know, like, how did I even survive, like.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 16:17

I'm sure there's a lot of just emotions, because your sister and you even in the locker room, and reading the Bible, like there was a sacred space. And you know, even if she took the brunt of your parents conversations, too, and that you weren't aware of it. But, and I love your sister. So it'd be interesting to hear just both of your journey side by side, because I'm sure it took an immense amount of courage and heartache for your family to choose to leave. And yet, as the younger sister watching the aftermath of your parents pain or their reaction, the community's reaction, you're now alone in that, and dealing with you know, do I have what it takes to advocate and move forward for what I believe in? Or do I realize like, this is too, too painful for me to, you know, and again, Paige and Reagan are 16 and 18. So our daughters are, you know, side by side and aging. Like, as a mom, I'm like, I wouldn't want any of that, or that stress or life.

L

Laura Geideman 17:25

I mean, my heart's beating now even thinking about it, because I wouldn't wish that on anybody, like I really wouldn't. Like I and that's why I say like, it was only God that I survived during that time, or that I remained. It was like, I had this small little flame inside of me that did not go out. I don't wish it on anybody, meaning like, it wasn't, you know, abuse comes in many forms. And it wasn't like I was being physically abused. It was just, it was during that time, like after she left that I just went inward. You know, because I didn't really feel safe talking to my parents. And I didn't want to hurt them. Right. I, I wanted to stay in contact with my sister because I was hungry. Sure. Which we tried it several times and got in trouble. I say this with all respect, like, you know, I'm a parent now. Yeah. And your your child leaving and leaving everything. They were struggling, they were doing the best that they could. And when you're in this mindset of, you know, just this religious mindset that it has to be this one way, they are under tremendous pressure within their community. We were an embarrassment to the community that they couldn't hold it together with their family. And I saw the devastation that my mom carried. This kind of stuff affects everybody differently from my mom, it was very much, you know, I saw her crying a lot for my dad, he became very quiet. And I was very uncomfortable being around him because I was always afraid. Both of them. I was always afraid they're going to start asking me questions. And I just didn't know how to answer them without causing more stress that I already felt. And so my thing was, I just kept busy. Like that's, you know, how we deal with things like you like I just kept busy. And I wrestled a lot like knowing what what was the right thing to do. It was intent, it was really intense. And my sister at

that time, she would try to come back home, she tried to stay in contact. And so it was kind of like a roller coaster. So we kind of rode that. That wave until I was 18.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 19:41

And again, I guess through what I want to really honor is a as now, women who have adult and teenage children and be being a parent, like how you're seeing it through different lenses now, versus you know, as a child and again, you were so young like, I can't imagine Reagan 16, your youngest is 15 we would never as a mom want any of that conflict or stress, or anxiety or fear or lack of relationship to be between us and our daughters. And yet there was advocacy in your heart to be like, Alright, I do want to pursue my faith. And this is really important to me. And that I'm causing some causing stress or heartache or pain. And I see that so like, that's, and I guess I've known your story for a long time, but just hearing it through a mom's heart. You know, so looking at through the lens of your mom and your, in your dad, but then be looking at through the eyes of our daughters, hearts of courage and stuff that that you had to deal with. Like, that's insanely honoring, and stressful, and crazy. And a lot. So you you turn 18? And can you just describe like the going into your 18th birthday. And then, you know, the aftermath of turning 18 and late leaving the Amish community?

L

Laura Geideman 21:15

Yeah, so I say 18. a, you know, that was a very defining period, because I knew that I couldn't make any kind of move prior to that, or they are, I would be brought back physically. Like, I just I knew that. So I just decided that I would wait, I thought it would happen at 17 because my sister Sister left at 17. So at the age of 18, I decided that I was going to leave, it happened early in the morning. And on a very snowy Blizzard, actually, on my birthday. In hindsight, I don't know if I would have done it on my birthday, just because it was even harder for my mom. Every time my birthday came around, it kind of was like, it wasn't always just happy birthday was kind of with, yeah, something attached to it. But you know, at that time I was, again, I was desperate. And in the community when you're 18, they usually, oftentimes I should say, like to throw you like a big birthday party within the younger generation. And I didn't really want anything to do with it. I didn't really want anything to do with that. And so that was one of the reasons why I decided to do it on my birthday. But so that was kind of transitioned into a whole nother, you know, we moved was early in the morning, we came up. Like, I love to let her kind of explaining to my parents, they didn't know that I was leaving. I just felt at the time, that was the best way to handle it. There really was no easy way to do it. Move to Cleveland, like you said, I moved to Cleveland, with a lot of emotions and on the inside because I was excited. But at the same time, knowing what my parents went through with my older sister leaving, I

knew that they were going to be experiencing it all over again. I just remember arriving in Cleveland and just waiting for the phone to ring. And just being like I didn't want to answer it. I didn't want I didn't know how to deal with it. Or you know, it was just a whole nother journey that I knew I had to face with me leaving. But I yet I knew that I had such a hunger and I had to find answers for myself. Like I had to pursue whatever this whatever this was that was inside of me.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 23:53

You are dreading the phone call. You're cognizant of leaving your family behind? Did your family reach out? Did they let go and let be? So what did like the few months after leaving and being in Cleveland look like for you? I actually remember the morning that you left because your sister was involved and close with my family. And I remember that story of like, this is the day that Laura's coming here and like I remember it being a snowy morning and and just kind of like that anticipation throughout the day of you know did happen. What happened? Did everything go as smoothly as hoped and planned? So I do remember that I'm a few years younger than you so you were 18 I was probably 15 something like that and what was in the few months after, you know coming up to Cleveland with engagement with your family.

L

Laura Geideman 24:51

It was overwhelming. It really was like. That transition was very, very intense because again, it was just a lot of back and forth conflicting emotions as far as like, with my parents, they were devastated, which, as a mom, I get, you know, I totally understand. So I would get occasional phone calls. Not necessarily from my mom, but more from my dad, my brother. And they weren't good phone calls. I mean, they were, well, they were controlling phone calls. And, you know, when, when you're somebody who just stuffs everything, you know, all your emotions, and whatever you're feeling like, that's basically what I did. Like, I didn't really communicate how I was feeling. My only safe place at that time was my bedroom at night. And it was a very lonely period of my life, between 13 and 16. And so, you know, I had stuffed all this stuff, and basically shut my emotions off, and I was in survival mode. So now here I am, in Cleveland, with tons of people who are ready to receive me. Don't know me, that was overwhelming. You know, I come from a family who we were not very affectionate at all, to this to this amazing church who wants to hug me and I'm just like Oh, my gosh, I just remember being like, this is really awesome. But you all are a little too close. Stop, stop stop touching me! And so and then feeling bad, because I wasn't able to I so wanted to receive but you have to understand is like I couldn't like, people gave me compliments. I would just look at them. Like, they weren't even true. I couldn't even receive it. Like I couldn't receive, it was so hard for me when you don't feel

like you have. If you have any worth or you know, a voice, it's very hard to receive. It was kind of like this back and forth, where it's like, you know, I was the good part of that that season, or the exciting part I should say was that I was surrounded with people who wanted to talk about their faith who wanted to talk about God who were receiving me unconditionally. And then the flip side of it was my family was rejected me that my family was saying things that were extremely hurtful because that was how they were dealing with it. And we're just talking on the faith level. I'm not even talking about the Okay, well, so let's do our hair. And let's do our makeup. I mean, I look back now at some pictures and like, why didn't people tell me just to put a ponytail in? I mean, help a girl out. I mean, my hair, I look at pictures. I'm like, Oh my God. I had no clue. I mean, I had no clue. I mean, makeup. What's what is like eyeshadow? What am I supposed to do with it?

J Jennifer Malcolm 28:07

That's awesome. Oh, I love that you're touching the different parts because that is a reality. There is a spiritual reality. There is a physical reality of transitioning from one home and community into another day, right? That's a cultural reality. And record. Laura is gorgeous. And her daughters are gorgeous. And so I bet you look back at like, it's kinda like looking back at your middle middle school or elementary school pictures. They're like, come on, you help a girl out.

L Laura Geideman 28:36

You're so kind Jen. I appreciate that. Non Amish people have way too many choices. Okay, I had about one or two choices getting dressed in the morning.

J Jennifer Malcolm 28:47

Was it color choices or style choices?

L Laura Geideman 28:50

Color. So like, style. Oh, my word just like there's just way too many choices. So that was like a huge stress point. Thank God, my first job was McDonald's. And it was an outfit. You just knew what to wear every day. I like to put my hair back. I didn't have to worry about my hair. small victories. Exactly. That was interesting. But you know, during that time, I also look back and I can see how God knew I also needed friendships I needed laughter. So it was a mixture of different emotions when I've definitely when I first came, and then we've tossed the whole thing of trying to find a job. In the Amish community, you only go to like eighth grade. I think for the guys, they basically are farmers, or they work in

factories or carpenter, or that's changed a little bit even now. And for women, you know, it's skills in the home. And so I had an eighth grade education. So when I first came up here, I kind of knew that I would have to do something about that. I look back now and I'm like, I have no idea how I even got through that because it was during a very stressful period of time to begin with. And so I'm trying to study for my GED. I eventually got it. But it wasn't on first try.



Jennifer Malcolm 30:03

All good that not everyone passes that or your driver's test first time, so it's just life.



Laura Geideman 30:17

However, I did pass the driver's test. First time, maybe it's because I drove a tractor



Jennifer Malcolm 30:18

Skills that most women don't have.



Laura Geideman 30:20

That could be.



Jennifer Malcolm 30:22

And I want to hit back on a point because this really aligns in a parallel fashion with the Jennasis Speaks movement. And what this whole platform is about, because you're talking about, you know, how you were feeling when you first came, and the volume of love or the volume of, like, I'm excited to be with you, I want you to play in my playground, I want you to laugh and normal. And I'm sure at times, on my, you know, 1111 Facebook Lives or on the podcast or things that I record, like, I am so passionate about this, like what I want women to feel free and come to play in my playground, of freedom and voice and opportunity and overcoming shame and self worth and all those things that lock us down, unlocking our voices and, and, and, and really stepping into our God given rights and power and voice and advocacy. And I'm sure it's very overwhelming at times for someone, some women. And this may be you as you're listening to say like, I'm not ready yet. Or I may be curious. But that is a lot. That's a lot to jump into. Or she's a lot to jump into. And my invitation, if you're listening to this is, it's the call to the curious is the call that someone is like, I'm not ready to jump into that whole community of women's advocacy or voice or vulnerability, or sharing my story yet. But I am curious. And I want if you're

listening today, I want you to take that moment to say if there's just a small Yes, in your heart, if there's a small ounce of hope or curiosity, you do not have to jump into the deep end, it's just that invitation to step in or lean in or to just continue to listen to the podcasts and the stories because this means you and there is hope and joy. And there's life and there is healing. And there is just so much freedom and laughter when we join together and let our walls down and heal and grow together. So, but I wanted to be cognizant, because you did share that of how you felt coming into a community who just wanted to love you and and wanted that that for you. And you're like, just give me give me a moment. Don't touch me. Don't stop hugging me. I think I like it. But just give me time to you know, adjust and right. That really aligns with I'm sure a lot of women who listen to this podcast as well.



Laura Geideman 32:53

Oh, yeah. Because I think so many times, like, you know, I'm just speaking from experiences, like we have things happen in life. And we just tend to go into survival mode, and we put masks on and we don't even know it. Like, we don't even know that there's more that we could be experiencing shows up, I think different for everybody. You know, and I think for me, it just, you know, when I came up here, and I saw, like you said, this freedom that some people were experiencing, I wanted it but it terrified me at the same time. And having a group of people or having somebody come alongside of you and just allowing you to go at your pace is a gift in and of itself. It's especially coming from a very religious upbringing and a very religious mindset. Sometimes we unfortunately contend to even carry that within different communities. So there's something really powerful to be said about somebody who can meet you where you're at in your mess. And your ugliness and be able to say there's no judgment. There's no judgment here. Like, you know, you can say what you want to say because I was not only did I not know how to feel. I didn't know how to express it. And I'll never forget, like when somebody gave me tried to give me a compliment. And I don't I didn't know how to respond. I didn't know what to say. And then he later went and told my sister Yeah, I gave her sister a compliment and she didn't respond. And I was so sad because everything in me I was like, but I wanted to like I wanted to respond like but you have to understand when we have those walls up people sometimes don't. So even I'm just aware like even now when people do that, it's not that they don't want it. It's just that they're just could we all have a story and sometimes we have hurt and we it takes takes us surrendering sometimes and desperation, I guess I was just desperate. So many times of like, I kept seeing I kept seeing a cycle in my life, where I would show up at the same place. Different circumstance, and I was at the same place, and I'm like, I had been here before, and I'm tired of it. Yeah. And we're, that kind of just was kind of like a signal for me, like, I need healing I need I just realized I was so depleted. You know, and I think desperation is a huge is a catalysts that that really it is.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 35:37

Yeah, right. And I and I can align with that, because after my divorce, you know, I kept coming to that cycle of, I can forgive everyone else, I can give love to everyone else. But through choices that I made, and just the pain of, of losing a marriage and, and family unit, I also kept coming to that cycle, when you keep arriving at the self hatred, or not worthy or unqualified, or, you know, out of the game, or, but I can I can give that to everyone outside such deep compassion, I've always had such deep compassion for other people's stories, and, and really fully embracing them where they're at, but kept coming back to that self loathing or self hatred, or I'm able to forgive myself. And when you get there the 20th 30th 40th 50th time, year after year after year, like, Okay, I have to change the narrative. And that is that desperation that says I have to change this narrative because I can't live in this unhealthy mental cycle, I can't live my children deserve a mom who lives full hearted and is alive and, and, and walks in forgiveness and walks in joy and walks in healing. And doesn't mean that there's not sorrow or regret, or still pain or grief, or things from days gone by. But it becomes a vocal piece of freedom and advocacy, and walking in a deeper level of authority, relationship, compassion that I never knew could exist. So I love the way that you worded that. That's really powerful. So I actually asked my editor who prompt our questions because it said, it's now been 30 years since you left the Amish community. I said to her four times. It's when it's 20 years. It's 20 years. And she's like, No, I think it's 30. And then I was like, Oh, dear God, we are that old. Because your same age, but I was like, it isn't happens. 30 years, I was like, that's a typo. It's been 30 years. We're still young and hot. And we got we got ourselves together. Are you in contact with your family still, and I know 2020 was a loss for you. And some transition not only through COVID, moving from Ohio to Texas, also losing your mom last year as well. But as far as you know, our had, have you been in 30 years in relationship or conversation with your dad, your sibling, other siblings? Or is it been pretty isolated as well?

L

Laura Geideman 38:25

That, again, has been was God has done some amazing things. I mean, obviously, when I first left, you know, it was very strained. But in the 30 years, God has opened up several doors. And you know, I'm grateful for whatever he God wants to give me in the relationships. Are they perfect? No, I'm grateful for what I have. You know, when we first when I first left, I mean, I always tried to stay in contact. Somehow with my mom, I knew my mom wanted contact my dad, for example, like we would try to go see my mom when he wasn't around. You know, this was we're going back now years, this is kind of what we did. We tried to they didn't really have a phone. And so it's not like I could just call her so we would go see her when we could. And then through several series of accidents, my mom had a serious accident almost 10 years ago, where we all kind of find ourselves in the emergency room together with Kurt as well. And that's kind of when he first met. Kurt

met my dad and we there was a time where we would actually go down and we would spend time with because I have you know, there's five brothers and there's two sisters. Obviously, literally no longer you know, she's up here close to actually where you live, but we would go down there occasionally to visit and that kind of thing. And I still you know, here it is 30 minutes, 30 years later, I still am in contact with them. And I would say that I have a relationship with them. Most of them I can call now you know, I have their phone numbers I can call, I have a really good relationship with my younger sister. And like you mentioned, as far as with my mom, she passed away in June. And we had a really good relationship that was that was devastating. Because because we did have a really good relationship to the point where, you know, she would call me occasionally. And we did go down there to see her. Usually in the in the summertime more than in the wintertime where we would drive down there and spend time with her. And sometimes my dad was there sometimes he interacted sometimes he didn't, actually, just about a week ago, was Thanksgiving is when I actually called my dad, since I've moved here. So for some I call them since we moved here. So every relationship is a little bit different. And I'm can't get better than me, I can, but I'm grateful for what I have with the relationships.



Jennifer Malcolm 41:03

That's huge. And I'm sure that, you know, looking hindsight at a, you know, woman at age 18 to you know, now that I'm sure there's, there's that's back then like there could never be relationship, this is never going to be any type of family or community and so that that piece of loss or grief that you anticipated, and to be grateful for the small wins and to be grateful for communication, be grateful for time. And, and I can't imagine you got married, and your family wasn't there and to be able to, you know, introduce Kurt 10 years ago to your family, you know what a gift and it probably wasn't the way you had hoped it would have been. But those are the small wins and small victories that I look back on my life, like as pillars of hope, or golden nuggets that I just cherish, and it may look different than I ever wanted or hoped. But they're still just small treasures of our hearts that we get to enjoy. And that speaks volumes for the woman that you are just wanting to continue to sow seeds and relationship and try to you know, have that bridge of communication with your family as well.



Laura Geideman 42:24

Right? I mean, there, I'll be honest, I mean, there are times we're all here about them all getting together. And we're not there. Kind of Sting, it still stings a little bit. But I'm just grateful because it's like we I have, you know, some of my brothers I'm close to than others. But it's just it's so remarkable though what God can do. Like even when my mom did pass away when I went down there and my interaction with my brothers while we

were there, it was it was a devastating time, but yet it was a gift.

J

Jennifer Malcolm 42:55

So what have you learned about yourself through? I know you have many different threads in the fabric of your life and, and in the beautiful, quote, work of a woman that you are. But what are like through this, this situation and experience alone? Like what are some things that you've learned in and of yourself? Because you are so strong? It was so strong, you have raised a dynamic family. You've just uprooted courageously, you know, to move from Ohio to Texas to you know, help your family and Kurt's job. So but what are some things that you have learned about yourself through this experience? Because I'm sure that there's people who are listening, that are like, I don't know how to get out of this feeling. I feel overwhelmed, I staple down my voice or, you know, just feeling that that darkness looming? What are some gifts that you learned through this? It's okay not to have it all together?

L

Laura Geideman 43:55

Gosh, I think I could write a book just on that question alone. Because I feel like some of the things is for me personally, I have realized that how important it is for me to know my true identity. You know, and it's so easy saying that, and I don't know if I have fully even grasp that yet. You know. And again, you know, we grow up with a certain identity, right? your families, but for me, I I had to really get to the bottom or get to the root of how God really viewed me and how God saw me. And sometimes, you know, we can just say, oh, God loves us, right. But to get to the point where you know that you are loved by God, and you can rest in the fact that he actually delights in you and how he feels about you is a whole nother level like it. That's just identity was a huge, huge thing for me. And you know, how we go about that search is different for everybody. Identity is something that I'm still pursuing. It's not like I even mean we ever arrived, right? Like, we're always pursuing that. So that was a huge, I would say, that would be a huge thing. And the other thing is, too, is just the importance of I didn't realize the importance of emotional maturity. And I think when you come from a place where you kind of stuff it for years, right? And you kind of, you're in survival mode, you kind of stuff, everything. But then also just, when I even when I came up here, like in the church and stuff, it wasn't something we talked a lot about feelings, like, it's almost like we didn't really know what to do with feelings, we kind of just wanted to fix things, right? So being at a place where I can just allow myself to feel and to go down that path of emotional healing, and mental healing, because renewing of the mind is another I mean, they're all kind of connected, right? It's not just, you know, physically and spiritually, right. And I think, you know, when I look back, it's like, if you asked me, like, physically, when I moved up here at 18, I was I was like, Okay, I grew up on

a farm, I threw some bales of hay, like, I can handle that. Right. But it was interesting. And that's another thing I will say was interesting, because it was through my physical, some physical issues that God started getting my attention. Because I had stuffed things for so long, and you can't, you can't bury your feelings. You just can't. You have to have a place where you acknowledge it and express it, right? And to deal with it. It's okay. It's okay to like anybody who's listening. Like if you're, if you're feeling a certain way, there's nothing wrong with us. There's nothing wrong with you, you have to be able to express it, to be honest with yourself. And I guess that's another piece of the puzzle. It's like, just being honest, like, there's nothing wrong with that. Like, I think I was so afraid of what I was gonna find that I just kept pushing it even after I came up here, even if I was part of a church, like, I just put band aids on things like, hey, just slap a scripture verse on it, and it'll be okay. Our scripture verses good. Yes. But you still have to deal with your emotions. There. They're not gonna just die. Like, it's not a magic wand. It's not it is. It's an activation. Yeah. And that's good, right? And even, like, you know, renewing your mind, right, you hear that all the time. That's good. But there's also the whole piece of I had to get I had to heal my heart. And I had to go from the head to the heart, from religion to relationship. Yeah, I couldn't just keep thinking about it, and just having positive thoughts and speaking my affirmations and are they good? Yes. But I had to deal with some root issues. And I think, you know,



Jennifer Malcolm 48:00

No, and that's huge. Because, you know, we are we are body soul spirit. Like there's all of their there's their emotionality, then there's your traumas, or triggers and, and things that we deal in our psyche. And, and so, you know, we often you know, focus on one lane, like, I'm going to work on my spiritual person, or I'm gonna work on my train for a marathon or I'm going to, you know, get fit after the new year and get back into the gym. And then there's this emotional piece that I think throughout society and and within the church is, you know, that you are throwing band aids on some things and not negating the truth or the power of the Bible, or belief or faith or God or any of that stuff. But there is an activation of being willing to get honest and have hard conversations with yourself, whether that's through journaling, whether that's through counseling, whether that's through walks and self care, pausing, breathing, there's all sorts of things that we often ignore. And I love the way that you said like you're stapling, stapling, stapling, stapling of emotional, you know, I'm not going to deal with this often then manifests physically because our physical bodies can only hold so much emotional pain or trauma or stress. And then it starts coming outside, right, and our body's screaming like, pay attention, like pay attention because something right on and we you know, we're wired that way that are so intricately created, that our all of our beings and essence co communicate with each other. And we often ignore, you know, one whole side and I love that you kind of

took three different pieces to pull that together.



Laura Geideman 49:51

We are so connected. It takes courage to say, Okay, I have some I need to deal with what's really I need to do with some deeper issues, and it's scary. I mean, let's be honest, it's scary sometimes and you don't want to be judged, especially if you've dealt with rejection. Why would I want to bring that up again? Like, why would I want to go there, but it's actually it's not necessarily to go there so that you can just live there, it's to go acknowledge it.



Jennifer Malcolm 50:20

No, and I like what you said, because we go to our safe space, we go to our, you know, what we're used to doing. So whether that's working out, whether that's meditation, whether that's, you know, reading the Bible, or journaling, or going for a walk, or whatever that is, we go to the things that we're comfortable with. And part of this podcast, and this movement is the call to go to the uncomfortable, and it's not to break shame is not to bring embarrassment, it's not to re instill rejection, or wounds or trauma, it's not to re traumatize, it's to go in there and put us bomb of healing, and compassion, and, you know, strengthen the muscles and the intricacies of our heart that do need to heal or mature or overcome trauma. You know, I realized that there's things you know, getting engaged at 20, getting married at 22, there are so many things that I was immature, and that I never grew muscles in as a young woman, because I went from living at home with my parents at college, to mainly being married and being a wife. And there were so many just muscles that I just didn't have. And, and, and realizing, you know, being a single mom for 10 years, and then getting remarried two and a half years ago, almost three now is like there's new muscles, and there's new tissue, and there's, there's new new newness to work with that's been healed or developed or cultured. And it's beautiful. And as women, you know, we tend to not take time to self care, we take time to not stifle things down or suppressing them, because we have family household careers, you know, responsibilities to take care of, and, and this is a call to now's the time to start looking in those because there's courageous women that are arising and that's meaning you, Laura, me, and the women that were also listening to this podcast, so it's good.



Laura Geideman 52:18

Amen. So together we can do this.

J Jennifer Malcolm 52:20
Absolutely. So I have some questions. So these are totally unprepared. So you're just gonna have to think fast on your feet. And we'll go from there. But what's that you are looking forward to in 2021?

L Laura Geideman 52:33
Meeting some new people here in Texas, with like minded?

J Jennifer Malcolm 52:37
That's awesome. Yes.

L Laura Geideman 52:38
Like minded, like minded people here in Texas. I don't know exactly what where that's going to pay or what its gonna look like. But yeah, that's something I'm looking forward to.

J Jennifer Malcolm 52:48
And I didn't think about that with you guys moving during COVID. Because people are not out. You're not in the community as much, you're probably not eating out as much at all. And that would be hard to uproot. And, and find friends.

L Laura Geideman 53:03
It, it has been so much so like to give you an idea, like, Okay, so we're in a development and, you know, pretty close neighbors. And I've met a few but every neighbor I have met have said to me, they have said to me, yeah, we wanted to come over. But you know, we're just not sure where everybody's at, which is understandable. But the COVID thing, right? And so, whenever I see somebody out getting their mail, i dash over. I mean, I do have some awesome friends for like two hours from here. Right? But I'm talking about like, even closer, right, you know, so that's good.

J Jennifer Malcolm 53:38
All right, this should be easier because I know you and I have had conversations about this on Facebook wall. What do you like to do for self care?

L Laura Geideman 53:45
I love massages. I haven't had one since I've moved here, that and a cup of iced coffee early in the morning so I can sleep at night. Nice.

J Jennifer Malcolm 53:57
One more? Do you still speak German at all?

L Laura Geideman 54:01
I do. I almost started speaking German. Now when you said

J Jennifer Malcolm 54:05
You can give us a little bit I just didn't know like if there's an opportunity to speak German much. Since you know being out of

L Laura Geideman 54:12
This funny I don't really have the opportunity like every once in a while I will break out here at home and the girls are like interpretation please. So it's usually when I'm having a little tense moment. You know, sometimes I'll break out and my German but I find that when I go to visit my family, which obviously I'm in Texas now so I don't haven't seen them in a while but when I'm around them, it'll all come back. And that's also I don't always get the words right and I kind of have to laugh about it. But it's all good.

J Jennifer Malcolm 54:42
Any closing remarks to the listeners today because you have such an empowering story about really choosing a life that you wanted that was important to you. It costs a lot. It costs you a lot to step into the world. In that you wanted to be the faith, you wanted to explore those things. And so is there anything that in closing remarks to any of the listeners that you would give as a voice of encouragement or act or call to action?

L Laura Geideman 55:18
I think the first thing that comes to mind is that I would just encourage people to be kind to yourself in the process of healing, whatever that is that you that maybe is standing out to you, because you're worth fighting for. I mean, don't ever, ever give up fighting for your

heart, because I think what, you know, I think we would all agree at the end of the day, it's our heart, God wants our heart wants to connect to our heart. And so just being being okay with where you're at, in the process of, I don't mean settling, but being okay with as you're in the healing process, and also just that, to find somebody who can also be, you know, a safe place for you to maybe go deeper with some things that keep coming up surfacing, and you don't know how to deal with it. And because, you know, like, we were all in the process, if anybody tells you that they've arrived, or that they don't have any issues, right? Yeah, look, again, you're valuable, we're valuable. And you're worth fighting for. Don't ever, ever compare? I mean, I know, I think that I think it's part of your movement, too, is that, you know, the whole comparison thing with women sometimes can be so vicious, and we don't have time for that. Yeah, we really don't like you know, I think the more people that are open to sharing their stories, and admitting we don't have it all together, but we are desiring to go we're desiring to be vulnerable with each other. Because we all want freedom, right? And there's an inheritance that we all have, I think that's what I would leave with everybody. We've been given an inheritance, don't ever stop searching for it, we all have an inheritance, we all have a voice, and we're going to impact people, you might impact people that I never impact. And we all have a voice.



Jennifer Malcolm 57:15

And I and I want to close with that, because you hit on so many great points with this Jennasis movement is, you know, and I've said this time and time again, like my story, my personal, you know, stuff that I've overcome or dealt with is going to resonate with a lot of women. And it's going to not resonate with a lot of women. But your story is going to impact different women. And so it's that webbing of stories and that gathering of stories and that releasing of stories and pain points. And, and it may not have been in someone may like Why wasn't I didn't grow up Amish, but there's identity, there's stapling down voice, there's things that we've talked about today that resonate. And that is it, that we as women deal with and humanity deals with, so and I love that piece, then it's a journey, because my call is you may not be ready to women, you know, whoever you are, may not be ready to run a marathon today. But if you just get up and take an inch step, and a yes in your heart that says I'm willing to, to explore and to heal and to join together, then, you know, you do 12 inches over a course of a week or so. And you look back over a few months. And you're like I've come You know, so many yards and but by the time it's just a journey, and if we continue to just go down this path of desiring to walk in the fullness of who we are called to be and, and release and bring freedom and voice to other women along the way, then that's a win in my book. Embracing the journey, embracing the journey. Yes. Well, thank you so much, dear heart for your time and for, for being here with us and sharing your story for the first time really on a public manner. And I'm honored to call you friend and sister and you look great.



Laura Geideman 59:07

Thank you, Jenn, thank you so much for having me. Appreciate it.



Jennifer Malcolm 59:11

Love you. Love you too. So thank you for joining us on this episode of the Jennasis Speaks podcast where every woman has a story and every story matters. And I say it every time. Yes, that means you you're listening. This means you. And we're gonna close out this one and we look forward to connecting with you next week. All right, have a great one. 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 to empower women's voices and reclaim the power over your own narrative.