

**Corey Andrew Powell (00:02):**

In this part, two episode of Motivational Mondays, I'm joined by inspirational speaker and bestselling author, Jennifer Kauffman, whose personal story is one of tenacity, optimism and forgiveness as a survivor of the Boston marathon bombing

**Jennifer Kauffman. (00:21):**

Candidly, I was reluctant. I just came out with a documentary about my story called "There's got to be more to life." And through my meditation practice, about two years ago, I got clear that I needed to put my story to film because one of the fastest ways to get a message out is through film and through storytelling in that way. And I was reluctant, even though I'm a very outgoing person, a very social person, I'm actually a very private person. And so through the making of this documentary, I reveal, the irony is that, you know, here I am healing from a terrorist attack. And over time I realized I had to heal the terror within me.

**Corey Andrew Powell (01:05):**

Yes. I wanted to ask you about that. Thank you for bringing that up. I read that in your notes and I was so curious what that means. So please yes. Share what you mean by you had to rectify the terrorist in you.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (01:20):**

So it's, it's really your inner critic, but that inner critic became the terrorist. And, here's what happened. I was in a support group meeting, a group of survivors used to meet on a weekly basis in one of the hospitals in Boston. Now, I'm born and raised in Boston. Now, if you've ever been to Boston or if you've ever driven in Boston, it's not a pleasant place to drive unless you've grown up in it. And so we cut people off. We beep we, you know, that's just...

**Corey Andrew Powell (01:47):**

I'm in New York. So we have a similar thing.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (01:49):**

Yes, you totally have a similar thing. Yeah. So it's just how it is. Right? So, and you don't think anything of it. And so this particular night I left a survivor group meeting and I was on my way home and this truck came out and, cut in front of me. And it was as if it ignited a match and I just lit up. I was, I literally just like swelled up with rage and I'm laying on the horn and I have every profanity in the book and I am now in road rage. I'm literally driving like a crazy person in downtown Boston trying to catch up to this person. Fortunately, this person made the light and I didn't. So the light became red. And if I had gone through it, I would've gotten into an accident. And thankfully I had the wherewithal to stop when I stopped.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (02:40):**

I was literally in a state of shock for a second. And I was like, who is this person? I started sobbing. If I had had caught up to that car, I was so outraged. I don't know what I could have done to be candid. And that is when I started to understand that my inner critic was no longer an inner critic, that inner person was a terrorist. And if I acted on my rage, I'd be no different than the two young men that I had at that stage despised and wished they were dead. A lot of us have, you know, had experiences as children that we, you know, never should have really seen and had these experiences. And so, you know, as a result for me, it was never good enough. I was never good enough. And so my inner critic was like, even though I would achieve, you know, really great things and have some successes in my life, it was never enough.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (03:40):**

And I was just like, I was always seeking more and that more was always outside of myself. Right? And I was yet, I would reach these really great things and I'd have a momentary, you know, bit of happiness, but it would dissolve. And then I'm like, seriously, like I work so hard to get to this place, but I wasn't fulfilled. And I wasn't fulfilled because I really was disconnected from myself. You know, here's the thing. And so this is another gift that the bombings brought to me. I had to learn to become my very best friend. I had to learn to be my own cheerleader rather than my own person who's, you know, cutting me down and looking in the mirror going, you know, who's this? And you're just not good enough. And you gotta try harder. Like there, you know, like it was that kind of inner mentality. I didn't do it outwardly to people. It was all inside. And so, and then when this experience happened, it just took it to the next level.

**Corey Andrew Powell (04:45):**

Hmm.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (04:46):**

Yeah. And so it's like learning to fall in love with ourselves, even the parts of ourselves where we've made mistakes. And we, you know, we hurt other people. I think the vast majority of us don't intend to hurt another human being. And yet we do. I know I do it from time to time. Not intentionally. Just happens.

**Corey Andrew Powell (05:06):**

Yeah. Part of the human experience. And we like, I wanna believe too that we don't do it intentionally, but there's so many of us on this planet, clearly we're going to have some interactions and not all of them are going to be pleasant and it can be unintentional. I love that you discuss how we can be our own worst critic of ourselves. Very often those most difficult criticisms that we actually have are creating lack of confidence and creating all these sort of feelings of inadequacy or imposter syndrome. All of that, mostly in many cases, I'll say, is being generated within us. We're doing it to ourselves so I love that you're talking about resolving that and being a cheerleader for yourself.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (05:50):**

It sets you up for manifesting greater things in your life. So even for those, you know, there are people I'm sure some of your listeners grew up in an environment where, you know, they weren't cared for and loved in a way in which it nurtured in a way of like, Hey, there you go. You know? And so a lot of this is learned behavior and I think it's just passed down and passed down. And, it's a cultural thing too, to some degree. But my point is, when we become old enough, we can't use that excuse. Well, that's how my parents treated me or that's how my siblings treated me. It's like, okay, that's fine. But at some stage, cut yourself a break, set yourself free because once we become our very best friend, and once we literally fall in love with who we are, life becomes like a magic carpet ride. I'm telling you it does. And it's just like all these just amazing opportunities, amazing people that you know, I'm sitting here in front of you today and I'm truly enjoying our conversation and we just met.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (06:55):**

And, and I think, I think, you know, we have to give up like being afraid of strangers, you know, you know, I embrace strangers now, which is something I never would've done before the bombings. Right? And I think, I think we have these like social norms. It's like, oh no, it's not safe to do that or safe to go there or safe to talk to strangers. And listen, I think we need to be vigilant. I think we need to be discerning and not put ourselves in situations that can be harmful. Right. Obviously, but, but at the end of the day, I truly believe the vast majority of people here on the planet are really, really amazing, great people. We just need to connect.

**Corey Andrew Powell (07:40):**

Yeah, you have some great points that I wanna make sure we discuss. One would be, and we did tap on it earlier, but getting unstuck and gaining a clear path. So explain a little bit about that.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (07:52):**

So I think the first step here is if you're not feeling fulfilled and happy in your life, the first step is just take a step back and pause and say, what is it that would make me feel fulfilled and happy? A lot of people don't know the easiest way to get there. I have found frankly I used to not know, but was easier for me to go to what is in my life that's not serving me at this moment? And start to look at that and start to take steps to all of that candidly. Right? And, and when you do that, something opens up, it's actually quite a magical experience, but it's kind of like clearing out the clutter, if you will, to be able to see or to have space, to be like to start to go, oh, I might wanna do this or I might wanna move here or I might wanna date this person.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (08:41):**

Right. So sometimes it's easier to start where we don't wanna be and what's not working and start to take steps to rise above that if you will. And then what I have found. So, I talk about this in my book "Shattered," right? So here I go through this experience, my background is entirely in business, entirely finance. I have no medical background and I'm in the hospital. I'm in the ER. And I hear a voice in my head that said I needed to learn how to heal naturally. Now, naturally I have no idea how to do that. But yet there was something about that inner voice, my higher self, if you will, that was leading me down this path that I had no knowledge of. Now. I was clear that if I, you know, if I were gonna die in the next day or two, I didn't want it to be in the hospital.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (09:32):**

Hmm. So that was the first step that was like, okay, then I'm gonna get out of situation. And then what happened next is once you take that first step, even though you have no idea, even though you don't know how it's gonna show up, what happens is the universe conspires in your favor and the right circumstances or the right people start to show up, not all at once. And it's just in that moment. And then if you lean in and if it feels right, then take that step forward and then take the next step forward. And then next thing you know, it's just like, it's like being a kid again. It's like being curious, like you just, every day is different. You don't know how it's gonna unfold, but a lot of us, you know, have all this structure and all this stuff. But we're not happy. We're not fulfilled. When we can let some of that stuff go and give ourselves space just to be... something magical, unfolds.

**Corey Andrew Powell (10:30):**

And I think that pairs perfectly with what I think is one of the most resonating points that you discuss, which is love it or leave it, letting go of everything that no longer serves you. So it's like the other side of that coin. And I love this one because I think that also, not to sound callous, but I think that also pertains to people, relationships.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (10:52):**

Absolutely. It does!

**Corey Andrew Powell (10:53):**

Get rid of those if they're not working anymore and we tend to hold that stuff. So talk a little bit about that point.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (11:02):**

I think that is such a healthy thing, but the key here is to do it from a loving place. Like, you know, is just to be able to make peace with those individuals that just don't resonate with you anymore. And just, and to me, it's a sign of your own growth, right? It's, you know, and I'm gonna liken it to a band. So say you, you, you know, you're musically inclined. You're just starting out and you join a band. Right? And they're kind of new at it. Well, the band doesn't necessarily sound great and it takes time to practice. And, then they start to harmonize and they get better over time. Well, if somebody in the band continues to perfect their talent, at some stage, if the rest of the band members are not doing something similar,, at some stage, you know, that person is likely gonna move on to the next opportunity.

**Jennifer Kauffman. (11:54):**

And it's no different in relationships with people. It's that it's not right or wrong or good or bad. It just is. And you know what? My mom always said to me, leave people better off than when you found them. I do that well, a lot of the time, not always. But I get better at it as I get older. But the key here though is, is like, it's okay. It's okay. If it doesn't serve you anymore, let it go, in a loving and kind way and move on. You owe it to yourself to do that. What I find is if you stay in those kinds of relationships, they tend to stifle you. They tend to stifle your growth. And at the end of the day, you're the only one to blame for that.

**Speaker 3 (12:35):**

Thank you for listening to Motivational Mondays presented by the national society of leadership and success and available wherever you listen to your favorite podcast. I'm Corey, Andrew Powell. And I'll see you again here next week.