

# S5S9: Jen Nash

## **SPEAKERS**

Peter Margaritis, Jen Nash

### **Peter Margaritis**

Hey, welcome back, everybody. My guest today is Jen Nash. As you've already heard, and I'm so looking forward to this conversation about, you know, the power behind tiny connections. And, Jen, you're the expert. So, one of my first questions is in reading through parts of your book and thinking about this, what's one of the... what's the one thing that holds people back from making these connections?

### **Jen Nash**

You know, people have this, and thank you for having me, but people have this innate fear of talking to strangers and connecting with strangers. And I think initially, a lot of people think I don't want to bother them. I don't want to be an annoyance. I don't want to be, you know, the fly in the ointment that is their day. And alternatively, people are tired. People work really hard. People are lazy. Like we have a million excuses, because we are, you know, all the colors of the rainbow on the inside. So, I dive pretty deep into this in the book, you know, every excuse from I don't need more friends. You know, and other lies we like to tell ourselves. You know, why should I go out and meet more people? Nobody can do anything for me. I've already made it in my game. Alternatively, you know, nobody wants to talk to me. Um, you know, I'm going to be ignored. I'll be, you know, left alone and feel isolated. But we all have a myriad of different delusions and fears. And I think they're all incredibly human. And so, I actually have a lot of fun in chapter two really sort of going in and asking the reader, scan this list like top eight excuses that that come up, and then pick the one that really resonates for you, and then I jump into it. And I asked them to like look at what they're really, really feeling. Like for me, my biggest issue was at the end of the day I'm tired. I don't want to do more potentially. And I don't want to go to the gym, for instance, which is something that I should do. And the gym is a great opportunity for like connecting with people maybe meet someone at a class or potentially, you know, in the locker room. But I don't want to go. I'm tired. So, what I'll do is I'll say just go for half an hour. And you know, incent myself. You know, maybe strike up a conversation with the person next to me on the treadmill. Or alternatively, you know, don't just be glad that I went and try. Like, you know, everything we do is like, for the good of it. Right?

### **Peter Margaritis**

Right. You haven't mentioned one word, and I think it's, it's strategically done by yourself. You talked about making these connections. You don't use the networking word.

### **Jen Nash**

Yeah, I think networking to some degree sounds hard. You know, it sounds like work. It sounds like somebody...it's not like something someone told you you should do. And you know, it's kind of like

brussels sprouts. You should eat them. And maybe you love them. And if you do, hurrah, but maybe you don't, but you know, you should eat them. And I think, you know, I love the word networking because it's, you know, there's a net underneath you're working. And I truly believe that if you want to stay employed for the rest of your life, you know, you definitely want to net around your work. And that is going to be a net made of humans who care about you and believe that you do a good job. But connecting is so much more. Because when I connect at the gym, I'm not trying to get a job. I'm not trying to like further my career. I'm really trying to infuse that little moment of time with, you know, that sort of intangible fun. It's like a sprinkling of joy in that moment, and humans really need connection.

### **Peter Margaritis**

Let's talk about connections during the pandemic. I mean, in the book you write about, we need social contact. We need social interaction. And we been without it technically for about two years. What do you see and how do we get past that? How do we how do we embrace maybe like this conversation as a way of connecting under the circumstances, but it's not the be all to end all?

### **Jen Nash**

Yeah, it's really hard. And I think, Peter, one of the reasons I wrote this book is I was so desperate for connection. And someone, you know, back in 2020, said like, what makes you, you, like, write that book? And I think, part of my joy, connecting with others in random ways. You know, and as you've seen from the book, the book is packed with really fun stories about what happens when you connect and how that changes your life and leads you down a path. I think part of that was what made me, me. And so, when the pandemic took that away, I really had to start thinking like, what are our options? You know, and I discovered something called LunchClub.ai. That's Apple intelligence. So for instance, you can have random lunches with people who are in a similar vertical to you, work vertical, or you can just have random lunches with people who also happen to be runners. They give you all sorts of choices, and it's free. It's literally offered to people so that they can connect all over the world. What a great idea. And I think we've seen through Zoom and other software's the ability for connection in breakout rooms. Which is really kind of fun, like when you go to those conferences, virtual conferences, and all of a sudden you're chucked in a virtual, you know, breakout room. I think initially, everyone's heart jumps a little bit. It's uncomfortable. But that's the same thing we would feel if we were actually at a conference. So gosh, I've got to go and meet some people by the lunch table. You know, there's always that eye roll. Please don't make me. But at the end, like this is the fascinating thing that I learned while I was researching aspects of the book, people say they don't like talking to strangers. They think they're going to be bored. They think they're going to run out of things to say. They think the stranger is gonna think they're boring. And yet, over 90% of time, when someone walks away from having a conversation with a stranger, they actually think that was great. That was so much fun. I want to do that again. But ironically, you ask them again in a week and I don't want to talk to a stranger. So, humans are just, you know... I call it humanas strangest averse. We don't want strange humans in our lives.

### **Peter Margaritis**

That's funny. You know, I think about networking and some of the conversations I've had with people, they use the word strangers, and I go a stranger is someone who has a bottle of Mogen David 20/20 down at the Ohio State Stadium and having a long conversation with the light pole. But in a business environment, there's no such thing as a stranger. They're all opportunities. And I've had, I've had some

people go okay, I've tried that and it works. But at some point in time, they revert back to the stranger because what did your mother always tell you? Never talk to strangers. And it's that fine line, that differentiation between what's considered a stranger and someone who I don't know that could be an opportunity.

### **Jen Nash**

Yeah, and I think honestly, I think we're really hard on ourselves, Peter. I think we think a conversation needs to be perfect. I think we think we need a great opener. I think we think we need to have cuter shoes on. You know, it's like from the outside to the inside humans second guess themselves. And one of the things that I suggest in the book is if you're feeling awkward, say you're at a friend's baby shower, at a conference, anywhere really. And it could even this could even work in a breakout room where you're suddenly facing someone that you don't know. Like, be honest. Lean into that vulnerability and share that because all of a sudden it just makes you human. Right? So, I suggest saying, I came alone. I hate these things. And I hate chit chat. How about you? Like how disarming is that? How wonderful is that? How approachable is that? You know, and like oh, my friends just abandon me. And here I am standing holding two drinks looking like an alcoholic. Like, you know, stating the obvious can be very, very grounding. You know?

### **Peter Margaritis**

I love that. It's yeah, because I hear a lot of people go I just don't...I just don't like these things. But my boss told me had to be here, or had to do this. And the other person maybe at a certain time, I'm in the same boat. Now, you've had a connection because you're sharing something in common. And I think if I was in that situation, they would tell me about the worst time you've ever been trying to make a connection or network and they get their stories, and then just I think that blows it up into a really interesting connection.

### **Jen Nash**

Absolutely, I mean, I think the worst start stories are always more fun. You need a bit of disaster to give any story, you know, a real sense of drama. One of the stories in the book that is a funny byproduct of a conversation that I had with a bartender. I literally asked a bartender, full transparency was very, very attractive. I asked him, "Where in the world did he most love to travel?" And he told me, "Panama City in Panama. Central, Central America." And to make a very, very long story short, and this story is in the book. I ended up in a Panamanian jail sitting next to a one armed man, a very drunk expat and a woman who I believe was probably working in the oldest profession. And I was stuck there for hours until my partner at the time, really got upset and he said, "You need to fix this!" And I texted the one person that that bartender had introduced me to, who happened to be incredibly influential. And with one small phone call, he got us out of there. And as we walked out, you know, we'd been pulled over by a very, very military looking individual who was covered in guns and things. And that gentleman stopped me and said, you know, how do you know this influential person? And I just looked at him and I said, I listened to a bartender, but you know. Yeah, it's a funny story. Yeah. And the funny thing is, is like couple hours later, we were crashing a wedding at the invitation of this fancy human. So, it was a fun story.

**Peter Margaritis**

Well, I bet you have, yeah, I can't wait to really dig into this book. Because I imagine you have 100 stories. But what's the worst story you've ever had? I mean, it sounds like it still had a positive outcome to it. You did get out of jail with the influential. And you started flirting with the bartender because as you said, he was incredibly attractive.

**Jen Nash**

I wasn't flirting. I was really just talking to him. I just took more of an interest than perhaps I wouldn't have otherwise. It's just human nature. We're drawn to pretty things. I mean, you know, I think that in life, we have this misconception, Peter, that there is such a thing as good and bad. And I think barring health issues for those that you love outcomes of situations, if we really know if something's bad. You know, like you missed your plane. How do you know that you weren't meant to miss your plane? You know, you didn't make that wedding, and Jesus, you know, the family's very upset. Maybe you really needed some time alone. Maybe you needed downtime. Maybe it was a blessing. Like sometimes I really just think we all need to like accept that we don't always get final say, you know.

**Peter Margaritis**

I believe in the universe, but I don't know why the universe at one point my career, I'm at a networking event, and I just said something completely stupid, and just had egg all over my face. And everybody just stopped looked at me. Their jaws drop. I said, "Excuse me, I'm out of here," and just walked away. But two days later as I thought about that, I went okay, so I made I screwed up. It's not gonna stop me. But it was completely embarrassing. And then for a couple years, I've run into people who are at bad networking or saying something stupid, like, yeah, I still do that. And I still say something stupid every now and then. I mean, come on. We all do.

**Jen Nash**

Absolutely, absolutely. And not, I mean, I really do believe unfortunately that humans only grow when we're in pain. You know, when you're sitting cozy on the couch, rolled up with your bestie watching, whatever, that's so fun. I'm pretty sure there's minimal evolving on the inside or the outside. You know, when we stick our foot in our mouth, and we are forced to walk around with a mantle of shame. You know, it gives us pause. And that pause hopefully inspires us to evolve. And I think one of the interesting things about the big power of tiny connections is these little sparks, these little moments with other people, they're not always pleasant. Sometimes you reach out and you connect to someone and maybe they're not in a good headspace. And maybe that sort of gets you thinking. And maybe it shifts where you're at, in a good way or a bad way. But that shift, I think it's still powerful.

**Peter Margaritis**

The fear of networking. The fear of talking to strangers is that internal dialogue that we grew up with constantly, and what's your advice to help people who... I don't have any more friends and come up, might have all these excuses? What's your advice to get them to change that mindset? That might be a pun of my podcast, but that's exactly why I started it. How can we change people's mindset? How can we begin to change what we do to the better and how would you what would you tell someone?

### **Jen Nash**

You know, I would ask them what they wanted more out of life. Like, what more do they want? Do they want more friends? Do they want to go to more parties? Do they want to make more money? Do they want to get a better job? You know, what is going to take their life to a better place? And I think when you look into the answer, then you can understand where they might want to consider leaning in and connecting. Because I truly believe that every person you meet has the power to change your life, and you have the power to change theirs. And if you want a better job, pretty much the primary way forward is through connections. And that can take months and months and months. That's not a quick Hey, I met a guy in a bar and he's gonna recommend me. It can take years. You know, if you want to make more money, that's not the same as getting a better job. You know, and in the book I talk about how do you talk to people who are perhaps investing in the stock market or investing in real estate or doing alternative investments? How do you find those people? And, you know, what, it can be done online. You can absolutely create strong bonds by reaching out, commenting on articles, sliding into someone's DM, you know, talking on LinkedIn, sharing knowledge leader papers. But whatever they want, that I think is going to be the driver of change. And I think to some degree, pain is a fantastic driver of change. Because if you need more money, because you're working all the time, you're exhausted and you really would like some, you know, lifetime, family time, kid times. You know, then getting a job becomes, that pays better becomes forefront. Right? So, it's like what is the pain point for someone? Because seeing that pain, clearly, I think motivates change. Does that resonate?

### **Peter Margaritis**

Absolutely, absolutely. I think there's some people in this world and you're this person who says yes. There's a lot of people in this world who say no. And this is kind of like an improv quote. And those who say yes, have this wonderful journey that they go on, and those who say no, can not move and stay in their own safety. And it's that thing, you know, you're getting outside your comfort zone. That's where your dreams live. You stay in your comfort zone. That's where they go and die. And it's just taking that risk. And as you said it, lean into it, accept it, and make the best of it.

### **Jen Nash**

Yeah, and I do hear you, because I have...so I work as an executive coach. And I'm really passionate about storytelling as you'll see in the book. So, I do a lot of storytelling workshops at large corporations because when you learn to tell a great story, you really become more audience centered. And it's really all about audience centered communication. And what does that do? Well, if you're selling a client or upselling, someone or trying to build a better team, it does all of those things in spades. But I think there are a lot of people who don't know how to move forward and are too scared. I think fear holds so many people back, and I think it's a very brave person who watches themselves being held back by I think it's a combination of excuses, fear of change, you know, I don't have enough money. I can't do this. A lot of excuses come up. And then there's a different type of person who realizes that they are never going to get more. That this is it. If they keep living exactly the way they're living. And so either be happy, or hire a coach, or, you know, join some kind of a networking group where they can support you in a brainstorming initiative. But, I mean, it's hard. I'm not gonna say it's not, because I do have coaching clients who really struggle pushing themselves and changing their lives. They want to, but they're terrified. And then but I can't are enormous. But sometimes when you hold a spotlight at

something that's scary, all of a sudden, it's not so scary because the spotlight is illuminating all those crevices and you're really seeing it clearly. And that can be like an nice exhale. Just a, "ahhhh..."

**Peter Margaritis**

I think we're ending on the right note because that was absolutely perfect. How can people find you?

I am at JenNash.com. And my book is available online on Amazon, Barnes and Noble or anywhere else where or they can go to JenNash.com\books, and that'll link them to me and to the book.

**Peter Margaritis**

Well Jen, I can't thank you enough. I was enjoying this conversation. I can't wait to dig into the book. I will have lots of questions and comments once I shift my way through this, but it's absolutely fascinating. We see the world in very similar ways, but I've learned a lot in this 20 minutes and I thank you very much. And then my audience is just going to run with this. This is great. So, thank you so very much.

**Jen Nash**

Oh, you're so welcome, Peter. Thank you very much, Peter. This was lively, and I really enjoy that. So, thank you so much for showing up so awesomely for me today. As as you know, asking questions is awesome, but also challenging, so I appreciate that.

**Peter Margaritis**

You're more than welcome. I want to thank Jen for sharing her knowledge and stories about making powerful connections. If you liked our conversation, then go now to Amazon and buy her book. The Big Power of Tiny Connections: How Small Interactions Spark Awesome Outcomes. Remember, there are people who prefer to say yes, and there are people who prefer to say no. Those who say yes, are rewarded by their adventures they have. And those who say no are rewarded by the safety they obtain. Be a yes person.