

Aileen (00:00)

Hi Julie, how are you? You sounded really British. Not your usual self-training, that was quite funny. Yeah, I'm good thanks. I'm as usual a wee bit reflective of actually... It is, yeah, it definitely is. And I heard something the other day and it's just stayed with me.

Julie (00:01)

Hello, I'm good, how are you?

How did I?

~ it's the month for it, isn't it? I think. Yeah. Yeah.

yeah, what is it?

Aileen (00:25)

Well, you know, I was listening to John Bon Jovi, not actually listening to him singing. But as we know, he's a complete legend. And he said this line that really stopped me mid-school. said, we're all just here trying to figure it out.

Julie (00:39)

Oh, which is so true. Actually in such a simple line, isn't it? And I think actually it's quite an equalizer, especially coming from him, because it's not what you expect to hear from like a rock star legend, as you say, total legend. I mean, if it came from me, it would just land as it normally would, you know? Oh yeah, we're trying to sort ourselves out. We're trying to figure it out. Cause we know we are just trying to figure it all out, right?

Aileen (00:55)

Yeah. Yeah.

We do, I mean we say it, we'll say that, you know, but yeah, no offence, but if it was you or anyone else really for that matter, I would think it was the norm. But because it's John Bon Jovi, you know, he's the man that looks like he's got it all figured out and has achieved dreams that some of us may still dream of. So it really landed for me. If anyone looks like they've made it, I mean, he really has. So yeah, he's sitting there saying...

Julie (01:07)

Yeah.

Aileen (01:30)

It's just trying to figure it all out like the rest of us.

Julie (01:33)

It's kind of reassuring actually, isn't it? And as I said, an equalizer, like it's a reminder that we're all the same, regardless of where people seem to be at in life.

Aileen (01:41)

Yeah, it was just so down to earth, really reassuring. And it made me think if he feels that way, no wonder the rest of us might think that too, you know? But what makes it even more powerful is everything that he's been through recently from losing his singing voice. Because for a while in the early 20s, fans did notice that his voice wasn't sounding the same. And then he later revealed that he was dealing with a vocal chord

Julie (01:53)

Yeah.

Aileen (02:10)

essentially one of his vocal cords had weakened and it wasn't closing properly.

Julie (02:14)

that's so frightening, isn't it? Because in his world, yeah, because his voice is everything. So imagine how horrible that would have been to go through. Actually, I remember in his documentary, Thank You, Good Night, he was really open about the moment he had to ask himself a really hard question. Like, if my voice doesn't return to the way it was, do I keep touring or do I step back rather than pretend everything's fine?

Aileen (02:15)

Yeah, it's been awful.

Yeah, and what he said, it really struck me because he came to the conclusion that the performing is what he does, but it's not who he is. And that goes right back to self-worth.

Julie (02:52)

Yeah, but how confronting it would have been to face that question initially because surely his identity must have been tied for so long to being a performer. So then to try to separate that out and say that's what he does, not who he is, would have been really tough, And not helped by the fact that most of us define people like him by what they do rather than who they are. And we put them on these

these pedestals and let's face it, it's really not our fault because what we mostly see is the performance and not the person behind it. But I think, you know, again, to go back to that moment where he had to separate that out, it definitely goes back to self-worth and him having to value who he intrinsically is without the performance.

Aileen (03:37)

I know and yet he talks about it with this softness and humility. I love humility. There's no ego, no pretending, just complete honesty. And it makes me think about people I've met over the years who are the complete opposite to this, who don't even realise that they define themselves as

what they do rather than who they are. We've done it for years, which is what led us to create our podcast.

Julie (04:03)

Yeah.

Aileen (04:05)

And was such a poignant moment hearing it from I'll call him JBJ. You were well done when you worked it out.

Julie (04:05)

Yeah.

JPJ. JPJ sounds like

a number plate.

Aileen (04:18)

He might not like me calling him that right now. So he's not listening. I know. So it's quite a mouthful isn't it each time.

Julie (04:19)

He might not like it, but you can't call him John because it doesn't feel like it's even him, but yeah.

John Bon Jovi. it is actually. But I think it's really common, like, as you say, we did it to define yourself by what you do. And I think sitting outside of that can be really difficult, especially for him. Like it wasn't a minor thing either. He got thrust into facing that question. I mean, one of his vocal chords was actually atrophying.

Aileen (04:30)

~

Yeah, was described as dying. They had to have this procedure. Now, can I say this? Medialisation Laryngoplasty. I actually did listen to the dictionary say that one, but even after surgery, he didn't know if he'd ever sing properly again. It terrifying.

Julie (05:00)

You

Must have been, cause that's huge when your whole life is built on your voice. That's massive to face that.

Aileen (05:11)

Yeah, he said it was like training for a marathon to get it back physically, mentally, spiritually. And you know what really got me was that he said if he couldn't sing at the standards he holds himself to, walk away. I actually do get that. I guess you don't want to be seen not singing as...

Julie (05:28)

Well, I think if that's what you're known for and you have such a brilliant voice, then it would seem like, what's, you know, why do it? Yeah. But it would still take huge courage because I think most of us cling to the things that we know long after they've stopped serving us.

Aileen (05:31)

Yeah.

Yeah, what's the point? Yeah.

Yeah, that's true. But you know, he did say, didn't he, that he, I have other things in my life and which is basically him saying my identity is not my performance. And that's self-worth, true, deep self-worth. I love it.

Julie (05:59)

Yeah, I love it too. And it's so relevant to people like us, right? Because like, for so long, we pegged our worth to Ros and a lot of women do to competence to being needed. And then when something shifts, like, you know, kids grow up, relationship change, careers wobble, we panic.

Aileen (06:14)

Yeah, that's right. We think if I'm not doing this, who even am I? You know I've asked that for a long time. It's interesting because recently I mentioned seeing someone from my past and they told me that when I was a broker that they really admired me and now well, they didn't commend me for my solo parenting, my bravery to leave, a job that I found soul destroying and the bravery I had to move countries.

Julie (06:22)

Yeah.

Aileen (06:42)

my daughter on my own. It really got me and it tapped into that old feeling of am I not good enough? And hearing John Byjomi say that, someone with this global identity which is massive, it reminded me that stripping back to who you are, it's universal. It's not about fame or achievement, it's just pure humanity.

Julie (07:03)

Yeah, it is. And we're all just trying to do that, right? Just strip ourselves back to who we are. it's like, you you faced it, people asking you, who you are now almost when you're not a broker,

because it is the thing you do that's the most shiny that people then think is significant. And that's who you should be. But, having him say that, it's an equalizer.

You know, reminder that they were all the same. We're all going through this. I remember once when I was going through a breakup actually, and it was interesting because Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston had just broken up. And there was a lot of news about her and how heartbroken she was. And I remember at the time thinking, gosh, even people who seem to have so much like she does, suffer the same pain that I'm feeling right now over a breakup. It was actually really reassuring because underneath it all, we're all just human, right? We face the same challenges and questions.

We all have the journey to our authentic self, to who we are beneath everything, that intense self-worth that we always outsource to our jobs, our roles, our achievements for so long. So I think there's something really vulnerable about him. And I think you can sort of see that he's been on that intense journey to the self. You can see he's lived enough to understand himself. Actually, you sent me a clip, it was on communication, the one you sent me this morning.

about how you can tell if people have been on a journey to themselves. was a good clip. Yeah.

Aileen (08:23)

Yes. I love that. thank you. Love

compliments. take that. I didn't know that. That you think you've ever mentioned that before about Brad Pitt Jennifer Aniston. That's so interesting. But I totally get it. I would have felt the same. you know, people put them on such a pedestal, you don't think they have feelings almost. So it makes you feel more connected.

Julie (08:36)

Jennifer.

Aileen (08:47)

And he didn't come from glamour, John Bon Jovi grew up in New Jersey in a working class family. His dad was a barber, his mum was a florist. Really So the humility makes sense. And he's always lived with sense of realness, which I love. And it's interesting as I've had a couple of conversations recently where people have commented that they think it's unfair that maybe friends they know are offspring of someone famous and how much of a head start they got in life.

And I said, yeah, but you if you want something so badly, you just have to really work a bit harder and you will achieve it. If your woman expects things on a plate these days.

Julie (09:21)

Yeah,

I know they do. It's that kind of culture, right? Instant. Everything's instant. It's terrible, but also everyone's journey is different, right? Like someone might have famous parents and therefore they might find the money or career part of life really easy, but then they might suffer with self-worth or things on the relationship side. And someone who didn't have the famous parents might have to put in more effort to get a career because you're right. But if you put in the effort, you can achieve it.

Aileen (09:26)

Yep, instant yeah

Julie (09:51)

those people might have other things that come more easily. You know, so I think it's useless to compare. We all have our own parts and we all adjust deeply human beneath it and want to connect, belong, feel loved. And the path to that has different forms for everybody. It seems like this phase of Bon Jovi's life or JBJ, I just can't even think of his initials. I'm trying to picture Bon Jovi's life.

It feels like it's really spiritual. Like it's a very reflective stage. I he's doing a lot of philanthropic work with his soul foundation, which he co-founded that helps communities with hunger and poverty. Because what matters to him now is connection, gratitude and giving back. And I love that he can recognize that people who are hungry are grateful for the food, not whether he can sing or not. So this is like a whole other self he's found.

Aileen (10:37)

Yeah.

It's great. It's just so human. And some people probably think, oh well, he should be doing that, but not everyone does that at his level. And he's, he's the kind of guy that I'd love to sit down. Imagine if we had him on the podcast. Let's try. Why not? No, but he talks about joy and aging purpose, adversity, all the things that we talk about, but not in a dramatic way, in a really grounded, soulful way.

Julie (10:55)

Oh, let's try. Can you imagine?

Aileen (11:08)

So maybe the vocal chords forced him to slow down and look inward and it made him even more humble. And that phrase he says, what I do is not who I am. It just resonates with us because at this life stage, it's exactly what happens to us. The unraveling of what we've been like for years.

Julie (11:31)

totally. happens to all of us. I mean, okay, you and I have had it. We weren't rock stars who lost their vocal chords, but we had external identities that defined us. You know, I think that's the

thing. You hit a point, like he hit it with the vocal. Everyone hits it at some point and you're forced to go, my goodness, and you change. Like we had the kids, the midlife thing. You know, you get thrust into this phase of like, okay, time to reassess, time to drop the ego, time to see what's real.

Aileen (11:38)  
for yourself.

Yeah, that's true. And I do think the thing about losing your voice is such a metaphor because I lost my voice too. All right, not physically, but emotionally. I mean, obviously I can't sing like John Bon Jovi, but growing up with conflict, constantly being silenced, walking on eggshells, you lose pieces of yourself. So when he talks about having to rebuild his voice brick by brick, I really felt that because I feel like that's what I've had to do.

over these years, been doing it emotionally.

Julie (12:28)

I think a lot of women listening will relate to that, because as you say, like losing your voice doesn't always come on, and you say it's not a physical voice. Sometimes it's just simply years of prioritizing everyone else as well. You know, I think we can lose our identity, which is like the voice we're consumed by roles, by who we think we should be, what we think we need to achieve. And that can go on from childhood right into middle age.

Aileen (12:46)  
Mm-hmm.

Julie (12:54)  
the real self gets totally lost.

Aileen (12:55)  
Absolutely.

Yeah, and there'd be so many women, I think, nodding their heads at that right now. And you wake up one day and you think, where did I go? I mean, that definitely happened to us. And that's why I was lying. We're all just trying to figure it out. It just felt like a hand on your shoulder. It was just so peaceful for me. A reminder that being human, is messy. And that uncertainty, it's not failure.

Julie (13:01)  
Yeah.

Aileen (13:22)

You know, not having it together isn't a personality flaw. Life isn't always rainbows. But if we can have that strong sense of self, it makes it a lot easier to navigate the lows.

Julie (13:34)

Yeah, it's like a baseline solid foundation. So important.

Aileen (13:38)

so important and even now after everything he's preparing for a comeback tour after questioning if it was all over it's just such a powerful message you can lose something essential and come back stronger like a phoenix even if the comeback looks different than before I feel like we've had those comebacks every decade and what a ride it's been so far

Julie (14:01)

I

know it's cause actually I have this friend, um, he and I worked together for a long time. I used to call him the Phoenix because there was always something and we both had it, you know, that these junctures where everything would crash and then you'd rise again. And actually I can't even imagine life not being like that because I feel like that's what makes you a better person all the time. And it makes life interesting to hit those junctures, but I think you have to lean into them.

Aileen (14:08)

Yeah.

Yeah.

Julie (14:28)

and go, okay, this is happening because it's bringing me to a new phase. But I think midlife is naturally kind of that stage that happens to everybody at that stage. And then you have this comeback phase because you do come to a point where you're like, what the heck? And you change a lot, even just hormonally. Like I think now that I'm in I can feel like so much has just...

slipped away that I needed to get rid of and it's just stripped away and I feel stronger and I have much more self-worth than ever before. It's actually amazing.

Aileen (15:01)

Yeah, and honestly, I feel like I'm in a film sometimes because I've gotten to witness this, you know, happen, this transformation with you firsthand. It's been, it has been like a Hollywood comeback. It's amazing watching you, how you've grown into yourself like this. It gives.

Julie (15:20)

It is interesting because

I think it is the whole, I mean, it's, I think two things happen, right? Cause you're at this stage where all the roles are changed. So you've lost the career role, the mum role changes and all of

that changes. And then the hormones go. So you, you process things really differently. Like if you think of me, it's really nice that you've actually seen it because I think it's not often that someone gets to witness that so closely, I think, cause we talk, even a husband wouldn't, cause they don't talk on the same level. Whereas you and I.

Aileen (15:41)

It is.

Julie (15:50)

Did so you saw me a year ago, even probably was probably 18 months ago. Cause I think I've been a year pretty much better, but how much of a mess and much more uncertain and much more comfy. then all of a sudden it's just like a refocus and it's like, Nope, you know what? It's really interesting. I think.

Aileen (16:05)

It really

gives me hope because I'm right in the middle of my perimenopause as you know and for other women out there you know to hear you like this.

Julie (16:12)

Yeah.

It is interesting. Yeah. It's just a confidence and it's not a confidence in thinking, ~ now I feel confident about all of my abilities. It's more that you don't worry about being judged for them. So you just step into it with all the messiness and it's like, you know what? If I'm not as good, that's fine. And it's really freeing. It is. So yeah, so this is a good conversation actually. It brings up a lot, doesn't it? Yeah. Yeah. Thank you.

Aileen (16:24)

which is great.

It does? Thanks John Bon Jovi. JBJ.

Julie (16:40)

JBJ. ~ So yeah, think a few things that people should take from this is one, your identity is not your performance because what you do is not at all who you are.

Aileen (16:52)

Yet losing your voice in any form doesn't mean you're lost. It might actually be the beginning of finding your real one.

Julie (17:00)

Yeah, and there's always a new phase, dreams don't expire. You can still chase them and still become new at 40, 50, 60, but I think you do it from alignment there, not pressure.

Aileen (17:11)

Yet in confusion it's a normal part of growth. Clarity doesn't come in a single moment, it arrives more like in a whisper.

Julie (17:20)

Yeah, humility also is strength. know that's one thing that both of us love, isn't it? It's so strong. It's not pretending, not performing, not hiding. And that's real confidence.

Aileen (17:32)

I love that. And everyone, even the icons, are to figure it out. You're not behind, you're just human.

Julie (17:41)

Yep. So if you're listening and you're in a season where you feel, unsure or everything feels a bit shaky or you're rethinking who you are, you are definitely not.

Aileen (17:53)

No you're not and you don't need to have it all sorted. You don't need a five-year plan. I don't need to be a polished version of yourself. that you might think people expect of you.

Julie (18:03)

Yeah, because we're all walking through life with exactly the same questions. We're all changing. We're all growing. We're all as JBJ says, just trying to figure it out. And that's okay. That's enough.

Aileen (18:18)

It really is enough. Yeah.

Julie (18:20)

thanks for listening. We hope you enjoyed this one. If it's resonated and you know anyone who might benefit from listening, don't forget to share it.

Aileen (18:28)

Yeah, and don't forget, we have our sanity checks now. They've moved over to Patreon, where can listen to the price of a cup of coffee every month.

Julie (18:37)

See you next week. Bye.

Aileen (18:39)

Bye.

