

Matt Bowles: My guest today is Geleen Antonio. She is the founder of Travel, Not to Escape, a holistic solo travel empowerment platform, which helps women to live lives. They are genuinely excited about Geleen empowering women to create intentional, conscious, and impactful travel experiences that are rooted in personal transformation, authentic connection, and play. She helps women redesign their lives, transcend borders, and connect with themselves, others, and the world in a way that is deeply meaningful and joyful. Born in the Philippines and raised mostly in California, Geleen now travels the world as a full-time digital nomad and has been to nearly 40 countries.

Geleen, welcome to the show.

Geleen Antonio: Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to chat with you.

Matt Bowles: I am so excited to chat with you. You are up to some really amazing stuff, I'm excited to get into it. But before we do, let's just set the scene and talk about where we are recording from today. Unfortunately, we are not in person.

I am actually on the east coast of the United States in the Blue Ridge mountains of Asheville, North Carolina, and you are in a very different time zone. Where are you, Geleen?

Geleen Antonio: I am currently in the Philippines. I'm actually in Cavite, which is like an hour and a half south of the airport in Manila. So definitely like a whole day ahead of you.

Matt Bowles: Well, you and I have actually not met in person before, but we know a lot of people in common. And we are going to meet each other a little bit later this year because we are both going to the [WITS Travel Creator Summit](#), which is put on by wonderful Maverick show listeners know, [Beth Santos](#), the founder of Wanderful, whom I've interviewed on this show, who is amazing. And I've interviewed several other people that are affiliated or involved with Wanderful as well, but I have not ever before been to the WITS summit, Geleen. And I know that you have, can you share a little bit about what it is for people that have never heard of it? And what was your experience like last year?

Geleen Antonio: I actually stumbled upon it last year for my very first time because another friend of mine actually was going. And she's like, "Oh, you're doing things and traveling. You should go". So, it's specifically it's woman in travel and creators in this space. And it brings all of us together to learn from each other.

So, there's workshops that we can attend to improve our craft and learn from each other. And then also there are brands there that we can connect with and potentially collaborate with. And on top of that, there are also opportunities for us to be able to, because they're hosted in different cities each year.

Uh, so last year it was in Puerto Rico and there were opportunities. to be able to actually explore on these, what they call fam trips. So, you get a deeper perspective on the city that we're visiting and also be able to collaborate and promote some of those tours and experiences as well. Since you have hundreds of travel creators at a destination, it works really well.

I have made such amazing connections just from this last year that I went, and I'm so looking forward to learning more from other creators and meeting even more people in this space this year.

Matt Bowles: Well, there are a number of Maverick Show guests that are going to be at this event, and I am super excited.

And by the way, folks, for all the listeners, if you are interested in joining me and Geleen and a number of the other Maverick Show guests in hanging out with us in person at [WITS](#), I actually have a special discount code for you. If you want to get a ticket and get \$80 off, I will link that up in [the show notes](#). It's going to take place in Utah, in the United States in April of 2024. So, you can go to [the show notes](#) and get an \$80 discount on your ticket, and then you can join us and come hang out in Utah.

All right, Geleen, I want to go all the way back now and give folks a bit of a sense of your background and your story and your trajectory as to how you got to this point in your life. Let's start all the way back in the Philippines. I think it is incredibly amazing that you are recording this from the Philippines today, where you were born. Can you share a little bit about your early memories growing up in the Philippines and then the transition to the United States and what that was like for you?

Geleen Antonio: It's definitely a beautiful moment to be able to record this full circle moment, actually. So, I was born in the Philippines and actually was only here from birth until four. And I will say the time that I was in the Philippines was rather, I would say like chaotic would be maybe the word. There was just a lot of childhood trauma associated with that time.

You know, a very poor family from the Philippines. My mom did her best with a family of four but also was in a very physically abusive relationship with my father. And so being in poverty and being abused, like there was really no way out. And so, she took the leap and got an opportunity to go to the U.S., which meant leaving us behind for an indefinite amount of time.

I ended up living with some family members during those first four years while my mom literally like, Oh my God, her work ethic during that time. It was amazing. She went to full time school to be a nurse. She worked odd jobs, sent most of it back to us to basically for the survival of her children. And after four years of working really hard, she was able to finally bring us to the U.S. with her. And so that's when I immigrated to the U.S. with my family. But it wasn't easy.

After that, I think a lot of people in the Philippines think that once you go to the U.S., then you have a bunch of money and life is great. But that wasn't the case and that's not the case for a lot of immigrants. And it's still a lot of work really hard and trying to establish yourself while still sending money back home to your other family members. And so, you're not necessarily living that, like, idealized life I think that a lot of people think when you go abroad.

So yeah, I grew up in California. It was a little tough growing up. It was even more chaos, just in terms of the stepdad and having some family issues as well. So, growing up, it was a little tough. My parents were also very overprotective, so I wasn't really allowed to have friends growing up. It was very much like a focus on study. I think that's another thing that happens is like, I took these risks in life.

Like I want my family now to succeed and that like very traditional sense of what success is, especially in the U.S. And yeah, so travel never really was an option, right? It was always like, you know, don't go hang out with friends. Steady. Travel was never even a part of the conversation

because we didn't have the money and so no one ever talked about it. Besides the fact that we moved from the Philippines. That was it.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk about your experience? Because I know you were in Southern California. I also lived in the Los Angeles area for about seven years. I know there's a really big Filipino community there. Were you immersed in the Filipino immigrant community when you were in LA? What was that part of the experience like? And how did you growing up and coming of age sort of navigate that Filipina American identity dynamic in an immigrant community?

Geleen Antonio: So, we were very much isolated as a family. We didn't have a lot of family really there in California. So, yes, there is a big Asian community in Southern California, but very much my focus was studying and not really integrating or having any type of joy or fun.

And so, growing up, also, there is this struggle to try to fit in. And there were a lot of things about me the reason why I got bullied earlier on is that there were a lot of things that were weird, right, because I wasn't from there, maybe I had like the accent still because I was still learning English at an early age. Just the way that my family operated was also, as I mentioned, very overprotective and just not accustomed to what "normal U.S. families" were. So it was really hard for me growing up, and I think the push at that point was to try to forget the fact that I was Filipino, because it just was something that made me different. And so, I tried to lean into the being the American piece, because I was like, what can I do to try to fit in, right?

So, there's a lot of things I think, and my earlier years where I think, you know, as many children just want to belong. And so, I lost a little bit of my Filipino culture up until high school. And then I started to try to get in touch with it again because in my high school, there were a lot more Filipinos.

And I actually did join some clubs and participated in some of the dances, which was really fun to try to get back in touch with my roots a bit. Because at that point I started to realize the beauty in my identity and the beauty in the fact that I did have those two cultures. And I think at that point I started to reclaim that identity for myself.

Matt Bowles: And you mentioned that growing up travel and world travel in particular didn't really seem like a viable option. Can you talk about how that eventually changed? What changed that for you? What was that trajectory like?

Geleen Antonio: Again? You know, we were, we were struggling to get by basically having just like a single-family income with my mom working two jobs seven days a week. So, there was just no thought of anything beyond just the survival mode. But thankfully, I went to a high school where, yes, I had to do all of the science courses and all of the more technical STEM focused courses. But it also had a requirement for having an arts class, something that kind of filled that schedule.

And so that was actually really beautiful because I took an art history course. And that art history teacher really changed the course of my life because she showed up as herself during those classes. She was very eccentric, I guess would be the word to use for her. Very passionate about her subject of art history.

And it made me really passionate about it too. And it was a glimpse as well of all these different worlds that were created by these artists and the way that she taught it, it was magnetizing. And she

herself had mentioned she studied abroad in Rome and even on the weekends would randomly take a substitute teacher to go to a random gallery in a different state because she wanted to by herself.

So, I saw that she was like an expander for me. It gave me another option than just being a doctor, study hard route. That was all I knew from like my family and even in some of my friends. So, when I went to college, I studied neuroscience in university because that was the path that I was on. I remember my second year I was walking down library walk in San Diego and I passed by a table that said study abroad in Rome and it clicked for me like, "Oh, what, what she said was actually possible". And so that kind of started this whole travel world for me because I applied on a whim. I was like, just like me on this podcast, I just shot my shot. And I was like, maybe I'll get accepted and maybe I'll figure out the finances along the way. And it all worked out really well.

And I was able to, at the age of 20, study abroad for a semester in Rome. Completely studying art history and Italian language was just such a pivot from just all the neuroscience that I was studying.

Matt Bowles: What do you think the impact of that study abroad experience was on you when you returned from Rome? Who were you at that point? What impact had been made on you and how did that shape your future trajectory?

Geleen Antonio: The study abroad experience in Rome changed my life and is actually the start of all the changes to come and how I ended up where I'm right now. And one of the pivotal moments on that trip that I remember was right before I came back to the us.

I remember sitting and crying on the river, bawling my eyes out, realizing that the life that I wanted to live, I had already lived in this semester. I was able to be social and get to learn about so many different parts of the Italian culture. See all of my favorite ancient Roman art pieces, and live this beautiful travel lifestyle, studying and learning something that I was really passionate about.

And I was at this point on the river where I was like, "Oh my God, I have to go back to this life where I'm stressed". I'm studying neuroscience. I have all this pressure from family to succeed and provide. I had a relationship at that time that I was like, "Oh, do I even really want that relationship?" There were a lot of things that were going on in my head at that moment.

And I also didn't feel very social when I was in San Diego. I was very depressed in university, but it was this one time during the study abroad trip where I finally saw things a little bit more clearly. And so, on that river, that moment, still in my mind, I remember making myself a promise. I promised myself that no matter what, within five years, I would make my way back to Rome.

I don't know how, I don't know how I can afford it, or who's going to come with me, but I will come back. And then within five years after that, I said, okay, five-year promise, 10-year promise, I have to get back to this lifestyle. I don't know what I need to do, but within 10 years I need to be my lifestyle, traveling, learning, and being happy.

So, that was a very pivotal moment because I did fulfill that promise to myself. So, after I came back, I was 20 at this point and I had to decide what I wanted to do with my degree, and I decided to continue studying neuroscience. Continuing down this road of trying to be a doctor. I did all the internships, and did all the things, but slowly, I got even more and more depressed, and I just

kept trying to go down this road, and things weren't lining up for me. And I started making some pivots, and my 25th birthday was kind of around the corner, and at that time. I had worked at that point for 3 years at a biotech laboratory and my boyfriend at the time even told me, he's like, oh, this job that you have, like, it's, you know, it's great. It's perfectly awesome. Like you should just stay in it.

You know that type of mentality of like, you should be grateful for the type of job that you have to stay there. And for me, I wanted more, I wanted to get back to that life that I knew I could have. And so, at 25, at that point, you know, you don't really have a lot of friends who can also afford to travel.

And I definitely had it in my mind because of that promise. And so, I thought I was going to travel with a bunch of people, but all of them canceled and it ended up being me with a one-way ticket to Europe and a month to kill. So, I did end up making my way back to Rome in that five-year time frame. So, I fulfilled that promise to myself.

And that was my very first solo travel experience. Yeah. That's actually, to be honest, I didn't love it. There were a lot of things about that experience that really tried and tested me. And I think that's really one of the reasons why I'm so passionate about helping other women solo travel as well, because I've been through all, the craziness, the chaos, the unsafe situations, and also using travel as a way to escape, right?

So that's the reason why my company is called [Travel Not to Escape](#), because at that point, there were two versions of me. There was a version of me that was traveling, that was having fun and living this amazing life. And then the version of me that I was to everyone else back home. And I lived those two lives for a very long time and was only happy when I was on a trip.

I didn't know at that time, I know now, I didn't know at that time that you can be one version, just, you could just be you and you can have your own version of happiness and not have to toggle between what makes you happy and what makes other people happy.

Matt Bowles: Can you share a little bit about how you reconciled those two versions of you? What was the path? What were some of the realizations and then what were some of the things that you did to move from that place to where you are now and being so passionate about the power and the amazingness of solo travel.

Geleen Antonio: It took me, I think, 10 years or close to that. So, around the time when I was 27, or 28, I finally hit rock bottom because I had that glimpse of the life I wanted, but I kept going down.

This path that I had built for myself was the path that I thought I needed to continue down. So, at this point, I was living in San Diego. I had a consulting career again, you know something that you know, you should be grateful to have the type of thing as people had told me I had a 10-year relationship with my high school sweetheart, I was only a couple hours away from my family. There's a lot of things that just kind of like kept me in place but there were also a lot of things that I just kept pushing down in terms of emotions, all those feelings of wanting more just pushed it down, all of those, and all those thoughts that would come up.

I like didn't process any of them. And so, I got to a really bad point in 2015 where I was just really depressed and I got, I think, to my office that morning and I could not stop crying. I actually even was at the point where I was contemplating like, what's the point? What is the point of all of this?

Why do I go to work every day? Like, why do I do the things that I do? I'm not happy at all. And I remember I left my office to go to the stairwell because I just, I didn't want anyone else to see me crying. No one else had come in yet. So, I was like, okay, let me just get my stuff together or anyone sees because at that point, I very much like a professional.

Consulting can't show any vulnerability. And I remember Google searching my random thoughts and just thinking, what's the point don't know what to do? And somehow the universe sent me on the first search. And I still have a screenshot of it. The universe sent me the profile of a therapist and it had everything that was in my mind.

It was like, are you questioning what the point is? Do you not know what your next steps are? Are you struggling with work and identity and all these different things? And I like to read that profile over and over again. I was like, I think I need to go to a therapist. So yeah, scheduled a therapy session that same week.

And I ended up actually seeing her every week for two years. And that started a whole host of changes in my life. That was the biggest, I think, piece that really helped me apart from the therapy. I started opening up to friends again and actually being vulnerable, started to actually speak my mind, have boundaries, whole host of things that happens when you start to actually ask yourself some hard questions.

Matt Bowles: Well, I know you have also gone very deep into studying this concept of transformative travel. You've even gotten accreditation and certification and all of this kind of stuff. Can you share a little bit for folks that concept and maybe just start with your own experience in terms of what you now thinking back from your current awareness? What was going on in terms of the concept of traveling to escape and some of the other problems with the type of traveling you were doing and then go into sort of explaining the alternative in terms of transformative travel and what some of those pillars were that you eventually learned about and gravitated towards.

Geleen Antonio: So, with the way that I was traveling and I was working corporate and with as much vacation as I could, all of that time I would use towards traveling solo or with friends. And it was this constant, I would be at work and like booking my next flight and just like, couldn't wait to get away in the next destination.

And that was when someone asked me like, "Oh, what's your hobby? It was always like travel. I just want to travel because that was the moment when I felt the most free. That was the moment where I felt the most myself. And I was constantly trying to get that version of me back, just to feel it even for a short weekend.

But when I would come home, I would be even more depressed, because the more that you see, the more that you can glimpse that life, the more that your current life peels in comparison, and it just makes it feel more suffocating. So, I was trapped in this cycle of leaving, traveling to escape, and coming back, and getting even more depressed, until I got to that point where I was like, okay, it's this way, there's no way, out besides rock bottom.

Like once you hit rock bottom, you're like, okay, I got to make some changes. So that's really what got me starting to think about transformational travel before I even took the course because I figured, okay, there has to be a different way. And as I was going and exploring therapy and coaches and starting to open my mind up to other things like spirituality, I realized I don't have to be the two people.

Like it's okay for me to be the one person in all the different parts of my life. Like, what does it look like if I were just that one person? And I fully leaned into that person. The other concept rather than traveling to escape, which is what I was doing was, okay, what does it look like if I brought that version of me while I was traveling back home?

And who is that version asking, okay, what did I like about myself when I was traveling? I liked the fact that I was sociable, that I could meet new people, and it was really easy. I liked the fact that I could learn about different art and cultures, and I was fascinated, and I loved that learning aspect, and I loved the fact that I could do different things.

Whatever experiences, cooking classes, art classes, whatever that may be, those were things that I was able to do and see. When I looked back at my actual life, I was working 16 hours a day in a long-distance relationship with someone I saw once a month, with family that was like really suffocating and burdening, and with friends that, yeah, we would take 10 shots every Friday and have a fun time. But when I was really down in my depths and needed someone to talk to, I had no one around me.

So, I started thinking, okay, those are very different lives. And what would it look like if I even just opened up to friends. What would it look like if I reintroduce some of those things that lit me up while I was traveling back into my life? And so slowly I started to incorporate the things that I loved about my travel life into my regular life and to becoming just the one.

And so, in this concept of transformational travel, you go on this journey and we all, we all do this when we go traveling, but we're maybe not as intentional as we should be. And so, the concept that I learned through the transformational travel council is this journey with five different components.

So, it's asking yourself before you even go, where are you right now? Where is your starting point and understanding what is current? And why do you want to go? What is the purpose of going? How do you go? And how do you experience that travel? How do you experience what's happening when you're there? And the last piece which I was always stripped up over, and I think that a lot of people miss, is how do you come back?

Who are you when you come back? What are the things that you learn and how can you integrate that back into your life? And within this journey, there's three different circles. There's the journey that you go within yourself and connecting with yourself more. There's a journey and how you connect with others.

And then the final circle, which is how you connect with the systems, the world, the earth, the universe around you, things that are much greater than you or other people. So that's really the full concept of transformational travel. It's like, how do you go from traveling to taking a photo, traveling to go to an experience and actually have it change your life?

Has it impacted others? Does it impact the place that you visit in a beautiful way, not in a way that is taking or claiming?

Matt Bowles: Well, I want to go a little bit deeper on that and actually pull out some tips from you if we could, because I know that you actually coach women in particular about how to be intentional about designing travel experiences that are rooted in personal transformation, authentic connection, and play. Can you talk about that and how to do that?

Geleen Antonio: One of the things I'm really focused on right now, because I think this is one of the first things I had to do in my own transformation, was opening myself up to others and connecting myself first and to be able to open up to others. And so those are the two things that are foundational and what I help with is how can you connect with yourself?

What are the ways that you can start to ask yourself those questions and build your own self-care toolkit of what lights you up, regardless of who you are? What city you live in, you know, what are the 10 things that if you just throw that at you, you will start to feel back into your energy. So, it's really an understanding of yourself because once you understand you and you can feel what your energy feels like, then you have a baseline.

You can go anywhere in the world by yourself because you're fully solid and whole in who you are and what makes you feel alive. By starting with that, you become really magnetic to others. And the other piece is a lot of people ask about, how do you meet people while you're traveling? How do you not be lonely?

Even seasoned travelers still feel those pains of loneliness. And a big part of it is, okay, how connected are you with you? And then also how open are you now to share that with others and find the ways of connection, regardless of what city that you're in and asking again. It all goes back to intentionality of, what are you looking for in those connections? What do you value? And from there, you can start to really attract that to yourself.

Matt Bowles: Well, I know that one of the things that lights you up, Geleen, is adventure travel that involves a lot of adrenaline. And I want to ask you about some of your experiences. I think I actually want to start skydiving. I know you have done skydiving in Southern California in San Diego, right here in the U.S. But the reason I think I want to start with that is because I want to also ask you about why you chose to use skydiving as a metaphor. So, I, of course, am a listener of your podcast and on your podcast, you basically say, allow me to be your skydiving instructor. Think of me that way.

So, can you share a little bit about, first of all, your experience skydiving? Like describe this for people like me that have never jumped out of a plane, Geleen. And then after having experienced that, why is it such an important metaphor now for your professional life and what you do and offer to other women?

Geleen Antonio: Yes, I love that. And thank you for listening. So skydiving, I actually did this shortly after my study abroad trips. I think it was 22 at the time in San Diego. It was again, I think at that point, like ripping off the band-aid and just like diving fully in and I was scared. I was really scared. I was actually up there with a few friends actually that I met because of the study abroad experience.

And., I remember being up there and telling them to turn the plane around. I was like, I don't, I don't want to do this., I can't take the leap. And I remember my skydiving instructor, just trying to calm me down. Like my friends around me trying to calm me down. They're like, it's okay. Like, you don't have to go first.

I'll go first. Uh, so someone else is going, to get sandwiched between them. So that way, like I wasn't also last I had this fear, right? And even at that point, where you're, you're like right on the edge of the plane and your feet are like balanced right off the plane and on the plane at the same time. You're just at this moment and your stomach just drops and all you see below you is clouds and you're like, okay, am I going to do this, right? And Before I could even think, my skydive instructor did a jump into the air, of course, with me attached. So, I really had no choice in the matter. It was more like, hey, we're going now.

And so, in that experience, you have a minute of free fall, and it is still the most adrenaline I've ever felt. I've done all these other adventure adrenaline activities around the world. And this moment, this one minute has been the most adrenaline I've ever felt in my stomach. And it's also the type of feeling where you have absolutely no control for this full minute.

Parachutes not open. It's just you are free-falling into the ground. And I think not having any control at that moment and just trusting was also really life changing for me because my whole life I was in control. Everything, right? Like from the, what I was studying in school to like the jobs that I had and like the friends and all the things that I was always the decision maker.

I was always the one that had to make sure everything was okay. And this was one minute where I got to experience just completely like a lack of control. And then after You fall into, like the parachute opens, and you spend the next 10 to 15 minutes in calmness. It's just the most tranquil, after free falling for a minute, and then you just, the parachute opens, and you're just floating in the air.

And the skydive instructor actually has a lot of control with the chute. And so, we were flying over the hills of like Tijuana, just in like Jamul, San Diego. Um, so you can see Tijuana, you can see the ocean, you can see the mountains. And he was twisting and turning the parachute in all those different directions so that I was basically getting a tour of the sky and the cities at this moment.

And yeah, it was, I still remember very clearly. Adrenaline pumping through you and then just having this very beautiful and tranquil moment. Yeah, so that, that was the kind of experience. When I was thinking about launching this business of [Travel Not to Escape](#), I really was trying to figure out who I wanted to be for others, and I thought about that moment of my skydiving instructor even at that very last moment.

I was doubting I was telling everyone like no I can just watch from below as you guys fall down like it's okay. I don't need a job. Even if I paid for it. I'm fine And I remember him giving me that push and not just a push like he leaped out of that plane and did some backflips with me attached and it was like, oh wow, like what if I was that for others?

What if I not only guided you in this very pivotal moment of your life but actually helped you take that leap. And then see the beauty in taking that leap afterward. Give you that minute of free fall, but then afterward it was actually very controlled. There was guidance. He was holding the parachute in

a way that I could see all the different things. There was a lot more clarity that I had after this experience. And so that's really why, you know, that's the image. That's the role that I want to play for others in the company.

Matt Bowles: Well, I know that was only the start of your adventure travel. Geleen, I want to ask you about some of your other experiences. One of the things that you and I have both done actually is paragliding in Columbia. I did it in Medellin. Is that where you did it?

Geleen Antonio: Yeah. In the San Felix Mountains. Yeah.

Matt Bowles: Yes. So, uh, for people that have never Done it or even seen it. Can you explain what paragliding is and then what the experience was like in Medellín, Colombia?

Geleen Antonio: Yeah. So paragliding, and this wasn't my first time paragliding at least. So that was, that was good. So basically, that second half of the skydiving experience that I described, that's what paragliding is. It's a very, people get scared about it, but it's actually very tranquil. The scariest part is the fact that you're in the air and you're attached to a parachute for 15 to 20 minutes.

So yeah, paragliding is the one where it's just the parachute as opposed to hang gliding. So, you could actually paraglide in a lot more windy conditions than you can hang gliding. I haven't hung glided yet. But you go in Medellin, they drive you up, and to the mountains of San Felix, which is just thinking like an hour north of the city, and it's all very professional.

Actually, you have to wait for the clouds to dissipate. But the interesting thing about this experience is they actually don't do it as tranquil and zen as my other experiences. At least in my experience, I don't know about yours, but the guy that I was strapped to wanted to do circles, like a lot of circles in the air.

He's like, oh, look at this waterfall. And then like, oh, look at this mountain. And then we were just doing circles for like 20 minutes in the air. I was like, oh, this is a lot more adrenaline than I anticipated with this activity. Was that the same experience that you had?

Matt Bowles: So, I did it with an instructor and I went up with some people that were friends of mine, some of whom are much more aligned with you, Geleen, in terms of seeking out adrenaline.

I'm a little bit less of that, but I do like to kind of step outside my comfort zone and try things. I'm like, okay, I'll try it. But I am watching my friends go and they're doing these like upside-down Lucy loops, figure eights in the air. And I'm looking at my pilot, the guy that's going to be tandem attached to me, and I'm pointing up there and I am saying, no. I'm like, "tranquilo letra el lo", So he knew and was fortunately very respectful of that. But I will tell you the way that this works, folks is you have a person connected to you who's behind you so you're in front and then there's a parachute, okay? But what you have to do being in front is run off the edge of a cliff as fast as you can and if you're not running fast enough, they'll tell you to run faster And so as you're getting closer to the edge of the cliff you have to run faster off the cliff in order for the parachute to catch it up.

It's like oh my gosh, so that was crazy and then once you're off the cliff and the parachute catches, then it can be an incredibly beautiful and tranquil, completely silent experience just there. And mine was just overlooking the valley, you know, the city of Medellin, and it was just a really beautiful and spectacular moment.

And then it was fortunately very smooth. There was enough wind that it kept us up there. And, you know, we're up there for whatever it is, 15, 20 minutes. And then you come, and you land at the same place that we took off. So, we had great conditions, and everything was beautiful. And the pilot was obviously professional and very respectful.

And so, I have a positive memory about it, but we were up there and it's like, after you're up there for like 10 minutes and you kind of get comfortable, then he's like, do you want to try a little bit of this loop de loop stuff now? I'm like, "no, paramino tranquilo por favor". I just like sitting up here and looking and relaxing and this is just good for me.

And now we can go back down. No problem. So, yeah, so it was a good experience, but my friends who wanted the adrenaline, they definitely got it. And I was watching them and like videoing them going figure eight upside down loops and all this crazy stuff. I'm like, not for me.

Geleen Antonio: Yeah. Oh my God. That's hilarious. I love that you described the initial part because I forgot about you have to run off the cliff for me.

Matt Bowles: Oh yeah, there's that part, Geleen. It's a seared into my brain.

Geleen Antonio: I was like, you just float and you're just floating over the valley. I forgot. Yes. You have to run off a cliff side and you have to run.

Matt Bowles: Oh yeah. That's a small part about running off of a cliff. Yeah. Just that, you know? Uh huh. Yeah. And you're in the front, so, you know, you better run fast enough. Otherwise, it could be a problem. So yeah. Uh huh. Yeah. That part. Yeah.

Geleen Antonio: Exactly.

Matt Bowles: Well, I want to also ask you about some other trips that you have organized for similar adrenaline purposes.

You did a trip to Costa Rica, and I want to ask you about that because you've done some stuff that I have not done, including whitewater rafting and some of that sort of stuff. So, can you talk about your experience in Costa Rica?

Geleen Antonio: Yeah, and this experience in Costa Rica was actually really pivotal for me because it was right in between.

So, I was living in San Diego for 10 years and then started doing therapy. And I got to the point actually where I had given up a lot of things in my life. I ended a relationship, I changed jobs, and I had basically cleared some of the things that I felt really stuck with, with the help of my therapist. And so, I had the option to move to Chicago at this point.

This was in 2017 and I took it. So, I was in the process of like kind of in this middle ground during my Costa Rica trip of, okay, do I go, do I change my life? Do I give up my apartment? Do I give up everything I've known and built up until this point? So, I ended up booking this tour through under 30 experiences because up until this point, I had been solo traveling, but I just wanted to give up a little bit of that control, especially in this time frame where I was having to make a lot of decisions.

So, I went to Costa Rica to celebrate my birthday and it was the first time I was on a group travel trip like this and it was very packed with a lot of activities and it was a very small intimate group of 10 of us in the first week. It was a very, it was a very beautiful experience because there were so many activities, and this is actually when I started to realize.

I actually really love adrenaline activities. Um, and this is kind of the, like, I went skydiving before, but then I had a bit of a lull, and then I did this Costa Rica trip, and I was like, oh my god, yeah, this is, I'm an adrenaline junkie. I love it. So, one of the things we did in Costa Rica was white water rafting.

So, in full transparency, I don't know how to swim. So, this is actually even more of an adrenaline piece for me, because I'm making sure that the life jacket is, is really the thing that's keeping me alive at this point. I did not fall off on this trip. I did fall off on a different trip, but on this particular trip, it went well.

I didn't fall off. We also did. Ooh. So, Costa Rica kept trying to kill me. I will say it was one of those, those places that was testing my will to live. So even as, as fine as it was for me, there were a lot of moments where it was like, okay, what do you do in the face of death? So, we went on this rainforest hike, which wasn't even supposed to be adrenaline-filled. And I remember the guides who were new saying, oh, the rainforest changes all the time. So, as we were like an hour into the hike, they looked like they were confused and did not really know what we were doing.

They were like, Oh no, no, it's okay. Like, yeah, we were here last week, but the rainforest changes every time. And like, they would just try to like machete off some things, and we would keep going. Two hours in, we're still wandering around and we very much are lost at this point. And we aren't on a real path. We're kind of on the outskirts of it.

So, it's the rainforest. So, it's wet. It's muddy. I'm not wearing the right shoes. Very much just slick Nikes that don't have any tread. And then I think on this hike, there's like. Two guides and maybe the ten of us walking. And so, we get to this part, there's like a water reservoir, and you have to scale this plank in order to cross this kind of like cliff side.

So, you're having to hang on to one side of this rock area while scaling this wooden plank beneath you. And the guide goes through, I think a couple of people in front of me go through, and of course, I try to go through, and the plank falls down the cliff.

And I'm like, okay, oh, my immediate reaction was to laugh hysterically. I'm holding on for dear life on this little ledge and I'm just laughing, and no one knows what's happening because I'm laughing and I, I realize that that's my reaction when I face death is I just laugh hysterically. So, it took like maybe a minute before anyone realized I was actually about to fall into the depths of the rainforest, and then at that point then they were like, "Help!" And so, then the guide pulled me up, just, just him and got me onto the knot ledge of the cliff.

And then everyone else crossed and everyone was like, what was going on? I was like, oh, you know, I just like almost fell to my death. It's fine. And then it's funny because it happened again, right? Cause we're still lost in this rainforest hike. So, it happened again where I'm like crawling on the floor with three points of touch at all times.

So, I don't. continue to slip. I remember this one moment where I just had nothing to hold onto and I was just slipping on the mud and again like holding on for dear life, laughing hysterically, but then the guy turned around and he's like, why do you keep wanting to die? And he pulled me up one more time and then just like kept a really close eye on me afterwards.

That was a struggle for sure, and I was like, man, how many times do I almost fall off a cliff in one hike? I don't know,

Matt Bowles: And despite it all, Geleen, you continue to schedule adrenaline based adventure activities. You and I are planning to hang out at the [WITS](#) Summit in Utah later this year. And you hit me up and you were like, yo, do you want to go beast jumping with me in Utah?

And I'm like, Geleen, I will support you in going base jumping. I'm not sure that's for me, but I'll be there to support you. Can you explain to people who don't even know this term? What is base jumping? Describe what you are planning to do in Utah, Geleen.

Geleen Antonio: So base jumping in general, would be jumping off of, say, a building or a cliffside with no parachutes.

And just free falling. Some people have those, like, wingsuits that they put on and they glide. But that's space jumping in a nutshell. I'm not there yet. So, I saw this really cool experience in Moab. in Utah. And I was like, when in Utah, right? And it's a tandem based jumping experience. So, you are strapped to someone, and they do have a parachute, but the first few seconds when you jump off that cliff, just like skydiving, the parachute doesn't open, right? So, you get that same drop, but I have a suspicion that it might be even more adrenaline that you get because of the fact that, I don't know, you're jumping cliff side, the ground is closer, you can see the things below you, and just even more lack of control. So, if I'm not selling it to you with this description,

Matt Bowles: Well, I will be there to record you doing that for your social media, Geleen. So, you can give me the photo, video credit, and I will be that person who's still up top, uh, filming you doing this base jumping. All right, we're going to pause here and call that the end of Part one. If you would like to join me and Geleen in person at the [Wits Travel Creator Summit](#) in Utah this April 2020, I have a discounted ticket link for you in the show notes. Just go to themaverickshow.com there you will find the link to get \$80 off of your ticket to the [Wits Travel Creator Summit](#). If you do grab one of those shoot me a message on Instagram. Just shoot me a DM at Matt Bowles Maverick. Let me know that you're coming so that we can plan to link up in Utah in person. And when you go to the show notes, you're also going to find links to everything else that we have discussed on this episode, including all of the ways to follow and connect with Geleen. Once again, it's all in one place. Just go to themaverickshow.com and go to the show notes for this episode and be sure to tune in to [the next episode](#) to hear the conclusion of my interview with Jalene Antonio. Good night, everybody.