TRANSCRIPT: EPISODE 160

Episode Title: How To Love Your Body

Guest: Emme

Episode Link: https://grownasswoman.guide/episode160

Emme: Jackie, it's so nice to be on the show. And, thank you so much for asking me--

Jackie MacDougall: I just jumped in. [laughs]

Emme: -to be on The Grown-Ass Woman's Guide. I love it. I love it. Please, I need the guide. [laughs]

Jackie MacDougall: I am so excited to do this. You're a legend for Grown-Ass Women everywhere. So, let's go back. I'm imagining my life in the early 90s, when I first see you grace the magazines and TV and all of it. And, it's like, finally, right? And, at the same time, was it all rainbows and unicorns when you became--

[laughter]

Jackie MacDougall: Like, I can only imagine the feedback in the modeling industry. Can you speak to what it was like in the beginning?

Emme: So, going back into 89 and early 90s, it was WAFTAM; every model that was on the covers of the magazine and working within the industry, they were young ladies that were either 5'10 or taller. Very few, like Kate Moss were 5'7, 5'8, but they were all size-zero, double zero (00), or even sometimes a 2.

And so, I came onto the scene as a rower, an athlete, and not really particularly wanting to be in modeling, but my girlfriend's brother was dating a woman that was in the full-figured modeling industry. And she was, she looked like me, like she was size 12 and healthy-looking.

And, I said, “Well, how do I get to do that?” And, people have always said, “Why don't you get into modeling?” I said, “I'm not going to lose half my body weight.” So, I left my reporting days and I came back to New York and I walked into an agency; I got signed on.

Now, that was the easiest part. When I went over to Ford Models and I started working with a lot of different people within the industry, a lot of photographers that were in the major fashion magazines, did not want to work with anyone that was not the ideal or the type of model that they were used to working with. They were scared that their work would be affected. It wasn't a matter of making money. It was more about reputation.

My body type was very proportionate and I had curves in the right places, but I was fit, fit with curves. That's the only way. ‘Athletic curvy’ is really what the term is today. And so, I started working a lot. One thing led to the other where I started booking big campaigns. And, one of the very first campaigns that I had, the photographer was one of those really esteemed photographers, and I was so excited.

And, when he walked into the room an hour and a half after hair and makeup was done and my curlers were in my hair, he looked at me and he said, “I'm not going to shoot this fatty,” and turned around and walked out of the studio, slammed the door. We didn't have cell phones at the time.

And, I called my agency and I just said, “Listen, I've never been spoken to like this before. I don't think that I really need to be in this industry. You know, truly it doesn't make any sense to me.” I was told to stay, it was an advertising job. It was a big deal.

And, when he came back, the light had changed. The set had to be completely altered. And, he said, “Well, if I'm going to shoot you, I'm going to shoot you sexy.” And, he was like, Ugh, icky. And, he took my boat-neck top, and my shoulder fell loosen. It was like for the first jeans ad ever with a full-figured model

Jackie MacDougall: When you're the world's first full-figured supermodel who's also chosen as *People* magazine’s 50 Most Beautiful People, not once, but twice; you have earned the right to be known by a single name, Emme. For three decades, Emme has made it her personal mission to break down barriers and fight for inclusivity in the fashion and beauty industries.

In her work as brand spokesperson, television personality, podcast host, author, the first full-figured Revlon spokeswoman, keynote speaker, coach, and clothing line Creative

Director; just to name a few roles. Emme's message remains clear; self-esteem should not be decided by the number on the scale. Something women over 40, myself included, struggle with on a daily basis.

I'm Jackie MacDougall, and this is The Grown-Ass Woman's Guide.

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Jackie MacDougall: As Emme shared, when she began her modeling career over 30 years ago, she faced judgment, criticism, and body shaming, but it wasn't long before those who shunned her began to change their tune.

Emme: Let's take a break for like two years, and then *People* magazine came onto the scene with 50 of the Most Beautiful People. And, I mean, *People* magazine doing a double-page spread in the nude. It was beautiful, but little did I know that this particular photograph would shoot me all around the world.

Jackie MacDougall: Wow.

Emme: I met this photographer two years later when I was modeling in Miami and there was a phone call at the luncheonette where everybody was getting their coffees, their egg sandwiches. And, my crew left later and I took the phone, and I said, "Oh, let me-- Who would you like to speak to?" Was this photographer? I'm like, of all people, I would have to get this phone call.

[laughter]

Emme: When I walked outside, this man looked cleaned up. He didn't look like he rolled out of bed, or had a very long weekend. He looked handsome. There were two models with him and I didn't exactly know what to say. And, he beat me to it. He goes, “Emme, right?” And, I go, “Yes.” And, he said, “We've got to work together. You're all over. This is wonderful, such fantastic new things.”

And, I'm thinking to my head going, ‘is this truly a real thing happening here? Is he faking it or what?’ So, I gave him the phone and I said, “I want to let you know, we have actually worked together. I want to thank you. You really solidified my place in what I was doing. And, here's your phone and wishing you a good day.”

And, I don't remember walking away, but it taught me that people who are not self-assured with either their own bodies or their own ideas of what is healthy and well, or the value of a human being, they're going to project and reflect those negative feelings; and quite frankly, touch the line of being a bully.

And, oftentimes for young kids, I share this when I talk to younger groups. And, I say, “What you have to do is not take this personally. It's very hard as a young person, not to take these words to heart. But anybody that's going to put you down because of the way you look like, it has nothing to do with you.”

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah.

Emme: It was a very early on experience. It wasn't all, you know, yippee ki-yay, this is great, but I had so many wonderful, wonderful experiences having my commercial run at the Academy Awards for Revlon, being a Revlon girl, you know, traveling around the world, and opening markets and opening minds and hearts that beauty is not just one particular way. It's an array of beauty. It's a bouquet of beauty.

Jackie MacDougall: Right. And, did you know back then, while you were going through this in those first years, you would make such a lasting impact on a generation, multiple generations?

Emme: No, absolutely not. I just couldn't-- Because my background was in reporting and I was working for an NBC affiliate in Arizona, I was a page in NBC, in LA and I had all the gumption coming from Syracuse, Newhouse and VPA that I was going to be in TV. And, that curiosity, when I fell into the industry and I started having success in booking multiple bookings over and over, it was all perfectly aligned. Little did I know back then, the kind of career that I had.

Now, I could have given up because of that photographer; I was very, very close to just walking away and saying, “How dare you?” The ego was just a little bit irritated. And, if I had let that happen, it wouldn't have had this magnificent, rewarding career being an advocate, being a disruptor. And, just asking the question, ‘why, why is this so? Why not feel good? Why do we have to feel poorly all the time?’ There's no reason for it.

Jackie MacDougall: Right. What did that feel like? I mean, you were pretty young still. What did it feel like having women all over the world feel represented, frankly?

Emme: I didn't understand the impact at first. And, when I would travel on a train from the Milan to Venice with my daughter, and I'm looking for a seat on the train and saying, “Excuse me, is this taken?” And, a woman from Germany went like this… And, I thought she was having a heart attack, and I almost went into CPR with this poor woman.

[laughter]

Emme: And, my little, my daughter was sitting there and she goes, “No, no, no, please sit. Are you Emme?” And, I'm thinking, ‘how crazy is this, that you're in another part of the world, different places, and that happened?’

Jackie MacDougall: There's no doubt about it, Emme was making an impact worldwide, but it was even then that she knew, if we're going to create a ripple effect, positive change, we would need to empower one another to stand up and be heard. One voice is powerful; many voices together, that's a movement.

Emme: I always had the conversations with my dear friends, it's teamwork. What you hear, if it touched you, don't let it just end there, figure out your own way of using your

voice. I have a chat called, in my coaching program, ‘a power of the purse’. And, the power of the purse is the most important thing that we can have as women.

If we don't like how our personal care products don't honor our bodies, then the power of the purse is going to take us elsewhere, where there's no bleach in our products; and there's no, this, that, and the other thing that could be harmful to our bodies. And, you better bet companies are noticing when there's a shift in income and there's a shift. And, if you are going to write a letter, start with a compliment and end with the room for improvement; and don't stop writing your letters.

They still really, it's really important. So, I see it as like, I might, you know, wipe away some of the cobwebs and some of the weight on the shoulders and then be like, okay, it's not just, you know, just a few people doing this. Once you hear your truth being spoken, if it speaks truth to you, you can't sit to go, ‘na, na, na, I didn't hear that.’ [laughs]

Jackie MacDougall: Right. So, true.

Emme: It's a group effort. So, this beautiful three decades of seeing change and enlightenment, and then it going down and then getting stronger, that next push, and then going down, and then it's not stopping. This is, it's a beautiful unfolding, and I love the younger generation coming in and going, ‘well, what are you all complaining about? Of course, all bodies are great.’ It's like, yeah, yeah; there we are. That's sounds good.

Jackie MacDougall: And, I love that you are meeting them where they are when they're young, you know, bring them along into adulthood and helping them understand that their body is their body, right? But how do we go back to the grown-ass woman? How do we go back to a woman like myself, 51, other women, everyone who listens; most, everyone is over 40, anyway.

We've been raised during that WAFT time. We've seen how things have changed in the modeling industry and the representation. And, at the same time, there's still a lot of pressure and a lot that has been programmed in us. And so, did you struggle during those times?

Emme: Well, I think we all, we all live in the same society and we still have a projected $377 billion worldwide that the diet-related industry is going to be making on a 98-percentage failure rate. So, when you think about--

Jackie MacDougall: 98% failure rate.

Emme: 98% failure rate, all diets fail; the conventional diets that, you know, eat this, eat that, do this, do that. We really-- When we start looking at that onslaught of, let's just say a billion is just taken off the top to just throw into marketing, to offset that pressure that we get through content in movies, content on online, content on social, content, on billboards, right, those messages; we have to become our own media watchdog.

And, I use this phrase very, very generally when I work with the National Eating Disorders Association, almost 30 years as an ambassador. I've learned through their work and their research that we can turn the tides. We can, not fall in and absorb these messages that they should be our own. We can see messages and say, “Why is that? Do I have to be that way?”

You can question it. You can turn it off. You can limit the exposure and who you hang with. Especially as adult women, we need our girlfriends. I don't care how old you are; until we're like 90, we need our girlfriends, at least, right? Well, are the girlfriends empowering one another? Are they tearing other people apart? And, when you talk to the younger, 12 years old, 11 years old, 9, 10, you want to show them that your girlfriends are the ones that see the brighter side.

And yes, you're there for them when things are really falling apart with the wine and with evenings where you're like, ‘oh, mom's with her friends, we need to talk about stuff.’ But how we choose to live our life is up to us. No one is making any of these choices and decisions; we have to choose. Do we want to live on the positive side of the coin? Or do we want to be on that negative side, where a lot of people are?

A majority of people find soulless and kinship with others when you complain about things. But what it does is it really affects your attraction of good things. It almost repels things away from you, business opportunities, job opportunities, relationships. And, it's not to be fake, but it's really get to the place of like, ‘wait a minute. Why am I talking about all these other people? What is it in me that I feel deficient in? Why is that happening here?’

Jackie MacDougall: Emme says, one of those choices we face is the one many of us struggle with, putting ourselves first; making ourselves and our needs a priority. It may feel selfish, but it's actually self-preservation.

Emme: I never understood this as a kid, why wouldn't my mom put the mask on me first?

Jackie MacDougall: Right.

Emme: Well, when you realize in any kind of change to take place, we have to, in order to give real true, yummy, delicious love to someone else; I mean, we're talking all in; you better be giving it to yourself because you're constantly going to be waiting for that other person to be hitting the bar here. 'Oh, you're not doing enough. You got to go up higher, for me.' And, that ruins things.

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah.

Emme: It's the work on inside and it takes practice. It takes failing, and it takes looking at failure as just opportunities to learn. And, there's no perfection here. None. It's just, keep on going; and, you know, wake up and bless-- I bless my body.

I bless all the cells in my body saying, "Thank you for this next day. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to go hiking and walking and starting my day and being with people that I like, and doing the work that I love." It takes work. It takes practice. It takes feeling really pretty horrible about life and feeling down; low, so low that you're like, 'okay, I'm done with this. This does not work.' [laughs] Yeah, there has to be a better way.

Jackie MacDougall: A better way includes honoring and accepting ourselves, no matter what the number on the scale says, or the number of wrinkles on our faces. And, I see that with women in aging as well. So, whether, you know, I grew up always feeling like I was fat--

Emme: Sorry.

Jackie MacDougall: -which, you know, I'm one of 13 kids.

Emme: Oh, my God.

Jackie MacDougall: And, I have five sisters, four of them older. And so, my first “diet" was, I was nine years old because I was watching my sister. And, by the time I was in my 20s, I had an eating disorder. And, you know, I have played these tapes over and over in my brain, my whole life. And, I think many women relate to that, but just as many women are like, ‘yeah, I never really had a weight,’ but now they see their bodies changing with age.

And, now they're starting to get super critical. Can you imagine an animal going like, ‘oh, well, I'm going through the aging process,’ and then self-hating because they're going through a natural process? Do you see that a lot? When you talk with women, whether it's a size thing, do you see when it comes to aging, this sort of self-loathing that occurs?

Emme: Well, it's a crazy situation. Yes. I mean, there's not a lot of societal uplift for anyone that's above 25 years old or 30 years old. And, unfortunately, that's their loss. I always think, you know, that that's a loss in our society that we don't honor the graceful aging of all men and women, more so women. And, then it's our responsibility to come together and be able to share our feelings and our thoughts and find opportunities to actually come together and make something happen. It's slow in process.

When I take a look at myself, for example, I'll use myself. My body is very different than what it was when it was in the 20s. I've given birth to a child. When I gave-- When I was, I was pregnant, I was really like pregnant. And, I thought, ‘my God, this is quite amazing that another body is growing inside of me.’

It taught me a lot about not beating myself up for the little things or, you know, how could I do that? And, I also-- I also started thinking as I'm aging, my heart ticks, no matter how much I put it down, my cells emit toxins and they do-- The more appreciation that I have, and yes, I have a little bit of more wrinkles and I have a sag here, or I don't have the kind of firm legs because I'm not an Olympic-trained or national team trained athlete.

Do I want to be that? No, I don't. I want to be able to just appreciate what I have and if anybody has anything to say about it; really, truly, it's not my issue. If I take control of drinking enough water; eating really good yummy, delicious foods. And, when I do have a Sunday, or I do have cookies to eat them with vim and vigor, to not feel guilty about it. It's true, I don't want to die, and be like, ‘I should have had the cookies.’ You know?

[laughter]

Emme: And, I want to break bread-- I want to have dinner parties with people who feel more about the conversation than the fear of the calories going into their mouths. It does change. But if we're going to lean on our society to lift us up, once again, Jackie, we're going to be shortchanged. And, I just want to feel free. I want to be uplifted. And, if I have to do that heavy-lifting or do it and get into a regular practice, well, then that's what I'm going to do.

And, diverting my funding of this, that, and the other thing in areas that lift me up, that make me feel good. The whole point is to feel good. And if A, B, C doesn't work, then there has to be other ways to feeling good. It takes work. That's all it is. It's being mindful of what you're absorbing in all ways.

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah. Yeah. I think anything worth doing, like being a grown-ass woman is a practice.

Emme: Oh yes.

Jackie MacDougall: You know, there's no destination. And so, the same with-- I mean, we can't go back and reprogram necessarily what we've been through, all the messages that we've gotten, whether it's from family or the media, but we can take responsibility for ourselves today.

Emme: Hey, and everything; every single thing, the good, the bad, and the ugly got us to where we are today. And, we have to be proud--

Jackie MacDougall: That's right.

Emme: -that we are here. And especially after the two years that we've just gone through, that we're here and we have a purpose; and we're living out the purpose. And, if we live in the past and try and figure out why, it might take some time. So, it's, you know, you're here now; 'Where do you want to go? Where's your vision? What's going to make you feel good in your work? What kind of work do you want to do, really?'

Like, do you really need, you know, multiple jobs and working yourself to the bone, do you really need to do that? It's a shift when you're a Grown-Ass Woman, I love the name of your show.

[laughter]

Jackie MacDougall: Thank you.

Emme: It's wisdom. Allow the wisdom to come and to speak to you. I, meditation is a gateway for peace and calm. And, when I feel like that feeling of either frustration or anger or something, I either try and lay down for half an hour so they can shut, just have a reboot, or I get into meditation or I scream and shout and go, 'gosh, I know better.' Insight Timer is an app that I use.

Jackie MacDougall: Oh yeah.

Emme: Do you know Insight Timer?

Jackie MacDougall: I do. It's a good one.

Emme: And, davidji, I'm in love with him. Oh my gosh.

Jackie MacDougall: Oh my gosh, totally.

Emme: You too? Oh, God.

Jackie MacDougall: I have heard-- You know, I haven't used Insight Timer in a while, but davidji's voice, oh my gosh. There's one other guy over there too that I really like, I'll have to link to that in the show notes, but yeah. I'm with you as far as, I need a leader of my meditation, you know? I'm not necessarily going to sit there quietly and meditate on my own.

So, I like meditations that kind of tell me what to do, and lead me there so that I can get out of my own head. So, it's a great app. It's not a secret that meditation and movement are both proven to increase our wellbeing while decreasing stress and other negative emotions, often leading to more confidence and a positive self-esteem

Emme: Keeping in line of self-esteem, and what I wanted to make sure that we talked about is the joy of movement is something that has been possibly mistreated. The joy of movement has been replaced with calories, and shape, and all that stuff. I'm claiming 2022 as the year of the body. And, I have a group coaching practice at VIP coaching practice.

And, throughout this last 2021 and now, I'm like, 'I'm claiming 2022 as the year of the body where we just fill it with joy.' I mean, forget about the calorie burn. Forget about the incessant weighing; I'm all into health. I'm really into health. I'm into joy. I'm not into doing my hiking and my swimming or whatever I do; snowshoeing like a crazy person when I can get snow when there's good snow.

[laughter]

Emme: I do it because it allows me to play; and I have a hashtag called #playsweatwin. When you play, you're probably going to sweat a bit and then guess what, you win. Whatever that winning is, and if you're consistent with it, you have hormone releases. You have beautiful serotonin coming to the surface that that helps with self-esteem.

It helps with your body image, because if you are doing your practice, this is a great thing for everyone to hear; when you are practicing kindness to yourself and you're treating yourself when the shoulder is up, you're not treating yourself when the shoulder

is down, if you're treating yourself when the shoulder is up, you'll always know when someone's not treating you right.

Whether you're dating, whether you're with in relationship or whether you're in work, when people are treating each other from the shoulder is up, you know, that's someone who I want to hang with. A lot of that feeling of self-esteem comes from drinking your water, getting your sleep. Sleep is a really undervalued thing.

It is so important to turn off your devices and put them in another room and get your exercise on, get into it. And, if you have to do it early in the morning, get it in, clock it in. You don't have to get methodical, but just get in there and do it.

Once you start putting that into a system of yours, anything that comes at you in a negative way, you're like, ‘see you. I'm not interested. I'm doing what I'm doing. I am the best that I can be right this second. Nothing you have to say, if you're going to make fun of my body, that's on you, buddy, or girlfriend or whatever.’

Jackie MacDougall: Right.

Emme: You know, seriously, when we practice those things and we have accountability buddies, you have accountable people with you, you have different walking partners; set it all up, set yourself up for success. It's really helpful, so helpful. And, all it is, is beginning one day; one day, begin, start.

Jackie MacDougall: Such a great point because I think we all try to plan it out, right? So, it's like, ‘oh, I'm going to start walking five miles a day. And. now I'm going to pull out my April calendar and I'm going to map it on there, and blah, blah, blah.’ And, it just becomes this convoluted, overwhelming thing.

Emme: Arduous.

Jackie MacDougall: Put on your shoes and walk, just put on your shoes, put them on.

Emme: If it's training, bring an umbrella. I mean, I've had to talk to a couple of my girlfriends. Like, ‘you're going to go out in the rainstorm.’ I go, ‘um, if it's really cold and raining, I'll save us. But if it's kind of warm and it's raining, Hmm, what's wrong with that? You know, we're getting it in.’

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah.

Emme: When you see those sunrises, when you see the sunsets; and I try and get my walking in between those times, or at those times, you're a part of something much bigger.

Jackie MacDougall: I love that.

Emme: And, it's much that more than just a calorie-burn or logging in the miles. We always like looking at our apps and ring, ‘is it 3.6? Or is it 3.2?’ You know, you have shorter legs than me, okay, fine. You know?

[laughter]

Emme: So, it’s, have fun.

Jackie MacDougall: I love that you call it The Joy of Movement. The joy of movement, and I did an episode recently because number one, I don't do weight loss on this podcast. I have done weight loss in the past, but to me, is not helpful. I don't want to have those conversations. I love these conversations about feeling our best in our own bodies no matter what size they are.

Emme: That's right.

Jackie MacDougall: If you want your body to be more fit or smaller or whatever, like more power to you, great, go for it. But I'm not going to be the leader of that self-loathing I know movement.

Emme: No. No.

Jackie MacDougall: But as far as movement goes, it's so important for our minds, for our bodies, for everything, like our bodies are meant to move.

Emme: Oh yeah.

Jackie MacDougall: And, it doesn't mean you have to go and do CrossFit, and lift, you know, 5,000 pounds--

Emme: Or like a crazy Spartan person. Like, oh my God, I lost my mind. I had so much fun, but I was like, 'I'm flinging myself over walls?' Like, I stopped that, but--

Jackie MacDougall: My goal was to do that in 2020, and then they were closed down and I was like, 'oh, I guess that's passed.' [laughs] I appreciate those who like to push themselves in that way, but I did an episode recently that one woman talked about, she juggles, she enjoys juggling and she's got like these great upper body muscles from juggling; and another woman who does belly dancing.

Emme: Ooh.

Jackie MacDougall: I love that people are choosing, especially grown-ass women, are choosing activities that bring them joy.

Emme: Movement, movement is really the key to burning off stress, to feeling good. And, even when you're feeling low, you have no energy, and you're like, ‘I can't get out the door;’ get your butt in your shoes and go because after about a half a mile, you're going to find that it built and created more energy within you.

Jackie MacDougall: Totally.

Emme: I always say, if you have a dog, you would never keep your dog inside for a week or two weeks or a month. You would never do that. In fact, you know, you might be called up by, you know, the Dog Protective Services.

[laughter]

Emme: But we have to look at ourselves as a human being with a physical body, needing the blood to not get thick, we need to move it. And, if it's dancing, go and be your bad self.

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah.

Emme: If it's snowshoeing or doing whatever it's going to be, but getting yourself moving helps everything. It helps everything.

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah. Yeah. And, they happen to have fitness involved with them. It's not, you know, the days of like going to Step Aerobics, but we would beat the crap out of ourselves, right, trying to look a certain way. And, now it's all about, ‘I'm 51, I appreciate this body. I want to move it. I want to honor it by doing something.’

Emme: Yes. I'm 58. I want to move it. I mean, I want to be like kicked out of this life. I want to be like, you know, last breath, boom.

Jackie MacDougall: Evicted.

[laughter]

Emme: I can't wait to kitesurf.

Jackie MacDougall: Flick your lights?

Emme: Yeah. Flick the lights, let's go.

[laughter]

Emme: And, you know, I'm ready for my next journey. Let's go.

Jackie MacDougall: Last call, Emme.

Emme: I can't wait to kitesurf.

Jackie MacDougall: Not now, I mean when it’s time.

Emme: No, no, no, when it's time. When it's time, you know-- Listen, I'm ready-- I'm ringing out every bit that I can, everything. I'm just so grateful. I'm just so grateful to have been and do the things that I get to do.

Jackie MacDougall: And, one of the many things Emme gets to do is create new organizations that make a huge impact.

Emme: I just founded the True Beauty Foundation. It's a youth initiative to help with mental wellness and everything having to do, that's just what it is. And so, I'm going to be talking to children and young people and college-age; as well as the medical community, educational community.

And, you have to have a full-court press hitting all different points to help the kids feel good in their skin because when they go home, you don't want them to be faced with ridicule or whatever it might be because they're saying, “I'm empowered, and this is great,” when a parent was brought up in the 50s or the 60s or the 70s and having this mentality of like, you've got to be only one way to have a job and find a man.

It's like, that's all gone now. So, I'm psyched to have it in-- I've been doing this for 30 years, and I finally made it official. So, I'm very happy.

Jackie MacDougall: Congratulations!

Emme: Yes. Thank you so much. I'm just delighted.

Jackie MacDougall: How do we Grown-Ass Women empower the young people in our lives and not pass on the programming we were taught; instead, find ways to support them in being their most mentally healthy versions of themselves? The person who's listening right now; maybe they have a daughter, maybe they have sons, maybe they don't have kids, but like, how do we twofold?

Number one, help ourselves to start stripping away those messages that our self-esteem is tied to a number on a scale for our own benefits; therefore, creating better self-esteem in the girls who come behind us.

Emme: Good question. So, we got to take a look at our Brené Brown list of values, and you can just go online and check that out. Figure out what your value, what is your … word that is a key to your life? And, then be able to build the way that you see others,

especially a child, especially if you have a girl or a boy. I mean, the boys don't get enough research.

And, hopefully in time, we're going to have much more about boys and self-esteem and body image and stuff, because that is-- What girls are going through, boys are really, really have been going through for a long time. But if you have a girl in the house and a boy in the house, you know, around dinner time, when somebody's hungry, allow them to eat; when they're not hungry, allow them not finish the plate.

And, also saying, “Are you going to have this?”, when they go out to dinner and question portions and sizing and all that. So, if you're doing that to yourself or if you're sneaking food in another room and you're not allowing the rest of the family to have dessert or whatever it might be, there has to be a balance.

And, if there's such a focus on food around the dinner table; and there's strife and you can feel it in your stomach, serve the food and then talk about, ‘I'm really proud of the way that you were compassionate with your girlfriend, I heard you when I picked you up from school, tell me more about where you're learning that from. This is really great.’ Or, ‘I really appreciated your helping me without even me asking you.’

Work on the value, the real true value of a human being; your generosity, your thoughtfulness, your uniqueness, your characteristics that make you genuinely you. And, talk about those things and be there during those kinds of conversations to bat home that that's what value is because you cannot, as we spoke about in the very, very beginning, Jackie; our bodies change, become a little fuller during our periods.

And, then trim down a little bit because of the water retention at different times when we're taking medication, at different times if we're going through chemo or if we're going through illness, we're going through. Whether we shrink down or go up, if we can see our bodies as our best friends, instead of our worst enemies, our life will change, starting each day with a body blessing that you are actually taking care of my journey as a human being.

I am a spiritual being having a human existence. It's not the other way around, like we're human beings and we're just searching for spirituality. We're actually, our bodies are encasing this soul. So, when we are in such a conflict, imagine what isn't coming to us.

But if we become connected and aligned truly in partnership with this incredible vehicle, I got goosebumps all over my body saying this, imagine what we could do as a people with each other, no matter what color we may be, no matter what gender we may be or fluidity or age. How if we're all in alignment and feeling good with the skin that we're in, my gosh, I think that that's just, that changes the whole conversation on what we're going to consume, what we're going to purchase, and how we're going to live.

Jackie MacDougall: Right. That's so beautiful. And, you're absolutely right; when it comes to consumption, we're talking about food consumption, you know?

Emme: Messaging consumption. Yeah.

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah. Social media consumption, you know, all of this-- We're judging ourselves, our real lives against what somebody has chosen to put out there on Instagram.

Emme: Because they're going to be making money. So, majority of people that put out messaging, most of the time, it's about, ‘this is the solution to your problems. Buy this, and this is going to solve your problems.’ A few months later, ‘now buy this, this is a new thing. Buy this because--’, they're not going to say that thing didn't work.

So, when you just become aware of what it is you're putting yourself in front of; and if you're watching a lot of TV, a lot of commercials; if you're going into social and you're not having limitations on that, please, it's like a herd of horses to try and tear you away from a rabbit hole. We all know that.

But it's training yourself on, ‘how do I feel when I'm with this person? How do I feel when I'm in this situation? How do I feel when I'm eating this food?’ Now, I tested negative for any allergies with gluten and dairy, negative. I don't feel really good when I eat gluten and a lot of dairy. I can have sheep’s milk or something, but man, you do not want to be around me when I'm having certain dairy and gluten. So, even though the tests aren't there, I know how it makes me feel. And, I'd rather not feel horrible like that.

Jackie MacDougall: Right.

Emme: You know what, go with how you feel. So, that's the best barometer. Yeah. Yeah.

Jackie MacDougall: I have a coach on regularly. Her name's Courtney Townley, and she used to be in all the fitness and stuff. And, now she's all about up here, right? When

it comes to health, she knows that mindset. But one of the things she says that I bring into my life daily is, ‘it's not what you're doing, it's why you're doing it.’

Emme: Amen, sister.

Jackie MacDougall: Right? So, are you eating the cheesecake hidden in a closet because you feel shame or are you just enjoying yourself because you want to have a slice of cake? You know?

Emme: I've had people at a restaurant lean in when I'm on a date or I'm, seriously, and go, ‘I wish I could eat like you,’ because I just taste everything. I'm like, ‘oh my God, this is so good. This is so delicious.’ But I acknowledge how good when it's a really good meal or I enjoy my dessert if I’m choosing to have dessert that night, it's such an oddity that there is joy around the act of appreciation of food.

‘Man, I wish I could eat like that. Man, I wish that I could--’ You know, I was eating an apple one time on the bus, and it was so succulent. It was so good. And, I was eating it with such appreciation. I remember it. And, the man next to me said, “God, I like the way you're eating your apple.” I'm like--

[laughter]

Emme: It’s too funny. And, it was not, you know, he was an older guy.

Jackie MacDougall: He was fantasizing on Emme eating an apple. [laughs]

Emme: I’m like, “Well, I'm appreciating it. I'm appreciating it.” So, I think it's slowing it all down, not living for others. And, this is being selfish really? It's putting your mask on first and then you'll be able to give in the way that you would like to give. But if we, grown-ass women, put ourselves still at the bottom of the barrel, we're going to be depleted. We're not going to have any energy for anything else for us and our girlfriends. We're

going to probably be depressed. We'll feel underappreciated. And, it's time to stop that, I'm giving you permission.

Jackie MacDougall: Yeah.

Emme: It's time to put ourselves--

Jackie MacDougall: Absolutely.

Emme: -at the top of the heap, our children will appreciate it. They'll get used to it. They'll be getting used to you giving them, you know, assignments; 'who's going to set the table? Who's going to clear? Who's going to help?' Giving assignments on taking the garbage out, helping with the yard. Really kids really, really are looking for those types of things to contribute to the home so that they understand that they're part of this unit so not everything is being done for them.

Jackie MacDougall: Could I have you talk to my three teenage boys about that?

[laughter]

Emme: So fun. So fun because they will do it. So, how old are they, again?

Jackie MacDougall: Oh, 15, 16, 17. They're helpful. Some more than others, but I have found ways. [laughs]

Emme: Are you sure you have?

[laughter]

Jackie MacDougall: I'm a, you know, Boston girl. I've got my ways.

Emme: Love. Love.

Jackie MacDougall: I used to get so frustrated and you're right though, when we feel like we're contributing to something bigger than ourselves or greater than ourselves, it's impactful.

Emme: And, there's rewards. There's truly saying, thank you, to them. But also saying, 'I'm sure you have your own tricks,' but yeah, it's expected. Expect them to step up, expect them to fail at whatever, if they're nervous about whatever it might be.

Jackie MacDougall: You're absolutely right in that, failure not only allowing young people to fail and to show up in a way that the world is going to require them to show up, but also being honest about our own struggles at times so they can see what resilience looks like, and perseverance.

Emme: Yes.

Jackie MacDougall: And, I'm sure your daughter has seen a lot of that in your-- I mean, you've pivoted, you're like the definition of pivot. You've pivoted so many times in your career, and done so many beautiful things--

Emme: Thank you.

Jackie MacDougall: -that in a generation where we're taught to like choose a thing and do it for the rest of your life, remember when we're growing up and it was like, ‘what do you want to do for the rest of your life?’

Emme: Right.

Jackie MacDougall: Now, we live in a time where you can choose to do something for the next six months or five years.

Emme: That's right. That’s right.

Jackie MacDougall: You don't have to choose something for the rest of your life. So, how do you see the next phase for you going? I mean, you're doing the coaching, you've got this new program. So, what should we be expecting to see from Emme?

Emme: Well, I'm not, not going to be going away anytime soon about diversity in fashion and inclusivity in the sizing of fashion, but you know, just the celebration of our uniqueness, it's, I'm going to carry on-- I believe that this is my chapter. This is the last chapter and to keep it vibrant and healthy and fun.

And, I want to bring joy back into movement, and not be seen as a calorie burner; and also, to get people away from devices so that they can-- You know, I'm going to be tying in the National Park systems with the movement part of place--

Jackie MacDougall: Nice.

Emme: And, the educational part will be with the Fashion Without Limits with inclusivity in fashion. And, talk more about meditation going in, like not being afraid of being quiet. I think there's a bit of fear of like, ‘oh, what am I going to find out?’

It's like, no, no, no, no, you're not-- And, we're not separated from the ultimate source of who we are. It's always been there. It's just that we want to be aware. Yes. Get silent,

get quiet and allow peace. We have to create our own silence sometimes. Everything is so busy, we're running. We're workaholic, this, that, and the other thing. And, when I got cancer, I will never forget someone was saying, “You got to meditate.”

I was like, “Why? I'm good.” You know, “No, it's going to really calm you down.” “But I got things to do. Let's go.” Like, “No, no, no, no, no. This cancer thing is like, calm you down.” They gave me a piece of paper that said, “Shut up and meditate.” I kept on looking at this thing and looking at it and going, uh. And, then finally, was like, okay. And, I felt like I was a little kid. I stomped myself on the ground and I sat there.

I was like, ‘God, this is so boring.’ And, then I committed to doing it 15 minutes, 15 minutes. And finally, one day I got what they were saying. And, then I liked it enough that I did it again and did again. And, it seems like that's my natural set point to start my day. And, then things-- When I don't, I feel like I have like a, where's my leg, what happened? [laughs]

Jackie MacDougall: Right, disconnected.

Emme: And so, this little tool helps me, and the physicality helps, and eating well and hanging with good people, hang on.

Jackie MacDougall: I think it's so important-- You know, I love the balance that you speak; quiet, just being alone, being with your breath. Also, use your voice in such an impactful way to make constant change in how we look at things. And so, it may have been in 89, in the 90s showing up, but now as you've hit your 50s in your stride, being able to use your voice the way you do to allow others to feel less alone, to allow others to feel, maybe they have a message inside them.

Emme: Yep. That's right. We all do.

Jackie MacDougall: And, that's really empowering. So, please keep doing what you're doing.

Emme: [laughs] Thank you, Jackie,

Jackie MacDougall: To learn more about Emme's coaching programs and all of the important work she continues to do, visit grownasswoman.guide/episode160. Thank you so much for listening. This show is made possible by listeners like you. Please, share this episode or any Grown-Ass Woman's Guide episode with a friend. And, if you feel inspired, leave a rating and review on your favorite podcast app. It's my personal mission to support as many women as possible in becoming their most badass grown-ass selves.

Until next time, you are a grown-ass woman. Act accordingly.