

## Craft a Kick-Ass Next Chapter, Even if it Feels Impossible



Episode 59: Craft a Kick-Ass Next Chapter, Even if it Feels Impossible with Jennifer Arthurton

**Gregory Anne:** Today, we're gonna do a little ask kicking with Jennifer Arthurton. She is the owner of a business called Old Chicks Know Shit which is one of my favorite new names for a business ever. She's gonna help us understand how to do that.

What do you call it?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Your kick ass next chapter.

**Gregory Anne:** Jennifer. Welcome. Thanks for being here.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Thanks so much for having me.

**Gregory Anne:** I wanted you on this podcast because you have one of those stories that a lot of people will relate to and didn't just wake up after it and say, I'm gonna become this person who teaches people how to be kick ass.

So tell us a little bit about your journey.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah. So, I was like most of us women living very busy lives, very driven and ambitious. I was a wife, I was a mother, I was a corporate executive, I traveled a lot for my job. I had amazing benefits and perks.

But sometimes I would find myself in a boardroom and there would be this little voice inside that would be like, is this it? Is this really all there? Is this what I've worked so hard for? But, you know, I did like everybody did. I went to school, got good marks, got into a good college, got a good job, worked my way up the ranks.

Looking back now, I realized I never, ever really stopped to check in. To see whether it was what I wanted to do. It was just what was expected, right? That was what was rewarded. And so, when that little voice would come up, I would brush it aside and be like, okay, you got a job to do, get back to work.

And then in the year leading up to my 50th birthday, I found myself divorced, unemployed, empty nester. So my daughter moved four hours away to go to school and I was bedridden with a stress related illness. And so all of the identities of who I thought I was in the world, wife, mother, corporate executive,

at that time, I was like a really avid gym goer. Like all of that was basically stripped from me in a relatively short space of time. And I found myself most days lying in my bed, cuz I couldn't get outta bed questioning like who am I really, if I'm not all of those things? Who am I? And what is it that I even want for my life?

And the scary thing was, is I didn't have any answers. I had no idea who I was because I had molded and shaped myself into what was expected of me, right. And it was like screaming into the void and there's nothing coming back, just silence. And so it was a long period of time actually, where I threw myself a big old pity party.

I was comparing myself to everybody on the planet going, why are their lives just going along unscathed? Like, what's wrong with me? Why can't I hold it together? And sinking, lower and lower. And really having to come to terms with myself.

I started to recognize, well this is your life. You created it. That means you can also make something different of it if you want to. If I wanna change my life, I have to show up differently in it. And it began for me, a process of healing and soul searching.

Because I also realized that along the way I had done what was expected of me, because I was trying to kind of fill a void of not enoughness. So my face to the world was, look, I have a great job. I have a great title, great family, a great husband. I'm doing okay. But inside there was always something of that was questioning.

And so I had to find love for myself. And really get to know myself. I'd love to say that was an overnight journey. It was not, most journeys are not that quick. It's like peeling an onion, like one little strip at a time.

Right. you have to kind of step up and do the work. But slowly over time, I got to know who I was and I was like, I kind of like this chick who was emerging really for the very first time in my life. Like for some women. And I see with my clients, they're getting in touch with who they used to be, but for me, it was really kind of getting to know myself for the very, very first time.

**Gregory Anne:** So interesting. Was there one thing? I understand that you recognized you had to heal and you had to get to know yourself but what, I would've stayed in bed. Was there one thing, was there a person, a book, something that helped you move through this?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah. And to be honest, I did stay in bed for a long time.

Like I said, I threw myself a big old pity party for a long time. I couldn't do much, like even going to the grocery store was like a heroic effort. Like I could go to the store and I could get the groceries, but I didn't have enough energy to come home and put them away.

So I would have to have a nap. I was really curtailed in what I could do. And so I was just like, okay, this is all I can do. And I just did what I thought I could. Right. But you know, it was a bit of a process of feeling sorry for myself. And it was only when I got into more of a spiritual journey that I recognized, or that it was, told to me everything in your life was a mirror of who you are.

**Gregory Anne:** Mm-hmm

**Jennifer Arthurton:** And when you change what what's going on on the inside, you can change what's going on on the outside. And, at that point, I had also come

out of my marriage, got into another relationship, which was a complete disaster, like a complete disaster, and really had me at the lowest of lows as to who I thought I was.

Like, I'm really garbage because, so let me attract garbage. And it was at that point, I was like, okay. I am literally attracting to me what's happening inside. And so then I started the process of bit by bit rebuilding that relationship with myself. So, again, it wasn't overnight and there were days where I'm like, I just can't face this and I'm gonna honor where I am.

And today I'm just gonna lie on the couch and watch TV all day because that's all I can muster. So it's not a linear journey either, right?

**Gregory Anne:** No. And I think people listening, there are two points I wanted to make. One you said you had a stress related illness that knocked you off your feet, put you in bed exhaustion, all that.

I think women especially, in their fifties could be rising to the top of their corporate ladder or the pinnacle or of their work, their business ownership, or still have another 10 years. And so the go go, go until it results in a stress related illness. I just want people to listen step back.

If you feel like that little voice that Jennifer was talking about, you know something's not right here. Is this all there is? Maybe there is a way to do it differently if you're not ready to stop doing it. Yeah. So do you think you would've gotten as sick had you loved yourself more during the process of being that fabulous corporate success?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah. If I had trusted myself and trusted those intuitive nudges, I probably wouldn't have gotten to that place, but I was the very driven, very ambitious and used to like control, manipulate, push. Just work harder and you can get what you want. When really what I needed more than anything was the opposite of that.

And even at the very beginning when I wasn't working. And I was barely sleeping and I couldn't get out of bed most days. I still thought that like I was, like I said, I was an avid gym goer. I actually still thought I could go to the gym. And I had a trainer at the time and she fired me as a client because I went into the gym one morning and it, so this was like the last bit of my life.

And I'm like, I can hang onto this. Bit of control. Like I can still do this thing. And I walked into the gym one morning and she said to me, I'm not doing this with you anymore. She's like, your body is clearly talking to you and you are not paying

attention. And I can't participate. And I just remember being so angry at her, like how dare you?

**Gregory Anne:** Getting angry at our angels is not a good idea.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Right? I had to go back to her several weeks later and be like, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Because that really, if anything, that relatively small thing was a bit of a wake up call for me to say, oh, okay. Because looking back now I see my body was talking to me for a very long time, but you know, my body was this thing that held up my head I didn't actually pay that much attention to what was happening. And so the messages were all there. I just, I was the kind of person who needed like the brick in the head to actually stop and pay attention. So had I not been forced to stop in my life, it might have gone on for a lot longer.

And who knows what would've happened, right?

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah, absolutely. So from there to now helping other women have a kick ass life. I'm wondering. You talk about the ageism in the world and how we feel old because culturally the message out there is we're old at a certain age, we become suddenly overnight old.

Was there any of that when you were trying to regain yourself, find yourself, learn to love yourself? Did you feel the pressures of, now what am I gonna do? I'm 50. And I'm starting over.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Oh my gosh so huge. So when I got to the point where I was like, okay, you know, I have a lot more than I wanna do in this life.

Well, so first of all, in the big pity party, there was the, who starts over at 50 I'm too old for this aren't I supposed to be riding off into the retirement sunset on the arm of a handsome man with a big pot of gold under my arm? Like, isn't that the way it's supposed to be? And I'm like, okay, that's not me right now.

But that was the picture of what it meant to be a 50 year old woman. Right. And you know, so at some point I thought, okay, there has to be women out there who have done this before. Like I cannot be the first person. So I started to search for inspiration. Where are all these amazing women

amazing things? And a lot of, like you said, culturally, what was reflected back to me? Was not very inspiring. A lot of the messages were, being irrelevant, overlooked, no longer as valuable. And then when you see it reflected back to you in media, it's like cover up your gray hair, make sure that you have no wrinkles.

Oh, here's some bladder leakage protection and some meal replacement shakes . And I was like, okay, wait a minute. All of those things are valuable and necessary, but it tells one tiny sliver of the story of what it needs to be a 50 year old.

**Gregory Anne:** yes.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** And so, as I started searching for that inspiration. I had to do some digging and I eventually came across women who were very, very inspiring.

And that actually started the podcast for me. I'm like, if I need these stories, if I need this inspiration, then other women do too. And so I started having these amazing conversations with women and even today, like I am so inspired by the conversations that I have with women on the podcast.

Cuz there are so many incredible women and we need more of those messages to get into mainstream. So that there's something to balance the bladder leakage protection and meal replacement shakes message.

**Gregory Anne:** And I love my podcast for the same reason, the conversations with the women.

And I've had a few men, but mostly it's women. First of all, the stories. I interviewed a woman who did a movie and she lets six 60 year old woman tell their story, it is beautifully done. And the point of the movie is that she had interviewed young people.

Like, would you be interested in hearing this? And they're all totally interested cuz they wanna hear what has, what our journeys have been. Yeah. And even at 50, 60, 70 to hear women at your age, having done similar or very different things is just heartening. It's like a community of we still matter.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yes, absolutely. So, from a societal standpoint, maybe we don't fit the standard of beauty, but we are so much more than that. We are not our bodies. Like we are just not our bodies. It's got nothing to do with it. It's irrelevant.

**Gregory Anne:** yeah, it's irrelevant. And most of the time we didn't use our bodies for

the experience we gained. Some people may have been a model or a tennis athlete, but for most of us, our bodies were not the thing that got us where we are, didn't actually have anything to do with where we are. We used our minds, our hearts, our wisdom, our intuition, and we're still capable of doing those things.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Right, right. But the message from society is that women's usefulness basically is, are you physically pleasing to another person and your ability to bear children. And so when those two things are no longer in place, it's so easy for us to question where we fit in.

And so we need those role models. We need to see other women, stepping into the greatest time of their lives. Right. Like they're done with the families. Maybe they're shifting careers and relationships and they're just like owning themselves in a way, like they never have before.

And there's just so much beauty and power in that.

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah, there really is. So when I think about what it takes to own who we are at this age, one of the words on your website, you have clarity, connection and courage. I mentioned connection. I think that's super important. I wanna move to the courage piece.

Because for some women who have never been recognized for anything outside of the mothering, the keeping the house together, which are super valuable. But if they, like you said, you didn't know who you were outside of those roles. What do you say to people that don't really know what to think about themselves?

How do you think differently about yourself?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah, so we have all been conditioned to see ourselves in a certain way. So whether it's childhood, the messages that we got growing up, the messages that have been reflected back to us from our culture. And because of all of that, we have stories.

We believe things about ourselves that for the most part are not true. Like I'm no good at math. I can't do this. I'm too old for that. I whatever. And so we've created the stories. And one of the first things that I get women to do is to check their stories because I mean, I came into it with, well, I can only earn money doing this.

Like I can only, be that. And the reality is none of that is true. Those are the conditioned thoughts that we have. And so it's a lot of mindset work to kind of unprogram and reprogram yourself. And I always tell women that your story really is telling is the key to where you need to go next, because I truly believe that life has set us up perfectly for where we need to go.

So if you look back through your experience you'll find common threads there. That'll be like, oh, this is the part that I love. This is the part that I'm really good at now. How can I turn that into something else? And so it really is about establishing

that belief and we all have, fears and limiting beliefs, every single solitary person on this planet.

And it it's a natural and normal human thing, but the truth is, is that none of that is actually true. , those are just what we believe. And when we change those beliefs, we can change so much about our own experience.

**Gregory Anne:** Absolutely. And all of this owning yourself, owning who you are and who you wanna become, even if you're not exactly sure what it looks like for the next chapter.

Touches every area of life. You can be great in one area, but I think you have to change the way you're doing everything. If you change the core of who you are.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah.

**Gregory Anne:** Right. Cause you were saying about that relationship that was a disasters cuz you were not anywhere near in your power. So you attracted somebody that was either going to like that you were not in your power or, diminish you for not being in your power. I don't know how it went, but the point I'm trying to make is it, it's not enough to say I'm gonna change in one area.

Would you agree?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** A hundred percent because really, and you just said this, like you are literally changing the core of who you are. I call midlife the gateway to authenticity, because this is the part where anything that is not aligned with who we are at our core truth is going to start falling away or is gonna rub, it's gonna feel uncomfortable.

Right. And it's for us to pay attention to those messages. So for me, my life very, very clearly told me, the universe was like, no, no, sister, this path is not for you any longer. We need to redirect you and to redirect you, unfortunately, we have to bring you to your knees. I don't recommend that

that's the way for everybody. There's much easier ways to do it. So this is the thing. As women, we become very disconnected from ourselves. We're so busy doing things for our families, being a good daughter, being a good mother, being a good career woman, whatever it might be, that we put ourselves last on our list.

And somewhere along the way, we become incredibly disconnected and all of the answers that we are searching for exist within us. You can't search for them outside

of yourself. And so coming back through that process of authenticity and really connecting deeply with who you are as the person inside,

not what you do, not your title or the role that you play, but who you are. That's how you find the answer to that question. Cause it's in there. I've seen it so many times now. And you just have to start like I said, start peeling back the layers and then you're like, oh, this is who I am and this is what I love.

**Gregory Anne:** Yeah. Yeah. I have clients, you may have clients also that are nearing, I'm gonna use air quotes, retirement age 60,, mid, early, 60, 65. And a couple of women, I was speaking to the other day. They don't wanna retire cause they don't know what to do next. So they're only sticking out the thing, not even for the money, just because.

And so I'm thinking, what advice would you give somebody who just is staying with a job because they really don't wanna face what's up the head cuz they don't have a clue to how to design it.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Well, you can stay in denial for only so long before you have to face the thing. First of all, so it's coming.

And then, it's the same thing that I say to all of the women who come to me and they're like, I'm stuck. Like I don't know what to do next. And the first thing I say to all of them is to stop doing. First of all literally stop doing. And I don't mean like lie on the couch and binge watch game of Thrones for weeks on end.

I mean, carve out little chunks of time if that's what it takes to start to just be with yourself. And it could be as simple as I'm gonna take five minutes and stare at the window while I have my coffee this morning, or, sit with a journal, but find ways to be with yourself. And then find things that you love to do.

In my process, coming back to myself, one day , I felt compelled to write. I had never really written anything. And I started writing and I was like, wow, I really enjoyed this. So I started doing more of it. Then I felt really drawn to nature.

So I, every day I would go for a really short 10 minute walk in the forest. And wow, this feels really good. And the more that I did things that just felt good to me, the more I could settle into myself. But previous to that, like my whole focus was, well, it's not productive. I need to be doing something for somebody somewhere.

And again, I was very at the very, very bottom of my list. And so when I was pulled up short, it was like, okay, well, who am I? What do I want? What do I even like? I don't even know. It's finding those small things. And as you settle into

yourself, the answers to those questions start coming to you, but we have to create the space for them.

And we're usually so busy that we just can't hear it.

**Gregory Anne:** Do you think that there's some truth? I've heard psychologists say, more in the personal development world, that when you finally give yourself that time to just be and explore nature, whatever, you might find that things that you wanted to be as a kid or that you loved as a child that kind of got pushed away, busied away, come back and you might

**Jennifer Arthurton:** hundred percent

**Gregory Anne:** find joy there.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** 100% ! So I have this guide called, 5 Steps to Becoming Unstuck to Create Your Kickass Next Chapter, and one of the steps in that is dare to dream. We need to allow ourselves to just daydream. Like what's a perfect day for me. What am I doing?

What does it look like? Who am I with? What am I saying? And

play with those thought. Because as kids, we did it all the time. And most of the time we were told, come back, you got work to do, stop wasting time. And then we got out of the habit of it. And so this is the perfect time of life to like allow yourself to daydream, like create images.

As you're sitting in that five minutes, having your cup of coffee, Picture yourself doing something you absolutely love to do, because once you start doing that, it starts opening up pathways. It's clues to who you are, things that you wanna do. And the answers are all there.

Like they're literally there and sometimes they just have to stop long enough to let them come in. So I agree A hundred percent.

**Gregory Anne:** You had never written much before you tried it. You liked it. It's that simple. Loved it. Yeah. It's a, just really that simple.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** And then, for example, I've always loved the water. And so I started to go to the lake all the time and just like sit and stare at the lake, which then turned into me, buying a buying a paddle board.

And now one of my favorite things to do is to go sit out on my paddle board in the middle of the lake. It's the place where ideas come to me, it's completely refreshing. So now I know that those are the things that fill me up that bring me back to myself. So when I am feeling disconnected, My first thing is to go to nature.

I go into the forest, go to the woods, sit for some meditation if I can't do those things, but I have those pockets. Cause we live in a world that it's so easy. Like we've got a million pieces of information flying at us all the time. Demands of us. It's so easy to fall back into that pattern of doing

for everything else and leaving yourself behind. And now I'm experienced enough at it that I feel the disconnection and I'm like, oh, okay. Now I know I need to go back and refill my cup. Right.

**Gregory Anne:** That's great that you have an awareness of that now.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah. Yeah. That's the mind body connection, right?

To be aware of like, oh my body's telling me right now. yeah.

**Gregory Anne:** And it seems like building a habit of listening. As you started to build your life back, you had to check in, check in almost every day. I'm sure.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Every day. Yeah. Some days it would be five minutes. Some days it would be 20 minutes. But building the practice of checking in with myself before I did anything is probably the most important thing anybody can do.

**Gregory Anne:** You have a mastermind, a group program. Can you tell me what the name of that is?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** It's called The Midlife Kickstarter Mastermind.

**Gregory Anne:** What happens during mastermind and how long is it?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** So the mastermind is a three month program and then there's options to o for more than that.

But I am a huge believer in the power of community and teamwork. It's funny because that's one of the things that I, in my corporate life, one of the things that I loved . I would bring teams together and build projects. And I'm like, oh, look at what I'm doing now.

Very similar. Right. So it's an intimate group of eight women who come together. Often women come to me because they are feeling stuck. They know they want something different for their life, but they don't know what it is. And so together we go through the process of figuring out what that is.

So getting the clarity you talked about. The connection with themselves and then, stepping forward into the thing that they want. And the power of doing it in a group is women will come into this group and they'll say things like I've always wanted to do this, but isn't that really silly?

And then the other women reflect back to them and go, I think that's the most beautiful thing. Right. And then it starts to build their courage, but often they've never said it out loud before. And so having a group of women where, who can hold your belief when you don't believe it, who can reflect back to who you are, because we can't see ourselves objectively.

**Gregory Anne:** Mm-hmm right.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** And who can support you? So there's a Facebook group as well, where, we share successes challenges, where we're feeling stuck. So I definitely teach lessons about how to become unstuck and how to connect your with yourself. And that's important, but I think the most important part is, you know, the community of women that come together, to share those experiences and build off each other.

I do hot seat coaching within those groups and. You know, one woman will come with a problem or an issue and it will resonate with four other women who are like, oh, I'm feeling the same thing, but I didn't quite know how to articulate it. And so, the beauty of that is,

It gives me goosebumps because just watching women, especially midlife women supporting each other is so ridiculously powerful. And the things that they create on the other side of it are mind blowing. I had a woman who was an insurance agent who is now creating and selling indigenous art.

Another woman who was a beauty sales rep who now runs a charity for underprivileged women and women with cancer about helping them beautify themselves. So things like that, where these women come in with saying, I don't know what it is. And when you start to peel back the, the layers, they do know what it is.

They're just afraid to say it. Cause afraid that they're not big enough for it.

**Gregory Anne:** Exactly. The fear of failure and I hate to be cliched, but we fear that we're gonna set ourselves on fire and then it's all gonna fizzle out and everybody will have seen us. And then they'll say, we told you, so you're too old, whatever.

I think to everybody listening, you need to just forget about that conversation and get it out of your head. Every single day more women are starting businesses after the age of 50 this year than ever before. Yeah. And I wanna say something about the group dynamic. I love running groups and I have been in groups as a client participant the thing about it, it's weird.

But when you join a group after you've decided, this is for me, it's speaking to me. I wanna be in this group somehow the energy of the group is lovely. And it comes together in this one cohesive unit. It's just crazy, right?

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah. Well, that's one of the things that like I personally, and I still do it today.

I will always have a coach mentor and I will always be part of a mastermind group because it's so easy when you're alone to discount your thoughts and to not take action. And as soon as you get in the group and then you express something and now you're like, oh, I have to deliver people.

I said it out loud. And sometimes it's like the little kick in the butt that you need to take that next step forward. Right. Absolutely. And yeah, like you said, the, the energy of support and community is really what carries you through, because again, like, you know, when you're by yourself and the fear thoughts pop up.

You just turn on the TV and there you go.

**Gregory Anne:** mm-hmm, Open up the ice cream or the,

**Jennifer Arthurton:** or open up the ice cream, pour a glass of wine. Yeah. Like whatever it is,

**Gregory Anne:** Not together, the wine and ice cream.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** No, no, no, definitely. No.

**Gregory Anne:** And then the beauty of also sometimes in a mastermind, I have one mastermind that I belong to.

Maybe I wanna say 10 years ago in those days, people got together physically three times a year. This year long program. I still have two women that I'm so close to from 10 years ago. One lives in New York, one lives in California. It doesn't matter. We still get in touch. We make sure we honor each other's birthdays and say hello and support launches.

And it just, you know, and it wasn't all of the people in the mastermind, but I got two really great friends and it's not easy to make friends after 50. It might not surprise anybody to hear me say that you, you know, we're in different situations. We're not taking, dropping the kids off at school and not gonna soccer games to maybe work.

So if you can find a group that feels resonant with you, You're likely to be surprised at how strong the ties can become.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah. I, I echo that sentiment. Some of my best friends have been people that I have been in groups with. Yeah. Because sometimes your closest friends, you know, the peop the friends that I've had for 30 years, and I like, I love them to death, but they're not on the same page as me about some of this stuff.

And so it's hard to have those conversations and get that support. And it's not because they don't want to. Right. Like maybe they just don't have the same experience, but when you bring like-minded women together, To be able to share those common experiences. It's what lifts you up? Like we cannot do it alone.

I honestly believe we cannot do it alone.

**Gregory Anne:** I, I totally agree. So before you go, I want you to define your version of a kick ass life.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** A kick ass life can be anything whether it's your career or whatever it is, but something that lights you up, that you feel passionate and excited about . You don't wake up dreading the day or feeling bored and disconnected like that.

You have passion and excitement for. When I I left my corporate career, that was the one thing I said is like, whatever I do next, I need to be passionate about it. I want that feeling of excitement about my life and that anything that doesn't suit you, you can, minimize cause sometimes we can't get rid of it completely. Right, but that we're living a life that is so truly aligned with who we are, that it just lights us up. And for some women that's expressing their artistic side for other women,

it's starting a business or, you know, championing a cause that's valuable to them for other women. It could be spending more time with their grandkids.

It doesn't really matter what it is. But as long as it's aligned with the truth of who you are and you find yourself saying yes, more than you're saying no. Then that to me is a kick ass next chapter.

**Gregory Anne:** I love it. Whatever lights you up. So tell listeners your website please.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** So my website is Old Chicks Know Shit and that's K N O w shit. Dot com. I'm also on all of the social media as old chicks know shit as well, too. So Instagram and Facebook, I also have a free Facebook group of the same name and I also have the Old Chicks Know Shit podcast.

**Gregory Anne:** And people could find, you get to know you a little bit better in your Facebook group, the free group.

**Jennifer Arthurton:** Yeah, absolutely. It's a free group.

**Gregory Anne:** Perfect. Yeah, I have learned from you, Jennifer, and I appreciate what you're giving the world after you've come through your difficult time. It's super important, we need more people that are lit on fire by what they do every day in this world. Thank you.

Thank you. It was a really fun conversation. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Okay. Be well and peeps I'll be back next week with another fabulous guest.