

Jamie Silverstein BARE Podcast Interview

Susan: Alright, everybody! Welcome, Jamie Silverstein, to the podcast. Thank you so much for being here.

Jamie: Thank you for having me.

Susan: So, Jamie, you have quite the résumé. You are an Olympic bronze medalist. You are a yogi. You own The Grinning Yogi in Seattle, correct?

Jamie: Yeah, I own Grinning Yogi actually in Portland and Seattle.

Susan: Ohh!

Jamie: And I have to correct you. I didn't get bronze at the Olympics, but we were bronze in United States.

Susan: You know the Wikipedia's wrong then. Wikipedia has you (laughs) an Olympic bronze medalist.

Jamie: (Laughs) I love it! That's cool with me.

Susan: (Laughs) So, Jamie, you have quite an amazing life story, and I wanted to invite you on to the BARE Podcast because you have been an eating disorder advocate and role model for people in recovery for decades now. And I wanted to share a little bit of your story here with my listeners because now you're a new mom!

Jamie: Yeah! I have a one-year-old who turned one on Friday.

Susan: Oh, my gosh.

Jamie: Yeah.

Susan: And so, we were talking just a little bit before the podcast started about how motherhood has really impacted your view on body and food and all of those things. So, talk a little bit about that.

Jamie: Sure. Yeah. Well, so, like you said, I am – I've been in recovery since I was in my very early 20s, and even to the point where I'd worked at treatment centers for almost a decade, kind of holding myself as an option to other people. I remember when I was really struggling. I didn't understand that people got through this. And so, for me, part of my advocacy work and part of my kind of accountability work to the point of say, like, "Hey, I'm human. I don't always do it right, but there is a way out of this." And what's been so interesting since I had the kiddo is just how when life changes – and this is how I know that I'm doing the work but also how I know there is work to do – like, when life changes, everything that you haven't felt or dealt

with, it surfaces, and then you have to consciously pick, like, *How am I going to sit in this work?* and *Am I going to numb out and use food and, you know, use sleeplessness and use any of these things to not heal, or am I going to let myself feel, knowing that sometimes that's retched –*

Susan: Mmm.

Jamie: – *but it's also the wake-up call.*

Susan: Oh, my gosh. So many – *whoo!* So many things you said in just a couple of sentences.

Jamie: (Laughs)

Susan: First of all, that sometimes the work is retched, which I do think that sometimes my clients when they enter into this work with me with the BARE process think that they're doing it wrong if they feel crappy.

Jamie: Mmm!

Susan: And – right? Like, *I'm somehow doing it wrong.*

Jamie: Yeah.

Susan: *Jamie, Susan, whoever seems so happy; therefore, this isn't for me or I can't make it through.* So, the first thing that you said was that, like, just being a role model or a light at the end of the tunnel that, like, hey, people get through this. Secondly, different phases of your life bring up different things, and there's just another layer of work to be done and sometimes it's retched.

Jamie: (Laughs)

Susan: And that there's an alternative to numbing out.

Jamie: Yeah. Well, I mean, I'm of the mind that any kind of, you know – let's just call them bad coping skills we have, like, they came in as like a symptom management. They are not necessarily the problem.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And, you know, for me, like the retched part or the hard part is, like, there are things that I've had to feel and heal and kind of like hold people accountable to and hold myself accountable to, and that stuff's hard.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And it's definitely easier to grab a cookie or, you know, not grab a cookie or whatever –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – the thing is, but I think that’s also the work to be done. It’s the work of being human.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And unfortunately, like the moment we’re in – and I notice in myself – so we do, like, no screens around the baby –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – and sometimes when it’s really quiet, like, I have this compulsion like I just don’t want to be in the quiet. My mother-in-law’s walking down the stairs.

Susan: That’s okay. Hey.

Jamie: But it’s really interesting to me that, like, the work is again and again teaching ourselves to be present when maybe the present isn’t the place we want to be –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – you know?

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: But –

Susan: What did you notice – after you became a mom –

Jamie: Yeah.

Susan: – what did you notice, like, was a trigger for you or something that invited you to do some more work?

Jamie: Yeah. Oh, gosh. I mean, I think, for me, the thing that I’ve been working on the most lately is, like, I kept on – like, you know, the first six months, the first nine months, like, *Oh, I’m just waiting to get my life back and then everything will organize back as it was*, because I had a really nice kind of system of self-care going.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And that, you know, like after about nine months, I realized, like, *Oh, it’s not gonna go back*; like, this is my new normal and that’s really terrifying, because then it’s figuring out, like, how I get my needs met as an individual and as a career woman and as a wife and now as a

mama, and it's incredibly overwhelming. And I think, for me, one of my triggers and soft spots is just feeling overwhelmed –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – because that's a hard place to feel, especially when we, like, label ourselves as successful or together or –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – any number of things.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And then, of course, just like the drama of my body is not my own. You know, I'm lucky enough to be able to breastfeed my son and all that, but –

Susan: (Laughs)

Jamie: – you know, all of the things that I would do potentially to get myself in a line, well now I also have to make sure that, like, I'm getting him in a line first, and there's a little bit of tension there –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – which we don't talk about as moms; like, the tension between, like, ourselves and our kids, and I think women are shamed for putting themselves first sometimes.

Susan: Oh, for sure. I mean, a huge part of my work is – because I'm a mom. My kids are older now. I mean, they're almost 20 and almost 18. They both drive. You know, they feed themselves. But I can remember, you know, a lot of the things that moms are taught is that, like, *This isn't your season*. Like, *You're later* or, you know, all of the needs of the family come first. And the truth of the matter is when Mom gets a front burner, everybody ends up with a front burner. Like, you know? If Mama ain't happy (laughs), ain't nobody happy in that house. And so, it's super-important for women to be – if, like you run two successful yoga studios and you're a mom and how to do that in a way where you don't lose yourself.

Jamie: Yeah. Well, first off, I want to take myself off this really complimentary pedestal you just gave me (laughs) because, you know, like the behind-the-scenes? Like, I can turn the camera around, like, the house is not together – you know? Like, I think we're very quick to share all of our successes and then internally a lot of people feel like, *I'm not that*.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And I can tell you, like, there are some things that are going really well and part of that is that, like, I've asked for help. I have a lot of people that work for me. And there are some things that I'm still learning how to manage.

Susan: Right.

Jamie: And I want to be open about that because, you know, I would hate for someone to listen to this and – because they're learning how to manage, too – feel like they're doing it wrong.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And then, there's such a cultural script around motherhood, like – it's funny. I love your burner analogy, but my mother-in-law who's in town because she came down for the birthday and she's rad and a great grandma and she was a wonderful mother to my husband, but like, she's certainly said that thing that you said, where it's like, *Well, these first couple of years are for the kids* and how do I look at that and look at her parenting, which was so successful, but also figure out how it's going to work for me? You know?

Susan: Yeah. I mean, I think that that's the thing is that every woman has to figure out what kind of flow works for them and, you know, I have a lot of help, as well, and have always had a lot of help. And I think that that is part of – you know, modern motherhood, we're so isolated compared to generations before us, where it really *did* take a village and there was a village and – and, you know, I think that it has been *really* important – and I love that you shared that because, you know – I have a couple of blogs I'll link in the show notes of my *It Takes a Village*, like, all the people that help me pull off everything that I pull off, and if I didn't have them, you know, I wouldn't have a front burner. But yeah, I mean, I do think that also previous generations, that's where we learned some of these lessons that, you know, like *It's not about you* and *It's all about the kids*, and I politely disagree, you know?

Jamie: (Laughs) Or impolitely disagree.

Susan: Yeah.

Jamie: It's an important message to give to people.

Susan: I mean, I just think that that sends a message to women that we are not as important. I mean, that – culturally, we're taught that we're not; that, like, our opinions don't matter, our votes don't matter, our bodies are only for certain things, and I'm for women taking what they need and saying what they want and need. And for some women who relish in the role of mom, that still doesn't mean that your needs don't matter and come last. You know?

Jamie: Yeah.

Susan: You can enjoy very much being a mom and being a homemaker and being in a nurturing role and yet still be worthy of time for yourself.

Jamie: I think that was so well articulated. And I mean, you're like one of the women leading charge, so thank you for that.

Susan: Well, I don't know – I'm trying (laughs).

Jamie: You are!

Susan: It's certainly trying to deliver the message because any of – because from my experience, I mean, I was the mom after school pick-up shoving a wheel of brie in my face with some wine –

Jamie: (Laughs)

Susan: – because I couldn't figure out how to say what I needed and feel like – feel important or empowered enough to say, "You know what? You know, I need some help here –"

Jamie: Totally.

Susan: " – and I need something else." So –

Jamie: And I think there's this weird – even though it is 2018 – there's this weird, like, gender role to it. Like, so my husband comes home from work, he says hi to the kid, and then he does his next thing to take care of himself, and there's, like, no internal drama about it.

Susan: Right.

Jamie: And I'm just like looking at him, marveling, because, you know, every second that I'm not actively mothering, you know – and it's so interesting. I was talking to someone and the word – I think the word – maybe it was "parenting," but it wasn't even really a verb until the past, like, 20 or 30 years.

Susan: Yes.

Jamie: But it's like one way we chain ourselves. And then, for me, like, if we're going to circle back to the body image stuff, like, when I feel like I'm doing a good job, I'm much more willing to take good care of myself and –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – now having another role come in that I feel like I could potentially fail at – or to be honest, most days I feel like I'm failing at –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – it's hard for me to then continue to do positive self-care because I deserve it. I think a lot of what my work is, is to not be in competition with myself –

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: – or not do that little, like, conditionality thing and to just remember – and that's what I love about being a mom, like, he came into this world and he's, like, so frickin' lovable.

Susan: Mm hm.

Jamie: And not because he did anything, just 'cause that's his nature.

Susan: Yeah.

Jamie: And you know? Like, I think we all need to remember that that's our nature, too.

Susan: Yes! Yes, queen. Yes!

Jamie: (Laughs)

Susan: It *is* our nature. And it is some – and I agree with you that there's no earning necessary to deserving taking time and care for yourself. And it is interesting to look at these kids. My kids have been my greatest teachers –

Jamie: Hmm.

Susan: – because they don't come into this world thinking, like, *Hmm. You know what? I'll only have an ounce of chicken and a little bit of butternut squash, and I'll save up some points and then later I'll have that chocolate cake.* You know? Like, they're not basing their body's worth on what they earned for the day. *Did I play well enough today?* (Laughs)

Jamie: Yeah. Yeah.

Susan: So, amazing. Well, thank you so much for sharing. I love that we have been able to see a glimpse into motherhood and your journey.

Jamie: Yeah.

Susan: And I appreciate everything that *you* are doing to elevate women's roles, as well.

Jamie: Aww. Well, thank you for that. And yeah, it's so great to meet you. You're kind of rad. I went down the rabbit hole a little bit with you, too, and, like, yeah. I really admire what you're doing.

Susan: Ohh! Thank you very much.

Jamie: Yeah.

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