

Casey: All right, then let's dive into today's episode. Will you give me your first and last name and your pronouns to kick things off?

Christine: Sure thing. I'm Christine Maziarz. My pronouns. Are she her

Casey: It's funny because full disclosure, part of me never wanted to interview somebody who's.

Main story is the whole empty nesting thing, because I feel like it is when I like I'm working on a book also. And like, as I research resilience, it comes up all the time and I'm like, there's already so many resources and there's already so many people that talk about this, but. Your style and you're a friend.

And like, I was like, you know what? Nope, this is a big life change and I want perspectives and I absolutely need to have you on the show. So thank you for being here today. Well, thank you for having me. Yes. So tell us a little bit about kind of current picture, who you are, what you do right now. So we have a frame of reference as we dive in.

Christine: Alright, my name's Christine. I have a podcast called Your Empty Nest Coach. I started it three years ago. About a year prior, my daughter hit it off to college. She went four years early out of state. So I was thrown into the empty nest really early, and I did not have the usual support system that people have, or you're all going through it together, which made things really interesting.

And I'm really close to my daughter. So. I realized fairly quickly that I did not want to be a hot mess emotionally as she went off, because that's not fair to her. It's not fair to her at age 18. And it's certainly not fair to her at age 14. So I did my work and I spent a year working on myself. Figuring out how to do this, how to handle it all and be okay with it to accept it.

It took about a year to radically just accepted. I knew it was right for her. It was just painful for me at the same time, which I think happens any year. You kind of lose your identity as you're a mom sometimes. And about a year in, I, I kept thinking I've always wanted to coach. I wanted to coach people.

Always have encouraged people, people would come to me and I'd fill that role. Naturally. I had three different ways to go. It was gifted education homeschooling or this, and this kept rising to the top because friends were like,

well, you did it when she went to college at 14. So how did you survive it naturally?

Rose to the top. And then I thought I'm just going to do this. I'm going to create a podcast, help other people. And I did it. It's pretty much, it seems that simple, but like, if you know how much work a podcast is, but that was what it pretty much, like I woke up one day and this is what I'm going to do.

And three years later I'm doing it. It's so fun.

Casey: That's awesome. I love that. I loved, I love seeing that progression of like, not only am I going to. Work on this for myself. This is also a thing that makes sense that I can help other people with and that the podcast and the diving in, and the, you know, not just working on it behind the scenes and pretending like you're okay.

And like, it's like, Nope, here we are. Here's what we're doing. Here's how we do it. Here's how I help others. That's my style too. So I'm a big fan of the all

Christine: in approach. Yeah. I've really liked transparency. I really do. I mean, life is not, I've heard it on your post. Life is not happy and peaceful all the time.

And it can be peaceful as you go through the rough things, but we're not guaranteed perfection things suck sometimes and you just got to embrace it and move on. So yeah, I really, the more you can embrace it, the better it becomes. And I think I learned how to do that through my empty nest transition and looking back, I'm like, wow, I wish I was taught this when I was 18.

Right. Because now I can apply it to absolutely everything and it just feels so good.

Casey: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. So I'm curious, cause this is just not something I'm familiar with. How did your daughter end up in a position of going to college at 14 out of state?

Christine: Yeah, it's kind of crazy, right? That was a long progression.

I mean quick she skipped, I don't even remember what grades. I think she skipped fifth and then eighth grade and we had homeschooled off and on. So. Slow skip those. So she had skipped two and then she had gone to community college. I think it was the age of 12 because I couldn't teach her. Chemistry, you

know, I remember when I first started homeschooling and people would be like, you can't teach chemistry and I'm like, you're right.

You're right. Community college. That's what that's for. And, but that was very obvious to me that while she was fine. Academically, her friends at the community college were all the moms because like the 1920 year olds didn't know what to do with her. And, you know, like, there's this weird thing. So it became really important.

And also the more research you do with gifted, you notice that mental health is difficult for gifted, especially like the higher levels. Like it's just is something you'd really need to be cognizant of. So my whole goal with her, once I realized where she was. Mental health, mental health, mental health. So with the community college, I could see she had no peers and it was, this is really fun story, actually.

So she was doing destination imagination. I don't know if you've ever heard of this. It rings a bell. It's like Odyssey of the mind, which some of that. Yep. So that's like a very similar and she and another homeschool friend were on a team of two and they made it to world finals in Tennessee. We live in Pennsylvania.

So on our. Bookshelf. I had this book that was like, God, I think it's called college at 13, something like that. And I picked it up. I looked at it and I thought, huh, Mary Baldwin university. They have a dorm for girls who skipped all or part of high school look at it. And we were driving right by it to go to world finals.

Well, it was very interesting because I, part of me was like, do I say anything? This is horrifying. She's really young. But I think she. To look at it and I brought it up and she's like, I'm not going to college. I'm not going to do that next year. Like, all right. But maybe you want to do the tour. So by the time the tour was over, she's like, I'm going here, sign that's how, like, it, it just, it was really good fit.

And the whole point for me, most people will say, was it, is it because she wants to be a doctor? You know why? Because you want to start school early. For me, it was. Sorry at my breath. I was like, I've been busy today for me. The most important thing was finding peers, true peers. So here she's one place on the college campus where at least in the dorm, there's other girls like her, who she doesn't have to explain who she is, which is really nice.

And then they're treated the same on campus as all the other student. And she just graduated. So she did. Okay.

Casey: So we're wow, that's awesome. And I would imagine as a parent that there's a little more of a. I would feel a little safer knowing that there is other kids, her age, that there's the university's tuned into that versus just kind of a regular college where she's just one amongst the faces.

And there's kind of nobody tuned into the fact that someone so young is there

Christine: and very much so. Yes, because they did have the right things involved. I mean, I, first of all, I can't imagine having a dorm full of gifted, highly gifted. Kids and having to navigate them and young, they do a really good job because they will test you and find every loophole possible stories are fascinating.

But you know, we, she did actually look at going to a local college and you know, staying at home, but it was the, the peer factor and. You just don't have any, anybody who's looking out for you. Right. I know. Difficult. Yeah. So we got really lucky. We got really lucky.

Casey: Yeah. That's awesome. I didn't even know such a program exists.

I mean, it makes sense that she's definitely not the only kid who's going to college early. And even with like the AP programs that are in high schools now, it's still a different. Experience, and it's still diff you know, I still have to be in the public high school system even really take advantage of that.

And so it makes a lot of sense. So I'm curious. So was it a pretty quick turnaround from like when you picked up that book and realize that college existed to like sending her out the door, like kind of the timeline there of where you had to kind of wrap your brain around it? It

Christine: was probably. It was probably like a solid six to nine months before she got like the acceptance.

Okay. But the time of like having the conversation with my husband at the time and going, ah, I think this might be right, you know, trying to advocate for that. And that was pretty quick. Yeah, because it had to be, I had the book on my shelf, so I wasn't clueless. Right. I knew it was an option, but I didn't really think it would work for our family.

And then probably it was within a month where it was that too. She wants to go there and apply. So yeah, that part was pretty quick. Yeah.

Casey: So, which I would imagine, like, I mean, obviously emotionally you have to start doing the work as soon as she gave any inkling of being interested in the idea. You have to start processing like.

Is this actually really, truly a good idea. How does this work? How do I make peace with this? Like, tell me a little bit about that early stages of realizing this is going to be a thing

Christine: that was pretty fascinating. Yeah, when she was excited. And she decided she wanted to go. We still had the whole world finals experience.

Right. And then the drive home. And we were with a friend who actually, she ended up going the year after my daughter. At the time it was cool, but it was very interesting because most of it, I had the process alone to be quite honest, because first I had to like really talk to my husband about.

And then that's kind of like the level of the finances and the logistics. Right? Right. The emotion side. No one thinks that's a good idea. There's no one in your life that's going to be like, I think it's a really good idea for your 14 year old to go out of state. Like, unless you live in, I think the UK have boarding schools and that's normal, but like that's not in my financial demographic at all.

Right. And it's not like it was free. So like, it was a lot to process and, and most of what I heard was, you know, you're going to ruin her life because she isn't going to get. Was the biggest thing and she isn't going to have a high school graduation. I was like, okay. I don't know. I didn't have a great prom.

So didn't bother her. Right. Same ironically with the pandemic. Most of the people that stayed in her year didn't have either, which is really weird. So yeah, a lot of it was me kind of just alone, trying to process it and figuring out which is what I needed, because most of the work you do have to do on your own to get.

To a place to trust yourself and to. Process your own emotions.

Casey: Right. And was your husband supportive of the idea or like, I I'm thinking about my husband and he knows, I say this on the show all the time. It was logical to a point that it's obnoxious. And so for him, the conversation would very much be finances.

Yes. Like how do we do holiday vacations? Like the emotional part is, would be on me. Like, yes, totally.

Christine: Yeah. So it was exactly the same way. And. Yeah, there gets to a point where it's like, oh, this is going to happen. And then she goes, and you can, you can hear the flip in their mind of like the story they tell, you know what I mean?

You can hear the story. So it's like us, like we have our story and then the story that works for us to move forward. And there's a lot to be said for like, Hey, I'm pretty proud of my kids 14 go into college. You know? So Yeah. He was very supportive in the end. The whole logistics and all of the emotional stuff though.

Yes. That's that was all me. I think that's normal though. So yeah. How was

Casey: the first, how was the early days? Like one of the things I like to kind of highlight in the show, because when we talk about resilience and we talk about life-changing events, we either kind of. Wallow in the grief and the hardship of it, or we gloss over the grief and talk about how like, amazing and like how much it changed, just like, but you kind of just said it there's that thing of like, being so proud of your 14 year old going off to college, but also like, holy hell, my 14 year olds leaving home like that.

But what were the early days? Like

Christine: for me personally? Yeah. Yeah. I think it's easy for me to flip into the logical side to tactically make it happen if that makes sense. So I think like I did that because it's very, and I think this is very common at any age when people go through anything, like whether it's a job change or your kid's 19, and they're going to college is that, you know, you get the dorm list, you get the, when do you have to have the checklist for the financial stuff.

So there's all these things. Do to make it happen. So, yeah, it doesn't, I didn't feel any of the processing really happened until like she was gone. Like, I, I knew it was coming and I was supportive. But then like the drive home and realizing that, oh my gosh, she's not gonna like walk down the hall tomorrow.

You know, like she's still alive,

Casey: but like there's this moment that she wasn't

Christine: home. Oh, my goodness. It's kind of horrifying. It's really weird when and it's, it's some parents are totally fine with it. I think, I don't think there's a right wrong or it's just everybody's experience is different.

But for me, I think the hardest thing for me was when she was sick and I couldn't just. Help her out. Like that was a weird, weird thing for me that was like, oh, do I, I, I am so glad she did it because she is a strong cookie. Like she can really, and the life skill she has. I didn't go to school far away from my family.

So I did move out of state later, but college itself was 20 minutes away. So I can't say that college helped me to become a better at life skills. Put it that way where she kind of had to, cause she couldn't come home on weekends and get her laundry done. Like she had to do it.

Casey: Yeah. Yeah. She just, all of a sudden had to step into this role and balance that with also schoolwork and living in a new environment and.

All the things that go with

Christine: stuff. Fascinating. Yeah. Thinking about it. I'm like, wow. That's a lot

Casey: her age. Made it easier or harder for you? I would assume harder if anything, or do you think this would have played out kind of the same for you emotionally? If she had done a more traditional going off to school at 18?

Christine: That's interesting. I actually think in some ways I had it easier and this is why, because I think around that age, is where moms and daughters typically heads a lot. And by her and I, and I don't know that she and I would have gotten as bad as I've seen some because we are, we talk about stuff, but at the same time, She went away right at that moment.

So I was the person she reached out to. So I, I do think I had that benefit

Casey: interest actually makes a lot of sense. 14 to 16 is where I think pretty much everybody I know, including myself hated our mother. Right. Yeah.

Christine: I know.

Casey: And now you've completely changed that dynamic, right? That

Christine: patch. I noticed that.

About two years in and everyone was complaining about their kids. And I was like, you're lucky, they're there. You know, I was probably very annoying.

Casey: Right, right. And I wonder too, also the nut shifts that dynamic on her side of like at 18, everybody's going to college and we're all in that same mind frame.

Headspace of like, oh, we're adults now off doing adult thing was where for hers, it was like, no, I'm still a kid. And I'm away from home. Like I, that dynamic I'm sure shifted dramatically on both sides. Yeah. It was playing to how you interact.

Christine: Yeah. A lot of kids who like just going through puberty and her norm, their picture in the beginning and the end, like, oh, they are different humans.

It's a middle school, but they're on the college campus. It's crazy

Casey: that horrifying from my administrator, like.

They are really good. I was just going to say, bless those humans that take that job. Wow. So she is graduated and back home. Now she

Christine: she's back home. Yeah.

Casey: Yeah. So 17.

Christine: 18. She just turned 18 in July and she has home. She was going to do film and you know grad school for film is not cheap. So it was very interesting to watch her navigate.

Do I still want to do film? Do I want to apply next year? And she actually launched a podcast today with, I saw friends episode drop of that. Yeah. Like she, and she's doing an MLS. Online school here and which is great because we get along really, really well. We were like roommates in the house right now, which is lovely.

You know, there are some really tough things when you graduate at 18 from college and you're not. A lot of the students in that school will like go to Oxford

and get their PhD. So they're like right back into academia and to come back into normal life and be 18 and graduated. Like most people don't get it.

So there is a huge adjustment on this side. I kind of expected. Right. And it's really interesting to watch, but I feel like my job is to support her and I'm really excited to have her home and I know it's not going to be permanent, so I'm getting ready. Like whether it's one year or three years, it's going to be what

Casey: she needs.

So. That's interesting. Yeah. I remember having an interesting conversation with my mom. So I deployed when I was 18, 19 fully came home from iRocket just before my 20th birthday. And so I was, you know, very different circumstances, but similar thing of like came back home when all of my friends were. Kind of wrapping up college or like learning how to pay bills and do all this kind of normal grownup stuff.

And here I am dealing with post-traumatic stress and having been wounded in combat, and it was this like really bizarre. Like hiccup in my early twenties to then have to like, like, I don't think I was then on par with my peers again to like our late twenties once, like everybody was out of school and I finally went back and finished my bachelor's and we were all like getting married then all of a sudden it's like, okay.

Oh, I know what the conversation is about. And I would imagine she's probably going kind of through a similar life. Well, but everybody's picking majors and she's done with college and thinking about grad school and like, oh, I've already lived on my own for three years. And now I'm back home. Like the allure of turning 18 and running away is that's like already kind of been addressed.

And it's, it's

Christine: bizarre because if you think about it, you know, she's 18, but she has literally nothing in common with most 18 year olds. So if you think about dating, like I told her, I was like, it's going to be somebody. Like grad school, age, traditional age that you're going to give was she's like, no, no, no, that's too old image.

Oh no, I get what you're saying. They're like, I'm going into the dorm now. She's like, I've been there, done that. Yeah. And I can't for you. Two is very similar. Like how do you even relate in some ways?

Casey: Yeah. Yeah. I ended up having a lot of my friends that were older and I just went and worked for a few years and.

Disconnected from a lot of my high school friends and kind of found a whole new world to fit in and then kind of balanced itself out later. So I think on one hand, I would imagine that's kind of great for her to be home. And you said it sounds like more of a Roommate relationship that you have, then that parental relationship where she can explore these things and have these conversations and kind of figure that out instead of trying to like, go find a roommate and yeah.

Quote unquote normal.

Christine: Yeah. And financially, I don't even know how you can swing that right now. Right, right. It's interesting because it is one of the things I talk about often in the podcast is when your kids go to college, Of any age, the person who returns or even the military or the person who returns is not the person who left.

Yes. And to remember that the person who walks in that door, you need to like, get to know them again and treat them like you've just met them and not like they're the end. And it works on both sides. Cause like the kid will come home and expect the laundry to be made and the dinners made it could, could be the posit or, and vice versa.

Yeah, and you just kind of fit into these old roles, but really if you start to fill the coach role, which I like to think about as a parent and just like enjoy them for who they are. It's like our partners, like be who you are. I'm happy to have you here. Let's have a conversation we can argue and work it out and it's fine.

And move on. Okay. It's, it's almost magical to see that.

Casey: I love that you bring that up of being aware of the fact that who comes back as a different person, intimately, her being aware that you have also changed as a person and the dynamic in your house has changed. I have a friend right now, who's having some issues with her moderate and she's my friend is in her forties and she's having some issues with her mother.

And I said, does your, does your mom see you as an adult? Like, does she realize you're a grownup stop my friend dead in her tracks. And she's like, no,

Christine: no, they sometimes. And

Casey: she's like realizing now, so now they're navigating like that simple, simple. I say, quote, unquote question brought up a whole bunch of stuff.

And my friend, all of a sudden, it's like, wow, I have to navigate a whole set of conversations with my mother now because this isn't fair. And I don't think we talk enough about that change. In relationships and in dynamics and being aware that like we talk about growing, we talk about our kids growing it's life changes, life stage changes, but like she's a whole different person with three years of experiences that you're only a smidge of.

Christine: Yes. Yeah. Yeah. And the, like, it's little things. It's funny because I didn't realize how important it was until I started like silly, silly. Is that a word I made these hotline videos where I'm talking on a banana and I'm like, Hey, your kid's coming back from school. And I do this whole voice. And it was meant for the moms to say, you know, you chill out, let your kid be your kid.

They might be tired. And the students. Ate it up and were like, I'm going to send this to my mom and they need to know this and like a million plus views later. I'm like, oh, this is something, this is like something serious, you know? And then I have them, like my parents still open my mail. And then in the comments they're 30 and their kids, their parents don't open their mail.

I'm like, okay, that's illegal. But interesting. It really there isn't that, that moment I feel like where we notice it and it's going to change every year too. Yeah. You know, even me with my parents and it's, it's like, you have to notice it to

Casey: appreciate it. Yeah. I remember having a very distinct conversation with my mom when she started dating again, after her and my dad divorced and.

She started telling me about her boyfriend. And I think she could see the look on my face and she was like, time out. Like you get to talk to me about your boyfriends. You're 30. I no longer have to tip toe around the subject. I was like, no, you're fine. That you're right. That's just weird. It's just weird.

But like all of a sudden, like she had to, because she had been making that progression, but we hadn't talked about it in a number of years, we talked about kind of the very post Iraq MI. And then we've kind of talked about me as I got in my later twenties and got married, but we hadn't done it like a catch-up on that conversation.

And now she'd gone through this big life changes. She was like, timeout, this goes both ways. And I was like, oh yeah, like fair. It's true. Boyfriend is still weird from my mother, but then it became, but then it became a thing that it was an honor to get off again, relationship. And it became a joke amongst my friends who wanted the update on my mom's dating drama.

And I'm like, you guys are killing me, like, oh my goodness. You know, but I think that's so awesome that you guys can, they, you see, do you end up having, as you talk about. Empty nest stuff. Cause I guess when I think about that, my brain is very much on the, essentially the grieving of the kids leaving and like realizing your children are growing up.

But do you end up having a lot of conversations on the other side of it, of kids coming back home or like that kind of post-college phase, even if they don't come home, that's still, there's still another change in the dynamic. Yeah. What I'm

Christine: noticing. Really a lot right now, especially the pandemic just threw everything crazy.

Cause I did a whole series on the not so empty nest because everyone came home and, and it made me realize how often that happens. I mean, you know, people who are 40 go back home and live because of financial situations or for whatever reason, medical and it happens and each time that happens, you have to reevaluate it.

So I. I've also just thought somebody coming in one of my Instagrams that, you know, they're five, six years into all their kids being gone and they're still randomly the emotions pop up and you know, you have to navigate them because it hits you when you least expect it. Yeah. That, that so much has changed.

And they're not, you can't go back. They're not, they're not going to be in the little Halloween costume know anymore. So while I. Blake to focus on. The idea of like catching moms, moms in particular, but any parent early, so that as you go through the transition, you feel good, which makes everybody's life easier.

Yeah. It's, they're all, I think whether you catch it when you're 60. Or 35 I've I've had mothers who have their kids who are three, who were like, I'm already worried about it, like, wow. But it's true. Like the, really the moment you have

your kid there. He, they're not going to stay for whatever reason, like you don't control them.

So there is the whole purpose is for them to go and be who they are. But we forget that.

Casey: I wonder too, how much social media, the last 15 years has really hyped that awareness of that. Growing up. Cause like, I mean, now you have like kindergarten graduation and they're in a cap and gown, which when I was a kid was only a high school thing.

So like right now, like every stage of life, it's like, I think it's great that we're marking these events and these achievements that our kids are making. But at the same time, it's this giant reminder that this like big thing of them leaving is looming. Yes. Yep.

Christine: Very interesting too, because as you're talking, my mind is processing the pictures of the moments, right.

But they're almost like our distractions, you know, like we take the pictures and we post them and we don't have to think about the fact that. They are growing up and we're not, we might not be listening in our household to what they're really saying or what they want versus what, how it presents sense to the world, which is really the most powerful thing we can give any human, but mostly our kids.

Like I hear you.

Casey: And I think it's amazing. Like I want to come in. You on, you were the one who realized the thing about mental health and about out-of-state college and showed it to her and then let her kind of run with it from there. Like how many parents would make that connection and go, oh hell no, I'm not going to point this out.

Like let alone have the kid brought that to it. Like how many, you know, how many kids have had to advocate and fight for themselves to get into these kinds of programs? Like, I think that's huge as a parent to be able to say like, Here's the thing that terrifies me. How do you feel?

Christine: It's funny. Cause you could ask her, I'm always presenting I'm.

I love to consider all the options. So I'll present anything and I'm always intrigued to see whether it's for me or someone else, what interests them and what they'll continue. Go for, and I think a lot of times that overwhelms people, because I'm like, what about this and this and this and this. And I'll say it too, to watch their reaction.

And they think, I think they should do all of it. I'm just kind of curious to

Casey: see I'm very similar. I want to see all the options I want to see. This was kind of how my husband and I, how I figured out the childless thing for us, like you start in fertility treatments. The last thing you want is to know.

Not have a kid. And we kind of hit that point where it's like, okay, what are our options? There's adoption. There's surrogacy. There's more IVF now. Now, now they're childless. Hm. I don't like that, but let's look at it. And like, as I looked at it, I was like, oh, oh. And so then it was like, then you start testing the language with other people and it'd be like, I'd have a conversation with my mom.

I'd be like, well, what if we just didn't have kids? And I see people's reaction to it. And it's like, okay, like try that reaction on size. Yeah. Self. And, and now like I play with, this is another thing I do. I play with language all the time. So whether I say I'm, child-free, I'm childless, I'm infertile. Like the different words I use, I sometimes pick.

Simply to see the reaction because I'm a jerk and own it.

Christine: I identify with that. How

Casey: can I create a conversation and make people really uncomfortable, really fast. But yeah, I love that. I, that I, I. I wish people, I think that's one of the lessons in, let's say for today's episode of like, I wish more people had that open-mindedness to, what about this?

What about this? What about this? Because I think it makes the resilience component of this, that much easier, because as you're looking at the decision of my kid's 14 and looking at moving out of state, Well, what does that mean for me? What does that mean for my marriage? What does that mean for her? What does that mean for, you know, and you can play that game with yourself and try all those things on.

Christine: Yeah. And sometimes you just go dive in, go for it. You see where it falls. And you know, I, my word or my words statement, I guess, for this year

was enjoy the journey. And and for some reason I knew 20, 21 was not. Gonna be the year. Like I've had really amazing things this year, but I just going into 2021, I knew that 2021 was really preparing me for 20, 22, if that makes sense.

And I just knew it with all my heart. So I'm like, I'm just going to enjoy the journey. So I've had things through, you know, thrown at me and I'm going to enjoy the journey. It's all good. I'm learning. And you, do you learn so much either about yourself or others? Yeah. Yep. As you just dive into things, sometimes it's just what comes to you and you go for it.

Casey: Yep. Yep. I'm curious, kind of change of tangent here. When you do empty nest coaching, as you, the people you interact with on social media, people who plug for your tick talk, people go check out her Ted talk. It'll be linked to show notes. Yeah. Do you ever, is it. Pretty much always parents and predominantly moms with kids leaving the house, or do you ever run into empty nesters of other dynamics?

I, I think about like your kid's gone to college and for you has separate, you know, you're getting separated in your marriage. Like, does that ever come up or does empty nest tie so strongly to the parent child dynamic that that's really all you ever see

Christine: and talk about? Oh no, we talked. Literally everything because it's, it starts there.

You know, usually, usually that's the trigger, but then when we coach it out, we realize, you know, it's a lot of identifying the same things that are going on in your life with all the relationships in your life. And. We have covered what do you want to do with your life ahead? And it's very interesting that people will come with a certain idea of what they want to do and go through different progressions and some decide, you know, the very happy with where they are, but they feel pressured to do something big because that's what they're supposed to do.

And I'm like, no, you get to be. Whoever you don't have to make it. Doesn't have to be someone else's dream. And then, you know, there's relationships. Yes. I'm currently in the process of a divorce and part of me, honestly, feared sharing that with others, because the last thing I want is people to think I'm pro divorce, which I'm not maybe for us, but it's just, you, you realize where you are in life and what's important.

And. Eventually I'm very much at this point in my life. I know I am the only one responsible for my happiness and I know I can't make someone. Happy. Yeah, you have to do the work. I, I can support and encourage, but in the end I can't get in someone's head and be like, be happy. It doesn't work that way. So sometimes like things just don't work out and you have to go separate ways for people to be happier.

And that's where we are. So. I've covered everything, but I've had people reach out to me before the separation and say, I can't use you because you're married and I'm not. So people will like think that because my circumstances are not exactly the same. They can't identify, which is interesting. And it just thought it totally.

What fits for them, but I write like interesting. Well, now

Casey: like, that's one. I catch myself sometimes as I don't have kids. And so when I'm talking to people about dynamics that have, you know, people who have kids, or even who are childless child-free by choice, like there are different dynamics. And I'm like, I have to presume a lot about parenting, but like, I'm a pretty good aunt.

And like, I love my, for children a lot. So like inferring some things here, but like, if somebody says, like, I can't work with you because they don't, you know, you don't have kids, you don't have like, I respect that. Like I get that, but yeah, I'm also very pro. I'm not pro divorced, but in pro normalizing divorce,

Christine: I upset.

Yes.

Casey: I have another friend who recently had the conversation with her husband. They're in the process of getting divorce now. And she's like, it's so hard. Cause nothing was wrong. Quote, unquote, wrong. And everybody keeps asking like, well, did he cheat? Or did he hit you? Everybody wants to know like the scandal.

And I'm like, no, like relationships, she, that conversation we just had about the change in your dynamic. When your child came home from college. Our spouse or partner with those dynamics, those things change. And sometimes. The bond, the is not even the right word. Sometimes the dynamic between the two people doesn't survive that change and that's okay.

Christine: That's good wording. That was really good wording. Thank you.

Casey: I just like, let's normalize. We, we taught, like, I talked so much about boundaries and cutting out toxic people and like, I have made some hard choices in my, I was no contact with my dad the last several years he was alive. Like. Why would we not do that to the person who's living in our house with those 24 7 2, if it's not a good fit anymore?

Christine: I think. And it's interesting because I do follow a lot of people on Instagram who are. Midlife marriage and reconnect. And I'm like, maybe they shouldn't, but it is interesting because you know, my, my husband, he really divorce was not an option to him. And I had to kind of say, Hey, what if it was because we shouldn't stay married because.

It's not an option. We should stay married because we love each other. We support each other. We are, I mean, you're right. We live together and we have another human hair. So I feel like it's stressful. It's not fun for anybody. And sometimes that's all someone needs. It's really scary to have that conversation, especially when, like so quickly he was like, oh yeah, thanks for that permission.

But like, you know, in your head, You know that like it needs to be said and it's, and, and it just doesn't feel good for someone to be like, Ooh, we're not, I'm sorry did that I'm not going to divorce you because it's not an option. Like that doesn't feel very good. Right,

Casey: right. Yeah. That's, that's the threshold at this point,

Christine: the lowest, right, right.

Belief. Very like, that's how we're re we were raised to think that

Casey: yeah. And I don't want to. Yeah. And I don't want to bash people who are, who have that mentality and that mindset I get, like, that's where a lot of people are at. And that's where it's like, I want to normalize conversations about divorce because I think I know my mom was, she was in her sixties.

When she left my dad late fifties, when her and my dad finally divorced 25 years of marriage, finally divorced. And to see her. Thrive after that marriage, like by the time she came and told me, I was like, thank God, cook Lord. I called this like three years ago. Thank you for joining the conversation.

Christine: Like

Casey: not my beliefs as the child and like my thing, but it was very similar, but we like have those conversations and to see her thrive and I'm like, what can we not normalize?

Christine: The pursuit of what I think. I totally think I heard this on a podcast, like two years earlier where someone had said they, they met with their husband every year. Like, I don't know if they had a date and they were like, do we still want to do this? Do we still love each other? Do we want to get married?

And I was like, when I first heard that. That's horrifying. And then I was like, let me think about that. Why is it horrifying and why does that scare me? And it took me a couple of years to like really work on that thought and realize, wow, there's a lot of power in that. And there's a lot of freedom when, when you both are going to be happier apart.

Right. Like, that's just better for both of you and that might not be the case. Maybe you work it out and it's all better together, but exactly. And it'd be nice to know

Casey: exactly. Yeah. Yeah. And, and take that time to have those conversations together and do the work and if the work works great. And if it.

Great. And yeah, I would imagine. And when you kind of said this earlier, that a lot of the work you did in kind of becoming the nest coach and processing your daughter moving out, I'm sure a lot of that work played in again. As you realized that for yourself and brought those conversations to the table with your husband?

Christine: Yes. Yes. It did take a co a margarita to

but yeah, it's stuff you can use over and over in every area of your life. And then, and then when you have the decision, you know, you figure it out. You're going to have all the emotions. All these same emotions and there's the radical acceptance of it. And then there's the time of like, okay, now I need to gift myself with processing through the emotions.

And I had like two to three weeks where I was really sad. And you can look at my stories in my, in my tech talks, they're there, you know? And I recently was like, just mad. I needed to be mad now. I feel very peaceful, but like you do, you need to gift yourself with the time. To process through the emotions too.

Cause I think the radical acceptance with ignoring the emotions isn't healthy either.

Casey: Right. Right. And I think not only ignoring those emotions, fighting that societal trained, like I shouldn't feel relieved to have this conversation or like I shouldn't, I should be mad or I should be sad, but I'm not like, so often we get this pressure.

When your kid moved out, I'm sure there was also some days you were thrilled to not have a child in the house. And like, there's this pressure you should be sad because your 14 year old is a way going to college, like sad face. And I'm sure there were some days I was like, hell yeah. Oh yeah. You can do a lot more stuff.

Right. And I think there's a lot of power in, like you said, letting, letting the emotions be like, Hm. There's no right or wrong. There's no right or wrong pace for them to come out. Correct. Hold conflicting emotions at the same time.

Christine: I think that is powerful. That is the thing this year that I have really embraced is that.

While going through all of this stuff that is difficult and hard. I was also having some of these amazing high is and recognizing that they can both exist at the same time is something that I never really, I guess it's happened before in my life, but I just really embraced it this year because it's powerful.

Okay. And you feel, you feel like you're supposed to be sad for so long or like, how can you be happy when all this other stuff's happening? It's very interesting. It's very interesting. You said

Casey: that. Yeah. It's one that I became acutely aware of as we were officially. Done within fertility treatments and like officially childless because we just spent two years doing back-to-back rounds of IVF, multiple miscarriages.

I mean, it was soul crushing. So there was this moment, like I distinctly remember actually waking up from my last DNC and I woke up and I knew I wasn't pregnant. And I knew that was our last trial. Like that was our final answer. And I was released. And because I had an answer, I now knew what my future held.

I now knew which direction we were pointing and being able to articulate that to people, because there are people to this day who, as you just did are very. Oh,

my gosh. I'm so sorry. You went through that, which I appreciate. But also at the same time, I'm like, no, I fucking love my life. And I understand,

Christine: I understand both of them at the same

Casey: time I do it.

Yeah. And so there's this, like, it became so aware to me that like, I had to be able to like explain this thing to people and people are like, oh, I didn't know. That was an option. Like, oh yeah. Like I cried in the shower every day for six months and then got out of the shower. Went and dreamed about what I want to do with my life now that I don't have to raise tiny humans,

Christine: my mind double incomes.

Like, is that more like, what, what is this

Casey: for us? It was, we dropped everything and moved across the country. We're both Pacific Northwest, born and raised. And we moved to Virginia because why not?

Christine: I love that, you know, and it stick.

Casey: Yeah. Like, and that doesn't mean that I my deaf, I had a nephew born on Halloween and it was a little bit of a gut punch.

Because it's another baby in the family. That's not mine. And then I turned around and slept in the next day. Exactly, exactly. Yeah. I just, I, I, it's just one of those things. That's just so important to me to highlight in these conversations and I think you're so good at that. That is what draws me to, why do I follow empty nest coach on techniques?

Christine: I know I'm impressed. You have me on your show. I was thinking about this you're childless and you talk, you're so open about it and that the fact that you have me on your podcast is amazing. Thank you,

Casey: absolutely. But I think that's what I'm drawn to you about is that you, you, you, you see that you acknowledged like, yeah, it was scary.

I had to do work. It was a thing I had to wrap my brain around, but it's also a thing that can be positive and you can see the good out of it. And it's also, like

you said, you kind of made it as a passing comment, but. The kid's still alive. And now she's back in your house tonight. Oh yeah. Do you think you'll do, do you think you'll have any kind of.

empty nest reaction when she leaves again or has that dynamic shifted enough where it'll just be a change in the household routine? I

Christine: think it's going to be more that like, well, I think no matter what, you always have emotions that are gonna pop up. So I th I expect them, but I truly, I support anything she does.

Yeah. I think she's like the coolest human ever. And I'm just lucky to ha like seriously, I wish all parents felt this way about their kids, because I think the world would be a happier place, but it just, I just want to see her do whatever she's meant to do. So I think I have my own plans and part of me some days, I'm like, I'm sorry.

Like, do we have to stay here for three years? Like how long do I have to say? I don't like, I'm stressing her out. Cause we've made a bargain that I'll stay in this location for three years and she can live here and then we'll figure it out. Cause I do have this dream where I live in an RV and travel around the country.

And so I have other plans and that's the thing. And whether that happens in three years or 13 years. Right. I'm okay. But I guess I

Casey: hadn't even thought about that. I mean, that's, that's fair. She moved out you're you aren't married anymore. That dynamic has changed. Like you get to pick the new path now, except that she moved back in,

Christine: she moves to back in and then the separation happened.

I was like, so we're, we're in that ha the rental. So, which is perfect because I can move easily, which I like. Right. But yeah, at some point financially, it might not even be able to stay here, so I might not want to stay here. So but

Casey: at this point, you know, where it's it's that same, she's gotta be aware that you've got stuff going on too.

Christine: She's keenly aware,

Casey: like you raised a good one. Can't get unwell. Is there any last parting? Piece of advice. Someone who's, whether their kid is three or 18 and they're

starting to kind of feel those washes of dread something that you'd like to leave us with.

Christine: I think the most important thing is to be present with your kid and that moment, because it goes so fast. And none of us are. I mean, that's going to be a little brutal, but none of us are guaranteed tomorrow. And what we do with this moment and just making the time where even though we're exhausted, if they're little and you're getting no sleep to make time for them, kids, most kids, I'm going to say 99.99 do not wake up to make our lives miserable.

They wake up to try to like, do the best they can, like we are and give them the benefit of the doubt and just remember and give yourself grace. For the moments where you might not feel so good about how you responded be patient with yourself, because you're amazing.

Casey: I love it. Thank you so much, Christine.

This was a delight.

Christine: It was a delight. Thank you for having me, Casey. Yeah.

Casey: And I will make sure I have your website, your tick talk. All the good things will be in the show notes as well.