

Girls Night #227: How our Past Experiences can Point us to our Purpose — with Jami Nato

0:00:05 - Stephanie

Hey friends, welcome to Girls Night. I'm Stephanie May Wilson and I'm so happy that you're here. Each week, I have a girlfriend over and we talk through one of the biggest questions we have about our lives as women. We're talking about friendships and faith and relationships and self-confidence, about our calling in life and how to live every bit of our lives to the full. Life is so much better and easier and absolutely more fun when we navigate it together as girlfriends, and I cannot wait to get started.

Friends, I'm so excited about today's episode. Today, we're talking about how our past experiences can point us to our purpose for the future. To talk us through this, I invited my new friend, Jami Nato, onto the show. Jami is a writer, a serial entrepreneur, she says, and an Instagram influencer who loves keeping it real. A few months ago, I received her book in the mail and it's called this Must Be the Place, following the breadcrumbs of your past, to discover your purpose today, and I knew I needed to have her on the show to talk with us about this.

In this episode, Jami shares the story of discovering her unique identity by drawing on her past experiences and why she truly believes that God can use every part of our story, even the messy parts. Embracing her new identity has given her freedom to step into her gifts and live a more joyful and purpose-filled life, and she's telling us how we can do the same. I love this conversation, feeling so inspired and encouraged, and I know you will too. Friends, I'm so excited for who you get to meet today. I'm sitting here with my new friend, Jami Nato. Jami, I am just so happy to have you on the show. Hey, thank you for having me. For women who haven't gotten to meet you yet, can you tell us who you are, what you do and a fun fact about yourself?

0:01:47 - Jami

Yeah, I am a mother of four. I have been writing for forever when we had blogs. This is when we did something called a blog spot, and I'm older than all of you.

0:01:57 - Stephanie

I'm elderly, so I'm 42.

0:02:01 - Jami

And so now you have to listen to all my advice. But I've been writing and I'm kind of a serial entrepreneur. I don't ever want to be bored. I love sales. I love Instagram as much as it's annoying, and so I just started building a platform on telling stories and being really honest and slightly irreverent, Especially because I came from such a fundamental like faith space that I was just like I got to be myself. So it turns out a lot of people liked that too, and so now I get to do what I love. I get to write and sell things and do stupid, stupid videos on Instagram like Target

Trions and ADHD Hotline, and my husband is like people like this. I'm like shut up. So maybe we are thriving in our marriage.

0:03:02 - Stephanie

Amazing, amazing, the stuff we do, right, Okay, I love that you oh fun fact, fun fact, oh fun fact. Let me stop you.

0:03:14 - Jami

I have. I grew up with seven siblings, so family of 10. And the other one that scares people that I say like all the teeth on my top teeth are all like fake, they're all crowns, veneers, Like I had to get a whole whole situation. I know you're like, wow, you really went from family of origin to dental care.

0:03:38 - Stephanie

That is. That is literally what Girls Night is for and what the fun fact is for, and so you understood the assignment. Very good, very good. Okay, fake teeth, big family got it, got it. You have a book that came out. When did it come out?

0:03:59 - Jami

In June. Yeah, it's kind of new but kind of not.

0:04:02 - Stephanie

It's like you know it's totally new. Totally new and it's called this Must Be the Place, and it's following the breadcrumbs of your past to discover your purpose today. And I was set your book. I get a lot of books in the mail kind of an occupational hazard when you have a podcast and I missed out on getting to see it because we were oh my gosh, I haven't told this. We were moving at the time. Maybe I will have announced that before this comes out. We were moving. We're still in Nashville, everyone. We'll all update you. Anyway, we were moving in so I missed it, but I remember opening the package and it's just this really fun pink that covers, so fun, and I love this idea of looking at your past for direction for your future. And so I knew that we needed to talk and I'm so glad that you have time. Tell me about the book, how, what's in it, yeah, yeah, what happened?

0:04:59 - Jami

I think I wrote the book that I wanted to read. What happened to me was I was a young mother and in this space it was like kind of like I keep mentioning it, but when you're in a really fundamental Christian space, you assimilate to it because you want to belong. And what you had to do to belong in this space was all of your identity was in your children and in your marriage. And if you were like wanted to be cool, you stay at home, aka you're privileged, but no matter that. And so I did that and I went all in and I just lost myself in everybody else. And then when you kind of I call it thawing out from other hood, I don't know, I don't know when it happens, but you kind of like wake up one day and you look around and say who am I and what? What am I really supposed to be doing? Like if I didn't think I had to be doing something and I should be doing something. And they are doing this and they look like they're doing really

good. What am I apart from all of that? So it just sent me on this like big, big journey. Not to mention my husband had cheated on me and I that just like talk about your identity being stripped away from you. It's like I'm apparently not a really good wife, because why would he cheat on me? And my I'm not a really good mother right now because I can hardly eat and like shower. I'm so sad and everybody's having to take care of me.

And so it was just this big bomb, like okay, I need to figure out where where my true identity is and where I belong and be really rooted in that so that it's not dependent on my spouse or my kids or who anybody thinks I am Like who am I really in there? And so I just I found I had to go pretty far back and figure out who I was. And that starts at like looking at who you were when you were an eight to 10 year old and what you were doing. And I think it's one of the most important questions that people can ask of themselves and have a hard time answering as it comes to find out. But I think that is such a breadcrumb of like what were you doing when you had literally no worldly obligations I mean barring trauma and things like that but when you are just your true self, what are you doing?

And when I was asking myself this question because I loved selling and I loved making money not for like making money, but I loved what money could do I liked what I could do in the community, I liked, I liked how you could move money to help people and change lives and I was just annoyed with myself because I thought, why do I love selling so much? Why do I love the marketplace? This is so unwombingly and maybe ungodly, like whoa, who am I? So I was praying one day and I'm like, take this away from me, god, just providing for my family and like loving what I'm doing and thriving, which is really dumb prayer. And God was like lol, I, literally this picture came to my head what I was doing when I was eight.

You know, people are playing house, you're playing school, you're playing doctor, you're digging around in the dirt, I don't know. Like, whatever you're doing, I did a little bit of all that, but mostly what I was doing I was pulling a rusty red wagon around my neighborhood selling rocks back to my neighbors. I mean, they were their rocks, but they were curated, they were incredibly, they were the finest of Monroe Street. And, yeah, were they elderly? Sure, okay, was it? I don't know.

I have some memory issues. Maybe in hindsight I was swindling my neighbor, just kidding, but they were buying them. And I got to know all my neighbors and I would sit with them on the porch and then I would go my mom has zinnias in the front yard and I said, mom, can I take some of these zinnias seeds, put them in a baggie like a drug dealer and take them around to my neighbors? And they bought those too, because they felt bad for me, probably. But you know, I just I grew up on welfare and we you don't ask your parents for money, you have to go find money. And so there I am, like hustling, turning nothing into something, and I loved it and I felt like in that moment I just got a huge permission slip to say you've always been doing this and you thrive in this environment and like keep going. So that was like my breakthrough and kind of what the book that moment is based off, the book of the book of circumstance.

0:09:53 - Stephanie

I love that so much. I wasn't selling rocks. I was selling like old junk from my bedroom to my sister, who was much better at saving money than I was. She was much better at keeping her allowance, and in fourth grade I had a. I might have told this on the show before I had it was during the Beanie Baby craze and so, recognizing an opportunity, I created Beanie Baby sleeping bags and Beanie Baby like leashes and collars, and it was called the Beanie Baby Stuff Store, and. But I couldn't sew, and so I outsourced the work to my mother, who was able to sew, and I got shut down in school because it was such a distraction.

Oh, my God, see, you had a thriving. You're really getting on to it, I know, I know. I know. I love that, though, because when you said because you didn't say like I love business, I love entrepreneurship, you said I love selling, and that reminds me so much of one of the things that I've always thought about when it comes to finding, like your path in life is that the path that you're dying to walk down is going to look awful to other people, and that's how you know, like we think, like well, everyone wants to do this, or everyone likes this, and it's like no, no, no, no. Most people really hate selling things, and so the fact that you thrive in this is that means it's a gift and that's a perfect example.

0:11:23 - Jami

It's weird, and when I say people to that, say that to people people are taking it back and like whoa, I don't know if you should say that or if women should say that.

I don't hear it a lot, and so I felt like I'm just gonna say it, because maybe there are women out there that love the marketplace too, and when I was, I had to teach a team like when I was growing my businesses I had a team of women who I'm teaching to sell and I told them the only way that you can sell with integrity is that you do it the way you do it and you stay true to yourself. So if you wanna be, like, educated, you wanna use education as a way that you're gonna sell. Do you wanna use entertainment as a way that you sell, like? There are so many different ways, but the only way you're gonna be able to sustain this and not burn out is to just literally be so grounded in who you are. And I'll tell you, women do not know who they are. They know a lot about their kids, they know a lot about their spouse, they know a lot about the Kardashians they know a lot about, like neighbors, but they don't know themselves because we've masked for so long.

We have. We do things that other people, we think other people would like us to do, and so it's sad to me and I want to change it.

0:12:48 - Stephanie

Yeah, yeah, I wanna circle or like circle background here, because otherwise I feel like everyone's been thinking about it. Can you finish the story on what happened with your husband? Can I ask that?

0:13:03 - Jami

I always do that Like I'm like, yeah, and so he cheated on me. And anyways, do you wanna talk about my gentle health?

0:13:09 - Stephanie

No, I'm like we gotta circle background here.

0:13:14 - Jami

I totally forget that. People don't know our story. Maybe don't follow me. It has been just a really wild, miraculous, redemptive story and when that happened I don't know. I would say it was. We were separated for a little bit and I went and got therapy for myself. I really unbuckled myself from his rollercoaster wild. I'm like you. I don't even know who you are. We've only been married for two years.

I had a toddler and a baby and I was like I don't know who you are, like for you to do this, and especially in the environments we were in, like very churchy people and involved in everything and like eight plus Christians. Ooh, it's embarrassing and I thought we were just like amazing for God. And it turns out my life just fell apart and we weren't and he wasn't and I just said I'm not, you go then to have it and I am going to get strong and I'm gonna be strong on my own and I don't even care if you come back Like at first I did. But during being separated and you know you're learning to be a single mom, and how do I do this and how do I ask for help when I've never had to need this much help in my life and it just, it was devastating. But I will tell you, through that suffering I became I'm stronger than I thought I was and I became a different person in a sense. And so my husband did come back.

It was like three months later and he totally changed. So I'll put my job, I'm going to therapy already on my own, I'll go with you, I, for the rest of my life, like you can do. You can do what you want, because I deserve that, but for the rest of my life like you're it. And he was just a totally different person. And I said, fine, I'll forgive you, but it'll be an act of God, obviously, because my dad's an attorney and I was like, well, we're just gonna have to take all your money in, make you miserable and I'll hold your kid hostage.

Like it's not, like I was like this amazing forgiving. I was like, yeah, thank you. And but you know, it was like God's mercy that my life fell apart. And so now I don't play the like christening game anymore, like I tell the truth and I tell it like it is. We tell our story a lot because I'm not interested in hiding just because maybe it makes our ego, it takes like ego hit, but I'd rather help other people and show them that there is hope. Either way staying or getting enforced, you're gonna be okay on the other end.

0:16:16 - Stephanie

Thanks for sharing that. I appreciate that. So okay, going back to the mother, had thought which I love that you started to look around and figure out like who am I, aside from all these different roles that I've been filling? You said that you looked back to like what you were doing when you were like eight or nine and I have two questions about that. One, I want to know if there's like what else, what other places you looked. And then also, what you found from being eight or nine, like you said, was not what you expected or didn't feel like an option really, as a woman, like can you like sales? As a woman, like that doesn't seem, I don't know. People think that's

weird. Well, yes, you can, but how did you get, how did you like embrace that when you felt like what you found was not what was not like an acceptable answer? Right?

0:17:16 - Jami

Well, I think what you're going to find when you look back, the book is full of just prompts, like I tell you a story about my life and I say, you know, we're going to take a bird's eye view from this and we're going to call all these things breadcrumbs. And when I started to do that I said like, oh, none of this is coincidental. So now life isn't just happening to me and not, oh, that just bad thing just happened to me and I moved on and I buried it and it's over here and I moved on. Look at me and I would say you know what, if that, there's actually buried treasure in that.

So you look at my suffering my marriage is a part of that story and you say like, well, what's the good that can come out of here? But your suffering really makes you who you are. Actually, it provides a really unique empathy, like you have a really unique empathy when you have suffered through something very difficult. So now, when you see that happening, or you see someone hurting, or you see a single mother, or you, like my neighbors, going through a hard time, and I can see she's crying in the front yard and she's trying to hide it, but I can see something is going on, so I text her and say hey, I know it's rough. I accidentally made enchiladas double and a margarita in this ball door and I am putting it on your door and you can't say no.

So just know it'll be there at five. It's like I am bossy about caring for others now because that's what I needed during that time and just saying you know what was? What is the treasure in that? Yes, even suffering or it doesn't have to be suffering it can be like, what do you just do, even when you're tired, and you like, like, what do you can you not help yourself from doing? And I have a bunch of things that are like that in my life.

Just a breadcrumb, looking at your childhood and the way that you grew up, I mean my dad went to law school at 35 while we were so poor and no college education.

He went to the local junior college to get his bachelors and you know he's six kids at the time and he had a dream he wanted to be an attorney.

And I it's just like, so audacious, like this guy who is a volunteer firefighter in a tree trimmer, is going to society, wants to be an attorney and watching my dad pursue that at that age. And then I watched my dad graduate from law school. When my mom pulled us out, I was in middle school and so you have our whole row is like all of us, like we just look like Mormon or Catholic. Everyone asked that I'm like no, just my parents are crazy. And those long, cold winters, and you know watching my dad graduate and I look over at my mom and I said, mom, why does dad have decorations on like dad had, like colorful ribbons on which I we are just from, and not that from being from Texas anyway, but we're from like backwards texts, like I don't have the language at this time to say what, what is, what are his decorations? I don't know what those are called like or yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

And my mom was like, oh, he just did real good in school, you know. And then it was. They said we'd like to recognize the top 10 of our class and there's my dad standing up. I mean it's like my dad, at 41, is graduating law school and with his best friend, who was blind and slightly deaf, named Clay, who we taught to drive that's in the book too it was. It was pretty not safe, guys. My childhood was not safe.

But I look back at that and what does that? What does that mean for me? Well, I just published a book at 41. Like I was taught at a young age that your crazy dreams can happen and I watched my dad do it. Then look at me. I'm like literally doing the same thing, not the same thing, I could never go to law school but at 41, chasing some kind of big dream. And so I say, like, look at your life and look at all the breadcrumbs and see where it's brought you. And when you do that, I think you live a very intentional, a very intentional life and it's rare, it's rare to see somebody who's living so intentionally.

0:21:56 - Stephanie

I love this so much because I feel like this is like you are so speaking my language with this. I've always felt this way about my experiences. I just have always, like paid extra attention to them, feeling like this is going to come around at some point, I'm going to need this at some point and that's. I mean, that's been the whole story of everything that I do. It started with I worked.

I took a part-time, unpaid internship at a college ministry and it was so cool because I'd be getting coffee with a girl who was like a handful of steps behind me in life and I mean, sometimes it was even like a step. I would have gone through something or had a hard phone call or had a weird thing that I had to figure out and then, like a month later, I'd be sitting across the table from someone and they'd be like you know, the weirdest thing just had, the hardest thing just happened, and I'd be like, yeah, I have a particular empathy for this and yours won't work for me, and that's I mean, that's like my whole job. That's my entire job now.

0:22:59 - Jami

So I love it, yeah, and even like, even directional missteps like those are just as much an arrow as something that you excelled in, something that you do well, in, something that brings you joy. Like what about the things where you took a wrong turn, like you know, this didn't pan out the way that you thought, and what about those? But you already said it, it's like everything will be used in some way. So, like maybe you spent all this time and money getting this degree. Then you get into it and you're like what, this is not what I thought it was, aka me as a teacher, a high school English teacher, and I was like this is torture. And so I like felt so bad because, oh my gosh, I just wasted all my parents money and and I don't know what I'm doing and you know what in the world.

But what I learned in that that season of like becoming a teacher and student teaching in particular, which I write about too is I learned how to captivate an audience. I learned how to use entertainment to educate. I learned how to like command a room. I learned how to be responsible like for myself, you know, and for what lesson planning and having the vision, like the overhead vision, which is like lol on my book is about is like look at the bird's eye view, and I

use all those skills to this day. So I think we need to just reframe things. So, instead of calling something bad or that was dumb or just a messed up, I think maybe reframe it like you said. How am I actually using that thing today?

0:24:47 - Stephanie

That is like this is such an epiphany for me, because we talk so often about like I got this degree and I never used it. You know, I think the amount of the number of people who are actually working in the field, that they set out to work in long term from college, I think it has to be very slim, but like so. So, yeah, we look at it and we go, well, okay, well, why did I get this teaching degree? Because I'm not a teacher and so I guess I'm starting over, but it's like absolutely not, you're not starting over, you figured out how to teach people something Like that's huge.

My degree's in journalism and I'm not a journalist, but I'm currently speaking into a microphone on video. Like this is my degree, and so I just I really think that I've always had like I don't know. I feel like we say it jokingly when we're like you know that degree was useless. But what if? What we're looking, what if the things that we, the most important things we learned are more like soft skills or hard skills that fit into a different picture than the one that we set out? You know, to live on day one.

0:25:55 - Jami

Because it's a better way to live. I think, too, just where you look at things with gratitude because that's what you're doing You're looking back at these things and you're actually, instead of saying like you're pointless, that was stupid, that was wrong, you're actually looking back and saying like, thank you, thank you for giving me a stepping stone into who I am today. I can look back, even at my suffering and I know this sounds crazy. I can look back at the affair and say, thank you, I would not be the woman I am today. I wouldn't. I absolutely that changed how I parent, how I am a wife, my friendships, like how I see God. You know it. Just, it changed everything for me. And I look back at it and I say thank you. And do I wish it on everyone? No, god, no, but we, nobody like prays and says like oh God, please give me suffering so I can learn how to be near and so I can get a really good lesson. Nobody says that, but like, like the frigate, that's what comes with life.

Right, congratulations, you're a human.

0:27:01 - Stephanie

I really feel the same way and I'm so grateful for that, because it really like we can look back at things and like even mistakes, even things that were flat out mistakes, and with some time and some healing and some therapy and you know we really do those mistakes or those hard seasons or, you know, missteps really do turn us into the exact person that someone's going to need when they're going through this thing too.

And like I love your example about your neighbor, where you're like I can see that she's crying, Like other people may not see it, but I can see it, and the fact that you know well enough to not ask like do you need anything, but to say I am. Or like what kind of food do you want? Or like

what's a good day, or whatever, Like you were giving her no option to say no. You're saying this is going to be on your portrait five and yep, like they're just guaranteed. She felt so loved and so taken care of by that and that she would have said no if you would have asked. You know, and you know that you go through grief enough times.

0:28:05 - Jami

I mean someone, a loved one, dies and you know you're having some kind of traumatic event. I mean there's so many things. You go through that enough to know how amazing it is when you open your fridge and there's soup and you didn't have to do anything to put it there and it's like late and you forgot to eat because you've been crying or you've been running around and there's soup or there's like chopped up fruit or like it's just there. And we do this all the time. During COVID, when, when my neighbors and I were, it was weird because we're all like separated and we're we were getting pretty tight in it. Our streets like a cul-de-sac and someone's mother-in-law had died and they were sad and it was like we just like wanted to be with them, but it was too scary and we didn't know and everybody had different opinions on can you know? So I texted everyone and I was afraid to because we weren't close. But I texted everybody else not the gout and I said, all right, I have this giant basket I got at the thrift store like two years ago. I've never known what to do with it, but I am going to drive around to all of your houses set out on your porch. We're going to call it a coping mechanism basket. You set out like wine. You know, did you bake something? Do you have like what do you have? That's going to be comfort someone chocolate, like everybody has something.

It was at the time, too, where we were like afraid to go to the store so nobody like you were literally going to get like flowers out of your backyard or you know, like you're just scrounging around. But by the end of it we had this huge basket, like overflowed. Of course everyone was like yes, I have something to put in the basket. And my head I was like is this stupid? Are they going to be like annoyed by me saying let's rally around? Our friend, and we did that. We took the basket, I took it over to her ring the doorbell and like ran right away. Yeah, rally, it was fun.

It's like I was eight again and she texted us just like crying like I, I just feel so loved, it's been so lonely, I can't even tell you what this meant. And then the next time somebody had something bad, I texted the group and said, all right, let's, let's rally around, so and so. And the friend who got the basket last time was like, hey, it would be like my greatest honor if I could drive around and pick up everybody's stuff on their porch. And so now it's like sisterhood of the traveling basket. We just pass it around like anytime someone's having a hard day, you know those. Someone will send a text. It's like I think it's time for operation basket, you know, or whatever, so I don't know. It's like you teach people how you want to be treated by just going first and doing nothing. Like you teach people how to treat each other by you being brave and saying and a little bossy, brave and bossy is my new brand, but just saying you know it's much to follow. You know I'm going to be bringing that to the marketplace.

0:31:14 - Stephanie

Yes, you will bring that.

0:31:16 - Jami

Yes, you will Brave bossy, I love it so much. But, you know, just going first and saying like here's the deal, here's what's happening, here's the truth. That can happen in conversation, that can happen in like acts of kindness and love, but it it needs to happen.

0:31:33 - Stephanie

Yeah that is the coolest thing. I have goosebumps everywhere. I love that with my everything. I want to go back to, like when you look through your past and you know I grew up this way. This happened when I was a kid, you know. I went through this as an adult. How do you like, I guess, what are we trying to fit those pieces into? Is this, like, does it have to be a career? And, if so, like, how do you get people to pay you money? To? Like, have this specific set of circumstances? Or like, is it more your kind of mining who I am and what I care about and how I want to spend my time? And like, yeah, talk me through. What do you do with these pieces once you find them?

0:32:25 - Jami

Well, first of all, I think women need to be taking up more space with their stories. So, yeah, this book is like, hey, I want to be a breadcrumb sherpa for you and say, you know, hey, have you like put the flashlight, like look over there, like that's pretty cool actually if you think about it, and just giving you permission to look at these things. Women do not give themselves permission to do anything but like care for everybody else, really, and otherwise you're selfish. And so, yeah, I think my secret goal of this book is don't tell anyone is that women would take up space with their stories. So if you actually genuinely answer these questions and they the book cover is pink and it is cute and you are like cute, this is gonna be fun.

The questions aren't hard. People email me and they're like, wow, we really thought we were going to be darling and we are actually like trying to figure out ourselves and it's on purpose. But if you really didn't answer those questions and you, you did that each chapter, however many there are I forget 11, 12, you would have a many memoir. And I'm not saying you need to be a good writer, but I'm saying I am so tired of women being like eulogized by other people and it's what they know about mom or it's what they know about grandma, but we actually don't know what mom thought Like. What were mom's experiences outside of ourselves as a child, as a kid? You're looking at your mom and you are thinking you're a mom and you've always been a mom, because that's true to them, but I haven't always been a mom and I have some crazy stories. Now listen, you might have to temper some of those.

0:34:09 - Stephanie

I'll tell you some of those when you're a little older.

0:34:12 - Jami

Some of them are in a black book, okay, no, but you know just, I want women to take more spaces with their story. I think it's important, I don't care if you're a good writer or not. I think I want women to have autonomy over their story. I want you to tell the story about yourself and I

think it's powerful. But I think that when you do that, no, you don't have to like change your career or go into a new career or like the same things I like. You don't need to like selling.

This book is not about selling. It is about living so deeply into who you are that you truly and I mean this you truly stop caring about what other people think and then you go live wildly and intentionally and freely, and it is the best feeling. And so I want everyone to. I want to go around and shaking everyone and say, like that's actually really cool, like stop hiding that, you are amazing and this is. You are weird, and like incredible and the world needs the weird and incredible. So this is my attempt to shake everyone's shoulders and say your stories are so important, take up more space, and then let's all like if women really live so intentionally like this, because, statistically, women are more philanthropic than men, and I love men. My husband is generous, but women are the ones who have their pulse on the community. They know what's going on in their churches or in their schools or in their neighborhoods. Like they have a pulse, they also dictate where the money goes. I think it's something like 75% of all consumer dollars are directed by women. I mean, it's like the most powerful. We're seeing Taylor Swift and Beyonce change entire economies. Women are so incredibly powerful and I know that I'm using my hands to talk a lot and I'm trying to sit on them, but I don't get so passionate about it. But if women were really to live that intentionally, you would change your neighborhood Like you would change your community. You would change those environments that you're in and connected with.

When people watch that, not only do they say I want more of that, like what is that about you? And kind of like how I use my platform, you're not coming in. I'm not like teaching you about the Bible. You're coming in because you watched me in a target dressing room be the most stupid ever, but you left and then later you're going to say how does she live so freely, like she does not care that she looks ridiculous in this outfit, but more I don't care that I look ridiculous doing what I love and I don't care that you think that I am greedy because I like to sell. You don't see my bank account. I don't care Some of its age, I think, because I'm elderly, as I explained earlier, and I'm in my 40s and now you start understanding old people when you see them out and you're like, wow, that outfit.

You were like, yeah, who cares? And my dad wearing his socks with Jesus, sandals growing up with paint splatters. And I was like you, you really don't care, but I judged him for it. And now you should see. You should see some of the things that I freely walked to the mailbox in and scare my neighbors with.

But it's like a freedom of the heart and so it's tendrils go and everything. And so, yeah, I want people to say what is her God like? But I want you to have fun getting there, I want you to have, I want you to experience freedom and I want you to live the life. Live a very full, generous, incredible life. Like I'm tired of people. Just I don't know. It's like it's lazy a little bit because it's easier to do what everybody else is doing. It's easier to fit in and do whatever. But I think there's a better way.

And so I just want women to say, maybe, maybe I could do something. Like, maybe I could change this neighborhood, like maybe I could start a basket. Guys, that is like life changing. For someone it sounds silly, it sounds stupid and small. The basket is what kept us together during COVID. We did not skip a beat, and other relationships can fall apart, but these women now today, like after all the fires, and we all have very different politics, like very different politics, very different health, wellness, very different ideas, but we don't care. Like we love you, not your politics, we love you, not that we disagree on masking and not masking. Like you don't get the basket because we voted for different people and so the relationships in this neighborhood are everything to me. But we worked really hard. These are some of my best friends and I can't believe I get to live with them. But we worked really hard for it and I would say it's worth it.

0:39:24 - Stephanie

That's so cool. Also, that's like the dream, the more I don't know if it's like the older I get or the more yeah, the more like socks with sandals I get, the more I'm like how do I just like live in a commune with my best friends, Like I'm really strategizing this.

0:39:41 - Jami

It's not as a way of the future. Yeah, it can be done. It can be done. All you need are Jesus, sandals, socks and a basket and a basket.

0:39:51 - Stephanie

Yeah, yeah, and to be a little bossy and brave, bossy and brave, bossy and brave. I really love this. I think that when we find things in ourselves, we can either feel like we've talked about with selling, you know where you're like this is a weird thing that I like to do. This isn't fit with the narrative I have about myself or my life. How do we get over that? This like, okay, this is who I'm finding out I am, or where I come from, but like, do I really embrace that? Like what if it's not what I thought it was going to be?

0:40:34 - Jami

Yeah, and it's not going to be I, it just takes. It takes a lot of compassion for yourself. It takes a lot of generosity with yourself. It takes a lot to really be who you are. And I would say it takes a lot on the front end, where you're thawing out for motherhood and you are trying to figure out, okay, who am I and what do I like. That just takes time and like you doing the work. So I think what's hilarious is when people get this book and they're like she did the work for me. It's 10 steps to finding me.

No, you have to do the work, you have to answer the questions, you have to look back, and that's why I love therapy. Isn't therapy always like origin story and all that Like, unless you have someone guiding you? I just I think it's hard to do the work on your own. I think it's boring to do the work on your own also, which is why you know book clubs are amazing, because you're, oh, we're all going to do this chapter and then, instead of discussing my story, you all go around and you discuss what you learned about you. And I did a book club for a neighbor a neighbor, so I didn't know any of the women there and I was like this is going to be weird, but cause it's personal, you know, and so we're going around and I'm like. I think they were like wanting to

know more about, like, my writing process and being an Instagram influencer. I roll and you know, all those things.

I'm like I can't even stand saying that, so please don't ask me. I'm like are you willing to be a complete idiot on camera? Then you can have my job and have trolls. And what was so surprising, as we went around and kind of talked through maybe like two of the questions, one lady started crying and she had talked about how she had a special niece brother who had died during COVID and no one in the book club knew that she went through that hard time and they were like, oh my gosh, you know, and they have been meeting for like a year or two or whatever.

I mean it's not like, but nobody knew. Because book hubs are fine, you guys, they are great, like you're doing something in community and you're making friends. But like, do you know them? Do you know each other? And I was just like you guys get, you need to go deeper, you need to be honest and vulnerable and ask these questions. And it takes work and it's hard but it's brave and it's worth it. And now they know that because and now it's like gives them a new compassion for her.

And she was saying I would love, because she was thinking about what would I love to do, and it was kind of the what were you doing when you were eight to ten? And she said I grew up having the special needs brother and not having a lot of resources for him, but I loved taking care of him and taking him on walks and all this stuff. And so that's when she cried and said, and he died last year in COVID and I'm looking around like, what are we doing? But she said something important. She said, and I'm realizing how much that gave me life, and I need to find a place where I can volunteer in this way.

So is it her career? No, but she's looking back to see like, oh, now that my kids are in school, how could I use this incredible childhood gift? I have a special needs kiddo too, and boy, does that shape your view. Now, when I see a special needs kiddo where I'm not ignoring, I'm not saying look away, don't stare. I'm going right up to the differently abled child and I am giving them the dignity of a conversation, just like my daughter would like to have the dignity of that conversation. So I just think it's important. I'm surprised that we don't do it more, but I just think we don't have the skills to do it. And you just need one person in a group, one person in a group saying let's go a little bit deeper.

0:44:47 - Stephanie

It's. The thing that I find is that it's scary to go first, but if you're sitting there waiting for someone else to do it, you may be waiting for a little bit, you may be waiting forever, but you get to decide how short that waiting period is. If you are just the one who goes first and if other people most of the time other people will meet you there, you'll be. You're in the pool first, but they are right behind you, and then if someone is sitting on the edge keeping your hair perfect, she is missing out, they're gonna get bored.

Yeah, she's missing out so much, and it's not because of you that she's not in the pool, it's because of her own stuff yes.

I love this, I love this, love this, love this. The last question I wanna ask you is going back to the beginning, when I said the thing about how you think the thing that you wanna do is like, well, everyone wants to do this. But really, the things that we're all interested in, the fact that some people are really good at dealing with other people's blood, is like, just, I don't have a category for that in my brain. Thanks and so. Yeah, and so if you're like or I mean like a preschool teacher, like if you are a preschool teacher or a teacher of really of any kind, I'm like bless you, I don't have that. And so if there's a part of you that wants to do this, like there's a reason for that. But I know that so many of us have that stop in us where we're like well, everyone wants to do this. Well, I don't know if I'm good enough to do this, or I don't know Like we just feel like we're not good enough. Talk us through that a little bit.

0:46:35 - Jami

Listen, there are things that you are actually not all that great at, but you have the thing inside of you that keeps tugging at you and won't let you go and that is, I think, bigger than someone who has no passion for it and is good at it. You have a passion for it which you can't teach anybody, and you have a dream that's tugging at you that you won't let go, even if you can hardly admit it, even if you. It's like the thought that won't let you go, the dream that won't let you go, the little thing. And you tell yourself about that dream that it's stupid. So it's like I want a little bed and breakfast, I want a little store, I want. You know you're like that is so stupid. You know you are your biggest trash talker, so like you will put it out there and then you will immediately like sabotage yourself and ask me how I know. And so you know you don't have to be amazing at something.

I was not amazing at public speaking, but I kept finding myself in positions where I had to do public speaking. So what do you think I'm going to do? I'm going to hone it and I'm going to get better at it. I'm still not that great at it, but I have a lot of fun doing it. And then one time I was getting on a stage and this is when I spoke in front of like 40,000 people. This was like a huge opportunity, okay, in random, and I walked out, forgetting because I'm in the back and I have these armpit pads on. I have like paper towels folded in my armpits because I'm stress sweating so bad. So I walked out, forgetting that I have two folded paper towels in this thing. And it is immediately and I am silly, anyways. So people are thinking she is being silly and I notice I have armpit pads in and I just make one of myself take them out. I'm like who wants to see? Is I'm going to throw them to the audience, you know, and you know just being myself being silly.

But in that moment I, for all those times that I hated public speaking, I just found myself doing it and I kind of liked it and it wouldn't let me go. Okay, I kind of liked it, but barely and it wouldn't let me go, and it was like something, in this moment a switch flipped and I was like I love this, I love this and I am going to be good at it, and so I think there are some things that you just need to listen to, like if you find yourself in a situation that you keep like, oh, I keep being asked to do this, or I keep being and you'd like it and but you know you're not the best daughter, like that is a breadcrumb because you can hone that skill, you can hone that skill. You can't.

You can't make someone love teaching preschoolers, like you can't make people love teaching middle schoolers. It's impossible. So you either born with that or you know, because I'm looking at it, I'm like the the BO alone is a deterrent. I have armpit pads, sure, but I am, I'm putting out beside her vinegar in here. Middle schoolers, they're not doing, they're not doing much.

So, I would say you know, don't, don't defeat yourself before you even try. Yeah.

0:49:55 - Stephanie

When I started this podcast like I need to figure out what year it is so I can do the math but like six, seven years ago, something like that, and my husband had been listening to podcasts for a long time and he was loving them.

And he's like I think you'd really like this and I was like sort of I was blogging but it took me forever to get a blog post down because I wanted it to be perfect, and so I like really wasn't blogging that much and he's like I think you should do this and I was so intimidated by it, like the tech of it and the uneditedness of it, like you just show up and you talk and that's just what people hear.

That's hard. And I just thought like I'm going to be bad at this. But then I realized you know, everyone who's ever started anything was not good at it At first and you got to get some reps in before you're actually getting it better and you're not going to start getting those reps in until you get started. So, yeah, I'm just going to like, let myself be a beginner at this, give it a shot. I said I'd give it one season and if I hate it I won't ever do it again and I mean it's like been seven years now. But I just like we, we just have to be a beginner at things, we have to let ourselves be bad at something so that we can get better at it.

0:51:11 - Jami

And yeah, I mean, are you brave enough to begin? It's like I hate to ever use that word now, but I'm working on selling you guys an idea.

0:51:19 - Stephanie

So working on, working on the merch, that we're totally Merch is coming.

0:51:25 - Jami

No, I'm actually like I'm the one with all the ideas but I have very little follow through. But you know it's. Are you brave enough to begin? Are you brave enough to go first? Are you brave enough?

I think a lot of us are maybe thinking we're not brave enough, but I mean to tell you, like, if you can just send the text, if you can just Google, how do you have a podcast? If you can just Google those volunteer opportunities of that thing that you just have like always loved? And it's time. It's time to get back out in the community, like we.

We in COVID we learned some habits that served us then that aren't serving us now. So get off your phones and go out into the big bright world and see what's what life is out there. And so just being brave enough to do the Google search, being brave enough to say to your spouse or to your friends like I'm kind of interested in this and it's scary for me, and like encourage me when I'm being lazy about it, and I really think, I think that's the way we're going to find our way back to ourselves. I think in a in a personal sense and I think in a communal sense, getting back out there feeds you, but it feeds like you're feeding yourself, but you're feeding like 25 other people along with yourself. So I think we've just forgotten how to do that.

0:52:57 - Stephanie

Yeah, I think the the idea, just a really good quote about this, but I would have no idea where it was the idea that you have to feel brave while you're being brave, like it. Just you don't get any extra points for not feeling scared. You can feel scared and do it anyway and that's like that's. That's that's what it looks like. Most people are scared when they're doing something scary. I'm definitely scared. We're all sweating.

0:53:27 - Jami

We're all stress, sweating, we're all wearing armpit pads of the heart, like we all. That's a you get. If you need a sound bite, you can tweet that. But you know we're all just scared little kids and. But it's a muscle and the more that you flex it, the better you get at it. And then you turn 42 and you're the, you're the one that's like yeah, screw it, I don't care, we're doing a basket, donate if you want, don't if you don't, you know like, but it's, it's fun. I could have just. I could have just filled that basket. To be honest, I'm a little bit of a hoarder, so I would. I could have just filled that basket myself and brought it over to my friend. But including other people in that generosity, you know, it teaches them how to be generous, but it also shows our neighbor how much we all love her and the impact of that is so much greater. So bringing people into that is just so key to anybody's bravery or anybody's success. I mean, it's think about doing it with other people.

0:54:41 - Stephanie

Yeah, I love this. I'm so, so glad that we got to have you on the show. Jami, thank you so much for this book and for your work and for your story and for your bravery and your bossiness.

0:54:55 - Jami

Thank you. Thank you for having me and letting me be weird.

0:55:04 - Stephanie

Friends, thank you so much for listening to today's episode. I cannot tell you how much it means to me to have you here at Girls Night. Before you go, I would love it if you do two quick things. The first is to subscribe. Coming to the podcast is the best way to make sure you never miss an episode. It's also a way easier way to listen, because it's a way of sort of bookmarking the podcast. You never have to go looking for it again. Your app will just automatically download the next episode when a new one's released.

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