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0:00:01.1 Nicole Antoinette: I'm Nicole Antoinette, and this is Real Talk Radio, a podcast filled with honest conversations about everything. Today, you'll get to meet Jupiter.

0:00:11.6 Jupiter: Especially with something like van life or really any big break from traditional norms. I think that when people go to do those things, when they consider those thoughts, I think it's very... You very quickly either turn on it, you're either into it or you're not, and I don't think that's a debate that lasts long in one's mind, and so I think that if you've held on to it and you wanna do it, just do it, and it seems terrifying. But what's that phrase? How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time? Just eat the elephant. Just do it.

[music]

0:00:43.9 NA: Jupiter is a wandering non-binary 20-something currently traveling the US, in their self-renovated 1979 Class C RV named Hottie. This is such a wonderfully honest conversation about mobile living. Jupiter shares why they quit their corporate job to buy an old RV, what it means to them to redefine the American dream, what living on the road has been like, both good and bad, and more. Huge thanks to the folks whose support made this conversation with Jupiter possible, the 400 plus people in our sliding scale Patreon community. Y'all are the best. It's your monthly funding that allows me to get a full transcript made for each episode, cover all admin and hosting costs and pay every single guest, our sound engineer Adam Day, and myself as the host, researcher and producer of this show. That's pretty cool I think. Our Patreon community, which I have nicknamed Adventures in honesty, it's not just a funding source for this podcast though, it's so much more than that. I host a live end of month reflection and journaling circle for the whole community, you get a bonus monthly podcast episode called Real Talk Reflections, where my friend Julia Hamlin and I share very deeply and honestly about our own real lives in real time, and you get my monthly business and money report, that's where I break down all the behind the scenes info and do an in-depth monthly Q&A about the financial administrative and decision-making side of my small business, and lots of other things too.

0:02:07.6 NA: If you love this show, I bet you'd feel really welcome and have lots of fun in our community, and as I said, we do operate on a sliding scale, and you can find us at patreon.com/nicoleantoinette. That's patreon.com/nicoleantoinette. I will see you there. Okay, friends, let's get into today's episode right now.

[music]

0:02:30.6 NA: Alright, we are good to go. Jupiter, welcome to the show.

0:02:35.0 Jupiter: Hello, hello, thank you for having me, I'm so excited.

0:02:37.3 NA: I'm excited too.

0:02:38.7 Jupiter: This has been a long time coming.

0:02:39.9 NA: I know, I know, we did a bunch of re-scheduling, but what that means to me is that this is just the perfect time for us to have this conversation.

0:02:46.3 Jupiter: The planets have finally aligned just so.

0:02:48.1 NA: They have aligned. My first question for you, tell me about your joy, what's bringing you joy in your real life right now?

0:02:55.8 Jupiter: Oh man, right now, the thing bringing me joy in my life is... Yeah, I'm still... So we kinda talked on it before the episode, Hottie is currently out of commission, and right now I am riding the waves of this past month that I had. I finally got to take her out, we had a rough summer trying to get on the road and adventure. Not rough in the... It was what would have been expected, what should have been expected when one purchased a very old RV and took it on the road. [chuckle] So we hit some hiccups and worked out some kinks, and this time I got to have a pretty amazing trip, I got to take my dogs to Mexico, I got to go to these secluded beaches and let them chase waves, and we were... We saw some of the most amazing sunsets. Hiked through the desert in the middle of the night looking at stars, those are things that I'm holding on to so tightly right now because we're getting back on the road soon. I just don't know how soon and right now that's what we got.

0:04:06.2 NA: Yeah, the stars and the night sky in the desert is one of my favorite things.

0:04:11.1 Jupiter: Oh, it's amazing. I walked outside and just like... We walked and we were hiking, and the dogs have these little light up collars, so they were romping and I could keep an eye on them, but I didn't have to have a head lamp on or anything, and I just stopped walking and looked up, and I swear to you, I don't know what happened, but I cried for 20 minutes. It was beautiful, it's so amazing. It's just like there's so many of them and you feel so tiny, it's wild.

0:04:36.9 NA: I love that feeling, the like, "I am tiny and insignificant," but in a good way.

0:04:41.1 Jupiter: Yeah, yeah, yeah, like everything is gonna be fine. There's this whole giant universe outside of me that exists and everything I'm dealing with, it will be alright.

0:04:50.4 NA: Yeah. So as you said, Hottie is currently out of commission, that might not be the case, and hopefully It won't be the case by the time this episode airs, but since we're having a real conversation in real time, do you wanna give a little rundown of what's going on?

0:05:04.3 Jupiter: Yeah, so this week I was coming back from Mexico, I was actually on my way to the desert, I had some filming to do in Hottie so I was gonna go do that and handle some emails, record this podcast, I was hoping to be coming to you live from Joshua Tree, but it didn't work out that way. Hottie threw a rod in her engine on a highway in California, and so, yeah, I ended up spending my week... Last week on the side of the road in this random small mountain town in Cali,

and then just yesterday, I got back to Texas. But yeah, it's a whole thing. We're not really sure how long it's gonna take to get her back, hopefully it's not too long, the engine... A new engine... She needs an entirely new engine, there's not really like an alternative. They are kinda pricey. I don't know if you've ever purchased one Nicole.

0:06:03.6 NA: I was just gonna say, for someone who... I live part-time... I live full-time in my van for part of the year so part time van stuff.

0:06:12.4 Jupiter: Part-time, full timer.

0:06:13.9 NA: Of part-time, full timer. I know nothing about that side of things. Please tell me, how much does it cost to get a new engine in an RV?

0:06:22.1 Jupiter: Well I'm lucky, Hottie's old and she's a Ford, so it's not too too bad, it could be worse, but it's like \$7000, overall is the estimate.

0:06:32.5 NA: That's significant.

0:06:34.1 Jupiter: It's a lot of money. Bear in mind, I paid \$2000 for this vehicle to begin with. [chuckle] Like for perspective, it's more expensive than I paid for the whole.

0:06:45.5 NA: Oh my gosh.

0:06:46.7 Jupiter: We're working out some cheaper options, but for where she is and where we were, that was the best we were offered, and I was like... I don't know, man.

0:06:58.2 NA: I mean, that's a hard... Obviously, I'm just wildly projecting based on how I would feel in that situation. Is it worth putting almost more than three times the amount that I paid for this into it, but I put so much work into it, that's an interesting crossroads of deciding what is worth it.

0:07:13.0 Jupiter: It is. Especially since... Like I said last summer, It wasn't too easy, either. I put a new carburetor in her and that was another... That was a \$2000 thing. And again, like I said, these things are to be expected, it's reasonable, I guess. The engine kinda threw me. Hottie had 42,000 miles on her originally when I brought her and they are original miles, I got her checked out, everything was fine. So that one was kind of a surprise, but new cars have surprises, I guess, so that's fine. But yeah, we are at the point where I was like, there was definitely a minute during that week that I was on the side of the road where I was like, Is it worth to fix that or should I just tow her and set her up and rent her out or something, I don't know, what do I do with this kid after this month, but I think she still got some life in her, so it might be worth it if we can find a cheaper way to do it, it's definitely... Definitely a thing that I'm gonna try to keep intact.

0:08:07.4 NA: Yeah, well, I will remain helpful on that for you. This is bringing up for me, and maybe this is something we can talk about, something I'd be interested in your perspective on, because in a lot of ways, I am someone who has made, I guess, non-traditional life choices, the kind

of self-employment, the style of my business, the part-time van life, just... There is a bunch of different things where I'm definitely not choosing I think what would be considered the white picket fence norm. I often feel like when stumbling blocks happen or when I come across obstacles, I'm not very nice to myself, and also I'm like, Well, you chose this path. So this is what you get.

0:08:45.9 Jupiter: Nicole, you see me right now. When I tell you, I called my friends and I had a whole breakdown, I was like, I understand why people don't do this. This is my fault. I did this, I could have kept my job, I had a corporate job, I had benefits, I had health insurance, and I walked away from it to live in this van, and now look at me, this is what I get. And I kind of spiraled and sat in that for so many days and that's the worst part. I would say that was the hardest part about being out solo was that nobody was there to kinda... Not even that it's anyone's responsibility, but I think when you're with someone else, you kind of have a second voice and you all can... You both... People do this thing where they shift blame and then you both come to a point where you're like, it's nobody's fault, and then you work through that and you have someone to at least comfort you at the lowest parts, if nothing else... And that's a hard part about doing it by yourself, that was non-existent. I was on FaceTime a lot, that week.

0:09:46.2 NA: But it's also just this really interesting myth that I have had to think about for myself of, What do I think if I would have made all of the "right choices," whatever society says that those are, that means I would never have pain or there would never be obstacles, I would never need help. That's not true. So it's like, Am I just using my life choices as... Am I weaponizing my life choices against myself to make myself feel bad? There's something in that that feels like really gross to me when I do that to myself.

0:10:13.4 Jupiter: No, definitely, I always get so frustrated with myself because I, as a self-proclaimed staunch anti-capitalist, I hate that, I hate that I feel like it's my fault because I wanted to do something good. At the end of the day, I knew made me happier than what I was doing because yes, I had health insurance, but I was miserable. I couldn't go outside. I hadn't been to the beach, I hadn't been to any water in ages. I love water. [chuckle] I wasn't able to spend the time I wanted with my dogs, I was stressed about the quality of life my dogs had, I was stressed about the quality of life I had, and even though I had the money, it just... The time wasn't there and it didn't translate in a way that mattered to me. And now whenever I too feel super icky, it feels like this gross holdover from that conditioning that, You're supposed to go to college, get a job, get married, have kids, buy a house, whatever. Maybe not in that order. I don't remember the right order 'cause I don't care anymore about that stuff. [chuckle] But you know what I'm saying. Yeah, I hate it. It's so ugly, and I'm really trying to unlearn it, but at the time, it's also finding that balance between how I let myself feel and how do I not beat myself up for just trying to be happy. It's so hard.

0:11:27.8 NA: It is hard. I thought about this a lot, so I was living in a van all of last summer, obviously during the pandemic, and something that I thought about a lot because for me, and obviously our vehicle sizes and livability are quite different, my van has 20 square feet of living space, it's like itty-bitty. And I made that choice for a couple of reasons, and one of the sacrifices is, Okay, I'm gonna need to do a lot of my living in more public spaces, coffee shops, libraries, potentially a co-working space, laundromat, there's just a lot that I rely on that all of it was closed

during the pandemic. And showering at the gym, none of those things were options for me, and it put me in a position of having to ask for a lot of help and having to deal with this shame that came up for me around, Wow, I'm 35 years old and I'm showering once a week at a friend's house, because that's all that I have access to, it was a real spiral and having to get back to like, No, there's no one path that guarantees that you're never gonna have hardships and leaning into the interdependence is if I let myself do it without shame, it actually feels like really lovely.

0:12:37.1 Jupiter: Yeah, I'm working on that right now, I will say. I'm an only child, and my mom was briefly married, but for the most part was a single parent, and so I've always been pretty self-sufficient and independent, and now it's kind of strange that through the van life... I wouldn't call it strange, it's honestly, one of the most beautiful things that I've been blessed to come away with from this community... Not even come away with, but be a part of, is that there are so many people who care and genuinely love and wanna support and help each other, help everyone else, that it feels so foreign to lean into it. Right now I'm staying with a couple of van lifing friends... Or they're not van lifers right now, they're a bit more stationary for the time being. But even accepting that, it felt so strange. I was like I'm almost 30, I just turned 27, and I should have my life together. I shouldn't be doing this. I shouldn't need to stay at a friend's house because I don't... Because my house is on the other side of the country with no real way of getting... No clear path on how it's getting back to me any time soon, and I just... It's so hard. But how have you come to overcome that? Have you gotten to a place? What makes it easier to lean in for you, 'cause I'm working on that and it is so hard.

0:14:00.4 NA: I will be surprised if I ever overcome it. I don't know for me that that's the goal. I certainly wish that that could happen. Don't get me wrong, if someone wants to email us with the secret, we'll take it.

0:14:11.4 Jupiter: Please, please. Anybody?

[laughter]

0:14:13.5 NA: No, I mean, I felt pretty awful about it most of last summer and really kind of went the full spectrum of if I hadn't gotten divorced, if I would have made this career choice instead, if... There were a lot of ifs, and to your point from before, those things weren't my path, and so okay, I probably just would have been unhappy in a different way, or there would have been different obstacles, and I don't know, I think for me leaning into it was letting it be okay that I felt complicated feelings around it. Can I just accept the fact that this feels... I don't know how it feels, that it does make me feel some shame, and it also at the same time makes me feel profound gratitude and a lot more bonded to those people who showed up for me, and that both...

0:14:58.0 NA: I feel like a lot of my work as a person in the world is around living in this both end, where two seemingly contradictory things can be true, that I can have to deal with the shame, and shout out to therapy for that, but also can be really grateful. And it made me think a lot about what are the kind of communities that I wanna be a part of as someone who's choosing not to have kids, and what does family and community look like if you're choosing a different structure. So it left me with a lot more questions, but I don't know. I try to stay curious, it's easier and also sometimes it's

just awful, so I have no magic answer for you.

[laughter]

0:15:34.8 Jupiter: No, I love that though. That's definitely an angle that I'm gonna try to integrate more. I think it's important, and it's so weird, I don't know if you find this to be true about yourself, but I think that I am so much more willing to extend grace and understanding and space for the complexities of life and everything when it's other people's things, but when it comes to me and my internal managings, no, there's no way. It either is or it isn't, and you need to figure it out. [chuckle] I'm so strict on myself.

0:16:07.0 NA: Oh yeah, it's like, it's real cute for other people.

0:16:13.1 Jupiter: Yes. I love that for everyone else.

0:16:14.3 NA: Yeah, I love it for everyone else, but I should be better. That's an invitation for me to be like, "Girl, what are you doing?"

0:16:19.0 Jupiter: Like, "Homie, what is happening right now? Why do you think that? What is wrong with you?" [chuckle] I need to turn that lens inward 'cause that is me too. No, that is exactly my thought process.

0:16:29.8 NA: I think about this a lot, and I know you don't know a lot about my business, my business model, but I don't really know anyone that has a business like mine, and sometimes it feels like pushing the boulder up the sand mountain continuously, but other... And when it gets hard or when it feels hard, I remind myself that, I don't know, like living in alignment with what I actually want and with any kind of values that are even at all counter-mainstream cultural, of course it's gonna feel hard sometimes because the entire system is set up for me to behave differently than that. And so, I don't know, maybe it's okay that it's hard. Like we're not supposed to be so interdependent and community and all of that, because then we can't be the individualistic capitalist machine cogs.

0:17:13.3 Jupiter: Yeah, yeah. No, I...

0:17:15.0 NA: Like, who wins when we don't ask for help from each other?

0:17:18.1 Jupiter: Truly, and I'm wondering if that's not part of... Like you said earlier, the other ways of living and doing things that we could have gone with just weren't probably our paths, and I wonder now if that's not an integral part of the unlearning of capitalism that you and I and other people who choose this life or find themselves in situations where they have to... I think anyone, I guess, who has to lean into community more than capitalism says is comfortable is okay. That's not part of the greater collective consciousness expanding to accepting these more communal ways of thought, 'cause I think it's really hard to do anything by yourself. And I think it's such a lie, it's such bullshit that capitalism tells us we have to be able to, and that we have to be able to sustain

everything, all the things by ourselves. It's just like, no, it's not possible. How? At all times. How?

0:18:14.8 NA: Yeah, for me a lot of it too has been looking at the ways in which I'm really sensitive to not wanting to be a burden on other people and where that story even comes from.

0:18:25.5 Jupiter: Who told me I was a burden, and why do I believe it?

0:18:29.2 NA: Right. Exactly.

0:18:29.7 Jupiter: And why is that the first thing that comes to my mind when I need... When I'm ass out on the side of the road in California. Like, why?

0:18:39.7 NA: So you painted a picture a little bit of what your life was like in the year or two leading up to deciding to make this big change, working in the corporate job, having that. What was, and maybe there wasn't a particular day, but a story or a time that you can tell me about when you were like, "You know, I think I'm gonna do something different"?

0:19:00.2 Jupiter: I was paying rent. Yeah, I was paying rent and I was fighting with my office because... I don't even know. Just one of those things that I had probably with my ADHD brain forgotten to do it, to set up the auto pay or something, or I was... Oh, I lose my debit card a lot. That's what it was. I lose my debit card a lot, and I was redoing the bank information, and they had charged me for my rent and were upset because it didn't go through on the other card and they were gonna charge me extra money just to put in my new card number. And I remember thinking, "This is so stupid. First of all, this is a lot of money that I'm giving you all for this apartment that when I'm done living in it, I get to take nothing of it." Not even that I want to own it. Just paying to exist is a strange concept, and if you live a lifestyle that takes you outside of your home at any point, with the way that the typical work week is structured, you are basically feels like sometimes paying for a giant storage unit that you could make food in.

0:20:11.0 Jupiter: And that sucked. And that was really it. And so it was all these thoughts that were building up and I was like, "I feel uncomfortable at my job. I feel like I can't actually be my fullest self while maintaining that job." 'Cause that job meant so much. That job was literally my ticket to stability, and so it felt oppressive in that way. Like I was stuck there and I had to do all these things. I had to uphold this code of conduct, even when I wasn't at work. Not that I wanted to do anything raggedy, but just I felt like I couldn't do the things I wanted to do, I couldn't talk about the things I wanted to talk about, I couldn't write about the things I wanted to write about, I just... It was hard for me to make that work. And so, yeah, paying rent, all these thoughts happened in about a 20-minute span while I was messing with my phone, or probably on hold with the apartment complex, and I was like, "Yeah, I'm gonna do something else." My lease was up. I think it was one of the last months of my lease too, which is why it was so infuriating 'cause I was already ready to go. I was almost out and yeah, I just was done, and the thought kinda got implanted that I should do something else, and I love traveling and stuff. I have my dogs. Can't leave them.

0:21:28.6 NA: Yeah, so when did that kind of maybe more vague question of, "I think I'm ready to

do something else," or "What might something else look like?" when did that come together to be, "I am going to buy and renovate and move into a vintage RV"?

[laughter]

0:21:43.0 Jupiter: So after that, it moved pretty quick, 'cause like I said, I had a couple of months out of my lease, and I had spent some time looking at moving to Austin. It's ironic that I kind of ended up based out of Austin anyway, but I was looking at getting an apartment in Austin and getting a job in Austin, and most apartments you have to have, I guess, proof of income or something, but they want it for the past few months. And if you're moving to a new city, unless you have worked in that city for three months, it's really hard to do that. They wouldn't accept my income from Houston, and so I was trying to transfer and shuffle things around, and it was a mess and it just... All of it felt like too much to do for a life that I wasn't really interested, that I already knew a lifestyle I already knew I wasn't interested in living.

0:22:34.6 Jupiter: And so I think I was on YouTube. I had always wanted to do tiny houses. Me and my friend, I had a friend in college that we would talk about running away from civilization and living in tiny houses with our dogs in the mountains, and so I knew tiny houses were a thing. I looked at them. They were stupid expensive, and I knew that that was not in my price range, and then I went to skoolies, as one does, and from there, I saw vans and then my mom made a joke that I should just get an RV 'cause I had an uncle who used to live in an RV in our back yard. Long story. [chuckle] Anyway, she mentioned it and I was like, "Ha-ha-ha, yeah, that's funny." Types in Craigslist "Vintage RVs for sale," and then... Yeah, I think after about two, three weeks of looking at RVs... I saw so many RVs, so many different kinds too. I looked at pull behinds, I looked at fifth wheels, I looked at Class As, I looked at other Class Cs, and I found Hottie in this little town tucked off outside of Houston.

0:23:43.9 NA: Okay, so take me to the day that you actually buy this RV. What are you feeling? What are you excited about? What are you nervous about?

0:23:50.1 Jupiter: Oh my gosh, everything. I was so concerned. The day that I bought it, I actually paid it over the course of a couple of weeks. I went to see it, and the dude that owned it wasn't there, so it was kind of weird, and I just I went, I had to deal with these people at this RV park and get the keys, and they checked it out with me and watched me, and it was just a very strange situation altogether, but then yeah, I decided that I wanted it. He was like asking \$3000. He was asking \$3000 for it. I thought that was ridiculous. Hottie definitely had some issues. She had some water damage, she needed... Her whole roof needed to be redone, there were just things that... It was ridiculous. I'm gonna be real. He was asking too much money, and I think he knew that, so he took it down to 2000, and I was so excited because I felt like I had just been this master negotiator. [chuckle]

0:24:52.4 Jupiter: And, yeah, I Venmo'd him, and then a couple weeks later, I met him in person and gave him another Venmo, and he signed over the title and he gave me a tour, an official tour, told me all of her quirks, and I was just so excited, I don't think I was really listening to him. I

recorded it all in my phone, so I have this library of videos of him walking me through Hottie's stuff and I reference them sometimes, and I'm like, "Damn, he said something. What was it? That man said something about this. What is it?" I'll go through the camera roll and go to that album. But yeah, I was so excited to have just purchased a home, and I called my Mom afterwards, and I told her I was a homeowner, and I was stoked.

0:25:35.3 NA: So I've heard you say elsewhere, the part of your desire to do this, to quit corporate America, go this other path was to redefine the American dream for yourself, and I would love for you to share some specifics about what that new dream that you felt like you were building, what was that dream?

0:25:51.6 Jupiter: I think... You say "was," I didn't realize the past tense. What are you trying to say, Nicole?

[laughter]

0:25:56.3 NA: What is that? Okay, that's fair, that's fair.

0:25:58.5 Jupiter: What are you trying to say? That's shady. I'm just kidding. [chuckle]

0:26:01.5 NA: No, no, that's fair. What I meant was, I think that dreams are ever-evolving things, and so I'm trying to put it at the point of like you have bought this RV, what is the dream? And then follow-up question is, has that changed?

0:26:12.8 Jupiter: No. Okay, okay, I got you. So at the time, I just remember I was and am very interested in politics, international politics, American politics, whatever. I love it. And I also have opinions and thoughts on things because that's what my degree is in. I have a degree in political science, and so it just tracks that that would be something I'm interested in, I guess, and so I felt like I couldn't talk or write really about those things for fear that they would kinda... If I said the wrong thing that didn't reflect in the way that the company maybe felt, it's very easy for people to get doxxed on the Internet these days. And so at the time, that was one of the biggest things that I was looking forward to. I thought that I was... It felt like I was buying and I was... And I still would say that I did, and I am buying. I just paid for my ticket to being able to do that and live on my own terms. I wouldn't need to worry about a light bill because I would have solar power. And I do. I wouldn't have to worry about rent because I always have a roof over my head. As long as I find land to park it on, I'm okay.

0:27:24.0 Jupiter: And even then prices, I had already priced out RV parks and stuff, and I was aware that it was much cheaper than paying rent. I was paying almost \$1700 in rent in Houston, and spots at RV parks are I think \$500 a month max down here. It's a very big difference. And then I get to have my dogs, and my dogs get to live their lives, and just all these benefits that I was excited about. It felt like I was buying myself the time really too, to do the things that I wanted to do. Take my dogs to the beach, go to the beach myself, visit my friends. This was pre-pandemic obviously. I wanted to visit my friends that had moved and spread out after college and stuff like that. Those

things that as people participating or being forced to participate in those systems, you really just find don't take priority as much as maybe you'd like them to. Does that makes sense?

0:28:25.3 NA: It makes complete sense. Yeah, it's interesting to hear you talk about two sides of the same coin. Like on one side, there's the really practical stuff of not paying rent or at the very least paying a much lower amount for RV parking, not having to pay the utilities because you have solar right there, so those really tangible, easy to see in your bank account on day one things. And then there's some of the deeper, more emotional, but probably equally if not more important stuff of, hey, you can write and talk about the things that you want without being afraid that your employer's gonna fire you for it, or that it opens up more freedom of ideas, and then also freedom of time. Your time becomes yours again because you're not just trading hours for dollars constantly.

0:29:06.9 Jupiter: Exactly. It felt like I spent \$2000 to buy my time back and I was so liberated in that moment, and when I say the new American dream, I feel like... I don't know if it's the new American dream for everybody, but I know that that's the dream I want. I don't wanna answer to somebody. I don't wanna have to worry that my job or my safety net is going to be yanked from under my feet. I don't wanna feel like... And again that sounds ironic in this position that I'm in right now, with my vehicle across the country with no functioning engine and no clear cut path to getting it back in sight, but I really believe that it's gonna work out, and I think that I'll be able to figure something out because I have this time. I think if I was working my job and my car broke down or something, and I had extensive repairs, I would just have to figure it out with the money that I was given from my job because I don't have time to try anything else. I don't have time to explore any other options, 40 hours of my week are still being taken up by this thing. Now I just have the problem of figuring out how to get there, which means that I'm actually probably spending more than 40 hours. My commute just got longer. I don't have a guaranteed ride now.

0:30:19.8 NA: Yeah, yeah, and it's like when are you supposed to figure out all the life admin stuff, right?

0:30:27.2 Jupiter: Yeah. And how do you do the rest of that? How?

0:30:29.7 NA: We don't. Like where is the 1950s housewife that does it all? I don't know.

0:30:34.2 Jupiter: Yeah, right, the 40-hour work week was never designed for single people. That's men. You're supposed to have a wife at home to take care of that shit, but who... No, no.

0:30:45.1 NA: No. Burn it all down, yeah.

0:30:46.5 Jupiter: Burn it down. Set fire to it. Hand me the matches. I'm done. [chuckle]

0:30:49.9 NA: Okay, money-related question, if you are down to talk about money, and yes, yes to the arson, sure. Like, burn it all down.

0:30:54.6 Jupiter: No I don't have any if that's what you're asking. [chuckle]

0:31:00.1 NA: Well, my question was, so in making this decision, you buy this RV, did you have... 'cause I don't know a lot about your work history other than what you've shared about having worked a corporate job... Did you have a plan in place of, "Okay, I'm gonna do this and this is how I'm gonna bring in new money," or was this, "I'm gonna figure it out as I go"?

0:31:18.4 Jupiter: It was a mixture. I knew that freelancing was a thing. I knew that writing was one of my stronger suits. Yeah, I knew that that was a thing I could do and a thing that I liked doing. I knew that I had skills that I could leverage, and I figured... Again, pre pandemic, right? I figured, worst case scenario, I, and actually it wasn't even a worse case scenario. I lied. Scratch that. It wasn't a worse case scenario. It was something I was super excited about. I wanted to go stay and do camp hosting stuff or be a server at those restaurants they have at national parks and shit, like in little outdoors-y mountain towns, where the tourist season gets popping and those restaurants need help. I was just gonna go be that 'cause I was a bartender and a server and stuff before anything professional launched off. And so I figured that it would be a mix of I can do these things to sustain the baseline and then hit these things up when I need to do other things. Getting broken down in the town isn't so bad in a world where you could just figure it out. You know, you just walk into a restaurant and get a job, I guess. Not that it's that easy, but you know what I'm saying, when there are options. Covid limited a lot for a lot of people, that's what I'm saying. [chuckle]

0:32:35.7 NA: Right. Understatement. Yeah, yes.

0:32:38.6 Jupiter: Yeah, understatement of the century. Covid really changed the game. It sounds like a bizarre thing to say that that even was a world that I thought that was possible, where there were ads, open ads on the Internet on cool jobs and all these other websites that do outdoors-y jobs. It would just be open ads for seasonal servers, bartenders at these lodge restaurants and stuff, and it was totally viable, it was a totally... It was not as astronomical a plan as it sounds now. [chuckle]

0:33:09.5 NA: And probably six to 12 months from now, it will not sound that way again.

0:33:15.8 Jupiter: Hopefully, yeah.

0:33:15.9 NA: Hopefully, yeah. Who knows? Tell me the story behind the name Hottie for the RV?

0:33:22.2 Jupiter: Yeah, Hottie. I like Steven Universe a lot. I don't know if you've ever seen it. Have you?

0:33:28.5 NA: No.

0:33:30.5 Jupiter: Okay, Steven Universe is this cartoon on Cartoon Network. And there's Steven and his dad, Greg Universe. Greg Universe lives in a van, and there's the Crystal Gems, and they are... They're amazing. Anyway, so yeah, there's this phrase in it. Steven's dad tells him, "If every pork chop were perfect, we wouldn't have hot dogs." And Gilly my partner at the time of building my home, was letting me know that... I was so stressed about the build... I was so stressed about

everything in here, and I was so stressed that I felt like nothing was right, or that every time I peeled back a wall, I found six more problems than I expected, and he was just... He would always say it. He kept saying it. He would be like, "If every pork chop were perfect, we wouldn't have hot dogs." And then we have the dogs, so hot dog, and Hottie for short.

0:34:23.5 NA: That's a delightful story. I like that very much.

0:34:25.2 Jupiter: Yeah, it's wonderful. If she were perfect, she wouldn't be her. And she's just as good.

0:34:32.8 NA: I feel like that's... Not that it needs to be better or worse, like that's better than my story. My van's name is Trixie.

0:34:37.3 Jupiter: Trixie. That's so cute.

0:34:39.5 NA: Thank you. Are you a Harry Potter person or were you a Harry Potter person?

0:34:42.7 Jupiter: Yeah, I was.

0:34:44.8 NA: So I'm in Slytherin, like very Slytherin, and that was my...

0:34:48.9 Jupiter: I'm in Ravenclaw.

0:34:50.2 NA: Ooh, alright. There you go. That was my... Trixie was my shortened Bellatrix name. So that's where that came from. [chuckle]

0:34:55.7 Jupiter: Oh my God, I love that. That is cute.

0:35:00.7 NA: So Bellatrix and Hottie. See, I would like to see them parked next to each other. I feel like my van could fit inside of Hottie. [chuckle]

0:35:05.4 Jupiter: Probably. A lot of people's vans could. It's wild.

0:35:08.1 NA: It's absurd. I'm interested in what, if any building experience you had prior to this. I had never used power tools or anything even remotely like that before this project, and luckily I had an enormous amount of help from other people. But what was your experience? Because the before and after photos that I have seen are wild.

0:35:25.2 Jupiter: Oh, none whatsoever.

0:35:29.8 NA: You did a fantastic job.

0:35:31.1 Jupiter: Thank you, thank you. Yeah, yeah, it's a miracle to me to this day that my ceiling hasn't collapsed. Not that I think it's structurally unsound. It's just amazing that I put that

together and it's still there. I built IKEA furniture for a couple of girls I dated and myself, I guess.

0:35:50.5 NA: So that was the... IKEA furniture as like the price of dating is your building experience.

0:35:56.9 Jupiter: Yeah, hell, yeah. If you can build an IKEA bed frame, you could totally build a house.

0:36:03.3 NA: Okay, okay.

0:36:04.4 Jupiter: It's basically the same shit. Basically.

0:36:07.9 NA: I hear the words that you're saying. I find all of this still like... My partner now, these are all his skill sets, like what he's just finished building out his... He built out a van last year, lived in it for a couple months, sold it and is kinda getting into the van flipping, like live in it and then sell it, game.

0:36:28.1 Jupiter: That's really sweet, yeah.

0:36:28.7 NA: Which is awesome. And watching him do stuff, I'm like... My favorite question as you know. "But how, though?" Especially... So if you're saying you didn't really have building experience, like looking at the before and after pictures, my question for you, Jupiter, is, but how though? How?

[laughter]

0:36:42.8 Jupiter: Okay. Yeah, so I don't know. It felt kind of intuitive, and a lot of it was just figuring it out as I went, and I will not even lie to you and say that every idea I've had worked out perfectly. The table, for example, is gone. It's been replaced with a couch now. I'm so excited, I put out a new tour. I have to fix... I have to paint it 'cause it just got built and I had minimal hand in building that, I will say, but yeah, the table did not work out. I tried to make it work and it didn't. It kept falling out of the wall. It was not sturdy. It was not good. So I took it out. The loft rebuild is my pride and joy, next to the bed, but the bed I don't take as much credit for 'cause my grandpa really came in clutch with the planning aspect of it. I had ideas and contributions as far as the thing that I wanted 'cause I don't think he could visualize it fully, but for the structural integrity, that was almost all my grandpa.

0:37:42.0 NA: Cool, so you did have help, which is awesome.

0:37:44.2 Jupiter: Yeah, I did. I did. More direction, I would say. But yeah, no, he came out and screwed some things for me. It was really sweet. He came out, he was so concerned about me and that bed, he was... [chuckle] He would look at me and be just so concerned. His eyes, you could tell that he was thinking this child was gonna die, "If I let them build that bed, I'm not gonna have a grandbaby no more." And I was like, "Grandpa, it's good, man."

0:38:18.0 NA: That was one of the questions that I was gonna ask you is, was there a particular day or part of the build project that really stands out to you as like, "Fuck, yeah, I did that"?

0:38:25.5 Jupiter: Yeah. Ironically, not the bed. It's the loft. It's definitely the loft because the loft, the second time I didn't... The first time... Well, both times I did it by myself, but the first time I didn't really know what I was doing, and the second time I kinda knew what I was doing 'cause I had already done the bed, I'd already hung the ceiling, I'd already reframed the walls, I'd already re-installed walls, I had already sealed and done all these things, wired... I had just figured it out. It was the first thing when I bought Hottie that I broke into, and it was the very last thing that I got into before I shipped her off to go start messing on the mechanical part. And so it felt like it really just came full circle in that loft and being able to make it what it is now was so satisfying.

0:39:19.4 NA: I'm interested. So what you said about it was your mom who typed into Craigslist, right, like the vintage RV, or suggested the RVs...

0:39:26.0 Jupiter: No, it was me.

0:39:27.0 NA: Okay, okay.

0:39:27.8 Jupiter: I did the typing, I will say my mom was completely joking and when I bought an RV, she was supportive, but I think she was confused. She was just... Anyway, go on.

0:39:42.1 NA: No, I was gonna say that one of my questions, anytime I'm talking to someone who had kind of a fork in the road moment and maybe took the less known or less traditional or less conventionally stable path is, what did your closest people think? What were those conversations like?

0:40:00.2 Jupiter: Okay. Yeah, my mom is an interesting, interesting person. She generally does not question much that I do, she has this unwavering belief that I could do probably anything in this world, and I love that for her, I love it. I wish I had a shirt of that confidence on myself, right. Don't we all wish we could just believe in ourselves as much our moms do?

0:40:22.6 NA: Oh yeah.

0:40:24.7 Jupiter: 'Cause even a crumb of it would be so good. But no, she was confused. But she thought that Hottie was super cute and she was so excited for me when I called her and I was like, "I'm a homeowner." She said, "You're a mobile homeowner." and I said, "Okay, thank you for that correction, mom." And then I called her when I was moving it to Texas, and you know Hottie had some mechanical issue, what we now know was a carburetor issue, and so she would stall out and I called her from the side of the road once, and I was like, "Mom, my house broke down." and she goes, "Okay, well, now you're a homeowner." and I was like, "What do you mean?" And she goes, "It's not mobile anymore." and I was like... [laughter] "Jackie, savage bro. You can't just say that shit." which she totally did. So no, she's had a good sense of humour about it. And I just met my

grandparents through the build, and they've been incredibly supportive. My grandpa was one of the few people to offer to help me and he's really the only one that actually followed through. And so, I got to meet him and get to know him and connect with him through building this RV, and he now is so proud and so excited.

0:41:38.9 Jupiter: I call him all the time from the road, and I give him updates and he will tell me sometimes that he didn't think that I was gonna get this far. He's like, "I didn't know. I thought that you would finish it, but I didn't think that you were actually gonna take it out." and I'm like, "Yeah, grandpa, what else was I gonna do?"

0:41:56.0 NA: That's such a unique thing to have bonded over and built a relationship over. You'll always have that you did that together.

0:42:02.7 Jupiter: Yeah, yeah, no, it's super rad.

0:42:06.8 NA: I would say my mom, my parents in general, but my mom is very supportive of anything that I choose to do and understands none of it, or why I would ever want any of these things.

0:42:19.1 Jupiter: Exactly, yeah, yeah. Jackie is like, "I don't get it but I love that for you."

0:42:23.0 NA: Yeah, I remember when I first got into long distance hiking. I was an indoor kid. I was not someone who grew up in the outdoors at all. I was raised, basically, in really big cities, I lived on the 26th storey of a 35-storey building in Lower Manhattan with my parents, we did not do outdoorsing. And when I first started getting into this in my 30s, getting into this and trying to describe to my mom like, "Oh well, you know, you dig this six to eight inch cat hole and you pop in it and you pack out the toilet paper." and she's just like, "Why? Who did I raise? What happened to you?" And then moving into the van.

0:42:55.8 Jupiter: "Where did I go wrong as a parent?"

0:42:56.2 NA: Right, and I don't even know if she's feeling that, but she's just feeling like, "Where did my child go?" [laughter] So it is always funny when we make a choice that's maybe different from the choices that our parents made in a fundamental way, or whoever our caregivers or family are, just what those reactions are.

0:43:16.5 Jupiter: No, yeah, it really is. It cracks me up. And then my grandpa doesn't understand Instagram either, so explaining that there's a lot of people who now follow the doesthiscountasvanlife account and stuff, or what that means and how that translates to these different things that I get to do via magazine... Apartment Therapy right, whether be it apartment therapy things or anything, he's like "So all of this, because you live in an RV."

0:43:44.7 NA: Right. [laughter]

0:43:46.6 Jupiter: I'm like, "Well damn grandpa, keep me humble." Yeah, yeah. It is...

0:43:50.1 NA: Oh my gosh.

0:43:50.2 Jupiter: It's just 'cause I live in a van, I guess. He's like, "You know, you could get an apartment right?" I'm like, "Yeah grandpa."

0:43:56.6 NA: You're like, "Yeah, but is Instagram gonna be interested in that?" Not that that's the reason to do something, necessarily.

0:44:01.1 Jupiter: No. Right, exactly. "I do it for the 'gram grandpa." I don't. I don't do it for the 'gram.

0:44:03.8 NA: Of course. No, no.

0:44:07.7 Jupiter: The gram is not enough to keep me in this life, I wish.

0:44:09.7 NA: It's not enough to keep you with your house broke down on the side of the road. No.

0:44:13.5 Jupiter: No, no.

0:44:16.0 NA: Actually that's something that I hadn't even really thought about talking to you about but I am interested... How do I even... I'm trying to understand what my question is. The role of Instagram in these choices for you, 'cause obviously you just said you're not doing this for Instagram and yet chronicling it on it and having support on it and being able to meet other people who are making similar choices, what role has Instagram played in this transition to mobile living for you?

0:44:42.4 Jupiter: Yeah, it's been super... A mixed bag, I will say, 'cause I never really intended to do anything with Instagram for this. I was originally posting about it on my main page, and I had a friend tell me that I should start an Instagram for it, and I kinda took it as they were tired of seeing that shit on my page, so... [laughter] So I was like, "Alright. Fine, fine. I'll make it into an Instagram." And then I did and I just started documenting the build, and I got to meet other people, get to connect with other people who were doing the same thing or who had done it before. And from the beginning, it was kind of really awesome. This community of people kinda just showed up that were invested in the journey, if not on the same one or similar one. They are just all, I don't know, I just feel like everyone... People came and it was nice. Words are hard. And then promptly after building it, I started... Well, I really started it in the pandemic, I guess. Yeah, yeah, I really just dove into full-time building and then the pandemic hit a couple months later, and so that's when it really became super clutch that I had Instagram.

0:45:52.3 NA: Yeah.

0:45:55.3 Jupiter: Even before it took off weirdly. Just being able to connect with people who were

doing the same thing or who had advice to give, or questions, advice they needed, other people who were queer or black or Hispanic or whatever, who wanted to get into this life and were tired of seeing only white people doing it. It was just really nice to be able to connect with them and to form that community, and it's been so great for it to grow, and I'm so excited about it growing. I know, I know I sound like, "Oh, it took off." Yeah, it's been amazing, and it's still kinda wild to me, weird to me, that so many people are so... Find something there that they can connect with and share with each other and with me, and I love it. It's been nice.

0:46:42.4 NA: Yeah. You mentioned earlier in the conversation, particularly around the RV breaking down, and feeling like, "Wow, I'm out here all alone," I don't have anyone to talk this through with in the same way that if you were doing it with someone else, and that that can feel isolating. I find that, for as much as there's definitely pros and serious cons to Instagram, at least, I have found, it is really awesome to feel like there's a bunch of people from all over who are rooting for you.

0:47:11.8 Jupiter: No, yeah, absolutely, and I think... I will say this, that's taken a very real manifestation for me this week with this situation, exactly. I met the person who did Hottie's electrical on Instagram, five cars and a bus, Megan Carr, she's delightful, I love her so much. Her and her family are the most wonderful human beings. She didn't know me at all, just saw that I needed help and messaged me, was like, "Hey, I'm not a professional or anything, but I can help you out. If you come to my land, you can have your house here, nobody'll bother you. It's fine, we'll work the system out, we'll figure it out." And so, she helped me install my Go Power! Solar, which was delightful. And then, fast forward to now, I took off, left her land in February. I'm out on the road doing my thing, I'm broken down outside of San Diego and Megan's like, "Oh hey, I'm on my way to San Diego, are you still in California?" And I'm like, "Yeah, actually, my house broke." And so, she's like, "Oh, I'll come see you and just hang out, see what I can do. I've been driving animals." She doesn't really interact with anyone on her job, it's just her shuttling animals. She's an animal transport carrier. And so, that's super cool. She shows up and she's like, "Okay, well, do you and the hot dogs wanna go home?"

0:48:29.6 Jupiter: And I'm like, "What? Megan, yes, we do." And so, she... All from Instagram. And that's so wild.

0:48:37.9 NA: It's incredible. The same thing, less so, with the van for me, because I haven't really done travelling, like van living. It's mostly been in Bend, Oregon, which is where I had a house before.

0:48:48.1 Jupiter: Bend is still delightful, though.

0:48:51.0 NA: Yeah. I just meant that I haven't had... I have a network of people there already, but where my point of relation and residence with what you're saying has absolutely been with long-distance hiking. Staying with people or getting rides from people through the kindness that I have received through Instagram, from strangers, has... It really... I know this sounds kinda cheesy, but it expands my heart, it makes me feel very uplifted.

0:49:15.6 Jupiter: Yeah, same, no. I just feel so much gratitude for knowing people who love that way, and it inspires me to just love people more and be more like that, the way that I move. And I think it's such a beautiful thing to be a part of and to be given from any community. And I want everybody to find that somewhere, if not everywhere in their lives. Maybe I'm being greedy with wanting that everywhere in life, but I think everyone should just have super, super tight-knit communities, 'cause it's awesome and everybody wins, I think.

0:49:49.6 NA: Once I hand you the matches and you burn down all the existing things, this is what's in its place, this is what we build in its place.

0:49:53.6 Jupiter: Yeah, I know, this is it. We're just loving each other. That's all we're doing. And we're caring for each other.

0:50:00.5 NA: When it comes to mobile living, now that you have experienced that for a while, what are some things that you wish people were more open and honest about? Or, in the #vanlife, what are some things that you're like, "Man, I wish people were talking about X"?

0:50:19.1 Jupiter: Right now, I think... And it's something that I really am inspired to try to figure out a solution for, if not a temporary solution. I don't know, I don't know that you can solve big things like that in one go, or if any one person can. They always feel like they're communal efforts. But one of them is how hard it is for people who don't necessarily have... Or maybe don't have access to support systems when things go wrong, and I think that that's important because as this pandemic continues to absolutely wreck the way people's housing situations and people's financial situations, I think we're going to see a lot more people moving... We already are seeing a lot more people look at this lifestyle as a viable option because cutting out two to three bills is a game changer. But I think that we need to be able to talk about... We need to be more open about the ways that things happen and big things happen, and sometimes those big things are bigger than people's reach.

0:51:34.7 Jupiter: Some people just can't... It's hard. If I didn't have the community I have, if I didn't... Not even Instagram or anything, just the people around me, if I didn't have my circle and my support system that is still new, it still feels so new, I would be in a much different head space, first of all, but I would also still literally be on the side of the room in California in this house that doesn't work anymore, and that's not a place to try to figure out the next steps. But I think other people definitely can find... It's very easy to find oneself there. And I really wanna see if there's a way that we can make it more accessible. Mechanics are expensive and things like that are expensive, but I don't think that that should be a reason that people aren't on the road if they wanna be, if they wanna be living that life, if they wanna do anything that they wanna do. I can't obviously solve all of the ills of the world, right? But I think at least in the van life sphere, I think that that's something that we need to talk about more and about making... That's a way that we can make it more inclusive, because I think it's ridiculous that we have certain van-lifers who are out here, raking in thousands on YouTube and Instagram and shit, and there's others who just are trying to make it.

0:52:54.0 Jupiter: Just trying to fucking get by and why are we bringing... It feels like we're bringing the wealth gaps that we see in sticks and bricks housing right into vans. And then what? Why? Why are we doing that? For what?

0:53:07.1 NA: Right. And people have been living in vehicles since well before YouTube was a thing.

0:53:11.1 Jupiter: Yeah, exactly, exactly. And so for these people to capitalize on it, or even... I don't really make much money off of these things, but if I were to, it just would feel weird to do that, knowing that some people are just... Some people are stuck on the side of the road, trying to get their shit met, their needs met, their most basic needs met in that moment and nobody... Maybe nobody's helping them. Especially I think about black queer people or queer people in general. A lot of our homeless population is LGBT teens, and I think that with van life becoming more of a trend, I don't know that it'll be... Obviously not sprinter van life but living in vehicles and vehicle dwelling is gonna be a more common thing. And if we can help make sure that these kids are safe while they're doing it and everybody is safe while they're doing it, why wouldn't we?

0:53:57.1 NA: Yeah, absolutely. And as you were talking, it's like I'm thinking more of like a Skillshare, or... I know you and I were joking back and forth about not having had any building skills before this.

0:54:06.8 Jupiter: Yeah.

0:54:07.0 NA: And I still don't have any mechanic skills and whatever building skills I have are still very rudimentary and it would make me feel a lot more confident if that was a thing that I knew more about, and I'm certainly not... I'm not the only one. I think something that doesn't get talked about... With this lifestyle, there's a lot of talk about freedom, which obviously, like you mentioned, I mentioned, I think that if you're not interested in that, you're probably not drawn to this, but the other side of that is that there's a lot of vulnerability when your house and your mode of transportation are the same thing. If something goes wrong, you have no transportation and you have no house.

0:54:42.6 Jupiter: Exactly, exactly.

0:54:43.9 NA: And it's like all of a sudden, what made it feel sexy and free... You're like, "Oh cool."

0:54:48.3 Jupiter: Is the very same thing that you feel trapped in now.

0:54:52.1 NA: Exactly, exactly.

0:54:53.5 Jupiter: That sucks.

0:54:53.8 NA: And that was the part of my decision to... The van that I bought, we're always making sacrifices, depending upon what you pay, what size you get. Was getting something newer, and sacrifice... I can't sit up in bed. It's basically a tiny sleeping and storage pod because I was like, if this breaks down, and of course it still could, but I'm like, I can't fix that, like that was... They say you spend money on your fears or whatever.

0:55:19.3 Jupiter: Yeah.

0:55:20.4 NA: And can I afford to pay a little bit more and sacrifice the space, and that was an interesting thing for me to have to sit with, like, am I willing to be physically more uncomfortable to feel mentally more at ease and... Yeah.

0:55:32.6 Jupiter: Yeah, no. I get that, and I honestly... Going on that exact thought, I had that thought when I was in Hottie, on the side of the road. A few times I was like, maybe I should have just saved up longer and bought something newer. But at the time, it wasn't an option, and so it was hard to not kick myself for that, but I also thought about it and I was like, "Okay, so what can I take from this that's not me beating myself up" and I just came to... In the future, the best that you can do is, if you can do that, do that. And I think that, now that's where I'm at and I'm looking at it. So like, and what can I do now that can be better?

0:56:08.8 NA: Yeah. It's so funny, if we are people, which I think a lot of people are, who are prone to beating yourselves up over things, it's like it almost doesn't matter what the circumstances are, you will find a way to beat yourselves up over it.

0:56:18.5 Jupiter: Always. Always gonna find a reason.

0:56:20.1 NA: For me, during COVID, where I'm like, cool, I'm basically trapped full-time in this thing where I can't even sit up in bed. I should have worried less about the mechanics. [chuckle] There's always something, right?

0:56:32.8 Jupiter: I should have bought another RV.

0:56:32.8 NA: Right, exactly. So one of my last questions for you, do you have any advice for first-timers or people who are interested in potentially getting into this life?

0:56:45.0 Jupiter: Yeah.

0:56:47.1 NA: Or anything you wish that you would have known?

0:56:50.5 Jupiter: Anything I wish that I would have known. Maybe I would have... The only thing that I would have done differently, and I don't even know that I would have done it differently, it's just experience that I have now, is that I might have tried out different vehicles first before I committed to one. I might have rented an RV and tried to rent out a van, rented a skoolie to see what I really could do with my dogs. Because I love Hottie, but sometimes, not to sound wild, but

sometimes it just feels like too much space for us, the dogs are... They have the room under the bed. One of them, Apollo is always in my bed, and if he's not, he's on the couch. It was just like, we're really lounging in there, and we're outside so often that it's funny that we drive this giant thing and we get so limited in the places that we can go. I think I found that, maybe accessibility... Not really accessibility, it's not the right word. Ability to get to more adventurous, I guess, places. Hottie is not crawling up any dunes or any mountain roads anytime soon. You feel me?

0:58:04.4 NA: Yeah, you're limited by the places that it can go.

0:58:07.9 Jupiter: Yeah. I'm limited by Hottie's capabilities, and that would have been something that I would have considered more. So that's definitely one, but otherwise, this is the only advice I ever have for anyone. It's like, just do it, just do the thing. If it scares you in a good way and you're excited about it, and it's something I think that people... Especially with something like van life or really any big break from traditional norms. I think that when people go to do those things, when they consider those thoughts, I think it's very... You very quickly either turn on it, you're either into it or you're not, and I don't think that's a debate that lasts long in one's mind, and so I think that if you've held on to it and you wanna do it, just do it. It seems terrifying. But what's that phrase? "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." Like, just eat the elephant. Just do it.

0:59:01.1 NA: Yeah, and something for me, when folks have asked me, either for advice or things, it's like, there's no way to prepare or know everything in advance. Like sure, you can research. Sure you can learn new skills, but there's just so much stuff that I know now, through the experience of doing it, that you just kinda adjust as you go.

0:59:17.5 Jupiter: Exactly. That's something that's hitting super for me right now, 'cause it's like, I did consider this. I had a savings account for Hottie's breakdowns and all of these things, but I could not have anticipated this rod being thrown. So no matter what you do... And then I've talked to people who have newer rigs and that's happened to them too, and so it's just like, you can never know. Just like whatever path you choose, you might be unhappy in some way or another, whatever you do, some things might come up, but that doesn't mean it's not worth doing.

0:59:43.9 NA: Yeah, yeah, and it's interesting when you said before about wanting to have a crumb of the belief in you that like your parent has. One of the things I tend to take notes like during podcast episodes, one of things I wrote down before that was self-trust, and I circled a couple of times, "That you seem to be someone who does trust yourself or at least trusts to the point of, I'll figure it out." And there's something really beautiful in that as a life operating principle, I think.

1:00:09.5 Jupiter: I think, yeah, I just... Yeah, my mom, like I said, only child, super independent, you kinda have to. And my mom trusted me enough that I wouldn't die and I haven't died yet. So I mean...

1:00:20.2 NA: So you're doing it. You're doing great.

1:00:21.0 Jupiter: Yeah, obviously killing the game. Totally got this. Anything that the universe

can throw at me, I may take some time to figure it out, but I'll probably figure it out. It's gonna be fine, eventually, and if it's not, it will be.

1:00:35.3 NA: Yeah, right. If it's not, it will be. I love that. If you could leave folks with one call to action based on this conversation, what would it be? Maybe a question to ask themselves or a tiny action to take.

1:00:46.8 Jupiter: Well, first, if I drop Hottie Merch to save Hottie, buy that, please, 'cause that's the best that we could do. But also, I think just being kinder to yourself, just try to be kind to yourself, because even when things are going wrong, you're probably still doing your best, and that's something that I'm trying to remind myself of right now, that's my current call to action. It's like, "Just take it easy on yourself, dude." You're not a terrible person because bad things happen. Bad things sometimes just happen, and it's not your karma. It's not like a lesson. I had this conversation with a friend of mine the other day. It's not your karma. Not everything is a debt that the universe is repaying to you. Sometimes shit just goes wrong. Sometimes shit just doesn't go right, and that's what keeps us human and that's what keeps the shit balanced, I guess.

1:01:45.2 NA: There's a lot of freedom and not trying to make everything mean something. Like, sometimes shit just happens. Oftentimes, shit just happens.

1:01:53.2 Jupiter: Yeah, there's not some profound thing in everything. It just... Sometimes shit just is, and it's when you accept that, when you accept that things aren't like a reflection of you or your worth, oh my gosh, the liberation.

1:02:05.0 NA: Great. I'm gonna play those last couple of minutes back to myself over and over again. Thank you very much for that.

1:02:08.8 Jupiter: You're welcome, you're welcome.

1:02:10.9 NA: What is the best place for people to find you and say hi? Do you have a favorite way to connect with new folks?

1:02:16.1 Jupiter: I do. So I have Instagram. My website is currently under construction, but it will be relaunched at doesthiscountasvanlife.com. I have Instagram, [@doesthiscountasvanlife](https://www.instagram.com/doesthiscountasvanlife). I have a YouTube channel, which is, "This is not van life," and after about a month on the road, I have a lot of stuff that is ready to get bashed out and edited and slid up on the tubes. I'm not good at editing, so that's been my hold up all the time. So yeah, YouTube is good too, but Instagram is probably the best and easiest.

1:02:46.0 NA: Awesome. I will put links to those things in the show notes. Jupiter, thank you so much.

1:02:49.3 Jupiter: Thank you, Nicole. I am so glad to have done this with you.

1:02:56.3 NA: And that's our show for today. Our music is by Adam Day, who also handles our sound editing. Thanks, Adam. You're the best. And huge thanks, again, I can't say this enough, to our patreon community, for making this honest conversation, this whole entire podcast, and so much of my other work, possible. Like my weekly personal essay and discussion thread series on Substack, which is called, "Good question." Yep, that is funded by the patreon community as well. Your monthly funding allows me to keep creating resources and gatherings for folks who crave honest conversations, both with themselves and others, and I fully believe that these conversations can change our lives, our relationships and our world. Maybe that sounds like a lofty goal, but it is one that I believe in with my whole heart. To join us, just come on over to patreon.com/nicoleantoinette. Our community operates on a shame-free sliding scale. So you can feel good about supporting this work from within your own means. So I'll see you over in the Patreon community. Yes? Hopefully. And until next time, know that you are doing great. You are exactly enough. You are not alone and I am totally rooting for you.

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