

# michelle summit

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## SPEAKERS

Michelle Vasquez, Christina Smith

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### Christina Smith

recorded this right? I'm recording now. Yeah. So welcome to the midlife Mojo Summit. I think that's what we're calling it now. I have Michelle Vasquez on with me today. And we are going to talk about this really awesome thing that I got to tell you in my 30s. I was like, What the hell is a relationship with myself? Like, what does that look like, right. And of course many years of therapy later, I realized what it is sort of looking like. But today, Michelle is going to help us understand what this is and how we can start this relationship with ourselves. So thank you, Michelle, for being here today.



### Michelle Vasquez 00:38

Thank you, Christina, for having me. I do love this topic, and I am on the same boat as you. I was like relationship with myself. That's what I do every day. Like, what is that book?



### Christina Smith

Like? That's so? Yeah. So tell us a little bit more about you and how you got here. In addition to this, you didn't know what relationships with self was? Because I always find that interesting how people get there.



### Michelle Vasquez 01:05

Yeah, absolutely. Thank you again, for the opportunity. I am a life and gold coach for women. And I have been in a self discovery journey since probably my mid the middle of my first marriage. And it was this, like, everything was about the kids make it perfect to have a family. Then it ended in a divorce when my kids were under eight, three boys. And it just felt like oh my gosh. So it took me back to figuring out who I was and what I wanted in life more than my kids. And as my kids got older, and they all went to school. I remember sitting at home thinking, Now what, what do I do now? Like, why do I want to do and having no clue what that

look like in my life. So I think it's so important that we don't lose ourselves in the things that we're doing in the in the jobs that we have. And in all the hats that we're wearing. So that's kind of like where my passion was born of goals, you know, what goals do we want? Do we want to do we know who we are? And how do we align our actions and our thoughts or feelings, everything else to meet those goals. So I am, you know, again, it's it, I went from, what is a relationship with myself, like I live with myself, that just doesn't make any sense. It didn't compute in my head. And once I understood, it was the way that I was talking to myself what I thought of myself what I ate, if I exercise, then that meant that I was having a more loving, caring relationship for me. And, you know, I started seeing how little steps grew into this big step of, gee, if I do this for me, I can be there more for my kids, I can perform better at work, I can be a better wife, not a better wife, but a more loving, present wife. I have since gotten remarried, we have seven kids. So all together. And it's been a journey. Where all my self discovery, all the tools that I've learned in life coaching, I can apply them everywhere. Because as you may have heard before, how we do one thing is how we do everything. And I went from this blame out of control, like I don't know, you know, who's gonna come and tell me what to do now to this is what I want. And I this is a vision that I have for myself and my family. So this is That's mean a big nutshell.



**Christina Smith**

Yeah. So there was like this a journey of empowering yourself by become making what I heard was making really good choices for yourself, right, starting making a while maybe even starting to make choices for yourself rather than all of the people that might be around you and all the caretaking that you were doing and all the roles that were doing. I think that relationship with self is starting is starting. This is just me my opinion. You can tell me what you think. But starting with that, who am I underneath all of these roles that I play all these hats that I put on? Who am I for me? Not Who am I for my kids, my friends, my husband, but who am I for me?



**Michelle Vasquez 04:32**

Absolutely. And, you know, it's, um, I'm not sure. I think it's the way that you were phrasing that that took me back to I came from marketing in a corporate environment where I was traveling, and I I knew I mean, I had a presence in my work. Then I became a stay at home mom, you know, and everything was perfect. And we really figure out you know, we kind of lose ourselves with like, No, I'm the corporate employee. No, no, no, I'm the stay at home mom. And if we don't, if we are not aware, we are going to have all these feelings and connotations and ideas of what that means and how you should act and what you should do. And it's a lot of pressure that it starts diluting who we are, who are we truly who we truly are. And I know that I am in my 40s, I think, if I would have known this, if I can, you know, tell my kids this, when they're in high school and junior high in college, they're gonna get to be 40 and not have to worry about like, who am I really, you know, what do I want out of life? So it's, whatever work we do on ourselves, right now, will impact will have a ripple effect on the people around us. And, you know, you, I always tell my clients think of the people around you, can you influence them, not by telling them, Hey, you should do this, you should do that, right? Because we don't know what people should do. But by living a life, that's actually true to yourself, I want to, I want to lose weight, then maybe, maybe you can start running, walking five minutes a day, it's not a lot. And in me, you will not see the results immediately. But it's something that you are

doing to yourself and your brain will start thinking about like, what else can I do for me? What else? What else? How else can I fill my cup? So that I can pour more and to the people? And everywhere that I go?



**Christina Smith**

I love that. Yeah, because I mean, I had a client who she realized she had so many hats, she was running a couple of businesses, she had children, she had a husband, she also has aging parents. And she was she was just like, I just, I started my businesses to be creative. And I don't even have time to be creative anymore. And I was like, What do you mean, you don't have you're not taking the time, right that the trace. And so what I asked her to do was every day before you open your computer and do start your work, I want you to spend 15 minutes being creative, because that's what you told me was most important to you. And when she did that, you know, it actually took a few weeks, because we had that she had that old default that was going now I can't do that right, I have to get right to work. Gotta lose time. When she finally started doing it, she realized just taking that 15 or 30 minutes to be creative in the morning, was actually helping her stay more focused during the day, she was scrolling Facebook last, you know, Doom scrolling less and getting all you know, distracted by other things less. And she would finish her work on time and be able to go spend time with her kids, which was another thing that she really wanted to do. And so I think that, yeah, I think that, for me, it's about giving ourselves permission to throw out the rules that we had before, right? Like whatever, like whatever I imagined that people expected me to be the perfect mom, I get to like, rethink that and go, What is my mothering look like? Right? Like how does that feel, rather than trying to fit all of these external expectations that we're assuming people have, which we don't even know, we're just creating these really high expectations and then trying to meet them. And I hear what you're saying is like, and I see this all the time and in our 40s is a really popular time for us to start going. What am I doing? My kids don't need me as much anymore. My relationship I had put on hold maybe until you know, the kids were grown or I got disconnected from it. Like there's all kinds of things that happen. And when we get underneath that it I think a lot of it is like who am I? Right? And what does that mean? And that's where I think my relationship with myself restarted was starting to ask those questions. And like it was almost like a remembering that I'm a whole person. I'm actually not here to serve everyone else. I'm a whole person all by myself.



**Michelle Vasquez 09:16**

Yeah, and you know, what I've noticed now that you mentioned that it's the, you know, when when we get so involved with like, we are just here for our kids, it's so it's so easy to fall into that, that bucket that when the kids are starting to grow up, you might have a harder time letting go because that's all you know, and your whole identity your whole persona is in that one bucket of like, I'm here for the kids and now they don't need me and what am I going to do and you know, it's like you're watching their every move and their every facial expression because you feel responsible for that. And I want to say like building yourself trust. You know, it's so important because you start identifying who you are. So when the kids grow up when they go, and they need you last, you can sit back and say, uh, now I get to see the humans that I've raised. Now I get to experience this life with them, as opposed to, for them and with them. And instead of them you know, one of the things that I think it's important to, to kind of break down for for people is that what is self trust? And why is it important? You know, and I think the

more self trust that we build with ourselves, the better we can make decisions, the better we can align those decisions with our goals, you know, and that increases our confidence decreases our anxiety and our stress level. So there's so many different blessings that come with, like, you know, raising yourself trust. And one of the reasons why I think a lot of people have a hard time working on their self trust, it's because they're, they struggle with the fear of failure, you know, being a perfectionist, there's this imposter syndrome, there's this negative self talk that if we don't, if we're not aware, then we can fix it, right, we can change those behavior. So that's one of the reasons why I think, working on your relationship with yourself, it's so important.



### Christina Smith

I love that trust piece, because that was, that was an intention of mine, I had for many years, it took me so long to be like, I trust that I can show up and everything's gonna be fine. I trust that I'm going to make the best choices I can. And yes, I'm still going to fail. Sometimes you reminds me of, like, the definition of confidence, which is like, it's actually a skill of doing something without no aid, right? Yeah, whether or not you're gonna get it, right. And that's so like, that self trust comes in. And there's, there's really nothing that beats that in my life. Because I feel like I can bring a lot more confidence when I'm trusting myself. And it's a tricky thing, because I asked women all the time, do you trust yourself? And they're like, Yeah, and I'm like, okay, so when you said you were gonna do X, Y, and Z, and you didn't do that? I'm just curious, do you still trust yourself? Right, because that commitment of like, that's how I knew that I didn't trust myself was that I was always either sliding my what was important for me off the list, or I was taking other people's external validation, I was taking other people's advice and going, Wow, they must know, they must know.



### Michelle Vasquez 12:41

They're the experts. Something I don't. Yeah, and, you know, if we want to define like, what self trust, it's really your belief in your ability to make those decisions, you know, to follow through on those commitments. And I, you know, it's really like to follow your gut your intuition, but it's also about setting boundaries, you know, those healthy boundaries, I think that is so important. When we start trusting ourselves, I can say no, to certain things, or people or situations. And because I'm practicing self compassion, I'm practicing, you know, what matters to me the most. And I think that is so vital that we really tend to forget that, you know, and the way that I describe, like self competence to my clients, it's like you mentioned, right, it's the belief in your ability to do something. But then there's like, a lot of some of my clients to confuse like self confidence with self esteem, and or self trust and self esteem, it's more of a of your overall sense of self worth. You know, and that is where we think like, well, if I don't value myself, I'm not trusting myself, you know, and they're kind of separate together. They're like, family, right? But self trust, on the other hand, is a belief in your ability, again, to make those decisions to follow through to stay with your commitment. And like I said, even if it's five minutes of you doing something for you, like you mentioned, to your to your client, the writer, or creative doing that. It just starts building distrust. I do believe that your brain starts like changing the wiring of like, oh, oh, wait, wait, we're paying attention to ourselves, you know, and, and then there's this discombobulation that happens of like, wait a minute, my kids are not my first priority, but it's actually filling my cup for them. You know that that can be really big for some people for sure.



Christina Smith

Oh, absolutely. Especially like in this culture of like, what you earn is what you're worth, for a lot of people and so like for us to think like I could take time or energy or even money and invest. Sitting myself can feel really hard. I know that for me, like I'm supposed to sacrifice until my kids are older or whatever, right. And so at what happened is I didn't take care of myself and I got into a lot of depressions, which then really ripple affected through my family, right? Because my mom's mom's suffering, then a lot of other people in the family are also going to suffer. And so I had to start saying, What happens if I take care of myself first, like, what happens if I really look at my own illness and what's going on for me, rather than and I hope that we're having this conversation and inspiring some women before they have to get to that point would be great. But if you're feeling depressed, or ill, or something like that is some kind of physical or mental is happening for you, I hope that this conversation is going to trigger somebody to be like, I really need to figure this out now. Yeah,



Michelle Vasquez 15:59

and you know, if you are at that point that you are, because I was there, that I would just go in my closet, and I would turn off the lights, and I have a little like a meditation, little booth there. And I would just sit there, and I would be so depressed, and I would cry. And I would I you know, I would think like, what I'm, and this is what I think society has taught us that is wrong, because I can questioning myself, like, why am I feeling so down? When my kids are healthy? My parents are healthy, my family, you know, and I would go to school. Right instead of being grateful, so. Exactly, exactly. Yeah. And, and I say what's wrong with society, because we think that because we have all these things, and everything is going perfectly, then you should just be, you know, super happy and positive all the time. And that was a big realization for me, when I heard you're not as positive and I thought, Well, no, I'm not. I am human, and I'm gonna have really bad times, and I'm really gonna have, I'm gonna have really good times, and he does not have to depend on anyone else. No one gets to come and determine how I am going to feel today. And it wasn't like, you know, if someone is out there, and they're feeling this depressed, I want to tell you, it's not like, oh, just start thinking new thoughts, and you're gonna feel great, and start doing something and you're gonna feel great. Do all of that if it helps you. But there's nothing wrong with you sit in that darkness. And I literally would put my hands on my chest and say, there's nothing wrong with me, I am feeling sad. This is why and I would really start thinking like, why am I feeling sad. But instead of changing it to like, well, then just think this side, I start with that sadness. And I start with that feeling of, let's say, for example, you know, my divorce and, you know, this is again, an example, but it wasn't that. Because everything was great, you know, in my, in my second marriage, and it was the, okay, I can be sad. And then I started timing myself, I'm gonna give myself 20 minutes to be like, as depressed as I can be. And I would sit there, and I would really allow those emotions, then I would stop, like, the timer would go off or something. And I'd feel like, okay, now I can start working towards bridging the gap to like how I really want to feel. And, you know, that's another thing, like, we hear a lot, like a friend of mine, just say, just told me like, align your goals with you with who you are, and all of that. It's very Kochi. So I kind of wanted to break it down. Because I speak a lot about aligning yourself, you know, it's, what does that mean? You know, the choices you make, that they align with your goals, with your values with your mission? And it's more of like, are they who are you who do you want to be Who are you believing you are? And based on this, you know, person that I want to be I know that I am

Christian, I know that I am a good person, I know that I am, you know that I want to be healthy. I knew I want to be here for my family. So now I am aligning my actions to this goal. So start thinking of like, what is that ultimate goal? What is the future version of me? What does she do? What does she have what you know, how does she look? And now my I am aligning my actions to that. So that means that I'm probably going to eat a little better, maybe I'll get more sleep. Maybe I will be more mindful of who I hang out with. Because, you know, it's we all have family. We all have friends. We all have people that are around us? What are you allowing your, your body, your spirit your mind to be filled with? So, you know, again, it's I wanted to just say like align your goals align your actions with your mission. It's Kochi, but it's also like if you start thinking about it like, kind of like a step, right, you take this step, and you take this step, you're aligned towards a goal. So I just thought it might be helpful.



Christina Smith

Very similar to very similar to how I teach it as well. So but it's about having that clarity, because what we're finding today, right is our old defaults aren't necessarily getting us to where we wanted because I went to the same area. The same places, as your example was, after I got married the second time, I was like, Okay, so that's great husband, I have my healthy kids, I have a great job, right, like, and yet I was crying on the way to work every morning, like I was not happy. And I was always taught that I would be happy when I would be happy when I graduated. That person, the house when I had the thing, and it ended up and I checked all the boxes. And I was crying on the way to work. Because I had done all the external things, right. But I hadn't actually said, Hey, is this actually the life that I want? Or do I want more and instead, I, I love what you said about, you know, throwing positivity or gratitude at it. It's great to feel grateful if you're feeling grateful. But in those moments that we are really questioning ourselves, I think that positivity and gratitude are just distractions. They're like bypass errs, we're trying to ignore what's going on for us when that depression, I was going through that sadness and grief and all the things that I was holding. Those were important messages, like, there was it was telling me something and I just kept telling it, it was wrong. So there went that self trust, right, that there's like this inner wisdom coming up through emotion and I'm like, Nope, don't have time for that. That's not appropriate. I'm supposed to be happy. So what's wrong with me is the really the question I started like, What is wrong with me? And then when we start asking that, then we're looking for all the things that are wrong. And it's a downward spiral from there.



Michelle Vasquez 22:33

Yeah, yeah. Which is important to remind people, there is nothing wrong with you. You know, we have so many feelings in the world. But we were taught, you're supposed to be like you were saying, right, I'll be happy when. And then you have all of the wins. And now you're still not happy? Well, I didn't see that, check that box where they were, I needed to check more I can say, Okay, I'm still not happy. And that's okay. And that has been like, the biggest aha moment for me as a mother that I can. Now my like, all of our kids are in their 20s and teens. And when preteen, but it's this message of like, it's okay, if you're not happy. You're not supposed to be happy all the time. And I remember the first time I started talking about that, they were like, I'd like, Okay, you're crazy. And I said, No, I'm not happy all the time. I'm mad, and I'm angry, and I am sad. And I am this and that. And, and I said, and there's nothing wrong with you. And if you come home from school, and you're feeling angry, you can say can I have

five minutes? You know, because now I'm teaching them how to respond to those emotions. Instead of, you know, feeling embarrassed that oh my gosh, is there something wrong with me? Because I'm depressed and I have all the video games and yeah, you can have all the millions in the world. Your, your emotion, still, they're still part of you. How do we deal with it? How do we handle it with self love and self compassion, which is takes us back to our theme, right of building the self trust, I can trust myself that I will follow through, but I can trust myself that I can process this emotion that I can feel this feeling and not react, but act in a way that I choose to. You know, my, my kids make mistakes. My husband doesn't do things right. Or the way that I like, right? Of course, lashing out with like, oh my gosh, why did you do that? You know, how many times have we talked about this or how I like things like it's more of like it's a really a big deal. Can I love myself enough to stay calm, not react, be more compassionate with them, as well as with me And, you know, I'm doing that for me a lot of times we think, Oh, no, I'm gonna do that for my kid. Okay, you can do that for your kid. But why don't we start with ourselves? Why don't we start with like trusting that? I'm not going to lash out? I am going to listen. Processes. Do I really want to have a bad evening? Because the dishwasher wasn't loaded properly, or you didn't do your homework or something? No, not at all. You know, that is self love. That is that self trust.



### Christina Smith

Yeah, I really love that. Because I hear a lot of people calling emotions, negative negative emotions. And I'm just like, that triggers me so much, because I'm like, There's no negative emotions, they're all valid, like all of the emotions, or else we wouldn't have them. The only difference is, is we've been taught how to be happy, right, or how we should be happy. But we haven't been taught how to manage the shame, the fear, the anger, the all these things that we're afraid of, we're not afraid. Like, if we really look at them, what I learned is, I'm not afraid of the emotion, I'm afraid of the way I react from that motion. But if I don't look at that emotion and go, Wow, okay, Christina, I might have to be a little kinder to myself today, I might have to slow down a little bit today, because I'm feeling X, Y, or Z. And so that's feeling really distracting to me. So I can sit with it. Like you said, I love that you like sat for 10 minutes, because I think for a long time, I thought if I started crying, I've never stopped. And so I held on to it and held on to it. And I gotta tell you, like, you can only cry for like 15 or 30 minutes at a time really like really blatantly crying like your body exhausts of it, but that's good, because there's like cortisol that's coming out. There's all kinds of like, itchy hormones that are processing themselves as we're having the emotion. So it's really about teaching our selves, how to have that emotion, I love that you're having this model for your kids, because they don't have to be scared of anger, when it comes, they just have to be like, I'm gone, I feel the anger. Let me not react from this in a good way, or in a way that is tempered. Right. And so we don't have to be afraid of these emotions anymore. They're not negative. They're just uncomfortable, because nobody taught us how to manage them.



### Michelle Vasquez 27:22

Exactly, or that they are okay to have. You know, it's I was I was raised to, like, I'm supposed to be happy. And why are you sad? Like, seriously, you know, and I remember this facial expressions from adults are like, Okay, why are you sad? You know, and now I can I can tell my son, oh, you're feeling sad, you should cry, you should do this, you should do that and meditate. Not as you should. And rules because I know better. But it right. And I preface it with

like, you're the only one that really knows how you're feeling. You know, I can tell you, this is what it looks like, to me as my opinion. And a doctor and experts can come and tell you like, oh, yeah, this is what, you know what you're going through. But you're the one in your body. And if you don't learn to build that self trust of like, oh, I have this, I feel this way. You know, why are we expecting other people to come and tell me? Yeah, you're, you know, a neuroscientist, and there's a, you know, something wrong with the nerves or whatever it is. But how does that feel to you, you know, and just really start bringing it into, like, I'm going to build self trust with myself, instead of feeling the shame. Because I'm depressed. I'm going to just allow the depression to be there. And I'm going to, you know, trust that I will set a timer or I will, you know, reach out to someone and say, like, Hey, can you call me 10 minutes, I'm, and give yourself that if that's what you need. But trust that you will come out of that hole, because just like you mentioned, I remember telling one of my coaches, it's like, I'm afraid to feel sad, because I feel like I'm never going to come out of that hole. And she, she said, Well, do you want to be in that hole, and I'm there with you right now. And we are going to come out of it together. And we had like an hour session of just me processing all of that. And, you know, there's, there's regret or there's the sadness of the kids growing up or whatever it is, right. And I don't even remember what that was about. But it was, I'm sure it was a combination of a lot of things. And that moment after that call. I remember feeling like there is no emotion that I cannot feel and think that I'm gonna die because I thought I was gonna die back then. After that, it's like, I'm still here. Whatever it comes. I'm still here.



Christina Smith

Yeah, because emotions are so scary when we do or know how to manage them that we started looking at, as if they're like, really unsafe. Right. And this is a question I always ask my clients, is this unsafe or uncomfortable? Now our reactions to emotions might be unsafe. But the actual emotion itself is not unsafe. It's just really uncomfortable.



Michelle Vasquez 30:20

Yeah, but imagine if someone's angry, right? Like I was watching that show beef on Netflix, everyone's talking, everyone's talking about it and thinking, like, if you learn to handle your anger, and you take a split second to say, how do I want to react, you can just, you know, step on the brake, and move on. But when you let that emotion take over, you start honking, you start doing other stuff, right? So I think it's so important to know what self trust is, why it's important, but also to understand to know how to build it. Because, you know, we're, we're telling our people, right, we're telling this amazing human beings, like, let the emotions be there. You know, self trust is important. And it all starts with self awareness, you know, understanding our values, our beliefs, our decision, our decision making process, builds our trust. Why did we make this decision? Because that's what I was taught. And that's okay. Right? Because your parents are the people that raised you are not perfect. So they taught you the best way they could. But now you



Christina Smith

get to work for them. Right? And they just might not work today for us. And that's what we have to keep in mind. I mean, my mother thought that college would be the end all be all, if I just went to college, my life would be great if I could graduate from there, because I'd be the



first one in my family. So surely, that would just automatically make my life better. Well, in her day, you know, it probably did, but today to have a college degree. It's sketchy.

M

Michelle Vasquez 32:07

It's still great. But there's, you know, it gives you advantages, but it's not the end. All.



Christina Smith

Right, right. But it wasn't her day, like you definitely got hired yet a bachelor's degree in the 70s 1000s. Not so much. Like, I mean, it helps but like you said, but that's what I just I just mean to go into that, because like your parents, the knowledge that she had at the time was this would make it better, right? Yeah. And so just because that's the knowledge that she had doesn't mean that that also works for me.

M

Michelle Vasquez 32:39

Exactly, exactly. And that's where your self trust begins, right? Having that self awareness, how does that feel? Kind of like, if I give you my shirt, and I say, oh, my gosh, try it on. It's may not fit. It may you may not like it, period. Right? So it's just being aware of like, what do you who you are, you know, starts with like, just again, that self awareness, right. The other thing, I think it's important, it's like for us to build our self trust, is to set boundaries, you know, prioritize what, you know, our own needs, our own, respecting who we are, how we feel. Like, you know, one of my sons had a period that he didn't like hugs, and I'm like, Oh, my gosh, I'm so devastated. You know, because he was very loving and snuggly. And then I thought, but that is boundary. And now I get to I raise this human to have his own brain. And now that's his boundary, how do I want to react to that. And, you know, seeing it as this is him, and this is his experience, and this is what he chooses, I can honor that. He's raising his self awareness. It's a win win, you know, because as parents, that's what we want. Also treating ourselves with kindness and compassion. It's so huge, the more that I can love myself and have compassion for how I'm feeling, the more awareness I have the more self trust that I can build. So that is, you know, that's really important. Also, when we're building when we follow up through commitments, like if we are committing to let him and I go on a five minute walk every day. That's a commitment that I'm making to myself. You know, and we are so quick to say, if my son if my husband and my boss wants this, and I'm definitely going to do in that we're like, Oh, we're so tired. We're not going to do whatever we decided to do for ourselves. So it's if you want to if you're following through for other people, start by following through with yourself.



Christina Smith

I love that because that's something I think I can still struggle with sometimes cuz I mean, it's a little better now that we don't have any kids in the house. But I can definitely, if a friend needs something or you know, somebody just asked me, I'm like, Oh yeah, I don't really need that hour to myself or that paint night for myself or whatever time I need for me. And it can easily fall off. So I love that piece and saying committed. That's beautiful. Yeah.

M

Michelle Vasquez 35:25

Thank you. And yeah, because we really show ourselves that we can be trusted, not for others, right? Because this is all about self awareness, and the commitment you have with yourself, which is where it starts. Um, the other thing, like I mentioned, it's like, we are so taught that feeling is not good. When we get the F's and the papers that back in school, oh, my gosh, it was so embarrassing, or, or maybe you weren't embarrassed, you know, whatever the case may have been, it was always front upon. It's like, why did you get an app? An F was never celebrated. You know, and this brings me to a really good point that I heard a while ago. And it's like, we always encourage, oh, you're doing great in math. Okay, let's get you a tutor. You know, let's get you more proficient in what you're already good at, instead of saying, like, if you're getting a fail, okay, I'm sorry, the other way. Right, right. Yeah, you know, if we're getting a fail, oh my gosh, that's where you need support. That's where you need to do more practice and do more work. And, you know, like, really bring you up to speed. Instead of getting someone like, let's say, you're getting an I love science, let's say I was getting an A plus in science, you know, why not get a tutor for science, that can help me excel in that field that I'm already good at, you know, but instead, we're trying to compensate what we're not good at. So we can be good across the board. And this is just an example of, you know, I was so blessed to have people and my mom was very aware of like, my schooling and very supportive and never felt forced to do good, but always wanted to for me. So that was good. But um, you know, I think it's so important that we learn from those mistakes. What am I good at? What am I? What are my weaknesses? What are my strengths? And that's an exercise that I do with my clients. Because we all want to, you know, there's this negative two weaknesses. But if I'm not good at this, if you let's say running, right, let's say you have weak knee, why are you going to take on the running? Maybe there's something else you can do? Let's figure out what that other thing is, instead of pushing your body, there's a difference between pushing it to be uncomfortable thing.



Christina Smith

Yeah, exactly. is like, and I love this point, because I say it so much to my clients like it, we put so much focus on our weaknesses and our failures and where we could do better instead of like, why don't we focus on our gifts and strengths? Because when we do that, a lot of those gifts and strengths can overtake like, maybe with a running with my weak knee, what I was wanting was health. Well, there's a million ways am I gifts and strengths. If I like dancing, or skiing, or, you know, walking or yoga, like there's a million other ways I can get to the goal that doesn't risk my body or doesn't make me feel like I'm white knuckling. There's nothing worse to me than like, trying to start a new habit and like, feel like I'm white knuckling my way all the way through it. So and what we focus on grows, so I always say strengthen your gifts and your strengths, because those are more fun, right?

M

Michelle Vasquez 38:46

Yeah, yeah. Strengthen your gifts. I love that. I think it's, but again, we're so afraid of failure. Right? That, you know, we should be okay. We should be good throughout, you know, across the board. So let's not celebrate what we're good at. Let's just keep making the other things better. So



Christina Smith

I've been taking notes. If you think I've been ignoring you, I haven't I've just been taking notes.



Michelle Vasquez 39:12

Good. Um, you know, it's the other point, it's that I want to just kind of touch on it's like the obstacles why? Why don't we do? Why don't we build ourselves trust, but also like, what are the obstacles? Because if we, you know, I remember the moment that I said, Yeah, my, my own marriage is, is just not working out. And it was a long marriage. And there was this fear of what are his family going to say? What are my family going to say? I was in first divorced and our family, both of our families, and being from a Latina background, there's this like, you marry, you know, in my time, you marry forever, you know, so There was this fear of like, we're not arriving. But I don't want to leave. Because what are people gonna say? Because my kids are young because of



Christina Smith

all of this, all of these conflicts are exactly that.



Michelle Vasquez 40:12

Right, right, that we have been raised with. But fear is just going to hold you back. You know, it's going to have you resent not only yourself, but the people around you. Now, you're blaming everybody, you know, but it's because you are afraid of having a conversation of making a decision, or like they say, look, staring the pot, you know, everything is fine. Why are you gonna go look for trouble, you know, you don't have to look for trouble. And that's one of the things that I love about like, with my clients, it's like, Let's fall in love with your, with your life so deeply, that if you want to leave, you can leave so happily. And if you want to stay, then that's great, right, whichever way you want to go. But don't leave don't take actions just because you're not happy. You know? Right? Um, yeah, I think the other bigger, big obstacle that I see, it's like perfectionism, you know, there. We don't trust ourselves. Because we think we should be doing it a certain way. Going back to school, right? We think we should be getting that A. And if I'm not getting that a must mean that I'm not as smart. It must mean something. If I don't get that promotion or that raise, it must mean that I'm not valuable. You could be valuable. But maybe you're thinking that you need to be perfect in order to do this. And maybe you're not applying for that promotion, maybe you're not saying hey, I want to raise, I deserve a raise. That's self trust. You know, when I can go and say, Okay, this is what I'm getting. I don't think it's fair or I don't, I know that I'm bringing more value, when you can have those conversations, knowing that you may not do everything perfect, but you're doing a really good job. That's your self trust.



Christina Smith

And knowing that Perfection isn't even required or possible, really, perfection is such a moving target. Every time I think I'm doing something perfect, my brain can figure out even more

target. Every time I think I'm doing something perfect, my brain can figure out even more details for how it needs to go even better. You know what I mean? The next time. So perfection is really a fear response, like I'm afraid that people won't love and want to connect with me if they find out. Or if I rock the boat or stir the pot or whatever, right? That suddenly I'm going to be unlovable, or unacceptable in some way. So it's really us like chasing that external validation. And it's like a weird projected external validation, right? Because it's what we think other people might judge us for, right? And so it's a weird thing, because it turns out, we're just judging ourselves when it comes to perfectionism.

M

Michelle Vasquez 43:10

Exactly. Exactly. You know, impostor syndrome, it's another big obstacle that I see with some of my clients. And if you're not familiar with the term, it's just feeling like you're a fraud. You know, despite all the good things that you've done, that you've achieved, it's like your there's still this feeling of like, oh, you know, I must, it must be look, it must be, you know, first timer luck, or, you know, however, that saying goes, I forgot him, I know. But it's, it must be something outside of me. And that landed me this job, or this client, or this business, or whatever it is. We need instead of internalizing it, and then saying like, yeah, that's because I'm really good. Now we're thinking that good, they're gonna catch me, you know, it's, this happened this one time, but it may not happen again. So. And, you know, the last one that, that I would say is, what are the biggest obstacles that I see, it's this negative self talk, you know, our inner critic. It's, of course, it's there all the time. And we have been socialized or trained to listen to that inner critic as our guide as our intuition. But, you know, this is all the brain this is all the brain trying to keep us safe. As my coach says, right, the primitive brain with the prefrontal cortex, the one that makes decisions, when you have that inner critic, that's your primitive brain, the one that's keeping you safe, keeping you comfortable. Keeping you scared because it wants to protect you.



Christina Smith

Yeah, small. Yeah, like it's a loving auntie. I have a visualization Where she's like a loving auntie. She's screaming from her cottage. Hey, Christina, come listen to this. You can't do that. You can't do that. Right. But she really loves me. I mean, that's the part of our brain that like, our brain is trying to keep us safe. This is actually quite a good feature we have right, but we overtake it right? We confuse what's safe with what's uncomfortable again. Yeah. And so I always imagine she's just this loving woman. And so I let her say everything she has to say just once. And then I get to pick what is true or important out of this. And what isn't right, like, because she might be saying some really important thing. Like, yeah, if you leave a pot holder on the stove, it's gonna start a fire. Like that's important. That's good to know.

M

Michelle Vasquez 45:44

On the road.



Christina Smith

Yeah, that's boring things. But like, a lot of that other garbage that we just we start pulling up

like, Oh, and remember in eighth grade, when you messed up that one thing? You know what I mean? Yeah, the stories are coming up. That's too much. That's when she's, you know, she's gone a little crazy and a little bit into her craziness. And we can go Yeah, see, I get it. Yeah, have some tea fall asleep? Right. What I think is important,

 Michelle Vasquez 46:12

right? Come with me. And then you know, but you're not driving, you're not leading. You're just That's

 Christina Smith

right. We're just listening. I'm here. I'm here to hear your wisdom. And I can choose what is actually what is actually useful out of that wisdom.

 Michelle Vasquez 46:27

Exactly. Exactly. And so, you know, when you get that inner critic, when you get that impostor syndrome thoughts, you can start reframing all of that negative self talk. And, you know, just think, Okay, those are untrue. are they true? Are they helpful? If they are unhelpful, maybe I want to focus on my strengths, maybe I want to focus on what I've accomplished. And this might be where you want to seek out support and people around you to say, like, this is what I want to achieve. But that is another whole segment, because you don't want to base your decision on someone's opinion. You know, this is where you, maybe you partner with someone, hey, if you hear me talk negative to myself, and you call me out, can you pinch me whatever you want to do, right? But something to bring more awareness to what you're saying and thinking.

 Christina Smith

More like tuning into your own inner wisdom. And I think sometimes we confuse our inner critic with our inner wisdom, two completely different thing.

 Michelle Vasquez 47:34

They're separate entities

 Christina Smith

are separate aunties for sure they have completely different perspectives on life, and what's important. So just knowing that that inner critic is not doesn't have to direct us just like these uncomfortable emotions. They don't have to direct us. They're just messengers. They're saying, Hey, you're doing something that's outside of your norm. And it's scaring me. Yeah. Okay. I mean, as we can imagine any older Auntie like, they would wrap you in bubble wrap, right

before they say, wow. And so it's not them saying don't do this. They're just like really scared for us going, Ah, this is a little risky. And so we get to assess the risks on our own is what you're saying and be able to say like, is this actually risky? Or is this just my fear coming, knocking? And then that's when Auntie inner wisdom comes? And she says, Okay, here's what's what? Yes, yes.



Michelle Vasquez 48:33

And the big thing is like, when you are going through this process, and you are wanting to take risks, do it when it's safe for you. And this is, this is something that I think that coaching industry has us believing, like, oh, just take a risk and just put yourself out there. And sometimes we have to believe our self trust, but also our safety, I want to feel safe. You know, as I put myself out there, I am building this muscle because that's what it is. I'm building this muscle of safety as I grow as I build this self awareness. And, you know, if you're, if you're being influenced to like, oh, just grow and you know, white knuckle it, just think to yourself, Does that feel safe to me? And if it doesn't, you be your own wisdom and decide, well, how can I bring it down a notch that feels safe to my body? Because, you know, uncertainty, fear, doubt, all of that are part of it. But they don't have to dominate you. So when we check in with like, does it feel safe? We can say yeah, I feel the fear of being uncomfortable. But I can also feel I know that I've done okay with this, you know, so just checking in with yourself as to what feels safe for you.



Christina Smith

Building that self trust. Right, exactly.



Michelle Vasquez 49:59

Exactly. So, you know, again, just to get to summarize it a little bit, it's like, you want to be able to self trust as early as you can, as much as you can. Again, it's a muscle. And it's essential for you to start making better decisions or different decisions, you know, increasing your competence, it helps you reduce your stress, reduce your anxiety. But as you're doing this, you want to stay more present in your body, you know, have more self awareness, set boundaries, practice your self compassion, honoring your commitments, you know, everything that we've talked about, and knowing that mistakes are going to happen along the way. And we want to know that they're coming, but we want to stay aware, too, like, what can I learn from this mistake? You know, go dating? Yeah, okay. I don't like going this late at night. That's a learning, you know, opportunity. Now, I'm not gonna go with this guide to this area, or whatever, you know, so I get clients from every walk of life. So wherever you are in your journey, just just think, like, what do I need to learn? What mistakes can I learn from? And if it doesn't help you move on? We don't need that self critic just say they're pressing keep going



Christina Smith

on and on and on about it. Right? So we like drag a dead horse within our own brain. Like, again, I can remember Oh, in seventh grade, you did that one thing. And it's like, Christina, that was seventh grade. Let it go. It's been over there. I have little summary notes that I was

was seventh grade. Let it go. It's been over there. I have little summary notes that I was making as we were going because I really loved the pieces about how do we build trust, self trust. And so some of the ones that I picked up that you were talking about, just to summarize, for our audience? Was that first piece about awareness, like really starting to get self aware, like what is important to me? What does make me tick? What makes what do I desire? What do I who am I right, that awareness piece? I love the part about boundaries, too, because I don't think it's just boundaries with other people. I think this like you gave some good examples of like how its boundaries with ourselves, right? Like, I say, I'm going to spend an hour by myself or doing something for myself, then I'm not going to let other people's urgencies or whatever, take over that hour without at least Nico renegotiating it with myself, right? Because if it was a friend, and I had to renegotiate, I would do that. But for some reason, we just take it right off our calendar and go and it wasn't that important. So her this kindness and compassion part, which I think is essential, like, especially when it comes to managing emotions, there's just some days, I'm not gonna get as much done as I'm gonna get done on other days, because I'm having PMS I have, you know, I'm sick, I might be physically something going on with me. And so I can just say, Okay, this is this is going to be one of those days, Christina, we're gonna have a little patience. And be kind to ourselves. Yes. This is what happens to human being. Right? Yes. Yes. I love that. Yeah. And then there was the commitment piece about staying committed to ourselves, not worrying about failure as much right? Like, I just think I when it comes to especially imposter syndrome, it's like, that would be saying that kids are adult imposters, right? I mean, that's what impostor syndrome really is, is like I'm learning something new. And so because I'm learning something new I audit, like, for some reason, I don't give myself credit for that, right? Like we we only get credit one way or the Pro for some reason. But we need a lot of credit on the way there because there are some failures, nobody becomes a master without having failed sometimes. Right? Exactly, exactly. Love that part about focusing on our gifts too. So those are some ways that we can start looking at building our own self trust is what I heard.

 Michelle Vasquez 54:14

You, yeah. Surround yourself with supportive people.

 Christina Smith

That's always helpful, right? Get yourself. Ask for help when you need it. I mean, we could probably go on and on and on. Yes, yes. Because they're, they're not the normal ones that you hear. And like, I always think it's like, Coach talk, you know, there's a certain level of coach talk where it's like, mind numbing to hear it anymore. It's like yeah, so you got to do all of these things and be happy and, and it's like, but I love the tips that you gave us are really like solid, like, this is where you start. We can't start self trust until we know who we are, and what's important to us, right and knowing that we're falling back on those and aligning with them, which is um And the key, you know, once we know all that stuff, how do we craft our path so that it's getting us there in the way that we want to get there?

 Michelle Vasquez 55:08

Exactly, exactly. And for your audience, I've created a self trust workbook. So it's getting to have, you know, a quiz that you can take. So you know, how much you trust yourself, it's good to have a checklist or maybe like a worksheet that you can just check in with yourself and your

to have a checklist, or maybe like a week that you can just check in with yourself and, you know, see what you want to do and, and things like that it's going to, so it's going to have some good information there that they can just kind of walk through as they grow. And this isn't something for you that to learn in a week, in a day in an hour. So just choose one thing that you want to focus on choose one thing that, that you think it's going to help you, you know, today, and maybe tomorrow, it'll be different, maybe next week, it'll be different. So you are checking in with yourself and believing that there are five pages. Okay, I'm gonna start with four, because that's where I am today. So I think that's so important for



Christina Smith

every self trust, right? Exactly. In relationship with yourself, right? So we're starting this relationship with ourselves, which I think is so so important. Now. I really like me now. And I don't know that I would have said that 10 years ago, but like, now that I've done a lot of the work of developing that relationship with myself. I actually like me, like, I like my company, probably better than anybody else.



Michelle Vasquez 56:39

And that makes sense. So,



Christina Smith

or show up. It's just like, this is actually how I feel about myself. I can be with people or I can be alone. And I'm perfectly happy. Like, because I trust myself. Yeah. So it is possible, especially in midlife. I think it's a perfect time to be looking at this stuff, if you haven't already. So thank you so much. The link to that, to that piece is below so y'all can go click on that and get this free gift that Michelle is offering you. And I just want to thank you one more time, Michelle, so much for being here. And having this conversation. I know that we could talk for weeks about this down to some really good points that we could be putting into place and things to be looking at where we're lacking this relationship with ourselves.



Michelle Vasquez 57:28

Absolutely. Is the only one that's guaranteed for life. Thank you, Christina again for having me and for everybody. I you know, I can't wait to hear what amazing things come out of this summit.



Christina Smith

Yes, thank you, audience for joining us.