

Episode 9: Shame Loss with Jen Pastiloff

Jen Pastiloff [00:00:00] You make a choice and every single day. It's all about daily practices, every day. Who am I going to be today? How do I want to feel?

Podcast Intro: [00:00:18] Hello and welcome to Enough, the Podcast, I'm your host, Mandy Lehto. This show is a mash up of inspiration and exploration around what gets in the way of us feeling good enough. If you're a leader whose life looks shiny and together from the outside, but inside, your inner critic assures you that you are one hot mess, this podcast is for you. It's time to own your worth – quirks, foibles, imperfections and all. Welcome to Enough.

Episode Intro: [00:01:06] Jen Pastiloff, best-selling author of *On Being Human, A Memoir of Waking Up, Living Real and Listening Hard* knows shame. She felt shame around her hearing loss. She had an eating disorder. She struggled with depression, anxiety and hopelessness. And like so many of us, she didn't feel good enough. A turning point was this realization:

Jen Pastiloff [00:01:32] All the things I've been trying to hide are really what the world loves about me -- or what someone else needs to hear or see or feel.

Mandy Lehto [00:01:42] And I love her candor about shame loss being ongoing work. It's not a one and done:

Jen Pastiloff [00:01:49] I began to realize that it was in the sharing, and in community, that I was able to put down shame every day.

Episode Opens

Mandy Lehto: [00:02:05] Jen Pastiloff, you're one of my "sheroes." You are a commitment to imperfection. What do you wish that people understood about shame?

Jen Pastiloff [00:02:19] Shame doesn't make any motherfucking sense. It's not logical. You know, I would talk to people about the shame I felt around my hearing loss. I don't anymore. But I used to and, you know, I've had people look at me in such confusion and say, 'I don't I don't understand why you'd feel shame about this?'

First of all, shame isn't logical. It's like trying to put it into a box. So, I think that's the big thing – it's being with that – saying okay, this doesn't make any rational sense and I'm *still* experiencing it.

And the other thing is, I created this program, Shame Loss. It's a daily practice, you know, we put it (shame) down every single day. So, I used to think, with a lot of things, like with the Inner Asshole, with shame, I got rid of it! That's it! And then you wake up, and there it is again, in bed with you. The idea that it's like this for the rest of your life, every day – that doesn't mean it has to be hard and miserable and painful. It might be, but it's a daily practice, like putting it down, putting it down.

Mandy Lehto [00:03:31] So I have a bit of a strange question for you. One of the ways I have learned how to cope with my inner asshole is I named her. I've given her a name. She's called Janet. And this is an apology to all Janet's in the world. But, you know, being a writer, it's the alliteration thing. Does your inner asshole have a name?

Jen Pastiloff [00:03:51] I think mine is Jen. And I realized then that that's part of me, but it's not the whole of me. But no, I just it doesn't have a specific name – just 'asshole.' But I love the idea of giving it a name. I love it.

Mandy Lehto [00:04:07] I love the idea of naming it, because then when it starts to go off on one, I'm like, 'Oh yeah, it's just Janet!' And Janet has become part of the family. So, I know that Janet is always riding side car with me. She's not someone I can ditch. But there's something about creating the separation *that she's not me*. She's somebody who hangs with me.

Jen Pastiloff [00:04:41] Absolutely. And another one of my clients – hers is Dolores.

So, for me, it's also about a big part of all the work I do...in the way I live my life is levity and humor. It's also about finding that. Naming (your inner asshole) makes it funnier, and it makes it easier to deal with things, and unpack things, and be with things. At least for me, if there's humor and levity in a totally, like, 'yeah, gee, Janet,' you make yourself laugh when you say it.

Mandy Lehto [00:05:14] She's like the old lady from Downton Abbey, you know, with the pursed up lips, and she clutches her pearls when I do certain things and, you know, arches an eyebrow. I've created a whole persona for her. That works for me.

Jen Pastiloff [00:05:28] I love it. I love it.

Mandy Lehto [00:05:33] So before we go in to talking about how you changed your relationship with shame, and how you can help us to liberate ourselves from its wily grip, there might be someone on the planet who hasn't read your brilliant book yet.
[*Mandy holds up hands, while holding Jen's book on video, and Mandy's manicure is the exact blue of the dust cover.*]
Did you notice my manicure?

Jen Pastiloff [00:05:52] I love it. It's really beautiful.

Mandy Lehto [00:05:53] That was a coincidence. But, hey, I'm gonna milk it! So, for someone who hasn't read your book yet, can you give a little bit of background on the way your relationship used to be with shame?

Jen Pastiloff [00:06:06] You know, it was such a deeply embedded part of me that I feel like I was just shame embodied. Like I was walking through the world *as shame*.

You know, I lost my father when I was eight and I blamed myself. There was a lot of shame in that. Right before he died, the last thing he said to me was that I was being bad, and I was making him not feel good. So, I internalized that, you know, everything became my fault. I'm bad. I think that was the genesis of it. I never dealt with that grief. I just locked it in my body and went on with my life.

Then I found a way to metabolize the grief (or so I thought), and to feel like I was in control, which was anorexia. And I nearly died. I think, ultimately, it was like the shame of being me. I just wanted to disappear. It wasn't a conscious, you know, 'I'm trying to kill myself' thing, but absolutely, I was trying to make myself go away.

And there's been a lot, you know. I started losing my hearing. I mean, now I wear hearing aids and read lips. But back then, I was in such denial. I would never tell the truth about it. People would confront me. Some of my friends had an intervention. And I was like, 'No, I'm I can hear fine.' I was so ashamed. I felt broken. I felt stupid, bad, wrong. You know – something's wrong with me.

Eventually all the things that I was carrying around, they broke me. I had a bit of a breakdown, and I left school. I left NYU to take a semester off. The joke is, it's still going on, because I never went back. So, I became a college dropout and got a summer job at a restaurant, and I never left. I was a career waitress. I was going to be a poet, and I ended up slinging veggie burgers – it broke me, the shame of it all.

And eventually I went on antidepressants, you know. Praise the Lord of Science. I found yoga, and yoga became my way out (as a yoga teacher). I began to transmute shame through my writing. I came back to my writing, and yoga, and all the things that I learned in the years of working at the restaurant, of being with people and all my gifts – and I kind of molded them all together and created this thing that I do now in the world, these workshops.

I began to talk about my shame and write about it. Although at first it was very scary because I thought – especially in the beginning of being a yoga teacher – I thought, oh, this is going to make people never want to come to my class. You know, the opposite happened. The opposite. And it was a real turning point for me because I thought, oh, it's all the things I've been trying to hide that are really what the world loves about me – or what someone else needs to hear, or see, or feel.

And I began to realize that it was in the sharing, and in the community, that I was able to every day put down shame. And so now, you know, every once in a while, I still catch myself having all the same stories. But I just don't hide anymore. I do not hide anymore.

Mandy Lehto [00:09:44] I would love us to dissect that process a little bit, because it sounds so simple.

Jen Pastiloff [00:09:53] What? What? The not hiding?

Mandy Lehto [00:09:55] ...the whole 'that this happened, and then you decided that you were going to stop hiding your shame.' I'm sure when you were in it, there was a certain level of taking a risk, thinking, what the hell do I have to lose? Like we get to a certain point where it takes so much energy to hold in your emotional gut. You know, it's like trying to suck your gut in emotionally, for years and decades. And maybe for you it was the depression. Maybe it was feelings bubbling up. Can you take us back to that messy place where you just decided, fuck it, because I'm going for this...

Jen Pastiloff [00:10:42] It's so interesting hearing you say this because, yes, it does sound really simple. And also, that's for brevity's sake. Yeah. How can I say this in two minutes? You know, we're talking 15 years. I mean, when did I start? 2008 is when I went on antidepressants. And we're in 2021 right now. Right. So, there are like many, many years that I just truncated into like a very, very brief synopsis. But I don't think there was just one thing. It was a culmination of my entire life, of shoving things down, you know, pretending I didn't care when my dad died, or never dealing with my eating disorder. I never did. I dropped out of school, and I started to gain weight back. So everyone thought I was fine. I was just never able to maintain that particular deathly thinness again. But I was

still torturing myself, sick inside, every single thing – I was still deaf, or going deaf. Every single thing, I just kept shoving, shoving, shoving until, like you said, there was like this breaking point.

And I, I think it was going on meds, honestly, because, you know, I've said they've changed my life. Then people say, well, *you* changed your life. Yes, but the medication allowed me to see a glimmer of hope or possibility where there was none.

So, with that, I never wanted to be a yoga teacher. I was like, no, I'd rather fall on a knife. With that, like a week later, literally, I was like, maybe I *will* take a yoga teacher training as an escape route. And it was like these little, you know – I end my book with the words 'now what?' – it was these little 'now what's' that started adding up.

Yeah, it was terrifying. It was terrifying to take a yoga teacher training, and to finish and be like, 'I really don't want to be a yoga teacher.' But then my mom built me a website, and I started teaching, and I was like, huh, I'm good at this. It was terrifying to start to read my poems in class. And then, when I really started to share honestly in my writing in a way that I wanted to write – which wasn't cutesy, or clever, or listicles or like, you know, a way to get people to come to my yoga class (which is how I had been writing my blog). When I was like, you know what, I'm a poet and I started writing about grief and depression and anorexia and deafness – that was scary back then because I had never done that, except in my poetry. It was terrifying. I just posted about this yesterday. The response was so life affirming. And I want to say the danger in that is, you know, I did a whole post about the danger in allowing that (validation) to give us life. Now, it adds to my life now, but it doesn't *give* me life, that validation. But I was grateful for it back then because that validation of people clapping, or going 'yeah, me too' allowed me to keep going, and keep sharing, and to keep putting myself out there. Yeah, it was scary.

And you're right when you say it's simple, and it's also not simple. It's taken me many years to be at the place where I'm no longer hiding. But I will die on a hill that says you don't have to take as long as I did. You don't. You just don't. You make a choice, and every single day you make that choice. Every day, it's all about daily practices, every day: *Who am I going to be today? How do I want to feel? May I have the courage to be who I say I am.* That line, you know, every day of my life, I live that. And what is that going to look like? So, I just went off on a tangent...

Mandy Lehto [00:14:56] No, I think this tangent is necessary for people who have come out the other side of creating a life that contains the toxicity of shame. There was a meme on Instagram not long ago, or a little short reel, or video of a woman who had one of those above-ground pools, you know, that you set up and you fill it. It was filled with all this murky water and looked a bit gross. Then she took a hunting knife, and she jabbed the side of the pool, and the murky water just blew.

Jen Pastiloff [00:15:37] Oh, I love that.

Mandy Lehto [00:15:39] It made me think that this is what it feels like, for me anyway (sample size of one) – what it felt like to release shame, all that murky, contained water. For me, there were many different "hunting knives" that helped that opening, and that releasing. And it was messy. I was bowled over so many times. And I think this tangent of yours is important for people to see that it's not just *tra la la la la la la*. Off you go. You decide. And then it's all happy clappy. It's messy, and it's hard, and it's fucked up. Sometimes it's important, I think, for people who are in the mess to see that.

Jen Pastiloff [00:16:27] Yeah. And then I think, you know, I'm working on my next book right now, and I was just writing this part yesterday... You've heard me talk about this because you've taken my virtual retreat, but everything is about daily practices, and that really was missing for me.

That was something I really realized during Covid. And I thought I had nailed it, but I hadn't, meaning I woke up again during Covid, depressed and on the floor, and back in a space that I was like, 'how did I get here again?' I thought I'd never be here again. How am I in this murky water again? And I realize, you know, yeah, first of all, we were in a global pandemic. But I wasn't doing daily practices.

Meaning? You know, starting the day with my morning prayer, or whatever it is. I was just going through the motions, so the messiness came up for me again. And it still sometimes does. And every day, I put it down.

You know, every day I look at it and I go, you know, like in yoga, we call it 'being a witness.' So, I witnessed it, without judging. 'Oh, wow. OK.' And I and I put it down *every single day*.

And stuff still comes up, you know. I just had some stuff about shame come up recently and it was a blind spot, and it was a real breakthrough to realize that, like, 'Oh, wow, I thought I was, like, doing pretty good.' And I realized I was still carrying some shame around about how I was living in my apartment. I didn't judge it. I just looked at it and I thought, 'Oh, that's interesting. Okay.' And I put it down.

Mandy Lehto [00:18:07] So one thing I think would be really useful here for somebody who's listening, who has felt that they needed to manage their image, in other words, look perfect, manage the way that they appear to the world; or for somebody who has gotten out of their body, and they're basically a head on legs (Hello! That was me for most of my life). Or just somebody who's pushing all that stuff down, and it's becoming unsustainable. So, they might be pacing the perimeter of the pool with the hunting knife, knowing that this has to change. And you're so practical...

One of the things that has really changed my life is not only your in-person retreat in London, which really was so useful, and also your book, and coming to your virtual retreats... It's exactly this – it doesn't have to be like one sweeping thing that changes your life. It can be small cumulative practices.

Take us to some of those practices that you've mentioned already. You mentioned your morning prayer. Let's unpack those for someone who doesn't know what you're talking about. And they're sitting on the edge of their seats saying, help me to release the murky water.

Jen Pastiloff [00:19:28] Yeah, yeah. There are many, you know, and some of them are more subtle, like. I am obsessed with the idea that, who are your people? Who are you spending your time with? And I don't even necessarily mean in real life, but, you know, on social media, or whose podcasts are you listening to, so really being intentional with your circle, with your people. Like, really, really, *really*. The morning prayer. The first thing I'd say is, if possible, sleeping with your cell phone, not in your bedroom, or not right next to your head, so that it's not the last thing, or the first thing that you do. That was a game changer for me. And starting the day with this thing, I called a body prayer, or the morning

prayer, which is a prayer that you generate from your own body. You place your hands on a place on your body, and you write as if you're writing from that place. And from those words, from anything that's trying to come through, you create this prayer, beginning with the words, 'May I remember...'

The idea, and the reason, 'May I remember...' is so powerful, is because the prayer that you come up with is what you already know. You just forgot.

'May I remember...' And then it's like, well, what do I want to remember today? How do I want to start my day with intentionality? Who do I want to be today? How do I want to feel? What am I excited about?

You know, and letting that be the very first thing, before you check email; before you start looking at the news; before you look at Instagram. You know, really being intentional with that and the prayer.

I also add TMI, which sounds like 'too much information.'
But today may I...
Today may I...
Today may I...

Because everything is about the daily practices.

May I allow myself joy today.

May I allow levity – because life is hard, so lighten up.

Mandy Lehto [00:21:35] One of the things that made this so powerful for me as a recovering perfectionist and recovering overachiever, is that to stay contained in that murky space is, *who do I need to be for you to like me? Who do I need to be to fit in?*

And I completely lost touch with my *own* desires, and what my *own* wants were (like, who do you want me to be?) I can be whatever persona is needed to get love and safety. And I think once the murky water is released, this prayer, this morning practice of coming back to it again and again and again is a place to explore who you are when you don't need to be somebody.

Jen Pastiloff [00:22:26] Exactly. What a beautiful way to put it. And I am so pleased with myself that I so rarely feel that anymore. You know, I'm in my mid 40s and I was like, you know, I will be me no matter where I am. And I'm really good at that, you know. I wasn't always that way, you know, when I worked at this very trendy Hollywood restaurant, I was always like, you know, who can I be, and will they like me?

And (now) this is me. So you're right, the prayer, it's a real reminder of who do I want to be *for me?* I get to decide. And the word 'allow' is really powerful. So that's in it (my prayer) a lot. You know, may I *allow* whatever it may be.

Mandy Lehto [00:23:18] Could you jog people's thinking a little bit in terms of what that could be? Because remember, somebody might be listening who's never done this before, and they're used to being really contained. So, what could this look like? May I remember...

Jen Pastiloff [00:23:32] Yeah. I mean, I'll give you some of mine:

May I remember to breathe – and again, breathe.
Today, may I not compare myself to anyone.
Today, may I not punish or deprive my body.
Today, may I allow myself pleasure.
May I remember I'm a writer. So write, dammit! (That's actually part of my prayer.)
Today, may I find what brings me joy and do that.
Today, may I allow.
May I drop my shoulders down.
Today, may I allow myself to unclench.
May I remember that money comes easily and frequently. May I allow it.
May I remember it is safe for me to have financial freedom.
May I be a human thank you.
May I allow myself to feel good.
May I find what brings me joy and do that.

These are some of the things in my prayer. So, if there's someone listening who has an eating disorder, maybe every morning they're starving themselves, or whatever it is every morning. Part of their prayers today: May I allow myself nourishment. Today may I allow myself to eat the fucking bagel. Right? Whatever it is.

Mandy Lehto [00:25:03] I found that when I started doing this practice, it really helped, not only in the morning because it helped me to really set my intention for the day. But it also helped when these little limiting beliefs, these bullshit stories come up, that are still hangover's of being contained and small and perfect and invisible.

So, one thing that happened recently that we've been talking about (because you're one of my coaches) is that I've aspired to create is space. My new office. I wanted a tumble dryer. I wanted these very specific things. And when we moved into this house two weeks ago, I was unpacking glasses out of the newspaper in the kitchen. My best friend was there. My husband was there. The kids were helping. We were playing music. The dog was getting in the way. And I had this perfect moment of happiness. It was even sunny in London, which is a big thing. I just felt myself overflowing with joy. And all of a sudden, Judgey Janet showed up, and said, 'Don't get too used to this. It's not going to last! *You're going to get cancer.* And if you don't get cancer, your husband will get cancer, and then it will feel even worse because you can't afford this, and you'll have to give it up. So, I don't get too comfortable with this.'

It's this whole idea of defensive pessimism, like I don't deserve good things happen to me. I've been doing deep work for well over a decade, you know, and as you said, you're not doing it wrong when these things keep bubbling up.

But when I remember what you just said, 'May I remember that I'm allowed to have financial abundance.' I'm *allowed* to have a new home. I can let good things can happen to me, and I can receive them.

Jen Pastiloff [00:27:13] I mean, that's my whole next book! You know, that's Janet's job, right? She thinks she's protecting you, and it's OK. You're not Janet, I see you. I get it. And I don't need you anymore, so go sit over there. You know, I have a sticky note right here, and in my bedroom too, that says, 'I get to have this.' And so, you know, that's a very boring, common thing that Janet said to you. And mine says to me is like, 'You don't get to

be this happy, but you do. And I do. I get to have this! And I encourage everyone to get a sticky note and put that on it, and then ask yourself, what's your "this"? I get to have this. What's my "this?" What is it?

And it's not necessarily the big house, the dog, I mean, that's great, but that's it's more this idea of *what Janet told us we can't have*.

Right? Like your birth rate isn't misery and stress and pain. It's just not.

One of the lines in my own prayer – and I encourage people to borrow – is, 'May I become my prayer.'

So it becomes you, and you walk through the world like that. And then it's like a mantra, you know, on repeat. I'd rather have that stuck in my head (something from my prayer) than, 'I'm going to get cancer. I don't get to be this happy. I'm broke. I'm tired.'

Right? Better to have that shit stuck in your head than the inner asshole dialog.

So, yes, you carry it with you all day and then it's a ritual. Rituals are so important and maybe the second part of it, or the yin to the yang, or however you want to think about it, is this journal called the Let Yourself Off the Hook Book. And, you know, you write in it throughout the day, whatever. Any time there's something you want to let yourself off the hook for, without judgment. You know, you put it in the book, but *specifically before you go to bed*, so it's like you're dumping into this book, you go to bed, empty, clean slate, wake up, start again.

And it's that idea, like you get to start again every day. Right? So let's say in the morning you're like:

'May I be a human thank you.'

'May I find what brings me joy and do that.'

And you walk through the day, and you're a real dickhead, and you're, you know, whatever. Let yourself off the hook! And start again, otherwise, where do you put that, let's call it shame? Where do you put that feeling of 'I failed'? I didn't live up to what I said this morning. I just think it's a really, really useful practice and maybe eventually you won't be putting anything in there or less things, you know.

SEGMENT BREAK: Mandy Lehto [00:30:06] I hope you are enjoying this episode as much as I am. Jen will be back in just a minute to give us some of her rituals and ideas on how to shift your relationship with shame, and how to be more authentic and real.

But before we go there, I wanted to invite you, Dear Listener, to write to me with what is shifting for you as you listen to these episodes. Is there a specific guest who you think, 'I did that thing that they suggested, and now my life has shifted?' I want to know details, not only because I'm nosy, but because I want to share your little snippet of insight in one of the next episodes. So do write in at hello@mandylehto.com for me to read your little segment on how your life has been changed, listening to our brilliant guests. Now let's get back to Jen.

Mandy Lehto [00:31:11] What would you say to somebody who feels the pull to be more real and more authentic, but they're not quite sure how to go about it? What would you say?

Jen Pastiloff [00:31:25] Well, see, I don't know, I would call bull shit. I mean, like, I don't understand. What do you mean you don't know how to be more real? Like literally break that down for me. The second thing is, it's just so interesting, this black mirror world we live in because...are you talking about social media?

Mandy Lehto [00:31:45] It could be social media, but I think, yeah, maybe the platform, the stage, might matter. But what if we were just starting with their own lives? Is it merely allowing yourself to want what you want? Is it...

Jen Pastiloff [00:32:01] Yeah. And I'd say it's about integrity, and it's about really learning how to be in touch with their body and to tell the truth *all the time*. That's why it *is* actually really simple, and you get better at it with practice, which is why I'm great at it right now – because I've been practicing for a long time. No, I've always been fairly good, for whatever reason. I don't question it. I just say thank you. You know, being how I am now, I've gotten better in terms of caring less about what people think, or just showing up as I am.

You know, I remember I did a retreat to Italy, one of the first one I did, actually, and it was rough. It was so not my favorite. I didn't know who I was then, I don't really know what I was doing. I think I called it like, 'Yoga, Wine and Food.' I don't know. And I brought two friends of mine, teachers from Philadelphia. And it (the retreat) was really cheap. It was like dirt cheap. And I basically just wanted bodies – and that's exactly what I got. There were a couple of really mean people, a couple of really mean guys.

I know I attracted that because there was no discernment. I was just like, you know, I just need bodies, essentially. And it was after that I was like, huh? That didn't work out for me. And that was a painful experience, but I'm never going to do that again. I started getting clarity on, well, what *do* I want, who do I *want* to be, and *who do I want* in my retreat, or in my room, or in my life.

So back to the question of like, how do you go about being more real? It's like start to notice where you're lying, you know, and just start to you feel it in your body. You do! Unless you're really, really disconnected, which some people are. You feel it in your body when you're not telling the truth, or when you're not. It's not a full body 'Yes!'

Or start by saying NO, when you want to say no. There's one. There's a real tangible thing.

Mandy Lehto [00:34:08] Mm hmm. It sounds like a lot of this, as I'm listening to your story unfold here and I'm drawing strands together, a lot of it is really experimentation. Knowing that if what you've done before didn't work, and didn't give you the full body 'Yes', then trying something different and going, 'hmm.' So, it's lots of small movements...

Jen Pastiloff [00:34:34] Yeah, you know, I'm going to write about this now because I'm really hooked on this idea of, like, someone wants to be more real. It's a fascinating question. It goes back to what you said about, huh? Who do I think people want me to be? So...

Mandy Lehto [00:34:54] It's the unpicking of who 'I think I'm supposed to be' as a woman, as a lover, as a mother, as a daughter, as a sibling, and in the workplace. There's all these layers and layers. And I think what I'm hearing you say is that we start to unpick these by experimenting with what is under all our 'shoulds'. One of your favorite lines, 'Should is an asshole', right?

Jen Pastiloff [00:35:23] Should is an asshole! But it's really about coming back to being in your body, and learning how to listen, and tell the truth. And so it's like, okay, what do I want? How do I feel right now, you know? Am I hungry? I mean, literally be in my body and then just tell the truth. And you can't go wrong with that.

I think for so long, so many people, myself included in the past, have learned to *not* listen to our bodies, or to shut off what we're feeling, or what we really want. And it's coming back to that. Just what is it that I want? What is my thought? My feeling? My personality, my dorky jokes, whatever it is. And letting go of the notion of, 'What will they think,' and I know it's not easy. It's not. But it's possible.

Mandy Lehto [00:36:27] Mm hmm. And seeing how you are now, and the way that you, as I said at the beginning, where we started from, your commitment to imperfection – and the effect that I have seen that you have in your classes; the effect that I know that's had on me; the effect I know that's had on people who have read your book and talked to me about it is...and you never even intended this, I'm sure....

Jen Pastiloff [00:37:00] I'm laughing because, girl, I'm not committed. I just AM. I'm not committed to it. It's like I told you before this (recording). I'm like, 'Oh my God, I forgot. We have this recording!' I'm just, you know, I think...

Here, let me let me rephrase it. It's not a commitment to imperfection. It's a commitment to being honest or being transparent about it. I think that's what it is. Because I don't have to be like this. It is just the way I am – and it's the way all of us are. Everyone is imperfect.

So, it's about just telling the truth about who I am. This is me. Take it or leave it. And some people are going to take it, and some people are going to leave it. And I'm always going to keep taking it, you know.

Mandy Lehto [00:37:44] Yeah, and what I what I meant by this, too, is that by you being unapologetically transparent, by you being unapologetically....

Jen Pastiloff [00:37:57] THAT, YES, YES!

Mandy Lehto [00:38:02] It permissions other people to experiment with what that could feel like for them, because it's not like you want them to do it like you!

Jen Pastiloff [00:38:13] No, hell no. Don't do it like me. You know, you'll forget things, you'll double book. You'll never make your bed. I mean, come on. You'll be in your pajamas for a week.

But you're right, it's the unapologetic, erm, unapologetic-ness (?), however, you want a word it all. I just won't apologize. I mean, I apologize if I'm an asshole. Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. If I hurt you or I do something shitty, which I'm sure I've done, I'm human, but I won't apologize for just for being me for the way that I show up.

Mandy Lehto [00:38:57] The world adjusts! And I think *this* is the thing that's moving us from this place, which is where I think the yoga and the body part comes into it. I don't know how you felt when you were in the grips of shame, but I felt so rigid. So, like everything has to be a certain way. It's very staccato, and very rigid, and very contained. The allowing, the experimenting, brings this flow and this suppleness...

Jen Pastiloff [00:39:28] Yeah, you know, our personalities are so opposite. You're more type A, and I'm, like, type Z. Right?

I've never had anything be rigid, except – this is what fascinates me – is that I was anorexic. And it fascinates me, because it's the only time in my life when I found that control and that rigidity and that containment. Because in other areas, you know, I spill over, and I'm messy, and that was the one area...

But in every other area, no, that is not my experience. In fact, everything just feels loose and out of control.

And this is what's so great about being human, right? How people are experiencing – that's not what it's like for me! But also, we're talking about the same thing, we just experience it differently...

Mandy Lehto [00:40:24] This is why I wanted to have you here, because not every experience will look the same. And we're still, like Ram Das says, 'We're all walking each other home.'

Jen Pastiloff [00:40:38] I love that quote. It's one of my very, very favorites, I mean, it's why I do what I do. It's how I live my life. It is a North Star community where 'I got you', right? We're all just walking each other home. Yeah.

Mandy Lehto [00:40:52] How can people hang out with you? What's your favorite place for people to experience more of Jen's wisdom and play?

Jen Pastiloff [00:41:01] Well, as far as social media, I'm on Instagram @jenpastiloff and my website www.jenniferpastiloff.com I'm also on an app called Mine'd twice a week.

I do virtual retreats now online. The next one will be in October, and I have in-person stuff happening in Europe in September. And get my book, *On Being Human*.

Mandy Lehto [00:41:42] It's brilliant. It's one of my favorite books ever.

Jen Pastiloff [00:41:45] Thank you. That really means a lot. Thank you.

Mandy Lehto [00:41:48] It made every cell of my body zing. I have gifted that to so many people.

Jen Pastiloff [00:41:53] Thank you.

Mandy Lehto [00:41:54] I ask every guest to lay a brick on this journey to enough as we're coming back to ourselves, without all the unnecessary layers. It could be a word. It could be a phrase. It could be a quote. Whatever lands in your heart. What would you say?

Jen Pastiloff [00:42:15] You know, what I always want to say is, 'Don't be an asshole.' Which is true, and I think that's the greatest wisdom ever, but I think...you know, I'm working on my new book and I'm writing this chapter called, 'I Got You,' which is my tattoo and how I try to live my life.

And the epiphany I had yesterday, as I was writing, is going to be a big part of the next book is: Live an 'I Got You Life.' Meaning, find those people that I referenced earlier in the

interview, *your* people, and you also be them, be that for them. But most importantly, you must be able to look in the mirror and say, 'I got you' to yourself. And that's a really new-found revelation. That was the missing link. Yeah. You know, 'Do not abandon thyself.'

Mandy Lehto [00:43:12] That was clearly a missing link for me – be all things to all others. And if there's any crumbs left over, then there'll be something for you. I'm done with that. Done. With. That. Thank you, beautiful soul.

Jen Pastiloff [00:43:31] Thank you. What an honor.

Speaker 3 [00:43:35] I've loved playing with you today, and to share you with people, and to get them reading your book. And we are waiting with baited breath for your next book. So get writing!

Jen Pastiloff [00:43:46] Well, I'm going to do that all day today here in California. So, enjoy London and I will be there as soon as I can.

Mandy Lehto: We can't wait.

Outro: [00:44:01] All right, we both know that you're pretty rad human, right, and I know you're probably already thinking who can I share this episode and Jen Pastiloff's wisdom with? Thank you in advance for doing that.

Next week on the podcast, I have Self-Compassion teacher and storyteller extraordinaire Catherine Kell on the podcast. And I promise you, I didn't just invite her here so you could listen to her luscious Scottish accent. I mean, who doesn't love a Scottish accent, right?

We talk about what happens when a profound, unforeseen event smacks you upside the head. You didn't see it coming, and all of a sudden that self that you always identified with no longer exists. How do you move on from that? How do you really identify with yourself? And how do you get to a place of feeling enough when you no longer really know who you are

Catherine Kell [00:44:57] *"...and you need to almost fall to your knees on the floor and break down completely if you're ever going to move past that, you need to surrender to how life is now."*

Mandy Lehto [00:45:13] It's a deep, juicy, profound episode. So make sure you and your ears are here, same place, same time next week. As ever, thank you for playing with us. Don't forget to send us in your snippet of which episode has changed your life and how we will be collecting those at hello@mandylehto.com Until next week, I'm signing out to create more goodness for you. See you next time.