

Summary

In this episode of Aging For All, hosts Jen Yanez Pryor and Andrea Price welcome Regina Foster, a passionate gerontologist and founder of Queen Aged and Foster Senior Services. Regina shares her personal journey into gerontology, influenced by her upbringing with her grandparents and her experiences with family members living with dementia. The conversation explores the challenges of ageism in society, the importance of embracing beauty at all ages, and the creation of her beauty brand, Queen Aged, which aims to empower individuals to celebrate aging. Regina emphasizes the need for authenticity and creativity in pursuing one's passions, encouraging listeners to embrace their unique journeys and challenge societal norms surrounding aging.

Jen Yanez Pryor (00:01)

Hello and welcome to Aging For All. We're your hosts. I'm Jen Yanez-Pryor.

Aging For All (00:05)

And I'm Andrea Price. Thank you all so much for joining us today.

Jen Yanez Pryor (00:10)

Today we have the honor of welcoming Regina Foster. Regina is a gerontologist with a deep passion for older adults. Not only does she bring a wealth of knowledge as a healthcare provider, but she is also the visionary founder of Foster Senior Services, a platform that provides seminars and consultation services for both healthcare professionals and caregivers who are providing care for older adults living with dementia and

Queen Aged, a brand dedicated to celebrating and helping people embrace the beauty of aging.

Aging For All (00:42)

Hello and welcome Regina.

Regina Foster (00:44)

Thanks for having me.

Jen Yanez Pryor (00:46)

We're really excited to have you with us today.

Aging For All (00:49)

Yes, yes, it's a pleasure to welcome you and to just hear your story. So tell us a little bit about your journey to becoming a gerontologist.

Regina Foster (00:49)

excited to be here.

my goodness. So my journey began as a child. I was raised by my grandparents. So I was born in a teenage pregnancy. My parents were 16 years old when they had me. And most of the times when someone is teenagers or younger adults, their parents help out a significant amount, right? And so my grandparents have always been a part of my life coming up. you know, I just feel like everything that I've done

from childhood up until now was just to please them. Both of them have passed away since then, but everything I do is with them in my background of them just pushing me forward and just give them praise. So that's why I became a gerontologist. But just to back up a little bit, I initially started my career as a healthcare provider. I was a PA for 20 years.

even while I was a PA is when I started the gerontology program at VCU, finishing that in 2018. And of course, VCU, you know, we talk a lot about aging and the anti-aging movement that society has created for us. And along the way, my grandmother,

was diagnosed with dementia, actually when I was in the gerontology program. And when she was diagnosed, this was pretty devastating for our family just because my grandmother was the matriarch of the family. This is who we went to for advice. And so once she got to the point where she was unable to provide that for us, we had to pivot and figure out how we can be good resources for her. Being a healthcare provider, my family thought that I knew everything about everything involving

health, right? I'm sure, you know, you guys are probably, if you have any family members that are healthcare providers, you probably call them for every little rash you got, every hangnail and all of that. So I am the resource for my family. And so when she was diagnosed with dementia, I was like, I don't know about this. I just didn't know enough about it. And so I took additional classes when I was in the program because we were allowed to have some electives. So all of my electives,

revolved around dementia care. And so just so that I can be a good resource for them. I was still a care partner, although I was a long distance care partner. Like I said, they called me for everything. And so I took these classes so that I can learn everything that I could about the condition. In that process, my grandmother, I noticed what she was always into

Fashion and beauty and stuff like that things that she instilled in us coming up. You just don't go out the house looking raggedy. You always show up as your best and that's kind of who I have been bred to be right and so even and Even when she had dementia and end of life. She was still asking for her

nail polish and her makeup and stuff like like wasn't going anywhere. You know, probably not even a doctor's appointment today, but just sitting in a room, she was going to show up as her highest self at all times. And during that time, I thought, you know, whoa, the way that we are marketing or assuming older adults feel or should feel is certainly a false narrative because I'm like, here my grandmother is in her 90s and she gonna look good going out.

right, like on hospice and she was like, put some lipstick on me. And so I always joke every time I talk about my grandmother where, you know, in gerontology, we talk, we have that uncomfortable conversation about taking the keys, right, of our, of our older adults when they've gotten to the point where they may not be in a position to drive. That's always an uncomfortable conversation to have, right, when they're, when they start to lose their independence.

my grandmother we had to take her heels because listen ma'am what's happening you're getting ready to fall right because vision is affected everything is affected with dementia but she was like what are these flats that they didn't put on me and so yeah that's sort of how i started both of my brands so foster senior services

Aging For All (05:10)

Thank

Regina Foster (05:28)

was really just so that I can be in support for my family and then just grew that into supporting other families and Queen age my my skincare brand was really to empower us to embrace the beauty and grow and older because like I said in at 90s my grandmother still wanted to be attractive and so the way we market is just you know a false narrative and that's how I grew both of my brands

Jen Yanez Pryor (05:55)

Wow, Regina, thank you so much for that walk through your journey. I just, I think my favorite part of this is seeing your grandmother's legacy throughout the work that you're doing. What an amazing way to, like I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it. Like it's, I love that. And, you know, I think that, you know, there's probably so many people listening to that if they really think about why they do what they do, it is tied to something goosebumpy, right?

Regina Foster (06:07)

Thank you. No. Thank you.

yeah, for sure.

Jen Yanez Pryor (06:25)

There's someone or something that we want to honor and do make the world a better place. you know, I love that you keep her kind of very close through the work that you do, providing these resources to other families, sharing what you've learned. I love this skincare, you know, the skincare products that you make, because it's really challenging that narrative, like you said, that

Regina Foster (06:35)

very close.

It's challenging that narrative is set.

Jen Yanez Pryor (06:54)

We have to look one way or the other, you know, like your grandma, right? She was beautiful, right? She wanted everyone to see that. so making this okay for us to say, I am who I am, I look the way I look, and it's beautiful, right? I love that. Yes. So, you know, I wonder like, what has it been like to kind of operate in this space that's very ageist?

Regina Foster (06:58)

Yeah.

very much so.

Yeah, Thank you.

Jen Yanez Pryor (07:23)

and trying to spin that message a little.

Regina Foster (07:26)

goodness, I, and I'm sure you guys can relate, I find myself defending it a lot. Like it's so acceptable to our society. you know, there's many ways that we can discriminate, right? So, you know, so many different things because we discriminate against things that are not like us, right? There's a fear embedded in that discrimination, but for some reason ageism is acceptable.

Like, you know, we often will even discriminate it against ourselves and laugh about it. Everything is funny. You know, I saw a post recently about Beyonce's mom, who's absolutely gorgeous. You know, that's where Beyonce gets her gorgeousness from. Her dad's good looking too, but the mom is absolutely stunning. And it said something about, I think she's 70, or at least the post stated that she was 70.

you know, being the gerontologist I am, I'm thinking, yay, we are celebrating this woman and, you know, into elderhood and how beautiful she is and the attacks that were under that post. That everyone was coming for her and I even stated like something about how ageist we are as a society and how disheartening that is. And someone came under my post and said, ageism.

what will the liberals think of next? And I was like, my goodness. And you know what? I've gotten to the point where I just stop arguing with people I don't know because it's easy to do when somebody says something so hurtful and so lacking in compassion. But I'm like, you know what? I don't even know these people. And I just get so angry and I'm ready to like.

Jen Yanez Pryor (08:55)

wow.

Aging For All (08:56)

Thank

Regina Foster (09:19)

you let's go back and forth, let's go back and forth. And then by the end of the day, you're exhausted. But with every, like I said, with every form of discrimination, that's what you face. Others who feel completely opposite and who feel entitled to say hurtful things and have hurtful practices and how they, you know, how they move. And I'm like, how do you even part your lips to say something like that and be comfortable?

Aging For All (09:48)

you know, it's a certain level of truth telling in the work you do. You confront these stereotypes with truth. That's for me the motivating factor for you, is there has to be somebody on the side of truth and facts. And I think that's the beauty of Queen Aged. I'm so glad you shared your information and

resource about Queen Aged with us. So you talked a little bit about your journey to the services for dementia care.

Regina Foster (09:51)
Yeah.

for sure. Mm-hmm.

Yeah, yeah.

Mm-hmm Yeah, so like I stated when my grandmother was you know still asking for her products it was like the light bulb went off now again going back to my original intro I've always been into

Aging For All (10:17)
What was this journey to Queen Aged?

Regina Foster (10:34)
beauty and fashion and stuff like that just as a child and so I was a product junkie you know like let me try this that feels good on my all of those things and I used to sell another product line a little bit before that and I was and it was just something that I did on the side like I said I was practicing healthcare I've been I was a PA even when I was in school I was still practicing and so but I always sort of had a side

you know, hustle if you will, doing something else on the side that I like to do for fun. So I would do personal styling for my friends. I did makeup. I actually went to LA and took a class with, you know, one of the top makeup, one of the top celebrity makeup artists and, you know, always been a, not educator, but wanting to learn more. And so if there's something that I'm interested in, let me learn and figure out how to do it. So when I was selling,

My products the the former company that I was working for i'm like I can really do this myself You know like you sell these products for other people you get your little 20 i'm like i've been doing all this work for 20 You know and so know again when the light bulb went off It was just like because when I was in a gerontology program I really wasn't sure what direction I was going to go into because you know, we can go many directions with that I was like, I don't you know, I don't know I like

the dementia stuff a little bit wasn't sure if that was my, you know, my niche yet. And so, you know, when I saw her asking for her things, I was like, the light bulb went off, like I can still empower women to embrace the beauty and growing older, not just women, but you know, people period and be into beauty, you know, and I'm like, there's not enough, there's, there are not enough voices.

in the health and beauty industry that are advocating for older adults showing up as who they are versus some sort of youthful praise, right? Everything, you you talked about anti-aging or, you know, get this serum that's going to make you look, you know, younger as if youthfulness is synonymous with beauty. And that's just not true. Just like aging is not synonymous with frailty, you know? And so it just, it just sort of

It just stuck. It was like, you know what? You can do this and you should. And so that's sort of how I got started. Yeah.

Jen Yanez Pryor (12:58)

Absolutely. I just thinking there's not enough gerontologists in health and beauty space, right? And I think one of the most disappointing things for me when I'm looking for products is I find something that feels good on my skin and then I see all the marketing campaign tied to anti-aging and I'm like, I can't consciously purchase this. I just, can't do it.

Regina Foster (13:04)

There are not. There are not.

Jen Yanez Pryor (13:27)

I can't support a fear-based industry like that. And, you know, I'm curious, what's your marketing strategy? How do you approach that?

Regina Foster (13:30)

Right.

Positively, so I talk the thing another thing that we you know, we have to understand too. Is that we don't have to ignore aging as well, right because you can have both ends of the spectrum you got those that are talking bad about and then those are like I'm just not going to mention it as if it's not a thing right and so, you know being one a woman and being a woman of color I've I've had to defend myself

many times on many different ways of being discriminated against. And so, you know, that is, you know, I've never been one that feared a lot of people wasn't a bully, but definitely wasn't one to get bullied. I've always been vocal about what I felt always been, you know, very much expressive and in my emotions. And so that was another thing that, you know, I just added it on to the other things that I was defending. But

Right, just like you said, if someone says to me, I don't see color, that's not true. Just like we shouldn't say, we don't see age or we're all the same. No, we're not. Old is okay, it's a neutral term. We shouldn't fear saying being old. You're not 50 years young or your grandmother's not 85 years young. She's 85 years old and that's fine. And so yeah, I get exactly what you're saying.

I'm not gonna support something that's, know, only talking about men and women in a negative way or only talking about other cultures and downplaying, you know, how African-Americans show up, nor am I supporting someone or something or a cause that's going to discriminate against growing older because that's the process that I'm in as well.

Aging For All (15:30)

And I think people are desiring places and spaces where they feel comfortable. And I think Queen A just a place I can feel comfortable with because you speak a language that I understand. I will give you guys a little bit of a secret. I'm a product junkie too. I've never admitted that out loud. I love doing the product. So tell us a little bit about the actual products that you have.

Regina Foster (15:37)

Yeah.

Yeah.

I'm a product junkie. I've never integrated that out. Yes, I am a product junkie.

Jen Yanez Pryor (15:47)

Hahaha.

Regina Foster (15:58)

Yeah, so I have four products. So it's basically a step-by-step process. So I have a cleanser, I have a toner, I have an exfoliator, and then I have a moisturizer. And I also, all of my products are named with a positive aging term. And so my...

picking them up so that I'm reading them as I'm saying it. So my cleanser is called Transcendent. My toner, do I have my toner up here? I don't know if I have it up here. My moisturizer, which is a gel moisturizer, just because I often feel if I use like a cream.

Or lotion sometime it can be heavy particularly in the warmer climates and I just feel like here in virginia We don't have a lot of cold. I mean, I know that virginia people think that y'all get cold, but you know i'm from pittsburgh And so it really isn't cold in comparison to what i've experienced so i'm like, you know, So the moisturizer that I have is gel based. So not very heavy and then the Which is called the finale in my

Exfoliator is called refined. So like I said, everything is with some positive aging Terminology because we want to get away from the negative marketing. Yeah

Jen Yanez Pryor (17:26)

That's excellent. you have, what's next? Like do you have plans to expand your line or are you good with the four products and really making them excellent?

Regina Foster (17:32)

you

Yes, so I do want to expand but I have a I have a big a business coach, who has launched or helped many people launch beauty brands and one of the suggestions that she made to me was when starting a product line, people can be really overwhelmed if you have too many things

on your site, kind of like going to a restaurant when there's pages and pages of, you know, the menu, right? And so she suggested starting out with a collection and then add on. But yeah, I'm a creative and an innovator. So I always have ideas up my sleeve of how to grow. have because I do want to grow to beauty products as well, besides just skincare. So I want makeup and all of that. But, know, I don't want to hit them.

Jen Yanez Pryor (18:04)
yeah.

Regina Foster (18:28)
According to her, you know, I'm taking the advice of a coach that has done it over and over and over. So, you know, I don't want to hit them with too much. But yeah, there's definitely more to

Aging For All (18:40)
And we know the beauty industry is huge, but I think this is a great niche. It's a very unique niche. You know, like I said, I'm a product junkie and I've not seen many companies or products that are niched for this specific area. So kudos for the idea and doing something that aligns with your personal values. I think that's what makes the business strong too. It speaks to who you are as a person, not just for the money you can make, but this is who I am and this is what I'm putting out in the world for people to also experience.

Regina Foster (18:43)
Thank you.

Yeah. Thank you.

Aging For All (19:08)
So thank you for being bold enough to do that.

Regina Foster (19:10)
Thank you. Yeah, absolutely. And I just believe that money will come. think that, you know, when it's something that you are passionate about and you have the tenacity to keep going, of course, there's going to be stumbling blocks in the road, right? But if you just keep on going and have your vision, I believe that money can come to any business idea as long as you are passionate about growing it.

Aging For All (19:37)
Absolutely. And you've worked in this space, you've done work from helping people through consultation to beauty. What have you learned about aging through your own process?

Regina Foster (19:37)
Yeah.

So, you know, again, there's some internal things that I've had to clear out because I grew up in the same society that we all have, right? That have told me that, you know, there were things bad about aging or, you know, I've even had to check myself looking in the mirror and I'm like, are those crow's feet? And then I'm like, girl, where are you doing? You know, we can welcome that or is that great? You know, just based on what I've...

just internalized, right? And so I've had to grow as a person within myself and accepting everything that grows with me, you know? And so, yeah, that's what I'm human too. So I have to face these fears that have been embedded in me. Yeah.

Jen Yanez Pryor (20:34)

Well, I really appreciate your authenticity. I think it's refreshing when we hear people say, especially gerontologists, right? Where we admit like, yes, of course we're looking in the mirror at ourselves and think all these things. And then the next step to that is we say, hold on, that's not bad. That's not a problem. It's different. It's new. And I need to adjust with it. It's a journey, right?

Regina Foster (20:58)

Right.

Jen Yanez Pryor (21:05)

And I think, you know, that's just living, that's just life, is just recognizing ourselves at different time points. you know, we don't have to be anyone but ourselves at any point in time. And I love that. And having conversations like this, I think is so nice because it reminds us all, right? That we can be who we are. And I also want to just mention too, Regina, I know I've talked to so many

Regina Foster (21:27)

Yes.

Jen Yanez Pryor (21:34)

students and people who are considering studying gerontology but they're not sure what to do with it. This is a beautiful example of integrating your passions, your creativities with a field of study and really carving out a unique kind of pathway for yourself. Like you can do both, you know? Yeah, so I love it. I thank you for sharing all that.

Regina Foster (21:53)

Yeah.

Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

Thank you, yeah. just feel like none of us are one dimensional, but that's another thing we're almost taught. You finish high school, you go to college, and you go to college, and you get married. You get married, you have a baby. You have a job, and then you work in a job that's your, you got your degree in, and what about the rest of me? I practiced for 20 years, and even when I left my healthcare as a clinician,

Jen Yanez Pryor (22:05)

Yeah.

Right?

Regina Foster (22:31)

There was so much fear around leaving because it was like, no, this is what you went to school for. And you, you know, you got all this money that you're paying in your student loans and now, and I'm like, but I'm so much greater. Like I have so much more to offer the world. I don't think that I have to stay stuck in any particular thing. Right. And so if I grow queen aged, you know, to a place where I

can hire people to run it, I can move on to the next thing. Right. There's, there's so many things that I can offer.

the world because that's how I show up. I said, I'm a creative, I'm an innovator and none of us are one dimensional. We all are multi-dimensional and it's just opening up those other pathways and those other portals to show up and those other versions of who you are. I'm not one person, I'm many.

Jen Yanez Pryor (23:20)
yeah.

Aging For All (23:20)
And that's, you talk about embracing the beauty of aging. And I think wisdom is a part of that. What you just shared in this conversation and that it's just wisdom. We are not one dimensional. We are complex and whatever the world tries to tell us, whether it's about aging or our career path or our life or what we should do after college or whether we should go to college. This is an individual journey and wisdom tells us that.

Regina Foster (23:25)
Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Absolutely. Yep. For sure.

Jen Yanez Pryor (23:50)
Yeah, I, you know, and I will say too, like, you're not wasting or lost your experience before. I mean, you're translating it in a new way, you know, between Queen Aged and Foster Senior Services, you're still tapping into all the things that you've always had. You're just using it different. And I think that's another pivot that some folks, I think, don't see right away is that you're not,

Regina Foster (24:02)
Yeah, for sure.

Yeah.

Jen Yanez Pryor (24:20)
jumping out of being a PA into something completely different. It's related, right? It's just a different way. Yeah.

Regina Foster (24:24)
Yeah, yeah, yeah. And I'm grateful for my journey, all of my journeys. Everything that I've done in the past led me up to where I am right now. But I've never really been in a box, to be honest. mean, people tried to put me in, whether it was intentional or not. Most of time it wasn't, particularly our parents and our family. Whatever they're doing or saying is usually out of love or something that they've been taught or conditioned to believe in. just...

Jen Yanez Pryor (24:45)

Right?

Regina Foster (24:54)

passing on what they feel is necessary to pass on. And so I'm grateful for, you know, my parents and grandparents who love me enough to feel like they needed to hold so tight, right? They needed to hold me so tightly. And in that, I'm just learning to not be as tight with my children and allowing them to show up as who they are. not conventional in my parenting and my, you know, my parents are like, what?

You're going to let them? And I'm like, I am going to let them. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Aging For All (25:28)

So there is one thing I did want to cover and that is the term Queen Agers. I absolutely love it. So tell us about Queen Agers.

Regina Foster (25:32)

Okay. Yay!

Jen Yanez Pryor (25:35)

Hahaha

Regina Foster (25:38)

Yeah, so so Regina actually means Queen right and It's so it's just easy like my family would call me Queen coming up my friends would call me Queen at least those that knew what it meant and so and I'm assuming you mean like how did the name come about is that what you're asking me? Yeah, so like I said Regina means Queen and I knew that I wanted to put the word age in because it's a word that we

Aging For All (25:55)

Thanks.

Regina Foster (26:04)

We've made to be taboo, but shouldn't be. And so it just, you know, it just came together. I was like, you know, queen age. to be honest, I saw the term written somewhere, like when I was trying to figure out what my brand name was going to be. don't even remember maybe a meme or something like that. And I was like, queen age. There it is. You know, we have aged into this, you know, this queendom because I always have.

well not always, but as I have developed, I've been on a journey of self-development for several years now and what I termed that is building my queendom. And so when I saw that, it was like, it just fit, it just fit, you know? Like I said, Regina means queen and it just fit.

Aging For All (26:49)

I love paper.

I love it. So if you all go to her website, queenagebeauty.com, you will see all of this beautiful, wonderful information that she has on her shop site and the.

Regina Foster (27:05)

Thank you. Yeah, and you can find me on any social media platform as queen aged beauty calm and that's a GED so Q you in a GED Queen aged beauty calm Yeah

Jen Yanez Pryor (27:20)

I love it. Virginia, do you have any advice for folks who are looking to jump into something crazy and creative? Just do it.

Regina Foster (27:28)

Do it Do it. Yeah, because I think that you know, we have intuition that tells us and guides us What stops that is fear. We're usually like, I should and it's like, no, i'm not gonna do that show up just show up for yourself. Stop playing small stop, know listening to the naysayers or those little voices that are you know being negative to you if if you have a passion and there's something that's making you

extremely uncomfortable then it means you're supposed to do it like seriously, you know, like if you are totally content with what you're doing Then your goals and your dreams probably aren't big enough. They should scare you a little bit. They should You know, you're not dreaming big enough if it doesn't scare you a little bit

Aging For All (28:18)

and that nagging feeling won't go away.

Regina Foster (28:20)

It won't go away. Yeah, it's like always, you know, I'm like something I need to be doing more I need to you know, like just do it and you will feel lighter You'll feel lighter like I when I decided that I'm gonna do what I desire to do Regardless of this fear that I'm feeling when I stepped out and it was hard Like I said, I practiced as a PA for 20 years and loved it

Right? It wasn't that I didn't like it anymore. I loved it. I love patient care. I had a good relationship with my patients and nurses, the other providers that I worked with, but there was just something else that was in me that wanted to do something else. And when I decided to walk away on faith, I just felt lighter. I was like, this is what I'm supposed to be doing. I feel freer. So my advice to anyone.

who feels held back a little bit is to just do it, because that feeling doesn't go away.

Aging For All (29:22)

And that is a great place to end with an action step, just do it. It's been our pleasure to welcome you and to learn from you and to embrace the queen aged-dom that you shared with us today.

Jen Yanez Pryor (29:24)

Yeah.

Yep, just do it.

Regina Foster (29:37)

Yes, thank you. Thank you. I'm so glad to be here and thank you so much for inviting me. Like I said, I'm very passionate about this message and so whenever someone invites me on a podcast or a conversation, I'm open to that because I think the world needs to know that aging is a normal thing. It is a neutral word and there's nothing to fear about.

a life process that we have been so fortunate to enter.

Jen Yanez Pryor (30:10)

Yes, absolutely. Regina, thank you so much for joining us. And I want to thank our listeners. Thank you so much for tuning in to this wonderful conversation. I know I'm walking away with lots of little sound bites in front of myself.

Regina Foster (30:12)

Yeah. Yeah.

Yay!

Aging For All (30:26)

And please join us next time for another amazing episode of Aging For