

Agency For Change Podcast : Jen Landis, Founder of Pincurl Girls

Announcer

Welcome to Agency for Change, the podcast that brings you the stories of people creating positive change in the world. We explore what inspires these changemakers, the work they're doing and how they share their message. Each of us can play a part in change. And these are the people who show us how.

Lyn Wineman

Hi there. This is Lyn Wineman from KidGlov and welcome to Agency for Change. Our guest today is Jen Landis, and I've had the privilege of knowing and working with Jen for many years. Not only is she an amazing creative director, but she's also a mother, an artist, a motivational speaker, and a passionate entrepreneur. She's creating positive change for young women through her brand Pincurl Girls. The Pincurl Girls brand is changing the world by encouraging self-confidence and helping young girls work towards their dreams. It's a positive voice on their side, telling them that anything is possible. And boy, do girls ever need that message today? Jen, I know that your work provides inspiration through a girl, brave podcast, daily text messages, and a line of merchandise that's spreading positivity. I also know because we've worked together for years, that you thrive on inspiring others by sharing your journey from self-doubt to self-love. Jen, welcome, let's get started by having you tell me more about the work you're doing with Pincurl Girls.

Jen Landis

I love that question. I started Pincurl Girls back about 10 years ago when I was in graduate school. And for some reason within that classroom, I just lost all of my self-confidence. And I was comparing myself to the other artists and classmates, and I just felt worthless. I told myself, I need to stop talking negatively about myself and start talking positively about myself. And so, I've been doing that for the past 10 years with the Pincurl Girls. It is a way for me to remind myself and other girls that they don't need to talk negatively. They don't have to have that mean girl voice in their heads telling them that they're not good enough. I want to be the voice that tells them every day that they are enough.

Lyn Wineman

Jen, that makes me, it makes me almost feel a little sad when I hear you say that, because I know you as such a smart, vibrant, creative shining light, but that makes you think that there's probably so many young girls, young women out there who have that same experience, right? They are bright, amazing lights, but yet that voice in their head is so defeating. Can you tell me a little bit more, Jen, what really inspired you to care about young girls and the challenges that they face today?

Jen Landis

There's still the young girl inside of me. And now that I also have a daughter who's 10 going on 11, she's changing in front of my eyes on the things that she says towards herself and says out loud to me. So, there's a connection there. And the connection is all about love and sharing what I have learned growing

up through it and helping others realize that they don't have to be the perfect vision of themselves that they think their parents want them or need them to be. I want every girl to believe that they are just perfect where they are right now, and you'll never get it right all the time. You'll never get it done all the time. What you need to do is do your best right now and strive to be the happiest you can be right now.

Lyn Wineman

Wow! That is amazing. I need your voice inside of my head. More frequently, Jen, generally changemakers are thought of as people, organizations or volunteers who are working together to make positive change for the greater good. Now, how does that concept figure into your work with Pincurl Girls?

Jen Landis

The responses that I get from the girls and women that are getting my messages. I have a couple of different avenues for how I get my positive messages out there. My favorite and most fulfilling is a daily text message. If you said you want more of this positivity in your head, that's what these text messages are all about. I send them out every single day and it has the person's name and the text, and it gives them a quick, encouraging, fun, uplifting message from the Pincurl Girls and the responses that I'm getting from these girls and women, there are women and a few men, that have signed up are really incredible. And I can tell that they are changing the way that they're feeling. I get messages such as – “Wow. This came at just the right time.” or “I really needed that. Thank you so much. I've been really sad today.” or just hearts, you know, heart emoji replies so many times a day. I'll get those responses from these young women. And I just feel it in my heart that they're changing the way that they believe in themselves and see themselves, which has a positive impact for the world. Definitely.

Lyn Wineman

Oh, I'm sorry to interrupt you, but okay. I've got my phone out right now. How do I sign up? I want to do it right now.

Jen Landis

Yes. You can sign up for the daily text messages at Pincurl Girls. That's PINCURLGIRLS.com. And there's a navigation tab at the top that says, “get encouraging texts.” You can sign up there.

Lyn Wineman

Awesome. All right. Well, I can't wait for that. That's fantastic. Jen, I've had the opportunity to see the great work you're doing firsthand and watch Pincurl Girls grow. And I'm so proud of you. First of all, I just think it's such a cool thing that you're doing. What is next for your brand?

Jen Landis

I am working on a new product line that is bilingual. It's going to be in Spanish and English. And my first product is the 2021 inspirational calendar. I'm working with an old friend that I worked with when I lived in Kansas City, helping me translate and get the images culturally correct. I'm super excited about this because there are so many girls out there, African American girls, Hispanic girls, that there's not very many products made specifically for them and for a girl to look at an image and see a positive quote or positive message next to a girl that looks like her, it just really solidifies that that message is to her and she can really take it inside and start to process and believe in that.

Lyn Wineman

That is so cool. You'll be posting more about that on your website and on your social media as well, I hope, right? So follow that. Fantastic. Jen, what are some of the biggest challenges that you face in your work through Pincurl Girls, but also as someone who leads change?

Jen Landis

Some people are conditioned to be very apprehensive toward people who are trying to do good or create change in the world. They think that we're doing it in a way that manipulates something, so they make us out to be the bad guy and they have their defenses up. And I've heard that response from a couple different Facebook ads that I run...about how these positive messages probably aren't a very good idea for people. And it's kind of interesting to see the skepticism that some people have, but the more you converse, have those conversations and share your story about this is just who I am and there's no deception here, it helps. So I think that's probably what the hardest part is - you're being judged for this, what are you really trying to do here? You can't just be doing this because you want to, there's always the - what's your alternative motive?

Lyn Wineman

That is fascinating. Jen, on a side note, I'm on a mission this year to read 60 books. And one of my favorite books from this year is the *10 X Rule*. One of the things it says in the book is that when you start to receive criticism, that's when you know you're about to have a great breakthrough. And so, I just know you're onto something really huge there. I think that's great what you're doing. And this next question really builds on that. There are a lot of cynics in the world and they aren't wrong to say that you can never solve all the problems. So why do you even try? I mean, can we get ahead of the negativity and the unrealistic expectations that are targeting young girls today?

Jen Landis

I love the quote from Mother Teresa. She says, "If you can't feed a hundred people then feed just one." And so it's better for girls to learn from a young age that they are enough and the more they are themselves without trying to fit themselves in a box, the happier they will be. And to me, happiness is the goal for all of us.

Lyn Wineman

That's amazing. What advice do you have for someone out there who is aspiring to lead positive change, they're in that place where they're just ready to get started? What advice do you have for them?

Jen Landis

They're probably looking at a lot of people that are also doing good and maybe they're comparing themselves to what that person's doing and thinking, "Well, they're already saying that. So why would I want to say the same thing?" And I would say, if you look to see what you have inside, that makes you different, that's what you need to show as the changemaker you want to be. So, I'm an artist. I chose my medium as drawing and illustrating typography because I'm also a graphic designer. And I can spin my

positive messaging, the changemaker in me, to be more just me, you know? I think if anyone is out there wondering, “Well, what new things could I say?”, just look inside and think about what makes you different and then use that to move forward and you'll know the next step because it'll be in your gut.

Lyn Wineman

That's really cool. I think for young people in particular, sometimes it takes a lot of courage to express your individuality. And I love the fact that you bring that out in people. So Jen, building on what you just said, what would you say is the greatest impact that you're having with your work?

Jen Landis

I get to connect with hundreds of girls every day and give them a message that tells them that they are loved and they are enough. And that fills my heart so much. And I'm super fortunate I have this platform in order to do that.

Lyn Wineman

And now you have one more because I literally just signed up. Bringing this all back full circle, how do you get the word out and amplify the great work that you are doing? Or another way to say that, how do you get your story out? To people who don't know about you?

Jen Landis

One of the things that I've learned over the years is that you have to seize opportunities that you might look at as everyday situations or think, “Hey, this isn't a big deal.” For example, the Nelson Mandela Elementary School in Omaha asked me to create a custom calendar for their 400 scholars. And I did it and it was wonderful, but I needed to take that opportunity and make a bigger impact. So, I called up the school and said I would like to come down and meet some of their scholars. And I called the photographer to meet me down there. He took amazing pictures and I created an experience where I could then share how much this opportunity meant to me with everyone else. And so it's the little things that happen every day that you're like, “Oh, that's no big deal.” Really think about it, step back and think, “How can I use this opportunity or this moment and amplify it and share it with more people?”

Lyn Wineman

That's amazing. I've seen those pictures and they were great. And it does. You see the joy on the kids' faces and I think that's so inspirational. Jen, I just have one last question. Could you share some words of inspiration or motivation for those who are listening to this podcast today?

Jen Landis

I am trying a new thing, it's called segment intending. And what that means is each time you have a new segment in your day, such as when I leave this room where we're doing this podcast and go downstairs and say hi to my kids, I will think about how I could make that interaction with my kids. The next thing I'm doing is the most fun. And if you do that every segment of your day, it just conditions your brain to think, okay, I can have fun. I am free. And I'm going to purposely put my positive thoughts ahead rather than just going to a meeting or going downstairs and reacting to what's happening. So, it's putting more

forward momentum on how you want things to go before it happens instead of reacting after things happen.

Lyn Wineman

That is so cool. And you must have done that before we got on the phone together today, because this has been just a delightful experience. And Jen, I just want to thank you for being on the Agency for Change podcast. And I have to say, this is a bittersweet moment for me because soon you'll be leaving your position as executive creative director at KidGlov, where we have worked together for a long time, to spend more time on your entrepreneurial venture with Pincurl Girls and to teach some college courses. And I'm just so excited for you. And I can't wait to see what happens next.

Jen Landis

You have taught me so much. Thank you so much for everything that you've done for me.

Announcer

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