

The Maverick Show Episode 35
HOST: Matt Bowles GUEST: Kristin Wilson

Matt Bowles: Hey everybody, it's Matt Bowles! Welcome to *The Maverick Show*. My guest today is Kristin Wilson. She is a location independent entrepreneur, writer, public speaker, content creator and full-time digital nomad. She has lived and worked in over 60 countries in the last 15 years and has helped over 1,000 remote workers relocate worldwide. If you missed the last episode when Kristin was on *The Maverick Show* check that out for sure. It's Episode Number Three during which we went all through her background in international real estate as well as her location independent entrepreneurial journey.

Today Kristin is focused on helping people become digital nomads through her courses, programs, workshops, and speaking engagements. She consults with companies and individuals on how to prepare for remote work assignments and relocate internationally. She is the founder of [Digital Nomad TV](#) on YouTube and host of *The Badass Digital Nomads* podcast. And she documents her own location independent lifestyle on her travel log and a personal channel called "[Traveling with Kristin](#)" which is also being syndicated on streaming services such as Hulu.

Kristin is also the creator of the "30-Day Digital Nomad Challenge" and she is the author of the forthcoming book *Digital Nomad 101: The Ultimate Guide to Location Independence*. Kristin is a top writer on Quora and Medium on the topics of travel, digital nomadism, and location independence. She's been featured in *Bloomberg* and *Business Week*, *ESPN*, *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, *House Hunters International* and many, many podcasts including Episode Three of *The Maverick Show*. Kristin, welcome back to the show.

Kristin Wilson: Thank you for that amazingly warm welcome, Matt.

Matt: It is always such a blast to have you here and it's so fun to hang out. Now we are not actually doing this in person today. The last time we saw each other was Brazil, I believe. We were hanging out in... that was about December and you actually interviewed me for your podcast *Badass Digital Nomads* in person. That was a blast. Do you remember where we did that interview?

Kristin: Yeah. In a random street in Porto de Galinhas.

Matt: It was like a block from the beach and it was, I don't know, 10:00

PM or something. It was a video interview because you are doing an audio and a video podcast. And we've been trying to schedule and then that 10:00 p.m. was the only time we could do it. And then we were wandering around and we said, "Let's just set it up here in this alleyway." And then we just set up all the video stuff and shot it in an alleyway. But it was really, really an awesome interview. And so, I feel like that was the last time we saw each other. And now, I am currently in Cape Town South Africa. Where are you today?

Kristin: I am in St. Augustine, Florida.

Matt: Awesome. Yeah, you're just doing a quick trip, right? Through the U.S. before you are off to your next set of adventures in a couple of weeks, right?

Kristin: Yup. Since we were in Brazil, I went to Buenos Aires after that which you gave me a lot of travel tips for. So, thanks for that. I think I hit all of the important stuff which included eating and drinking. After that, I came back to Florida for a couple of days for a wedding, and then I went back to Europe and I've been there ever since. So, I'm just passing through to just do some work and visit family. I haven't really been home in a couple of years. So, I just came to hangout for a little while before I go back to Europe and I'll be headed to Paris in about two weeks for the Rolf Potts Travel Memoir Paris writing workshop.

Matt: That is completely amazing. And for people who don't know who Rolf Potts is, I mean the first thing that I'll say about him...and then you can share a little bit more...and where I came across him is anybody that's read *The 4-Hour Work Week* by Tim Ferriss, which both you and I read in 2007 when it came out by the way...Tim Ferriss extensively sites Rolf Potts as his inspiration. He is one of his primary inspirations to writing *The 4-Hour Work Week* and Rolf Potts' book *Vagabonding* about the art of long-term world travel, which I have also read both the book and listened to the audiobook. It is also been very inspiring for me.

So, that's amazing, first of all, that you're gonna meet Rolf Potts and that you're gonna attend his course. Can you talk a little bit about what that is, and what he means to you, and how you decided to do it? And what is the course gonna be about?

Kristin: Yeah. So, actually, I found out about Rolf Potts through Tim Ferriss and *The 4-Hour Work Week* because I think when *Vagabonding* came out I was already a vagabond. So, I was out in the world with no smart phone and no internet connection most of the time. So, I was unaware that that book even existed until after I read *The 4-Hour Work Week*. So, I kind of found out about him in a backward way and ever since I've just been just kind of casually following him online. I actually was looking at his books on Amazon because I thought I needed to brush up on my Rolf Potts. I'd listened to some of his podcasts and I read his articles and a lot of stuff that he'd written over the years, but I haven't read a lot of his full-length books. So, I was thinking I might get some for the plane ride over.

And I feel like Tim Ferriss and Rolf Potts are kindred spirits because we come from the same generation. We're all about the same age and we all are obviously passionate about travel and lifestyle design and entrepreneurship. And so, I always felt like we had a lot in common. So, I really related to them even though they don't know me. But the writing workshop...I think he's been doing them for 10 or 15 years. So, I've been aware of the writing workshops for a long time, but at the time I was really busy with my business and I wasn't doing a lot of writing. So, I couldn't really justify going to a writing workshop except that I used to be a writer when I was in college.

So, now that I am actually writing again and have been writing online and wrote a book, I write every single day now anywhere from 1,000 to 10,000 words. It's something crazy like that. So, it's just really become a part of my daily life and I thought this is the year that I'm gonna go do that because I love Paris, I love France, and there really isn't anything that I would rather be doing than learning to write better about my travels from Paris through Rolf Potts. So, it just seems like kind of a match made in heaven and I couldn't pass it up this year.

Matt: That's amazing! I'm so excited to hear how that goes. I love France as well. I was there last summer. I spent about five or six weeks going through the French wine country and actually took a bunch of your recommendations. You sent me out to Saint-Emilion's in Bordeaux and gave me some amazing recommendations there. So, I feel like, for me, I'd been to Paris before and I've been to the south of France, but I had never been

through the different wine countries in Bordeaux and Burgundy and those kinds of places and it was just a truly spectacular experience. So, I agree. Paris, I love. And also, now the rest of France has just significantly moved up my list. It's really an amazing place.

I'm super excited you're going to do that. What have been some of the other things that you've done since we last talked earlier this year? I know you were in Europe and you produced some really solid travel content. What were some of the highlights of your year so far in 2019?

Kristin:

So, my Number One Goal this year was to finish the manuscript for my book *Digital Nomad 101* and last year I kind of came out of the gates running and I wrote some articles about how many goals I had in the year because I had been running my online business by then for six or seven years. I really was excited about all of the new ideas that I had and transitioning into a little bit of a different type of business. So, going from relocation consulting to more of the brand building and media company and a thought leader for the remote work industry. I like to call myself a cheerleader for the digital nomad movement.

So, last year I had 100 goals in 180 days that I was trying to accomplish which I think I did a pretty good job at. But one of the things that I learned through that process is that you can get also a lot done if you have a very small number of very important goals. And so, I decided to shift strategies this year and instead of going for a lot of smaller goals, to only limit my number of goals to anywhere from one to three goals per quarter.

And actually, I got that from Michael Hyatt because I use his Full Focus Planner and Full Focus Journal. His team recommends only doing one or two main goals per quarter. And so, my number one goal was to finish the manuscript for my book. I decided to leverage my ability to be location independent by choosing my environment for writing that book. And one of the best places for me to be productive is Bulgaria. So, I went to Bulgaria for two months and all I did was snowboard and write my book.

So, every morning snowboarding and writing and then working in the afternoon. So, it was a blast! I snowboarded 30 days and then after that basically my way of celebrating finishing the manuscript

was going to the French Alps and just partying for two weeks. So, I did that. I went to Tomorrowland Winter which was the first Tomorrowland Music Festival in a ski resort and that was in the French Alps.

And then I went to a one-week long bachelorette party in Courchevel which they call the Oligarch's Playground. It's like one of the most expensive places I've ever been, but it's beautiful. And that is just a couple hours away from where Tomorrowland Winter was. So, more skiing, more snowboarding, lots of Rosè. And after that, I went back to my home away from home which is Amsterdam and I've been there ever since. And then I just got back to Florida a couple of weeks ago and I'm preparing to take off again.

Matt: That's awesome! I remember when you and I were crisscrossing barely missing each other because I went to Bosco on the very tail end of the ski season right after you had left. That was right after I went to the Ski Week which was in the Austrian Alps. You were in the French Alps while I was in the Austrian Alps and I had just missed you in Bulgaria. So, we were super close crisscrossing this year. Hopefully, our paths will cross because you're doing some really cool stuff too. After the France experience, you're gonna go up to this artic lodge. I'd never heard about that before you told me about it. Can you talk a little bit about what that is?

Kristin: Yeah. So, I wrote an article called "Co-Living the Future of Housing" about a year ago. These guys sent me a message. They were like, "Oh, we really liked your article. Can we share it?" And I was like, "Yeah. Sure." And I looked at where they were from and it said the Artic Coworking Lodge. I was like where's that because that sounds really cool.

Being from Florida you would think I like the beach, but...I do, but I'm also really obsessed with cold weather for some reason. I really like going to northern places. And so, I looked at it and I saw that it was a co-living space in Lofoten in the northern part of Norway which is somewhere I've always wanted to go. And when I went to Norway I went to Oslo and Bergin. Going up to the north is like a whole separate trip. So, you really have to have that planned out. It's not like you just jet up there and then come back in a couple of days. You want to be able to stay up there for a while and really experience it.

So, it had already been on my list and it was combining all of the things that I like. So, on another level, besides the Paris writing stuff, I love nature. I love hiking. I love the snow. And you can surf up there and I used to be a competitive surfer. And it's co-living, so it's like digital nomads in nature in this cool spot. And I told them, "I'm gonna come up there sometime." So, I booked a month. I wanted to go last year but it didn't really lineup. So, this year it's definitely happening. I put my deposit down a few months ago and I'm going there.

Matt: I'm so excited to follow your experience there. I will be watching very closely and am super excited to see everything that you experience because that does sound like a truly, truly epic experience.

So, let's talk a little bit about the book. I know this has been a really primary project that you have just been grinding on the day in and day out relentlessly and just really putting in the work and effort both on the research and the writing and everything else. It's been very impressive to know you as well as I know you and to see how hard you've been working on it. I'd love for you to just talk a little bit about the book. What's it about? What's it for? What does it contain? And then maybe we can talk a little bit about your writing process.

Kristin: Sure. So, it's called *Digital Nomad 101* at this point in time and it's an idea that I've had since probably...I've been wanting to write it since 2015, but it was before I had my brand of "Traveling with Kristin" and it was before I really knew how I was going to help people become digital nomads.

So, I learned of the term 'digital nomad' in 2013 and realized that all of my clients were digital nomads basically. And I was like, "Wow! I can help all of these other people become digital nomads too." But there are only so many hours in a day so I can't really help them one-on-one. So, what is the next best thing? That would be writing a book. So, I've always wanted to write a book about anything really.

In college, I had a whole manuscript called *The Surfer Girl Diet* because I was really into surfing and health and cooking and making healthy food. So, I created this whole cookbook basically called *The Surfer Girl Diet* because I worked at a sports

management agency as an intern and people were always asking me, “How do you get in such good shape?” and “How do you stay in such good shape for surfing?” So, I wrote the book. I actually never published it because I ran into all these problems about calling something a diet and health. There are all these regulations and it never got published.

But my whole life I’ve always really had a natural affinity for writing and reading over math, for example. So, it’s kind of always been inside of me to write. And I used to write for different websites and things like that. So, I thought I’m gonna write a book and it was just a matter of time. In a perfect world, I would just be a writer. And I probably will end up doing that at some point, but this book specifically is meant to be a digital nomad bible so it’s going to have everything in it that you need to know to be a digital nomad. So, it’s split into five different parts and it starts with a history of remote work and digital nomadism and also the mindset of being able to work and travel and live life on your own terms. And then it has other sections about remote jobs, and online businesses, and how to start your own business, and how to create your digital nomad job. There’s also a whole section on travel and community.

So, it’s wrapping everything together from the moment somebody figures out what the digital nomad is and what their capabilities are. Then it actually shows you how to do it through details like budgeting and getting rid of your stuff and things like that and then actually going through that transition and sustaining the lifestyle long-term because becoming location independent is a lifestyle shift. And it’s something that you can do on your own for sure, but it really helps to have the wisdom and knowledge of people who have already been there because there are so many opportunities to make mistakes and waste time and waste money. That’s going to happen to some degree anyway any time that you are working for yourself or traveling around the world while working remotely. But that’s gonna be a part of the learning process.

For everything we do in life we want to find the best way to do something. And so, this is going to be a guide for that. And so, it’s like a practical guide, but it also has this element of philosophy. And just like the bigger life picture of what it’s about and what it means to be a digital nomad and how people can really take advantage of that and thrive in the lifestyle long-term instead

of trying it out...taking the leap as they say. Jumping off the cliff with your one-way ticket to Bali and hoping it works out.

I'm just giving people a practical guide that they can refer to whenever they have a question about the lifestyle whether its financial, or has to do with mental health, friendships and relationships, etc. They can just go to the book and look at the section that talks about that and get a little bit of a foundation or perspective there from not just me, but other people who have been through it. So, I have a lot of stories about what other people's experiences have been to just kind of illustrate each point. And actually, I reference your story in there too.

Matt: That's amazing! I'm so excited to read this book. I do not have a copy of it yet because it hasn't been officially released, but I understand that it is available for pre-sale and that the listeners of *The Maverick Show* can put a link in the show notes so that they can go and get on the pre-sale list to get an early copy of the book as soon as it's ready.

Kristin: Yeah. There's a waiting list.

Matt: Amazing. So, we're gonna put the link in the show notes for how you can be first on the list to be able to get a copy of that as soon as it's available. That's awesome! One of the things, Kristin, that I've always appreciated about you and your content in this regard is that you have really been one of the people that is focused on how to do this in a sustainable long-term way. I feel like a lot of people...it's a very, like most things in life, the things that are kind of promoted are short-term kind of. Like sit on the beach with your laptop and have this Instagram picture and then boom. But what about loneliness over time? And what about dating and relationships? And what about sustaining all these different types of real-life needs?

And I feel like you've been one of the people that has given very, very serious attention to that. And one of the things that you've done, which has been amazing for me to have participated in and been a part of, is that you formed the *Long-term Digital Nomad Success Group* on Facebook. I was wondering if you could just talk a little bit about that because I think that's an incredibly significant contribution that you've made in terms of creating and facilitating and running that group. Can you talk about what that

group is all about, what it offers, what it's used for, why you created it, and where you're taking it? What is your vision for that group?

Kristin:

Yes. You really hit the nail on the head because anybody who's been on Instagram or Facebook lately has probably seen some ad talking about how you can get paid to travel the world and it's just a bunch of hype to get people to pay for maybe products or courses that are get-rich-quick or quick fixes of some kind. I think that this is a very opportune once in a lifetime moment in history for people who are alive today to witness the shift from the industrial model of working and living to a new paradigm for the future of nomadic living. I feel very strongly that people today are living at such an amazing time because this shift allows everybody to be able to decide what they do with their own lives. They are not restricted anymore by the things that have been holding human beings back for thousands and thousands of years. And all of the work that I've done has been around condensing my 15 years of experience traveling the world and trying things out when there was absolutely no road map. And before iPhones and before I even had a Facebook account. I know that that's what made my journey take longer and it went a lot slower than can happen now.

And so, my life goal for the foreseeable future is to help as many people as possible make that shift as fast as possible because technology is changing exponentially fast and the people who get to decide to become digital nomads right now or however they want to live their lives, they have the tools at their disposal to be able to do it. It doesn't make sense for people to just keep waiting around for permission.

I wanna be the one to give people the permission because when I was growing up, I failed all of the career tests in middle school and in high school. No one could ever match me with a job. When I was a freshman in college my career counselor told me that my ideas were crazy because I said I wanted to work in Italy for myself and travel around. He said, "That's not a job, that's a vacation." And then I just kept getting 'No's from everybody. People were like, "Be a doctor. Be a lawyer. Do this..." and I was like, "No. None of that is a good fit."

And so, of course, I ended up listening to them, going to school, going to grad school and then in grad school, in my business

school where you are supposed to be guaranteed a job basically, our career counselor in business school quit during the first semester. So, there I was with student loans at 21 in my MBA program and I was spending for myself to find a job again.

Now in hindsight looking back everything that happened led to this. And now to have the ability to help people seize the day basically and do it now is just a real honor. I know I'm doing a lot of things at the moment with the book, and the YouTube channels, and blogging, and courses, and the group, but it's all centered around the same thing which is helping people to overcome the old paradigm of how we've lived for thousands of years. I help people to just embrace what is possible and make it their own because I think there are as many different ways to become a digital nomad as there are people in the world. And so, the Facebook community is one way to do that with people one-on-one just for free.

Matt: Yeah. I mean, that's amazing. That's why I want you to sort of just share and sort of explain that part of it. This is a Facebook group which listeners of *The Maverick Show*, if they want to could just join it for free and be part of that community for free. And then what is...can you just say what the community is and what their experience would be in joining your Long-term Digital Nomad Success Group on Facebook?

Kristin: Yes. The idea for that came out of seeing a lot of misinformation on Reddit Digital Nomad and in different groups and different forms. I just wanted to create my own group because at least I know that the information I'm sharing is accurate, and I can have some control over that.

So, the group is for anybody who is...it started as Aspiring Digital Nomads. So, anybody who is interested in the idea of remote work, but they're intimidated by entering a group that has 50,000 people. And maybe people are criticizing each other or there's a lot of back and forth going on. My group is like a family. So, I call it the [Long-Term Digital Nomad Success Family](#) and it's just a really positive encouraging a group of people who are accepting of anyone from any country of any background who is interested in traveling or working remotely or starting their own business and having autonomy over their lives as adults.

So, I do that by sharing a lot of my nerdy research findings and

lots of tips from travelers who work. I share on a daily basis anything that I come across that I think is worth sharing. And then the other people in the group post questions and ideas for feedback. They give each other help. I also do a live stream every week either with just me or with somebody else. We could be talking about insurance for example, or financial stuff, or travel tips, or how to be successful as a freelancer, or how to get clients for your business, or tips for getting remote jobs...anything that is going to support people on this journey.

And it's as much about giving examples of what people can do as it is about teaching. Because I think a lot of people learn through stories and from seeing what other people are doing and kind of taking what resonates with them. So, they just learned through a community. So, that's what I want to develop.

Matt:

Yeah. I think one of the things that have been amazing as a participant of the group myself is to see how...I mean there are now thousands of people in this group and they come from all over the world. And a lot of the people that come into the group are people that don't have the community around them of supportive folks that are doing this. They don't know people that are doing this. Their friends and family are telling them you're crazy, or you shouldn't, or you can't. When they come into your group, you ask them to introduce themselves and they do. And then everybody's very supportive of them. They can ask questions and they can basically be around in an environment of thousands of people that are either doing this or trying to get into it. Everybody is supportive of each other.

And so, I think that's just such an amazing environment. It's totally free and what we're gonna do is definitely put the link for that in the show notes as well to check out your Facebook group and join at no cost which I would encourage everybody to do if you're in any way interested in that. But I also wanted to talk about some of the other stuff that you've been doing. You just actually, started a more specific thing to help people get jumpstarted; you just recently launched your course, "The 30-Day Digital Nomad Challenge". Can you talk a little bit about how that came about, what that is, and who that is for?

Kristin:

Yes. That was actually born out of having the group because once it got to a certain size...I mean I answer everybody individually,

but once it got to a certain size I realized that I was back in the same predicament that I had been in with my relocation consulting company where you can only help so many people per day with questions. I kept getting the same questions over and over and most of them were geared around how to start. Where to start on this very undefined overwhelming concept of transitioning from a traditional conventional lifestyle to one of location independence. Especially when all the people around you don't understand it, don't encourage it, and don't condone it.

I realized that I have to come up with a framework to help people. It couldn't just be one-on-one. It had to be serving people in a better way. So, over the course of six months and with writing my book and going through so much research in putting together my own concepts, I decided to drop out the most important things that I thought would only be important for people who are starting. And this is also based on giving workshops and getting questions in a group setting.

I created this thing called "The 30-Day Digital Nomad Challenge" which is a jumpstart to working remotely. It's basically pouring jet fuel over the idea of becoming digital nomad because it's the things that you might find out in the first two years or three years of the process of trying to become a digital nomad, but you're getting fed one exercise per day every morning for 30 days that is specifically designed and building on each day prior to help you become the digital nomad.

So, it's not like from day one at 12:30 you become a digital nomad and you're flying somewhere, but you have all of the tools at your disposal that after that 30 days is up, you'll have your mindset correct. We spend a whole week just on different mindset exercises and strategies because always the biggest thing holding people back is fear. And then also, remote jobs, online business, creating your own job, what are the different options for people, or how to figure out what they should do for work. How should they support themselves?

And then once those questions are answered, should they travel? Where should they go? How much should they travel? How do they budget for travel? How much money should they have saved? Should they go by themselves? Should they go with a group or retreat? There are all of these other questions that come up.

So, we do travel in the fourth weekend and also community because, of course, we're human beings so we need community. So, this digital nomad challenge is designed with themes presented one per week for four weeks in a noninvasive way. You can just spend a few minutes on one every day, but it's all about working smarter and not harder.

So, instead of stressing yourself out and Googling questions for the next 16 months before you take the first step to becoming a digital nomad, you don't even have to search for the answers. They're getting sent to you every day on email and then there's a Slack group where people can have that community feel and share what they found out and uncovered about themselves. They can share their answers and support each other. And then I'm in there answering questions as well and doing livestream to answer more questions from the group.

It's been really fun. This is the first one that we've done, but anyone will be able to join from now on. It's been very humbling to see the progress. And it's everything I've ever dreamed of. It's anything I've ever wanted to help people with and it's actually happening. It's been a very profound experience for me too.

Matt: That's so awesome! We're going to link that up in the show notes as well. I think it's really, really significant because there's a lot of people who are interested and they listen and they want to do it and they're sort of aspiring to do it, but there's just this indefinite timeline. There's a kind of paralysis of 'Oh, at some point I'll eventually do it.'

What I love about the way that you structure this is it's a defined 30-day period to do exactly what you said which is pour gasoline on it and really get you to do it in a progression in a short period of time to take you from where you are now to a much further place along your journey. I think that's really significant for people that are at that level and they say, "I'm really ready to do this. I need help. I need information. I need somebody to work with me on it, but I'm ready to do it and do it now." I think that's a really significant contribution.

So, we're gonna link up to that in the show notes as well. And then the other thing that you have recently launched is *The Badass*

Digital Nomad podcast which I was super honored to be a guest on. And we recorded that epic interview in Brazil which was absolutely an amazing night. I remember it so fondly and my memory is incredible. But you have been also interviewing some really incredible, powerhouse, super interesting, super dynamic people on the podcast. So, can you talk a little bit about how the podcast came about, and what you're doing with the show, and so forth?

Kristin:

Yes. So, as soon as I found out what podcasts were a few years ago I knew I had to have one because I just love talking and connecting with people. And so many times throughout my life...I have some amazing friends and I've met so many cool people while traveling that before I learned how to use a video camera, or in this case podcast recording equipment, I would say I wish I had a GoPro strapped to my head and we were recording this conversation. You just get exposed to so many different points of view when you're traveling in different countries.

The original idea was to make it something like...some of the ideas I was throwing around were "Digital Nomad Digest" just to kind of provide examples of how people became digital nomads. It transformed into *Badass Digital Nomads*. The number one thing all of my clients say once they relocate is, "I wish I did that sooner." Some of them wait five or 10 years before doing it. And so, the whole idea is to help people have the courage to make these decisions faster whether they're going to actually move to a different country, or whether they want to quit their job, or whether they want to start their own business. Whatever it is, there's usually something holding us back. It only takes one thing that you hear that triggers something that makes you take that first step.

And as we know from psychology and research on motivation and productivity and procrastination, action begets motivation. One little thing can inspire someone to take that first step and then that first step can snowball. So, the idea for *Badass Digital Nomads* is to interview people on all the different ways that they have transitioned from a 9 to 5 to location independent. They come from all different backgrounds, different ages, different industries. Some of them are self-employed, some of them are freelancers, some of them run e-commerce stores, some are remote employees. Everyone is doing different things and they're all different ages and it's just to show what's possible.

So, I had you as a guest on there. I had Palle Bo who is our shared podcast guest who shows that you can become a digital nomad in your fifties. I've had people who went from making \$10.00 an hour or 2¢ per word as freelance writers who now have massive online businesses and hundreds of thousands of followers in their audience. I had a single mom come on from Germany and she talked about how she quit her job in theater and now she is a really successful YouTuber with online courses. She teaches voice coaching.

There are so many different stories out there. The goal of *Badass Digital Nomads* is to share those stories and also to bring on experts in the remote work industry. People are paying attention to remote work but there's not any place or any one source where you can go to kind of stay on the cutting edge of what's going on. Things are changing really fast. So, I bring people in from different remote companies, people who are creating products and services for digital nomads to solve problems that we have and that continue to come out of the woodwork as this community evolves. That's really what it's about.

Matt: Yeah. I subscribe to it of course and it's really an awesome podcast. So, we're gonna lead up to that in the show notes as well so people can go check it out. And then one of the other things that were really cool that you did since the last episode is that you were the keynote speaker at The Nomad Summit in Las Vegas. It was really cool because I was one of the keynotes at the 2018 Nomad Summit in Chiang Mai. They expanded the Nomad Summit into a second one outside of Chiang Mai in Las Vegas and had you keynote that one. I was not at the one that you spoke at, but I would love to hear about what your topic was about and what that experience was like for you.

Kristin: I was invited by Johnny who is the founder of Nomad Summit and it's funny because it just goes to show how tight-knit the nomad community is or is becoming. Before 2018 I did not know any digital nomads. The amount of collaborations and friendships and opportunities that have come out of my intentional year of meeting as many digital nomads as possible has been mind-boggling. Digital nomads are creating their lives and creating their lifestyles. They're also creating their own opportunities for themselves and for others and they are solving problems for people as they arise.

So, the digital nomad community is like a cloud nation of crowdsourced people in this gig freelance economy. It's so dynamic and it's so interesting. The way that that happened was really meeting Johnny at a hostel in Spain before we went on the Nomad Cruise. And then we traveled with a group of nomads in Greece and we became friends and decided to split off and go to Bulgaria together because everyone was kind of breaking into smaller groups as time went on. We just became friends.

He asked me to come on the podcast and we did some mastermind stuff together and then he asked me to speak at The Nomad Summit on how to create a digital nomad relocation plan which is a thing that didn't even exist before. So, I took my relocation experience and adapted it to what you would need as a digital nomad to basically create your own escape plan and to be able to travel the world while working. It's something that you can implement one time, or you can do it every time you change to a new destination. That was what I spoke about at The Nomad Summit. It was great. That was my first real talk in front of an audience that big.

I also did a workshop on sustaining the nomad digital lifestyle later on in the weekend. Both of those experiences have also contributed to the idea for *Badass Digital Nomads* in making it more interactive because of the nature of the digital nomad community. That's why, for example, I do the podcast. A lot of the episodes are live on YouTube because I really love that interaction with the audience and with the viewers and listeners so that they can ask questions in real time and be a part of the process of designing their own lifestyles.

Matt:

Yeah. For sure. I think the Nomad Summits are such important meetup events for people that are already doing the nomad thing and aspiring nomads to just meet and hang out in person. It gives such another level of depth beyond what the virtual communities are able to do. I'm a big fan of that event. They're doing it twice a year now. I just had Johnny on the show a couple of episodes ago.

In 2019 he's gonna do the second Nomad Summit in Mexico this year. They of course always do the flagship January event in Chiang Ma. We'll put the link to that in the show notes as well if anyone wants to check out either of the Nomad Summit events, but

I highly recommend it. It's a really good time and a really cool place to meet amazing people in person.

Kristin: I just want to give a shout out to Johnny because he has such good vibes. I know he's been on your show a couple of times. So, for anyone who's listening and who's thinking of going to a real-life conference or event, I highly recommend The Nomad Summit because it's just an extension of Johnny's personality in my opinion. It's so different.

I think The Digital Nomad community is a lot different from other sub-cultures within business because it really is such a sharing economy. Everybody realizes that it's not a zero-sum game and everybody just sharing information together and helping each other I think is bringing up the entire community. It's so inclusive. Everybody is allowed in the digital nomad community. So, I just wanted to say, if anyone wants to do that, come on over and join whatever floats your boat because it's just so welcoming.

Matt: At this point, I would love for you to maybe talk a little bit about...you've alluded to your relocation business. In the last episode, we talked a lot about how you initially developed the business and how it started with a really tight niche which was professional poker players. We went through that entire story in episode three and it's an amazing story. I encourage everyone to go listen to it who has not yet heard the story.

But I would love to hear on this episode how you transitioned from the niche of professional poker players to a broader relocation company. And how you developed Orbus which is your broader relocation company. What does it do and how you run that business remotely?

Kristin: It's really important as a location independent entrepreneur or remote worker when you're working from home you really need to have contact with other people in real life as well as online. So, after I started Poker Refugees...so this was 2011. In the first couple of years, it was mostly poker players because it was such a niche business. But I think after the word got out through mainstream media and this concept of lifestyle design and *The 4-Hour Work Week* just continued growing in popularity over the years and was becoming more mainstream.

Somehow people found me on the internet because most relocation

companies are for corporations or retirees I would say. That is the primary reason for relocation companies...and maybe for families. But usually for corporate employees. I was one of the few people that was offering individual relocation services for normal people. I started getting inquiries from personal trainers, and therapists, and all sorts of different sole proprietors and they were asking if I could help them even though they weren't poker players. And I was like, "Yeah. For sure." It's the same process with just a few different things and it's actually less specialized if you're not a professional gambler because they have a separate set of needs in addition to that.

So, I decided I wanted to help them too. I'm not gonna turn these people away. I can totally help them. I don't even play poker myself. I started helping everybody: personal trainers, software developers, couples who had their own business together...all sorts of different people. My original company was called Orbus Relocation, but then Poker and Sports Refuges were like the sub-brands of that. I decided to make Orbus Relocation my flagship brand still just for regular people. I have also done corporate relocations as well, but I just focus wanted to focus on helping people who want some one-on-one guidance when they're moving to a different country and they don't want to just figure it out and do a sink or swim sort of thing.

Matt: That's awesome! You and I were also talking about travel experiences and adventures and snafus and all that kind of stuff along the way. I know a lot of the founding of these companies was when you were spending a lot of time in Central America. We were talking about the time we both spent time separately in Nicaragua and all that kind of stuff. I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about your time in Nicaragua and how that went? And what were some of the travel adventures that you had there?

Kristin: Living abroad as in expat from the age of 19...19 or 20 is I think when I started. Talk about learning the hard way. The learning curve is so steep. It is at any age. I just came into it with this blissful ignorance. It was a fun time, but it was also a bumpy road at times. My first time getting ripped off was paying this guy \$80.00 to help me find an apartment when I was 19 years old living in Australia. He took the money and never helped me. I ended up finding my apartment in the classifieds of a newspaper.

It started very early and then that continued. Costa Rica and Nicaragua were kind of known as the wild, wild west of real estate because you didn't need to be licensed to do real estate there. There was no multiple listing system. It was very unorganized. Even though there were laws, they were very difficult to enforce. So, a lot of people took advantage of that and there were some shady business practices going on. That was pretty shocking for me to see coming straight out of college and business school where everything is on the straight and narrow.

I did leave different companies throughout my career because I didn't feel they aligned with my values. I took a risk to go to Nicaragua to help set up a brand-new office in the middle of nowhere for a really big real estate franchise and the same thing was happening. I didn't see eye to eye with the broker and I felt like I wanted to do my own thing.

But I got nudged into that really quickly during the elections of 2008. It was the municipal elections in Managua. Nicaragua already had an image problem and a branding problem because Daniel Ortega, who was the president during the Civil War, got re-elected decades later to be the president again. And in the elections in 2008, there was a lot of riots and protests because the Sandinista Party was accused of stealing the election.

I still had some roots in Costa Rica while I was living in Nicaragua, but I was traveling back and forth between the countries just for fun and to visit friends and things. During one of the trips...I think it was at the end of the year because it was during the elections. I had already had a pretty tough year building this real estate office in the middle of nowhere all by myself with electricity only part of the day and admittedly, it was a really trying year for me. I was only 24 and I was already stressed out. But my entrepreneurial spirit was still strong, so I had all these side businesses and ideas that I was testing like a t-shirt company and exporting dried fruit like pineapples, and bananas, and cashews, and chia seeds and all sorts of things. I was running around doing all these errands. I had a lot of balls in the air and on one of the trips going from Costa Rica back to my headquarters in northwestern Nicaragua; I got stuck in a big riot during those municipal elections.

At the time I had a driver because the cost of living in Nicaragua

was really low. Services were really cheap, so I had a fulltime maid, caretaker, gardener, and driver. So, I'm sitting in the back seat minding my own business. This was right when iPhones came out. So, I remember I was emailing somebody on my iPhone, and I got this email from my business partner in a non-real estate venture who was basically telling me that they were cutting me out of the business. They had gone behind my back to the suppliers that I sourced in Nicaragua and basically cut me out and then offered to hire me as a sales agent for the company that I had started.

So, I'm reading this email on my phone and I'm hearing all this stuff happening around the car on the streets in Managua, but I'm thinking I'm safe because the driver is going to take care of it and he knows what he's doing. The next thing I know, the driver pulls over...it was kind of a traffic jam. He just gets out of the car and joins the riot. I'm just sitting in the back seat on my first-generation iPhone reading this email telling me basically that my partner has screwed me over and all the sudden my driver is joining this riot out in the middle of downtown Managua. He just ran away. I literally never saw him again.

So, I climbed over into the front seat and the keys were still in the ignition, so I just drove away. I didn't know where I was going because again, it's pre-Google maps. I got locked in a parking lot of a mall because the only place I knew how to get too was this really big mall. I got there and thought at least it's safe. It's somewhere I know. I know the neighborhood. I went into the parking lot and they closed the gates and I was stuck there for hours in the car until it got dark. There were people throwing cherry bombs and they had fire on sticks and picket signs. It was crazy and hectic.

I had to talk a security guard into letting me out of this parking lot and I drove across the street to a hotel that I knew, and I stayed there for three days. All of the roads were blocked to get to my house which was three hours away. So, I had a lot of time to sit there and think in this hotel. I thought, you know what? I'm too young for this. I don't think my life was directly threatened by the people. I was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. I had to make a decision. I thought, what is this career worth or what is this life worth if it ends so soon over something so random. I felt like I had put myself in a really high-risk situation and that I was a

little bit in over my head.

After sitting in this hotel for three days I decided that I already wasn't that happy in my situation with my partners. I had the side businesses that were falling apart. I felt very alone in the world. So, I drove back to Costa Rica because the roads north were still blocked off. So, I thought I'm just gonna go back to Costa Rica and figure it out. So, that's what I did. That's when I first decided I'm gonna work for myself from now on. I don't want to be at the mercy of these other people and geopolitical forces and all of this craziness.

So, I went back to Costa Rica and a couple of months later I went back to get my stuff from my house once things had settled down. I actually still own property in Nicaragua. It's such a beautiful country and I'm still friends with my former staff and team from our real estate office. They're amazing people, but I feel really bad for the local people of Nicaragua because they have really been put through the wringer when it comes to the political situation. I know there's been a lot of additional violence this year. I would say that's one of the craziest things that has ever happened to me while traveling.

Matt:

Yeah. I feel like the more you travel you have all kinds of experiences. You learn from them and they shape you and they develop you as a person. So, I think it's amazing we've had so many experiences in so many cultures in so many scenarios and you've been able to really harness all of those experiences together and put them out into the world in ways that other people can learn from. All of the collective sort of wisdom and lessons that you've developed...it's amazing that you're doing that in all these different content formats so people can really derive the maximum amount of value from all of your experiences.

I want to ask you a little bit about that too. As you've been so prolific with your content creation, particularly over the last year. When we did the last interview, you were putting out content. But I feel like over the last year you've just gone exponentially to a completely another level. I want to ask you first of all, just about personal brand building. That's the first category of question I want to ask you. Can you talk a little bit about what you've done particularly over the last year and any tips you have for people in terms of content creation and prolific content creation with respect

to building a personal brand?

Kristin: I think that everybody needs to consider building their own personal brand from now on because as we spoke about with the old model and industrial model of work, the key to success was specializing in one thing. You go work at your job or your factory for 30 years, or 40 years, or 50 years and you do one thing and you do it really well and you move up the ranks and everything is good.

Today, robots can take your job. Or your job can get outsourced. There's very little job security. So, the digital nomad and remote work revolution are really aligned with the end of specialization in jobs...at least in some jobs. Of course, if you are a brain surgeon you want to be specialized in that, but the way to succeed in the future and in the present is being able to combine different skills and different specialties into something that is new.

So, whether you are niching down to help a specific person or sell a specific service, or you just want to be more attractive to an employer, having a personal brand is so helpful. Even if you're just applying for a remote job that you found online, your resume or your CV are very important and also your LinkedIn profile. But also, everyone is going to Google you now. So, how you appear online could impact whether you get the job or not.

And it's even more important when you work for yourself because your clients are going to Google you. They're gonna look for reviews. They're gonna look for other people who have worked for you. They're going to look for social proof. And so, whether you are a software developer or a blogger, or anything, having a personal brand is going to be really helpful.

When I was developing my own personal brand I was thinking, okay, well, it has to be me. It has to be authentic. I want a brand that is going to grow with me as a person throughout my career for the next however long. I put a lot of thought behind "Traveling with Kristin." And I say as kind of a tagline that 'it's about traveling the world and life' because many people identify with their jobs and with their careers, but today we get to identify with something much more than that. Our job can be an extension of our personality and our skill set and what our natural abilities are. And now we get to combine it with travel or being location independent and living wherever we want. So, it was really

important to me to serve people to have credibility and for people to get to know me and know that I'm legit. The only way that I could think of going forward is to just share who I was and what I did so that I'm walking the talk.

It was a very strategic decision, but also one that felt natural for me and it was a good fit. Having a podcast, making videos, writing the book...these are natural extensions of my personality. For each person it will be different. A lot of people are saying now that the future belongs to the polymaths. So, anybody who can combine their skills in a unique way and then market them is just going to make more money. So, I think it's a two-way street for people to think about not only how would they be benefiting themselves, but how are they benefiting the world at large and how are they securing their future?

Matt: That is really good advice. I want to ask you about one more topic. As long as I've known you, you've been a really hard worker. You've been hustling. You've been grinding. You've been building businesses. You've been making things happen. With that said, I feel like in the last six to 12 months, you have shifted gears and are taking it up three notches in terms of your productivity, in terms of how prolific your content production is, and just in terms of your overall net productivity. I feel like you've taken it to another level and you've literally just done a gear shift.

I want to ask you about that. What have you done differently? What have you learned? What does your current productivity routine look like on a daily basis?

Kristin: The key for anybody listening who wants to do something that hasn't done it yet, is twofold. It's first to make the decision that you're going to do it. You need to recognize that every moment, every breath, every day, every morning, every minute and every second is an opportunity to change your mind or to make a decision to do something.

There's this saying that 100% is 100 times easier than 99%. I think that's so true because in a moment of making the decision and deciding to go forward with whatever it is that you want to do, it just makes it... I don't wanna say easier, but it just gives you momentum and it takes away the fear of doing it. The fear of

acting. So, it's making the decision and getting out of your own way. And also taking small steps. So, I appreciate that complement, Matt. I have been working really hard and I thank you for that. You noticed that I've been producing a lot of content. I do work a lot at it, but it's just taking things one step at a time and celebrating small wins and realizing that you might not get there or wherever you're going over night. You're just enjoying the process of learning a lot as you go.

So, one way to make the decision that you're going to launch that business where you're going to travel, or you're going to sell your house, or whatever it is that you're doing, you just want to commit to it and then reverse engineer it and work backward. How are you going to do it? I've applied that to everything that I've done because, just like anyone else, I get overwhelmed. I sometimes get unsure of myself. I get nervous and afraid. I wonder what people are going to think. I wonder if what I'm creating is good. I have all of the same doubts as everybody else.

The thing that has kept me going is just whether it's a small project or a big project, it's just breaking it into really small steps. So, whether it's filming a video, or creating an online course, or writing a book... I wrote my book in one chapter per day for six weeks. The first draft was 95,000 words. It was a lot of words. But it had been open as a project for a few years. It wasn't until I decided, "I'm gonna do it and this is my deadline. Now, what do I need to do in between this timeline to get it done?" And I just calculated it. I'm gonna write for 1 to 2 hours per day or a minimum of 2,000 words.

I just started doing it. I micro-focused on that one thing and I didn't care how long it took. Even now, the book is not published yet, but you can only focus on one thing at a time. So, even if the first step to doing what you want to do is opening your computer or turning it on or opening a Google search page, just start with the very first step and break it down into laughably small pieces so that you cannot be intimidated by your own goals. That's how I've just approached each next thing. Whenever I get stuck, my job is to find the answer. The answer is always out there.

Something helpful for me has been to ask myself if I knew the answer, what would it be? Or if I already knew how to do this, where would I start? Or what would I do first? Or if I knew

someone who could help me, who would I ask? It's weird when you ask yourself in a way that takes the pressure off, all of these answers start to come, and it's like a little brainstorming session. So, big picture strategy...that's how it is. It's not very sexy, but that's how I get through each day. Eventually whatever I'm working on is done.

The other thing that has really helped me get to the next level and change my life in a massive way is having a morning and evening ritual where I check in on my goals. I'm obsessed with tracking my goals. Every morning I look at my Full Focus Planner then do meditation and then do a two-minute entry in the Daily Stoic Journal. Then I look at my list for the day and I do my most important tasks. I just focus on one thing at a time.

That night I open my Full Focus Planner which is like a series of questions that is an end of the day check-in. It's crazy how many ideas I've gotten and how many insights from doing a daily review. So, ask yourself what did I read today? What did I hear today? What stood out? How am I feeling right now? What can I do tomorrow to move forward on my goals? It's just like chipping away at your goals in little steps. That wrapped in with the Full Focus Planner which is like quarterly goals and annual goals help me stay on track.

And then weekly I'm part of the mastermind. So, every Monday morning we do a one-hour phone call where we review what we committed to do last week, give ourselves a progress report, and then we announce our commitment of what we're going to do the following week. You're actually 76.7% more likely to achieve your goals when you write them down and you share it with a friend. Even if your friend doesn't care about the goal.

So, I think the biggest thing besides breaking down my projects into tiny pieces is to keep my goals top of mind on a daily basis. So, I focus on them in the morning when I start my day and the afternoon or the evening when I finish my day. And also sharing goals and setting public goals so that you are publicly accountable.

One of our mutual friends got me to do a 90-day live stream. So, once I announced it I had to do a live stream for 90 days. That's terrifying. So, just getting out of your own way and doing things and not caring what the outcome is and what people think. All of a

sudden it becomes a part of who you are, and you just keep going. And, of course, having fun along the way.

So, it doesn't mean every day is easy, but if I could give anybody some tips, those are the things that I started doing in the past year that I had never done before. It has apparently resulted in a way that is noticeable.

Matt: That is for sure. That's really good advice. All right. Kristin, at this point, are you ready for the lightning round?

Kristin: I'm ready, Matt.

Matt: Let's do it! What is one travel hack that you can share with people that you use?

Kristin: My newest travel hack is an app called Timeshifter. It helps fight jet lag. So, it will give you a plan leading up to your trip of what time to sleep, what time to drink caffeine, what time of day to get light exposure, when to wear sunglasses, and it helps to prevent jet lag.

Matt: Awesome! I need to get that. What is one travel gadget or item that you always love to travel with?

Kristin: I have two. One is any sort of laptop stand or laptop desk just for ergonomics and posture. I really can't work without one of those now. The other thing would be a Wi-Fi device. You always want to have a backup Wi-Fi device, whether it's an unlocked generic one or through one of the brands like Nommi or Skyroam or TEP Wireless.

Matt: Awesome! What is one tip that you can give for staying healthy and staying fit while you are traveling or as you are moving around as an itinerant nomad?

Kristin: The biggest tip is to slow travel because inevitably, if you are going too fast, you are just going to be dealing with too many urgent and not important things to be able to focus on your health. So, slow travel. And then, when you are slow traveling, my number one tip would be to watch out for your alcohol intake because it's really easy to drink socially when you are meeting new people, or you are around other people who are on vacation,

or other travelers. So, alcohol is a depressant and if you are traveling too much, eating out at restaurants, and drinking too much, it's going to catch up with you really fast.

Matt: All right. What is one lesson that you've learned from interviewing all of these badass digital nomads on your podcast? From all those conversations and all those people that you've met and interacted with and are in this lifestyle, what is one thing that you have learned from them?

Kristin: I've learned how amazingly unique each person is and how these people's stories you have not heard of can be much more inspiring than some business guru like Tony Robbins. That's why I like to have just regular people on my show because I think everybody has something to share. Everybody has a skill even if we don't know about it and it can usually help a lot of other people.

Matt: Awesome! The last question is knowing everything that you know now and everything you experienced in life up to this point, if you were able to go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Kristin?

Kristin: I would tell her not to listen to all of the naysayers. That you have your ideas and you have your inner desires and dreams for a reason and to follow them through and see where they lead because the more you listen to other people, the longer you're going to delay your own destiny and living your life.

Mat: That is awesome advice. All right. Kristin, I want you to tell people how they can get a hold of you, follow you, get into your universe, and consume your content. And everything you say we're going to link up in the show notes at TheMaverickShow.com. So, you can just go to one place if you want all the links but go ahead and tell them how they can find you.

Kristin: So, the easiest way would be "Traveling with Kristin" on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com) and my website which is: TravelingWithKristin.com. There's also [Youtube.com/digitalnomad](https://www.youtube.com/digitalnomad). That is my Digital Nomad TV channel. So, that's where you can get more of the nitty-gritty and the technical stuff on how to become a digital nomad. And you can also participate in the live recordings of *The Badass Digital*

Nomads podcast. The podcast is also available on iTunes, and Google Play, and Spotify and should be everywhere soon, but you can also look up *Badass Digital Nomads* and you can join our free Facebook Family [Long-Term Digital Nomad Success](#). That is also linked to my website as well. So, come hang out.

Matt: It is an awesome place to hang out. I can vouch for that. And we're gonna link everything up at TheMaverickShow.com in the show notes for this episode. You can just go there and find all the links to Kristin's stuff. Kristin. Thank you so much for being on the show. It was so wonderful to have you again.

Kristin: Thank you for having me back and I hope next time we are sitting somewhere in an exotic destination with a bottle of wine.

Matt: Let's make that happen for sure! All right. Good night everybody!

Announcer: Make sure to visit the show notes page at TheMaverickShow.com for direct links to all the books people and resources mentioned in this episode. You'll find all that and much more at [TheMaverickShow.com](#).

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