

Skinfluenced EP01

From Passion to Purpose. A Conversation with the Founders

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:00:00] Skincare is not one size fits all. At Image we rely on skin care professionals and clinically proven ingredients to create solutions that adapt to your lifestyle. But don't take it from us. Just ask the 30,000 plus professionals in over 60 countries across the globe who trust Image Skincare to deliver when it comes to results. And while we got our start with skincare pros, we think it's about time you got to know us better too. Tune in to Skinfluenced to hear straight from industry professionals on how to keep your skin healthy, radiant and resilient through every stage of your vibrant life.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:00:36] Hello and welcome skincare aficionados! Image Skincare is so excited to bring you Skinfluenced, a podcast about all things skin. Our favorite topic. My name is Ashley Kehrt and I am the global educator for Image Skincare. I've been with the company for three years and in the beauty industry for 18 as a licensed medical esthetician and makeup artist. With me today is my beautiful co-host, Jacquelyn Hill. Hi, Jacq. Welcome.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:01:02] Hi, Ashley. I am so excited to be here and kick off this podcast today. So I am Jacquelyn Hill. I am also a licensed skin care therapist. For 29 years in the industry, I've done everything from owning a med spa to education to working in a salon and spa as well. I've been with image for going on ten years now. And really cool fact, Ashleigh, is that you and I both are in love with skin, but we're also both in love with travel.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:01:37] Yes.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:01:37] Both travel with Image extensively. So I think my favorite city, I have so many but I think my favorite place to travel and teach about skin is Budapest. What's your favorite place?

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:01:48] Oh, that's hard. But I would have to say mine is Berlin. I had a fabulous time there. And speaking of Germans, we are super excited to be kicking off our first podcast with two of our favorite leaders. Joining us today is the unstoppable

duo, Janna and Dr. Marc Ronert. Janna is the founder and chairwoman of the Board for Image Skincare, and my personal mentor. Alongside her is Dr. Marc. He's a European certified board plastic surgeon, chief global innovator for Image and the author of the book *Age Later: Look Seven Years Younger in Just Seven Weeks*. Together they are the proud parents of twins and their cute dog, Coco. Welcome, Janna and Dr. Marc.

Janna Ronert: [00:02:27] Thank you so much. So happy to be here today.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:02:31] We are so excited that this is our first podcast and we get to start it with you two. So let's jump right in. Everyone's dying to know, how did you two meet? What's the juicy story there?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:02:42] Well, the stories differ a little bit, but I'll let Janna go first.

Janna Ronert: [00:02:45] No the juicy story is when Image Skincare was founded, I attended a trade show in Houston, Texas, for international plastic surgeons. And I had a little booth. And Dr. Marc was a participant and a speaker at this event. And that's how we met.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:03:05] Oh, I love that.

Janna Ronert: [00:03:06] Was it love at first sight? No, but it's been love at first sight for 15 years.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:03:13] Oh, that's beautiful. And Dr. Marc, what's your side of the story?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:03:17] No, that was pretty accurate.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:03:20] I love that. So, Janna, my first question is for you. How did you turn this passion that you have into purpose? I get to work with you all the time, and I see that passion every time. But when you were little, were you thinking, oh, I can't wait to be an entrepreneur or did you want to be a singer? Or what kind of was that process for you when you were deciding what you wanted to be when you grow up?

Janna Ronert: [00:03:41] You know, I think that process was very interesting for me, because growing up on a farm in a small town in Nebraska, I don't think I wanted to be a singer and I don't think I wanted to be some skincare guru. But seeing my father being a successful entrepreneur, I knew I always wanted to, I guess, run my own show ...

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:04:03] Right.

Janna Ronert: [00:04:04] ... Create my own pathway. And so it just seemed to be a really great transition since my real love I found at a later time in life in my 30s was skin. And I thought I could really transform globally a lot of people, not only with their skin, but change their lives. And it's been proven, I guess, with Image that it's kind of worked and it's still working.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:04:30] Absolutely. And skin really can change lives, right? We see that every day. Dr. Marc, same for you. How do you balance being a doctor and entrepreneur? And is that something that you wanted to do and that you saw for yourself as a young person?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:04:43] Yeah, great question. I mean, for me, obviously, my story is a little bit different coming and growing up from Germany. But since I'm a little child, three years old, I already wanted to always become a doctor and a physician. So the question what I wanted to do later in my life never really faced me, you know? And I think that out of that desire to become a doctor and help people and and cure disease. And I also always envisioned myself having my own practice and run my own business. I was never seeing myself working in a hospital or for somebody else. So I hit that internal desire to be my own boss and make my own decisions.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:05:30] I love that. And you also have a foundation that's really near and dear to us, at Image. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:05:36] The foundation was created a little bit later, once Image was tremendously successful and it was always in the back of our mind to have the urge to give back and do something either in the society and in our community, and in that case, for our foundation to give back where we saw the greatest need around the world. And that was around skin replacement, skin transplantations, reconstruction to

offer plastic surgery for people in need that wouldn't have the financial ability to pay for those kind of surgeries. And that's why and that's how we created the Care for Skin Foundation.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:06:21] I love that. That's incredible.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:06:23] I love the Care for Skin Foundation. It's one of the things that makes me the most proud to work for Image. But I have a different question for you guys. So because you both are the boss and have always it sounds like wanted to be the boss, what is it like to build a brand together? So who's the boss at Image?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:06:42] That's a piece of cake. Come on. The boss is always the woman. You know.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:06:47] That was a smart answer.

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:06:49] That's for certain. So I think early in the stage of our relationship. We've been giving and taking in I think equal amounts and shares and but I'm perfectly OK to to give in and step back and let Janna make her decisions. And sometimes, obviously, I want to make my decisions, but I think we found a good balance and created different paths for ourselves within the same company on what kind of areas we wanted to focus on.

Janna Ronert: [00:07:31] You know, and I think building a brand together, we have both learned over time what our real strengths are and where we should probably focus our time.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:07:42] Right.

Janna Ronert: [00:07:42] Because what you're really good at is what you love and probably what you should do and the things that you're not so good at, you should probably shift and delegate to those who do that the best.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:07:55] Absolutely.

Janna Ronert: [00:07:55] And we were very fortunate in our relationship, not only personal and business that our strengths and weaknesses really complement one another. So although I'm sure a lot of you listening you may work with a spouse or you're thinking of working with a spouse. And I think it can be very successful, but it's very hard to go down the same lane together. If you can try to stay in your own lane, it tends to work a lot better both when you're in the boardroom and when you're at home.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:08:28] Yes, absolutely. So it sounds like you have a really good balance, but there has to be a time where you both think that you are right. So how do you handle those disagreements that you have?

Janna Ronert: [00:08:41] That's a good question. Usually I'm right, so, oh, no, that's not true. No, I think you just really like any business or discussion, you have to sit down and really look at the other person's point of view. And it's interesting with Marc and I, because obviously Nebraska and Germany are two very different cultures. And, you know, from a cultural standpoint, sometimes our viewpoints are different. So there's a lot that you have to think about that you have to determine and you just have to pick your battles about what in relationship to Image is best for the company, because we all have our own egos ...

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:09:20] Right.

Janna Ronert: [00:09:21] ... We all don't want to be bruised in different ways as it relates to when we want to be right. So you got to kind of take your egos out of it, remain a little humble and really find out who has the best interest at heart for the end result.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:09:38] I love that.

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:09:39] Yeah. I mean, it comes down to compromise. You know, you can even if you think you're always right in a specific situation. You are 100 percent sure that you should drive forward your point. You still have to work on compromise and find common ground. And I think for Image, that has been a real advantage to have so different viewpoints and opinions. And then we don't fight about it, but we discuss it and

we argue and then we find really a nice balance. And that tended to be an excellent result for our company at the end.

Janna Ronert: [00:10:22] And I think what's also interesting about striking that balance as it comes to formulations and products, we never disagreed. We were always completely on the same wavelength.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:10:35] Wow.

Janna Ronert: [00:10:35] And, you know, being an esthetician and then having a plastic surgeon who really understands the the scientific element of how you put things together and then from a marketing aspect, knowing how you want to get the product to market, to let the people know how good it is. We never had a disagreement about that. That's in our 17 year history, never.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:10:56] Because we agree that everybody needs to Age Later.

Janna Ronert: [00:10:58] We do, we know that.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:11:00] That is the goal.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:11:01] That is the goal. That is easy, whether it's reading a book to Age later or applying a product to Age Later. OK, so one more question just about this, because not only are you partners in business, but your partners in life, do you find like, that's the biggest struggle that like you have to see him all the time, Janna, like 24 hours? Or are there, is there something else that's the biggest struggle when you are partners in business and partners in life?

Janna Ronert: [00:11:32] You know, I mean, there isn't really one huge struggle. I don't think, you know, a lot of companies might struggle with financial. Image never did. You know, I grew up with a sense that if you don't have it, don't spend it. But you've got to in order to get the reward and the prize, you do have to take a risk. So we were always very financially fiscal with this company. And it's proved to be, some would say, frugal, maybe, and maybe that's married to a German that he helped me understand that. But the struggles haven't been really all that much. I think as in any business, the struggle is

always with people. How do you grow your people? How do you get your people to a level that they want to get to? And that's a struggle because it's not easy when you deal with, you know, thousands of clients. And I think that has been my biggest struggle.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:12:31] Oh, I love that.

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:12:32] Yeah. And for me struggle is a harsh word. And we've been married now for 17 years and and we really never struggled in our personal relationship or even in the business. We've been super fortunate running this company together and having a deep understanding for each other. And like Janna said, people issues are the greatest challenge, probably not only for Image, but for many other companies out there to find the right talent for the right positions at the right time. That's a constant challenge. And that's also the reason why at Image, every day we are looking for talent and we are interviewing and we are looking for new people and, you know, very important for our culture to never stand still and always look for the right talent in the right places.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:13:33] I love that.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:13:34] So that's a great segue, because being that we both Jacquelyn and I work for the company. And you were talking about the financial aspect of it, and we just went through a worldwide pandemic and a lot of companies didn't make it. Some companies really struggled. And I can say personally that we really fought the fight and we made it through. So my question is, how do you both feel Image has shown its resilience over the last year in this pandemic?

Janna Ronert: [00:14:02] I mean, I'll take that one. That's I'm very proud to answer that question. And I think we fared as good as any company in the globe. You know, we did not miss a beat with products. We did not miss a beat with our people. And that goes back to the strong foundation that we built as a culture.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:14:23] Right.

Janna Ronert: [00:14:24] When you have passionate people, you don't have to ask them to get up in the morning and make sure they're at their computer or to make sure

the task is done. We just knew it would be done. And I think rallying the troops around this COVID was not easy. But our team was so committed to staying and being number one in the professional space that that just really motivated and kept us all going.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:14:51] Yeah, I agree. And it's that proactive, right? We're being proactive instead of being reactive. And I feel like as a company, everyone, I was amazed to see how everyone really just made it happen. I mean, I don't know how some days we made it happen, but we did. What would you say, Dr. Marc?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:15:06] Yeah, I mean, historically it's the biggest disruption that our generation, the generation before us ever experienced. So it's such a worldwide fundamental event that that literally every single human being on this planet was affected by this. And the greatest thing for our company is even though we were locally divided, it really pulled us together in a virtual way. And everybody working from home on the same vision and with the same mission still, that was incredible to see. And we are, Janna and myself, incredibly proud of our team and we're super happy to see that even in 2020, our company grew. You know, that's unheard of. And we needed to shift very quickly. Within days, we had to shift our business model. We had to reinvent ourselves. We had to still be very innovative in what we have done. For example, we couldn't visit any customers and a lot of customers were not even set up electronically or virtually. And so there was an incredible learning curve that happened really fast to shift a lot of business activity around. And that was really thanks to the team that we have.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:16:35] Right. And that actually leads me to my next question, because for those of you listening, our culture at Image has been very in-person and we've thrown big parties and events that no other skincare company has ever done before. And so we really relied on that. So I was a little nervous when we went virtual just because I'm used to going to different countries and being with the accounts and so our culture sort of shift, but knowing that our culture before was so hands on and so in person. How is it now and what do you see that looking like?

Janna Ronert: [00:17:08] I mean, I personally think it's stronger than ever because we've been able to connect to those 60 countries to those 30,000 professionals, even tighter than Marc and I or any of us sitting at this table could have ever done ...

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:17:22] Right.

Janna Ronert: [00:17:23] ... And so, you know, when you think of the word Image, we've always had the acronym that the I starts with the innovation. And that has been really our foundation, that we are innovative not only with products, but the way we think and how quickly we can make a shift to think a different way ...

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:17:40] Absolutely.

Janna Ronert: [00:17:40] ... And to listen to a different point of view. So to get all of these points of views, to talk with all of our professionals, to do all the events that we did, I think brought us closer. And I think our customers really had an opportunity to get to see us more ...

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:17:55] Absolutely.

Janna Ronert: [00:17:56] ... It shined a light on our people, our products, our processes and our commitment to the professional, which is really the foundation of who we are.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:18:05] Yeah, you're right. That's exactly right.

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:18:08] Yeah. I mean, many times in the past, we felt the obligation to get into a plane to see customers or go to another country to launch our new products. And the acceptance was just not there to do something like this. Just on the plane. Zoom for half an hour. But this time savings alone, what you can get accomplished and how effective and efficient you can be now within one day. I mean, it took us weeks to see seven different countries to launch our product. Now, we can do that in one day from the convenience of our own home, so, I mean, it was not all negative that this change really happened for us. Efficiency significantly increased.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:18:58] Absolutely it did.

Janna Ronert: [00:18:59] But I'm telling you, I'm dying to have a worldwide launch party and I don't care what you say anything I'm to get on a plane ready to get on. Take me somewhere.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:19:08] Me too. I'm with you.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:19:09] Me too. And see some people. All right. So, so many people are ready to leave 2020 behind because they think it was so bad. But there's something good in everything. So what do you guys think your silver lining, what are you not leaving behind in 2020, but you're bringing it forward in 2021 with you?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:19:30] Yeah, first and foremost, the connection with our family. I mean, we gain so much more time for personal stuff. Our kids, drop them off school, pick them up tennis, watch them play sports weekends that we in the past had to fly somewhere already. So we gained a tremendous amount of more family time. Which was great. And overall I personally really learned even more to balance our work life. Work life balance really was a big improvement for us personally. So looking back at the year, I don't see it as a tragic negative event. We pick a lot of positive things out of that year.

Janna Ronert: [00:20:27] Yeah, I feel the same way. What what Marc just said. But I think for me, you know, it's weird because I'm in the beauty industry. So you would think that I get a lot of treatments and pampering and self care, but we were so busy not to do that. And now during the pandemic, I did a lot of that at home, self care. And it was great to learn and to be educated and to do all of that stuff that I've really never done before. I don't know if you girls felt that same way.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:20:59] I did.

Janna Ronert: [00:20:59] I really did. I loved it.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:21:01] I did more masks than I've ever done in my life.

Janna Ronert: [00:21:03] You know and you could just do them while you're Zooming or talking with somebody or turn the video off. I mean, there was a lot you could do, pedicures, manicures. I could start doing that. I don't think I will.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:21:17] Yeah, it definitely brought a lot of my manicure, pedicure, facial skills back. I think mine was, mirroring what Dr. Marc said spending so much time with my kids. I mean, they were literally going to school beside me on the sofa while I was working.

Janna Ronert: [00:21:35] So cool.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:21:36] It was cool. It was great. I got to see what they were doing and I got to see their classmates. You know, my puppy was on my lap on top of my laptop sometimes. So that was great. And I also picked up meditating in 2020, which I've always said I was going to do, but I always said I didn't have time for. And it's all just part of my day now. So I absolutely love. That was my silver lining. What about you Ashleigh?

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:22:01] I'd have to say it's a little bit of everyone. I'm not quite doing the meditating yet, but I do take time in the morning for myself, which I never I'm usually up and then I'm rushing and rushing to get to the office. And with that little time that I have in the morning now, I'm able to wake up slowly, you know, get my head on straight. Know what I'm doing for the day. So I think it's a little bit of everybody's I think everyone really came away from 2020 with work life balance. So I think that's like something to be said. And I agree with you. I don't think it was all tragic. I think that there's a lot of great things that came out of it, especially as a person.

Janna Ronert: [00:22:37] I think as people we had a reset button. And I think as a company, we had a reset button. And I think that reset was probably necessary.

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:22:46] So much, much needed. Yeah. All right. One final thing. What does the future look like for Image Skincare?

Dr. Marc Ronert: [00:22:56] The future always looks bright for Image Skincare, regardless of what year or what's going to happen. I think we we set ourselves up and

differentiated our company so much from the competition from other companies, what they offer. I think we have the broadest spectrum of products out there in the market. We have great treatments. We have great people that educate on our products. And we always come out with new innovative ways how we can help estheticians and licensed professionals. And overall, I think the future looks really bright for our company.

Janna Ronert: [00:23:35] Yeah, I couldn't agree with you more. I mean, our pipeline of new some of the coolest products in the market are just starting to kind of roll out this year. And that's one thing that we've never had a lack of is big ideas, big products, big launches, doing things different and really always keeping that professional in mind, because like the ladies sitting here, we're all estheticians. So we know what it's like to be behind a chair or teaching or educating. We've been kind of where a lot of our listeners are today and we want to help you be super successful. So I think the success for Image is bright. And I think the success for people who work with us, we hope that you just go right to the moon with us.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:24:20] Well, I think that is definitely ending on a high note. And how can our listeners find you guys? What's your Instagram handle? How can they find you?

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:24:29] They can find me @Jannaronert

Jacquelyn Hill: [00:24:32] @Drmarcronert

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:24:34] Awesome. And you can also find them on Imageskincare.com. So I just want to thank you both so much for joining us today. I had a blast. I hope to see you guys again soon. I also want to thank the listeners, because without you, we'd be nothing. So I want to make sure that you all know that next month we are talking about skin cancer awareness. So it's going to be all about that. You can follow us on Image Skincare on Instagram and Imageskincare.com. Thank you. Thank you, everyone.

Ashleigh Kehrt: [00:25:08] Thank you for listening to Skinfluenced. If you are skincare obsessed just like us, don't forget to subscribe and rate this podcast. We also love

hearing from our skincare fans, so send us your questions and comments to skinfluenced@imageskincare.com.