

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

[Jen Riday](#)

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast, episode number 242. We're talking about being bold and putting yourself out there. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women Podcast.

Hey my friends, Jen here and welcome back to Vibrant Happy Women. I am talking with a friend, Kaley Chu, in this episode. And this was recorded quite a long time ago, pre Covid. And I was waiting for just the right episode to release it. And I thought lately I've been hearing people talking about friendship and the lack of in person interaction, the lack of fun like we used to have. And I thought I should release that episode because this is really cool, a really cool story of Kaley taking the initiative to make new friends, doing something way out of her comfort zone.

Now, you might not be able to do the exact same thing she did, having a lunch with a new friend every day, but what if you could virtually? What if there's something out of your comfort zone that you can do once a day that will help you feel bold, and amazing, and connected, and loving, and all the good things you get from social interaction? I want you to think about that, apply that lens as you listen. And keep the thought in the back of your mind. How can I apply what Kaley is talking about in this episode so that I can get out of my comfort zone and do something bold and brave for me?

So that is my challenge to you as we listen and let's go ahead and jump in.

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Jen: Over the course of a year, Kaley Chu turned lunch into a life changing experience. Kaley is the author of 100 Lunches with Strangers. Her inspirational story and lessons from those 100 lunches inspire people to get out of their comfort zone, unleash their potential and change their destiny. She is an author, speaker, people connector, business development manager. And she's happily married with two little boys and she resides in Australia. Welcome to Vibrant Happy Women, Kaley.

Kaley: Hello. Hi Jen, lovely to talk to you today.

Jen: I'm excited. So today is morning for you and evening for me, that's the fun of the time difference. But good evening, good morning. Let's start off with your favorite quote and we'll talk about 100 Lunches with Strangers.

Kaley: Okay. My favorite quote is actually from Tony Robbins, 'Change your expectation to appreciation and your life will change in a second.'

Jen: Yeah. How have you applied that one in your life and seen a difference?

Kaley: I just love that, the moment I heard that quote for the very first time, it just hit me because I had a high expectation on people. I had that bad habit of I expect people to treat me well. I expect people to do things. I expect this. I expect that. And that just upsets me because life doesn't always give you what you want. And when I started to look at things differently and appreciate all the little things that come to me, I just become a lot more happier.

Jen: For sure. That's great advice. That sounds especially tricky to do in relationships. But is that true for you or have you found it not so bad?

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Kaley: Well, we're actually getting much better. Ever since my 100 Lunches with Strangers, Jenny, strangely enough, because that's something we completely not expected, the relationship between me and my husband actually got a lot better.

Jen: Really? Tell us more about why that is.

Kaley: I guess because I met my husband when I was really, really young in high school. So we've been together forever really, for 16 years. So we've been a little bit bored, I don't want to say he's a boring man. But after being together 16 years, there's not much spark going on. But when I started the journey of having lunches with strangers, I guess there's just a lot more new topics coming in. I met this person today and he did this and that, and she got some award, and just more interesting topics to talk about. And I think I cover it in my first chapter in my book actually.

The first thing that I changed from having lunch with strangers is I started to have a much more interesting life because people ask me questions about my hobby, what I like to do. And I feel like it's really hard to answer those questions when I've done nothing interesting to share. And also I have more interesting conversation. I actually push myself to do more interesting things.

For example, I don't know if it's embarrassing, it is kind of embarrassing that I joined the adult swimming beginner class, next to a whole bunch of little young kids because I couldn't swim until last year. So I pushed myself to do that and I did skydiving. I even did standup comedy a few weeks ago.

Jen: That's crazy. Wow. Let's back up, before you did 100 Lunches with Strangers what were you doing with your life? I noticed you have two little boys, what was happening before this experience with the book?

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Kaley: I have a good life, don't get me wrong, life was okay, but a little bit – I don't know how to describe that. Okay, so let's go back a little bit. So I was born in Hong Kong and finished high school in Hong Kong and came to Australia for education. I came here for uni and I stayed here since. For the first 12 years that I've been in Australia they will tease at me, they'll go, "You're not really in Australia, you're in Hong Kong, Australia," which is kind of true because I only hang out with people from Hong Kong. I only hang out with immigrant moms from Hong Kong.

And there is a funny photo that I show to lots of my friends, and when I do my speeches. I've got a photo of my son's first birthday and there are five moms, five dads, they're all Asian looking because they're all from Hong Kong, and 10 boys, because we all have two sons each. And I didn't realize just how small my comfort zone was. I want to hang out with people that's almost identical to myself, that's when you get most comfortable, which is okay, nothing wrong with that like I said.

But as I start the journey and meet more people I realized that life is a lot more interesting. And I was living in such a small world and didn't know much about what's happening in the world. But now I feel like the world has become much bigger and just a lot more interesting.

Jen: Yeah, that makes sense. No wonder you had nothing to talk about, everyone had two boys and they were the same ages and that's funny.

Kaley: Yeah, or almost identical. I usually talk about the [inaudible] or you know what moms talk about.

Jen: Yeah. Well, so you're in this world of motherhood in Australia, hanging out with your friends who also have kids. What inspired you to get out of that small world bubble and expand? Where did that come from?

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Kaley: Actually there were a few things. The first thing is I was really shy, whenever I was out of my little social circle with Hong Kong moms I couldn't talk to people. And because of that I realized that my kids were shy as well because mom's not setting a good example. I'm not talking to other moms so they're not playing with other kids. That's one thing that I found.

But really the breaking point for me was after my second maternity leave I got a new job as a business development manager, which I'm working in at the moment. I was in the boardroom with the clients for my very first client meeting, that I want to impress my boss and with my boss sitting next to me. And two hours, for the whole entire meeting I didn't say a single word. And my clients asked me a question. I don't even remember what question that was because it's a year and a half ago, almost two years now ago.

And all I said was, "Err." And that was it. I didn't say anything else other than the, "Err," for two hours. If I didn't know the answer, that's the problem, if I didn't know the answer that was okay. But I had the answer in my head but I just didn't have the courage to say it out loud, which is so wrong. Not wrong, but I was really beating myself up, because that's just embarrassing and frustrating. What's wrong with me? I've been in Australia for 12 years at that time and I still couldn't talk to anyone that's non-Asian, and that sounds ridiculous.

And that's how I started my 100 Lunches journey. And I thought if I had 100 lunches with strangers, and I should be able to talk to people and that's what I thought.

Jen: So did the idea just pop in your head, oh my gosh, I need to fix this, I'm going to lose my job, my boss was unimpressed, I'll just go eat lunch with 100 strangers, this just came to you?

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Kaley: Almost like that, because after that meeting I sat down with my boss and go, “We have to do something.” And not long before that meeting I got some random invitation from LinkedIn and people asked me out for coffee. And I thought that’s actually a lot easier to talk to people over a coffee, something to drink and just a lot more relaxed environment. But instead of having coffee all the time I thought I’m going to have lunch anyway. So maybe I just have lunch with people and see what happens.

But what happened was it changed my whole life from a different aspect altogether, instead of just opening – I can’t stop talking to anyone now, that’s the problem.

Jen: That’s so cool. Well, tell us about the first lunch, who invited who? And how did you feel?

Kaley: My first lunch was kind of a disaster, I guess. In fact I tried to invite my first lunch guest to my book launch three months ago. And he completely ignored my message. So I thought that’s a good indicator of how good that lunch went.

Jen: Oh no.

Kaley: I was really shy. It wasn’t an exaggeration that I was really, really bad. People asked me questions and I’d just give them one word reply, which is kind of, you know, yes. I feel sorry for that guy actually. He’s a really nice guy, don’t get me wrong. He’s an Italian background businessman, he’s really, really nice. And he tried to engage me with conversation but I just couldn’t talk much, and I don’t know what to talk and what to say and it was just awkward.

And to make things 10 times worse – not 10 times worse, but a lot worse, I was, I think, a low carb diet at that time and it was chicken wings. And that

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

wasn't a good idea. So I was trying to be nice and have my table manners. And I was trying to eat the chicken wings with a knife and a fork.

Jen: That's so funny.

Kaley: And of course that didn't go well and I felt that's ridiculous. But you know what, I'm so glad that I did, I was determined to change and I persist, otherwise we wouldn't be talking about that now.

Jen: Yeah. Well, tell us more how you changed. That's so amazing you had the courage, oh my gosh, I love this.

Kaley: Every single way imaginable, from how I look at myself, how I look at the world, communication skills. That's one important thing, and how I connect with people. And my whole life changed. My kids become more confident, my husband become more confident. We go out and do more fun things together. From someone who couldn't talk to one person just last year to now I'm doing public speaking, sharing my story, trying to encourage people to get out of their comfort zone. And like I said earlier, I did standup comedy before. That's a massive change I think.

Jen: That is incredible, I can't imagine going from a dinner where you said one word replies to his questions to standup comedy. It's the total opposite ends of the spectrum. That's crazy.

Kaley: The beauty is it didn't take long; it was one lunch at a time. Yeah, and then I start to do MC gigs, reading off a script and I start to do public speaking and just yeah, a little bit, a little bit, and a little bit. And I just become a different person altogether after a year.

Jen: Yeah, public speaking and you said MC gigs and ooh. Well, let's say if there's someone listening that wants to expand their comfort zone in a

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

similar way, but maybe slightly different. What advice would you have? What other similar stories have you heard along these lines of what you did?

Kaley: So many, so many stories. We just have to – I am sure most people heard of that expression, magic happens outside of your comfort zone. And I think it's really true, because – how do I explain that? As we expand our comfort zone we do a lot more things that excites us. And all the things that I've done, for example, having lunch with strangers, at the beginning it was terrifying. But after maybe two or three lunches it becomes uncomfortable but I wasn't terrified anymore.

And after that I become comfortable about it and then I start to feel, like enjoyable, and I love to have lunch with strangers. And at the moment this is something that I look forward to every single day, and the best time for the day is to listen to other people's story. And that's the same for most things that I've done. For example, public speaking, the first time I did public speaking it was absolutely terrifying. I refused to go on the stage and someone had to physically push me on the stage to do it.

And then after a few times I'd feel uncomfortable but I got that up, and then I start to feel comfortable about it and now I just absolutely enjoy doing speaking and talk to people, so yeah.

Jen: That's amazing. Are you still having lunch with strangers every day?

Kaley: Absolutely, I haven't stopped, and I have no plans to stop. I think I've got almost 200 now and absolutely enjoy it, meeting new people and seeing what can happen next.

Jen: Okay. So you're really brave now, I can hear it in your voice. What is your next way to get out of your comfort zone? Because you've already

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

done so many things, I mean standup comedy that is big. So how do you keep expanding from here?

Kaley: Actually a very good question. If anyone listening has got an idea to get off my comfort zone I am up for it. That isn't a problem because if your comfort zone expands it feels like nothing scares me anymore. That's an exaggeration. Sometimes I still find myself a little bit uncomfortable. But I'm just up for challenges, yeah, whatever. I set myself a really, really big goal that excites me a lot and make me jump out bed every morning and work really hard for is that I set myself – I want to help one million people to restore their eyesight.

Jen: Oh, neat, that's a great goal. So what are you going to do to accomplish that?

Kaley: At the moment I am partnering with a charity, so I'm not going to physically do the surgery and help them to restore their sight. But I'm partnered with a charity who does send doctors there to go to the poorest country and the poorest region and help to perform the surgeries on people.

And the beauty is the cost of one lunch in 12 minutes for cataract surgery, that can give people the gift of sight and the gift of hope, permanently change their life. That's something that I'm really passionate about, and telling people, "Hey, you know what, you can change someone's life."

Jen: So you're making a difference?

Kaley: Trying to.

Jen: Yeah, that's amazing. So let's think of that person that's getting inspired by your story now. She wants to get out of her comfort zone,

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

maybe she's a stay at home mom like you were. And she's thought of that thing she might like to do and she's scared out of her mind. What's step one?

Kaley: Okay, step one is find out what you're going to do, I think. There are plenty of ways to get out of the comfort zone. She can follow my path and just send out a whole bunch of invitations on LinkedIn, invite people out for lunch which was a great way. Because other than get out of comfort zone you make amazing connections with people. And it's amazing. But at the same time there are so many other ways. She can join a charity, she can volunteer or she can just sign up for a hobby and meet people there.

And then that's just a better way to do it and picture the end result, yeah, it's worth doing.

Jen: I love that, you start with the end in mind, you find the end result and then you figure out the steps after that. You had the motivation to do it because you knew you wanted to be confident. So you had the vision first and then you took the action, sounds like.

Kaley: Yes, that's true. And another purpose of my life – well, not one main purpose of my life is to be a role model for my sons. And I want them to look at me and go, "I'm proud of my mom, she did this, she did that. And I want to follow her or I want to do something. Because if my mom can do this, if my mom can push out of her comfort zone and take charge of her life and change her destiny, I can do that too when I've got some problem when I'm older," or whatever. Just have that picture of my sons in my head. That really gives me a lot of motivation to do things and set an example for them.

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Jen: Yes, for sure. And so for those who haven't read your book yet, but they want to because it is really, really inspiring, what can they expect when they read the book?

Kaley: For the book, I didn't put in every single lunch in there because that's going to bore people and I don't want to put them to sleep reading my book, that's [inaudible]. I have condensed all the lessons that I have learned throughout the 100 lunches, Jenny, into 15 lessons. So 15 little chapters about what I've learned throughout the lunches. And I've got questions at the end and help them to reflect back to their life. So that I hope that it can help them to implement what I have learned through their life as well.

Yeah, and then after that I've got FAQ because lots of people ask me a whole bunch of questions all the time, so I have FAQ there. So people can read about it. And also a few testimonials or stories from the guest, from the guest perspective, what did they think about their lunches? And also I put on the step-by-step guidance on how I did it and a lot of tips on how they can do it if they want to follow the journey.

Jen: That's cool. And it sounds like a really great book for a book club to discuss how we can all get out of our comfort zones. It sounds amazing. Excellent.

Kaley: Thank you.

Jen: Let's talk a little more about some of your favorite things. So what is your personal favorite book, Kaley?

Kaley: My favorite book. I like the book called Sometimes you Win, Sometimes you Learn, because that's such a great idea that if you have that in mind then we'll never fail. You either learn or you win.

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Jen: Exactly. I love that. And your favorite happiness tool?

Kaley: Happiness tool. My kids, they just give me the biggest joy, just looking at them makes me happy, usually – usually, not a 100% of the time but usually.

Jen: Usually, yeah. Good. And your favorite easy meal?

Kaley: Hotdogs, does that count?

Jen: Totally, yeah, ice-cream, that's a great meal.

Kaley: Not too healthy.

Jen: Your favorite life hack or life tip for helping your life be easier?

Kaley: Can I say have lunch with strangers or meet more strangers?

Jen: Yeah. Meet more strangers, I love that.

Kaley: There's so many strangers, they really changed my life and inspire me so much. And I've learned so much from them. And a little bit of warning, it's addictive, so when you start you might not stop.

Jen: Yeah. I get to interview strangers for my podcast, and you and I have never met. I feel the same. But how much more powerful to meet with them in person, it's really inspiring what you've done, yeah.

Kaley: Yeah. And there are so much opportunities come out from people as well, from both business and personal perspective. I wouldn't be who I am today or given the opportunity to speak and become a speaker, like a

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

professional speaker without the help of strangers, which is something that I've completely never ever even imagined in my wildest dream.

Jen: So what's next for you on the horizon in terms of career? Do you think you'll keep working where you are or do you have career aspirations to be more of a speaker? What are the goals there?

Kaley: All of the above. I love my job. I love helping people achieve their financial goals, which is what I'm doing at the moment in a financial planning firm. But at the same time I really enjoy being a speaker and just motivating people to get out of their comfort zone because lots of people try that. And they love it as well because we only live once so make it count, live it to the fullest and try more new things, and also the blindness thing that I talked about as well, helping restore eyesight for people.

Jen: And making a difference with what you're doing. Yeah.

Kaley: Absolutely.

Jen: So what is your personal formula for being a vibrant happy woman?

Kaley: Good question. I think at the very beginning you asked me my favorite quote which is change your expectation to appreciation and everything in your life will change in an instant. I think this is so true because being grateful and appreciate all the little things. And when I go out and meet people or just whatever in general, I love to think about what I can give to people, or how to bring more love, or bring more joy and positive energy, and positive impact to people instead of thinking what I'm going to get.

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

And what I realized is that I actually get a lot more out of that. But I'm also a lot happier as well. So I like to keep asking myself, how can I appreciate this even more? Or how can I give even more?

Jen: So I'm curious, what do your mom friends, the ones you were hanging out with before all of this happened, what do they think of the new you?

Kaley: Most of them are really surprised because they've seen my transformation in such a short period of time. But it's great because I also inspire them and to get out of the comfort zone and try more new things. And we go out and do more fun things together, so it's good.

Jen: Good. And let's have a challenge from you to our listeners and we'll say goodbye.

Kaley: Challenge from me, what about you have – it doesn't have to be lunch, it can be coffee, can be breakfast, can be dinner or just a catch up. But meet three people that you've never met before and have a good conversation with them and see what happens in the next two weeks.

Jen: Okay. We have two weeks, okay, we can do it. We can do it, everybody.

Kaley: Yes. If anyone wants any help, send a message, I'm more than happy to catch up, otherwise LinkedIn is such a great platform to meet new people. You can even stalk them a little bit before you send out invitations, it's just awesome. And people there are pretty open to catch up anyway, so it's great to meet them. Or any other way really, like I said, hobby, or volunteer, or charity work or whatever, just go out and meet strangers and see what happens.

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

Jen: And if people want to follow you on social, LinkedIn, I know you're there. Where else are you on social media?

Kaley: Instagram, Facebook. I don't have a page, but I have my personal profile, more than welcome to @ me there and yeah, have a chat.

Jen: Okay. Everyone follow Kaley and get inspired on how to meet more strangers. I'll admit, I'm a little intimidated. This is out of my comfort zone. But I bet you're just laughing because you know that's a good thing.

Kaley: Yeah, we've got to laugh about things.

Jen: Yeah, you can laugh at me. I love it. I love it. Well, Kaley, this is beautiful. Everyone definitely get the book, 100 Lunches with Strangers. It's an awesome book for a book club and it will inspire you to get out of your comfort zone and really start living life more fully like Kaley was talking about. Thank you so much for being on the show, Kaley.

Kaley: Thank you so much for having me here today.

So what are you going to do to get out of your comfort zone, to put yourself out there, and stretch, and grow, and build a new talent, connect with new people even during the Covid pandemic? What is that thing for you? If you're not sure, I want to challenge you to go sit still and to meditate and think for a moment. And just ask yourself the question, how can I get out of my comfort zone? What can I do right now even during Covid?

Trying new things is really important for our psyche, overcoming fears is really important for our growth. And when we're growing and getting out of the box and trying new things we feel happier. So that's our challenge for

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

242: Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone with Kaley Chu

this month of November, this month of gratitude, and love, and connection that's coming up. And I want to hear all about what you're going to do. Send me an email at support@jenriday.com and let me know. Maybe I'll compile a list of ideas. That would be so much fun.

Thank you so much for listening. I'll be back again next week. Until then make it a vibrant, and happy, and brave, and out of the box week. Take care.

If you enjoy this podcast, you have to check out the Vibrant Happy Women Club. It's my monthly group coaching program where we take all this material to the next level and to get you the results that will blow your mind. Join me in the Vibrant Happy Women Club at jenriday.com/join.