Joyce Kristiansson Transcript

Hello, ladies! You are listening to Women Emerging Fearlessly. Did you know that four out of five women struggle with confidence and knowing who they are? **This show is dedicated to helping women lead their lives with fearless confidence and to know how amazing they truly are.** In this show, you will hear from women who are emerging fearlessly, who have overcome many obstacles to pursue their dreams and passions. And they will inspire you and encourage you to stand up, step out, and speak up. Be your authentic self and bring your true gifts to the world. **My name is Janelle Anderson, and I am your host. If you enjoy this podcast, please leave a great review and subscribe, and share it with your friends**. Enjoy the show!

Alright, well welcome, everyone, to the podcast “Women Emerging Fearlessly.” I’m so excited to be with you again today. I have a wonderful guest with me today, Joyce Kristiansson, and we’re going to have a great time. We’re going to have a great, great talk because her topic is very fascinating, very interesting, and very important. So, I want to introduce you to her. Joyce left the safety of the corporate world and a six-figure income to start her own environmental consulting company. Wow, you must really be passionate about it. She also raised her two small children. Eighteen years later, the kids are grown, the company has six employees consulting to companies around the world. Joyce also went through breast cancer treatment in 2017. She’s going to tell us about that story – it left her desperately fatigued. So, her journey through health and financial adversity that came at this time culminating in her writing a book, called *The Last Straw: Change Your Life and the Planet for Good.* I love that title. So, it’s like a sustainability self-help book, and she’s going to share a little bit about her book with us. And I love what she says here: “Until you take care of yourself, you can’t really take care of the environment.” So, welcome, Joyce, to the show. Thanks for coming today.

*Hi, Janelle. I’m so glad to be here.*

Good! Well, I am so interested in this topic. As I was telling you offline a little bit ago, my daughter is huge into environment and sustainability and doing everything we can to “be green,” and she’s got me using glass straws and bamboo paper towels and all these things. And my husband’s like, “You’re crazy.” and I’m like, “No, the environment! We have to do all we can.” And recycling, and all of that good stuff. So, I’m excited to share with my listeners this topic, but [also] how you got into it, because I always like to have women come on my show that have a story of women emerging fearlessly and pursuing their dreams and their passions. So, I’m excited to have you on and have this be our topic today. So, why don’t you share with the audience a little bit about you and your story, especially the surviving breast cancer, and what brought you to what you’re doing today.

*Well, I’ve always loved science and I’ve always loved nature, and that ended up with me going to college and getting a degree in biology; later on, a Master’s in Environmental Management. And I worked in the corporate world for a lot of really good companies. At some point, it just made sense for me to make a shift and let go of one thing to make room for another thing that’s hopefully better. And sure enough, it was. My kids were small, they were five and two; my son was just starting kindergarten. And I wanted to be that mom who had my professional career, but also that all the moms at school thought was just another stay-at-home mom, and I managed to do that. And then, as you said, eighteen years later, it’s like, wow, the company’s grown. Originally, I thought that it would just be me, and then we got a lot of work and so, we got to grow. But along the way, in 2017, I discovered a tumor in my breast, and did all the things you’re supposed to do. You get the chemotherapy, you get the radiation treatment, you’re taking the medication – but even in 2019, early last year, I was just so tired. I could not shake it. If you don’t have that foundation of sleep, everything else is just like – it’s like when you had a newborn, right, and you’re just like, “Oh, please, let me get through this day so I can go to bed and hopefully wake up with some energy tomorrow.”*

Yes, I remember those days. Oh, my Lord, I don’t think I got a good night’s sleep for two or three years. You’re like a zombie.

*Exactly, and I was facing that and thinking, “Oh, my gosh, is this it? I’m 50 –” What was I at the time? 56 or something. I’m like, “Is this it? Am I old? Am I done?” I’m like, “I’m not ready to be done mentally, but my body is not cooperating.” So, I went to my oncologist and I’m like, “Look, is this a latent effect of the chemo?” She asked me a few questions and she said, “You know what, you need a sleep study.” And I’m like, “Okay.” So, I got the sleep study and it turned out I had sleep apnea. It was easily fixable. And so, I got -- I call it my “sleep machine,” and it really changed my life. I got out of the doldrums, I started getting my energy back, I started getting my hair back, I started feeling like myself. But in the meantime, my business had really plummeted because it’s hard to take care of yourself and take care of your clients. So, that was hard, and it was a financial hit, too. So, I actually got some help, I got some coaching, and that’s a lot like what you do. Sometimes we need some help and we should not be afraid to ask, right?*

Absolutely, yes. Working with a coach is the best thing I’ve ever done. It’s powerful.

*Yes. I have to second that. And that process of coaching, it helped me realize – the coach pulled out of me that I have this great passion for the environment. Not just in helping companies improve their environmental performance, but helping people be more sustainable.*

So, tell me more about that whole passion for nature and how that led you into the work that you do in just, I think, trying to educate people, right, on how they can have better practices in their life. Habits, you talk about habits. So, share a little bit your passion around that, and then I’d love to get into those habits.

*Yes. I think that for a lot of us, it’s just kind of hard. We want to do better, but we don’t always see, maybe, the direct impact, or we don’t know how, or it’s just one more thing to fit in, especially if you’ve got kids and work and trying to take care of, maybe, elderly parents, and you’re just like, “Ugh, I can’t fit one more thing in.” Right?*

Right! Yeah, that’s how I felt.

*And we’re kind of hard on ourselves, aren’t we? As women?*

We are always hard on ourselves, and we are always doing way too much and taking care of everybody else. And so, taking care of the environment on top of that sometimes can seem like, “Ugh, I can’t be bothered.” Or, “I just don’t have the energy to think about it.”

*Yes, it’s overwhelming. I think the number one thing we need to do is, we need to give ourselves a break, and then we need to know it’s okay to not be perfect every day. Some days are going to be better than others. How well do you think I did with my sustainability habits when I was undergoing chemo? Probably not very well, but that’s okay. But there are ways that we can do little things and incorporate habits.*

The thought just occurred to me, too, that – and maybe you’ve thought about this – older women, and that’s usually my audience, women over 40 – I’m 67 right now, so – when I was young and growing up and in my young adult years, even 30’s, people weren’t really talking about sustainability. We weren’t talking about “being green.” Recycling was kind of starting, I think in my 40’s maybe, but it wasn’t a big thing. And we weren’t thinking about it and we were producing all this trash and doing all this damage to the environment without really thinking about it. It was just kind of like, you buy all this plastic and you throw it away. And we didn’t know. So, for us to change our habits around that – for me, it was, first of all becoming a lot more aware. My daughter really helped with that. She’s like, “Do you realize, you use a straw one time and then it ends up in the oceans – Mom, plastic doesn’t go away!” And she helped me to raise my awareness around the problem. Then I could start thinking about how I could help.

*I love your daughter. I’d love to meet her -- she sounds like a kindred spirit. That’s beautiful. For me, starting out when I was a little kid, what I did for fun was I traipsed around in the woods, so I really loved to learn nature. And I think if we could kind of get back to that nature connection, you know****, if we love nature – if we see it, then we’re going to love it. If we love it, we’re going to want to protect it. And if we want to protect it, we’re going to be willing to make these small changes. And what’s amazing about this, is [when] we make these little changes we find out, “Well, that wasn’t that hard, that wasn’t that bad. I worked through that.” And then we make more and more, and suddenly we see bigger things, and who knows what could happen, right?*** *You’ve seen the transformation, I’m sure, yourself, when people get those small wins and it gives them the confidence to carry on.*

Yes, and I’m all about confidence. And it shows up in all kinds of areas of your life.

*So true.*

I think that’s really, really valuable to hone in on, when we are raising our awareness around this – is to really look at nature and appreciate nature. I love nature. When I was a child, I used to love to run around in the woods, too, and imagine I was in the Enchanted Forest, waiting for my Prince Charming, making up stories as I was in the woods, by the stream. And I just love it. I love being outside in nature. I love to hike and ride my bike. I love to just sit in my yard and listen to the birds. And the more that you are aware of nature and not just getting in your car and driving somewhere, but just really paying attention to our beautiful world, this beautiful nature we’ve been given, this gift. But along with that, I feel like the more educated you are about how important it is to preserve our earth and nature, what it does for us. I mean we need plants and animals, not only just the beauty, but – it’s functional.

*Absolutely. And I do think right now, this is one of those things that, it can be a little bit of a silver lining during these hard times. We’ve got more time, so hopefully, we can get outside, and we’ll suddenly be surprised at how much nature there is in our own back yard. Well, it was always there, it’s just now we’ve got the time to see it. Whether it’s a little bee pollinating the flower, or the lizard or the birds chirping away – it can really almost be meditative, and really calming.*

Very much so. I love to listen to the different birds singing. They all have such a unique sound. I’ll close my eyes and just – it’s like a symphony, you know? And today I saw my first hummingbird of the year! I’ve had hummingbird food out there, but it went to the flowers, the little petunias. I love birds. My mom loved birds, too. But I think that has helped me a lot, too. It’s always bothered me to see litter, but as I’m taking walks around the neighborhood -- this is something else my daughter has, by example, impressed this on me. When she was here visiting, as we were taking a walk, she would pick up the litter and just carry it until we got home. And I was like, “What are you doing? That’s that person’s responsibility – whosever yard it’s in.” And she’s like, “No, it’s all of our responsibility. This whole world belongs to all of us.” That’s naturally what she does. And then when I went to visit her last year – she lives in the San Diego area – and they had a big city-wide cleanup day. And so, we went, she and her husband and the kids and she and I, and spent a day cleaning up this area. And man, it was really eye opening to see how much trash and litter there is out there. And it just felt good to be part of that cleanup, to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

*Exactly. And I’m with your daughter, I think of it the same way. I say, “Well, if not me, then who?” And also, am I willing to let this be there, and let the little children in my neighborhood see that I passed it? They should have a beautiful environment. They should expect that things should be clean and litter-free. I feel like it’s my payment for getting to use this space. Here’s what I’ll give back, I’ll pick up this litter.*

That’s a beautiful way to look at it. So, tell us about – you have four things that we can do now to create sustainable habits easily.

*Yes, yes. And what I love about these four different ways is that you could literally apply them to almost anything in your life, it doesn’t have to be environmental sustainability. So, that’s what’s neat about it. So, I hope that as listeners hear these four different ways, they’re mind will start clicking and they’ll go, “Well, wait, I could use that here and I could use that here.”*

*The first way is to make it easier. Who wouldn’t adopt a habit if it’s easier than the unsustainable habit? And an example of this is one of my favorite products – and I’m not endorsing this product in that I would ever make any money off of it, but it’s just a wonderful example – it’s something as simple as dental floss alternative. It’s called* [*Dental Lace*](https://www.dentallace.com/) *and it’s made of compostable mulberry silk. Now, how cool is that?*

Oh, wow.

*And it comes in this adorable little glass container, so every component of it is not single use plastic. And so, you can actually compost the dental lace or just throw it in your trash and it will be composted. But the reason it’s easier is because I put myself on a subscription service, so I’m going to get that at regular intervals and I don’t have to go to the store and buy these big ol’ floss containers – those big plastic ones, they’re so hard to open, you nearly cut yourself when you open them – throw all that packaging away, and then use floss that’s synthetic and covered in chemicals so it will glide, right? I don’t want that in my mouth. So, a product like that is just easier. There’s a lot less packaging to throw away, those little floss containers, that’s another single use plastic – turns out we don’t need it. We can do what we need to do really easily.*

Wow. I’d never heard of that, and I had thought about floss before – you know, that’s going in the trash, too. I didn’t realize about the chemicals on it. Wow, I’m definitely going to look into that.

*Yeah, there’s some statistic about these little plastic containers, that they could fill three football fields in a year – I don’t know, it’s something crazy because you don’t think about it, right, it’s so small. But one more thing that we can quit throwing in the trash. Small but impactful.*

Definitely.

*Another way is to make it cheaper. If it’s really expensive, we’re going to go, “Well, that costs too much.” Right? So, a good example of this is [that], at least where we live, the power is deregulated. And so, I can choose what my power source is. Well, for a long time, wind power, most renewables, they were more expensive. But they’re not anymore. So, if you live in a place where you can choose, then you can choose that the power for your home is wind power, renewable power is 100%, and it’s as cheap or cheaper than just not thinking about it.*

Wow, I never knew that, either.

*So, make it cheaper, make it easier. And then, another one that I like to use – and this actually comes from the guy who founded Toyota. The Japanese are very big into quality, and this is [for] quality systems, that’s how they use it. Ask five whys – so, if you have something that’s not working out for you, just ask why, and then every time you answer it ask why again. So, for example, you want to use your cloth bags instead of your plastic grocery bags, but you keep forgetting them. And you go, “Well, why am I forgetting them? Well, because I’ve stuck them in the back of the car, I don’t see them.” Why’d you stick them in the back of the car? “Okay, I can put them in the front of the car. Now I will see them.” And sometimes, you don’t even need five questions, you get there pretty quickly. But then, other times you really need to go in depth on those five whys – with the plastics. Why are these huge garbage patches of plastic circulating out in the ocean? Well, the plastic is collecting in our waterways, and where does every waterway lead? Ultimately, it leads to the ocean. Why is it collecting in the waterways? Because it’s blowing out of pickup beds, or people are throwing it out their car window, or they’re accidentally losing it somehow. Why is that happening? Because they’re not conscious of it. Maybe they don’t know better, they’re not aware. Why do they not know better? Why are they not aware? Because they need to be educated. Okay, now we’ve got our solution. Or maybe the behavior needs to be modeled, as your daughter is influencing you. I’ve said this many a time about my children – we think they grow up and we shape them. Oh, no, oh no. They are just as much of an influence on us.*

That is very true.

*Yes, yes, in a good way. My daughter’s been the same for me. I’ve got a twenty-year-old now and she’s been that way for me when it comes to critters because she saves every little critter. So, I get it.*

*And then the fourth way you’ve actually already hit on. Your daughter was doing exactly this. You’re taking a walk, which is something enjoyable, right? And she picks up trash. So, it’s kind of a bundle-it thing. Pair something that you want to do with something that’s maybe not what you would go out and do. Put those two together, and suddenly you’re kind of rewarded for picking up litter by this lovely walk.*

Wow.

*So, that’s kind of the four ways in an overview.*

Those are great sustainable habits that anyone can start doing. And I would add in get a glass straw and take it with you to restaurants. I stopped – even if I forget my glass straw, I won’t use the straw they give me.

*Yes, exactly. Decline the straw at the drive-thru. So, I got stainless steel straws – there’s so many options now. There’s stainless steel, there’s glass, there’s bamboo. And then for the times that I maybe cleaned my straw and forgot to put it back in the car, I actually have a box of paper straws in there.*

Oh, nice! That’s a good idea.

*I’m looking for the day when – because I’m kind of bad about going through the drive-thru and getting drinks, icy drinks, especially in the summer – and I’m longing for the day when they ask, “Would you like a straw?” instead of just handing it to you. That will be a mini-revolution for us.*

That will be, that will be awesome. I think somebody recently did ask me that, and I was like, “Oh, thank you for asking!” They were young, so they were more aware. I think that younger people are looking at the environment and thinking, “Oh, my gosh, what has happened?” And I’m feeling, as the older generation, “What are we leaving to them?” Because we haven’t been paying attention. I feel like every little bit that I can do right now -- and I can educate people as well. And one day recently I think I asked some people I was with something about recycling and they were like, “Oh, I don’t recycle.” And I was like, “What do you mean, you don’t recycle?” I was so shocked. And they just looked at me like, “No.” And I was like, “Why not? It’s so easy to do!”

*It’s easy. And you know they actually – during this time of pandemic, the waste companies that take the recyclable cardboard and paper, and they actually have a little bit of a shortage of it, and they need it to turn it into toilet paper and paper towels and paper napkins and things like that. So, whenever I go by my neighbors’ trash and I see their cardboard boxes sitting out by it, it’s like, oh my gosh, this is so easy. We actually have curbside service that has multistream. We can just throw it in a different container.*

Exactly!

*And it turns out, we really need it! It’s a resource, it’s part of the supply chain. And I didn’t even really understand how important it was.*

I didn’t, either. And we finally have pickup, too, for recycling, so it’s super easy. I used to have to gather it myself and I had boxes in my carport, and I did this for years. And then I would take it all in bags and throw it in my car and take it to the recycling center and then come back with the bags and fill it up again, and it was a chore to do. I was committed to doing it, though, and now we have curbside service, which is so much better.

So, tell us about your book, I would love to know what it’s all about.

*So,* The Last Straw: Change Your Life and the Planet for Good, *it starts out laying the foundations over the course of ten weeks. You can incorporate some habits that help sustain you, which then enables you to be less annoyed by, “Ugh, recycling.” Or worry about, “Oh, it’s too hard.” So, the first weeks are really based on sleep -- and I really understand how important that is – and play. Just getting out and spending time playing with your kids. Not exercise. I’m talking about purposeless, no goal. Get out there and listen to the birds, whatever works for you. And then, it carries on for ten weeks, each week is a chapter, and it just builds to a point where you can understand your natural way of being and then progress and shed some of the things that are holding us back, incorporate these new habits, and then learn to share it. Because I think [that] sometimes we forget there is a real cost to not sharing. So, if your daughter hadn’t modeled those behaviors and shared that with you, then there wouldn’t have been the impact of changing you, and then you change others, and as we know, that just multiplies. By the end of the book, there’s some examples of some people who changed in very big ways. So, it’s one of those things where you can take it as far as you want. You can do those small changes, but it might just open up a window where you can make some really big changes.*

Well, it sounds wonderful. If you all are interested in Joyce’s book, I believe you do have a little giveaway?

*I do. The book is, yes,* The Last Straw. *When you buy it on the web, it’s priced to encourage e-books for obvious reasons that are environmental, but I do have a couple hard copies that I can give away to the first two people that hear this podcast and email me and just mention “Women Emerging Fearlessly,” send me their address, [and] I’ll be happy to mail it to them.*

Wow, that’s fantastic! So, I will put Joyce’s email in the show notes. So, the first two people that email Joyce and mention the “Women Emerging Fearlessly” podcast, you will get a free copy, autographed copy of her book *The Last Straw.* Very cool.

*Let me give the email address, Janelle. It’s* [*joyce@thelaststrawbook.com*](mailto:joyce@thelaststrawbook.com)

Great! And of course, that will be in the show notes as well. So, if people would like to get in touch with you in some way, is your email the best way for them to do that?

*Yes, I would love that. I’ll talk to anybody, anytime if they want to talk about their successes, they’re struggles, when it comes to sustainable habits. I’m here.*

Okay. Now, how long have you been passionate about this – well, I know you said you were passionate about nature your whole life, but how long have you been practicing these sustainability habits and learning how to change habits?

*It’s probably, if you were to graph it, it would probably correlate to the age of my children – inversely correlate. It’s been easier as they’ve gotten older. Always, but more so in the last ten to fifteen years and then really in the last year or two, and I think it’s just a question of intentionality. Sometimes, we do these good things and we do them accidentally, and this is more about being mindful of it and doing it on purpose. And it’s funny, you talked about someone kind of rolling their eyes, “What are you doing?” I kind of get that a little bit from my husband, too. There are some techniques in this book about how you can have those kind of conversations, too…influence people without being in their face. Because nobody is shamed or embarrassed into good habits, it doesn’t stick. Really, it took me writing a book, and now my husband’s a lot more understanding.*

Yes, motivation is going to come from, intrinsically from them wanting to make changes because they see, oh, this really does matter. Even though, I think, like you said at the very beginning, we can feel overwhelmed by it and feel like, “If I don’t use a straw, what good is that going to do?” But it is the little things that add up to the big changes. And like you said, sharing with other people and modeling it, and then they start changing their habits. And we’ve seen this grow – awareness of it has grown over the last, I’d say, decade. It is making a difference and it is important and it does matter.

Well, thank you so much for coming and sharing your heart and your passion and your story. Congratulations on overcoming and being a survivor – not just a survivor, but a thriver – and pursuing your dream and building your company, and just doing all the wonderful things you’re doing in the world and being an example for us. Not only an example, but a teacher. So, thank you. Thank you for writing your book, and sharing this story and also your wisdom with us. Hopefully, ladies, you will emerge fearlessly into creating sustainable habits. I hope that you’ve gotten a lot of out of this episode with Joyce, and certainly reach out to her and get that book.

Thanks again, so much, for coming and sharing your time with us today, Joyce.

*Thank you, Janelle. And thank you for what you’re doing. It’s so important, the emerging fearlessly part. I’m not going to tell you [that] I’ve always been fearless on this journey. But* ***if we don’t stretch ourselves, we don’t know where the edge is****, right? So, thank you for providing a forum for us to do that and for supporting us.* ***We can be imperfect, but we can still move forward.*** *So, thank you for that.*

You’re welcome. And I like that, if we don’t grow, we don’t stretch to the edge. That’s awesome! Alright, well, thanks, ladies, for listening, and until next time, go out there and be fearless!

I hope you enjoyed that episode and got a lot out of it that will help you on your journey to becoming fearlessly confident. If you would like to know how to work with me to help you to become fearlessly confident, just email me, [janelle@emerginglifecoaching.com](mailto:janelle@emerginglifecoaching.com). You can also go to my website. There’s lots of great resources there, including a free mini-course called, “Be Confident, Be Real, Be You.” It’s a three-video course with downloadable action guides that will definitely help you to get on this journey to becoming fearlessly confident. My website is emerginglifecoaching.com. Thanks for listening, and until next time, be fearless, be confident, and be you.

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