

## The Full Stop episode 60 with Jessica Hepburn

Michael Hughes (00:00:00) - This podcast was produced on the traditional lands of the people of the nation. We wish to pay our respects to the elders past, present and those emerging.

Jessica Hepburn (00:00:11) - I think to live a rich life, which is what I want to do in the face of what I couldn't do, that drives me more than anything else, you know, to live the richest life I can live. It's to balance those two things. You know, it's the balance. The times of wintering, of stillness, of introspection, with the times of going out into the world and, you know, putting yourself out there and doing something big and brave, which is my hashtag, you know, that is beyond your comfort zone that you don't think you can do. Like it's for me anyway. And I don't say for a moment, like, you know, I always say, I'm not saying in writing my books or doing podcasts like this that I want anyone to live their life like me. In fact, I'd rather you didn't live your life like me because that would be too much comfortable, too much competition.

Jessica Hepburn (00:01:08) - I want you to live your life like you. And if there's anything in my story that can inspire you, then that is what I'm trying to put into the world. Because as I always say, like we always, we all have sad stuff. My sad stuff was that I couldn't have a baby with a man that I love. And then I went on to lose that man. Um, but I think you have to take your sad shit stuff and turn it into something good for yourself, number one. And if you can, for other people. That's my life philosophy, along with struggle. Well, which we talked about in the last podcast and actually is in my book.

Michael Hughes (00:01:54) - Welcome to the Full Stop podcast hosted by Sarah Lawrence, Berenice and me, Michael Hughes, where we, with all our special guests, explore what it means to be childless and hoping we can help you feel validated, seen and inspired, and in turn help you navigate this very different life to the one we thought we were going to have this episode.

Michael Hughes (00:02:15) - We welcome back the absolutely inspirational Jessica Hepburn, where we talk about her upcoming memoir, Save Me From the Waves. I think you will very quickly realize how much love and respect we have for Jessica, and we also identify a couple of challenges for you to take up for her and perhaps give some love back. Oh, and keep an eye on our social media to how you can win a signed copy of her book, and you can find all our links at the full stop. You can also sign up for our listeners list newsletter to keep up to date with what's going on in the wider, childless world. And while you're there, you can also find out about joining our own private online community. Okay. Let's get talking to Jessica.

Berenice(00:03:05) - Welcome to the Full Stop podcast for the second time. Jessica Hepburn, how are you today?

Jessica (00:03:010)I'm very good. Thank you. Happy Sunday morning or Sunday evening to Michael and anyone who's on the other side of the world.

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Berenice (00:03:030) Indeed, yes. So here we all are. We're holding an event in online community, where we're arranging to come down to the book launch.

Jessica Hepburn (00:03:22) - So yes, I oh please, please join me. 5th of March. I have to really focus when I say 5th of March, because pub official publication day is the 7th of March. Um, and but because very excitingly yet I the lyric, which is my theatre home, I ran it for a decade, have offered me the main house, 550 seats to fill. But the only day they could do was the Tuesday the fifth. So I but I keep mixing them up. So Tuesday the 5th of March. Oh, I'm excited to hear that. I know we've literally got a little gathering going on so we can all go and do, um, like drinks and nibbles or food or whatever before we come down so that we're all, we're all fed, watered and and on the way it's jolly and jolly. I jolly there might even be a little singing. Oh, just say getting a little audience participation.

Sarah Lawrence(00:04:40) - Oh, wow. Now we're going to come a mass, aren't we? Hopefully so.

Jessica Hepburn (00:04:44) - I'm just exploring whether because I was going to do a live launch in an online launch, and that's still in the sort of offing. But because this launch is becoming such an exciting thing, I'm I'm definitely thinking of recording it and potentially live streaming it. So you could even join us from the other side of the world if you want to. Haha.

Michael Hughes (00:05:13) - I'll stick it in my diary.

Jessica Hepburn (00:05:15) - Thanks.

Michael Hughes (00:05:15) - Hey, before we go on, Jessica, um, obviously we know who you are, but there'll be a lot of our audience that won't know who you are. Well, they're probably 1 or 2, I would imagine. But how about who are you and what do you do?

Jessica Hepburn (00:05:31) - Oh, so I just thank you.

Jessica Hepburn (00:05:36) - Thank you, um, for that reminder that I am that. Yes. Of course, I don't assume anyone knows who I am, um, but I so. And I've got a what I know is a weird job title in that, but I'm really settling into it now, so I describe myself as an author, arts producer, and adventure activist. Um, and the arts producer, which is the middle bit is the easiest, um, bit to describe in in a way that riffs off just what we've been talking about. Because for most of my early career, I worked in the arts, specifically the theatre, and for a decade I ran the Lyric Hammersmith, um, which is a big theatre in London, West London, for those people who don't know it. Um, and as we were just talking about as we came into the podcast, my book launch is going to be there in March, um, the launch of my third book, which is called Save Me From the Waves. Um, and that's the author part of my job.

Jessica Hepburn (00:06:36) - So, um, in fact, this is an extraordinary time to be talking to you. And for this third book to be coming out, because it was a decade ago that my first book came out exactly a decade ago in February, and that book was called The Pursuit of Motherhood. Um, it it was what it says on the title. It was my journey through 11 rounds

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of unsuccessful IVF and my what I call My Misery memoir. Um, uh, although hopefully there are a few laughs in it too. In fact, someone wrote to me yesterday I did a talk, um, the week before last and someone said they were reading it and it was making them laugh yesterday morning. So that filled me with joy. Um, and, uh, and so that came out a decade ago. And then I went on to write another book which was called 21 Miles, uh, Swimming in Search of the Meaning of Motherhood. And then there's this third book, and that all brings me neatly onto the third part, which is Adventure Activist.

Jessica Hepburn (00:07:31) - So I always say when I turn 43, after my 11th round of unsuccessful IVF, I basically decided I needed to do something different. And the thing that I decided to do was that I was going to swim the English Channel, which was nuts because I wasn't a very good swimmer. Um, and I had no idea what was involved. But it was a journey that, like, changed my life, and it led on to me taking on these big physical and mental endurance challenges to raise awareness of what it's like to go through a fertility and unsuccessful fertility journey, which I think is the other biggest physical and mental endurance challenge. Um, but also because these adventures that I've been on, um, have changed my life for the better in so many ways. Infinitely. And this third book, and this is the end of this long introduction, um, is called, as I said, called Save Me from the wise. And it's about my journey from the top of Parliament Hill in London, where I live, to the top of the world, literally Everest, although I call her Qomolangma.

Jessica Hepburn (00:08:41) - We might come on to talk about that, which is her original Tibetan Sherpa name. Um, and it was all fuelled by listening to my every episode of my favourite radio programme, Desert Island Discs, That's is me in a nutshell. How long did that take? I'm trying to get it quicker.

Sarah Lawrence(00:09:01) - Although it was really speedy actually, given everything you got to cover.

Jessica Hepburn (00:09:04) - Yes, you Sarah. Bless you. Whenever I give a talk these days, I always start with this is my job title. And I then go I love alliteration; I just like and also, it's a bit like you have to be. Like strict with yourself in writing, because I sort of have got to a point in my writing where I just want everything to have a little reaction. Whenever I write a word, I'm like, oh, where can I find a word that can go with it that has the same letter at the beginning? So I just mustn't overuse it.

Berenice (00:09:44) - I absolutely love alliteration, and I also love the number three, like three is my favourite number. So yeah, there we go. Three books, three books. Three. Three adventures as well. Amazing.

Jessica Hepburn (00:09:44) You've got to find the patterns in life, you know. And part of what I think I've done successfully, if I've done anything successfully, is that I've made sense of what I've been through and made a story about it, both literally in the form of a book, but metaphorically vertically, sort of in terms of how I think about my life and these patterns, like the threes and the alliteration, even, you know, they're important. Part of me reaching peace about what has been a very, very hard journey for me.

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Sarah Lawrence (00:10:52) - I like that. It's. It's finding a life hook. That's what keeps sort of pops in my head when I'm listening to it. Because it is? I know Jody's talked about this too. It's this term living a life unexpected and trying to make some sense of it.

Jessica Hepburn: (00:10:60) Definitely. And, you know, and I think, I think everyone, you know, like also for those people who know about a lot about psychology and, um, you know, Sarah, I'm sure will have heard this, you know, coherence is so important in terms of making sense of our lives making and particularly the trauma of our life making a coherent story out of what it was, why it happened, what it led to. What can come out of that is, is, is really, really important in the healing process.

Berenice (00:11:01) Could you talk a bit more about that? About coherence. Um, just for listeners who aren't familiar with it, because that sounds really interesting.

Sarah Lawrence(00:12:03) - Um, I think for me, it's, um, putting yourself back together again with a new story and a new, I guess, a new person. You're a new person. So you got for me. I always visualize it as I was. I was one person. Before my childlessness, I fell apart, and then I had to put myself back together again. But that falling apart will always be part of my narrative, my being who I am and my story. And I think part of the counseling when I work with people is helping them make sense of their falling apart and putting themselves back together again, and you'll always be a changed, different person. But I think what I love about it is we find our meanings in different ways. So for, you know, Jessica, Jessica climbs a mountain or swims the channel for some of us it might be changing jobs or it might just be, you know, I really want to go and do this, this adventure, whatever that is.

Sarah Lawrence(00:12:57) - And I think it's finding our own story and our own way of doing it, isn't it?

Jessica Hepburn (00:13:01) - Yeah.

Sarah Lawrence(00:13:01) - Of you?

Jessica Hepburn (00:13:02) - Yeah, absolutely. And one of the things that really, you know, I caught myself then when I was talking because I really, you know, I must never assume and I hope I never do assume that everyone's story is the same as mine. You know, everyone. And, you know, again, this is something that Jodi De, you mentioned, Jodi Burns talks about a lot. You know, the 50 ways of becoming childless, childless or the 50 Ways to lose, you know, off the spin off, the Paul Simon's song of 50 Ways to Lose Your Lover. You know, like everyone's story and this is what's, you know, I am in a really good place now, so I have to apologise that I get a bit excited like this. This is what's, it's amazing that we that we all have very, very different stories in this childlessness arena and we can take our own story and make whatever we want out of it.

Jessica Hepburn (00:13:55) - Um, and it's going to look completely different from everyone else's. And in a world where, you know, and I suffer from it as well, you know, particularly with the book coming out, you know, you're putting yourself out into the world. You can't help but compare yourself to everybody else who's doing better than you, or it seems to be living a more exciting life. Or, you know, and I know that people might look at me and think, how do you say that? But of course,

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I'm I feel that as well. I absolutely feel those feelings of inadequacy as well. But I think what's exciting for people is that your story is totally unique and how you make sense of it, how you make sense of your childlessness and what came during it and after. It is totally yours. And you can own that in whatever way you like. And that, I think is exciting. And that is what I've tried to do with my own life. I think that's amazing because it just gives people some hope that something can be different.

Jessica Hepburn (00:14:53) - And that's something I know that I personally struggled with in it, that falling apart and putting back together. And I'd say it's probably largely down to having role models. You've done that. And certainly, I think your story and also Stella Duffy as well, when she came on the podcast and there was just a moment in our recording where I had to kind of like and we both kind of caught each other because our journey through IVF so very similar and how that can carry on through your life. But people come to this space for lots and lots of different reasons. Partly why the podcast keeps going. In this episode 60, we're recording because we've had 60, some more than that. People's stories to share. Yeah, yeah. And that full story is amazing because, I mean, like, a Stella is a force of nature. So I'm not taking any credit at all. But Stella and her partner Shelly were in my festival, Fertility Fest, which is I know where you three met and, um, and I and actually, Shelley had written a play about IVF, but they hadn't really spoken together.

Jessica Hepburn (00:16:04) - Um, sort of, uh, on stage about their, their fertility journey and, and, you know, Stella, as a campaigner on so many different fronts, you know, um, that it hadn't necessarily been the sort of central part of her activism, I would say. I mean, I don't know, she I don't I don't want to speak for her, but I think I would be right in saying that. Whereas actually, now, you know, she's really talking about it much, much more and it's much more and, and, you know, again, it's just such a good example that we all have different routes into this and different stories to tell.

Sarah Lawrence (00:16:42) - It's interesting, isn't it? Talking about stories and voices and narratives. Do you find that your story and your voice has changed as your books have come out? Um. Jessica evolved.

Jessica Hepburn (00:16:53) - Oh, that's such a good question, Sarah. Um. Yes and no. Right? Uh. No, in the sense that I've written three books where I am the central narrator.

Jessica Hepburn (00:17:11) - This is like a trilogy of work, and this last one that's coming out in March. Um, I do very much see as the last in a trilogy of narrative nonfiction adventure stories, and I do very much see my IVF journey as my first adventure now. Um, and with me as the central narrator. And after this, I am even never going to write like this again. Or I'm not going to write like this again for a long time. So, I mean, never say never, but, like, I definitely see this as a body of work and this is it. And so no, in the sense that. I think if you read all my books, you would hear the same voice. You know, I write in the same. I try to write. It's me, it's me, you know. And it's the way I write to the world. And I am the central narrator. But yes, in the sense that I think. My writing has really developed. And this third book, you know, like the first book, The Pursuit of Motherhood, was, I mean, I like, glibly call it my misery memoir, but it was it was like a

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straightforward journey through IVF, you know? And then in 21 miles, I tried to do this thing where I, um, I was swimming, I was coming out of fertility, I was swimming the channel.

Jessica Hepburn (00:18:35) - It was it was sort of inspirational memoir rather than misery memoir. It's a journey of healing. But also, I interviewed these 21 famous women as to whether motherhood makes you happy. And so I was sort of combining another element which is complicated to do. And, you know, like publishers at the time didn't think that I could make it work, and I hope I did. And then this book, the third book is is different again in that it's, it involves, you know, like what I can be absolutely sure of is that no one has ever written a book like this in the sense that, you know, it's not just about someone who who's been through, um, unsuccessful IVF and is childless, although that's a theme. It's not about someone who's climbed Everest as a result of that, although that is part of it. It's also about very much about music and which has come out of this listening to every single episode of Desert Island Discs, my favorite radio program. So it is all these three things, and that is really complicated.

Jessica Hepburn (00:19:36) - And one of the fears, you know, and I'll be really honest with you, I mean, like, it's amazing because I've got an amazing publisher. There was a small publishing auction for it, and I've really struggled with, like to get my writing noticed. In the past, I had to self-publish my first book, but like, um, I had a small publishing auction for this, but there's a lot of publishing excitement. But one of the fears that I have is that my core readership might not like it as much as the other books, you know, because it's it's not as straightforward as the pursuit of motherhood, probably of all my books, the pursuit of motherhood has sold the best, you know, like and it keeps selling like I told you, like someone was reading it this weekend because that audience of people going through fertility treatment is always regenerating itself. Um, but then I also have a group of people who I know absolutely love 21 miles, you know, um, and I worry like this is much more sophisticated, complex book that the publishing world love.

Jessica Hepburn (00:20:36) - But like, will my core readership love it? I have no idea. But like, you've got to keep developing. So sorry. Again. That's a long answer. Yes and no.

Michael Hughes (00:20:47) - I want to take you back in touch to what you said earlier about Desert Island Discs. We around the world, but may be some people that don't know about Desert Island Discs and so. In your words, Jessica. What is Desert Island Discs and why is it special to you?

Jessica Hepburn (00:21:07) - Oh, Michael, what a question. Um, what are questions? Just because this is this is my passionate. This is my passion, right? This radio program. First thing to say is, wherever you are in the world, you can listen to it because it's a BBC radio program that is available worldwide, BBC, British Broadcasting Corporation, um, our public service broadcaster, they would describe as the jewel in their crown in terms of radio shows, um, because it's one of the longest BBC radio shows running ever.

Jessica Hepburn (00:21:45) - It's been running since 1942, so it's 80. It's just celebrated a year or so ago, it's 80th anniversary, and it's been running for all that time. And, um, and that's why the listening to every single episode was like a massive task because it was like an

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Everest of listening. It was over three that there have been over 3000 episodes. And the brilliance of the format is this. So guests on the show who have been basically the who's who of British 20th century history, but it also has guests from all over the world. Um, plenty of Australian guests, American guests. If you've got people, um, listening, um, are invited to they're invited to be castaway on a desert island. And when they're castaway on this desert island, they must choose eight records, one book and one luxury item that to take with them. That's all. And the format of the story of the show, which is like 40 to 45 minutes long, is about them talking through this selection.

Jessica Hepburn (00:22:56) - And what is extraordinary about it is that, first of all, when it was first aired, it was the first ever. Sort of. Autobiographical confessional interview on the radio. I mean, like now, nowadays, you know, this is everywhere. We're doing it right now in a podcast, you know, people talking about their life. But when Desert Island Discs started, people didn't do this, you know, and certainly famous people or like or successful people did not talk about their life. But what the music does is that it it makes them talk about their life in a way that sometimes they don't even realize how sort of deep they're going. And that is why it remains even with like, confessional interviews everywhere now, such a special thing, because the music provides the anchor for people talking about their life and their their feelings. Um, and, you know, even in the last few years, you will hear people on, on I mean, like, really good example and I, you know, like one of the things I'm doing at the moment is recommending different episodes to, for people to listen to and, and like, I'll give you a real example, but everyone will probably know this person.

Jessica Hepburn (00:24:19) - Tom Hanks, you know, the film actor Tom Hanks. Go and listen to his episode because he's a really, really good example of how it gets you because he I mean, he he only did probably Desert Island Discs because because he was told by his publicist that it was an important program in the UK when he was bringing out a film. And so he did it. And he's probably very selective about what press he does. And he chose his eight songs, and he talks about how he got into the movies. And there's just this moment in, in the episode where it just hits, it hits him and he gets emotional. He gets really emotional, and you can tell he didn't even really. He's such a professional. He doesn't even realize he's going to he's it's going to hit him like this. Um, and that is the beauty of the program. It's about memory, um, revealed through the music. And I'm a, I'm a Desert Island Discs devotee, as you can tell. So I hope that's a little example of what.

Jessica Hepburn (00:25:17) - What a description of what it is. Michael. Thanks.

Michael Hughes (00:25:22) - And so how does it without giving into spoilers about your book, how does it parallel with your book? You said earlier that, um, yeah, it was a big inspiration.

Jessica Hepburn (00:25:32) - Yeah. So what I can tell you is the very first chapter of the book. Um, is that I. I'm training for the London Marathon. So after the, so after the channel. And I felt really healed. Very much so in terms of my, um, fertility journey coming out of the channel. But then my relationship broke down and I always say, you know, like it heaped gloss upon loss, you know, like the double loss just broke me. It absolutely broke me. And I turned to adventuring again. And the

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first thing I did was that I decided I was going to run the London Marathon. And I'm delighted I ran the London Marathon. It's my something that had always been on my bucket list. It's my home city. Um, but I was a terrible runner, and I, uh, and I wasn't really enjoying it.

Jessica Hepburn (00:26:30) - And I decided that I had to go on this 18 mile training run that I would listen to something to get me through. And I wasn't even, you know, I say I wasn't even listening to music at that point because I'm like, I'm not good on technology. And I was just sort of like, I'm doing this thing. Let's get it over with, you know, grit your teeth. Anyway, I decided I'd listen to something, and I decided that I would listen to an episode of Desert Island Discs, and it was just right. You know, this is in 2017, when the podcast thing was really taking off and the BBC had made Desert Island Discs into a podcast so you could listen to it. Um, you didn't have to listen to it live. And, um. I listen to the comedian Jimmy Carr, and he just he just said this thing when he was choosing his music. He just said this thing through my headphones into my heart. What do you want in life that strikes me as the most important question, what do you want? And in that moment, I just couldn't answer what I wanted anymore because I knew for a decade that I wanted a baby.

Jessica Hepburn (00:27:33) - You know, and then I. And then I started to see that I could have a life without a baby. And I was going to have this life with my partner, who I loved. And we were going to go on adventures together. And then that, like, fell apart. And I just like, in that moment, I just didn't know what I wanted. And the only thing I could answer in that moment was, I want to go like, I want to go to a desert island, desert island with my eight year. I want to choose my eight deaths, because I've always sort of like, had that harbored this idea that I'd love to be on the show. And that was what. And that really was the start of what became this journey to climb to the top of the world, listening to every single episode. And then I just started to listen and it took me. It's taken me years both to get to the top of the world and listen to the whole archive.

Jessica Hepburn (00:28:23) - And the only other thing that I would say, so that's how it all started. The only other thing that I would say, which is a sort of thing, if you read the book that you'll hopefully experiences to begin with in the book. It's very much like I'm listening to these people and they're giving me their music and they're giving me their wisdom, and it's generating all sorts of thoughts, which if you read the book, you'll understand. But what happened gradually and what happens in the book as I write it, is that gradually this, these people in my head, these amazing people, they became my family. You know, and one of the things that I do always say to anyone who is childless, myself included, is you have to find your family. And your family might not be your own children. And of course, that's the quickest route to family and why so many of us want it. But. But if you can't find your family in that way, you need to find your family in other ways, because social connection is so important to human beings.

Jessica Hepburn (00:29:22) - And so these castaways, as the book progresses, they start, we start talking to one another. They become my family. And what an amazing family to have. Let me tell you some of the most amazing people, most inspirational people in the world, so that that's how how they sort of. Impact. Sorry. You've got me babbling away. You do this? Actually. This last time you guys, like. I dunno what it is.

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I don't know whether it's the shared experience or. But I or your brilliance as interviewers. I think it's both. Um, but like, you get me talking in a way that is extraordinary. Thank you. You're welcome. Michael does ask some very good questions. They both do. I'm waiting for another one to come up in a minute. Don't worry. Can I just ask if they asked you to go on Desert Island Discs, would you go on there? Would you? Stage fright. Would it be too much barrenness if they asked me? I, I could die happy.

Jessica Hepburn (00:30:29) - I of course, I mean like, I mean I'd faint and then I would die probably happy, um, before I'd even got on the show. But the thing is, everyone says to me like, you're going to be on it. You're going to be on it. You know, like also one of the interesting facts is that, you know, they've they've had several Everest summiteers on the show, but they haven't had a woman, of course. Um, so I could be the first woman. Um, but, uh, it's so hard to get on the show, right? It's like the alternative honours system in the UK. You know, it's that hard. Um, and and, you know, anyone, anyone. It's like it's, you know, it's like. It's like it's like getting on Woman's Hour on on BBC radio four for anyone who are, you know, here that are in the British audience, you know, people, you know, like people. I finally pop my Woman's Hour cherry in October, and I was so excited.

Jessica Hepburn (00:31:28) - And people just have said to me for a decade, well, you must have been in Woman's Hour with all your fertility campaigning and like, like, no, it just doesn't work like that. These jewels in the in the BBC radio and television crown, it is virtually impossible to get on them. So like, of course it would be my dream, but but I'm but I, you know, hopefully I'm going to live many years and there are other things that I can do that might make me eligible at some point. Who knows? But I'm not holding out the hope. And it doesn't take, even if I was never on it. It doesn't take away the joy that it's given me, which has been unadulterated. Oh, okay. But do you have your eight discs lined up? You know what? You're going or does it change? Because I think mine changes. If I've got a list and it always changes because I, I, I've been a devotee since you told me about it and I used to, but then I stopped and then I realised that got the archives and they've found the lost ones.

Jessica Hepburn (00:32:28) - Is that some more to listen to you now? Just like, who are these people? Because I don't know them. I know, and that is also. Well, I love the fact that you've got to listen. In answer to that question. You have to read my book to, to, to, to. I thought there might be something that I answer to that question, but um, but like, uh, yeah, the archive is I mean, obviously the current programmes are great because you've got people who are current, you know, at the moment, whether they're famous or not famous. I mean, actually, to be honest, some I mean, everyone, you know, everyone who's on the show has got a Wikipedia site, basically, you know, like everyone who's on the show has done something important. But not everyone is a household name like Tom Hanks. And but actually, sometimes it's the people who are not household names that are, like much more interesting, you know, like they've had incredible lives and and yeah, the archive, the I have just you know, I always say that I'm really share history.

Jessica Hepburn (00:33:29) - Like I'm really, really bad at remembering facts, you know, um, like, God my ex-partner Peter, you know, the number of times he would try and teach me the years of the Battle of Waterloo

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versus the Battle of Trafalgar. I mean, like, I just still can't remember it. And he used to test me on it all the time. Please don't test me on it. Um, but, like, actually listening to the show, listening to, like, 80 years of the show, like, it taught me so much, you know, like, like nearly all the British prime ministers have been on the show. So now, you know, I can list you all the post-war British prime ministers in a way that I never could have done before, you know, and I can listen, you know, and so and just like everything every you know, because also the guests are from like all different walks of life. The other thing that's taught me loads about is South Africa, because a lot of the guests on the show over the last 80 years have been played important, um, roles in, in, in the struggle against apartheid that I've learned a lot about the Holocaust.

Jessica Hepburn (00:34:33) - Again, a lot of people who escaped Nazi Germany have been on the show. Um, you know, like my 20th century history has just changed, like inordinately because of this show as well as my music knowledge. I mean, that is just and my love of music, I mean, I always like music, but now it's just so central, I think. I think I should be on commission from the, uh, actually, one other thing. Can I say that, um, which is very exciting, is that, um, I, I've recorded in October the audiobook for the show, and one of the things that I read every chapter in the book starts with an epigraph, um, from um, from. One of the castaways. And the thing that I really, really wanted was these epigraphs to be read out from the show. Um, like the real voices of the castaways, everyone from Maya Angelou to Louis Armstrong to Emma Thompson to Edmund Hillary, who was the first man to climb Everest.

Jessica Hepburn (00:35:37) - And, um. I and the and again you know like the BBC are so difficult but they have been amazing. And in October I managed to secure the rights to get these clips. Um, and my publisher is just like over the moon. So if you listen to the audiobook, which is possibly more I'd like people to listen to even more than read the real book, because the castaway voices are in the audio. Um. I'm just so excited about that. And one of the conversations we're trying to have at the moment with my publisher is to try, and I mean, it will be on Spotify and obviously audible, but like what we're trying to do is get embed the music into into the actual book. But that's a big sort of discussion that won't happen necessarily immediately. But Spotify are potentially really interested in that because I think it is. It works best as a reading and listening experience because music is so fundamental to the book anyway. I know that that's amazing. I worked with alongside permissions people.

Jessica Hepburn (00:36:48) - So the rights of that, that that's quite a coup, I have to say. Oh, it really is. But I think, I think it was the perfect moment, Berenice, because of course, the BBC, because there's so much pressure on them now in terms of the, you know, them being a public service broadcaster and the government are really questioning their value that they're having to be more commercial. So, I mean, in fact, I think last year it was announced that they've sold the rights to Desert Island Discs around the world so other people can use the format, um, because, um, up until this point, no one's ever been able to replicate anything like it in other countries. You know, it is the BBC radio programme. So I just think it was sort of perfect timing. And also, you know, like I'm a big fan of the show, right? So, you know, hopefully I'm going to encourage other people to come and listen to it. You know, I am it's super fan you are.

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Michael Hughes (00:37:45) - But when you when you think about that, Jessica that that is groundbreaking. Yeah. You're you're crossing technologies now that that no one's done. I don't think anyone's done. No.

Jessica Hepburn (00:37:55) - And you know, it's so true, Michael. There's Michael with one of his good questions because, um, when I was talking to my, I literally, like, got the rights in October, we recorded it, the audiobook in October. The Spotify conversation happened in November. That started to happen in November. And actually, Spotify are really excited about it. But the technology doesn't exist yet to embed music like that. And the rights discussions haven't happened with all the artists to embed music like that into an audio. So what's exciting is that if you listen to it in Spotify, I mean, oh God, this is an advert. I mean, I love audible to audible. Um, but if you listen to it in Spotify, at least then you're one click away from the music. Do you know what I mean? So you can go, I've listened to a chapter or I'd really like to listen to that song now.

Jessica Hepburn (00:38:46) - Um, I'll go. I'll like I'm I'm already in the app. I can listen to it. You know, you don't have to come out and go somewhere else. But what would be brilliant and we're working towards is a situation which is like at the end of a chapter, it's like, do you want to listen to this song now, or do you want to listen to this song or move on to the next chapter? I mean, I do think. I do think that that that will be going to be really exciting for the book if we can make that happen.

Michael Hughes (00:39:15) - I'm excited because I listened to a lot of audiobooks because I'm on the road a lot. So. I'm excited. Yeah.

Jessica Hepburn (00:39:22) - Yeah, I think it would be. I think it would really, you know, like I, I've tried to to like the music that's in the book, you know, obviously something very personal to me and, and, but a lot of the music is, is, um, I've created this algorithm of 300 artist slash tracks that can be cross-referenced against every single castaway on the show.

Jessica Hepburn (00:39:49) - And what I, what I propose is that this is the algorithm of songs for life, right? And a lot of them like that. Basically, these are the three 300 most important sort of artist songs of the last 100 years. That's my that's kind of my proposal. This is what I mean about this book being much more, you know, complicated and, um, uh, and yeah, hopefully better. Um, but, um, yeah. And so but still, you know, even though these are 300 quite well known artists, you know, from the Beatles to Beethoven, um, people won't always know if I'm talking about a specific song like that song. And so it would be really interesting and I think, um, lovely for people to be. Oh, I'd really like to listen to that song, you know? Um, so I really hope we can make that happen. Anyway, sorry. You really are getting me blurring, and I hope this is interesting to your listeners.

Michael Hughes (00:40:51) - I'm I'm loving it. Yeah. Loved it.

Sarah Lawrence (00:40:54) - So is this your next amorous, then? Is this your. Oh.

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Jessica Hepburn (00:40:58) - I've done that. Oh, no. This this has come to an end now, this this this. Do you know what I was on? Do you know I was on the phone to, um, my best friend this morning. Who? I have two best friends, one of my two best friends who lives in Australia, in Sydney, actually, Michael. So we always speak on a Sunday morning and, um. I was just saying to her this morning, I said, oh, taa, you know, I'm just starting to feel because I've made this year like 2024 is my year of self-love. I've decided. Um, that's another bigger conversation. But, um, self-love is an icky phrase, but I've decided to embrace it. I, um, and, um, and but I was saying to her, do you know what? I'm getting to the point.

Jessica Hepburn (00:41:45) - Obviously, this is going to be I mean, part of the reason why it's the year of self-love is this is going to be a hugely busy year for me because the book is coming out. It's my first book in, uh, six years. You know, like there's a lot happening around it and it's going to require it's going to be like, uh, um, listening to the whole archive or climbing Everest, you know, in terms of the amount of work. But I was, um, yeah, I was saying to her, like, what I need next is some time off, like, and I just this morning thought, you know, at some point I don't know when it will be, but I, I am going to like, I just getting excited about the idea about actually doing nothing for a little while. So. So yeah, I do have an ever. And answer your question, sir. I do have an Everest to climb this year, which is getting the book into the world, which is very different from writing it, researching it, all the things I did to make it happen.

Jessica Hepburn (00:42:42) - And it is. And that's my Everest. But like, actually in terms of, um, what I want to do after I've done this is that I just want to do nothing for a while.

Sarah Lawrence (00:42:52) - Sounds like you've earned it, to be honest. Yeah, yeah. Is it going to be tricky, though, to do nothing? How do you feel about it?

Jessica Hepburn (00:42:59) - I don't, I don't yeah, of course it's going to be tricky but like you've got to like I believe in growth. Right. I'm really. Like, if you read my book, you'll see I had a very traumatic experience on Qomolangma who saved me. She saved me, but I nearly died up there. And, um, so the last section of my, uh, book, um, is, is about songs to die to because I think we all need a song that we want to die to, as well as our funeral songs, different things. If you read my book, you'll see why I think they're different.

Jessica Hepburn (00:43:39) - Um, but I'm very, very motivated by death. And sorry if that sounds weird. Um, but I also think, you know, I'm 53 now. Uh, people started to around me get ill and die too soon, right? I've had quite a lot of, um, experience of that, um, particularly recently. Um, and I looked death in the face on my mountain only for 48 hours. But I did, um, and and so. I'm really motivated by taking on challenges and not all challenges and and going on adventures need to be high and far away. Or 3000 episodes of listening. You know, for me, yes, it will be an adventure and a challenge to do nothing. But I want to try that because. What's going to happen to me, you know, like it will be hard and but and and the outcome is unknown. But I'm excited by what journey that offers me and that that's. So that's why. Yeah, it will be hard, but I want to do it.

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Sarah Lawrence(00:44:57) - I love that, I think it's a really strong message, isn't it? Sometimes we've got to just sit with ourselves.

Jessica Hepburn (00:45:02) - Uh huh. Yeah.

Sarah Lawrence(00:45:03) - I think it's I think it's one of the growth things I've noticed in as well is kind of as you do get older, you become more I don't know. Thinking more about what what life brings. Even if you just stop and pause and you haven't got to be haring around like a, you know, doing all these different things. But actually, you know, part of life is death, isn't it? It's I've had a few experiences of it lately, and it makes you quiet. Um, I don't know. I think you pause a bit, don't you think? Well, actually, what do I want to get out of life? Like Jimmy Carr said, isn't it? Yeah. It means packing up a mountain necessarily. It might be sitting with yourself and working yourself out. I love that.

Jessica Hepburn (00:45:43) - Yeah. Sarah, I think it's both those things.

Jessica Hepburn (00:45:46) - You know, I think to live a rich life, which is what I want to do, you know, um, in the face of what I couldn't do, you know, that is. That drives me more than anything else. You know, to live the richest life I can live. And it's to to balance those two things. You know, it's the balance. The times of wintering, of stillness, of introspection, with the times of going out into the world and, you know, putting yourself out there and doing something big and brave, which is my hashtag, you know, that is beyond your comfort zone that you don't think you can do. Like it's for me anyway. And I don't say for a moment like. You know, I always say, I'm not saying in writing my books or doing podcasts like this that I want anyone to live their life like me. In fact, I'd rather you didn't live your life like me because that would be too much comfortable, too much competition.

Jessica Hepburn (00:46:52) - I want you to live your life like you. And if there's anything in my story that can inspire you, then. Then that is what I'm trying to put into the world. Because as I always say, like we always, we all have sad stuff. My sad stuff was that I couldn't have a baby with a man that I love. And then I went on to lose that man. Um, but I think you have to take your sad shit stuff. And turn it into something good for yourself, number one. And if you can, for other people. That's my life philosophy. Along with struggle Well, which we talked about in the last podcast and actually is in my book. So we sat with that for a long time. Struggle. Well. And an awful lot of meaning to that. I often refer to it sometimes on the really, really bad days. Yeah. Are you struggling well with this? Yeah. Or the wheels really falling off? Yeah. And often they're not falling off at all.

Berenice (00:47:53) - I'm just not struggling. Well, I think that's a good lesson for life. You mentioned about how I'm going to. I'm going to hash up the pronunciation now, but I'm going to go with this ... Chomolungma for saving your life. And I'm just wondering, um, you mentioned go cycling back to your swim across the English Channel and the London Marathon. And has that altered, perhaps your perception of place and your connection with the places where you've had these adventures? Is there a new meaning to the English Channel in London for you now?

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Jessica Hepburn (00:48:04) It's really interesting because there isn't. You know, what I've tried to put in this third book is sort of everything that's landed in terms of, um. Uh, everything that's landed in.

Jessica Hepburn (00:49:04) - Um, but, yeah, like, it's I tried to put into this third book everything that I've sort of, like, realized in life and or that has. You know, has settled as sort of key philosophies, I suppose. And, um, and the relationship with the sea and the mountains and particularly the channel and trauma is so profound for me, and it is so connected to my fertility story and for me and I. Never knew that when I embarked. On the journey. That that that this would be the result. Uh, but. You know, I write in 21 miles, my second book at the moment, when I realized that swimming the channel was just like going through IVF, you know, because it didn't I wasn't a very good swimmer, but I was doing all the right things in terms of learning how to do the crawl and and do all the training. And then I realized that actually, because I did this relay and the weather turned bad and we were fished out and we didn't get across, it was part of I was just swimming it as part of a team.

Jessica Hepburn (00:50:29) - It wasn't my solo attempt. And at that point I realized that whether I got across the channel was out of my control. And it was. Terrifying because I thought, there's a very real chance I'm going to fail at something again. You know, I failed at 11 rounds of IVF and, um, and now I failed to get across. I might fail to get across the channel now. In actual fact, I did swim across the channel and I put that very much down to the channel allowing me to do that. And I do describe it as my version of giving birth because it was 17 hours, 44 minutes and 30s of pain eclipsed by euphoria when my feet touched the sand in France. And then and then I yes, I ran the London Marathon and it's very different. I mean, I'm delighted I did it and it's sort of the jam in the sandwich as it were, but like it's very different from the sea in the mountains, because if you start in Greenwich and you run to the mouth, you don't stop.

Jessica Hepburn (00:51:31) - You'll get there. But the mountains is like the sea, you know, they decide whether you're going to climb them and you have to listen to that. And, you know, I had three attempts on Chomolungma and my first was a non attempt because the mountain was closed due to Covid and I couldn't go. Then my second attempt, I wasn't able to summit for a whole range of reasons. And then I did summit on my third attempt. But I had this terrible accident on the way down, and this accident was nothing to do with the mountain, and it was nothing to do with me. It was a manmade accident. I got hit by an oxygen bottle, um, which broke my leg in the death zone. And then there was a load of other shit on top of that. And if the weather had been bad. I would have died. And I did look death in the face because at one point I got altitude blindness. I broke my leg, I couldn't see, and I just thought, that's too high for helicopter rescue.

Jessica Hepburn (00:52:32) - I just thought, I don't think I'm going to get down. And. But I did get down and I credit that to Chomolungma. And I did feel. After both those things and where I am now is that like nature is, my God, you know? And I just have such. She didn't give me a baby, but she did allow me to swim the channel, which was part of my healing process. And then she saved my life. And I and and this goes back to what we were talking about at the moment. That's all bollocks to some extent, I know that. I know it's all woowoo and bollocks, you know, but that's how I've made sense of it. It makes sense to me, and I love it. And so

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I'm holding on to it. Yeah, that that's how profound that relationship is. And it just makes everything. Good in life for me. You know, it makes sense of everything. It makes sense of all the pain. And it's something to take forward for me. As a as I progress towards death, which will. She can't save me. Ultimately she won't.

Berenice (00:53:42) - It makes sense. I started revisiting places where I've had trauma. In nature the planet places can save us too. I absolutely can see that as well. I think it's very poignant. Our sense of place and our sense of belonging in the world can be really rattled when we're not doing the living, the life we expected we were going to live.

Jessica: Yeah. Oh, analogy as well with swimming the channel and yeah, totally, I love that. Yeah. But would you share a place with us or is that too personal a question that you've returned to? Because I'd love to hear about that. Um, yeah.

Berenice (00:54:50) - Yeah, I'm quite happy to talk about it, just with a warning that it, um, I'll, I'll avoid some keywords here, but one of the places actually is this is going to sound completely nuts, but it's a farm shop! It was actually at the time when my last IVF was failing, I was waiting, um, to come off the drugs, waiting to bleed and all that. Yeah. And we'd gone to, um, stay on a railway carriage in Wales, in Pembrokeshire. I haven't been back to the carriage yet, but I will do one day. So in this now different life, and I think we started the podcast and we were driving through Wales and we stopped to get lunch and it was the same farm shop and I walked in, completely fell apart, thinking I would be better because I've got a dog now and I'm doing different things and I have moved on and this is all okay. And actually I wasn't okay. And I went back on the way between Story House this year and actually went in and was like, okay, this is emotional, but I'm okay. I can lean into it. I'm okay with that. Last time I had a panic attack, massive panic attack, This time I went in just on my own. And yeah, I cried. I cried in the carpark of the farm shop. But that's kind of how random sometimes I think these traumatic events can be. But I was like, okay, I've done that now, I've done this snotty crying and I've done that bit. And I think next time I go back, I'll probably cry again. But that's okay. That's all right. Um, I can do that. And it kind of made me feel a bit braver about going to other places since

I've been to one since, which is a particular beach that I - well I wasn't going to be swimming, - I was determined that was going to be the end. There was no point to me anymore and I have been back there. And yeah, I was able to do the snotty crying and sit on the beach and learn from that too. So I think that sense of place and going back and revisiting some times and just just giving a life book or a meaning to it. Yeah. And then kind about ourselves when you talk about self-love and, and delving into that, then yeah, there's a lot of stuff. I think there's a need to keep going and going and going, but pausing and going, okay, what who am I? Where I come from, this. There's a lot I can take from that too. Jessica, thank you for asking that question. We're meant to be asking you questions, but thank you for asking me about that. Made some degree of sense to listen to

Jessica Hepburn (00:57:49) - I love that it's like it's like these pillars. It's sort of like a pilgrimage. Right. And I, I think it's so important. Yeah. Thank you for sharing. Yeah. Just really.

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Berenice: (00:57:60) Yeah I love I love that word pilgrimage as well because I'm not particularly religious in any way. Um, apologies if that offends anybody, but I'm not. I had struggles with all of that. But, um, I do love actually some of the work of Sheridan Voysey, he talks an awful lot and writes about pilgrimages, and I love that. And any programs about those sorts of walks and the winter walks, anything around walking and and nature. And Sarah, I know you're nodding because that's important to you as well.

Sarah: (00:58:20) The process of walking, of being out in nature and just yeah, some kind of like, cathartic with about that kind of pilgrimage to somewhere and to to revisit things and to just connect with nature again, I think just gets us out of our head and into moments.

Berenice (00:58:46) - Nature is so important. Yeah, I really think it's so healing. Yeah. Um, yeah. And that idea of the found family as well, I can very much relate to that. I'm quite sure that the reason I could go into the farm shop and have a good snotty cry was because the story house. Yeah, absolutely. No, it's my family. They did that. Yeah. It was amazing. Story house. Just amazing. You go to tears, you know. Oh, I just blew me away. Yes. Ordinary experience. Yeah. Really. And we do it all again. Spoiler for us. But there we go all again to Jessica.

Michael Hughes (00:59:33) - We had a question coming from audience.

Jessica Hepburn (00:59:36) - oh yes!

Michael Hughes (00:59:36) - Would you do a swim challenge again because this particular person was watching Nyad last night and she was thinking of you.

Jessica Hepburn (00:59:44) - You wouldn't be the first. Yeah, yeah. Uh, it's a really great question. I love that film, by the way.

Jessica Hepburn (00:59:52) - I was very, very lucky. I got to see it at the London Film Festival. It was first, um, uh, UK screening and actually the not Diana Nyad herself, but her. I've gotten her name now, but her friend and coach, who's played by Jodie Foster, was there at the screening. So it's very exciting. And I love the film. And my goodness, what an incredible woman she is. What I feel about, um, so often when I give talks, I mean, I gave a talk on Thursday actually up in the Wirral, um, at a rugby club, but, um, a group of people, and someone always asks at the end, what's your next adventure? And I always say, have I not done enough? Have I not, you know, like it's the channel and not enough. So in terms of like big swims. Um, like all big mountains done. But the sea and open water and the mountains and in nature generally, like I have to keep going back to them.

Jessica Hepburn (01:00:56) - They are a home to me now, and particularly in the way, like I feel like come along as my God, but I feel like the water is my home. Uh, and I write about this in the book and, uh, and so I have to go back and, and when I'm there, I feel like it's loved. And I feel a sense of safety. Uh, weirdly, even though I hate the cold. So I am trying to do every. Well, I try and swim every week in water. Not always open water, even if it's for a short amount of time. And I, um, I'm trying to do a small swimming adventure. Um, so last year I did the silly swim challenge and went to the Silly Islands for the first time, which was amazing. This year I'm thinking of doing the Hellespont swim in

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Turkey. It's between, um. It's a small, very, very famous swim made famous by Lord Byron between Asia and Europe. And and I'm also trying to swim in new locations like, like my target because I'm a big list lover and I'm a big goal setter, obviously.

Jessica Hepburn (01:02:04) - But sometimes they can be small goals. Um, I'm trying to swim in 25 new locations, so. So in answer to your question, water is really important. Small swimming adventures. But like the big swims and the big mountains, that's done.

Michael Hughes (01:02:26) - And thank you, Jessica. So. Now plug this. Let's plug your book. I mean. When's it coming out? Where will it be? How can we get it? Oh, all that, all that good stuff.

Jessica Hepburn (01:02:41) - Yeah, all the good stuff. So it's coming out on the 7th of March. Um, although the launch is on the 5th of March. Um, and, uh, it's available from all good book shops and online retailers. And in fact, you know, like, if you're someone who's passionate about reading and independent bookshops, then you can go and order it from your local bookseller. Um, but yes, of course, it's available on Amazon for pre-order now, and the audio is going to be available.

Jessica Hepburn (01:03:11) - We talked about that on Audible and Spotify. Um, and if you want to reach out to me in any way, I'm my website. You can do that through my website or any of my social platforms. And actually, I have just started a Substack. Um, I don't know if you guys know about Substack, which is apparently the big next thing after Instagram. Um, specifically for, uh, writers and content creators. So I'd love you to follow me on Substack if you're interested in hearing from me, um, more regularly and, um, yeah, do reach out. I love, love, love hearing from people. I love Substack, actually. It's really good and medium. So yeah, it is. You might find a certain podcast on there at some point. Yeah, definitely, because I think, I mean, obviously with your podcast, you can send that out to well, I don't know quite how podcasts work, but the, the real, um, challenge of a lot of the social platforms, which I think Substack is trying to combat, is that you're beholden to the algorithm as to whether people see your content or not, whereas on Substack, people give you their email address and then you can go directly I mean, you can read it on the app, but your your podcasts, your voice notes, your emails, your videos or whatever you want to create goes straight to the people into people's inboxes.

Berenice (01:04:30) - So you're not beholden to the algorithm, which I think is is potentially going to make it a great platform for people. Yeah, great. Fantastic. Now, I like it because the 7th of March is actually my birthday, so it feels like it's my kind of like, best present ever.

Jessica: Oh well, no, even better, because you can come on the fifth and then you can do something even more lovely on your birthday. I should just sit somewhere and read. Read. Save me from the waves so I don't do that on your birthday. No, I honestly don't. But a day with books is a happy place. I. I was listening to something. Oh, what was it? It was she, um. It's a random fact, but it was on cue. I happened to watch a repeat of it the other night. And it was about how how more people need the loo in, in bookshops, because apparently it's so relaxing. It relaxes all the body. Soothing. Oh, really? Yeah.

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Jessica Hepburn (01:05:26) - Apparently. Random fact. I was like, I don't think I've had that experience, but apparently, yeah, that's the thing. Bookshops have this that calming that people go into like, oh, do you know what? I have the opposite experience in bookshops, although I'm trying to get over it, which is that I get palpitations about all these books that I want to read. I never get to read.

Berenice: I do, yeah, I get kind of like, how many can I possibly take home? How can I do this? Um, and I'm reading a book. Um, oh, I caught on the title of it, but it's around the UK and bookshops. It's Robin Ince. Oh yeah. Yeah, it's fantastic. And he just talks about how he just goes into a book. He cannot physically pass one, and he's never known to come out with just one book. He has to come out with, with several, which Sarah, um, can, can give credit to. Because actually, when we went down to London before Christmas, we went down and the bookshop we wanted to go to words on the water, which is the canal barge on Camden Lock, wasn't open, so we ended up in hot chat at Saint Pancras and, um, yeah, we all came out with with I think we all came out with more than one book. I know I did. Did you Sarah.

Sarah Lawrence(01:06:33) - You'll come out with three? I wasn't supposed to be spending any money doing very, very good.

Jessica Hepburn (01:06:40) - Very good. Yeah. That's so good about books because you feel like you're improving yourself. You know, it's not. It's not like buying a cake or something. Although cakes do. I do love a cake, you know, like. And that does improve me. But like books you feel like you're learning. Yeah. I'm reading just a plug for a book. I'm reading Lessons of Lessons in Chemistry at the moment, which I know is a bit late to the party because most people have read it, but it's bloody amazing. So and it's and actually, if you want a really good, feel good read, it's, it's the way to go. No, I haven't read it yet. It's on my very very, very ginormous to. I know if I gave it to me last summer and it's been sitting there but I just yeah, it's a brilliant it's really great.

Michael Hughes (01:07:53) - Jessica, how would you feel if someone got someone started your wiki page and then got to then started bringing up the BBC to say, get her on Desert Island Discs?

Jessica Hepburn (01:08:04) - Uh, I would kiss them if they were open to that. Um. Oh, yeah, I, um yeah. Yes.

Michael Hughes (01:08:16) - Just wanted to check that you wouldn't be. You wouldn't be, you know, um, insulted if someone started that.

Michael Hughes (01:08:23) - I challenge you out there as one of our audience.

Jessica Hepburn (01:08:25) - No. To be frank, having a Wikipedia page is something I don't have

Michael Hughes (01:08:33) - No. Just looked.

Jessica Hepburn (01:08:34) - Yeah. And I and it's I mean, because I'm, it's well, it's really funny actually Amnesty International, um, because I became a woman of suffragette spirit. Um, a few years ago, they nominated various women and. They said that they were going to do this project, which is to get more women Wikipedia pages, because actually

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women are very underrepresented on Wikipedia, you know, like and it is true that if you know and I'm sorry that I'm saying this to you, Michael, because you're a man, but you are asking the lovely question because you are a lovely man. It is true that if I was a man, I probably would have a Wikipedia page. Um, yes. So that is something. But when I've got a Wikipedia page and when I've been invited on Desert Island, then. Then I will know that I've done enough in the world.

Berenice (01:09:24) - But, uh, yeah, that's a little bit like climbing Everest, isn't it? Because actually, I was reading an article and it brought me, brought you to mind in a on female mountaineers and how they were all forbidden from climbing Everest. And then when they did it was wearing skirts.

Jessica (01:09:50) I'm sad to say, Berenice, that although things are changing, you know, there is. And I'm sure they're changing on Wikipedia, too. Um, but, uh, there is still a lot of misogyny in the mountaineering community, and there's definitely a lot of ageism and, you know, and, and in the world, you know, but, um, that's another podcast. Not for today. It's been this has been a joy. And thank you, Michael, for suggesting that if anyone wanted to do that, no, you know, you don't have to. Life's too short. You should get on with doing the things you want to do. But if someone did, then yes, I might kiss them.

Michael Hughes (01:10:43) - Well, I think actually, uh, I know we've we've probably have a time, but I think it's actually a good way for someone to repay back to you because you talked about how you don't want people to feel that they have to do what you do, but there are so many women that get inspired by you, particularly in our community, because you drop your name and it's, ah.

Jessica Hepburn (01:11:04) - You're very kind.

Michael Hughes (01:11:07) - Oh no, no, no, it it is true. I wouldn't bullshit you because that's not what I do. But when I listen, when I listen around and the two girls here will say the same thing. So yeah, it will let someone repay you by doing that. I think that's what needs to happen.

Jessica Hepburn (01:11:23) - It just sort of made me like I can feel the tears in my eyes.

Jessica Hepburn (01:11:27) - It's hard being human, isn't it? You know, it's hard. It's hard being human and so like and so, so things like that. You know what I mean a lot. And I know this is sort of a bit of an emotional place to end. Um, but you know, like, I know that a lot of the stuff that I've done has come out of not being able to be a mother, you know, and trying to be good enough and, uh, you know, like I talked about, um, this talk on Thursday and I, I said that there's one point that I said, oh, you know, like, I went through 11 rounds of IVF and I'm a bit ashamed about that. And then some women spoke up in the audience. She said, you shouldn't be ashamed about that. Um, and, and, and actually, I write my speeches and I didn't write that, but I just sort of threw it in at that moment.

Jessica Hepburn (01:12:17) - And I thought, you know, like, why did I do that? And, you know, it's the same. I sometimes feel a little bit ashamed about the fact that I've done all these things, and I know that part of

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it comes out of feeling inadequate. Um, and, you know, will it ever, will ever be enough, you know, like, if I get a Wikipedia page and get invited on Desert Island, will it be enough? Who knows? But, um, in that moment when you just said that, it really meant a lot. So thank you. Thank you very much.

Michael Hughes (01:12:48) - I've loved this time and I know everyone else's.

Jessica Hepburn (01:12:51) - Thanks, guys. Thanks and hope to see everyone who's here who wants to hear more please come to my launch. Um, and you're very, very welcome. I have a big house to fill. And of course, we'll repeat some of these things, I'm sure, in the event. But there will be other things. Um, there are other treats to be had, I promise you.

Berenice (01:13:20) Thank you so much, Jessica. Jessica. I mean, your inspiration and being you. Thank you.

Michael Hughes (01:13:24) - Thanks for listening. If you want to find out more about our podcast or you have a burning topic we have not covered, please reach out to us as we'd like to be as inclusive and diverse as possible. Or you might even want to reach out to one of the presenters. You can find out all the ways to do that at our website. The full squad.com. We're also on Facebook. Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. But while you're at our website, please consider subscribing to our listeners list. As well as becoming a member of our private online community, which helps us fund the podcast and some of our other projects. We also love it. If you could write the podcast on the platform you are using, and this will help the algorithm get us in front of more of our community.

Michael Hughes (01:14:10) - And as always, it's important for us to let you know. You are not alone.

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