

Interview mit Chenyu Zheng, 365daysonairbnb.com, persönlich, 06.06.2017

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Luise: Alright, so. How do you came up with the idea of using Airbnb for one year and especially I'm interested in why did you choose Airbnb and not like another platform?

#00:00:15-6#

Chenyu: So I've been using Airbnb since 2012 and traveling with locals has always been a way of I like how I experience a new culture. And ((as I mentioned)) ten years ago, I came to America for high school, or eleven years ago, and I had a host family. #00:00:34-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:00:35-3#

Chenyu: Yeah, I think, it's my American grandparents and they really treat me like a family member. #00:00:39-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:00:40-6#

Chenyu: And I think that made a huge difference ... You know in your like teenager days, there's gonna be what you observe or learn have a big impact on you and I think they really brought me to my first like Long Island trip, my first Thanksgiving. #00:00:56-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:00:58-0#

Chenyu: They made bread every morning, not every morning – they make bread every week. And like they love birds and bears. So we're in like New England, which is north-east. So I think they really pass on their values about treating strangers like their family member to me. And then, when I went to Princeton for college, our motto is to live in the service of our nations and become a global citizen and so I actually concentrate on how to become a global citizen or I prepare myself to be a global citizen. So in high school I had my first abroad trip ((after)) China in the US. It was to India. And we were volunteering in a school to teach kids like neurons and (...), so every trip I've done is not purely travel, it always have some civic engagement or social angle for my trip. And then in college, I studied Spanish because I am very interested in different cultures and intensely curious about how people live in different cultures, so I wanna make sure I'm not a traveler, I'm a local. So. And I go to Nicaragua, Panama to study like in a forest, we do experiments with soil and like the environment 'cause in college I did economics and environmental studies. #00:02:29-9#

Luise: Aah, okay, alright. Okay, yeah. #00:02:30-9#

Chenyu: So for environmental studies, now I study abroad, in Panama, where we do like these experiments with soil and in the rainforest. And then it also took me to Ghana, where we spent seven weeks in Kokrobite. And we were doing (...) cookers, so that hands-on approach and living with like locals in five different continents really shaped me and how I operate. And I studied abroad in Oxford in my junior year and during the Easter vacation, I went to Spain and I lived with a host family. So I think that like become a part of me. Like living with locals. #00:03:16-3#

Luise: Yeah. #00:03:16-8#

Chenyu: And in 2012 when I graduated from college, actually in 2011, when I was a senior in college, I came to flew to Malawi for a trip. #00:03:29-5#

Luise: Okay. #00:03:30-7#

Chenyu: And we visited thirty companies and I was like "wow, I wanna come here, that's like where the future is." It's really destructing traditional industry. So I always have paid attention to tech companies and innovations. So in 2012, during my graduation, my mom actually booked my first Airbnb for our family. #00:03:45-4#

Luise: Oh really? Ah, right. Okay. #00:03:46-8#

Chenyu: Yeah, my mom is really into with tech. #00:03:47-8#

Luise: Yeah, that's cool. #00:03:48-6#

Chenyu: 'Cause she wants to keep up with technology. Both of my parents are working in education, in college. So after that I was like "wow", it, you know, that's like how I travel and there, now there is a platform. I tried to sign up for Couchsurfing in 2009, but I've always tried to use like homestay when I studied Spanish, I didn't actually have a chance to use it. Every time my travel in college was like for study, there was a program. So I think, I guess I missed a chance to try Couchsurfing and I jumped to Airbnb in 2012 and later I become a host in New York. #00:04:30-4#

Luise: Alright, oh wow, okay. #00:04:31-7#

Chenyu: So I rented out my couch and I met really interesting people. #00:04:35-3#

Luise: Yeah, yeah, I can believe it. #00:04:37-1#

Chenyu: So I become both a host and a guest. #00:04:40-0#

Luise: Ah, that's, that's nice, yeah. #00:04:42-5#

Chenyu: And then I, so I really identify with the platform. #00:04:46-4#

Luise: Yeah. #00:04:47-4#

Chenyu: And twenty, fast forward, in 2015, I came back from China after working there on startups, I only had two suitcases because when I moved to China in 2014 everything was packed up. #00:05:00-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:05:01-0#

Chenyu: I think the hardest thing to do what I did was to give up your belongings.
#00:05:03-9#

Luise: Yeah, that and that would be like another question that just comes to my mind: how does it felt for you to actually don't have like a home in terms of like a safe place for you to be? So how does it feel to be always on the move? #00:05:21-0#

Chenyu: Yeah, so actually I moved twice a week // #00:05:24-8#

Luise: Yeah, wow. (laughter) #00:05:25-7#

Chenyu: Regularly. #00:05:26-1#

Luise: (laughter) #00:05:26-5#

Chenyu: During the regular time of my project which was in Los Angeles. #00:05:30-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:05:31-5#

Chenyu: For seven months I was in LA. And I actually never felt like I was not having regular space because every space I choose is very carefully chosen and I actually felt a sense of belonging because I identify with these like cat pillows and these plants and bright and this little book about San Francisco. It's all I would pick if had a home. #00:05:56-5#

Luise: Oh that's nice. So you looked for a listing that would like in some way symbolize your own interests in interior design. So you wouldn't take a listing that seems interesting, but isn't like part of your personal style? #00:06:11-8#

Chenyu: Yeah, I would pick an interesting host. Like for example, the tree house, I don't live there all there all the time, but I just spent a night with my college roommate here for Independence Day. Like for this mansion dome, I'm not gonna live here like for more than five days. I think it really combines the adventurous part and also just what I would call home. #00:06:32-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:06:33-3#

Chenyu: And for me it is really studying interior design 'cause I'm very interested in interior design, but I don't have the luxury of having a home that is so big. And the interesting thing is that like most Airbnb hosts need to be home owners, right? Because of the regulation. So people who own homes, actually they have a certain income level and they would have the, I guess, luxury to decorate their home. So for me it's – I'm a student for life. For me this year is learning about hospitality, about how to design a home. And I think the best thing is: Not a lot designers go to Pinterest or to Airbnb to learn about interior design 'cause I'm actually living in their home and talk to the architect from Spain, you know, to see how she designs her home. Or with this pilot from United Airlines like ... and I think ... it's his house, you know, his backyard, he turned his garage into this really crazy interesting thing and it is his backyard, he's traveling to forty countries. #00:07:35-5#

Luise: Yeah. #00:07:36-3#

Chenyu: And I think living in every home, I'm looking for a friend I'm supposed to know. Because every host is carefully chosen. Imagine: in order to stay with that host, I had to really contact them a year in advance and I just wait for them when they are available. #00:07:53-0#

Luise: Yeah, but that's cool, that's shows like your appreciation. That's it's not about like getting a cheap place to crash, but it's like really getting to know another person's life and their home. So what would you say what does home mean to you? #00:08:08-2#

Chenyu: I think home is where ... definitely a place where you can rest, where you feel comfortable to be with. Because I remember there is one encounter where I was to stay with a meditation master and he just got divorced recently. So the profile says, it was like three people, like the couple and the daughter were the hosts. And when I got there it was just the husband and the daughter who was four years old and she told me in the morning: "You are not welcome home, please, you're not welcome here, please leave." And I think

that's when first time I felt I was not welcome and felt uncomfortable – even in a coffee shop I felt more comfortable. #00:08:52-2#

Luise: Yeah, of course. I can imagine that, yeah. #00:08:54-7#

Chenyu: The home is where you can rest, where you feel comfortable, where you feel you belong. And fortunately like all the places I chose, are the ones I feel like I naturally belong to. #00:09:04-8#

Luise: Yeah, that's cool. #00:09:06-9#

Chenyu: That's ((what I call)) home. Where like the people there are people who have ((that)) and you wanna spent time with. #00:09:12-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:09:13-2#

Chenyu: And now the hosts are so interesting, it's like my family members. Like one interesting difference between my stay with other normal Airbnb travelers, like they use it for travel, I use it for daily life. So I become friends with all these hosts that later, they would like pick me up from the airport when I was stranded or they bring me to their fifty year old birthday party or, you know, like when I don't have a place to go, they would host me. ... Or when they are away for three weeks, they want someone to take care of the pet, they contact me. Like these become my solid group of friends. #00:09:51-9#

Luise: Yeah. #00:09:51-8#

Chenyu: Like I literally, before I meet with you, I went to pick up these books from one of my hosts who kindly allowed me to use his home as my address. And then in return, I will recommend guests for them. I have so many followers in Thailand, they ask me for recommendations and I ((bettered)) his homes. I know Chinese travelers who would just like them, so I'll bring them there. So last time it was a give back and forth and give and again ... And ... some of the host just went above and beyond to be nice to people and I always want to try to be nice to them, too. ... So here, I can show you a picture – oh, I think I forgot. So, I had a, I saw a lot – when I was in New York, I got a lot like, I'd say I love studying people, like maybe I'm also interested in sociology. I can observe a home, I know what they love. And I would buy like maybe with the same fifty dollars for a night they waived me or they gave me a discount, I would go to Trader Joe's to – Trader Joe's is a store here with all the healthy snacks. I'll buy little snacks for them that I know they love and new things for them to try. #00:11:05-9#

Luise: Yeah, that's a good idea. #00:11:07-8#

Chenyu: Yeah. #00:11:08-5#

Luise: Yeah. #00:11:08-0#

Chenyu: And I always bring a thank-you note for my hosts. #00:11:13-3#

Luise: That's cool. #00:11:14-4#

Chenyu: That's the reason why I had this like host book. This is [*name of an Airbnb host*] where I was just there and he loves cats. It's very obvious. He had everything cats. This is from him. #00:11:26-9#

Luise: Alright, yeah. But when would you like introduce your host book? Would you do it at the end of your stay, just go there and ask your host "hey, would you mind//“ #00:11:36-2#

Chenyu: Yeah, no, I don't ask everyone because it's only when I feel we connected. #00:11:40-3#

Luise: Alright, yeah. #00:11:41-9#

Chenyu: And only the night before I leave. So I'll give them some time. #00:11:44-9#

Luise: Yeah, that would – yeah. I can imagine// #00:11:47-0#

Chenyu: And I observe if they have a guest book, so easily they'll understand the value about this book. #00:11:50-9#

Luise: Yeah. Yeah. Of course. #00:11:53-5#

Chenyu: And I'm asking "do you mind?". I think one of them – actually I have my note here. Because actually what you asked is an interesting question because some people ask me like "I don't know how to ask". #00:12:05-3#

Luise: Yeah, yeah. #00:12:07-3#

Chenyu: "How do ... how do you get them to write for you?" #00:12:24-6#

Luise: Yeah, yeah, that's right. #00:12:27-8#

Chenyu: I think one of the hosts here, right. So he is the owner of the treehouse here. #00:12:19-0#

Luise: Oh yeah. #00:12:21-0#

Chenyu: And below I have my notes of him. I said "Hi [*name of the Airbnb host*], this is my host book with notes from hosts I stayed with. Any words for me about, or like is like any memory I want to, this book is my, for memory. If you have anything you want to add to, feel free." That's how they leave me a note and I always bring thank-you notes. #00:12:43-9#

Luise: That's a good idea as well, yeah. #00:12:47-9#

Chenyu: So this was note, I should, this was a draft. So I gave a note to Joe [Gebbia]. #00:12:52-7#

Luise: You have a very nice handwriting. #00:12:56-0#

Chenyu: The handwriting of your book was not as nice because like it's hard to write with like on flat surface so that's why I have a good surface, I'll handwrite that. #00:13:06-0#

Luise: That's nice. ... And// #00:13:08-6#

Chenyu: So I'll always bring a thank-you note. #00:13:09-9#

Luise: Yeah. #00:13:10-5#

Chenyu: So it's really about, I think even by looking at the descriptions, a lot of hosts say like "I've been to seventy countries and I've received my fair share of hospitality from strangers and my giving back is a fair price and a cup of coffee." I think that's what's so pure about what I'm doing is really this, like giving back and giving and receiving. And when you are kind to people, people are kind to you. #00:13:40-6#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:13:40-7#

Chenyu: So it's really like celebrating this piece of humanity. I think this world really needs it now because there is like so much like conflict, all this stuff going on, that you lose faith in humanity. But when you go to someone's home and they are so kind to you, like, "Wow!", you know? This is, a difference of Airbnb is that humanity. Maybe that part is similar to Couchsurfing, like ... I believe Couchsurfing doesn't involve much cash exchange, it's like Burning Man and so it's about exchange. So for me in some way, because I'm working, I'm really busy, I don't have time to go through the Air-, Couchsurfing thing where you have to give back with like maybe cooking a meal for them. Like I wouldn't, you wouldn't be a good guest// #00:14:28-7#

Luise: That's right, you have to spend time together. Yeah, okay. #00:14:28-2#

Chenyu: Here I paid. So if we have a good relationship, then we'll go like, we have a further interaction and then maybe we cook a meal together. At least it doesn't get me too involved. Like I wouldn't be able to maintain a full time job if I was doing Couchsurfing. #00:14:45-3#

Luise: Yeah, that's right and you wouldn't be, get upset if you stay at an Airbnb host and he's like "Oh sorry, I don't have time for you, I have to", you would be "Alright, that's nothing to worry about". #00:14:56-9#

Chenyu: Yeah and also there was a host that I, we rented his, her home in Tahoe for skiing. But then we just talked to each other, I sent her a picture from our trip and then we realized that she lived along our way, so we grabbed coffee afterwards. #00:15:13-2#

Luise: Alright, yeah, that's cool. That's really, really cool, yeah. #00:15:17-5#

Chenyu: I will show you. I don't, and I met with a host from Japan where he actually said, "I'm not available to host tonight", but his home is ((so interesting)). Then we met, had a coffee and became friends. There are like so many occasions where I didn't actually stay there but actually this is a tool, is an app for me to meet interesting people. And now I have like eighty reviews. And I think Airbnb really is based on social barriers: where in the past you need a ((warm introduction)) to come to Airbnb, now you have a credential, you have – I can just show people my Airbnb page and they welcome me, they had decided that they want to welcome me. It doesn't have to do with that I know his friend's friend's friend's friends. It doesn't matter. #00:16:05-1#

Luise: Yeah, but was it sometimes hard to find a good or an interesting Airbnb place because from my own experiences I know like in some cities it's very professionalized and it's hard to find someone who would actually like rent out their own personal space. #00:16:25-0#

Chenyu: Yeah, but there are so many listings. I think maybe depending a little from being in Los Angeles because LA is a city with more creativity and more crazy people and little

who just do it for the benefits of meeting people. And I don't think I would be able to do my project if I started in San Francisco. #00:16:45-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:16:46-6#

Chenyu: To me the last five months was a struggle because I moved here and like every home that I want to stay is so expensive. #00:16:51-7#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:16:54-4#

Chenyu: So I think that is a good balance of my project, but imagine if I were here, I don't think I would even have the strength to finish my project, unless I was funded by someone to just don't worry about the money and just take whatever. #00:17:07-7#

Luise: Yeah, yeah, I can imagine. #00:17:09-5#

Chenyu: You know in Los Angeles I was able to find places that were sixty or seventy dollars a night. Yeah, so this project is self-funded but in some way it's like paying for tuition for my education. My continuous education. #00:17:25-7#

Luise: Yeah, that's nice. That's really nice. #00:17:28-2#

Chenyu: And I think that later, right now I'm glad I did it a year and a half ago when the hosts are more like the Couchsurfing crowd, now they've become more like a hotel. #00:17:37-8#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. It's like, it becomes very popular so you can't make sure that everyone really understands like the message of Airbnb, like their values, yeah. But you mentioned the review system, so would you always go through the reviews of your host before sending a booking request? #00:18:00-1#

Chenyu: Yes, yes, that's the most important thing to read the reviews because as very – I think a lot of times if you go to LinkedIn what you see is highlight reel for your life, if you go to Instagram all the reviews are positive. You only share the best part. But reviews on Airbnb are ... neutral. You can see that someone says "this is like exactly like the picture described", or it said "this is more for adventurous travelers" because the situation, the service is more tough. So the reviews really review what – they set up the right expectation. And I think a lot of time people are disappointed or unhappy because they had the wrong expectations. #00:18:44-8#

Luise: Yeah, so you would always write a review after a stay? #00:18:48-6#

Chenyu: I always write a review. #00:18:49-8#

Luise: Okay. #00:18:50-5#

Chenyu: There were a few times maybe when I just didn't wanna write a review because I don't wanna write bad things and some incidents just happened, you know, I was locked inside a home. #00:18:59-5#

Luise: Oh yeah, yeah. I read about that. #00:19:02-1#

Chenyu: I don't wanna write that review because it wasn't his fault. But I can't write – like that was such a bad experience for me because it was an accident. I didn't wanna write a review. #00:19:12-9#

Luise: Yeah, yeah, sure. And you won't be responsible for all his future or for destroying all his future potential Airbnb experiences because as you mentioned it was an accident. #00:19:23-1#

Chenyu: I think if it wasn't going to, then it was really good experience. We even had a coffee the night before with his kid, you know we had a really good conversation. #00:19:30-9#

Luise: Yeah. Oh no. ... Mh ... so how does it feel to always stay in someone else's personal, intimate space, like how, what would you normally do to settle in, to like get familiar to this new home? #00:19:52-7#

Chenyu: What I do? Ah, so I actually look at the pictures ahead of time. I read their reviews, I read their descriptions. So I kind of know – a lot of my hosts write a lot about who they are. I know, I never stay with a host where their profile has nothing. You know, there are some hosts has nothing on their profile? The more they write, the more I know about them and our conversations start before the stay. I'll chat, I tell them who I am, I'll send them my website, my Instagram. Some of them already read my story beforehand. #00:20:23-1#

Luise: That's cool, yeah. Yeah. #00:20:24-0#

Chenyu: So and I do some research about who they are, too. 'Cause I also am sort of like a journalist, so I tend, I want to understand people when I go there so I'm not a blank piece of paper. #00:20:36-3#

Luise: Of course. #00:20:37-7#

Chenyu: And when I get there like I always settle in my home ... Like observe and I always ask to have a breakfast. Oh, I actually search for listings with breakfast offering. So by cooking together you actually have a more involved experience. It's more like relaxed. 'Cause sometimes when you get to a home at ten p.m., people want to speak and they not gonna have thirty minutes talking to you, but in the morning people tend to have better moods. ... And I have a popular video channel, so when I ask to film, I'm like "I'm trying to share culture with Chinese travelers". #00:21:21-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:21:21-8#

Chenyu: So most people are very open-minded to that. #00:21:24-2#

Luise: So maybe you can tell me a lot about, more about this. I got the feeling you are acting like a cultural mediator for Chinese travelers. So what, why is it so complicated for the Chinese to like get to, get used to Airbnb? Why do you// #00:21:43-6#

Chenyu: Oh it's really a new service. People like in America homes are mostly single family homes or more spacious. In China homes are small. And we don't have that fundamental layer of trust. Like you asked me whether you can leave the bag downstairs, I said: "no problem". ((It's normal)) in America, maybe in Germany you can do that too. You

cannot do that in Columbia, you cannot do that in South America, in India, in China. So that's a big difference between developing country and developed country. #00:22:14-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:22:15-4#

Chenyu: Like even go to a mall, to travel is a new luxury for us because we – with opening up of China, with an economy developed, you'll now have this prosperous income to enjoy travel. We didn't grow up like Americans to backpack everywhere or like in Europe you are going to be backpacking everywhere. Travel is not something we know. We are not as adventurous or as like tough in dealing with uncertainty. We've – and service is generally cheap, so we got a lot of like when you go to Taobao which is China's e-commerce platform, you get a lot of customer support to help you handle it. You was be able to search, say you go to China, you go to Japan, you can just maybe figure out a job with your own research. But in China, people like going on tour groups, so we just opened that for travel. It's like Japan twenty years ago or similar like that. So this is the time where people just settle into new models and because we developed so fast and we welcome new ideas, we kind of skipped middle development ((and switch)) directly to Airbnb or Couchsurfing. ... So there, people don't necessarily know what to do to stay at people's ((homes)). #00:23:36-0#

Luise: Yeah. #00:23:37-3#

Chenyu: Yeah and in our culture we're not as like, I don't know just staying at a stranger's home is a strange concept. #00:23:46-1#

Luise: Yeah, it is. It is obviously. And I think the most like one of the biggest challenges Airbnb and Couchsurfing has to or had to like master when they first started because everyone at first was “what?! this is like insecure or inappropriate or yeah, why would I want to do that?” But yeah. #00:24:08-4#

Chenyu: But I, yeah, I think with the society here is, I think, the first market in Europe and America which is more trustworthy, so if they would start in developing country I'm not sure if that thing had paced to// #00:24:22-3#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. Yeah of course. Yeah. Wow. #00:24:26-1#

Chenyu: So and for me this project is like is not just for me. It's for so many people in China that read my blog. #00:24:33-6#

Luise: And it's more like you're an ambassador and you tell them about like, yeah, the Airbnb values. That's super great. #00:24:41-7#

Chenyu: 'Cause I wanna show you a note that's very powerful ((from my)) blog. This one traveler write to me and they say that, “Your blog really showed us, gave us courage”// #00:24:50-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:24:51-2#

Chenyu: “China is (...) and ((thank you for talking about))”. #00:24:55-9#

Luise: But this again is something when I heard about your project I was like, “Wow, she is a female solo traveler and she would do that for like such a great amount of time”. That's

like for me it's very inspiring, too. Especially because I think when you are female, you have to like, yeah, consider more like safety issues other than maybe males. #00:25:19-9#

Chenyu: Yeah, and also I was working in Los Angeles for a year beforehand so I'm relatively familiar with it. But I guess the difference is, I wasn't settling into a new city. I already noticed neighborhoods that now I can live in their homes. I think this is the difference. #00:25:35-7#

Luise: That's amazing, yeah. #00:25:37-1#

Chenyu: And then later it trained me to be able to just adapt to any culture because // #00:25:41-2#

Luise: Yeah, that's great. Yeah, I think it needs a lot of intercultural understanding and intercultural skill set to like be able to adapt to new environments in such a// #00:25:52-9#

Chenyu: And I came to the States for high school by myself, you know, in boarding school. #00:25:57-0#

Luise: Yeah, that's amazing. #00:25:58-2#

Chenyu: So I think that really – and at the time, I had to bring three suitcases to a little village in the middle of nowhere by myself. And I realized like – and at first I couldn't understand English like very well – and at that most difficult time I felt like there is nothing else is not like to not be overcome. So I think that's what gave me the courage. 'Cause ((I had)) to like overcome challenges. #00:26:26-3#

Luise: Yeah and what would you say in broad terms, how would you describe a good Airbnb host? #00:26:33-7#

Chenyu: ... I think they are really ... They actually – some of the best Airbnb host are travelers themselves because it's more all about empathy the more you travel the more you understand how to treat others with respect. How when you are stranded in the airport, you will feel so tired, when you get off the plane you may not have time to buy a toothbrush, toothpaste. So they prepare little travel sized like items where you feel more settled or they bring, they even, just even, there is a cup of water. It's so important because you may not have access to water when you arrive ten p.m. So these little details. Only when, only comfort experience. The second one is like, actually I think clean is very important. It could be extremely interesting host but rather being friend with him or her inside living in their home because it's not clean which happened in Shanghai and then I moved out. #00:27:34-5#

Luise: Oh really? #00:27:35-8#

Chenyu: But the person were interesting. He owns like a tea house, but like there is all these dusts and bathroom is not cleaned which I think that may for guy and girl standard for cleanliness is different. #00:27:51-8#

Luise: Yeah (laughter). #00:27:52-0#

Chenyu: So being clean is very important to me ... and communicative. So, some host like don't sent you anything until you arrive and you feel like you don't know what to do. Other hosts will send you all the information you need to be able to find yourself, self sufficient. I

wouldn't need them when you arrive, you have the key code, you know where to find the key, everything is communicated ahead of time. They wouldn't send you a GoogleDoc if you don't have a smartphone, you know, and you can't open it when you need it. I think they need to, they know how to address key moments of user experience. #00:28:31-7#

Luise: Yeah. That's right. That's so important. #00:28:40-1#

Chenyu: And maybe the next one is, they are local insiders. That would be ((the best)) . #00:28:43-9#

Luise: Yeah, yeah of course. So you would look for, you would actually, every time when you stay at an Airbnb, you would try to engage more with your host. To like to chat, to get some recommendations on what to do, to like to get to know something about their lives and their like everyday lives. #00:29:03-1#

Chenyu: Actually a lot of them send me, they actually print out like guides, local guides. #00:29:09-9#

Luise: Yeah, oh that's cool. So that reminds me of another question: what would you say what does authenticity mean for you? Has it something to do with experiencing a local life? #00:29:23-1#

Chenyu: Authenticity of travel means just maybe staying in a coffee shop for a whole afternoon without making, check in to so many stops. 'Cause sitting in a coffee shop, I could see people coming in and out. I normally pick like the gentrification areas where the old meets the new development. Not like ... and then you can see so much in little// #00:29:50-0#

Luise: That's right. #00:29:50-7#

Chenyu: So much of daily life. Or by taking a bike ride around Kyoto, around Bogotá. Either way with your host or without or with a friend or not, but like you just observe so much or like running or something. Just do whatever my host does on his or her normal day and don't feel rushed. ... The other thing is authenticity is being able to be part of the host's life in any mood 'cause everyone has different moods, right? Like in ... if we're in a social setting you have to be so nice to people, you have to be smiling, but sometimes when you live in people's home there are like stressed, tired, they are mad, like just being able to embrace all their emotions, I think is important, too. #00:30:41-3#

Luise: Oh, yeah. That's a good one, I think. That's really, yeah, that's really good one and to like be – like not to have too much expectations, so kind of go with the flow and see okay// #00:30:54-6#

Chenyu: Yeah, I think go with the flow is a good one. I have to write this down. #00:30:58-1#

Luise: (laughter) #00:31:01-7#

Chenyu: I ((will not)) forgot this one. ... Maybe I just sat on my book. #00:31:06-7#

Luise: (laughter) #00:31:13-7#

Chenyu: Yeah, before you leave, you can maybe leave me a little note. #00:31:16-5#

Luise: Yeah, of course! Ooh, I would love to. ... So I already read about some negative experiences and you mentioned that you been like locked, accidental locked out one time, but is, was there some moment where you felt insecure? Where it really was like, "Oh, this person doesn't respect like my personal boundaries" or something like that? Where you felt like, "Wow, I can't stay with this host for longer"? #00:31:49-5#

Chenyu: Yeah when the, when the little girl told me, "You are not – you don't belong here!" #00:31:54-1#

Luise: Alright, yeah. So you actually, you left? #00:31:56-5#

Chenyu: Oh, I like ... the father was like, "Oh, don't worry", you know, like, "You are welcome here", but that tension was really bad. I went to a coffee shop and (...) I couldn't focus doing anything for two hours. #00:32:09-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:32:11-2#

Chenyu: That one occasion and the other one is I stayed ... with a retired veteran. And I think she has been in rules of not like – you had to put everything in certain places, so it's like ... so I'm tied up with everything I do and I actually had a lot of stress from work and I just moved to, at that, to San Francisco, ((to that place)). So I go, I go through a lot myself and she doesn't take into account of that and she expect me to be perfect. #00:32:45-1#

Luise: Wow, okay. #00:32:46-6#

Chenyu: So and actually accidentally ... like I asked her something and then she say "you don't read my listing", you know? So there is just this picture that I am not being very // #00:33:00-6#

Luise: Friendly. #00:33:00-8#

Chenyu: Friendly, to// #00:33:07-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:33:08-8#

Chenyu: That's also maybe a taste of older generation and younger generation. We may be more flexible, like say "I'm late today", you say "okay, totally fine". But she would be like "how come you are late? how come you be late?" So certain things like that just become complex. #00:33:20-6#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Yeah, kind of rude. And I think it's like because you mentioned the different generation thing. I think it's, we're a generation that is more used to digital media and digital devices and to just like, I've read, I think it was mentioned in your Medium that you were like "okay, I need to go to this dressing, this wedding but I don't have a dress right now, so of course I will just like look up if I can rent one". So, yeah. That would be it. #00:33:53-5#

Chenyu: My whole life like – how do you say? I realized that I really don't need that much to live. #00:34:00-7#

Luise: Yeah, that's nice. #00:34:03-3#

Chenyu: And I don't, right now I need to prepare like a costume for my dance performance. And I was like I don't wanna buy new things that I'm not gonna wear long. This is gonna be a waste. #00:34:11-6#

Luise: Yeah, sure, yeah. #00:34:14-7#

Chenyu: I think I become less wasteful. I used to like buy a lot of things but now I don't have a desire to buy. #00:34:20-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:34:21-3#

Chenyu: Oh, unless it's high quality (...), versatile, multifunctional, dry fast ... and don't wrinkle. #00:34:32-5#

Luise: Yeah, yeah and how would you like combine your traveling experiences with your own everyday life? How would you like keep in touch with friends? You couldn't invite them over, right? Because it's, you were always staying at someone else's place. #00:34:49-0#

Chenyu: Oh sometimes actually my friends will stay with me sometimes. Yeah. #00:34:53-2#

Luise: All right, okay, so you like could travel together? #00:34:55-3#

Chenyu: Yeah and sometimes I asked my host if they can come to visit or we meet in coffee shops or I go to their home. #00:35:03-2#

Luise: Yeah, okay, yeah. #00:35:06-0#

Chenyu: Sometimes (...). It's really about ask first. But then, when I did this project I commit myself to more time engaging with the host. #00:35:16-0#

Luise: Yeah, of course. #00:35:17-1#

Chenyu: And I actually said "no" to a lot of social gatherings. #00:35:20-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:35:21-6#

Chenyu: This really happened quick. And then otherwise you have these forced interaction with people that don't mean anything. #00:35:27-9#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:35:28-9#

Chenyu: I'd rather just like say "I'm sorry, I'm like really occupied with my thing" and // #00:35:34-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:35:36-9#

Chenyu: And I just do what my heart calls out. #00:35:39-4#

Luise: Yeah and they were all right with that. So they, you didn't get into a lot of fights? And they were like "hey, we // #00:35:44-3#

Chenyu: I mean they're not, they're not my // #00:35:46-6#

Luise: Friend. #00:35:47-1#

Chenyu: Real friend. #00:35:47-7#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:35:50-7#

Chenyu: What, what was the question I said I was gonna write down when I asked?
#00:35:54-7#

Luise: Go with the flow. #00:35:55-7#

Chenyu: Oh. #00:35:57-5#

Luise: It was like what should, what is a good Airbnb host? #00:36:00-6#

Chenyu: Ah what authenticity means? #00:36:02-9#

Luise: Ah yeah, right. #00:36:11-6#

Chenyu: Okay. #00:36:18-5#

Luise: So the last big one, question, I got is, we already talked about it, but nevertheless, right now San Francisco tries to regulate short-term rental services and especially Airbnb. What do you think about these attempts? #00:36:29-9#

Chenyu: ... For this question, I'm not fully sure. I haven't been, I have not been very active in the regulation ((fight)). #00:36:38-3#

Luise: Yeah, so in San Francisco it would be like you have to register as a host and you're only allowed to rent out the space if it's like really your living space. So if you really live there, you are able to rent it out. #00:36:53s-0#

Chenyu: One thing, regulation, regulated – everything, every innovation is gonna need regulation and I, if you think of the coffee tax and ... I understand why we need to pay city tax ... but like as a user you also go, “Oh, you have to ((pay stuff))” #00:37:14-4#

Luise: It's super expensive. #00:37:16-4#

Chenyu: But I'm, logically I understand it. #00:37:18-8#

Luise: Yeah, okay. #00:37:23-2#

Chenyu: But as a ((company)) maybe you want to avoid it. But then like legally you know you have to do it. It's like paying tax. #00:37:28-1#

Luise: Yeah, but do you, are you afraid that it could like have a bad influence on the whole Airbnb idea? #00:37:34-7#

Chenyu: Hmm ... I still, I'm still able to find a host I wanna stay with. ((But)) it has become less affordable for me now. #00:37:45-1#

Luise: Yeah, all right. Okay. So I'm out of questions, but if you feel like there is anything you need to put some more emphasis on? Or if there's some topic which, where you think, “Oh, we should include that”, yeah? #00:38:01-6#

Chenyu: Hmm ... Maybe like the idea of being a digital nomad. #00:38:05-6#

Luise: Yeah that would be interesting as well. #00:38:08-5#

Chenyu: I think, I am hoping that really you can cover – it's not just travel. #00:38:15-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:38:16-7#

Chenyu: It's daily life. #00:38:16-9#

Luise: Yeah. #00:38:17-8#

Chenyu: My, I'm trying to push that concept. #00:38:19-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:38:20-6#

Chenyu: That, I'll hope that every new person to a new city, they can feel ((a sense of)) belonging I had when ((I was new)). #00:38:29-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:38:30-4#

Chenyu: 'Cause a lot of times when you go to a place (...) you don't like that. #00:38:38-6#

Luise: Yeah. #00:38:39-6#

Chenyu: ((And then)) you cannot leave, you cannot move. What if there is a way where you can for the first two or three months, you can live in a different neighborhood, recommended to you, live with locals and then you actually feel like belonging, you become more productive. So I think maybe co-living is interesting. #00:38:52-7#

Luise: Yeah. #00:38:52-7#

Chenyu: I think you would be interested in learning about co-living spaces. #00:38:56-3#

Luise: Yeah, right. #00:38:57-1#

Chenyu: And ((all this)). #00:38:58-2#

Luise: Yeah. And there are also like some co-working spaces as well where you just have to like sign up for it and then you can go and leave whenever you want and, yeah, I think that is like kind of a development that characterizes our times right now. Yeah. #00:39:17-1#

Chenyu: Yeah, and I think there are a lot of futuristic homes. It's all about high technology. #00:39:24-2#

Luise: Yeah, that's right. #00:39:26-5#

Chenyu: And I think what Airbnb really ((means is)) to ((manage)) that// #00:39:31-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:39:32-4#

Chenyu: That you feel, ((in all these)) homes that I feel a sense of belonging to – it's not from the technology// #00:39:40-2#

Luise: Yeah. #00:39:41-1#

Chenyu: It's probably more from ((the whole)) details. #00:39:42-1#

Luise: Yeah, like the decoration and // #00:39:45-0#

Chenyu: Smartboard, ... pans, paintings, wooden material. #00:39:52-1#

Luise: Yeah. #00:39:54-9#

Chenyu: So ... The things in virtual homes should be more intentional. #00:39:57-8#

Luise: Yeah. #00:39:5-5#

Chenyu: Maybe not as – it definitely has more knowledge, but I hope that knowledge does not replace human beings or animals. #00:40:07-5#

Luise: Yeah. [Chenyu shows a picture in her host book] Oh cute. (laughter) #00:40:11-1#

Chenyu: All my host love animals and loved (...). #00:40:14-6#

Luise: Yeah, yeah, nice. And – oh, do you actually like engage or participate in the Airbnb events and any community? Because they do some meet-ups and they do this big Airbnb Open. #00:40:27-8#

Chenyu: Yeah, I was a presenter at the Airbnb Open Night. #00:40:31-2#

Luise: Ah really? Cool! #00:40:31-6#

Chenyu: And there I was, I spoke at the Airbnb LA meet-up. #00:40:35-1#

Luise: Yeah, that's nice. #00:40:41-4#

Chenyu: ((Like)) these events. #00:40:38-9#

Luise: Yeah, because I think it's a cool way or a convenient way to get in touch with locals and travelers alike. So when I came to San Francisco, I went to some Airbnb meet-ups, just in some little bars and – what was the other one? ... I can't remember right now. I think we met at a café. Just to like get a coffee, grab a coffee together and then start off the day. That was really nice. #00:41:06-4#

Chenyu: Oh. Was that organized by Airbnb? #00:41:08-1#

Luise: Yeah, it is. #00:41:08-7#

Chenyu: Yeah, I went out when in Tokyo, I joined one of these. #00:41:12-6#

Luise: Yeah, that's cool. #00:41:15-9#

Chenyu: ((In China that's)) all we have now. #00:41:15-8#

Luise: Cool, but yeah, thank you so much. Thank you so much for your time. #00:41:20-3#

Chenyu: I hope it'll be helpful. ((If you have any another question, e-mail me)).
#00:41:21-9#