

Ep 333: How to Live a Happy Life (with Salisia Valentine)



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With Your Host

Jen Riday

[Vibrant Happy Women](#) with Jen Riday

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You're listening to the *Vibrant Happy Women* podcast. I'm Dr. Jen Riday. And on this episode I'm talking to a friend about how to live a happy life and not just exist. 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 there my friends. I recently took a trip to Boston with my fifth child and second daughter, Jane. We have a tradition of going on a 12 year old trip and this was hers. She wanted to go to a cold climate or colder with an ocean. So naturally we got on Google Flights and found the cheapest flights to an ocean and we landed upon Boston. While we were there we went on a whale watching trip. And on that whale watching tour I met somebody and you get to be introduced to her today.

Now, before we dive into that story I want to talk to you a little bit about living your happiest life. This pandemic has left so many of us feeling like meh, what do we even want to do. We've spent a lot of time surviving and not thriving, or existing but not really living. So, I want to plant the seed before I talk with my guest, Salisia today, about what does it mean for you to live and not just exist, to live a happy life?

If you throw away all of the expectations, all of the shoulds, all of the things a mom should do, or a wife should do, or an employee should do, or that you should even wear a bra for example. Side note, I just went through a store the other day and tried this experiment. I can't tell you the number of women who looked at me with a frown like where's your bra? So anyway,

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my point is, I want you to plant the seed of thinking about the shoulds, what would happen if you threw them out and did exactly what you want?

I've been doing this experiment and it's getting juicy. I'm getting really excited and feeling very alive again. And as I step into the space of living my wild true, free, authentic life, I'm having more fun. I'm doing more interesting things. I'm having more adventures and I feel so good. And as I do those things I love those things are crowding out the things that were draining me, like the news, social media. I even removed streaming from my phone and you don't have to do that.

But I want to invite you to think about what would it look like and how would it feel for you to be fully alive again and not just existing, thriving but not just surviving, that is our intention for this episode. Now, before we dive in, I'm so excited about this topic that I'm going to be leading a group of women on a month of adventure in the month of August. A month of living, not just existing, a month of having more fun and adventure, living in the moment. What a perfect month, what a perfect opportunity to try this.

So, if you want to join us I'm going to tell you more about it. I have a workshop that explains all the details, you can sign up for that free workshop at jenriday.com/adventure, jenriday.com/adventure. Now, this is going to be amazing, I've already been experimenting. There are a tiny couple of things you need to buy to be able to have this adventure, one of them is a good backpack. This does not mean we're backpacking across Europe.

But you could if that's your version of adventure. But we need a few things in a bag that we can grab and go and be fully present in the moment. I'm going to lead you through those steps as well. It is amazing. So, if you want

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to join us, jenriday.com/adventure. I'll explain all the details and I hope you'll be with us.

Now, about our guest, Salisia Valentine, I met her, as I said, on a whale watching tour in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. We had just seen about 13 whales breaching and doing the things that whales do and it was amazing and beautiful. And there's something about being in nature with hundreds of people on a boat, I assume about a 100 people on a boat where you just feel the sense of connection. We just experienced whales together. So, I sat down at the front of the boat to watch the sunset as we drove back into the Boston Harbor from at least an hour and 15 minutes out into the ocean.

And we were all clicking pictures, watching the sun set and this person next to me struck up a conversation by calling me friend. She wanted to talk to me. And she did this with several people. I loved it. The rest is history. She's here on the podcast today. Salisia, is a woman who is living and not just existing. She is going after the fun and the adventure, and feeling wild, and free, and fierce, and that is what we all are craving. I know this, I've heard it from dozens and dozens of women. And let's go get this together. So, without further ado I bring you Salisia Valentine.

Jen: Hey my friends, I am here with a really cool person I met on a boat in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean on a whale watching tour. I was sitting there, we were going back from seeing a lot of whales. And I sat down at the front of the boat and this person next to me said, "How you doing friend?" And I'm like, whoa, she's friendly. And then I noticed she did this to a number of people, a man from Germany. And I thought, she's so cool.

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When she heard I had a podcast she was like, “That’s so cool.” And so here we are today, she’s here.

So Salisia Valentine, I’m so glad you’re here. I want to let you introduce yourself.

Salisia: Well, hello everybody. What an honor it is for me to be a part of this vibrant podcast by my friend here. I’m just honored to be among the journey. And so, my name is Salisia Valentine, just some hats that I wear. I’m currently a nurse practitioner. I actively practice in the state of Alabama. I’m also vice-president at American Family Care where I supervise all the NPs and PAs. I also help the CMO with the physicians as well. I’ve been in that role for nine years.

One of my biggest, biggest accomplishments is working alongside other leaders where we could change the mentality of being physician driven to provider driven. And what that means is there was a time where love my physicians but there was a time where physicians were number one and our profession was kind of seen second class. But now to be on the same playing field because we’re all here to see patients. That was a phenomenal change that we made.

And I’m also an advocate for our profession. I’m currently working with local organizations to hopefully get autonomous practice in the state of Alabama, the road is endless. There’s no limits.

Jen: Yes. Let me interrupt you. So, NP is nurse practitioner and PA is physicians assistant. I have to just give a plug here. I love seeing nurse practitioners and physicians assistants. I even had my last three kids at home with a nurse midwife and I just find them in general, no offense to

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doctors but in general the stereotype and my experience is much more compassionate.

They give you more time, I don't know how the training is different but I am so grateful for the work you do, making sure they are seen as equal to doctors and not just practicing below doctors. Because they have the same training, yeah.

Salisia: Right. And of course, there are some limitations and we recognize that it's just the fact of us knowing that we can all give the same care, the same excellent care to all of our patients is the goal. So yes, yes, yes, kudos to the NPs and PAs out there.

Jen: Yeah, that's awesome work that you do. But that aside you're an amazing person, you have such an energy. And you literally just see people. There are people on the planet, they're very rare but they just see everyone around them and not afraid to talk to them, and engage with them. And you have that gift, that light, where did that come from?

Salisia: I think it honestly came from my father being in the military and us moving around so much. And so, I had to kind of put myself out there to make friends because I knew in three to four years I was going to be moving again. And so, it is a great attribute to have because honestly I do talk to everybody. My husband can't stand it, he's like, "Don't make eye contact because she's going to carry on a full conversation." And I will because I love hearing people's stories.

I am that girl that loves to look at documentaries and learn more about people because I really feel like when you know the history of a person you can understand that person and you can help them be the best that they

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can be. So, I think that's where it came from is traveling so much at a young age.

Jen: That's cool. So, did someone model that for you or were you born with that?

Salisia: I really just think it's just a gift that I've been given. Really honestly at the end of the day I want to see everybody excel. I want to see everybody live their best life. I don't know. It does something to me when I see people existing and not living because there's so much life to have. I mean go ahead and skydive, go ahead and bungee jump, go ahead and take that trip that you would have never imagined that you would go on because there's so much life to live. There's so much world to see.

I'm honored to be in a position at my job where I can even help create jobs, majority of our department, I will say 90% of my department that I oversee were all created roles. We saw a need and then we saw an individual that we thought could be a great fit. And so that kind of helped us model what that job description would look like. And then I always tell them, "Look, we modeled this after you but I want you to take that next step. I'm going to be your biggest cheerleader. I want you to have your voice in the area that you want to work in. And I just want you to be great."

And so, I think it's just something in me. I just don't like to see people live below their potential.

Jen: So as an example, one of the people on the boat with us, she was with you. I gather that, well, her story is she had a certain position. She applied to a job and you helped her move way up the ranks really quickly, tell us about that.

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Salisia: Yeah. So, a lot of people just need to get their foot in the door. They just need an opportunity. And so, who you're talking about is my dear friend, Sarah, but she was actually working for an office at one of our clinics. And I just was drawn to her professionalism, of how she was handling certain situations. I saw her training other staff members. I saw her patience. I saw how organized she was. And this is just me visiting the clinic and I was like, oh my God, this is amazing. And so, we as a team as we were developing we knew that we would need more provider trainers.

And we did put the job out there but we really weren't getting the type of person that we thought we needed for the team. And instantly we thought about her. It was just a perfect fit. It was just amazing. So, we brought her in and that even provided more exposure of her and who she is. And so, she started out as part of the training team. And now she is one of our senior provider trainers. And she just hired someone under her. And so now she's in a leadership role of having people report to her.

So once again it's about seeing the greatness in people and pulling those things out. The potential is there, sometimes people just need it to be pulled.

Jen: Yeah, fantastic. So, you are married and have a fur baby and a lot of people listening may not work in a corporate space, or a workplace like that. How do we do this with the people we love or we should love?

Salisia: So, let me tell you, the job that I have can be very demanding. With me overseeing such a big group of people sometimes they're calling, I have different people with different skillsets. So, some of them may not be completely confident and that's no shame, they'll get there. And so, at one time I was available 24/7. And I'm going to be honest, that was not a healthy place to be. You have got to create boundaries. And so, when it

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comes to my loved ones, my husband, my fur baby, my family, when I say I'm with them I'm with them.

It's okay to put do not disturb on your phone. It's okay to not sync your emails every second when you're not on the clock. And so, I literally had to do that and honestly, it didn't start off that way. Sometimes it took some complaints of my family, it took some complaints of my husband to say, "Hey, babe, you need to disconnect. I promise you, the building will still be up if you do not answer." And so, I had to learn that and I did hit a situation where my health was really impacted. You never know how much stress can do to the body.

But I was having issues with hair falling out and horrible weight gain, and not sleeping, and my emotions were up and down. And I remember going to a holistic provider and she looked at all my labs and she said, "Let me tell you something, if you do not put your job in a place of boundaries, if you don't start living for you, you are going to kill yourself at an early age. Your thyroid is off. Your hormones are off. You're emotionally wrecked. And it's only downhill from here if you don't start advocating for yourself." And honestly, that was a life change for me.

And so, the next day I came to the job, I said, "Look, I appreciate what I do but I cannot do this 24/7. And I was brave. I said, "I need my Fridays off. I need when I'm off I'm off, I'm going to no longer sync emails automatically. I'm going to have do not disturb messages. And if that offends or bothers you, I'm sorry but I've got to take care of me." And guess what? I got a yes. And sometimes behind the scenes we're always thinking about what we need to do, what we can do. But you never go for it. You never ask for it. All they can say is yes or no.

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And so, I advocated for myself and got a yes, so I've been around full circle. How do I deal with my family? I establish borders and boundaries and I keep those boundaries.

Jen: That's awesome. That's so well said. And you said, "I've got to live my life." And you mentioned in the beginning, I want to live and not just exist. So, let's imagine we have listeners out there that are thinking, we've just come through a pandemic. I've just been existing." What advice would you give them on how to figure out what it means for each person to start living like that?

Salisia: We're so crazy but you're absolutely right. Going through the pandemic you kind of get into some other routines. And it's very easy for us, I'm a big planner, and so I feel like I can go anywhere without my planner. Every second of the day is calculated, but Lord, if the day didn't go right, oh my gosh. I was messed up. And so, one of the things, as it comes to existing you do need to be careful of your everyday routines. You have to be flexible and open enough for the unplannable.

I know you want to have that picnic outside but it rained, but you know what? Let's dance in the rain. It's taking those moments, it's enjoying the moments, taking advantage of the moments that aren't planned, that aren't routine and just living life. My husband became very sick in 2021. And I had to become his caretaker and you would think as a nurse practitioner that was go for it, easy breezy, have your Oreos and milk, just easy. But honestly, it transformed my life because he was sick for seven months.

He dealt with reticulitis, thank God he's better now. But during that time, I did stay in this nurse role. And I remember going to the hospital and he held my hand because as soon as I got him there I was looking at bottles, looking at the medication going in. I was doing all the nurse stuff. And he

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held my hand and he said, “I just need my wife.” And that is an example of living in the moment. It’s stopping what your everyday is and just taking in everything around you.

And I’ll even be honest, even after my husband got better I still kind of fell into this rut. I did go to a therapist because as he was healing I was getting angry, not because he was getting healed. But my expectation was, we’re going to go back to life as normal. And when I went to the therapist she said, “You know what? Life will never be as it was. What is your normal? Your normal is pre sickness of your husband and you’ll never go back to that.” But she said, “You know what? I believe you’ll be better.”

And so, she sent me on this journey of taking off all of these hats and roles that created who I was and all of a sudden I got to this naked part of me. And let me tell you, it was not comfortable. I do not like being vulnerable. I don’t like being exposed. But after the mother hat has gone, after the sister hat has gone, the wife hat, the job hat and any other role you may have, the question she posed to me was, “Who are you? Who are you?” And I had to pause on that because I didn’t know who I was. The girl that when I was single, the girl that would travel, and paint, and take pictures was lost in life.

I just had to get back to that and so I’m back in the mode of painting again, and taking pictures, and just doing random things, getting up on a Saturday morning and saying, “Hey, I’m going to go to the park today.” Or, “I’m going to go to the museum today.” It feels so good just to not be on a time schedule. And to me that’s what makes my life worth living is being able to encompass everything that even I would want to do from small to big. So that’s what I would say is existing, I mean living, yes.

Jen: Yes.

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Salisia: Living, let's clarify that.

Jen: Yeah. So, the old you was really attached to that planner but you've learned to live and go outside of the boundaries of the schedule a little bit and you're painting, and you're spending time at the park. You're just living. I can almost feel a breath of release like I'm living, yeah.

Salisia: Yes. I mean of course I still have a little planner in me. I want to make sure I've got gas in the car and I want to make sure everything is okay. But honesty, I am, you're absolutely right, just learning to breathe, just learning to just take the restraints off and just see what life has. If there's something going on downtown Birmingham, go down there. We now have the world games going on. And so, me and my husband are like, "Maybe we want to go down there. I mean that's once in a lifetime, just do it." So yes, absolutely, taking the restraints off.

Jen: That's so great. So, you're leaning into what you do want to do, what sounds fun. How are you leaning away from things you don't want to do and what are those things?

Salisia: You know what? I think my biggest fear is not living the full life that I was created to live. That's a big fear of mine because I don't want to get to the end of my journey and have regrets, and would have, could have, should have and all of that. I want to be able to get to the end of my journey and say, "Thank you God, I lived out everything that I was planned and purposed to live out. I saw the world that you created." I have been able to experience things that normal people just don't experience.

That's why we were on the boat for the whale tour, we were there for the job. We were there for the job but then we were like, "It's a whale tour, let's just do it. Let's just do it. Let's not think about it." And so that is a fear of

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mine to not live out everything. And so even little things, my relationships with people, I really struggle when I have issues with people or if there's dynamic that's not smooth or if there's something that's going on that's not cleaned up or whatever and so I really struggle with that.

And so, I make it purposeful to have those conversations, not with my emotions because sometimes I can get emotional. But to have those moments where I talk to those individuals and say, "Look, we've got to work together. We've got to worship together. We're family. Let's talk about what happened because evidently it was a misunderstanding." Even in those everyday little moments in the everyday, I don't even take those for granted anymore. So how do I avoid the things that I don't want to do? It becomes easier as I keep doing the things that I want to do.

Jen: They crowd it out.

Salisia: So, I love doing new things so it overcrowds the need to have a planner of what's happening every single hour and second of my day. The good outweighs all of that. And so, there's benefits in just taking a road trip and just going. So, I think honestly, I hope that answers the question. But I think honestly what cancels out the negative is staying in the positive.

Jen: Yeah, you've let it crowd it out. You lean into the positive and I think that's fantastic. There is a book called *Running With the Wolves*, it's kind of about women unleashing their wild side. So, the question is, if you were to unleash your wild side and run with the wolves, what would that look like for you?

Salisia: Oh my God, you know what? I would love to buy a camper and just travel the world. I would love to hit every state and then once I've finished hitting the states I would love to travel abroad. Just to experience different

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cultures and people, and how do they do it. Because I think honestly, that even makes my life more enriched, to see others, how they live their life. So, if I could be the one, I would just go and just, oh my God, I probably would never come back to a regular house. I would just be, because I also love nature.

So, I could just see myself in the woods, by water with the camper and just I don't know, that would be just phenomenal. So that's what I would do.

Jen: That lights me up, I love that. So, you're kind of on a path of starting to lean into all of that. Where do you see yourself five or 10 years from now?

Salisia: Oh my God. I see myself living my best life. I'm just that convinced that everything that I've been through, everything that I'm going through, every lesson learned is just for me to continue to live my best life. I see myself definitely being a forerunner of all things changed to make things better. I see myself doing mission trips. And I just see myself in a place of comfort, of not worrying about things, but just being able to just freely go. And that's what I see. That's what I see.

Jen: Awesome. I love that. And another question I love to ask is, what were you distinctly designed and prepared to do? Now, before you answer, you mentioned the military, how that contributed, I think the angle I want to take for this question is, how has your life made you and helped you prep to be who you are today? We all have a lot of hard moments. I had a moment or 20 years of something hard. But I can look at it now and say, "Man, that really changed me, that expanded my compassion."

So, looking back at the struggles, how have those uniquely prepared and designed you to function the way that you do?

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Salisia: Well, I really feel like my optimism of life and the journey of life has come from those struggles. When I was younger I had epilepsy. I dealt with seizures. And that was very crippling growing up because I couldn't finish school, as far as I couldn't, you know, I would go to school but then I would get too sick and then I would have to come home. And I was going from one doctor to another doctor trying to figure out why she's having seizures. What's going on with her?

My parents, they went through a divorce and of course we all went through those relationships that were heartbreaking. And even disappointments just even in workplace. And so, I think we've all come from a story of overcoming. And I just choose to stay in the mode of the overcoming part. And I think that's what adds to my life because to me I represent the other side. And I know that may sound selfish but it's just a confidence I have for the people that may come into my life that may ask questions or, hey, I can't do this, or I don't believe I can live.

Well, I'm the other side, I'm living. And we can always have a question, story battles of who went through it the worst. But at the end of the day for even the listeners that are on here, you survived it. Why? Because you're listening to this podcast. You have tuned into the vibrant life podcast, the Vibrant Happy Women podcast. And so, for you to even find this podcast let's me know you're on the road to a vibrant life. And so it's flipping that mode of me going through and constantly reliving that and constantly living in that because honestly it's hard to live your best life if you're always in the past.

Because what's going to happen is your past will become your future. And that's not how it's meant to be. Let your future be its future but also let your past be its past. But at the same time, do not forget about where you are now which is the present. So even in the midst of my present time right now

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as I'm speaking to you, I have a choice. I can live in my past, or I can live for the future. And my choice is to live for the future because it's going to be better. Why? Because I know it's going to be better. I'm going to make it better. I'm going to live in the better. And that's just what I choose to be.

Jen: I love that, it sounds like a mantra or a thought you've thought a lot of times which is I'm on the other side, I'm living. I love that. I love that.

Salisia: Yes. It's almost a little bit depressing when we say that life is too short. But flip it, we've got 24 hours in a day to make it great. So, what are you going to do with that? Every day we wake up we've already slept in some of those hours but what are you going to do with the remaining hours? Are you going to have pity parties? And let me tell you something, it's okay to have those pity parties. I've had my pity parties. I've had those moments of crying. And let me tell you what I do. I don't know if I should even say this out loud.

But sometimes I have a pity party where I'm just crying, I'm upset, I'm going through life and why me, and I'll cry, and cry, and cry. And then I'll look in the mirror and see how ugly I have made myself from all the crying. And then I start crying all over again. And I'm laughing at myself but you know what, crying is so detoxifying. And so, I never tell people, "Don't cry." I never tell people, "Don't get angry." Because that's a part of your human side. It's okay to be angry, and sad, and have all those emotions. But my cry to you as far as living is don't stay there. Get out of that and keep it moving.

Jen: Exactly, yeah. I heard you kind of say, asking the question really when you start the day, what would make today great? What would make me feel alive today? And I feel like that's what you're so good at, you're alive. You're connecting. You're present. So, let's take it down to a practical level,

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what does a typical day look like for you? How do you plan because you mentioned planning several times, how do you plan and fill your time on a typical day?

Salisia: So, I work Monday through Thursday, typically I'm off ish on Fridays. So, on Monday and Thursday it's very important for me to have peace and a level mindset. So, as I'm getting ready for the day, I may have prayer going on. I may have various music playing in the background. When I'm on my way to work I'm going to have something playing. I really strategize that before I go to work, I don't answer any work calls. I just meditate on things. I think now I'm going to add to my listening zone the Vibrant Happy Women podcast because it's encouraging.

I've listened to some of the podcasts and they're encouraging, they get you through the day. And so, it's very strategic for me to listen to something that'll help me, push me to get through the day. And then as the day goes on, even when things are going on today, one motto that I really try to push out there is the day is not bad for the one bad thing. So, if I go into the day and I say, "Today's going to be a good day." And let's say I drop paint on white shoes. Well, guess what? That was an incident that happened during my good day.

But I refuse to let that incident make my whole day, to change the category of my day as bad because I am open enough to know that things will happen, but that does not change what I'm declaring that day to be which is good. And so that is how I prepare my day during the work. Now, when I'm off as mentioned before, I disconnect. I have learned over and over again, the job will still be there. The building will still be there. Family will still be there. Sometimes it's okay not to pick up the phone. Sometimes it's good to let the family figure it out.

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And it's okay to not always be there. Sometimes it's hard when you're a fixer, that's me. But I've learned that there are some things that people need to fix for themselves versus me always being in the middle of it. So sometimes I'll make it worse than what it needs to be, not because we don't have good insight. But maybe that's just a journey they need to go on and learn for themselves. And so, when I'm off I do disconnect, I do, do those things that make me happy. I love spending time with my husband. I love seeing new things, eating at new restaurants.

And so those are the things that I do. So that's kind of how my week gets prepared and we go from there.

Jen: I love that, living and not just existing. That's so good. Well, imagining all these women out there, okay, they're like, "I want to live like Salisia, and not just exist", what's one piece of advice you have for them as they embark on this type of journey?

Salisia: Yeah. So, my advice would be to fall in love with you. Love you. Fall in love with you. And as much as we give love to others, sometimes we're the last ones to love ourselves. So basically, what we do is we put ourselves unintentionally last on the list. So, we make sure fur babies look good, or you mentioned your children look good, your husband looks good, your job looks good. But we put ourselves last. And I will tell you, there is nothing wrong with putting yourself first. There's nothing wrong with loving you and cherishing yourself.

There's nothing wrong with looking in the mirror and say, "Girl, you look good." There's nothing wrong with that. Girl, my, you are vibrant, you are victorious, you are amazing. There's nothing wrong with saying those good things about yourself and falling in love with yourself. And the reason why I say that is because when you love yourself then you're aware of yourself,

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and then you know okay, today I probably do need to stay at the house. I've been doing a lot of running around. Let me kind of recharge.

Or maybe, hey, I've been at the house a lot, maybe I need to get out and get some vitamin D and explore the world. And so, there's nothing wrong with putting yourself first. Don't be afraid to put yourself first. As a matter of fact, everything around you will be better when you put yourself first.

Jen: Do you want people to be able to reach out to you? I mean because a lot of guests have a website but do you want them to connect with you on social media?

Salisia: Sure. So, I'm on Facebook, yeah, sure. If you want to reach out or if you just need someone to be a listening ear because one thing I do know is that we all need each other. And so, if you want to reach out, my Facebook is Salisia Valentine, S-A-L-I-S-I-A and Valentine, just like the day. You can also email me salisiavalentine@gmail.com. And yeah, I mean we all need each other. We all have high points, low points and I say no relationship is just a coincidence, just like with my friend here, Miss Riday, and so I don't take anything as unintentional. I think there's purpose in everything.

So yes, definitely do that and I'll look forward to hearing from you.

Jen: Well, Salisia, this was amazing, I really, really appreciate it. It was meant to be that we met and thank you so much for being on the show.

Salisia: Yes, thank you so much and what an honor it is to be here so thank you, thank you, thank you.

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I hope you now love Salisia as much as I do. She is a woman of light, and purpose, and example, and adventure. She is living, grabbing the moments, being present, not leaving her thoughts in the past or too far in the future but like she said, she's overcome some things and now she's living. What would it take for you to be able to say, "You're living", what would you give up? What would you lean into?

If you'd like to experiment with this, with me, we're going to be doing this, you can learn more at my free workshop, jenriday.com/adventure. I would love to have you aboard. It's a vibrant happy adventure. Alright my friends, I love you, I will see you again soon, go live. Don't just exist. 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.