

Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness & Mirai Nagasu

JVN [00:00:00] Welcome to Getting Curious. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and every week I sit down for a 40 minute conversation with a brilliant expert to learn all about something that makes me curious. This week, we're re-releasing one of my favorite episodes of all time, from April of 2018, where I literally learn so much more about figure skating than I ever knew before and I really started to, like, wrap my head around it, with none other than prolific Olympic bronze medalist, stunning, the amazing Mirai Nagasu, where I ask her: What's it like to do a triple Axel? Are you recording? OK.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:00:41] Are you recording?

JVN [00:00:43] Well, Mirai-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:00:44] Can you give me some lessons in attitude because apparently I need more of those.

JVN [00:00:49] Wait, listen. [Song plays] Did you hear it? That was it. That was the Nicki Yamaguchi shout out.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:01:00] Oh my god. Wow.

JVN [00:01:04] Well, Mirai. So the opposite of chill is what I have to have you here today.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:01:09] Thank you so much for having me.

JVN [00:01:11] Well, I want to take you back to the Olympics and not the part that you think that I'm going to ask you about, which is your skate. It is about the moment when you first acknowledged me on Instagram and I was on my couch and I remember it like yesterday I had been DM-ing you like every day, just support, support, support. 'Cause I was just like really here for you-, actually even before that, we're going back.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:01:35] Throwback.

JVN [00:01:36] We're going back. To nationals.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:01:38] OK.

JVN [00:01:39] I have never cried so hard watching a live figure skating competition in all my life because, like, I very specifically remember watching you win nationals when you're an 18 year old little baby girl in 2008. Like I very specifically remember it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:01:52] Babe, I was 14 in 2008.

JVN [00:01:53] She was 14? Ok, whatever. When you were 14, but I remember watching that-, I remember watching you in that National.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:01:57] Pre-pubescent.

JVN [00:01:58] But in my head, you were 18. But I love that you were 14. Yeah, because you were a little baby. That's, that's how old you were on my quilt.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:02] No boobs. Let's make note of that.

JVN [00:02:05] Well, you, you were a baby.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:06] Things were a lot easier back then.

JVN [00:02:08] Oh, is it hard? Because it's the harder to twist when you have? Well, obviously. Right?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:13] Like, titties.

JVN [00:02:16] It is, it's harder.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:16] They don't help.

JVN [00:02:17] They don't cause it just like-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:18] They help in real life, but not in the-.

JVN [00:02:21] Skate life.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:21] The athletic scene.

JVN [00:02:23] Wow. Well, I just got to say, you know, congrats on, at Nationals. That was like a really gorgeous skate. Like, I cried.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:29] Thank you. I did too.

JVN [00:02:29] It was like everything. Did you?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:31] I mean, you saw me crying on TV, right?

JVN [00:02:34] Well, then the kiss and cry. But you didn't like right when you finished.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:36] Oh, I was crying.

JVN [00:02:38] You did?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:03:38] Happiness.

JVN [00:02:40] Oh my God. 'Cause you were just nervy.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:02:42] All of it. Like, you work so hard for that moment and you just don't ever know if it's going to happen. And so people work so hard just to make it to the Olympic team. And, you know, people have bad days. And I think that's what I learned this term from you, "stan for." From you. Are people who, like, get up and keep going even though they fall. And I think a lot of people think of athletes, like, I think of Michael Phelps and really respect him because I can't even count how many gold medals he has. But for some of us, just making it to the team is enough. Like, we work our entire lives and we're not as beastly. And so I think I represent people who fall but keep going and don't give up. And so, yes, there will be people who will tell me that the bronze medal isn't a win. But for me-.

JVN [00:03:33] What?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:03:34] I know.

JVN [00:03:35] No one's ever said that to your face. And if they have, then I want their fucking Instagram handles and their addre-, and I will find their address.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:03:40] Will you go for them?

JVN [00:03:41] Yes.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:03:42] Attack them.

JVN [00:03:42] Like, literally I will toe pick them right in their neck.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:03:44] Mirai Nagasu, represented by Jonathan.

JVN [00:03:47] Honey.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:03:47] Comin' for you.

JVN [00:03:48] I am not I, I just think that's crazy. It's like that. Anyone. What, whatever.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:03:54] This is why I love you. Because like to be honest, "Queer Eye" is a little before my time and then, like, all of a sudden everyone's, like, JVN, @JVN, is, like, really standing you. And I'm like, I'm so sorry, world, but what is "Queer Eye." And then I watched your show. I watched your video. And more than you helping people, by the way, I need a haircut because-.

JVN [00:04:18] Oh my God, we're doing that. We're already doing that. Don't worry about that.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:04:20] During the podcast? That would be amazing. Like just your personality. I love what you represent. And like how you're helping people. But you're also so much fun and talking to you like you're just always so positive and bubbly. And I think the world needs more of that.

JVN [00:04:37] Well, that's not how I felt on the night of the ladies long skate. Because not, I mean, I was. I mean. I mean. Yes, of course. OK. That not because-. I'm obsessed with you, and I'm obsessed with you on skate and I'm, like, it was perfect. Except I do feel that, I feel like Evgenia should have won, over that little baby, Alina.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:04:58] But you know what, Jonathan? Alina did a triple Lutz triple loop, or triple flip, triple loop.

JVN [00:05:05] After that half. So then she was like 10 percent more.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:05:08] Yeah. And they tied.

JVN [00:05:09] And that's just really hard?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:05:10] In the long.

JVN [00:05:12] They tied in the long?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:05:12] They tied in the long and literally that, like, triple triple in her short program, because loop combos are, like, the tiniest bit more than toe combos and Evgenia goes for toe combos and Alina did loop. And that's-.

JVN [00:05:26] Okay. Wait, wait, wait. Too fast. Too fast. Too fast. Okay. So.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:05:29] The Difference.

JVN [00:05:30] Okay, wait. So toe loop vs. a-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:05:33] Loop jump.

JVN [00:05:34] Okay. So toe loop versus a loop for the combo, it's so, because in a toe loop you would, like, use your pick to like go up for the second one and a loop, you wouldn't, so it's harder?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:05:42] That's what they say. But you know, like, people like certain elements. Like I like toe better than loop. And so I would be, like, you know what girl deserved to win. Loop is way harder. But maybe for Alina, like, loop is harder.

JVN [00:05:55] Okay. I'm so sorry. And I'm being so fucking basic right now, but I just really have to break this down.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:05:58] Ok.

JVN [00:05:58] 'Cause like I really wanna understand, like a professional, or like a-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:01] Ok, so like in the short program, we have three jumps. One is a combo. One is an Axel type jump.

JVN [00:06:06] Yes.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:06] That's my thing.

JVN [00:06:07] Where your triple is. Yes.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:08] And one is a solo triple.

JVN [00:06:10] Yes.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:10] And so the combo, you have to do either a triple double or triple triple.

JVN [00:06:16] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:16] And so to, like, get all those points you want to do triple, triple and then each triple is, has, like, a base value. And that's what the judges, the tech panel, inputs into the system. Then the judges are, like, based on grades of execution, they give the jump, like, a plus three. So you can get up to three extra points or minus three, which is when you're, like, you fall.

JVN [00:06:40] Fell or put a hand down.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:41] Yes. It's ugly.

JVN [00:06:43] So my question for you is for the combination. And so, like, if it's, like, a triple, like, triple flip, triple loop or a triple flip triple toe.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:52] Yeah.

JVN [00:06:52] The loop is harder because when you're like landing, like you don't use your other foot to like, jump off the ground. You're, it's, like, a single bent leg that you're coming back up off.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:06:59] Yes. The toe you get to, like, pick into the ice and, like-.

JVN [00:07:03] Create that-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:03] Vault yourself up. But the loop is all about that edge. So you, like, land and you have to go.

JVN [00:07:08] Go right back up. Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:09] Yes.

JVN [00:07:10] Which, to, I feel like Tara Lipinski is the first one who, like in my memory, did the triple triple loop in competition, it was like really, like she was killing it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:17] Actually, Tara was really good. Like-.

JVN [00:07:19] She was really good at triple triple loops.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:21] Yeah. And she did like half loop Salchow-.

JVN [00:07:23] Yes. Yes. But you know what?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:24] She was ahead of her time.

JVN [00:07:26] She was ahead of her time. I have to say about that half loop Salchow combo.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:28] Yeah, what?

JVN [00:07:29] In general I don't really like it. I don't love it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:31] I'm not a fan either, but I don't like Salchows. I went through a 7-year-period where I boycotted the jump.

JVN [00:07:37] Now I do love a Salchow by itself. I love that little, like, wrap around from the outside moment.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:40] It's fun to say, too.

JVN [00:07:41] Yeah, it is fun to say. I feel like I remember Michelle Kwan's being, like, something that I loved, but I was always nervous for. Like sometimes it was like at the end of program, I was like, oh my God. But then it was, like, but she always got us together. I really love her too. But like she was-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:52] Michelle loved the triple toe triple toe combo.

JVN [00:07:55] She did. Which is also what that Kim Kardashian of Canada loves. You know that-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:07:58] Who's that?

JVN [00:07:59] She's that Kim Kardashian Canadian girl who's like really good at triple toe triple toe but she fell in the Olympics, which was really-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:03] Gabby Daleman.

JVN [00:08:04] Yes.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:05] Yeah.

JVN [00:08:06] She's fierce at, I feel like she could do a triple toe, tripe toe over my head.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:09] Yeah, she's very strong.

JVN [00:08:12] Yes, really strong.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:13] Yeah.

JVN [00:08:14] Really, really strong.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:14] Like, she warms up backstage. She is always wearing those cropped tops because she is not afraid to, like, show off her body.

JVN [00:08:22] Her obliques.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:23] Yes. Because she is working it.

JVN [00:08:24] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:24] So, like, there's a reason she jumps, like, up to the ceiling and it's because she's, like, a hard worker.

JVN [00:08:30] Core.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:31] Yeah.

JVN [00:08:31] Core, core, core. We love a core. We love a strong core. I-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:34] We love an apple core too.

JVN [00:08:36] Are you, do we?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:37] Yeah we do.

JVN [00:08:38] OK.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:38] An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

JVN [00:08:40] My obsession for you keeps growing on, like, the ten second. Like, it keeps getting worse. Like, more intense.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:45] I'm told I'm a little bit clever sometimes and also sometimes I just, like, talk shit out of my ass.

JVN [00:08:51] I do too. I do that too. I do that too.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:08:53] That's why we, like, connected right away though, right?

JVN [00:08:56] Yes. So let's go back a little bit because I can't think of another skater who made the team, did, American skater, who made the team, didn't make it, came back, made it and medaled.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:09:07] Thank you.

JVN [00:09:07] Like, I wonder if we could look that up and see if that happ-, 'cause I feel like in '94, Boitano and that other boy came back out of retirement.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:09:13] But don't forget they did that whole switcheroo.

JVN [00:09:16] Yeah. The '94, '92, so they got a double and yeah. Because actually, you know, I think about a lot of gymnasts in the 1994 era who I was, like, they could, because like if they would have gone the other way like that would have like the Magnificent Seven would have been different and, like, you know, if they would've done like a double summer, it would have been, like, different when they, you know, got 'em syncopated, like, off years.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:09:33] Yeah.

JVN [00:09:33] But I still kind of appreciate that because I really like having an Olympics every other year because, like, I stand on the Olympics. So it's kind of nice to have it, like, I'm, like, obsessed with the Olympics.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:09:41] You get the rings tattooed on you.

JVN [00:09:43] Well, I'm not, I think that's more like an Olympian thing. You know, I'm not.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:09:46] I don't have those though.

JVN [00:09:47] And you know, I kind of support that because when you're, when you're like 58, do you want to have Olympic rings tattooed on you? I don't know. Maybe you do.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:09:55] That might be saggy, but then they'll be ovals. And I don't know if I can support that.

JVN [00:10:02] Okay, so I have, I have an honest question.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:10:04] Yes.

JVN [00:10:06] So, like, 2014, Sochi, '18. Like how is it with, like, I mean I'm, like, in '14 with Ashley in Sochi. I loved everything that you did because she was, like, the only one that was like, "No, Putin, I won't be quiet." And I was like, I love you for that.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:10:22] There's a reason to admire people who, like, take a stance on things, especially in the figure skating community, because we're taught to be super accepting and, like, we're told to pretend we're perfect and, you know, like-.

JVN [00:10:38] Kind of ballet dancer-ish.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:10:39] Yeah. And to reveal that we have a flaw or were injured, like, that makes us seem vulnerable. And nobody has time for that. And so I support people who know and can be proud of what they represent and stand for.

JVN [00:10:53] Yeah. And I, I, I love that. And I think that vulnerability is, like, what is makes you strong and makes you beautiful. And I think that there is more of an interest in in, and across sport, for there to be more vulnerability and authenticity and transparency. So that's really cute. But when you have, you know, a set amount of people, like, vying for a certain amount of spots, like, because I know for me, like, with "Queer Eye", for instance, like, when we got into, like, the final, like, there was 10 vying for five spots.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:11:18] Oh, my God. Can you tell me how you auditioned? I'm looking for a TV show, too.

JVN [00:11:22] Oh, my God.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:11:22] How can I help people?

JVN [00:11:23] Honey, you already landed one. You're already on "Dancing with the Stars." You already landed your first. The first of many.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:11:26] It's a four-week show.

JVN [00:11:28] Four weeks is plenty, honey, for you to, like, just vault a triple Axel and single foot landing your next TV show, honey.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:11:34] Oh, Alan tried to do the triple Axel with me and I was, like, uh, "We are going to need some blades and ice."

JVN [00:11:41] Yeah, well, I'm really good-. I have, like, a really beautiful double toe loop, single toe loop on the ground in socks. I also have a really strong single Axel on the ground on socks.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:11:50] If you can do it on the ground, you can do it on ice.

JVN [00:11:52] Well, I'm not as good on ice. I'm not.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:11:54] Do you have good skates, though?

JVN [00:11:56] No.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:11:56] Because if you don't have good skates, if you go to like Dick's Sporting Goods and buy your skates, then you're not gonna have ankle support.

JVN [00:12:03] OK, but wait. But so how is it for you? Like, when you're in a competition and you're, like, "I have to beat you to get to where I want to go." And there's all of this, like, baggage because, like, you've been competing against each other for a long time. And I'm sure she's not the only one in your career where you've, like, had a rivalry with. So, like, is it hard to separate, like, a personal relationship from, like, a competitive relationship, like, when you're in the thick of it? Because for me, I found that it was. Like, at first I loved him, like, the one who was like the top one. But then when it, like, when it got really down to it, I was, like, "Don't look at me. Don't come within five feet of me. Like, I can't look at you while I'm trying to slay you." So just please don't-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:12:36] Trying to be your best.

JVN [00:12:37] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:12:38] I totally get that. And there will be times when my competitors will say things that they don't mean to come off as offensive or, and they're not shooting daggers at me, but sometimes they land their blow on me. And so I think that it's most important to remember that they're just trying to represent themselves to the best of their ability. And yeah, it sucks. But I think especially with Ashley, I think at the end of it all, we've been through so much together that, yes, I want to beat her all the time and I want to be my best. And if that means being better than her and that's what I have to do, I will work towards that goal in full force. But at the same time, we relate on so many things because we're very similar people. Like, she does have a little bit of a better fashion sense than I do. I'll give her that. But, like, we love skating, and she's a great competitor. She is also so mentally strong. It's amazing. And so I admire that about her.

JVN [00:13:43] I thought she handled it, like, really, really, really gracefully. Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:13:46] Yes. And it's OK to be upset with how the decision was made.

JVN [00:13:51] 100 percent.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:13:52] Because I was super upset in 2014.

JVN [00:13:55] I wish you could physically see me right now because yes. Like, which, which makes you all that much more inspiring because, like, on paper, you should have gone ahead and, you should have. And you know, I think that that's. And also, like, that is, I will not be held to 15 minutes on this. This isn't, the producer is telling me that we've been 15 minutes in. I don't. This is the thing about "Getting Curious" this week, kids, I have my idol here, so it might be a little bit longer and you-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:14:22] Babe, let's keep it going.

JVN [00:14:23] Yeah. So just give me, do that again in, like.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:14:25] This is my first podcast, guys. And like, I love it. I can't stop talking. Like, look at me. I'm, like, rah, rah, rah.

JVN [00:14:33] So tell me, wave at me again in, like, 5 to 7 minutes. OK. So you guys, I have, like, never treated Colin like that in my life, but I'm just, like, really in love with Marai right now. So that's the truth that we're living. So. So and, you know, I think that's the hard thing about sports to have, like, such a subjective piece to them.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:14:47] Yeah.

JVN [00:14:48] But prior to Sochi, like, had you ever been training a triple Axel? Like, was-?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:14:54] I did it for, like, shits and giggles, but not necessarily, like, seriously. I did it because, like, my double Axel was hella good and I loved it. And then, like, sometimes I just be, like, "Oh, let me see what will happen if I stay in a little bit longer." And then I, like went, like, really depressed, basically.

JVN [00:15:16] After Sochi.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:15:16] Yeah, because I was, like, "I'm not good enough." And, you know, you just have a time period where you're, like, down in the dumps because something that gave you, like, so much happiness, that something so beautiful could also cause you so much pain. That was just really a rough time for me. But then to, to consciously come to the decision that, like, I wasn't going to let someone else's decision, like, stained my love for skating and then that I was going to literally give it my all for the next cycle. I feel like I did a good thing. And I really hope that message comes across to other people that you don't have to be perfect all the time. You just have to get up and keep going and, like, good things will, like, come to those people. Oh, my God. Jonathan's crying right now because he really relates because, like, that is what "Queer Eye" is about. Right?

JVN [00:16:14] No girl, this is not about "Queer Eye," like, this is about, that is, you know, I just-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:16:17] It's about helping people who are, like, who need a little bit of help and-.

JVN [00:16:20] No. It's about being really inspired by your strength. I mean, to-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:16:24] Thank you. I'm not always this strong though.

JVN [00:16:26] No. But to work your whole life to, I mean, and it's, like, not to compare it to Tonya Harding, but I mean, I saw "I, Tonya" obviously and too, because it's not, like, a different panel of judges every competition. So it's, like, you worked that whole season and everyone saw how you were doing and then to have them make that decision. And how old were you after Sochi?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:16:43] I was 20, Now I'm-. Well, I was 24 in Pyongyang, but now I'm twenty five. And that's a quarter of a century old.

JVN [00:16:51] I was aware that's a quarter century old.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:16:52] I know, I like saying that it makes me feel really wise. And I've got a lot to learn still.

JVN [00:16:58] But there is no, I can't think. I mean, there's not very many people who would train their whole life and come, you got fourth in Vancouver, which is, like. Like.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:07] I know.

JVN [00:17:08] Like so.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:08] It really is.

JVN [00:17:09] Like, it's, like, so. And then to be, like, done like that in Sochi. And 'cause it was, like, Ashley, and then-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:16] Polina and Gracie.

JVN [00:17:18] Yeah, girl. Yes. And it was like-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:19] Literally, the Olympics is, like, her international debut. And I think that was what was also really frustrating is that I had been around for so long.

JVN [00:17:30] And I'm seasoned and I'm, like, a fourth place. Like, what are you talking about?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:33] Yes.

JVN [00:17:34] Yeah. It's really it's, it's. Yeah. Really gross. Mommy doesn't like. But for you to find the strength after Sochi and decide, so '14, did you come straight back to competing in '15 or were you still, like, "Uh, not sure." And then you did '16? Or like what was your?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:46] Sixteen was when I went to Vancouver. Then, I went through puberty. And.

JVN [00:17:51] Wait, you went to Vancouver in 2016?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:54] 2010.

JVN [00:17:55] Yeah. Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:55] When I was 16.

JVN [00:17:56] Oh, when you were 16.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:17:57] Then things got a little bit rough because my body changed and I had to really work harder to get back into shape until, there were a couple, a few maybe like five years of rough, rough years. But I was, like, finding myself too. You know, how, like, people have to, like, find their calling and like what they want to do. Like, it took me a little bit longer than most people to get to that point. But then I committed after Sochi. So, like, it was awful and it sucked. And even now, thinking about it, it's, like, I don't know if you saw my exhibition after that Nationals, where I literally cried to, through the entire thing, but I still cry when I watch that of myself to, like, go through all of that. That is my message to people, like, just keep going. Also, can I just say that I met Tan, you Face-, we FaceTimed you.

JVN [00:19:00] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:19:01] And he said that you made him cry. But I love that you're crying right now.

JVN [00:19:06] Aw, yeah, I know, that really, I mean I'm hearing you, like, tell that story, like, in front of my face. That makes me want to cry. Okay, Colin, we'll take a fucking break. We'll, we'll take a little break. Welcome back to "Getting Curious." We are with Mirai Nagasu, bronze medal-winning Olympic athlete, national champion. Just, wait, have you ever placed in Worlds?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:19:37] No, I haven't. That's eluded me. But actually, in 2010, I won the short program. So I have a little penny-sized medal. And then I freaked out that I won the short. And I literally think I fell on every jump in the long because I couldn't keep it together.

JVN [00:19:56] So this year, I remember after the Olympics, like, Worlds were right after that. So was that like that in '10 too? Did, like, World's happen after Vancouver?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:20:03] Yes.

JVN [00:20:04] And then, but then this time you're like, "I'm good on that. Like I'm a bronze medal winning, like, actress, like, I don't need to do that. I'm good on that."

MIRAI NAGASU [00:20:09] Oh, I like actress.

JVN [00:20:10] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:20:11] I went out there to the World Championships to just really enjoy my skating. And, you know, after the Olympics, I got to go to the Oscars. And I wanted to do as much media as I could because I love the media. I love meeting people. I love talking to people, like, I can't ever shut up. So.

JVN [00:20:34] But no one wants you to.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:20:35] Thank you.

JVN [00:20:36] No one wants you to. But wait. So I, not to keep harping on your triple, but I do because, like, this is the closest thing that I can compare it to, which is, like, nothing like a triple Axel. But I, like, grew up really wanting to do gymnastics and wanting to be able to tumble. And I was, like, deathly scared of going backwards. And then I could do all this like forward tumbling, but I couldn't go backwards. And then, like, my coach was like, I've never really seen someone with, like, less natural ability. Like, you're never going to learn, like, how to tumble backwards, like just stop coming to gymnastics, like, is not going to happen. And then my step dad, like, three years later, like, took me on a diving board and was like, you're going to fucking dive off this diving board backwards. And he just, like, manhandled me into, like a back dive. And I was, like, and after that I wasn't scared of it anymore. And then I got tumbling on a trampoline.

And then I tried out for cheerleading on, like, a dare when I was in, like, eighth grade, like for ninth grade. And I made it and I fell in love with it. But I wanted to cheer year around and competitively, but I couldn't tumble like on the gym floor. And so once I'd been, like, tumbling on the trampoline backwards for a long time, I was like, I was like you're never gonna get this on the gym floor. Like, you can't even do a round up back handspring, like on a spring floor, let alone like a hardwood floor. Like, you're never going to get this. I remember, like, literally crying myself to sleep because I was like, you will, you're not a tumbler. Like you're six feet tall, like you're weak. You don't, like you, your body's not meant to do this. And then I finally got it after training like six days a week for like six months. And then I finally got it. And like, I finally got to like show all those, like, little cheer bitches like

that I could. And like. And I was coming for, like, their varsity spot on fucking basketball so I would be a year round cheerlead, so you'd better watch the fuck out. And I finally got it. And, but that was, like, in a little town in the middle of America, like, no one was watching. I mean, some people were watching, but not really anyone. So for you to kind of, you know, work so hard and then, you know, make it and then still somehow come up short because of, like, politics and, you know, people judging, you know, perform, it, it's just really, because of the subjective side of figure skating and to have this thing to be like, "You know what, not only am I going to come back, but I'm actually going to train a triple and, which no one else is doing," which is to give you guys a little bit of history on the triple Axel. So like Madori Ito was the first person that ever landed it in competition.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:22:31] Yes.

JVN [00:22:32] I was obsessed with her when we were little, but she was also probably a little bit before your time. But I don't know if you ever saw her skate but she is super fierce.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:22:36] She's the nicest person, by the way.

JVN [00:22:37] You've met her IRL?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:22:38] Yes.

JVN [00:22:39] What was that like?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:22:40] She's so cute and so little that you just want to hug her because she's literally like the size of this table, like, short. Height wise.

JVN [00:22:49] So there was her and then Tonya landed it, she landed it at Nationals. She landed at, like, the Intercontinental something.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:22:55] Skate America, right?

JVN [00:22:56] Yeah. Skate, yeah. Uh huh. And then, and then no one did again until Mao Asada. Right?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:23:01] Yeah.

JVN [00:23:01] But you know what I didn't know about her? Because I just rewatched the Sochi long skate. I didn't know that she did triple Axel double toe.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:26:07] She did two triple Axels. Yeah.

JVN [00:23:09] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:23:10] She is really outgoing.

JVN [00:23:12] Have you ever done a triple Axel double toe? I bet you have.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:23:14] I have. I've gone for a triple Axel triple toe, but never-. One was enough for my mental capacity.

JVN [00:23:21] Yeah. Yeah. So like, like I'm sure someone has asked you but, like, do you, do you, do you wanna keep, you feeling good? You wanna keep going? You wanna keep try-? What are you, what are you feeling?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:23:32] Right now. I have my hands full with "Dancing with the Stars." I'm literally training, like, four plus hours a day for it because I have a really competitive partner and he wants to help me look the best that I can. And I guess I have to keep training, like, I was training for the Olympics to be a ballroom dancer.

JVN [00:23:56] How different is it from figure skating?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:23:58] Oh, my God, I can't even tell you. And people are, like, "You're going to be so good." And I'm, like, "I'm going to be good if I am because I work really hard." And so I haven't really had time to think about it. But maybe I should get a podcast because I love this so much.

JVN [00:24:1] Oh my God. Am I, like, watching an obsession, like, happen right in front of my eyes?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:24:19] Oh my God. It's like-.

JVN [00:24:20] But you-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:24:21] "Hoarders."

JVN [00:24:21] But can I get a-? How is this like "Hoarders?"

MIRAI NAGASU [00:24:24] Because you won't be able to get me out of the room and like-.

JVN [00:24:26] Oh, cute, cute, cute. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:24:27] And all this stuff will pile up and you'll come in and I'll still be here.

JVN [00:24:30] And Mirai is just, like, a little, like, old baby lady in 80 years, like, just talking to herself in the corner.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:24:34] I'll be, like, dropping into everyone's podcasts. And Colin will be, like, "I can't get this girl out. What a mistake."

JVN [00:24:41] Well, we would be really lucky if that happened to us. But I'm going back to, unsolicited advice for "Dancing with the Stars" from me to you. I feel like people wouldn't necessarily expect for you to be, like, the most, like, personality ass bitch out there. Just give them fucking face. You know what I'm saying? Get them facial, like, facials. Big eyes, big smiles, face, face, face and on those little packages, honey, I need to laugh. I need to cry. I need to be like in your heart and soul. Like the day after, when you and Adam climbed up on that roof and ate "In 'N Out," like, on those little vignettes that they do, you need to make me laugh, you need to make me cry. I need to be so attached, so devastated, so in love. And when you're giving me that dance, I just need, like, so much Mirai face. And then when you think that you can't give any more Mirai face, more. Like it's-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:25:29] Whoa.

JVN [00:25:29] It's so much fucking face.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:25:29] I don't even know how to take that all in.

JVN [00:25:32] Because your body's going to look so sick, like, your body is going to make the shapes. It's about like how you're gonna sell that shit. Like, you have to tell a story with your gorgeous face. Which by the way is so pretty in real life. I can't even handle how stunning you are.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:25:43] Thank you.

JVN [00:25:44] Literally, so stunning.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:25:45] This is me after I've melted my face off because of rehearsals. But I've been really working on getting my chemistry with Alan, my partner.

JVN [00:25:55] Yes. Oh, 'cause is that what it's about too? It's about, it's kind of about, how, like, sexy your chemistry is together, sort of?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:26:00] Yeah, yeah.

JVN [00:26:01] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:26:02] And I'm not used to that. And I have the salsa and he's like, "Babe, move your hips, be sexy". And I'm like, "I really don't know how to do that."

JVN [00:26:10] Okay, wait. Here's another piece of unsolicited advice for you. So I've been doing a lot of photo shoots lately, be like for the Gram and like just trying to like, you know, make the content. I always thought that was a very good like "America's Next Top Model," sort of, like, I always thought I could take a really fierce picture.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:26:21] Smizing.

JVN [00:26:22] Yeah. Then I was doing this photo shoot with this lady and I realized that I have like literally four looks like on my best day.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:26:27] A Blue Steel.

JVN [00:26:28] I can do four things. But I never knew until like this one photo shoot, so I was talking to my friend Denise about it, who's been on this podcast. I love you so much, Denise. And she was like, "Huh, like, how many looks did you do that day?" And I was like, "There's, like, eight and I only can do four looks." And she's like, "Well, you're wrong, because when you're trying on these different outfits, like you're really not being yourself, you have to tell a story to through the clothes, like let the clothes tell a story and then you're playing that part." So if you're feeling kind of like surfer-y or whatever, like in a surfer outfit, like give, like give surfer, like don't make shapes that Jonathan would make like be Jonathan as a surfer, like be yourself. So maybe that will, like because, like, maybe Marai isn't that, like, hippy or, like, that sexy with salsa but when she puts on that little red salsa dress like, oh, but she is.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:06] Be a character.

JVN [00:27:06] Yeah. Like, be more of a character, like that salsa Mirai is like nasty. Like she's ob-. Wait, what's your partner's name?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:12] Alan.

JVN [00:27:13] Yeah, you can get enough Alan, honey. You just like want to swing those hips all over his hips and just-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:17] Oh, it's hot in here.

JVN [00:27:18] Yes. Gives him habanero peppers and just smear them all over everybody, 'cause you're so fucking hot. Can't even handle it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:23] I'm dancing to Meghan Trainor.

JVN [00:27:25] I love her.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:27] I've never met her, but-.

JVN [00:27:28] I haven't either, but I did, I did a Spotify Takeover for her new album. It's really good.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:32] Oh, I'm gonna go take a gander at that.

JVN [00:27:35] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:36] But I think my character will be Meghan. And I know that she loves unicorn onesies, but I'm wearing almost, next to nothing and bedazzled nothingness. So I think I'm going to take your advice and I'm gonna be Meghan Nagasu.

JVN [00:27:52] Cute.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:52] And all about that show-mance with Alan.

JVN [00:27:55] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:55] For my minute and 20 seconds.

JVN [00:27:57] Is that your first-? Is this your first dance?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:27:59] Yes.

JVN [00:27:59] OK. And when are we performing it?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:28:01] On the 30th.

JVN [00:28:02] Oh my God.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:28:03] Of April. 8/7 Central. Make sure you vote. Because I've been really working my ass off.

JVN [00:28:09] That, we're gonna be on the Gram hitting you're voting really hard. Don't even, like, worry about it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:28:13] Oh my God, I'm counting on you.

JVN [00:28:14] It's, don't. I'm literally the president of the Mirai fan club, like, we're killing this. Wait. So growing up, when did you know that you wanted to be a figure skater? Like, who were you obsessed with? Like, when's the first time that you knew you wanted to be a figure skater? Like, how did that happen? And, like, what's your family do? Doesn't your mom and dad own, like, a sushi, like, thing?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:28:29] Yeah. Maybe we can take the podcast with us and then we can, like, eat sushi while we do it and talk about-.

JVN [00:28:35] Oh my god, you're already producing.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:28:37] Bursts of flavors. Because my parents make bombass sushi and also ramen, which is so random. But.

JVN [00:28:46] But so you grew up with, like, working? Or you-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:28:47] Humble. Yeah. Humble beginnings, like, people will be, like, "Did you do chores?" And I'm like, "Yeah girl, I bussed those dishes and I washed them," and I, I slept in the storage closet of my parents' restaurant because we couldn't afford a babysitter and then, like, because I had to sleep. My mom was really adamant about, like, eight to nine hours of sleep.

JVN [00:29:08] That's why you look so good, honey. You're aging so well, honey.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:29:10] The skin.

JVN [00:29:11] Yeah, honey. She got enough rest, but anyway.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:29:13] I'm the same, I'm still the same way. Like, I don't get that much sleep anymore.

JVN [00:29:17] I have to. I get so grumpy. Like, I have to sleep.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:29:19] Yes. This doesn't happen without sleep. Yeah. Like, I would, like, sleep there. And then my dad would pick me up and, like, take me home and put me in bed so I sleep-, fall asleep in the restaurant and then wake up at home and then wake up to go skating. And I did that until my dad physically couldn't carry me anymore and dropped me on my head. And then he was, like, "It's time for you to start staying home by yourself. You can be home alone now."

JVN [00:29:47] Oh, that's a cute story. And that was, like, in Southern California, right?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:29:51] Yeah. Arcadia.

JVN [00:29:52] So you grew up in Arcadia, which is also where, there's another figure-, isn't Sasha Co-, someone else's from Arcadia.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:30:58] She started skating at the Pasadena Figure Skating Center. And I started skating there too. Like, she did her first session there.

JVN [00:30:06] Does Karen Chen skate from-, who else skates in Arcadia? Like, there was someone else from Arcadia.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:30:10] No. She's from Fremont, which is the same as Kristi Yamaguchi.

JVN [00:30:15] Oh yes.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:30:15] But California is a haven for those skaters because it's so hot that people, like, do vacay to the ice rink and then, like-.

JVN [00:30:25] Stay cool.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:30:26] Yeah, you have to.

JVN [00:30:27] So how old were you when you realized, like when did you go figure skating for the first time?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:30:30] I was 5. Actually, my dad really loves to golf and he wanted me to become a professional golfer. He was like, "Mirai, the scholarships in golf are real." And so I have photos of me before I can even walk playing with, like, plastic golf balls. And my dad is like in the back room, like, actually practicing. And he's, like, "Oh, look, this was your calling." And then my mom, it rained in California, and my mom was, like, "Oh, let's go skating."

JVN [00:30:57] Thank God for your mom.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:30:59] And to this day, my dad says, "That was a day that my dreams were cancelled."

JVN [00:31:06] I mean, golf is not an Olympic-, well, I think it was.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:31:09] It is, it is now.

JVN [00:31:10] Okay. Well, whatever. I don't. Whatever. I'm really committed to your figure skating career, and I'm, like, really in love with your mom for doing that. So when you were 5 and you went figure skating for the first time, like, when was the first Olympics you remember watching?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:31:23] Tara and Michelle. That rivalry. Nagano.

JVN [00:31:26] Okay, okay, okay. I have a lot of really strong feelings around this one.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:31:30] It's hard to watch.

JVN [00:31:31] I had to just, I literally, like, once a year go back and rewatch it just to, like, and actually just this year for the first time I rewatched it and for the first time, like, didn't have such like blistering rage that I, like, didn't kick the TV. 'Cause I was like, "Oh." Like, now I feel, like, subjectively, like, I don't know what changed in the last year, like, I do, all of a sudden, I feel like she did. Like, she beat her that time. But over all, in terms of, like, fairness for career, I feel like-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:31:57] I think they're both doing great, though. They're both winning at life, so.

JVN [00:32:00] No. Yes, I know. I know. I know. But this is the thing. Like, when it comes to figure skating and gymnastics, it's like my one, like heterosex-, like I'm, you know, like, like

that's how I can understand how straight guys freak out when their team loses because, like, like that's how I get with, like, people who I love. I just get so like-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:32:13] For figure skating.

JVN [00:32:14] I'll be, like, devastated for, like, days. Like I, like I like when you landed your triple I was like, ah, I'm good. Like, I knew she wanted that. And that's all I, I just wanted her to get that and she got it, so it's good. You know, I was like, great. But Michelle, she wanted a little baby gold. And so sometimes I just, you know, and, and I, I just Tar-Bear was like, and, but actually Tara's doesn't piss me off as much as Sarah Hughes'. Really. Even though I know Michelle fell then, but like, fuck. Like Michelle, like, just to me, like, Michelle, Sarah has, like, she never went to Worlds.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:32:45] Oh she didn't?

JVN [00:32:45] No.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:32:46] I didn't know that.

JVN [00:32:37] She literally won Nationals, won the Olympics, had, like, the best skate of her life, like, in her hometown.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:32:52] Yes.

JVN [00:32:53] Like just was like, "Fuck it. I'm just gonna throw this," and-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:32:55] Then she went to Harvard. So.

JVN [00:32:56] Yeah. And, you know, she's, and she's probably like a really sweet girl. I just, you know what else I realized about not only politicians, but figure skating.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:33:04] Yeah. What? It's political.

JVN [00:33:05] Well, no. That too. But also, like, if there's something about, like, the aesthetic that works for me, I'm like, "Oh my God, I'm obsessed." Like, Hillary Clinton. Loved her blow dry. Loved it as a little kid. Loved her forever. Can't help it. That Sarah Hughes haircut for some reason-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:33:20] It was iconic, though. She brought back, like, the Dorothy Hamil and the Peggy Flemming.

JVN [00:33:25] No. Yeah, but for me, like, in like eighth grade, it wasn't, it went over my head. I wasn't here for it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:33:29] Oh.

JVN [00:33:30] I was, like, I was, wait, I was, like, in ninth grade. But I was just, it just further made me upset about Michelle. I was just really pulling for Michelle.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:33:35] I know. And I used to think that I was Michelle Kwan because, like, she grew up in California and, like-.

JVN [00:33:40] And you grew up in California.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:33:40] Her parents had a restaurant too.

JVN [00:33:43] And your parents had a restaurant.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:33:44] I know. But-.

JVN [00:33:44] And she's a figure skater and you're a figure skater. But you love her too, right?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:33:47] She is genuinely the nicest person I've ever met. And like, I hope you get to one day meet her because you will literally cry for hours.

JVN [00:33:57] Well, she has not been as forthcoming on the Gram. I have tagged her a many a time on an InstaStory because I just, she's on my quilt too. I'm obsessed with her. That Vera Wang, powder blue Nagano long skate outfit is something that still, you know, comes to me in my sleep when I need to be comforted, just, like, the silhouette of it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:12] She's busy working for Hillary.

JVN [00:34:14] I don't think she's working for her anymore.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:16] I know.

JVN [00:34:17] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:17] Maybe-.

JVN [00:34:18] She's just busy in general. She's, like, doing like, all the Special Olympics things.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:20] I want Hillary to run again.

JVN [00:34:22] I actually think she's going to. She's, she's acting like someone who is going to. As much as people keep saying that they think that she's not. I think that she is.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:27] It's time.

JVN [00:34:28] But the other thing, I agree that it's time, but now I'm, like, terrified if she does run, we're gonna lose again. And I'm, like, oh, my God. Like, I mean I love Hill-Hill. She was my first presidential vote. I voted for her against Barack in the primaries in 20-

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:38] You did?

JVN [00:34:39] Yes, she's my first presidential vote ever. I really, really like her.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:43] One step at a time, girl.

JVN [00:34:44] Yeah, one step at a time. "There's no need to rush." You know that Jordin Sparks song?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:34:48] Yes.

JVN [00:34:48] It's like, "Learning to fly." Yes. Yeah, yeah. Ok, ok, ok. Is there a judge that, 'cause you know, like, it's, like, you, you kind of know the judges, right? Like, how in "I, Tonya," we learned it's, like, it's, like, similar judges, like, there's always like-

MIRAI NAGASU [00:35:02] Yeah. But I've never, like, gone out to the parking lot.

JVN [00:35:05] No, of course not.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:35:06] And been, like, "What am I doing wrong?" I have-

JVN [00:35:08] But is there ever one who you were like, you fucking bitch? Like, is there ever one in your head like that fucking bitch is here again. Like, she's always give me five fucking seven for artistic impression even though I'm selling the shit out of this. I know that we don't score on a six-point scale anymore. But you know what I mean.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:35:20] Yeah, there are always people, judges who are harder than others. But that's legal.

JVN [00:35:28] Have you found any tactics as far as, like, when you're taking the ice and doing that really fierce thing like that you do when you, like, are deciding where you're gonna, like, you know, how you, like, skate out and you're like, I'm just, like when you're coming into yourself, like when you're about to take, like, your first starting position and then do you ever, like, make eyes with like that one fucking judge who you know is an asshole and just be, like, "I'm going to triple this Axel so fucking hard down your throat right now?"

MIRAI NAGASU [00:35:46] You know what? I try to make contact with all of those judges, and I'm, like, "Give me the points because I'm stanning you right now." And the thing, I'm gonna bring back "Dancing with the Stars" because I'm, everyone has dress rehearsals on Sunday night before the show, but I have a "Stars on Ice" show that night, so I'll be taking a reeye. And so we, Adam and I got to, like, go into the studio and, like, run what our, like, a little dress rehearsal without the dress. But I literally asked Alan, I was like, "Why aren't we facing the judges?" And he was, like, "This is for TV, babe. Like you have to do it for the camera." And I was like, "Oh, so the camera is my judge."

JVN [00:36:31] Oh yeah. Because it's more of like the people, you need the people. You got to sell it to the people.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:36:33] Yes. Yes.

JVN [00:36:35] Yeah. That makes them.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:36:36] I'm gonna look right into the lens and do all the face that you showed me.

JVN [00:36:38] Sell it. Yeah, sell it. Yes. And just pretend, like, it's, like, the judge that just like will not, like, she's just, like, always giving you like a two, like a two for execution when you know that, that like artistic impression's a three.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:36:49] Yeah.

JVN [00:36:50] You know? Bullshit. So, it's so upsetting. So then, okay great. So then what was your favorite competition that you've ever, like, skated? And one that was like your, yeah, it was like your favorite. Probably the Olympics. Right or no?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:37:01] Oh my god, the team event was my absolute favorite because I was, like, full on panicking. Like, if you think about it, we work our entire lives. Like, you asked me when I knew I wanted to become an Olympic figure skater. I can't even answer that because I've been skating for so long that I don't even know a point of my time where I wasn't skating. And so, like, the Olympics just kind of fell into that. So to work our entire lives for this moment and then, you know, we go out there alone as single skaters and then to have my whole team and my whole country relying on me, that was, like, way more than I could handle, and so-.

JVN [00:37:37] But you handled it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:37:39] Thank you.

JVN [00:37:44] When you were coming into the pass for the triple, I-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:37:48] Did you see me trip?

JVN [00:37:49] Yes. Yes. No, there was, there was like one little. No, there was like one little piece where you were like skating out. And I was like, were, like, I did noti-, so you did then?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:37:55] Yeah.

JVN [00:37:55] There was one little-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:37:56] Because it's a lot. It's a lot to, like, go for something.

JVN [00:37:59] Did they deduct anything for that or did the notice? No.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:00] No.

JVN [00:38:00] No.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:01] I don't think you could really tell unless, like-.

JVN [00:38:03] You were really looking 'cause, like, I just got really fucking nervous when that happened. I was, like, "Oh, fuck girl. I was like, you got this. It's okay." You know what else I loved about you and the Olympics?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:11] What?

JVN [00:38:12] Was that thigh tape.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:14] You know, that Axel is not easy. The triple Axel is not an easy jump, guys, so it takes a lot of force. And so I have to tape my adductor because it gets really tight.

JVN [00:38:26] So what does that tape do?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:27] It just holds it in place so that, the Axel doesn't always go perfectly, and so, like, when it is off, like, my abductor just doesn't get, like, placed in the wrong place, it just holds it all together.

JVN [00:38:38] Did you see "The Cutting Edge?"

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:40] No, it's on Netflix, though, isn't it?

JVN [00:38:44] I'm not stopping right now, Colin.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:45] I'm really sorry, but.

JVN [00:38:46] No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:48] Ice skating movies are so hard to watch, for me.

JVN [00:38:50] Mirai, this is-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:38:52] Did you watch "Ice Princess?"

JVN [00:38:54] I'm, we're not. That was a nice try. And I realize that you're really into podcasting and you think you're really like, you know, in the driver's seat on this. And that's fine. But we're not gonna, we're gonna do a follow up question on "Cutting Edge."

MIRAI NAGASU [00:39:04] Okay.

JVN [00:39:05] It is one of the most iconic films. Not only figure skating films, but just films in general. It is the story of this Paris skater who can not find the partner that she wants. And then this hockey player who basically gets you-ed.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:39:15] See, already too cheesy for me. A figure skater and a hockey skater.

JVN [00:39:21] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:39:21] Is this Kristi Yamaguchi right now?

JVN [00:39:22] Yeah. And then he, and then he has to, and then he has to become a figure skater. And there's this whole movie montage. That's a toe pick. It's very major. And-

MIRAI NAGASU [00:39:31] It's not real life though.

JVN [00:39:32] At Nationals, at Nationals, there's a brother, sister Paris team who gets one of their skates stuck in the other one's lederhosen, and they're totally supposed to win but because they fall at Nationals. It gets them in and so they can do this really controversial move called the Pamchenko, which is essentially like your triple Axel. Where you have to, like, wave the girl around, she goes like this and she gets waived around, it's, honestly. And, like, all the close up foot cut aways.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:39:51] Like the Iron Lotus.

JVN [00:39:52] You have to see "The Cutting Edge." And then once you see it, like on the plane, you'll be, like, OK, I see what he's saying.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:39:58] Ok so, I'm going to, like, literally put a camera on myself for the entire movie and just-.

JVN [00:40:04] Hate it the whole time.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:40:05] Jaw drop. And I'll send you this hour-long clip of me just speechless because of what you made me watch.

JVN [00:40:12] Because you love it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:40:13] Maybe.

JVN [00:40:13] I wonder if Adam and your teammates have ever seen it. I feel like they've all seen it and you're the only one who hasn't.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:40:17] No. I watched "Ice Princess" and I was mortified when I was, like, 13 years old. Because-

JVN [00:40:22] "Ice Princess" ain't got shit on "The Cutting Edge." I've never even seen that bullshit movie and I can tell you right here, right now. I mean, "The Cutting Edge" is, like, an Oscar-winning movie. It's critically-, it's not at all, actually, it's not. It's not. It didn't win an Oscar and it probably is really terrible and cheesy and I got obsessed with it when I was 6, which is why I think it's so great as an adult. I feel like when you get obsessed with something when you're little, you're, like, "That was the best thing ever." And then when you see it as an adult, you're like, "Oh, it really does suck." So you're probably right.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:40:45] I like "Blades of Glory," though.

JVN [00:40:47] Yeah, girl. That was really, actually I loved it too. With that little Napoleon Dynamite baby and Will Ferrell.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:40:53] Yes.

JVN [00:40:54] What other-?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:40:55] I've been saying, "Vote for Mirai and all your wildest dreams will come true," because, like, in "Napoleon Dynamite," Pedro says that, but then I've been, like, maybe I shouldn't say that because, like, that references so many other things that's so wrong and weird. And, but then I'm usually, like, Vote for Mirai and all your wildest dreams will come true. That's why from "Napoleon Dynamite," by the way.

JVN [00:41:17] OK. I love that. That's amazing. And I think that's really good. Hashtag, I have a few more questions and we'll wrap it up.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:41:21] OK.

JVN [00:41:22] And they're all figure skating.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:41:23] Of course.

JVN [00:41:24] Yeah. So favorite figure skater of all time? It could be pairs. It could be anything.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:41:30] That's a lot of, okay.

JVN [00:41:33] From ever.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:41:35] It's so hard to say because I, like, as a person, like, I love skating so much that there's just, it's hard to-.

JVN [00:41:43] Who's your favorite jumper?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:41:45] Jumper. You know what, Yuzura Hanya, he's dang. Dang. That, like, triple Axel. He just does it out of nothing and they're beautiful. Like, I also like Patrick Chan.

JVN [00:42:00] Gorge.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:01] His skating makes my heart melt. Like, the way that they just, like, are looking out. I feel like they're reading my soul and, like-.

JVN [00:42:11] Thank God he won Worlds. That really made me happy. It made me, like, really, I was like, yes, King.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:15] The Olympics in the team event too. He got his gold medal. Patrick Chan.

JVN [00:42:20] Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:21] Do you know who I'm talking about?

JVN [00:42:23] She got confused, she got confused for a second. I was thinking, but didn't Patrick? But who is the boy? Nathan.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:27] Nathan. Yes.

JVN [00:42:28] Yeah but he's the one, he just won Worlds.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:30] Yes.

JVN [00:42:31] But he was the one who, like-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:31] Nathan is amazing too, though.

JVN [00:42:33] Yeah. Yeah. I just got, because are their, both their last names are Chan?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:36] Chan. Yes. Wait. Patrick is Chan and Nathan is a Chen.

JVN [00:42:49] Those are close.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:41] Yes.

JVN [00:42:42] Yeah. So I think we both get a pass for, like.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:44] Ok.

JVN [00:42:45] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:42:45] We'll slide it under the table.

JVN [00:42:47] Okay, wait. So who do you think is more controversial of the following rivalries for who won the gold? Nancy and Oksana. Tara and Michelle. Evgenia and Alina.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:43:02] Whoa.

JVN [00:43:02] Like, who do you think? Like, if you could reverse any of those decisions, like, because you think the rightful winner was, like, not the one who won, who would you say it would be?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:43:10] I don't want any daggers coming for me.

JVN [00:43:12] No one throwing daggers, girl. This is the very end of the podcast so no one will probably be listening to this, anyway.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:43:16] I think that Alina won, fair and square. And-.

JVN [00:43:21] But you think it's fair that you can just get all that ten-point extra, like, for after the last half? Like, don't think that programs are, because I personally think that her program isn't, nice, as nice to watch because like all the jumps come at the end so it just feels kinda, like, bombarded, like, it doesn't feel balanced.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:43:32] You know what, girl? The people in charge of the rules place that rule and she just played by the rules. So like she got a 10 percent vote-.

JVN [00:43:40] No, she Donald Trump-ed it. I get it. She worked the system. She worked the system. Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:43:42] She worked it. She nailed it. And Evgenia had some jumps in the first half. And also, Evgenia, like, won, they, like, tied in the long. Like-.

JVN [00:43:53] They tied in the long.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:43:54] Literally. Point for point. Every single point, like, to the decimal point.

JVN [00:43:58] Like she, because of her combo in the short is what put her over the top.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:01] I'm just going to bring him back to me and say I'm happy for myself and my own performance. And those wins and medals, those are not my decisions. I just live for the moment that I had and, like, being able to roar on ice.

JVN [00:44:16] Oh my God, that roar was so iconic.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:18] Thank you.

JVN [00:44:19] That roar was like the high point of fucking Pyeongchang, honey.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:22] Thank you.

JVN [00:44:23] Yeah. Okay, so that's cute. I like that answer. That's, like, really diplomatic and gorgeous.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:25] Yeah. Things out of my control, I've learned to just, sometimes you just have to, like, let it be.

JVN [00:44:33] Who won in Torino?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:36] Shizuka Arakawa.

JVN [00:44:37] Yes. Because then baby Sasha got second.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:39] Yes. Because Sasha fell.

JVN [00:44:42] I can't remember her long skate, but you know what I do remember about Sasha? Is, like, the prettiest layback spin ever.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:47] Yes.

JVN [00:44:47] Like, really pretty layback spin.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:48] Yes.

JVN [00:44:49] I feel like-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:44:49] She was, like, the most flexible girl out there. Like she came out with the best spiral, and that's why my layback is so good, because I watched Sasha Cohen's and, and I was, like, "Girl, I guess I gotta get my leg over my head now."

JVN [00:45:03] You know what you have that's like really pretty that I'm obsessed with because your back is so flexible is your Biellmann spin.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:09] My Biellmann spin? Biellmann spin.

JVN [00:45:12] Biellmann. Whatever.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:13] Yes. Isn't it funny that in cheerleading they call it the scorpion?

JVN [00:45:16] Yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:17] Yeah.

JVN [00:45:18] Yeah. She's a scorpion. Biellmann spin.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:20] Yes.

JVN [00:45:21] She had a really major perm in the 80s.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:22] Yes.

JVN [00:45:23] Like, she had, like, a really, like, boxy little short perm.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:24] She was iconic.

JVN [00:45:45] It was a little perm. Yeah..

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:26] Did you dig that haircut?

JVN [00:45:27] Yeah. And there was this other Russian gymnast who had, like, a similar haircut and perm who was, like, the 1988 Olympic champion and she had, like, a really boxy, short perm and it was amazing how, like, in that era you can have, like, a 20-year-old girl, like, look 45 because of those haircuts.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:41] No, it was the video quality. Grainy.

JVN [00:45:46] You're so diplomatic. I love that about you. So basically, we're not sure if we're coming back. We're just really focusing on "Dancing with the Stars" right now. We're focusing on podcasts.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:54] Yeah.

JVN [00:45:55] Telly. Maybe you'll feel like doing a triple Axel double toe.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:45:58] You know what? I-.

JVN [00:45:58] Maybe we won't. We'll just see how it goes.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:46:00] I love doing interviews. I want to interview people and, you know, commentating I'm not sure about because I'm, like, like, you just saw. I'm really bad at shit talking people. I like to be diplomatic, but I want, I like that I've been given my opportunity to tell my story and I want to help other people tell their story. And I think that, I feel like I'm a friendly face. If I could give, be given that opportunity, that would be my life dream.

JVN [00:46:28] Also too, to go back to what-. Which I'm obsessed with. And I think you should follow your dream, and do whatever you want, because you're amazing to talk to. And I think that you'd be amazing-.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:46:34] Thank you.

JVN [00:46:35] As, you know, getting into interviewing and journalism. But just to clarify what I was asking, I don't want you to talk shit about those medals and who has won. I was just thinking, and it's probably, it's, it's this term that I just learned called like "wrong friend." When someone asks you a question, and you're, like. It's, like, if your, like, parent

passed away or something, and then your friend calls you to bitch about their mom and you're like, I'm the wrong friend for you to be telling this to right now. Like, wrong friend. Hang up, call the next person. Wrong friend. So I probably just wrong friended you.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:47:00] Oh my god, Jonathan.

JVN [00:47:01] Asking you that question. Because more of what I was trying to get at was like as a fan, like not as a skater yourself, like, not, like, you've ever met because obviously you've probably met all six of those people and you've worked with them. But like, if you saw it like as a fan, like which would be like, because I don't want you to like shit talk. I was just thinking as like someone who like is not a skater.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:47:17] I think that the biggest lesson that I've learned is, like, leave everybody's jobs to whoever is in charge of that job. So, like, I'm not in charge of judging, like I love performing and skating, but I will never be interested in judging because, like, that is just not for me. Like even at Worlds, like, yeah, tenth place wasn't what I was thinking I was gonna get, but, like, I was so happy with how I skated in the long because, like, that was a long season for me. And to-.

JVN [00:47:47] What year was that?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:47:48] This past year. Like, this past Worlds, like-.

JVN [00:47:50] Like '17. I.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:47:52] 2018.

JVN [00:47:54] '18.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:47:54] March. Yes.

JVN [00:47:56] You just went to World, you skated at Worlds this year?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:47:58] Yeah.

JVN [00:47:59] I thought you skipped it.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:48:00] No. No. I was like, "I'm going." And then I didn't want to go, but I had committed myself and, like, I had trained this whole season, so I went. And some of my calls were questionable. I will say that. But at the same time, like, I skated, you know,

and I was happy with it. And that's all I can control and everything else. I was just, like, "You know what? Fuck it. That's it. Like, I'm happy with how I did and that's all I could control. And, like, accept it, girl."

JVN [00:48:28] I love that. Yeah. Me. Because it's really, I mean, my student brain gets curious about, like, how the judging works and why it works like that and like, yeah.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:48:35] Yeah. Don't analyze it. Just take it and run with it.

JVN [00:48:40] Well that's, like, as an athlete. But for me over here who, like, couldn't do a single fucking toe loop if you held a gun to my head, will analyze and will think about it because that's what makes people want to watch figure skating. Without people analyzing it and, like, being curious about all the questions that I just asked you, really, there's no, like, that, we want people asking those questions so that we want to watch.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:48:56] That's true.

JVN [00:48:58] But for you, as someone who's in the thick of it, I wrong friended you with that question. And that's ok.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:02] You're the type of person who brings scandals out to light and make sure that wrongs become rights. And I'm just over here, like, it is what it is. I'll take it.

JVN [00:49:12] Which, I love that.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:13] Maybe I need to be more like you and like, question everything.

JVN [00:49:16] No, I just, you know, no.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:19] I question myself all the time.

JVN [00:49:21] I think that you're like, I'm literally so obsessed with you. Like, I can't handle it. Like, I just want to spend all the time with you.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:27] I want your mom to make me a quilt.

JVN [00:49:29] She probably would. She, I think that quilt took, like, eight hours a day, like, every Sunday and Monday for, like, three months. But she really sorted that out.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:36] How did she get, like?

JVN [00:49:39] All the pictures?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:40] Yeah. On, like, fabric.

JVN [00:49:40] Well, I sent her the pictures that I wanted, and then she printed them out at a T-shirt store and then she, like, made a quilt out of them. She's so major. My mother. I am so obsessed with her.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:49] Oh my God.

JVN [00:49:50] So Mirai. So people will definitely be voting for you on "Dancing with the Stars." We're going to InstaStory that. Is there anything else you want to say? Or you want the children to know on "Getting Curious?"

MIRAI NAGASU [00:49:58] You know what? I am so grateful for this opportunity to be on "Dancing with the Stars", and I can't wait to see what else I get because, like, as an Asian American, I feel like we're really underrepresented in the TV industry. And growing up, I didn't have shows like "Fresh Off the Boat" to watch. And I watch, I mean, I love Emma Stone, but her role in "Aloha" as an Asian was really hard to accept because, like, we want those Asians out there and so-, well, I do. So to represent the community and hopefully to have America vote for me and to support my ballroom dancing as much as they supported my skating, I hope that really happens. And I really just want to represent and do us justice.

JVN [00:50:45] Well, I think that you are majorly and also your spirit and your determination and your work ethic and everything that you, that your career stood for and for everything you are continuing to stand for, I think is so inspiring, for not only Asian Americans, but just everyone. Like you are just such an inspiring person. And you brought so many people so much joy. And I'm just so grateful that you came in and talk to us.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:51:05] Thank you for having me.

JVN [00:51:06] Love you to pieces.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:51:07] Love you already too.

JVN [00:51:08] And I'm totally cutting your hair.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:51:10] Good.

JVN [00:51:10] Well trimming it. I like it long, but.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:51:11] The hairstylist at "Dancing with the Stars" told me I need to cut off a good two inches and that it was dead.

JVN [00:51:17] Well, I would never talk to your hair like that. So I guess that's why I'll be cutting it, and not her. Thanks for listening, you guys. We'll see next time on "Getting Curious."

MIRAI NAGASU [00:51:24] Thank you.

JVN [00:54:45] You've been listening to Getting Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. My guest this week was Olympic figure skater Mirai Nagasu. You'll find links to her work in the episode description of whatever you're listening to the show on.

Our theme music is "Freak" by Quiñ - thanks to her for letting us use it. If you enjoyed our show, introduce a friend - show them how to subscribe. We love a new subscriber, and all of supporting subscribers, come to think of it!

Follow us on Instagram & Twitter @CuriousWithJVN if you please. Our socials are run and curated by Emily Bossak.

Our editor is Andrew Carson, who literally deserves a medal. Andrew, thank you so much. And our transcriptionist is Cassi Jerkins, and you really do, too!

Getting Curious is produced by me, Erica Getto, Emily Bossak. That was Matilda meowing in the background. Oh, do you hear? Matilda's so cute, I don't know if you can hear it, so cute. Getting Curious is produced by me, Erica Getto, Emily Bossak, Chelsea Jacobson, and Colin Anderson.

MIRAI NAGASU [00:52:24] I also brought my medal for you to like see.

JVN [00:52:26] Oh, my God. I can't handle. You brought the medal?

MIRAI NAGASU [00:52:31] I did.

JVN [00:52:31] Oh my God. I can't handle that. I wasn't ready for that. I've never seen one in real life.