

Evelyn: [00:00:01](#) You're listening to The Hosting Journey podcast, episode 73

Evelyn: [00:00:12](#) Welcome listeners. I am your host Evelyn Badia, living an Airbnb life since 2010 in Brooklyn, New York. At The Hosting Journey, we're all about the world of Airbnb and vacation rentals. I will show you how to expand your hosting potential and increase your listing profits. The Hosting Journey show, where no hosting subject is taboo and if it is, it won't be for long. Show notes and links can be found at [thehostingjourney.com](http://thehostingjourney.com) you can also follow me on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, at the Hosting Journey. Thank you for listening.

Evelyn: [00:00:49](#) Dear hosts. My guess is that some of you are probably sharing your extra bedroom in your apartment. Others probably have one private listing and you're wondering, oh, how do I grow from one listing to five to 10 to more than 20. Well, Maria and her husband Jay, are hosts in New Jersey, when they started Airbnb in 2010 they did in their private home and their business grew from there and they're not a company with a big staff. In today's show, from one to more than 20 listings, the evolution of an Airbnb host. I talked to Maria about her journey as an Airbnb host. In this episode, we talk about how Maria provided breakfast because she thought she had to. Breakfast was good. It was a great setup for guests, quick conversations and memories, tactics for approaching landlords the wrong way and the right way, how it was the wild west and how it started to change. Flying by the seat of your pants with insurance.

Evelyn: [00:01:53](#) How Maria did not even need to look at apartments to rent because she already had a plan. We also talk about market change in 2018 and why Maria and Jay decided to close down their Airbnb business in the United States. Listen to Maria's story, in [From One to More than 20 listings: The Evolution of an Airbnb Host](#), to learn all about it.

Evelyn: [00:02:18](#) But first one of the issues that Maria and I spoke about was the importance of having that list of products we love and trust. After nine years of living with guests, you have to know what drinking glasses last longer, the wine glasses that look nice without costing too much and the items that are worth spending extra on like bed bug covers for your beds and pillows. That list of go-to products is essential.

Evelyn: [00:02:43](#) Listen to the sponsorship for more information

Speaker 2: [00:02:47](#) [Music]

Evelyn: [00:02:48](#) One of the the most frequently asked questions on the Facebook group The Hosting Journey is what kind of sheets should I use? What insurance companies are best for vacation rentals? All good questions. Well, no need to worry. I have done the homework and as usual, I got you covered. My dear host, just go to the [hosting journey.com/essentials](https://hostingjourney.com/essentials) and you will find exactly what you need in order to build your Airbnb right, right from the start. Yes, some links are affiliate links, but these are products and companies I used to build my own Airbnb business. I recommend them because they are reliable and I continued to use them to this day and go back to that page from time to time because I will be updating this links every so often we do sessions and products. Why? Because I learn and look for new companies all the time. So as I find new companies and products that pass the Evelyn test, I will be updating the essentials page. Visit the [hosting journey.com/essentials](https://hostingjourney.com/essentials) to get everything you need for your vacation rental. And now back to the show.

Evelyn: [00:04:12](#) Maria, thank you so much for joining us at the Hosting Journey because you and I are one of the original hosts.

Maria: [00:04:19](#) Yes.

Evelyn: [00:04:20](#) How did we actually meet?

Maria: [00:04:22](#) Oh my God. Well, just before this call I was looking back at my transaction history because we remember the name of the first guest, but I was trying to remember the exact date. You know, this was 2010 it was in September, so I think by the time kind of November, December rolled around, I was all in and in the beginning of 2011 that's when I started to get involved in the community. And at the time of course, dear Sheila was involved, Airbnb was still growing. They were still very kind of handle the, you had direct interaction with the guys at the top. The guys at the bottom, we knew everybody and so there was events, there was a community event in New York and I thought, I don't care that I'm from New Jersey. I'm serving the New York marketplace. I'm in.

Evelyn: [00:05:12](#) Did we meet at that event? You remember when Brian Chesky came to New York the first time and I think it was somewhere in the 30s and you would hit her. I still remember, I was talking to Brian Chesky and I mentioned to him about him being a bodybuilder. Right, right.

Maria: [00:05:29](#) Well I, I, it probably was because I think it was, you know, at that time when I had already kind of grown a little bit, so maybe we didn't meet until maybe a couple of years in, because at the very first time I met Brian, I remember him saying like, Oh my God, how many places do you have? Like this is insane. How did you grow them so fast? And I'm like, I don't know. Just kinda happened. And he's like, wait, we've got to do a story about you. And

then of course that, and I thought it was funny because they were kind of pushing the homestay over the host experience was more than narrative or it became more and more of narrative later. But at the time I'm like, dude, who do you think is making all the money for you guys? And then we started to see each other at all kinds of events and we just always were chatting.

Maria: [00:06:14](#) And then, you know, some of the people who are very good friends with me now to this date, our hosts that I met at those events, and I'm still very connected with a number of hosts here in my area. In the Manhattan area, kind of less so because there's lots that have kind of dropped out. But yeah, meeting people at these events, at these community events and workshops and everything was phenomenal.

Evelyn: [00:06:38](#) And we even went to the Airbnb open together.

Maria: [00:06:40](#) We stayed together. Roommate, roommate. That's so much fun. It was, that first opened was really special. It was really a very, very, you know, it sounds a bit sappy to say transformative, but it was just so powerful to see something that we had been doing to be so massive and to be so interesting and all these cool people and everybody's just so fun and interesting and such good stories and all kind of the same.

Maria: [00:07:10](#) Like we all kind of had the same stories and we all have the same frustrations. And so that was really interesting to me. I'd never really been to any events like that before.

Evelyn: [00:07:22](#) I know.

Maria: [00:07:22](#) That was really cool just to sit there and you and I were just like, this is pretty awesome.

Evelyn: [00:07:28](#) I know.

Maria: [00:07:29](#) You know, it was justification to, it was like, yeah, Dang, we're doing a good job.

Evelyn: [00:07:32](#) I remember that first Airbnb Open and seeing our names and the bags and I met my first fan. It was Josh.

Maria: [00:07:39](#) I remember that we were together, we were walking down the street, we were going to get a coffee and he came up to you and you're like, oh my God. I remember. That's so funny

Evelyn: [00:07:49](#) I think is the whole start of who we are as hell. But let's start from the beginning. How did you become an Airbnb host? What was two origin story? What was your journey?

Maria: [00:08:02](#) We had um, been living, we're from Canada and we had,

Evelyn: [00:08:05](#) Who is we?

Maria: [00:08:06](#) My husband and I. And his name is Jay or John Jay. And we had been living in the US since 2002 I came here on an L1 visa to work for a company at the time was called Ultra Star entertainment is a company that David Bowie was involved in is a company that was ultra cool, so fun. And we had lived in Harlem and the company was starting to make changes and everything. So I had been laid off at the time we were living in Harlem, paying, huge rent. And we decided let's buy some properties. So we came and looked in New Jersey, found a house, bought it, moved in, and at the time a friend of mine from Vancouver called me and said, oh, I have a friend of a friend who's coming to New York.

Maria: [00:08:55](#) I know you have a three-bedroom house. Could she stay with you? And I'm like, what? Some stranger's going to stay with me. I'm like, yeah, sure. I don't care. She can come. And he said, no, no, she'll pay you. And I was like, who is gonna pay to stay in my spare room to come to New York? That's the most insane thing I've ever heard of. Two days later, there's an article in the New York Times about Airbnb with exactly this scenario, and my husband and I looked at each other. We're like, what is this the thing like let's do it. What do we got to lose? So we instantly, you know, it was at my sewing room, take sewing machine out. I did a little bit of research, like two-second research on Airbnb. There was a site looked easy enough. So I'm like, let's do it.

Maria: [00:09:35](#) Move the sewing room out, put a bed in there. And in fact, I posted on Facebook the other day pictures of a set of sheets that I went to Sears to buy that are still holding up. They were like phenomenal. They still are phenomenal sheets. So we made a bed. I made it look, you know, as pretty as I was able, we posted the listing and within like a day we had a booking and it was a Brazilian couple, Nelson, I can't remember his girlfriend's name. And they selected us because I speak Portuguese and they didn't speak any English and they were nervous about it. So they came and stayed for a week and we were making breakfast. But it was like instant friends. It wasn't like, Oh, you know, it was still so weird that, but the good thing was there was no financial transaction taking place personally.

Maria: [00:10:21](#) So you can pretend that it was a friendship without money being involved because the money was all done behind the scenes.

Evelyn: [00:10:28](#) And I think that's one of the things that I love about Airbnb was because you don't have the money as change that it's behind the scenes. It's sort of like, oh, money's already handled.

Maria: [00:10:41](#) Yes, you're just free to be friends. And so that was how we started. And you know, after a couple of bookings, the second booking was a guy from Nigeria living in Germany and his girlfriend, they'd met on some exchange and they both came from different parts of the world and they stayed with us. And then we decided after a couple of bookings we're like, this is pretty good. I said to Jay, get that crap out of the office. Get your music equipment, put your keyboard downstairs, let's make some money.

Maria: [00:11:09](#) Because we were, at the time I had lost my job. I was on a visa specific to this job. So it was kind of a question of how all of that would work out. It's since been solved. I'm here totally legally. And Jay was still working, but still, you know, we had a mortgage to pay so we needed to do something. And so we got the second room going. This was so in the beginning that I was like, Oh, if we've got a second room, couldn't we take like a family with the kids? So then we played with how that all works. Now it's so easy with coordinating, making three listings, a room, room a, room B and Room a plus B, you know? But at the time it was, you know, a little tricky. Oh, I remember. Yeah. I didn't take many months for me to, to Jay again.

Maria: [00:11:54](#) Why are we sleeping in this huge big bedroom? What do we need this big bedroom for? So we moved down to the basement, which wasn't even a finished basement. There wasn't even any bathroom there. We put a blow up bed down there, put our clothes down there, fixed up our bedroom, and then we had three bedrooms going. So we were living in the basement like a dungeon. It was really like, you know, a dungeon. And in fact, when our friends and family came to visit, they stayed in the basement with us on blow up beds. At one point my brother came and our friend Steven came and they both were in the basement with us and we were sneaking upstairs to use the bathroom. Kind of in between guests using the bathroom.

Evelyn: [00:12:33](#) Oh my God. I remember when I started because I started like you. I started in May, 2010 so my anniversary is coming up and my first guest was Ed from Amsterdam because we, we, you know, we all remember our first guest.

Maria: [00:12:46](#) Yeah.

Evelyn: [00:12:47](#) I remember that. I had someone else tried to book first and I just did not take them. I was still nervous. I was like, wait, no, wait, no, I'm not ready for you.

Maria: [00:12:58](#) Yeah, I mean it is nerve wracking, but you know, I,

Evelyn: [00:13:01](#) I was giving up my bedroom. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, but I remember it and I did like you, I gave up, like I would say if they could stay in my backyard, of course I'm going to rent it out. Yeah. The things we did, I mean,

Maria: [00:13:16](#) At the time we were doing breakfast, you know, so we were like, I, yes.

Evelyn: [00:13:20](#) I remember that you used to go to the different places and serve breakfast

Maria: [00:13:24](#) It was such insanity. The bike that are used to use to bicycle between the places with this little kind of trailer attached, the trailer was \$180 off of Amazon. And I'm like, how am I gonna pay this back? Like, I'm, we're going to have to take a lot of bookings because I need to make this money back. This is crazy. So I'd be going down the street, I can't, blue bags have been like my lifesaver. So I'd be bicycling down the street because it wasn't long when we were doing the three bedrooms. So we now had six people at the most, six people plus us, and then we were kind of looking around going, can we do this somewhere else? This is kind of what started our business. So we started looking around, you know, going for walks in the neighborhood because our neighborhood was great.

Maria: [00:14:08](#) There's coffee shops, not lots but very ethnic, lots of coffee shops nearby, super easy transit into the city. Interesting. Like for people it was giving them kind of to holidays. They have this really kind of ethnically diverse neighborhood that they participate in like a real neighborhood and then 10 minutes in they're in the city. So it was kind of cool. So we saw a for rent sign on an apartment five blocks away and we phoned and talked to the woman. Of course we didn't tell her anything. We were just like totally, totally undercover at that point. I was like so, so sneakily careful and it was in a two family home, so was like a main floor apartment and there was an apartment above and maybe one of her relatives or something in the basement or whatever. But it was pretty close. So we went in and looked at this apartment, three bedroom, two bath, and we're like, ah, this is the money we're renting it.

Maria: [00:15:04](#) So we made a deal with her, sign the lease, forget about month to month, we signed the lease handshake deal.

Evelyn: [00:15:09](#) And you didn't her that you were doing Airbnb?

Maria: [00:15:11](#) No. Oh my God. We were, the first question we asked her is where do you live? And she goes, Oh, I live, you know, whatever. 20 miles away. We're like, great. So she wasn't going to be on site. We were not naive. We knew what we were doing, but we were a little bit more innocent about it. It certainly hadn't gotten any kind of bad press. We

weren't thinking about any liabilities. We weren't thinking about anything other than this is fun. Let's keep doing it. We're making money. Like that's the honest truth. We weren't considering lots of things that we now you're a carefully considered. So we started doing that and we were doing it room by room and in that apartment there was two bathrooms.

Maria: [00:15:49](#) So the master bedroom had its own bathroom, so now we could charge like \$110 for that room and charge 80 or whatever for the other two rooms and at the time there was limited availability. There wasn't a lot of inventory so we were booked all the time. Yes. So my trying to coordinate first. Okay, we're making breakfast here at eight o'clock house one it was like all by code. How's one breakfast does that between eight and nine and then house to breakfast is between eight 30 and nine 30 because we needed to, my husband had to go to work. I needed to get organized and do other stuff. So the night before it's making sure I had everything I need. Go into the supermarket, we're making a basic breakfast like Fruit Salad, oatmeal, yogurt.

Evelyn: [00:16:37](#) Why did you want to make breakfast?

Maria: [00:16:39](#) I thought that's what we have to do. I didn't want to, I was just like, oh their bed and breakfast. Okay. I guess I have to make breakfast. It wasn't cause I wanted to, it was ridiculous. It took so much effort and so much time and so much waste, but I thought that's how you have to do it. Everybody's doing it around me. Everybody was doing it.

Evelyn: [00:16:57](#) Where you guess eating the breakfast? Where you guests...

Maria: [00:17:00](#) This is the funny thing, when it was one couple in one room, like if the others had early appointments or whatever or weren't up yet, the one couple would sit down and they would maybe have a cup of coffee and maybe they'd grab a banana and go. When everybody sat down together, it was party. It was like the most incredible thing. I also loved that part of it, so I really didn't want to just be dropping off breakfast and going because I realized very early on that what was getting good reviews was not okay.

Maria: [00:17:34](#) The bathroom is clean, the house is clean, the house is nice. What was getting reviews was me. It was me, so I was a presence. Not me. Like, I'm so great, but a physical presence of somebody who is sitting there, not entertaining them but being, you know, telling them a story about New York or telling them a place that they love or giving them advice on their day. You're saying, no, don't go to Woodbury Commons. That's like two hours away. You'll waste the whole day. Going there, you know, go over here. I have such special special memories of some of those breakfasts and one of my very good friends who has interacted with our Airbnb guests since we started doing this because he's come, he sat at the breakfast table with them and every once in a while after a couple of drinks we will go through

our comedy routine of trying to do the accents of guests that we've had and very funny things that they've said.

Maria: [00:18:32](#) And you know, if I had thought about it at that time to make like a youtube channel of some of these breakfast was that it would have been those heartwarming things that you see on Facebook of like this old couple from Scotland who are celebrating their 65th anniversary together. And then a young couple from Singapore that are, you know, going out, um, he's like in some crazy outfit and she's in six inch heels and they're tottering down the sidewalk taking this old couple to the bus stop to make sure that they get on the bus correctly. Crazy things like that, that you just warms your heart. Of course. See the relationships that people make in between guests. So it was really interesting. Breakfast was the time. It was like the set up for the day. It was like the good setup. So it was whether it was over yogurt or bagels or whatever, it was the time when everybody is like, Oh, I did this yesterday. Oh cool. I want to do that too. So it was the guests giving each other good advice and the guests, you know, interacting, which was so helpful for me because I didn't need to be repeating those same things over and over. The guests were participating in that. It was really incredible. So we did that until we had three separate properties of nine listings. That's when it just started to get to insane. Like it just wasn't sustainable. It was too much.

Evelyn: [00:19:56](#) And you will do with them all as individual bedrooms. So you will not doing them as private apartments.

Maria: [00:20:01](#) No, it never even occurred to me. That was how my mind was thinking at the time. Individual groups.

Evelyn: [00:20:07](#) Interesting. Isn't it interesting how we evolved as business people, right?

Maria: [00:20:12](#) Yeah. Crazy. Right.

Evelyn: [00:20:15](#) Dear hosts, we've been at this since 2010 it's nine years as hose. I mean you're getting our experience of hosting for nine years. Back then there was no podcast, there was no educators, there was no Facebook groups, there was none of this.

Maria: [00:20:33](#) There was us just calling each other and say, ah hell, I'd have this issue.

Evelyn: [00:20:37](#) Exactly.

Maria: [00:20:38](#) And there weren't really issues. Honest to God, there were so few issues.

Evelyn: [00:20:42](#) Certainly, I mean what I remember was like when dear hosts, Back then. So Sheila used to be the Airbnb community person for Airbnb, New York and New Jersey and she used to create events for us as hosts and whenever she will invite us, we will be like bees to honey. Right? Like we would just like go eat and they like and all of us go because we will be like, oh my God there is an event and we could chat. And it wasn't about the event. It was only because we could talk to each other. Yeah. Because there was no Facebook groups. I think Facebook was going on there, but there was no groups invented back then in 2010. And Airbnb back then did not have groups either or forums because eventually, they created a forums. But we do have a way to communicate as groups.

Maria: [00:21:35](#) Yeah. You had to send each other coded messages separately. You still do if you want to get in touch with the local host, which is I think a big fault. I think that there should have been some much easier way. The groups just never worked. I don't think the forums, you know, we're kind of a bit, uh, I just didn't think there should have been host to host communication or something because even now, even like two weeks ago, I had to contact somebody looking to help a former guest of mine that I couldn't accommodate. And I had to go through this fake booking inquiry, which, you know, I get them too. And my initial reaction was like, Oh God, fake. You know, I was excited getting a booking and then my second reaction is, okay, it's a host too. I want to talk to,

Evelyn: [00:22:18](#) I remember whenever we would get together and uh, conversations and all of this. I remember you breakfast stories. Yeah.

Maria: [00:22:24](#) Oh my God.

Evelyn: [00:22:25](#) So you started getting these apartments that were, you did not tell the landlords that you were doing it and having all these amazing breakfast gatherings and now you have three apartments.

Maria: [00:22:37](#) Yes.

Evelyn: [00:22:38](#) And one of them are in your own private home. Yes. Two of them are landlords that they do not know.

Maria: [00:22:46](#) Yes. Or didn't know at the time. It wasn't clear when they did find out and then the next rental situation I finally decided, I'm just going to tell them what I'm doing if they don't like it. Because by then we had in looking to expand and looking at other

properties and you know, I was very strategic with how we were looking. It had to be a very small building. It needed to be no more than three units. It needed to be, you know, a great location. It needed to be a completely separate, not a semi-attached or attached property like a townhouse or a brownstone or anything. It needed, you know, that was my criteria in case of any noise leakage. I wanted not to be inviting extra issues. Yes, exactly. And I needed the landlord to be not living there and I would also ask them, so where does your family live?

Maria: [00:23:34](#) Cause I didn't want him having some uncle living next door because I was undercover. I was, you know, being sneaky. So I was trying to find that perfect situation, which surprisingly enough we found, you know, over and over again. And then I presented a good package. We had our financials ready. We would go to meet with a landlord with checks, with our records, with our smiles and our Canadian niceness. And they would say yes. Sometimes they would say no. They'd say thank you for your honesty. That's not what we're interested in. We're like, okay, no problem. So then I thought, let's just change the strategy. Let's just see if we start telling people what happens. And so the next time we went, we found this great big house. The location was kind of out of our area of comfort, but it has phenomenal views of the city and you know, it was a good rent.

Maria: [00:24:32](#) And I told the landlord, this is what we're doing, this is our attention, here's what we're doing to make sure that everything is good. And they're like, look, let us think about it. And then two days later they come back and they said, yeah, fine, no problem. Go ahead. And uh, I actually just went and visited them the other day. We're still friends. And it was that, that house when things, that's when it started really to be unscalable because that house was further away. It was like, you know, a 15-minute drive. So it was certainly not practical to be bicycling. So that's when we started then doing just breakfast on the weekend for everybody, you know, we would, because we still wanted to do something special. So that's when we started doing breakfast on the weekend. Then they became a bit more elaborate because now it was just once a week and most people were booking the weekends.

Maria: [00:25:18](#) So we were trying to make sure that every guest booking got kind of a special breakfast. So, and that was the first time that we had actually said out loud in very clear words what we were doing. And after that I'm like, okay, so there are landlords that are amenable to this for whatever their reasons. I know their reasons. Their number one reason was because they saw that we were legitimate people and it didn't take very long for them to see that they would drive by and that the lawn would be cut or that the front door was clean and polish and that the ugly numbers of their house had been replaced with much nicer house numbers or that all the light bulbs have been changed outside. So they were like, oh, well somebody taking care of my property. I don't have to maintain it.

Maria: [00:26:08](#) I don't have to think about it. And we were doing everything. If we were in a building, for example, a three-family building or a three unit building, we would be taken care of the building. We wouldn't just be taken care of our apartment because I didn't want guests to have their first initial reaction be to come into a smelly lobby or dirty carpets in the entryway. So it doesn't take long for a landlord to notice that and be like a sucker. I got them doing everything, you know, they're thrilled and we took care of any problems and none of them were asking us for, everybody was just giving it to us for market rent. They weren't asking for extra rent, they weren't asking for extra insurance. That all came later.

Evelyn: [00:26:48](#) Let me ask you a question. How do you approach a landlord? How is it that you go about it? Because I mean this, this conversation, how do we go about approaching a landlord? Because I could tell you what just happened to me in Puerto Rico where I try getting an apartment where I could live and also do Airbnb when I'm not there. And we could talk about that experience and what happened. But how do you go about it?

Maria: [00:27:13](#) Like I said, we had everything prepared, so really money talks and we had the money ready. We had the checks ready and we had our package, but what I did by the second time, so the first time being upfront with the landlord was David and David. They both want to partners. They were both named David. By the second time we were approaching landlords, we now had a more complete package. I had a photo album of my listings and my reviews, like an actual photo album that I took with me and accompanied by the checkbooks our financial, anything that they would want, you know, copies. At some point we used a letter of recommendation, which really they didn't care about all they cared about was somebody who's going to pay me the rent, take care of my property. That's all I care about. That's, that's it.

Maria: [00:28:01](#) There was nothing more. The copies and the reviews helped when there was any kind of hesitation because now we're getting into kind of 2004 2014 I'm sorry. You know, so people are starting to hear about Airbnb a bit more. They're still not hearing about it in such a negative way, but it's becoming a little bit more, um, just like Uber at the first time I heard Uber, but then after you use, just start hearing it again and again, Airbnb, Airbnb. So people are like, oh yeah, my cousin used Airbnb when they went to Berlin, you know? Oh, I've heard about that before. And then people were impressed with the reviews, you know, so they were impressed looking at the pictures because maybe they had been landlords that have had issues with their former tenants and maybe they had, who knows, hoarders, people with like 15 pet rats, you know, people with dogs that weren't careful. So when they see pictures of pretty fluffy pillows on a bed and a, you know, a nice sofa with a throw over it and kitchen with the, uh, table set, they're like, Oh wow, this looks nice. And I didn't, I didn't take it personally when somebody said no. It was just like, okay, next. You know,

Evelyn: [00:29:13](#) so now let me ask you a question. Do you get insurance for the apartment?

Maria: [00:29:17](#) No. Oh, it was such a wild west. And I mean honestly looking back, I cannot believe how lucky we were. Insurance didn't start to be an issue until maybe kind of 2015 because we had apartment insurance, we had, you know, renter's insurance. And I never once looked at a policy, I just, Oh we need insurance, we're going to get the same renter's insurance. We've always had never once looked at a policy, never thought about it. And then one day this woman, I don't know where maybe she was from Amsterdam, was very nice couple. And they, uh, I think that the woman was like four months pregnant or something. And so they were coming kind of their big trip before the baby and she tripped coming home on one of those things that open to go down to the cellar, you know, those things on the street, those kind of wooden doors, like Dorothy goes into stay away from the big Kansas City storm, those, whatever those things are called.

Maria: [00:30:27](#) There was one that was closed thank I goodness. And she tripped on it and she fell and she kind of hurt her. She had a little bit of a like a kind of road rash on her arm that she was perfectly fine and she came in. I happened to be there when they came in and I was just like panicked and you know, rushed her to the hospital and it was then that I was like, oh my God. Like what happens if somebody gets hurt? It was the first time that I've ever even thought about liability and as a Canadian we're really not as obsessed with liability. You know when somebody is like, oh, don't offer them a yogurt, you know, liability. Oh, don't you know, I'm like, oh, that's crazy. People aren't that nuts. That was the first time that it kind of hit me saying, I better look into this.

Maria: [00:31:12](#) And then we started to have conversations. I think as hosts, we were all having this realization at the same time because we were all kind of growing the people that I was involved with, you and many other hosts locally. We were all starting to have these conversations at the same time to be like, oh, we've got to get insurance. This, our insurance doesn't cover it. One friend of mine had called her insurance broker, if I remember correctly. She had called her insurance broker to ask questions and mentioned short term rental or mentioned Airbnb. And that day her insurance carrier dropped her coverage. And so then she was scrambling and that was kind of like, oh my God, this is really, so then we started to investigate different possibilities and different insurances and you know, there was some of her, many people interested in coverage and they wasn't until, you know, I went to Mike McKay, of course, he's so wonderful. He had these, you know, awesome. And it continues to have these awesome, uh, meetups with Airbnb hosts kind of in the New York area. And we started talking about that. Then we started talking about proper insurance and CBiz and you've done podcasts about them and slice and everything. And really our insurance coverage really didn't start in earnest until

kind of late 2016 early 2017 so there was a good chunk of years when we were flying by the seat of our pants.

Evelyn: [00:32:41](#) Yeah, no, I totally understand. I guys, Cbiz is a few years back, I totally understand, but I'm covered with CBIZ and they cover for vacation rental and host your home insurance will not cover you if you do in short term rental.

Maria: [00:32:58](#) Yes. And that's very important. And I tell that to every single person that starts because you know that's also a huge expense. So that was also something we weren't considering at that time when we were doing the wild west because we didn't have that additional expense. We could have suffered greatly because we could have lost everything. But when we were putting together our strategy of it, does this apartment make sense or does this rental, you know, is it financially feasible? That was one line item that we were never even considering. So it was, you know, almost always financially feasible because that's whatever it is, \$500 a month, \$600 a month. That I think that our insurance right now on one of our properties is \$600 a month.

Evelyn: [00:33:45](#) That's a lot.

Maria: [00:33:46](#) Yeah, no it is. I mean, it's, you know, four bedrooms, it's a big property, but still \$600 a month. That's a pretty big ticket on top of all of the other expenses that are necessary. So that's an extra kind of four days of booking, let's say, just to cover that insurance. So are you going to be able to do that? This is why when people are asking me, even today, last week, a month ago, I couldn't recreate this. There's no way we could recreate the success that we've had now starting now. So for somebody starting now, not to be doomsday about it, it's just not the same. Like we, you and I, I think we really were able to capitalize on the newness of it, the limited availability at the time of listings, all of that. You know, somebody starting today, I'm not sure. Maybe they could, I don't know, but I don't, I certainly don't think for a second that I would be able to recreate the success that we've had if I was starting today. It's a whole different set of rules.

Evelyn: [00:34:56](#) Well I only have one house. I never had the amount of listings that you had. Cause at one point, how many do you have in total?

Maria: [00:35:03](#) I guess number that we ever had in terms of listings, not properties was 27, 28 listings going at once.

Evelyn: [00:35:11](#) No Way. Oh my God, that's outrageous.

Maria: [00:35:13](#) Maria. When I look back at my listing history, you know, you can go back, there's so much information in your account page. When I look back at the listing history, you know, and the way that I had numbered them, like house one room, one house, one room to house to room three. So to underscore three, you know, it's completely insane, you know? Then we would lose track too. Then we would be like, okay, we've got to get a naming system. I can't just keep calling this one house one. So looking back at all of the ones in all of the old pictures that we took that different photographers took, seeing pieces of furniture, like my favorite pieces of furniture moving around listing to listing. Because we, you know, we always wanted to be the, the new one, the new kid on the block we always wanted to have great attention to and you become a little bit of a creature of habit where you like I happened to like decorating with blue accent pieces.

Maria: [00:36:14](#) So I just keep continuing to see these same blue accent pieces are the same flower vase that I saw always looked really nice on a table for a photo or the style trick of, I can't remember if it was Joe Cotton. Well maybe we'll be listening to this who told me that in all photos there should be one small tiny imperfection to make it look human, like a mug on a plate or you know, a crossword puzzle half done on a table or something. And that was the trick that I carried. And then other photographers would come and they'd say, get a shot of that coffee mug. On the table. They say, no, that looks messy. We like, no, I want it. You don't do it my way. And of course they wouldn't that do whatever they want. And then I started paying photographers and then you can have them do it your way.

Evelyn: [00:37:02](#) Yeah, of course. Once you pay them, it's like no way. Yeah. I know. The one thing that we photographers is also hide the cables, my God, hide the cables, please.

Maria: [00:37:10](#) I know that's a whole other podcast isn't it? You'd probably done one on small design tricks, which I look back and I see all of my mistakes. You know, I look back and I'm like, oh my God, look at all these cables everywhere. That's so messy. How did anybody ever want a book here that just looks so awful? And uh, I think it was the first Airbnb open when, you know, we were in workshops about listing description, photo strengths, you know, captions. You might've even have done that workshop, captions and everything and making sure the description has all of this stuff that I am literally at that workshop because I stayed an extra day or two and I'm on my phone trying to book an Airbnb in San Francisco for the last night or two

Evelyn: [00:37:55](#) I remembered.

Maria: [00:37:55](#) And all I did was look at two pictures and book. I didn't even look at one single description. And then of course I get there and it's, it wasn't a place that I was very

happy with and I'm like, well look at, I am the true testament to all the things that I say you shouldn't do. I have just done it. So it was a real kind of light bulb moment when..

Evelyn: [00:38:15](#) You are that guest.

Maria: [00:38:16](#) I'm, I'm no better, no worse than any other typical guests. I'm not reading anything either and exactly.

Evelyn: [00:38:22](#) No, no, I totally understand. And so I am actually about to do a webinar about brain hacks for for guests. So this a whole thing about reptilian brain and how we tap into them. And I'm actually about to do a class about this. So interesting. Yes, because there's a whole thing that we as human beings, we have this reptilian and part of our brains that gets satisfaction and you will start noticing this is that whenever we are satisfied, so the reptilian part of our brain, oh my God, I don't want to, I could talk about this until I'm blue in the face. It just taps into it and with the reptilian part is like images instead of words. That's why the images means so much to us

Maria: [00:39:15](#) and honestly for me, the first four images, forget it, I didn't even scroll quickly. It was like the first four images I'm like, oh, this looks nice. I'm going to book it. Book done. Credit cards,

Evelyn: [00:39:26](#) That was the first four they mean so much and I'm doing something really different with my images on which I'm going to be talking about on the Webinar that I'm going to be doing in two weeks, but it's just so important that it's like the brain hacks that we could do with our guests before they book and then after they book is just amazing. We don't really read is just not part of our brain is just not part of it. And I mean in, and some guests do. I'm not saying that everybody does.

Maria: [00:39:54](#) If they're engineers, they do. I've found that every single engineer I've ever had is read. Every single thing is wonderful

Evelyn: [00:40:00](#) and it is wonderful. It's in, and I'm not saying that you should not have it in your listing. You should because you need to cover it for the most part, people do not read it. So you need to make sure that those things, yeah, you need to prompt them. Yup, exactly. Exactly. So yeah, so there's the whole thing. Yeah.

Maria: [00:40:14](#) Them by the hands. They come with me. Look at these lovely house rules. Read them.

Evelyn: [00:40:19](#) Exactly. Exactly. So we're going back to, you have at some point over 20 listings, which I cannot even imagine.

Maria: [00:40:27](#) Well, I'll tell you one of the easier parts of that was one of the landlord relationships that we made turned out to be a very, very great, I'm going to say partnership. They rented us the first, Oh and this is a crazy story. We had a set of guests early on from Tunisia, a couple, and it was after the events of Chinese you years ago. Uh, they came to New York for, you know, some peace and recuperation and while they were in New York, we had a really dynamic group of guests. At that time. Everybody was getting along. We were having so much fun. While they were in New York, they decided that they wanted to move to New York. I think one of them had a green card or had had a green card. There was some, they had some potential to actually stay here with no problem.

Maria: [00:41:23](#) They both worked, you know, in the tech world, they could work from wherever. So this was, let's say in January, it was January, February, terrible weather. So they stayed with us and we kept in touch and they came back in May and when they came back in May, I helped them look for an apartment. And long story short, they got this apartment. Everything was great. She started doing Airbnb in there, which was her intention. We were helping each other. I'd go over to her place. She'd come over here. We were living close together and we became great friends. They had some family emergency that they had to go back home and they had to go very quickly and so they had this apartment all fully furnished, you know, sheets that we picked out together at home goods and so she said, Maria, I need your help.

Maria: [00:42:21](#) Can you help me? I need to close down this apartment. I've got these guests coming, I've got this situation happening. I've got these other guests coming from Germany that's at the top. She had like let's say another five bookings that she didn't want to cancel. And I said, of course, I'm going to help you however we can. Let's keep paying the rent. We'll get through these bookings. And then I was thinking to myself, I don't want it closed down somebody apartment. But that's a lot of work. I've got a lot of listings here. I love her and how am I going to do this? How am I going to help her? And so I said to Jay, why don't we just take her apartment? It's already all furnished. It's already everything is in there. Let's just lease the apartments or take over her lease from the apartment.

Maria: [00:43:02](#) So then I had to go to her landlord and I had to ask him if it was okay that we take over the lease of this and he was a bit of a grumpy character and after some questions and back and forth, he said, yes, it's okay if you take over the lease. She was doing Airbnb but the landlord was not in on it. We had not rented it with the full disclosure. So she was a stay at home post and she was very careful with it. So I take over the lease and slowly, slowly, slowly within a couple of months I realized that is not my business model where the landlord doesn't live anywhere near the landlord is there every day. So when I'm like, how did she ever have any peace of mind to be worrying about guests coming in and out of the door with a more landlord across the street watching her all the time.

Maria: [00:44:00](#) So it was a really different experience for me that it was so stressful to be like, oh, okay, no, no, don't, don't, don't hang around. Don't smoke outside. Go smoke around the corner. No, no, no, don't wait for you over here. Go wait for an Uber around the corner. It was just so stressful. And so finally now I'm getting to know the landlord because I'm trying to talk to him to kind of feel out, you know, what's his situation? And he turns out to not be as grumpy as he appears. And he's like, I know you're doing Airbnb in there. And I'm like, oh, I'm okay. Okay, well that's good. And so then he's like, just make sure I never had any problems. Don't bring any problems to my door. I'm like, okay. This landlord had a couple of other rental apartments in the neighborhood.

Maria: [00:44:45](#) And so after a while I got up the courage to say, hey, you know, we have a lot. You've seen our guests, they're all great. You see there you don't have any problem. I wonder if you have another apartment that comes up. Will you tell me about it and will you allow me to do Airbnb at another apartment? And he's like, I'll tell you no problem. Two months later he's like, Hey, you want this apartment? The rent is whatever. And I'm like, Yep. He said, you don't want to look at it. And I said, nope, I don't want to look at it. Cause at that point I'm like, I don't need to look at it. I'll make it be whatever it needs to be. I just need it to be a landlord who is allowing me to do this. So it turns out then that way we ended up with 13 of their apartments.

Evelyn: [00:45:33](#) Wow.

Maria: [00:45:34](#) And so that was over the years? Not all at once, obviously over the years. And then every once in awhile he would say to me, hey listen, I need to, there was no leases. It was handshake deals. It was, oh my God. The first one was leaks. It was just handshake deals, which is good and bad. Of course I would do whatever he needed me to do, you know, to take care of things. If he needed me to not have any guests for this month because they were replacing this. I mean that's how I lost superhost the first time is because I ended up having no option but to cancel some guests because he needed to do some repairs. And it's one thing to say to a tenant, you know, I'm going to put you in a hotel for two weeks while I do this repair, but he's not going to do that for me. You know, he's like, as much as it was a good arrangement for him, he's not going to go out of his way. So I ended up having to cancel. So that was the bad part of that. But the good part was over so that it sounds like a lot, but, well, it was a lot. There's no way around it, but it was, you know, a lot of them together, a lot of apartments together.

Evelyn: [00:46:43](#) Wow. I just, I mean, I'd look that, I don't know. I can't, I no. Overwhelming. Overwhelming. But it was your business. This was your career and this was your business. And now talk to me about what happened now because your business has completely shifted.

Maria: [00:46:59](#) completely shifted in the last few years.

Evelyn: [00:47:02](#) But hold on one second. Let's just talk about one thing. How much does it cost to build an apartment? Cause I know my dear hosting community would like to know,

Maria: [00:47:12](#) well this is the number I used and people, some people have told him, found it outrageous and other people have found it very cheap. My startup cost was always \$5,000 a bedroom. So a three bedroom apartment is going to cost you \$15,000 start up a one bedroom is going to cost you \$5,000 to start up. And to me that was every single thing in the apartment from colander, to extra sheets. I mean, I never had high end places. My places are always not budget. But you know, at the beginning it was certainly designed by Ikea, that's for sure.

Evelyn: [00:47:54](#) I love that design by Ikea

Maria: [00:47:56](#) and lots of very careful thrift shop, uh, shopping, never with mattresses or anything that people were going to sit on or soft textiles that kind of grosses me out. But certainly for sets of cutlery or for a teapot or stuff like that.

Maria: [00:48:11](#) And then after awhile we just had kind of a list and Amazon of course combining an awful lot of stuff from there. But it was always kind of white dishes. It was always the same sets of dishes. It was always like the same kind of black and decker coffee maker. And we always had, my rule for the kitchen, even in a studio apartment was whatever, a family will need to make a spaghetti dinner. And so that meant that you had to have two cutting boards. One for meat, one for vegetables or whatever. You had to have a drainer, you had to have a pot big enough for the noodles, the sauce, you have to plate, you have to have a salad bowl, you have to set the tongs, anything to do. So that was kind of the maximum that people would make. Would be where they can grab, you know, a box of noodles and grab a jar of sauce and a bag of salad.

Maria: [00:49:04](#) Maybe your head of lettuce. So you needed to have all of that sort of stuff. I was never, I was always very careful to have enough that people could make food because you know, we're serving the New York marketplace. It's really expensive. And especially when people were, when we stopped doing room by room and we started doing entire apartments for family to come here. I mean it's outrageous. You, you know, taking a family, even have a hot dog, go to Yankee Stadium. Even if you get tickets for \$15 three kids and they don't want a hot dog from the guy on the other side of the street, they want the hot dog from the guy on the stadium. Well that's a \$5 hotdog. Of course they're going to try and make some toast and eggs in the morning. And of course they're gonna try and have dinner at home one night and

take a pizza, put it in the oven or something. So you have to have all that stuff ready. You know, we didn't make sense to me to be kind of Chintzy arm the kitchen, you know, it always, even if stuff didn't get used, you know a garlic press isn't going to get used all the time, but somebody who's going to make something like me, when I go to a standard Airbnb, I'm like, I don't have a garlic press. Like what kind of animals are they? Where's the garlic press and believe no,

Evelyn: [00:50:12](#) Totally understand. Look at the Airbnb. I was staying in Puerto Rico. They didn't have wine glasses that's definitely betting have one glasses. That wasn't a wine opener. There was like, I was like, okay. One of the reasons I wanted to rent it and actually take over it was

Evelyn: [00:50:28](#) because, oh my God, I wanted to turn it into an amazing apartment. Yes, but I also knew it was going to take money to build it into something

Maria: [00:50:36](#) and you're seeing those wine glasses, those cost money.

Evelyn: [00:50:39](#) Exactly.

Maria: [00:50:39](#) You have to have wine glasses, by the way, breakage. You have to account for that. You can't be upset that somebody, somebody today sent me a message. They were checking out today and they said, we're so sorry. We broke two of the small juice glasses. We couldn't find any replacements. So we left you \$5 I'm like, oh my God, five star review. Not only did they tell me they left me \$5 I don't care. I've got a thousand glasses I replace them. That's fine. Not sweating the small stuff at all.

Evelyn: [00:51:04](#) And I always buy the same glasses everywhere. So like that I could just pick all some of those extra glasses and put it in the same property.

Maria: [00:51:12](#) We didn't learn that trick because we were growing slowly. We were never growing that fast. So, of course, we would go and Oh, you know, we didn't get to that. Everybody has a black and decker coffee maker until kind of late in the game. So, which was an issue for the sheets was an issue for the towels because I was trying to be all fancy and coordinating, oh, this has got blue walls and let's have green towels. So this one's great. And then it was at some point when we had a guy coming and picking up the laundry, which is another whole podcast and that I started getting stuff in bulk that I started buying sheets by the dozen, you know, that I started buying towels, you know, from a hotel supplier, which was so much of a better thing. But then even now as we are finishing off our Airbnb business, even now I'm looking at it like, oh, I've got like three dozen really good shape towels.

Speaker 4: [00:52:02](#) What am I going to do with them? You're not using this inventory anymore. It's not the easiest thing. And it's not just like give them to goodwill. In fact, a goodwill has already told us, don't bring us anymore. You brought us too much. Like find another goodwill to bring it to. So part of the process of slowing down the business is heartbreaking because you're looking at all of these things that you very carefully chosen that you've, you know, sheets that are folded a thousand times towels that I very carefully cut snipped loose bits from and re sewn and I mean, I'm like cheap Portuguese, so I'm really careful with my stuff. I would never throw out a sheet that had a stain on it. I would cut it and make a pair of pillow cases with it. You know, it was ridiculous. At some point, it becomes ridiculous because is my time better spent growing the business?

Maria: [00:52:48](#) Or is it making a set of pillow cases out of a damage sheet? But that was my kind of keeping it real. I just couldn't be that fancy that I'd throw away a sheet. That's ridiculous. It would be, you know, something that would be used for regs or whatever.

Evelyn: [00:53:01](#) Okay. So let's talk about where are you going next? What is happening to your market?

Maria: [00:53:05](#) Yeah, so the market is really changing in my area as it is in many, many areas. So we had kind of a devastating blow in 2018 where one of the towns that we had a number of listings in decided that they would go through their ordinances, something that they had not been, you know, they hadn't been paying attention to it and every abuse growing and getting lots of noise coming into New York. So everybody starts paying attention and they were basically shutting down hosts and we started hearing locally, friends of mine that would call me and say, Oh my God, I just got a notice from the city.

Maria: [00:53:42](#) And we were thinking, oh, it's complaints based. They're not doing it in any kind of strategic way. It's complaint space. You have a neighbor that was upset about something and phoned the city. So we thought that when it was kind of one by one by one, but then they really made this like huge effort to shut everybody down. So everybody started getting notices and that was devastating because that was, you know, it was more than half of our revenue was from these particular listings that got shutdown. So at that point we started thinking about everybody is really cracking down now. It's just not as, it's not as lucrative. That's much harder. You're competing with people who have got four bunk beds in a one room and are charging \$30 not competing because it's a different animal, but still you're against that. And then Airbnb is telling you 48 people have looked in your neighborhood and they had booked something that is \$28 less, you know, just kind of gets on you and it's physically very hard work.

Maria: [00:54:42](#) And we never got to a point where I never had any great team, but was my husband and I he's the great team member, him and I together, because cleaners

was always an issue. Laundry was always an issue. You know, we couldn't go on holidays. We couldn't. The only time we'd be on holidays is in February when it's dead. No, I'm not that anybody was booking, but we'd actually shut down all the listings. So we missed out on a lot of opportunities socially, we'd missed out on a lot of family opportunities and we decided this is kind of the death blow and all of the other local towns all started to do the same thing. You know, they all started to go back to old ordinances and pull things out and started making new ordinances that were anti short term rental. And, and so we just decided this is, this is just getting to be too tough.

Maria: [00:55:34](#) So we thought, screw it, let's move. Let's move to Portugal. So, uh, just by kind of a strange set of circumstances, I was born in Portugal, but there was no particular that only had minimal bearing just because of the shared language, but we were looking at, let's think about retiring and how that's gonna work out. Because what happens when you're doing your own business, you're not working for somebody with a retirement plan or a pension plan. Your money that you make is, that's all you have to live on, you know? So we're kind of trying to figure where we could get bang for a buck. So we started looking at things like, oh, maybe we'll move to Costa Rica, maybe we'll move to Panama or maybe you know, oh Portugal is getting some news. So we bought a house there and now our life is Garin down the properties that we had been lucky enough to purchase at great prices.

Speaker 4: [00:56:27](#) Um, you know, that we've fixed up and did what we not really fixed up, you know, whatever. Throw a coat of paint on. But the market had changed in real estate and we were very lucky to make some good investments. So we ended up buying to run businesses and we ended up buying four properties, one of which we're living in now. And so we sold one last year. We sold one at the beginning of this year, were under contract with another one. And then the last one we're going to keep as just like our residents here, cause we'll be back and forth. So we still have two listings. But it's tricky. It's tricky because it's a, when you're not in a situation where you can be out and proud about it, it's tricky to manage. And so we're just not sure how much longer it will be a viable here. We're hoping that we can get through the summer and then we'll reassess and see. You know, what we do next in so many towns in so many countries and so many cities, you know, short term rentals are a touchy, touchy subject, which is why I was very hesitant doing this podcast because this is kind of being very open about something that is a kind of a delicate situation.

Evelyn: [00:57:47](#) I know. Look, dear hosting community. One of the reasons why we do these episodes is because I like to tell the truth. I like to tell like what is actually happening. It's like, you know, a lot of, a lot of educators out, they were very like, Ooh, how much money you can make and everything else. But what is happening?

Maria: [00:58:05](#) And you know, it's so funny because on Airbnb of course, because it started out as a Kumbaya, share your home, eat breakfast, all of the stuff that we did and we absolutely loved. And then it grew very quickly that a lot of people still had this mindset that Airbnb purists still had this idea that, you know, I was the problem [inaudible] and I admit that for sure. I carry some blame as somebody with multi listings for what has happened. And I'm not on the industrial level, I guess in some ways I am. But you know, there has always been a stigma that I have felt on forums in certain groups of hosts where it's like, oh well you're not a real Airbnb host. Back up with that. How real do you want me to be? You know, you have no idea. So it is, it is very interesting. I was trying to make a living trying to pay my mortgage, trying to make money, you know?

Speaker 1: [00:59:05](#) And look, I know you from the beginning. I know when you from when you were living with guests. Yes.

Speaker 4: [00:59:11](#) And we went back to that. We are ironically, we thought, oh, it's been so long since we've lived with guests. Let's do it again. When we moved into this house, our house where we're living and we had kind of a perfect guest situation where they have a private entrance, private bathroom. We're like, let's go back to living with guests. So we were doing it again for, I think it was like six months before it was like, Oh God, do I have to, you know, get dressed to come downstairs every day. Um, but you do miss that interaction. You do miss the excitement of it and sharing people's, making their trip maybe. Interesting. I hope I never made it worse. Maybe I never had any effect, but I think sometimes I made it better because it was kind of more real experience. So it's not like we gave up dealing with guests on a personal level, what we had built up to allow us to go back to it purely for kind of pleasure, you know?

Evelyn: [01:00:05](#) Yeah. It's the evolution of the journey of your business. You went from living with guests to expanding to now going back because what are you going to be doing in Portugal It's going to be the same thing. You're going back to living with gas again.

Maria: [01:00:17](#) Yes, yes. And I mean we bought a big house. Of course we'll have to go there. The licensing process, although there was some news about it just yesterday that the licensing process is getting a little bit harder and so many people are abandoning their licenses because it's not worth it. But the house in Portugal is going to be, um, we're going to have two guests rooms, each room with a private bath and we want to do kind of exactly what we were doing at the very beginning breakfast, sitting with the guests, breakfast, you know, here's what you do. We've got all of these ideas, we've got all of these hopes, you know, we'll get there and who knows what'll happen. But going through the licensing process will be the very first step that I take.

Evelyn: [01:01:03](#) [inaudible] I cannot wait for the next journey of what your host in life is going to be like. And you know, I'll be visiting you in Portugal.

Maria: [01:01:11](#) You'll be the one in charge of collecting the eggs out of the, uh, chicken coop. Because we will be having chickens

Evelyn: [01:01:16](#) and you know, I will be there with those chickens hanging out.

Maria: [01:01:21](#) It's, it's so interesting because you know, it's got a little bit of land around it and mature fruit trees and mature olive trees that somebody might want to just come and hang around for a couple of days and sit by the pool and do really nothing and it's kind of wonderful that I'll be there doing nothing with them.

Evelyn: [01:01:39](#) Exactly. Nobody knew you will be sewing and creating and you will never just do anything.

Maria: [01:01:45](#) I, I mean I have got a bookmark folder of things to do in Portugal that is all of these things that I've wanted to do along the lines of you get a piece of raw wood and epoxy, all of these youtube videos that I've watched that I'm like, oh my God, that's so cool. I could do that. I'm like, what am I going to do that? Well, maybe Portugal is going to be the time when I'm going to do that.

Evelyn: [01:02:06](#) Yeah. Yeah. Oh Maria, thank you so much for sharing your journey of your life on Airbnb here. The crazy. Yeah. Yeah. And you know it's been nine years, man.

Maria: [01:02:19](#) Yeah. It's pretty special. Going back through the reservation was still looking at names and like, Oh man, he was so fun. Oh man, they were so cool. I wonder what happened. You know, I wonder if they ended up getting married or wonder. You know, their baby must be seven years old by now. All of that stuff. So I love doing that. When I feel sad when I've had a bad day, that's the way to pick me up. It's just going through that going, I'll look at all these people that I've been able to meet.

Evelyn: [01:02:43](#) Yeah. You know, one of the things that I do is actually keep track. I have an excel sheet of all the names of my..

Maria: [01:02:49](#) Mama. I'm know it cause I do it. Exactly.

Evelyn: [01:02:52](#) And you know We, you, we have to, well we have to keep track of the good guests and the bad guests. The ones we don't want back. Yup. I keep notes on all of

them. I've never gotten involved, but I should have been. Yeah, because you know I'm a story. Make or so I like to tell stories and stories will be told.

Maria: [01:03:07](#) Well thank you Evelyn for being patient on the timing of this and it's been fun and less nerve wracking than I thought it would be

Evelyn: [01:03:15](#) and you see, wow. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, thank you. And really I wish you the best on the next part of the journey of hosting.

Maria: [01:03:24](#) That'll be the followup podcast in a year.

Evelyn: [01:03:26](#) I know

Maria: [01:03:28](#) I'm booking myself as a repeat guest like Johnny Carson or, something yeah,

Evelyn: [01:03:31](#) of course you will be. We will still be here sharing, you know the truth of hosting because we have to tell it. Yeah, somebody has to.

Maria: [01:03:40](#) That's right.

Evelyn: [01:03:41](#) All right my dear. Thank you so much Maria.

Evelyn: [01:03:43](#) Thanks everyone. Maria, thank you so much for sharing your story with the host journey community. Good luck with your future adventure. I know you will create something amazing in Portugal. Dear hosts your business can grow quickly when you find the right landlord or it can evaporate because of a change in the law. It is a very different time than 2010 for us hose, but it's still exciting and opportunities are still out there, especially for home shares.

Evelyn: [01:04:12](#) Some cities are changing short term vacation rental laws, while others are allowing host live with guests. You just never know how your business model will evolve. Once again, this is Evelyn changing with the times thanking you. Always. Felicity, if we're joining me on this amazing hosting journey, this podcast was brought to you by hosting

Evelyn: [01:04:34](#) journey essentials page. Get the products you need to become the Airbnb host. Guests cannot stop raving about. Go to the hosting, [joining.com/essentials](https://www.joining.com/essentials) make sure you subscribe so you never miss an episode. And if you liked this podcast, don't forget to share this show and leave an honest review on apple podcast. You remember a happy host makes for happy guests.

