

A., Veronica, 12-09-22, part-2-of-2, interview

Transcript

Elizabeth Sine: [00:00:01] Okay,

Veronica Avery: [00:00:02] So then I transferred to Five Branches University in Santa Cruz, and I was seeing a guy in, in the Bay Area. And so we would see each other on the weekends. It was only an hour and a half drive and he was up in the Berkeley, Oakland Hills. And [00:00:30] so we dated each other. And I was going to school. And, you know, by this point, I'm more than halfway done with my program. And it's been a little bit of a, you know, trail ride with all the different schools, and transferring and this, and, you know, but I was ready and this is what I wanted to do with my life. And the guy that I was seeing, he was really uncomfortable with [00:01:00] me. You know, I had a massage practice and I was getting ready to have an acupuncture practice and he didn't want me to do that. So we had a really bad breakup. And then after we broke up, I found out I was pregnant. So of course I tried to fix things and by then it was, you know, the ultimatum of, well, "If you're not going to stop [00:01:30] this path, then you need to do this on your own." And so, yeah, I kind of had to make that decision, you know, of whether I wanted to be a mom. And so I did. And I had my child and I was, let's see, when I graduated, she was almost...she was one and a half. So I guess, you know, I [00:02:00] was still, you know, a year and a half out, and I had to move in right across the street from school because she wouldn't take a bottle. And so I had to run back and forth and back and forth. And, you know, my teachers would always say, "Just bring her to class." And I was like, "No way," you know. It's like, I need to finish this and people thought I was crazy. But I did it. I, I took half a semester [00:02:30] off to have my baby and I moved back to my parents house and they made a little dwelling. It was like an old woodworking shop or something. And they, they fixed it up to be like a little studio apartment. And so we lived there for a couple of months. And then I went right back to school, you know, postpartum.

Veronica Avery: [00:02:50] And I jumped right back into working at the clinic, the student clinic, and everything. And yeah. I did it. I made it happen. [00:03:00] And, you know, by so if you look at my grades for psychology versus my TCM grade, traditional Chinese medicine, I was acing everything. Like, I had so much passion for this

medicine. This is what I wanted to do with my life. So I did. And so I graduated with my master's in traditional Chinese medicine in December of 2009. Koa was born April of 2008 [00:03:30] and then so straight from there I moved back to San Ardo, population 576 now. So living in a one room, you know, in my mom's house, because at that point my sister had moved...my younger sister had moved home. And so she was living in the, in the little dwelling. And so I was, you know, had to move into my mom's house. And, but [00:04:00] it was great, because I was starting my practice, and Mom helped me out. And Joe, my stepdad, he's amazing. They all were just there. I never had to worry too much about, you know, there was food when I came home and there was, you know, child care for my daughter. And I was able to really start and build my practice in Paso Robles. So that's like a 30 minute drive. [00:04:30] A little more than a year into my practice, I decided to open up a second clinic in King City. And so I'm processing a lot, you know, because I really couldn't stand King City from my last experience there at the high school. And so I had to really, you know, learn to embrace the community again and not see, you know, for a while I couldn't even listen to eighties music or nineties [00:05:00] music because it reminded me of that part of my life where I just felt so ugly and just like...I just felt like, like there was no sense of belonging. You know. So, yeah, I, I had a lot of people that showed a lot of interest and it was such a success right away. My schedule book was probably more full than the one in Paso, and so I would do three [00:05:30] days a week in Paso and two days a week in King City. And I was just back-and-forth-ing and I had this lady that worked for me and she lived in San Ardo. So she went to both clinics with me and she was so amazing. But then she got pregnant, and so I had to find other work...people to help me. And I had that satellite clinic for five years. And so it was five years ago that I closed [00:06:00] King City clinic because I wanted just to focus on my Paso clinic and by that time, my daughter was, you know, doing extracurricular sports. And I didn't want to be far away. And if she had to stay home from school.... Sorry, I guess I should say I lived with my parents for three years. Three years into my practice was when I was able to save enough [00:06:30] money to put a deposit on a rental. And I lived in that rental on the west side of Paso for four years before I was able to purchase my home. But yeah, I didn't want to be. So super far away from my daughter. So I closed that clinic. And since then I've just been working the one clinic in Paso. So it's twelve years [00:07:00] now, about twelve and a half I guess, that I've been in practice. And that was what all this education led up to, was not only do I get to go to work and love what I do, but, you know, it allows me a lot of financial freedom. And also being my own boss.

Veronica Avery: [00:07:20] I have the freedom in my scheduling. But yeah, there was a minute where it was I had created a monster and I had too much work. [00:07:30] And it was I didn't realize that I could just say no. But eventually my health told me like, "Yeah, you need to pull back. You can't work this much." So, yeah...

Preston Allen : [00:07:46] Great. Super. So now we're going to kind of shift a little bit to your pathways and kind of talk a lot about that already. But maybe there's more that you want to add. So I don't know if you want to pick up the route part [00:08:00] or you want me to continue. It's up to you.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:08:02] Yeah, I'm glad to ask some questions, along the...Thinking about, yeah, you're sharing many things about the pathways you've moved through, and I guess to kind of roll it back, even to think about the pathways that brought your parents kind of into each other's lives and to the Central Coast. Yeah, [00:08:30] I guess. Would you can you speak to that? I mean, you shared some about your, your connection, your relationships with them. But yeah, how did, how did each of them respectively come to San Ardo?

Veronica Avery: [00:08:45] Yeah. So my dad, Walter Avery, he was in the Army. And he was in the Army for just over, just under twelve years total. A [00:09:00] few years into it was when he....Actually No, no, no. He signed up for the Vietnam War. And so he went over there and, you know, when people were getting drafted and that, my dad actually signed up. That was something I didn't know. I always thought that he got drafted, but he said, "No, I volunteered." I said "Oh okay, Dad." So he was there for two tours. And eventually [00:09:30]when he got out, I'm not sure how far into it, but he was stationed at Fort Ord in Seaside Monterey area, and so his home base was Fort Ord. But he was out at Fort Hunter Liggett, you know, doing the trainings and stuff there. So Fort Hunter Liggett is [00:10:00] out there by Lake San Antone [Lake San Antonio], very close to where I grew up. So he got an apartment in King City, and then he would commute out to the Fort Hunter Liggett. And then he eventually got out of the Army and he stayed in King City and in the apartment where he lived. My mom also lived there. So [00:10:30] they met up, and dad found a job at the San Ardo oil fields working for Trico, and he worked as a mechanic there. And the guy, his boss had a trailer in San Ardo and he ended up selling the trailer to my dad. So that's where I grew up, this little tiny two bedroom trailer. And all of us, [00:11:00] that's that's where where I grew up. And he

worked in the oil fields for a few years before he opened up his own shop. And so I remember my dad, you know, he really had a good vision.

Veronica Avery: [00:11:21] And I even remember sitting there watching him try to make the logo for, for Avery Automotive. And I think partly [00:11:30] my Avery Acupuncture... So his was "Avery Automotive Service and Repair," and mine's "Avery Acupuncture and Natural Medicine." So you know I always really looked at my dad like that. And he would do, he also was...what is it called? Like, old school architect like he would you know he had these big tables like I can't remember what kind of tables are called, but it's like on a like a trifold thing. And and he would do all that stuff, old school. He was he was very, [00:12:00] very talented in that way. He just didn't really have a lot of the, the social skills were robbed from him, from his time in Vietnam. And anyway, you know, I had asked him on Thanksgiving, just when we had a nice long talk, and, you know, I had asked him, "Oh, you know, so. So you were a mechanic in the military." I said, "Oh, okay. Well, is that what you were doing in Vietnam?" And he goes, "No, Veronica, I spent two years just trying to stay alive." [00:12:30] I was like, "Oh, okay," you know, And he meant it too, you know. He doesn't really like to talk about that part of his life. I've never...He's never opened up to me about that. But I know it was really horrific, and, and from the veterans I serve now. I have a contract now with the VA, and so I treat a lot of veterans from the desert wars and also from, from Vietnam times. We have some Vietnam times veterans that come [00:13:00] in, you know. And so I listen to some of their stories and I see some men that are very, very broken from from those times. And I see some that somehow got by, and, you know, I don't know the difference, but I know of of how they were able to mentally survive it. But I know my dad did not.

Veronica Avery: [00:13:21] I know that he would never get on a plane to come see me. There's no way there's no way he would ever be able [00:13:30] to, to do that. He's just so nervous. And Dad doesn't like crowds. He does the same thing every day, and still smokin' cigarettes and drinkin' beer and, you know, very, very unhealthy. I don't know how my dad's still alive to this day, but, you know, he's just a survivor, I guess. So...So that's how Dad ended up...here in...on the Central Coast. [00:14:00] You know, and like I said, he was here for about 25 years. I was 20, 21 when he moved away, maybe 22. And so he's back in Tennessee where where he was born and raised. So, so his...his mother and father, Grandpa Samuel Avery and Grandma Evelyn Avery were both born in Tennessee, and Grandma Avery, [00:14:30] I believe she was Gardener, was her

maiden name. She...they also came from Tennessee. But my dad's dad, Samuel Avery, he...his parents came from Virginia. And Dad's mother was half Cherokee. I have this picture of her. And my mom was given that picture from my grandpa. And he was always so [00:15:00] proud. He said, "My mother is Indian." And so, you know, we don't have a whole lot of that written down or anything. But my dad actually, when we were talking on Thanksgiving, he said he wanted to do his DNA. So, you know, on Black Friday, I ordered the...Ancestry [ancestry.com], you know, is half off, so I ordered it for him. So, yeah, I never thought he would want to do it. I always thought he would be too, you know paranoid or [00:15:30] something, but he wanted to do it. So I said, "Okay," so I ordered that for him. It'll be interesting.

Veronica Avery: [00:15:34] So Mom, on the other hand. She was born and raised in the Sierra Mountains of Mexico in the state of San Luis Potosi, and the town is called Joya de Luna. And it's not a town. It is like a village. Like San Ardo would have been big, big city compared to this place. [00:16:00] We were actually just there a few months ago, and it was...it was so neat. There's no electricity, no water. You had to find the well. And that my...my mother grew up very, very poor, to the point where, you know, she tells me stories that she and her mom used to go looking for dead animals. And if the meat wasn't green, they'd cut it and bring it home. [00:16:30] And but she just said her youth was...she was always hungry. She was always cold. Because it's up in the mountains. It's, it's high up there. And she just said, you know, she and her brother would sit there on the side of the house, you know, before the sun came out. As soon as the sun came out, they would start, you know, they'd be warm again. And, you know, there were certain seasons where, you know, the trees, you know, she would go and find a tree and she said "I would sit underneath that mango tree and I would eat as many mangoes as I could until I got sick." Because [00:17:00] they were just, you know...She had a lot of sisters and brothers. And she was one of the youngest girls. And, you know, back with the gender thing. You know, the boys got everything. But anyway. So when my mom was 15, you know, my parents...my grandparents, my abuela and my abuelito, they could not afford to keep her around. And she told me this story last night. She said [00:17:30] she had made this beautiful blue dress. And Alejandro, this man that she loved, and she wanted to him to fall in love with her. And they had this wonderful, you know, three days where they were, you know, meeting each other, and this. And then my grandfather says, you know, "Pack whatever you need. You're you're leaving tomorrow morning." And my mom, she was so sad. And my uncle actually [00:18:00]

ended up marrying Alejandro's sister. [00:18:02]My Tia [00:18:02] So anyway. So, so she was so sad that she had to leave Alejandro. And she had some cousins that lived in near Edinburg, San Juan. It's in the valley at the very bottom of Texas. You know, where it kind of comes down like that. And so, back then, they would bring girls over, and [00:18:30] she worked. She said it was humiliating. She would work for \$8 a week and...and she would be like basically like a live in maid. And she said that especially the Mexican families were so abusive to her. And she, you know, she went from being hungry all the time to, you know, [00:19:00] now she had food.

Veronica Avery: [00:19:02] But they would make fun of her because she didn't know, you know, she had all these foods that she had never eaten before. And she said one night she woke up in the middle of the night, because she was so hungry, and she got some milk and bread. And the woman woke up and, you know, she, my mom got in bad trouble then. But yeah, she she hated her life there. And she wanted to be with Alejandro, and she was so sad. And so my Tia Maria, my mom's sister's husband, he [00:19:30] had, I believe, a cousin or a nephew, and his name was Rogelio. Rogelio would soon become my mom's husband. Well, he was going to California. And my mom said that they called it the, the corrido. Like, like everybody would just go in these times when the harvest would come. And there would be work. And so coming across the border, she said she just needed [00:20:00] a little card. And they were very easy to get back then and they would allow you. It's kind of like a tourist visa anyway. So she got work up and was working in the fields in King City, and there's this little camp between San Ardo and San Lucas on the back road, and there was all these little tiny houses, you know what they use them as today? Little horse stables. But whole families were living in [00:20:30] those little tiny things. And there was this raid. I can't remember how long ago, maybe like ten, fifteen years ago, and they shut that down. But anyway, my mom, like she told me last night, "Yeah, you know, we lived in that Waco camp," and she told...you know, explained it to me. I'm like, "You live there? I didn't realize that!" So...and she said that she, she didn't mind the work, because compared to what she was doing down in Texas, you know, this humiliating work, you know, she liked being with the, you know, the vegetables [00:21:00] and, you know, in the carrot packing and this, all this other stuff. Well, Rogelio was really abusive to my mother. And by then, you know, she had had Roger. He was born in King City. And then when she was pregnant with my sister, [00:21:17] Crucita, [00:21:18] she...she wrote a letter to my uncle in Illinois, and he sent for her. And so she went with the two kids, and Crucita was born

[00:21:30] over there. So Roger was born in King City. I was born in Paso. My sister was the only one that was born outside of California. And, anyway, Rogelio went and got her and brought her back. And then he was just really horrible. And had this...you know, very womanizer...he had this other woman who he ended up marrying and having children with. And I can't remember her name, but she's important.

Veronica Avery: [00:21:58] So, so [00:22:00] as soon as she got out of this relationship with Rogelio is when she met my dad. And she said, she just jumped right in, because it was a...she couldn't do it on her own. And so, she met my dad. And then....Let's see, she was pregnant with me, and Rogelio's new wife reported my mom to [00:22:30] the migra, the immigration. And so they sent her a letter. And by then, my mom said she wanted to go home so bad, and so that she left. But they said that she could have me. And then, when I was six months old was when Roger, Crucita and me, six months old, we went to Mexico. And she...she thought that my dad would fix her papers so that she [00:23:00] can come back because we were all born over here, but he didn't. So she said we were there for about four or five months. And my she had sent a letter to my uncle, my Tio Martin, in Illinois. And he came all the way down there, and he got us, and I didn't know that. But, you know, it was just such a blessing that...that she has, you know, people [00:23:30] that, that love her. And, you know, because my grandparents, they didn't have anything. They couldn't take care of us. I mean, they made sure that we were fed. But she said that we loved it. You know, the kids like we you know, being up in the mountains. And it was so beautiful up there. We didn't really know that we were suffering. But anyways. So, so my Tio came and got us, and we went back to Illinois. And that's when she contacted my dad again. And that's when [00:24:00] he sent her the money for all of us to go back to California. But there was a bit of time in there. You know, we were talking about the Black Panthers one time, and my mom was like, I owe so much to the Black Panthers. When we lived in Illinois, we had no diapers, we had no this, no that. And she said it was the Black Panthers. They came and like offered us all this, you know, resources and stuff. So, she didn't go too much into that detail last night. But, [00:24:30] you know, we ended up coming back, and, you know, she was finding work again and she started with kCAC or I guess back then it would have been [00:24:44] Calidria [00:24:45] Corporations at the asbestos plant. And she worked for them for 21 years.

Preston Allen : [00:24:51] Wow.

Veronica Avery: [00:24:52] Yeah, it was a really long time, She says there was a couple of years in the beginning where she got laid off, but then they, they brought them back. But I remember [00:25:00] we would go and visit my mom and she'd always have this white hard hat on and like kind of like a hazmat-ish type suit. And, you know, she's lost a couple of...of her, her colleagues from back then that worked there. One had mouth cancer, and one got lung cancer. You know, so I'm always really kind of looking after my mom, you know, after all that exposure of that for so long as...She was always really good at covering herself with the respirators, she [00:25:30] said, but...Her job was, you know, before...I think she worked in as a lab technician for a while, and then they moved her to, you know...She would basically catch these, you know, fifty pound bags of asbestos as they were coming off the conveyor belt, and it blew out her neck. So her, so my mom is 100% physically disabled. You wouldn't be able to know it just by looking at her, but she's just in so much pain all of the time. And she still has a [00:26:00] work comp case open with them to this day. But they told her, okay, well you're just going to be on disability for the rest of your life. And mom, when she came over, she had a second grade education. They couldn't afford to put my mom through school. So when she came over she was working, you know, as the maid, and then working in the fields, and then working at the asbestos plant. And my grandparents, [00:26:30] my mom's parents, they decided they wanted to get their citizenship. And so, my dad had fixed my mom's papers, but she just had her, you know, her green card. Her resident alien card. And I remember it was always weird because when we would go to Mexico for Christmas, my mom would always have to get out and walk across the border and we would go in the car because when they would ask us, it would always be, "Are you all American citizens?" "Yes." And they just push us through. Well, to make it easier, my mom would go across with [00:27:00] her green card. Anyway.

Veronica Avery: [00:27:02] So let's see, where was I? So anyway, so she decided she wanted to get her citizenship too. And at this point, it was I believe they wanted her to have her GED or something, whatever it was. And so she said, "You know what? Let me go ahead and do that. Let me get my GED." And then she really liked school a lot. And she was 50 years old. And she, you know, they had closed the asbestos plant, [00:27:30] and she's 50 years old. She got her AA from Hartnell [Hartnell College] in Salinas. And then at this time my brother was having a lot of issues...mental issues, mental and drug abuse issues. And so she said, "You know what? I want to learn about more about this." And so she got her Bachelor's degree after that in sociology. And she

wanted to be a social worker. And then after that, she got her Master's degree. [00:28:00] And this was from CSUMB, when they very first started in Monterey Bay. And so, so she got her her Bachelor's degree and her Master's degree. And then she got her Licensed Clinical Social Worker. So she...she can now she's now considered a psychotherapist. So she works for the county. Four tens, right? Yeah. Four days a week, she works ten hours. And then on Fridays, at my clinic, [00:28:30] she has her private practice, where she sees...and then sometimes, most of the time on Saturdays, too. So my mom works. Like, like, she's never not worked at this level. But I see her just tired. I see her as just this, you know, real advocate. Growing up, if there is any abuse that was happening in the neighborhood with kids or whatever it was, my mom was always, you know, in there and people knew they could [00:29:00] come to my mom and my mom would help them. So she was always really kind of like a social worker even before she was, you know, had all her credentials and that. So, yeah, that was my mom's story was coming here as a, you know, legally, staying illegally for as long as she did, and then being deported, and then coming back, coming back across, you know, to Illinois. And then my dad actually fixing her papers so that she could stay [00:29:30] here longer.

Veronica Avery: [00:29:31] So, yeah.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:29:33] Wow. That's...

Veronica Avery: [00:29:34] And the reason they came to King City, My mom was because Rogelio had family. His mother and father were here and cousins and stuff. So that's that's how they came to this area.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:29:45] Okay. Thanks for that. Wow, that's a remarkable story. One quick question. When you were in Illinois, where were you? With your uncle?

Veronica Avery: [00:29:58] Wherever [00:30:00] Anheuser-Busch is, that's where my uncle worked.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:30:06] Fair enough, fair enough, yeah.

Veronica Avery: [00:30:06] It was like called Green...Greenville or something. I don't know.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:30:10] Yeah, yeah. I just, Yeah. And then the Black Panther reference...I wonder which chapter...

Veronica Avery: [00:30:13] Yeah. Wherever it was, it was really cold, because there was a couple pictures of my sister in the snow.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:30:18] Yeah. In thinking about all of the geographic pathways that you've moved through, I mean, including your family, but you yourself [00:30:30] now... multiple places throughout the Central Coast, but also so far, you know, Mexico and back across the Pacific and then, of course, returning to the Central Coast and, and settling in here. When you in thinking about and kind of retracing all those movements, how did you, if you could speak to your sense [00:31:00] of place as you move across those places, and in particular your connection to the Central Coast, or how you think about the Central Coast kind of in relation to the different places you moved to....Anything along those lines that comes up in thinking about your connection to the Central Coast. What it means, what it meant to you as you moved through those places, or how they compared in your sense of them, and also what what drove you back here, and what kind [00:31:30] of pulls and anchors you here.

Veronica Avery: [00:31:32] So I think being from San Ardo, it's like one of those....Everybody's kind of, I guess, proud of where they're from. But like, there's something really unique about a town that's small. And so if you hear anybody...and if I said, "Oh, I'm from San Ardo," and people [00:32:00] perk up. If they know somebody from San Ardo, they're like, "What?! You're...I never thought I'd meet another person from San Ardo," Or, you know? And so, I guess that was always kind of like a story that know would like, astonish people. Wherever I would go, when people would ask me where I'm from..."I'm from a town of 500 people in California," And a lot of people think, Oh, California, they just think of like Los Angeles and, you know, San Francisco and cities and beaches and stuff. And [00:32:30] I'm like well, you know, I just grew up in the country. And it was, you know. So...I guess the fact that my mom never left... She's been there in that little tiny town. She is the heart, you know, of that town for me. And so, there haven't been too many Christmases that I haven't spent with my mother. And so I always wherever I was in the world, one time [00:33:00] I spent Christmas in Australia. That's when I was living in Japan. And then one time, I spent Christmas in Hawai'i. But all the other Christmases, I believe I lived close enough to where I would

always be home for Christmas. And so I guess there, you know, despite it being kind of a rough growing up and it's I [00:33:30] always think of home as being, like, very clean and wholesome and easy. Like, there's no traffic. We don't even have a stoplight in our town. There is barely a couple of stop signs. And when I was in college, I remember I'd go home almost every single weekend my first couple of years, and people would be like, "What's wrong with you?" You know, I'd just be like...I don't know. It's just, my mom is like my...you know, she's [00:34:00] my heart, you know. I always go back to her, even though there was this time where I like, you know, when I was in going to school here and I remember she came to get me. And then after graduation, she's like, "You're coming home now." And I was like, "No, I'm not." And she took me home. And I was so bummed. And the next day I ran away, and I came back, and she really wanted me to be with her as long as [00:34:30] I could before I went back to, you know, went to school in Santa Barbara. But I didn't want to be home anymore. And, you know, my my mom and dad were not together anymore. And that house just wasn't a home for me anymore.

Veronica Avery: [00:34:44] And maybe it was a good thing I left because, you know, soon after was when she met Joe. Well, we already, everybody already knew everybody...but, when she got together with Joe, my stepdad. But I came back here and I got a job at the Avila [00:35:00] Beach Grocery, and I wanted to stay here as long as I could because I really liked that feeling of the college, you know, And I was having fun. I was partying like way too young. But, you know, if you grew up in a town with 500 people with a really strict mom, like, what do you expect? So going to all these beaut-...,I've been to so many countries, so many beautiful places around the world. But, you know, you come back to the Central Coast [00:35:30] and you have the ocean, you have the hot springs, you have this really simple way of living. It's very uncomplicated. The roads. You know, my family's here. You know, some of my good friends from growing up. Not so much from San Ardo, but from King City. I still keep in contact with them. And yeah, it was always my mom having a home for me. Knowing that...I mean, I think [00:36:00] for like, about eight months, when I finished UCSB after the time in Louisiana, I was living out of my truck, like, I put a queen...I mean a twin mattress in the back of my Mitsubishi and I had a camper. And I was just like a vagabond. But I would come home every once in a while when I got sick of that life. But, yeah, you know, she was always there. And I always knew that she would welcome me and and it would feel good. Did I answer that [00:36:30] right?

Elizabeth Sine: [00:36:30] Oh, yeah. I mean, there is no "right," But, but yeah I...

Veronica Avery: [00:36:36] And I guess after, after college....after my master's program, the reason why I didn't stay in Santa Cruz or try and open up my business anywhere else was because I had my daughter at that point, and I knew that I needed help. Yeah, because I had done the single mom thing at the school for a year and a half, and it got old so quick. Yeah.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:37:00] Yeah, [00:37:00]

Veronica Avery: [00:37:01] It was hard. So when people say, "Oh, you're a single mom, it must be so hard" and this and that. And it's like, you know what, it was, but it wasn't. It was all I ever knew. I knew from the very beginning I was not going to have a man by my side. And, but I had my family, you know, and even even now, my daughter goes to my mom's house almost every single weekend. And I talked to her about it, too. Like, "Why?" Besides there being no rules at [00:37:30] grandma's house... And I laugh because I'm like, "You should have seen the way I grew up. Like, we got the belt." She's like, "Oh, Grandma hit you with a belt?" I was like, "Oh, no, Grandma beat us with a belt. Like, we would stand in line..." Oh, my gosh, yeah. My mom was tough. And now she's like, "Oh, mija, things were different back then. I was I was so uneducated" and blah, blah, blah. But I was like, "Oh, yeah." I kind of told my, my daughter some stories about what Grandma used to be like, and she's just like, [00:38:00] "I don't believe it." Like, unrecognizable. But, she says that she just loves that there's always people there, and especially in the winter, she loves Christmas time, but they have a fireplace in the living room and then they have a wood burning stove in the kitchen. So it's always like that kind of like that wood heat, you know. So she just she loves it there and I love to have time to myself too. I mean, I love my kid. She's, you know.... Sunday [00:38:30] night, Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night. I am cooking almost every single night. I come home from work. We sit, we pray, we eat, you know, we check in with each other. I'm, you know, she slept with me until she was 12 years old. At the pandemic is when she stopped sleeping with me, because then she realized, oh, she could sleep in. If she wasn't sleeping with me. So she wanted to start sleeping in her own bed. So we've always been really close. But yeah, it's been nice, you know, on the weekend. And my mom just loves [00:39:00] having her there. So my mom's like, has all the, you know, cousins and stuff coming. So, yeah, she, Koa loves it. You know,

she just...she has two cousins that are just a few months younger than her. So Sophia, Anthony, and Koa. They're really close in age and they just, they're best friends. So that's, that's why they like going to grandma's house. They can just pal around and grow up together.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:39:26] That's special.

Veronica Avery: [00:39:27] Yeah.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:39:28] There's another dimension of your [00:39:30] pathways that I'd love to hear more about, and that's, just thinking about you...you shared your educational path, and the pathway into acupuncture and your profession in Chinese medicine and that. But there's a way in which...I mean, when I think about the, the draw of initially psychology and then to Chinese medicine and onward, but also kind of thinking about the pull of surfing [00:40:00] and just wellness kind of in general as something that seems to be kind of a driving kind of pulse in your life. I would just love to hear you speak to that or what that is for you. Like, the nature of the pull of these things that you're following as you've moved from place to place, but also as you moved through these different chapters of your life.

Veronica Avery: [00:40:30] So, [00:40:30]you know, growing up, my mom was an herbalist, too, because she grew up in the times where there was no pharmacy over there. And so a lot of the medicine was natural. And my so my grandfather's...my abuelito's mom was full native from, my mom did her DNA and she's [00:41:00] like 60% native from the Mexico the area of Mexico...and the tribe is the Huastec. The Huastec nation. And so my, my grandfather used a lot of that medicine. But my grandmother also did, too. And so my mom, well, partly, you know, we didn't have cable in San Ardo because it was so remote. But a lot of the stuff that we [00:41:30] did was outside in nature, and my mom...probably because we couldn't afford it, but like, we didn't have sodas and we didn't have, you know, a lot of that kind of foods and things, you know, that the other kids were bringing to school. Ours was like beans and rice and, you know, things, you know. My mom was always such a good cook. They'd have these parties, these dances. They were very popular, my mom and dad. And so we would have these dances and my [00:42:00] mom would just make so much food and people were always so happy. That was one of the great memories from growing up, is how my mom just

loved to feed people. And, you know, we didn't have a lot of money but we would spend money on food, you know what I mean? It was great to, to be able to, to offer that, you know. But as far as like the balance of, like food, you know, we always ate really healthy, even though it was simple. And then [00:42:30] like with this, like, I've never had a TV for Koa. We just got a house computer, just last week. And so, you know, she has a phone. She does have a phone, and, but, you know, I try and keep, you know, like the mental health part of it, try to, you know, like, here we're two humans, let's interact with each other. Let's interact with our animals. Let's, you [00:43:00] know, we have...I have 12 chickens and two bunnies and three cats and two dogs. So we're learning a lot about, you know, the, the balance for them to be able to stay healthy and clean, clean water, clean food, all that, you know, for for the animals, and, you know, making sure they're sheltered and that. You know, as far as medicine goes, I have like a real sensitivity [00:43:30] to any sort of like, you know, controlled substances. And you know, so I you know, even caffeine, it's I don't like the feeling. So, you know, I've always been, you know, besides the times where I was kind of, like, hardcore party, getting it out of my system, just really trying to walk my walk and talk my [00:44:00] talk, even though it's there's nobody, like, you know, keeping up on me. But I know that if I go into excesses, I'm not going to feel good, you know? And then if you if you don't feel good enough, then the medicine has to be stronger to treat that. But if you just go a little bit out of the balance, you know, you can use natural medicine to, to fix that. So and my dad, he was one of those people that never [00:44:30] went to the doctor ever. I remember one time he cut off his finger, he got his finger in the fan of a whatever, and they had to take him to the hospital. And it was like, "Oh my gosh!" My dad...and.. Yeah, they just, they didn't even put it back on. I don't even think he looked for the rest of the finger. Sorry that was TMI, but... [laughter]

Veronica Avery: [00:44:50] So yeah, you know, we're like simple country people and I, you know, as far as, as [00:45:00] the medicine that I do, you know, my child has been on antibiotics once in her life, when she was very young. And, she's in fifth grade. And other than that, I do all of her medicine. You know, I listen very carefully to my daughter. And if there's something in her voice or if something doesn't seem right or what's that on your skin, you know, we want we want to treat it naturally right away, if we can, before it. Becomes [00:45:30] a bigger problem and you have to use modern medicine for that. So I'm a little bit of, you know, growing up in a time where traditional, traditional medicine was really important for even just the generation, my parents generation and

the one before them. And then also on my Avery side, they always had a big garden and it was a lot of like, you know, garden to table style. And and Grandma Avery was an amazing cook I hear. And she would can everything and [00:46:00], you know, just have everything taken care of, in that way. You know and as far as my, my mental health and that, you know, I do my, my yoga and meditation and I really try to, you know, not because anybody's making me or because anybody's watching, but like, I want to feel good, you know. And, I'm with people all day. You know, I'm seeing sometimes over 20 patients [00:46:30] a day. And then I have my office staff, too. And so, I kind of like floating around and you, you're there with people. You're happy with people, you're sad with people, you're suffering with people and all this. And at the end of the day, sometimes I just like want to go home and, like have nobody talk to me, or my kid, you know. Like, she's so easy. I'm so blessed. She's a scholar. You know, she doesn't have any behavioral issues. You know, she's only 14. So I [00:47:00] touch wood. She's she's a very, very easy kid. She always has been. So...so, yeah, it's just, it's one of those things where I have...I have the teachings, and I have the resources. And it's easy for me to have this wellness lifestyle. I have a big garden, you know, I do my summer garden and in the winter, you know, we just planted some garlic and some kale and chard and things like that. And we get our fresh eggs from our chickens [00:47:30] and it just feels good. It feels right. It's easy to live in a, more kind of wellness style.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:47:37] Yeah, that makes good sense.

Veronica Avery: [00:47:39] Okay, good.

Preston Allen : [00:47:41] So how are we doing on time? Because I know you said you had to do a pickup?

Veronica Avery: [00:47:47] So that changed it.

Preston Allen : [00:47:48] Oh, yeah. So we're still good? No. Yeah. You tell me.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:47:52] We've got about probably about 15 more minutes for now, before we wrap up and [00:48:00] reminding us that we can always do a follow up interview if there are things to to cover. I feel like I have much more, I have a bunch more questions, but I'm going to hand things over to you to move through whatever you have.

Preston Allen : [00:48:14] Keep a third eye because I don't know how long and if I have the room. So someone may come in, but we'll just focus on another 15 minutes or so and then I'll go and ask him. So...so amazing travels. Amazing migration. Amazing. I mean, I'm just sitting there thinking, [00:48:30] you must be like 80 years old when you squeeze all that in. So that's just amazing. So as you kind of move through all these different phases, are you able to kind of identify the community that sustained you through each of these different little stages? And who might those be, and how might they...?

Elizabeth Sine: [00:48:52] That's interesting. That's a really interesting question. Through all these different areas, I don't feel that any of the communities [00:49:00] embraced me, to tell you the truth. I feel like my family did, and a very small handful of friends, and maybe some teachers along the way. But, you know, even in Japan, I was always too loud. And, you know, the 40% of the island's covered in American military base. And so, you know, the sort of animosity...There's [00:49:30] a little bit of a animosity toward Americans there. But, you know, I've always been kind of like louder and dynamic, and, and people don't like that, you know. Especially when you don't look like you could fit in. But the wonderful thing about working for myself is that when people [00:50:00] come to me, they need me more than I need them. In the beginning, it wasn't that way. I was starving for patients and now it's like, people walk into my clinic and it's, it's a wow experience. It's beautiful, my clinic. Everything is, like...I do everything to make just this wonderful experience for people. I want them to feel comfortable when they come in, like they're coming into my home. It doesn't feel like a sterile clinic. [00:50:30]It feels...And it's not like a spa. It's somewhere in between because it is very clean. Everything has its place, everything. Everyone has their job. And people get what they've come for. But yeah, I can think of pretty much everywhere that I've spent time....When I lived in Hawai'i, you know, like Hawai'i is pretty notorious. If you're not local, you know, you get a little bit of that, you know, [00:51:00] that kind of look. But I do feel that everywhere I have been, I've been able to kind of break a stereotype of what people think about someone that looks like me. And I've been able to make some really amazing friends, and people that I would consider family, you know, from the different places and times in my [00:51:30] life. And even now, you know, people from San Ardo, sometimes I'll see some of the elders. And I always thought they were so....You know, I put them up on this, you know pedestal and stuff. And, you know, now we talk to each other just like, you know, like we're equals, you know, And it's, it's just kind of cool to be

in, in that place where, like, I'm comfortable, I'm not relying on people. And I would say to a fault I am that way. I'm very independent. And, [00:52:00] you know, I've had Jerry Ramirez, she's my office manager. She's been with me for over ten years now. And she's a tough woman. She is a tough woman. And we've butt heads a couple of times, but over ten years, man, she has been so amazing. She's kind of like a bonus mom to me. And and has been very loyal to the company. And, you know, in [00:52:30] turn, you know, I take care of her and her family and making sure that she stays in balance, too, you know. So when I do...when I have this connection with someone, you know, if they haven't rejected me or made me feel a certain way, you know, once they cross into my personal life, like, you know, I'm really looking after them. That's I guess the mother in me. You know, I have my one child, but I feel like [00:53:00] I'm mothering to a lot of different people, or nurturing in that way. So, yeah, I'm not really sure if that answered the question.

Preston Allen : [00:53:09] Oh, no, no. Very much so. With just a variety of places you've been, some would assume that you really needed to have this picture of a community that helped you move through. But what I'm hearing from you is that that absence of to whatever degree that was there has made [00:53:30] you who you are right now, Right? That has contributed to how you view the world, how you fit into the world? Is that, like, because, go ahead

Elizabeth Sine: [00:53:39] Well, this might tie into the wellness part of it, because, you know, when when I did live in Japan, you know, I met up with this woman from Hiroshima and she was a yoga teacher, and she was the one that introduced me to the man that fixed my back. And, you know, her daughter, you know, was my age. [00:54:00] And we became really close friends. This was before social media. So I didn't you know, we didn't...never kept in touch. But, you know, it was like that through that health and wellness stuff. And, you know, I can kind of think of the people that I have really, you know, kept in my life. It's always been kind of, you know, people that were really down to earth and people that really understood this kind of like earth medicine. And [00:54:30] so I guess that would be the community, is that...In different places that I've been, you have, like, your, you know, your average, kind of stereotypical, you know, cultural-, culturally accepted person. But then you had those kind of free thinkers, and the free spirits, and the hippies, and the, you know. And those were always the people that I gravitated towards. And [00:55:00] they were less judgmental. And, you know, you

could talk about like things like systemic racism before that was even like a catch phrase. And we would understand, like, "Oh, yeah," you know. And we could talk about things like that, whether they were white, whether they were, you know, Asian, Black, you know, islander... So...Yeah, when it comes to, I guess that...You [00:55:30] know, not just being spoon fed everything from the TV or from this kind of the, the real free thinkers... I've really found them in different communities. And, and we've been able to embrace each other and help each other along.

Preston Allen : [00:55:47] Yeah, I really appreciate hearing that. That's pretty awesome. Yeah. So. Okay, I'm thinking we probably because again, I don't know what the plan is out there. So what do you think? We [00:56:00] would love to continue to talk more if you were interested, but not necessarily right now unless you just want to continue.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:56:08] Well, I want to I want to respect Veronica's time. And I'll maybe, I'll just ask a last question before, and then I'll end the recording for now. But, um, I guess, for now, we've covered a lot, but of course, I'm sure we're both bursting with additional questions. But in terms of what your sense of what [00:56:30] what we've moved through today, what have we not yet...What have we not gotten to in today's conversation that is missing or that you hoped we could have gotten to?

Veronica Avery: [00:56:50] Hm. Well one thing that I did leave out was, you know, I talked a little bit about some of the countries that I've been to. But [00:57:00] yeah, there are some really fun stories along the way. And even when Koa ...Koa has been to like five or six countries already. And so, I guess, yeah, just kind of some travel stories, you know, that are, that are fun and scary and, you know, dangerous and things like that. Things that someone from a town of 500 people shouldn't really, you know, have done all of these things. And, [00:57:30] i don't know, i guess, maybe another thing is with, like, the satisfaction of where I am, because I am at a crossroads right now, where, you know, I'm working too much. Even with my three days a week, I'm still working too much. And I'm, I'm happy with where I am [00:58:00] happy enough. And I'm also, you know, I have dreams and my, my kid's going to leave me, you know. She's going to leave me. And my mom. She's going to leave, too. And my dad's going to leave, too. And, you know, my my mom actually, the day after Christmas, or Christmas night, I'm taking her up to the airport, her and my stepdad. And when we were over there in the

[00:58:30] summer, she wanted to buy the, the plot next to my Tio and he had her cousin Gil doesn't want to sell. And so she was talking to my [00:58:42] Tio [00:58:43] Noe about it. She was so sad because Tio Noe has a house right there. And then my, my [00:58:47] Tio Alberto, and [00:58:48] then her cousin Gil. Well, my Tio Noe said, "Well, don't buy that plot. You can have my house." So my Tio Noe gave [00:59:00] my mom his house. And it's not finished. They still have to do insulation and flooring and things like that. But my Tio Noe is a contractor. Like he really did well for...If I think my mom's a superstar, he's like, right up there, too. Like, he's got his own construction business. He built his house from the, you know, from the ground up. And over there in Louisiana, you know, they have really big houses with big lots and things like that. But yeah, he, you know, so my mom, you know, she wants to live part time down there, too. [00:59:30] So that question of what made me stick around or what keeps me here....Well, the things that keep me here I feel are, you know what if Koa wants to go to school in Hawai'i, or wherever she wants to go, maybe she wants to stick around with me. She says she wants to go to Cal Poly, but we'll see. So I guess I kind of talked about it.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:59:53] Yeah,

Veronica Avery: [00:59:54] It came out.

Elizabeth Sine: [00:59:55] Yeah. Well, thank you so much for that. I'll, i'll go ahead and [01:00:00] the recording and then.

Veronica Avery: [01:00:02] Did you have one more thing?

Preston Allen : [01:00:03] Oh, no, I'm good. Yeah, I'm good. I have tons more things but.

Veronica Avery: [01:00:07] Okay, oh okay, okay.

Preston Allen : [01:00:09] I think we could, that would just start a whole conversation...

Veronica Avery: [01:00:12] Yeah. I'm very long winded.

Veronica Avery: [01:00:14] Yeah.

Preston Allen : [01:00:14] But I am totally interested, so I want to not cut you short at all. So.

Elizabeth Sine: [01:00:19] So we'll go ahead and close it off for today. Thank you so much.

Veronica Avery: [01:00:22] Thank you.