

**Pretty Curious with Jonathan Van Ness, Perry Romanowski, &
Valerie George (The Beauty Brains Podcast)**

JVN: Hey, curious people. I'm Jonathan Van Ness and welcome back to another episode of Pretty Curious. Autumn is in full swing and we're experiencing the natural skin changes that come with that. Cleansers are an essential part of daily skin care. But there are so many options. How can we really know what's best for our skin? And furthermore, what are each of these cleansers doing on a chemical level? We gotta find out. There's literally so many, there's cream, gel, powder, oil, water based. There's clay, there's just so many cleansers. I wanna understand what's going on with all of them to help us find our cleanser answers. We needed to get some help with some of the most brilliant minds and beauty chemistry. Valerie George and Perry Romanowski, cosmetic chemists and host of the Beauty Brains Podcast. But before we get to our chat, it's time to get ready with me. I went to Mystic Lake Casino, which is just outside of Minneapolis to do a show there last week and I got to use my Sephora haul. The Kosis SPF Foundation is next level. I understand what all the hype is about. I understand because it has this like scent to it. That is so spa like it's giving such skin care. It's really seamless. Um, I absolutely love it, but here's the other thing that I did, which I've not been doing for a long time since like Gigi Good era. I went in with the Kosis press powder right underneath my eyes just a tiny, little bit and it gave my face this whole airbrushed finish. And if you look at my Instagram and look at my camera roll dump, I think from two weeks ago, it's the one I mean that little like kind of sea like aqua green sea foamy dress. The reason my under eye looks that good like for the week after the election is because of Kosis press powder and it did not and it used to when I was using it, I used to kind of settle in my wrinkles in my like fine lines and wrinkles a lot, but I realized that I was way over using it. So if you've had a bad experience with press powder, really tap that shit off before you press it on your skin and I feel like I just had a really positive experience with it. Absolutely loved it. I also the Sephora savings event I went in, I went ham, I got a new um, liquid blush by Lady Gaga, which I loved. I got the CAY Skin SPF which I also I am obsessed with. So if you've been not sure about CAY skin by Winnie Harlow. Get in there. That SPF was T I four. Also those sidebar you guys, I want to do like a pretty curious journey where like I take you with me to like get my first laser treatment or something done. I just after I shaved my face, I was so startled by what I look like with no beard. I, I don't wanna do like fillers, but I do want to do some sort of laser treatment. So we're gonna have to deal with that later. Um, and also even though I get that, this is a pretty curious episode, I don't always do such a long intro on like why I'm curious about something. But ever since Frances Hannon turned us on to the gel cleanser by Le Mer, that was part of what this came from. So I do talk to Valerie and Perry about this within the episode, but Francis is just like in my gay brain, I'm obsessed with her. I can't even believe we got to have her on. So without any further ado, let's get to this week's conversation with Perry Romanowski and Valerie George.

Perry Romanowski is a writer, cosmetic chemist, inventor, scientist, instructor futurologist and thought leader. He's also the founder of Chemists Corner blog and training program. He also has the longest running streak done while juggling major. Valerie George is a cosmetic chemist, science communicator educator leader and avid proponent of transparency in the beauty industry. She works on the latest research and hair color and hair care as vice president and research and development of a leading Cambrian. You can follow her on

Twitter. Also, you guys uh I'm doing a little post addendum. I needed to talk to Valerie so much more about hair color and like allergic reactions to hair color and like chemicals and hair color that I did not even get to because this is about like facial cleanser. We're going to have to have Valerie George back to talk more about hair. Perry. Valerie, welcome to. Pretty Curious. How are you?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: We're great. Thanks for having us.

VALERIE GEORGE: We're so happy to be here.

JVN: Chemists Corner. I want to hear a little bit about what you guys do. Uh Just tell us about what you guys do. First of all.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Well, our main uh project together is the Beauty Brains Podcast and website and essentially we're real cosmetic chemists that answer beauty product questions. We've been doing it for, well, I, we started back in about 2008 as a website and eventually turned it into a podcast starting around 2012 and then Valerie came on board around 2018. So we've been together ever since.

JVN: I've got to give you guys a little background on like what today's episode is about.

VALERIE GEORGE: Ok.

JVN: We got to have Frances Hannon on the pod a few weeks ago and she's like the hair and makeup and prosthetics Designer for Wicked and like so many incredible movies. And I thought I went through this phase where I like, thought that I didn't like La Maire. Then I realized that I was obsessed with La Mer. I just didn't warm it up in my fingertips first. Now I'm a La Mer addict and it's not great for the bank, but it's like, like the skin's looking real cute. But Francis was telling us about this gel cleanser. And then I was thinking about how like, Le Mer has their gel cleanser and then they have that one more like foamy one that's like that. It's giving you like Clearasil like texture from like the nineties but like, you know, little green and super expensive —

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Sure.

JVN: I was like, what is the difference with cleansers? Like what is the difference between facial cleansers? Like what makes the cleansing oil honey? What makes a foaming cleanser? What makes a gel cleanser? And I was like, I got to figure this out. So that's where you guys come in.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Well, our specialty is knowing how these formulas work and how they're put together so we can help.

JVN: How much is like how often is too often for washing your face?

VALERIE GEORGE: Well, I think uh washing your face once a day is good enough. I think if you wash it too many times, you can remove a lot of the natural beneficial compounds on your skin. And so my aesthetician has always told me, keep it to once, especially if you have sensitive skin rosacea or any other skin melodies and then just use water the rest of the time. Uh, but it's a little bit different if you, uh, wear makeup or you have lots of other stuff on your skin, you wouldn't be able to get that off first. Uh, I guess it would be one face washing and then you would actually wash your skin, which would be the second that would happen at one time.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: You know, one of the things about our show is that Valerie is the product user and I'm just the guy who kind of knows how it makes. And so she gives a lot of beauty product use advice and I'm like uh wash your face, but I do it in the shower.

JVN: But what's like, I mean, and then to like zoom in like, I think this is the question for you Perry, like when we say that we're like, you know, washing your face like what's going on and like the bacterial, like, like skin level of your skin, like what's going on in there?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: That's, you know, that's a great question. Now, your skin has the microbiome. So there's some, you know, bacteria that's good there and there's some, you know, other organisms that are not good, but essentially you are washing your face, your face naturally will produce oil se bone. And so that gets on your face and some of that is good because it uh well provides food for your microbiome. But it also makes your skin more flexible. However, it can absorb pollutants from the atmosphere dirt. And so your face just over time will collect dirt. And when you wash it, you're removing that oil and that dirt and you're refreshing the surface. So that's why you have to clean. And of course, if you're using makeup, you want to remove all of that because that's a foreign material. And finally your skin, the outer layer is full of dead skin cells. And when you, whenever you cleanse your face, you're gonna remove some of those. And if you want extra uh of those moved off, you're gonna exfoliate your face. So that's essentially what you're doing when you're cleaning your face

JVN: Perry. This might be a doctor question. But I always wonder this like if you have like if you like touched the handle and then you like touch your face and you get like, like some strep bacteria on your face and then you go home and you wash your face with just like your lame gel cleanser. Is that gonna like wash that strep off your face or will it just like move it around or will it kill it because it's like foamy or like or not all foaming cleanser is gonna like kill a fucking bacteria?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Pretty much the process of cleaning your face with any kind of sort of surfactant like that. And that's the thing that makes the bubbles is going to both uh kill the bacteria and, and remove it. So, yes, it's, it's going to do that. Now. Uh some products used to claim to be antibacterial and the FDA has sort of said, well, all of these products are removing it so you can't claim yours is antibacterial because it implies other people's aren't. So any kind of washing like that with uh a surfactant or a foaming ingredient is gonna get rid of bacteria from your face.

JVN: What is like the kind of spectrum of cleansers from like most cleansing to like most gentle?

VALERIE GEORGE: Well, I think uh, all cleansers clean at the end of the day, but it's really how effectively they can emulsify the dirt and debris off of the face and then get swept away by the water. And so I'm thinking in that respect, I would say like cream based cleansers, oil based cleansers, they're probably more on the weaker side because they just intrinsically have more oily components to them and they have less uh, surfactants and things that'll sweep off the face when you splash uh all the bubbles with water, uh gel cleansers, I would say are the most cleansing. They typically have the highest concentration of surfactants. Um, that's why your face can sometimes feel squeaky after them. And uh foaming cleansers, I would say um our second bar cleansers, I always never felt they really cleanse for me. I mean, like, technically they are, but they also leave this like residue on the skin. So it's, it's

hard to tell. But I would say like in order of operations from like most cleansing to least cleansing it would be gel foam, uh cream, oil, like the liquid oil cleansers, um bar cleansers.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: You know, I'm gonna, I'm gonna show my age in this industry, I've been in it for a lot of times and when I first started in the industry, they were pretty, the only cleansers was really your bar soaps. So, uh, so when I see bar cleanser, I'm thinking soap and really soap is probably one of the most harsh things that you can use on your face. And so —

JVN: Because at least my skin is so fucking, excuse me, at least my skin is so tight. If I use bar soap, like if you're in like a pinch, it's like, oh, it hurts.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: It's, it's an, it's because it's an alkaline material. It's very good at cleaning, but it will also uh can leave a residue on your face and can be very irritating to skin.

VALERIE GEORGE: Yeah, I don't like the residue. Yeah. And that your skin takes 4 to 6 hours for that PH to come back down after using a bar soap. So you have to put something else on after it.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: But some people do like that tight feeling and I think what you made an excellent point that there is no one cleanser that works for everybody. You've got to find the cleanser and the procedure that you like. The interesting thing about cleansers is Valerie had mentioned the oil cleansers and gel cleansers. They clean the face in a different way and oil is essentially you're putting more oil on your face and then you've got to wipe that away. And so it's the wiping process that's removing both the oil that you're putting on there and the oil that was naturally there, it's always good to follow up with some sort of water based one to remove any sort of residual oil also.

JVN: Oh, ok. Wait, let's say that again. So if you're using like a, like a, like an oil cleanser or what's like a Ponds cleanser? Like class? Is that like a cold cream? Like, what would that —

VALERIE GEORGE: It's like a cream based cleanser. Cream cleanser.

JVN: Yeah. So like if you're, if you're doing a double wash, well, I guess we weren't even saying, implying that, but if you're doing an oil based cleanser or a cream based cleanser, like you're probably going to need to do two washes to get that all the way off.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Yes.

VALERIE GEORGE: I think so.

JVN: Yeah, I think so too because my face feels crazy if I only use oil cleanser, even though I did go through a phase where I did that. And then what is the stuff in the Le Mer cleanser or like the Clearasil Cleanser? Like I feel like I'm not describing it well, and this is when I wish that getting curious hadn't gotten canceled on Netflix because then we could do like a video of it. And this is also why we need to go back in person so that we can do it for like youtube. But like what is those kind of like ribbons of that like pearlescent like you know, that kind of like pearlescent vibe and like Clearasil or like all the way up to like a La Mer when it's like to me, like that's like that foaming cleanser?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: No, you, you're describing it correctly. That is, it's called Pcent and it's actually just a special effect that we put into formulas. So it looks like it's more moisturizing. It's an ingredient called the EGMS Ethylene Mono Sterite which it has a certain

solubility in the water. So it's not quite, it won't quite dissolve in there. So it comes out and it makes the little pearlescent effect and it's specifically done just to give it a look. Uh And, and that communicates a message to the consumer that this is uh moisturizing

JVN: But it has no material benefit?

VALERIE GEORGE: No.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Not really.

JVN: No. Uh, rude!

VALERIE GEORGE: Yeah.

JVN: If you're someone who has a kind of chronic acne and or just like chronic dry skin, it's kind of the idea of like over oily hair. It's like because you're over washing, like, you know, you overwash and then like the like the oil glands in your scalp, like they make more oil and then, you know, you wash again, you're like, why is my hair oily again? So, over washing can create like excess oil production, which can create acne, right?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: That's one possibility for a acne. But there's lots of different things. We don't exactly know. Yeah. Yeah, we don't know.

VALERIE GEORGE: Exactly. I think the biggest problem with over washing your skin is that your skin, even though the outermost layer is dead, it has lots of valuable lipids um in it like ceramides, which are really crucial to maintaining the skin's barrier. So not allowing water to escape the skin, the water is so valuable for cell function. Uh, keeping organisms like you mentioned, wiping a strep bacterium on your face, um you know, preventing those from getting in and when you constantly wash the skin and get it wet and apply these cleansers to it. If you do it once a day, that's cool. No problem. But if you do it um too much and then you're exfoliating on top of it and you're doing all this other stuff to your face, you can disrupt the skin's barrier and that can lead to different um skin concerns that are really hard to make go away once that happens. So, um inflammation, uh rosacea, uh if you're prone to eczema can exacerbate eczema. So it's really important to uh not be uh it's important to be kind to your skin essentially to keep that barrier intact, I think to me that's the most important thing you want to watch out for when you wash your face.

JVN: How do I feel about facial cleansing cloth? Like not like the disposable ones but like when you're like for me, I love like a little gentle washcloth. Like I also was a huge fan of that like nineties AVEDA Shamy, like uh so iconic.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Yeah.

JVN: But do you like, do you like to just go in with your hands? Do you like to use something to assist? Like those little like silicone, like little face things? Like, how do you feel about accessories?

VALERIE GEORGE: I do like the feel of the silicone face things. I mean to me that feels weird. I'm like, what am I rubbing my face with? But I don't mind a little cloth because um you know, if you don't exfoliate your face super often using a little cloth can help lift up those some of those dead skin cells and so your skin kind of looks bright and fresh all the time. Um, now if you exfoliate every day, which would be too much, I think it might be overkill to

use that on your skin and it might actually cause more irritation from the friction. But if you know you're, if, if it's a gentle cloth, it's totally cool.

JVN: I actually like, don't I think because I wear makeup like almost every day if I'm working. So like when I go to take it off, like I'm always using a washcloth because I can't get like the mascara and the eye without —

VALERIE GEORGE: Yeah.

JVN: I mean my hands, I just leaves too much behind and then I also always go in with a Q tip in my water to get my lash line because that mascara, I can't get it all the way off and my inner corner is like my shit's so hooded. I got to get in there with a fucking Q tip because I just, I hate leaving any makeup behind on my eyes. It just bothers the shit out of me because I can see it.

VALERIE GEORGE: I always like mascara the second day because it's like eyeliner, you can just like, you know, kind of clean it up and then it's like you have eyeliner on day two.

JVN: How do I feel about? I'm, I'm paranoid about putting retinol on my skin in the daytime even with SPF over it. I just feel like, I don't know, is that too granola of me?

VALERIE GEORGE: I just feel like, no, I feel like it's a better night time product. Your skin's barrier is at its lowest at night. And so it has the most opportunity to penetrate during the day. Your skin's worried about protecting itself from, you know, free radicals and all that kind of stuff. So I'm a retinol at night person if I did use it.

JVN: Do you guys like any little is there like a particular like laser or like noninvasive thing that you guys are obsessed with or that you've heard like really good reviews about?

VALERIE GEORGE: I once did, um, alt therapy. Have you heard of it?

JVN: No.

VALERIE GEORGE: Ok. Basically they take this frequency of a laser and they blast your, your neck and your face with it and they just stamp and they keep going around. I'm not gonna lie. It hurts really bad. Ok. Um, like, so bad. It felt like —

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: it hurts to be beautiful.

VALERIE GEORGE: Um, it felt like they were putting cigarettes out on my face. That's how bad it hurt.

JVN: Your skin is so pretty.

VALERIE GEORGE: Oh, thank you. Yeah. Well, so, anyway, after the procedure I was like, I hope it was worth this, you know, like \$2000 or whatever I paid and, um, they say it takes like a few weeks to kick in and so over time people will be like, wow, your skin looks so good and like, tight. What do you do? And I'm like, I mean, nothing.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: It's natural **laughs.**

VALERIE GEORGE: And then I was like, oh my God, the old therapy it worked and I got compliments for like, months. And my friend said it's a very popular procedure in South Korea —

JVN: Ooh!

VALERIE GEORGE: And she said some places like the frequency is so intense. They actually put you out for it. Now. I don't know if that's true. That's just what she told me. But I was like, I wanted to be put out for what I had in America. So I couldn't imagine if it were more intense.

JVN: No. So your face doesn't, like, peel off or whatever.

VALERIE GEORGE: No, no, no, because it's uh sending frequency into the deepest collagen layers of your skin.

JVN: Is it like a fucking shock collar or something like a dog?

VALERIE GEORGE: I don't know.

JVN: Like running away from like the invisible fence or something?

VALERIE GEORGE: It was awful. It felt like cigarettes. But again, it wasn't burning, it was all like deep within.

JVN: Creating formulas. Cosmetic chemist life also Beauty Brains Podcast. What's the hardest part for you guys in creating a new formula?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: I think one of the hardest things for a chemist in creating a new formula is trying to satisfy the desires of your marketing department. You know, our industry is really driven not by the technology, but it's driven by the marketers and they want you to create products that satisfy some crazy claims that they have and often the claims they want to make are well beyond what the technology can actually do. So the challenge is creating a formula that everyone likes, but it also satisfies what your marketing people want to sell.

VALERIE GEORGE: Perry stole my answer. That's the hardest part. It's, you know, reining in marketing or the the brand people and saying, you know, it's not really how it works because they get inspired by looking at what other people are doing and other marketing comp you know, departments are also saying crazy things that may not necessarily be able to be supported. So you have to tell them like that's great that that company says it, but that's not like really is what happening or how it works.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: I think another challenging part though is also creating a formula that people will notice is different than your competitors. Uh because it's just really hard to make uh products that people notice differences with.

JVN: keeping a podcast spicy and saucy and engaged for a decade. Honey. We're coming up on our decade next year and we have just been in these streets, the three of us and the podcast streets, you know, dealing with these trends, dealing with the changes of the industry. How did it start and how have you guys kept it spicy and interesting all these years?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Well, originally I started it with another chemist that I work with and we did it anonymously because back in the day —

JVN: Ooo!

VALERIE GEORGE: Yeah.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: You know, we were working for a company so we could not actually reveal who we were. So we had these monikers of the left brain and the right brain and cerebellum. But it was really too just two guys talking about products anonymously. Uh, and eventually I left the company. And so we were, I was able to come out and be the face of the beauty brains. And so me and my partner, uh Randy, who he recorded, you know, a lot of the shows in the beginning with me, we would just get questions from consumers and we would answer them from the standpoint of scientists. Now, one of the problems with that iteration was that it's two guys that don't really use the products very much. And so Randy kind of got left the show and we brought on uh Valerie because uh Valerie not only does she have the chemistry background, but she actually is a product fan. So that really helps.

JVN: She's got the hair for it honey. I love it.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: So she came on around 2018 and we've been going strong ever since

JVN: 2018 was a good year. That was a good Olympics. It was, it was, you know, it was a good midterm. That was, I really don't have too many notes for 2018.

VALERIE GEORGE: Yeah. Yeah. Which is a good thing. And what keeps it interesting is, you know, we offer a little bit of personality into the show. We have our famous in a chit chat. People always want to know what we're up to what we're doing. I travel a lot. Perry travels a lot for work. We get to go to these conferences and speak on things and people, people like to hear about that also. We have cats. Perry has uh many outdoor cats. I have a cat problem at my lab. And so, you know, people like to hear that kind of conversation.

JVN: A cat what at your lab?

VALERIE GEORGE: Just a cat problem. We have a lot of cats everywhere.

JVN: I love that. You guys love cats. That's so cute. Um How did you guys become cosmetic chemists? Like how did you get into it?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: I just stumbled into it. I went to college. I said, what do you want to get a degree? And I'm like, oh, I like biology or, and then I switched to chemistry because that's where all the jobs were. And then when I got out I had this degree in chemistry. I didn't know what I wanted to do, but I landed a job at a shampoo factory and got into cosmetics and I was only going to be in it for like one year. I'm like, I'll, I'll do this for a year and, and then go back to school and do something important. But you know what I got into the industry and, you know, it's a fun industry to be a, a formulator in. So that's how I stumbled into it like.

VALERIE GEORGE: The same thing with me. I was sick of the cold weather back east where I went to grad school and I said I'm going to move to California and I started looking for jobs in LA and I saw all these cosmetic companies were hiring, but I was a biotech person and I was like, wait cosmetic chemists, chemists make cosmetics. I could get paid to make lipstick for a living? And that was it.

JVN: What do you want consumers to know about the beauty industry and how they can get the best, the best stuff for them and, or how they can just navigate the space?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Well, the whole show was started. The whole project was started to help educate consumers in a way that they weren't getting educated because mostly

consumers are educated by the marketers of products and they're just trying to get you to buy products. I was, I was sort of driven to help people get products that work for them and, and not feel bad if they're buying something that is inexpensive because they think if it's inexpensive, it can't work as well. Now, the reality is the price does not really relate to how well something is gonna work. Now, it does make people feel better when they buy something that's like a two ounce product for \$300. It's gonna be big.

JVN: Do you think La Mer's ingredients are worth it. Am I being duped? I feel like it really takes the pillow lines off my face way faster than other fucking —

VALERIE GEORGE: Le Mer is pretty good.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: This is, this is the advice I give everybody if it works for you just keep doing it because —

JVN: Because other moisturizers don't take the pillow lines like off my face like La Mer like takes fucking pillow lines off my face in the morning in like a minute or two.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Sure, yeah.

JVN: Like other moisturizers don't do that. I don't know what, I don't know what it has.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: I think one of the important things to know about products though is the way it works and how it works is not just based on the ingredients that are used, it's based on how you also feel about your identity with the brand —

VALERIE GEORGE: Yep.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: How you feel about your aesthetic interaction. So I can't just stay here and look at the uh the chemicals and say, oh well that, that cheap one would work just as good as that expensive one because a lot of how these things work is psychological in addition to what it actually does. So if Le Mer is working for you that keep going.

VALERIE GEORGE: Yup.

JVN: Ok, both of you budget beauty recommendation under \$10?

VALERIE GEORGE: Um, I really like uh drugstore products, Cereve, Cetaphil, for skincare because they're really simple formulas. They, you know, no muss no fuss and I like them.

JVN: What about boots? I also love boots?

VALERIE GEORGE: Um I haven't tried too many of the products but um I know some people that work for them overseas and they're pretty good.

JVN: Per? Ry? **Giggles.**

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: What I'm, I'm just like a basic bob and suave shampoo works. Works great.

JVN: Dang honey. Ok. Suave. She's a little dehydrating for length. Splurge recommendation?

VALERIE GEORGE: Like in any category?

JVN: Could be any category but it also could be beauty.

VALERIE GEORGE: You know. Well, since we're talking beauty, I'll just do it splurge. I like splurging on a good hair mask.

JVN: Uhh, I love a good hair mask. Just makes me feel lush expensive, gorgeous.

VALERIE GEORGE: It makes me feel loved. Yeah, I'm loving myself.

JVN: We have to send you Nuture, we'll send you Nurture, we'll send you, we gotta make a note, make a note, Nate. Perry, what about you?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: You know, I think I like a good shaving cream. And so you get a nice gel one that foams up to it.

JVN: What's your shaving cream rec Perry? I didn't see it coming. The ladies want to know for their huzzies.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: I'm very basic. Like the Gillette stuff works.

JVN: You said, this is splurge, Perry. You can't contradict yourself.

VALERIE GEORGE: Well we're lucky he's not using his shampoo to shave.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Right, that is my splurge cause usually I just use shampoo.

VALERIE GEORGE: It's so terrible.

JVN: Wow, honey, that is, I love it though. You're just giving me like you can't help it. That that's your vibe.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: That's why, that's why Valerie had to come on the show because —

JVN: We got work that out a little bit honey. Like he's out here talking about Suave and stuff. But that's ok. You know, we're not shaming nobody anywhere and Suave is great. Um, uh, ok. Wait, what's a product? You never leave home without?

VALERIE GEORGE: Burt's Bees lip balm.

JVN: Perry?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Toothpaste.

JVN: You leave your house with toothpaste?

VALERIE GEORGE: Oh I have to go get groceries. Let me bring my toothpaste.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: You always, you always have to be ready. You know, you want to have fresh breath.

JVN: You always do you bring toothpaste and a toothbrush or just the paste?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: No, no, a little brush too, you know, just in case you get stuck in your teeth.

VALERIE GEORGE: Oh, I'm dead.

JVN: Ok. Perry. I love, I love um, ok. Uh, what is your, I normally would do a bit of a vintage beauty memory but we don't have time you guys, I'm so sorry. We got to get into a rapid fire.

Perry and Valerie. It's time for our final segment. It's rapid fire favorites. I'm gonna prompt you with a question. And all you have to do is tell me the first favorite that pops into your head. Are you ready?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Yeah.

VALERIE GEORGE: We are ready.

JVN: Cleanser?

VALERIE GEORGE: Skin Fix, uh, oil cleanser.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: V05.

JVN: Oh my God **everyone laughs.** Perfume or fragrance.

VALERIE GEORGE: The uh Aesop, um, I forget what it's called, but it's really wooded.

JVN: Perry?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Michael Jordan had a fragrance I used —

JVN: Oh my God, moisturizer?

VALERIE GEORGE: I use uh Renee Rouleau vitamin C treatment.

JVN: Ooo, how much is that Valerie? Is it expensive or is that I was just gonna think I give them up, give them down.

VALERIE GEORGE: Um, it's like 80 bucks or something like that but it lasts like a whole month.

JVN: What's like, what's like a good dupe? What's a good dupe? What's a good dupe? This economy is hard.

VALERIE GEORGE: I don't know. A good dupe, but I would say just like a Cetaphil moisturizer.

JVN: Oh yeah, you already gave it. Yes. Yes. Yes. Perry Pomade. Do you fuck with pomades or do you only fuck with hats?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Pomades. Uh, Axe had of pomades which I really liked.

JVN: Ok, Axe is fierce. You know, I mean, unless you have a fragrance allergy but then it's like, you know, that's um yes. What about accessory like bag, coat? Um, like, you know your favorite like —

VALERIE GEORGE: Watch.

JVN: Ooo, what kind of watch?

VALERIE GEORGE: Uh, this is Tithings. It looks like a classic watch but it actually is a smart watch.

JVN: Oh, ok. We love that, Perry?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Baseball caps.

JVN: Ok. I love that. That's also Karamo's favorite thing. So that's cute. Um chemical compound?

Valerie George: Water.

JVN: Ooo, that's good one.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Petrolatum. It gets a bad rap but it's really great for moisturizer.

JVN: Petrol — what, what did you, how did you say it again?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Petrolatum.

JVN: Is that like petroleum —

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Jelly? It's derived from that, but it's essentially Vaseline.

JVN: I love a little Vaseline so multifaceted —

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Totally.

JVN: Foundation Val — erie?

VALERIE GEORGE: I really like um beauty blender has for me a really great foundation because it's super lightweight and you can kind of, you know, use it with your fingers, stamp it out across your face, matches my skin tone perfectly. It used to come in like a really cool um dispenser where you could like bounce on the dispenser. They got rid of that uh good thing because it broke but now it's in droplets. I forget what it's called, but I think it's just called Bounce Foundation.

JVN: Bounce Foundation. Ok. Love that. I didn't know the beauty blender had a um a makeup line. That's so cool.

VALERIE GEORGE: Yeah, yeah.

JVN: Favorite movie Perry Rushmore. Oh, that's a classic. We love, Valerie?

VALERIE GEORGE: Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves. It's very cringey and I also like the men in tights version.

JVN: Ok, so good. So I love we're giving, we're giving range you guys reusable water bottle?

VALERIE GEORGE: I use a Frank and Green bottle. Um and it's the kind that you flip the top up and —

JVN: Oh yeah, my bestie uses that I love those. How about you, Perry?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: I use. Is it a Stanley knockoff that I got at Target.

JVN: I love a good dupe, skincare brand overall?

VALERIE GEORGE: I mean, I really like if I had to pick like one collection to live with Skin Fix is, Skin Fix is all right.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: I'd say new to Neutrogena.

JVN: I felt like that was like Perry's first like hearted answer and I'm so glad that you saved the best for last. Like, I feel like that was like your first, like, really hearted wreck of that. Like,

I like the other ones. You were like, fucking with me, but I feel like that you actually really like meant it and like, loved it. And I think that's like really good.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: There you go.

JVN: Um, wait, you guys, what's your production schedule for um Beauty Brains? Is it every Wednesday? Where can people listen?

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: We, we try to do once we try to do once a week and typically it's coming out on Wednesday or Thursday, yes.

JVN: Ok, Wednesdays or Thursdays, wherever you get your podcasts, I'm guessing. Right.

VALERIE GEORGE: Yep. The Beauty Brains on Spotify on Apple.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: The best way if you want to follow us, you go to [patreon.com/the Beauty Brains](https://patreon.com/theBeautyBrains) and we, you know, we follow us there.

JVN: Thank you guys so much for coming on, you guys. I had so much fun —

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: All right.

JVN: And let me know if you guys ever need anything. And um I think I got, I think I got everything. So yeah, we just, we went all the way there with our cleanser, I think.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI: Yeah, we did.

VALERIE GEORGE: Yeah, hopefully.

JVN: I think hopefully, I think we did. I think my ADHD maybe won the battle today but we if we didn't get there, we'll, we'll have you guys back to get more into face cleansers. If you guys would be so, so generous um —

VALERIE GEORGE: We'd love to talk more and don't forget to leave home without your toothpaste.

JVN: Yes, toothpaste forever. Thank you so guys so much.

VALERIE GEORGE: Bye guys.

JVN: You've been listening to Pretty Curious with me, Jonathan Van Ness. You can learn more about this week's guest in the episode description and follow us on Instagram and TikTok @CuriouswithJVN. Pretty Curious drops every Monday wherever you get your podcasts and make sure to tune in every Wednesday for Getting Curious. Still can't get enough? Honey, you're insatiable! Subscribe to Extra Curious on Apple Podcasts for commercial free listening and our subscription only show, Ask JVN, where we're talking all about sex, relationships, or really just whatever's on my mind that week. Our theme music is composed by Nathanael McClure. Come on Nathanael! Our editor and engineer is also Nathanael McClure, yes! Getting Curious is produced by me, Chris McClure with production support from Julie Carrillo, Anne Currie and Chad Hall.