

Coming Out Pod

Lauren

Hey everybody.

Nicole

Hey y'all!

Lauren

Welcome to coming out with Lauren and Nicole. We are a weekly podcast where we have on queer folks from all walks of life. They tell us the tales of how they came out to friends, family and the world at large.

Nicole

Because who doesn't love a coming out story.

Lauren

But also, special for pride and on the heels of our just very--our expertise (laughing) that we gave you in our flirting and dating episode. We teased the fact that we were going to have on a queer dating coach. We are here today with that queer dating coach! Please welcome, Ariella Serur. Hi, Ariella!

Ariella

Hey, so happy to be here.

Lauren

Thank you for coming on. As we have said many times on this podcast, we are not an advice podcast. We do not take that kind of responsibility. And we acknowledge very much that each case, each person, is individual in their needs and their circumstances. And so, advice in general is not a one size fits all proposition. And certainly dating advice is not a one size fits all proposition. So, we give that disclaimer to this episode as well. But certainly having a professional on to speak about this stuff is...is recommended. (laughing)

Nicole

(laughs)

Ariella

(laughing) I thought ya'll did great. I've heard a lot about you--

Lauren

You are so kind, thank you so much.

Nicole

Thank you.

Lauren

But yeah, so if you follow us on Instagram, which we hope you do, (@comingoutpod), you will have seen that I posted a story saying, "Hey, we're

having a queer dating coach on, hit us with your questions." We got a lot of questions, because this is a topic that many in our community...I'll say struggle with. I know that I certainly do. (laughs) It is a challenging aspect. And--for anybody, and I think being queer, especially, there's a lot of nuance. So we will be getting to some of those specific questions later on in the episode. But we do want to just talk to [Ariella](#) as a person first, and hear about her! So how do you identify?

[Ariella](#)

As a very queer person. (pause) (laughs)

[Nicole](#)

Yayyy!

[Ariella](#)

That's basically all there is to know.

[Nicole](#)

Beautiful.

[Lauren](#)

Awesome. Love that.

Nicole

Fantastic.

Lauren

So, how did you come to be a dating coach?

Ariella

Yeah, okay. Well, basically what had happened was that I had gotten my life coaching certification, and then I needed to figure out what I wanted to do with it. So, I knew that I wanted to help queer folks, probably in their 20s and 30s. So I basically did what you all do: put up a poll on Instagram and was like, "Queer folks, what is it that you need help with? Or what is it that you most want to achieve right now?" And I qualified "achieve" in some ways that wasn't quite so capitalist and scary--

Lauren

Yeah! Yeah.

Ariella

(laughs) But, some people specifically called out dating. Like, as you said, this is a super hot topic, right? And, prior to that, I had considered relationship coaching, I considered non-monogamy. I was thinking in this kind of relationship connection sphere, and I was really digging around for what is it that I'm

uniquely qualified to do? And once people call it out dating, I was like, "Ooh, baby. Dating is my thing." Dating has been my favorite hobby for years.

Lauren

Ah!

Nicole

Amazing.

Ariella

And, it's been something that I always am helping people navigate, and talking to friends and family about, and helping people roleplay. So it was kind of like my queer dating coaching--coming out as a queer dating coach felt similar to my coming out as a queer person, in the sense that all of these pieces started to make sense. Where I was like, "Oh, I've really been doing this all along."

Lauren

Huh!

Ariella

So, that's kind of, yeah, the long and short of it. I didn't always love dating, but for the past...seven or eight years, I'd say it really was my bread and butter. So, I want to help it become other people's bread and butter too. And not hate it.

Lauren

Ah! That's incredible. So, yeah, here's my question in relation to that, because I think for the queer community, one of our more endearing stereotypes is sort of the awkward, queer, I have a tank top that says disaster lesbian.

Nicole

(laughs)

Lauren

I think a lot--we're very sort of self deprecating. We have so many jokes about how we can't talk to each other, women identified folks especially. It's like you're having sex with them and in your head, you're like, "But but is this a thing or are we just friends?"

Ariella

(laughing) Yeah.

Lauren

So many of those memes and jokes?

Ariella

Yes!

Lauren

And so I guess, how did you have the wherewithal or the confidence, or whatever you want to call it, to be like, "No, no, no. I got this!" That to me is such a great example to follow. (laughs)

Nicole

Yeah, like you said, that dating wasn't really your thing until seven or eight years ago. So how did that happen kind of...

Ariella

It's a combination of getting more comfortable with myself, for sure. That was what had happened seven, eight years ago was a lot of getting comfortable in my body and a lot of--

Lauren

Ugh, yeah.

Ariella

--what I call "conscious confidence," practicing confidence when I'd go out. Similar to--I'm forgetting, I think maybe Nicole, you had told this story on the dating and flirting podcast about being like, "No, we're gonna show up full of self worth today?" A lot of that was really my journey and being like, "Either I'm going to love myself, and the way that I move about the world, or I'm gonna have a terrible time." So, it was a lot of practice, like practicing in that way. But I

will say it's not--I am a great communicator. And I consider myself a professional dater because I know how to show someone a good time. And I know how to assess how it's going inside my own body. So I consider myself a professional dater in that sense, but it's not that I have--it's not that I'm never rejected, it's not that I've never confused on how to initiate with someone. I'm in the mud with everybody else.

Lauren

Yes! Yes.

Ariella

It's just that I trust myself to be able to speak aloud what it is that's happening with me, and to be able to connect with people of all different, you know, walks of life and whatnot. So, that's what makes me feel like a professional dater: understanding myself and communicating what's happening.

Nicole

I love that!

Lauren

I think you fucking nailed it! Cause I feel like there's some misconception that you are, quote unquote "successful" at dating if you get a relationship, and then you're in that relationship. And it's like, "I've seen a lot of very dysfunctional toxic relationships."

Ariella

Yes!

Lauren

I think that the idea of being successful at dating is, are you enjoying this? Do you feel like you're presenting yourself authentically?

Ariella

Yes.

Lauren

That doesn't necessarily line up to "You got married off a dating app. You did it!" It's just, yeah, and I think--

Ariella

Absolutely not that.

Nicole

Yeah!

Lauren

--when we equate these things--

Nicole

Yeah, it doesn't have to be the relationship escalator. Which is what I was just thinking. It really, you know, successful at dating doesn't mean "I've gotten on the escalator and I'm not falling off!" You know?

Ariella

No way, no way! It's so bad, it's so bad that we even think that, that that's even our go to. It's so harmful and it really promotes this idea of what is normal and normative dating, and for queer folks who are already existing outside of that box, it's so damaging to promote one ideal in that way. I--do you want to know how I qualify a successful--what is dating success?

Lauren

Please! Yes, absolutely.

Ariella

Okay, this is my big ol--I did a speech on this a couple of weeks ago and this is basically the final paragraph I'm giving you. (laughs) So, you really earned it!

Nicole and Lauren

(laughing)

Ariella

No, to me, this isn't memorized, this is me just, you know, bullshitting what it was that I said at the thing. But, success is not securing a second date. But it's allowing the people that you go out with, everyone that you interact with, to affect you. It's really moving the focus away from future and on to how might I impact this person? And how might they impact me in this brief moment we have together? Because, ultimately, I love dating because I don't take for granted how impactful brief moments can be on my life. And I allow every interaction to be that impactful, brief moment, and then dating becomes part of our evolution. So--

Nicole

Yes! Ah!

Lauren

Really, yeah. I mean, back when I was on--when I was on the apps, and I was dating quite a bit, a lot of those--I'm a very specific type and I'm attracted to very specific types, so there were a lot of moments where within the first five minutes, I knew this isn't going to be a thing. I'm almost certainly not interested in a second date. But, I tried to at least have a good conversation, learn something new, this person's from Florida. Tell me some stuff about Florida!

Ariella

Totally.

Lauren

You know, just enjoy the aspect of talking to someone without an expectation?

Ariella

Yeah, for sure! I think the attraction thing is also interesting. I'm curious to then be like, "Hmm, how do you know within the first five minutes--" (laughs)

Lauren

No, please!

Nicole

I'm gonna pick at that too.

Lauren

Drag me!

Nicole

Well, I'm curious what that experience is like for you, because a lot of folks--well, alright, you could tell me this and then I'll tell you what I've observed in clients. Tell me what it's like for you. What are you sensing in your first five minutes of going out with someone that tells you this is a yes or this is a no for you?

Lauren

Oh, that's such--oh my god, she pulled out a notebook.

Nicole

(laughs)

Ariella

I did. (laughs) Just in case I need take notes. I'll try to make them quiet.

Lauren

The best way I can describe it--and this is probably cheating--but it's like kind of a gut knowledge. And I think that this is because--and I talked about this in the flirting and dating episode--because I am very comfortable being alone, to me, I don't have the part--And I know a lot of people have this and I think that's wonderful. It's just I'm wired a different way--I don't have the part of me that wants to be in a relationship? I will need to want to be with a person.

Ariella

Totally.

Lauren

So, for me, it's very connected to that. And, I'm not saying--there's definitely been slow burn things where I'll start out if I'm doing a play or something like that. And initially, I don't think of somebody in any way that's romantic and then I can learn to--I grow to feel that? But a lot of times on dates, it's just, I don't know, I just get--it's like a click or not click. And I can--there's ambiguous too. There's gray area, but I feel like I can feel a not click pretty strong. If that...I don't

know if that makes sense. Where I'm just like, "for the way I'm wired, this does not feel like I will be pursuing it." I don't know if I've given a (laughing) good answer to that question.

Ariella

Cool. You know, I like what you're saying about a gut knowledge, a click or not click, and I love--and you were really clear about this in the last episode too--about your comfort with yourself and not needing to be in relationships. I think that's all super healthy to move through the dating pool with. And, I guess where I get curious or suspicious is when it comes to more physical-based attraction.

Lauren

Sure!

Ariella

And people knowing I'm not attracted to this person right away, then I'm kind of like "Says who? And who taught you that? And where is that--what are the influences there behind the scenes?" But, it doesn't sound like you're really saying that. It sounds like you're talking about more of a connection element.

Lauren

Yes.

Ariella

Which I can get behind more. So, I'm not gonna necessarily drag you (laughs).

Lauren

I got partially dragged. That's fair. No, for me, it is more the "Are we on the same page, like emotionally, mentally, all that stuff." The physical attraction, I have learned that there--because there have been specific cases where I really don't feel I'm physically attracted to somebody and then as I get to know them over time, I can become physical.

Nicole

Totally.

Ariella

Yeah!

Lauren

And I had to learn a lot myself, because initially, I was very hardline about that.
(laughs)

Ariella

I think we all need to learn that!

Nicole

Yes.

Ariella

Because we've been given, force-fed a particular image of what is attractive--

Lauren

Oof. Yep.

Ariella

--in our society, that I am highly suspicious of myself when I don't find someone attractive. I'm like--

Lauren

Oh, I love that!

Ariella

--where's that--where does that come from? What is that?

Lauren

That's so interesting.

Ariella

So that's where I get more suspicious.

Nicole

I love that. Because--I love when you say suspicious, because, it's funny, I haven't thought about that necessarily when it comes to other people. Because again, I haven't been in the dating pool for a bit, though I also absolutely fucking love to date and we'll talk about that later.

Ariella

(laughs)

Nicole

But, literally in my 20s I was like, "Could I do this professionally?" I had the thought--

Ariella

Like, should you date professionally?

Nicole

That's actually--I literally was--

Ariella

I'm with you.

Nicole

At that point, I was thinking about it more in like "Okay, could I be an escort?"

Lauren

Yeah, I was gonna say!

Nicole

But I'm terrified about being an escort because of the potential implications from cis hetero male danger.

Ariella

Yeah, mhmm.

Nicole

That was actually literally the only thing that stopped me, because I loved dating so much.

Lauren

Ohhh, interesting!

Ariella

Oh my god, I'm a plus one--I'm a professional plus one. You need someone--

Lauren

What a gift!

Ariella

--and I'm here. I'll remember your 50 family members' names in the first five minutes.

Nicole

Yay!!

Lauren

What a gift.

Nicole

It's so fun! Anyway, we can talk...

Ariella

(laughs)

Nicole

But, one of the things, in terms of being suspicious of what you find attractive or not, I feel like that's a conversation--I know that's a conversation that I've been having with myself about myself about certain things when I'm looking in the mirror, especially postpartum.

Ariella

Yes!

Nicole

Where things that I've been taught are not attractive--and I can say specifically, the war with cellulite has been something in my brain for a very, very long time that was implemented there by my mother. I love you, mom. But, that's the way that she saw herself, sees herself, and it absolutely passed to me. And so, I've been really trying to deconstruct the conversation in my head that says that cellulite isn't attractive.

Ariella

Yes.

Nicole

And recognizing that I've been taught that and going like, "How much of that is my brain biology finding that unattractive? And how much of that is society telling me that's unattractive?" So now I'm seeing it in the mirror and going, "That's not attractive!"

Ariella

It's probably not much brain biology.

Nicole

Absolutely! And so it makes complete sense, obviously, that we should be suspicious of that when we are looking at others. And, so on that note though, because this is not something I've thought to really question in myself, but I

almost picked at it with Lauren and then I realized I do the same fucking thing. But so, okay. I think something very specific to the queer community is talking about types that were attracted to--

Lauren

Sure. Yeah!

Ariella

Uh huh.

Nicole

And that comes up in in cis heteronormative culture too--what type of guy or what type of girl are you into, whatever. But, it is different in the queer community--

Lauren

Yeah, it's part of our culture, in terms of labels.

Nicole

It is part of our culture. Exactly. Femme and butch and androgynous. You know, all of those words that are and many other things on that spectrum that we toss around. And, we have said many times on this podcast, for the people who listen to us regularly, everybody knows Lauren's into femme chicks, and I am into more androgynous women. And that is--or more trans masc leaning people.

I would say I'm a little bit more open than Lauren in that way, I have dated femme women--

Lauren

I would say that's fair.

Nicole

Yeah, I've dated femme women and been attracted to them. But it's more on a case to case basis. And, I can generally say androgyny is more attractive to me. But I'd say we're pretty set in our ways that way. And I do feel it's instinctual. But what would you say to that? And have you encountered that with people?

Lauren

Good. Question. Oof!

Ariella

Yeah! I mean, a lot of people have kind of type preferences. And I'm not...I don't want to invalidate who turns anybody on. All I think about and try to investigate in my own self is where is this coming from? Is there societal belief that is informing this? Or if I got to know this person more, would that attraction grow? Or would I learn some of these things? What kind of media am I intaking that promotes the sexualizing of certain other groups of people who haven't traditionally shown up on my list of people I've slept with or whatnot. And for

me, it's also different because I have really slept with a lot of different--I guess I'm gonna talk about me sleeping with people on this podcast (laughs)

Lauren

Please! We don't talk about it, we get so embarrassed we have to talk about this shit!

Nicole

We have to. I can't be the only one talking about the people I've slept with on this podcast.

Lauren

Okay, I haven't slept with that many people, let's move on, okay?! (laughs)

Nicole

(laughing)

Ariella

I'm a really big slut. And proud of it--

Nicole

Me too!

Lauren

But I think we call it sex positive now. (laughs)

Ariella

Oh. I don't find slut to be a bad word.

Lauren

Good!

Nicole

That's wonderful. Let's embrace that.

Lauren

Let's bring back slut!

Ariella

Yeah, I feel just really comfortable in my slutdom.

Lauren

I fucking love that.

Ariella

But, so I guess for me as someone who is--sex for me is--it's a fun activity you can do with friends, people you don't know, people you love, whatever.

Lauren

That's amazing, yeah.

Ariella

It's like playing cards, I'm usually in the mood, (laughing) if someone wants to play.

Lauren

I have a friend who describes sex as recreational for them.

Ariella

Literally a great, great hobby. But I know for a lot of people, it's not that way. So, when I'm on my diatribe of "I see who I've slept with is kind of exclusive of these certain folks," or whatever it is. For me, that's really specific, right? Because that is my relationship to sex. And that is my relationship to attraction, where it is kind of this encompassing thing, where I know a lot of other folks don't feel that way or sex isn't quite as accessible to them in a way that might be accessible to me as far as their own levels of attraction or interest in sex. Right?

Nicole

Uh huh.

Ariella

So we can take what I'm saying--it's like a sprinkling of a suggestion. There's no hard and fast rule here that we must need to be attracted to every different type of person. But it's more that, if there's an underlying tone of fatphobia, or misogyny, or racism-- there are reasons that--we have been taught certain things about who it is appropriate to be attracted to, and who isn't and who is appropriate to be sexualized and who isn't. And, I just think that we need to be really hyper critical of those messages as we're entering into the dating pool. And, the way that I circumvent this a lot, is by talking not about standards in the way that folks usually talk about standards. It's really my standards are all feelings-based standards. So it's not about what someone looks like at all. I don't even--sure, if you look at the people I've slept with you, you might be able to notice some trends of who might be a little bit more present. But, I don't go into interactions with the picture of someone in my head whatsoever. And I encourage clients not to as well. And it's more about how do we feel, let's sense how we're feeling in the presence of someone else. Not, I want to look at you and see if you look like what is inside my head.

Lauren

You are speaking to why, at least for me, the dating apps are so hard because it's pictures through a screen. And so you don't have that opportunity.

Ariella

Yeah!

Lauren

And it's just--yeah, I mean, we'll obviously talk about dating apps, because you can't talk about dating without dating apps at this point.

Ariella

Totally.

Lauren

Especially not queer dating. But that is, I'll tell you right now, I recently--after our flirting and dating episode--my best friend in Atlanta got on Hinge. And I was like, "Oh make a profile--I'm doing this in solidarity so we can both be on this dating app and share war stories or whatever." And going through hundreds of photos where it's just pictures and a tiny little blurb, I hearted, I think one person out of like a hundred. Because if I don't have the opportunity to have some kind of chemistry or connection or something, it's just for someone like me, it's gonna be a non starter most of the time.

Ariella

Totally!

Lauren

And I think that people have a lot of trouble with that on the apps.

Ariella

Yes, I completely agree with you. And I feel the same way. I have traditionally not been a dating app person. I've met a lot of folks in person, and introduce myself, go up to them, send them a little DM--

Lauren

Yeah!

Ariella

--whatever it is. But I figured out, you know, what's kind of my style here, but dating apps have not been...I haven't really used dating apps to meet people when I am in the city I live in. I'll use dating apps more--and, I think you all mentioned this on the last episode, too of someone using dating apps when they move around.

Lauren

Yep!

Ariella

So that's how I use it. I was traveling around the country during most of COVID. And would use dating apps to connect with local queer folks. And then get a drink with them, or whatever it is. So I use dating apps really as a concise tool. And if I'm not actively swiping I take myself out of the deck, so that people aren't interested in me and then I'm not, you know, responding or whatever it is.

Lauren

Yes! God bless, yeah.

Ariella

So I'm very regimented.

Nicole

That's cool!

Ariella

Yeah, go on.

Nicole

No, no, no, please. You go, you go. Literally all I had to say was that's cool and I just interrupted you--

Ariella

I'm like "Just compliment me more." (laughs) Just tell me how cool it is. No, I was gonna say, though, **Lauren**, I think that it totally makes sense that a lot of dating apps where there is nothing evocative happening, of course it's really hard to be interested then. So, that is something that we talk a lot about in my coaching is what do I recommend putting on a dating app profile, for that exact reason. Like, how do we actually sense the essence of you--

Lauren

Yeah!

Ariella

--through this screen, especially when a lot of people are using them. So--

Lauren

I'm so glad to hear that you do date by other methods, because I am forever screaming into the void, "It's not the only way!"

Ariella

Oh yeah.

Lauren

Or like, "What are the other ways? and I'm like, "Hard pass on answering that. I just know it's not the only way." (laughing)

Ariella

It's not the only way at all. At all.

Nicole

Yeah, it's interesting, we've even had--and I will not name names, but we've had people on the podcast before, whether in person or on Zoom, who, when I think about it, I'm like, "Yeah, if I saw them on a dating app, if I just thought pictures,

I'd probably be like, meh," but then hearing them talk, I'm like, "Oh, hiiii!" I get much more-- it happened many times. I mean, not to--I don't mean to sexualize our guests. Hi, I love you. I'm very respectful of you. (laughs) It's really more like we're having that feeling of, oh wow! I totally am vibing with the energy that you're putting out there and that's maybe not what I would have expected if I just saw you, based on what I quote unquote "think I'm into." Do you know what I mean?

Ariella

For sure.

Lauren

That's what happens to me to me all the time, yeah.

Ariella

That's you sensing how you feel in someone else's presence and that makes you want to lean in or no. I think that's exactly it.

Nicole

Well, and I wanted to loop back just for a second to what you said about, you know, basically...is getting suspicious about your own attractions and really questioning whether racism, misogyny, fatphobia, etc play into any of your attractions and I can say, I mean I guess we'd how's this under misogyny, because when I point to why I'm not usually into femme women...other than the

fact that I would say that--and this is not again, this is not everybody--but the majority of the the best sex that I've had with women has been with androgynous women, for whatever reason, from an energetic standpoint. But I know that part of the femme women thing is because I have an association, that because I'm slightly more androgynous than those femme women that I'm gonna get put in the position of the dude.

Lauren

Yep.

Nicole

And that I--and I'm not comfortable with that. And I like someone to top me, you know, and I just assumed femme women are not tops. I have these things that are absolutely internalized misogyny just laying themselves out in my queer attractions. And it sucks because I don't want that to come into play. And it's literally been a problem in my relationships with femme women before, because I start talking myself out of the attraction to them.

Ariella

Mmm. Yeah.

Nicole

And that sucks. I don't want that. I don't know. Anyway, I don't know if you have thoughts on that.

Ariella

I just think that you're doing the right work of questioning where this comes from. I think that that's totally it. It's recognizing this and being like, "Okay, is there wiggle room here? How might I unlearn something like this? Or how might I go out with a femme person and try to make no assumptions about what will happen?" Or whatever it is, and you might realize that yeah, you are still, you know, being put into position to top, or whatever it is. But it's the process of recognizing, and then trying to unlearn if it's a belief that's not serving us.

Nicole

Yeah. And, also, even as I'm just saying it I feel like I'm realizing things in the moment. Also, communication, I feel like there were times when I was younger, where I'd be dating a femme girl, and I felt--I was starting to feel that, and then I'd bail instead of having a conversation where I was like, "Ah, hey, I really like to be topped. How do you feel about that? You know, is that something you're into?"

Ariella

Totally!

Nicole

Which could have literally saved at least one relationship that I can think of.
(laughs)

Ariella

A hundred percent. A hundred percent. I think that that's spot on.

Lauren

Ughh!!

Ariella

Yeah. And that's all understanding what's happening in your own body and figuring out how to say that, and I think that communication is so important. And so at the crux of what it is that I work on with folks, because it's not taught and folks that are poly or non-monogamous, I think that it is so much more part of the equation, and so much more part of the narrative. It's not--if you're doing a well it's so in line with what it is that you're taught about navigating relationships in that way. So I think--and my last relationship was non-monogamous as well. So I attribute a lot of my communication tools to non-monogamy--

Lauren

Oh yeah.

Ariella

--but if you're not operating in that--in a non-monogamous relationship, communication is still so taboo, and it's so hard to talk about what it is that we want, or to ask for what we need.

Lauren

Especially sex stuff! Oh my god, we're so puritanical. (music plays)

Nicole

Hey, Lauren!

Lauren

Yeah, hey!

Nicole

Does oral sex sometimes feel a little too intense or make you feel, I don't know, too exposed?

Lauren

You know me so well, Nicole.

Nicole

I know I do.

Lauren

And look, that's the case for a lot of people and we get it! There are many ways to get pleasure and that's why Lorals were created.

Nicole

Absolutely! Lorals is a queer-owned woman-owned company. They are single use natural latex panties designed to be worn during oral sex and rimming.

Lauren

Couples, throuples, just hookups, spouses, cis, trans, queer, kinky--look, Lorals are made to help literally everyone say yes to maximizing your pleasure.

Nicole

Lorals are ultra thin so you feel every little thing. Plus, the super stretchy latex is easy on your partner's tongue and allows for tongue and finger penetration, even simultaneously.

Lauren

Lorals come in two styles: shorties for fuller coverage or bikinis if you want to bare a bit more.

Nicole

Lorals are made with your privacy in mind. They're individually packaged in a pocket size pouch, so you can take them on the go for those, you know, one nightstands or multiple nightstands or anything outside of your house really.

Lauren

Anytime you're standing and it's night.

[Nicole](#)

Yes.

[Lauren](#)

And look, we all know I can barely remember the last time I had sex but I did recently catch an Instagram live with the founder of Lorals, Melanie, and she was explaining that Lorals are really great if you're in a situation where you want some oral and some rimming but you don't want to, let's say, risk cross-contamination--

[Nicole](#)

Good way of saying it.

[Lauren](#)

--this is a perfect product for that. Or, if you're interested in kind of BDSM, but you haven't really explored that, try on a little snappy pair of latex panties. It's a great introduction to kink.

[Nicole](#)

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Lauren

And, for listeners of the pod, Lorals is giving you 15% off your first purchase today at www.mylorals.com that's www.mylorals.com using the code COMINGOUTPOD.

Nicole

Do it to it, y'all.

Lauren

Lorals!

Nicole

Lorals!

Lauren

(music stops) This brings--we're kind of adjacent to a question that we got asked that I think is really interesting and pertains pretty specifically to the queer community. So this person writes: "Hi, I'm relatively newly out as a male, question mark, bisexual pan, but I guess I'm straight-passing, since my style is chilled and laid back. My question is if I need to change this up to code a certain way, ie painted nails, makeup, or carry on with how it's going. I'm relatively shy. And I feel I don't appear queer enough to garner interest from the same sex."

Ariella

Totally.

Lauren

This comes up a ton and it's particular to queer people, what do you do? Cause it's like we gotta signal somehow, but if it's not in our natural DNA to look queer, do we fake it (laughs) That's inauthentic? Yeah.

Ariella

Yes, I would say it--first, it depends on how you're trying to meet people. Som, this problem is coming up exclusively if this person wants to be perceived as part of the queer community in public, right? So, this is where you can disclose on dating apps, or be swiping for who you're interested in, whatnot. But if this person is wanting to garner some kind of queer attention in public, I would not say to paint your nails or wear makeup if that's not authentic to you. You might try it and be like, "Oh shit, I didn't realize this was really authentic to me and now I want more of it." But, I would say that there are ways that you can flag. It's interesting, I did a...I wound up compiling a set of polls about this a couple months back, and then making this ebook called--what was it? How to tell if someone's queer and how to connect regardless, or something like that. Because there are, you know, from the queer lens, there are things that we do look for in other folks. And I think it's important to be aware of those, and to also be aware of how exclusive that is, and how potentially femmephobic or ableist those things are too.

Nicole

Yeahhh.

Lauren

Totally!

Ariella

So, I would say that if you don't want to mess with your style, and you want to be more easily recognizable as queer, I would say putting a rainbow sticker on your water bottle or, you know, adding a rainbow in somewhere is probably going to help. But that's also people make fun of me for going over the top with that. I think in my--

Lauren

Yeah, I do the same thing!

Ariella

I think in my mind's eye, I see myself as like super femmey, even though I don't wear makeup and I wear the same joggers and white t-shirt every day. There's some leftover--for some reason I'm like, "If I don't flag, no one's gonna know." And everybody at this point is--my friends are like "Sweetie, people know." (laughs Theyre like, "You can tell. You can tell.")

Nicole and Lauren

(laughing)

Ariella

They sent me a meme of Jojo Siwa wearing--covered in rainbows and being like "This is femmes during pride month." (laughs)

Lauren

Yeah! It's so true though! Yeah, I know, I still feel the same way where I feel like nobody is going to know and a lot of straight--what I've always described myself as, nobody--or at least straight people--never assume I'm queer but are completely unsurprised once they find out. So it's like that middle ground.

(laughs)

Ariella

Totally. Totally.

Nicole

I feel like I would say that--because I did it when I was younger. I got a fohawk when that was cool, y'all.

Ariella

Woahhh.

Nicole

I went from long hair to fo--well, I shouldn't say long hair. I gradually got shorter, but it was absolutely to signal. I mean, I I genuinely felt like I needed to express that part of myself, too, that was part of it. I wasn't just doing it to signal or to flag.

Lauren

No! Yeah.

Nicole

But it was totally part of it at that point where I was 21 and being like, "I'm tired of people thinking I'm straight."

Ariella

That's why I have an undercut. (laughs)

Nicole

Yeah, exactly! No, exactly! And I did the side--even when I grew my hair back long, I did shave, the whole thing and then when I cut it this time it was just because I genuinely felt that I wanted to. But it is interesting because it was always such a calculation when I was younger. And then I think when I hit about 30, I just assumed that my energy was so fucking queer that it didn't even matter anymore. That I was just--and I'd been out for so long to that point too that whatever. But, I don't know, I guess also, I think it's a reflection of--and

maybe we need to give people more credit here--of the world changing that there is a lot less assumption that people are heterosexual, necessarily, you know? And granted, I am speaking more about the coasts and more liberal areas, to be sure. But I think we are actively undoing what it looks like to be queer, you know?

Ariella

Totally.

Nicole

And people are catching on. And that should make however, whoever you are out there, and however you present, feel more confident in in your own presentation. Whatever that is.

Ariella

What I'm curious about here, though, is that as I've gotten more comfortable in my own queerness, and as I've been out for longer, now I see a lot of people and I'm like, "All you bitches are queer," which is controversial.

Nicole

(laughing)

Lauren

I totally get that.

Ariella

But if this person's at the beginning of this journey, it can feel like maybe you are the only one, or you do want to get someone's attention. That you might not trust that people are perceiving you in this way yet. And, if you need a little key chain or a little bandana--I mean that's how it used to be. That's how historically it happened.

Lauren

That's exactly--yeah, I mean that's such a staple of the community. And I do think it comes down to what you were saying about being comfortable with yourself. And a lot of folks who are newly out, naturally, they don't have that comfort yet--how could you?

Ariella

Yeah.

Lauren

So, that's sort of--and so this is good. This brings us to--we got several questions from folks who, you know, describe themselves as baby gays or newly out. But the bottom line is, have never been with someone in a queer way. One person was 26. One person was in their early 40s. So this, you know, it spans all the ages--

Ariella

Totally normal.

Lauren

Some saying "I've never even kissed another woman before. My nerves are crazy with this!" And, a big question for these folks is, when do they bring up that this is a first time for them? Or do they have to? Or just, how do you navigate that when you're a newbie?

Ariella

Okay, I want to acknowledge that you took a stab at this question on the last podcast, and I thought that you did a great job--

Lauren

Oh, yay! Thank you.

Ariella

I think it's largely up to the discretion and comfort of the person that's in that position.

Lauren

Oh, great.

Ariella

I think in any situation, I mean, this becomes about disclosure. And it's--

Lauren

Yeah!

Ariella

I think what will make you feel present and what will make you feel safe? And that is--if it is really on your mind if you're out with someone in a queer way for the first time. And all you can think about is the fact that you can't focus because you're just so fucking nervous and this means a lot to you. It might ease you to be like, "Hey, I'm thinking something in my head. It's really distracting. Can I name something about this being a first time for me?" Or "Can we have...can we quickly deviate over to a transparent conversation about how I'm doing in this moment?" You know?

Lauren

Ah, this is my dream. Yeah, yeah.

Ariella

Yeah, I think that if it makes you feel safe to name it, name it. And if not, no one needs to know your history. That is your...that's yours to disclose if you want to or not, if you don't want to.

Lauren

Yeah.

Nicole

"Can we quickly deviate to a transparent conversation?" feels like the thing I'm going to take on now. You know? In general, just mid sentence talking about something, and I'm gonna be like, "Can we deviate to a transparent conversation for a moment?"

Lauren

Yeah, I love that.

Nicole

Seriously, there's so much relief in even just thinking about that--about doing that.

Ariella

Yeah, totally. And I'll say that I vote--if things aren't going well, or if you're feeling distracted, or feeling a type of way on a date--it is okay to pause and name what's happening. Or to pause and get a drink of water, whatever it is. I call this "calling a timeout." And often it'll be--this has happened twice in the past year where physical intimacy is on the table and even though I went on my whole diatribe about sleeping with people (laughs) but, sometimes I don't. I know, I know shocking! But I will sometimes need to evaluate whether this is a

good idea for the health of the person, the health of me, whatever it is. So I will be like, "I need a moment to think about this, can you give me a second?" and I'll close my eyes, put my hand on my heart, and take a few breaths. And I'll consider what I want to do and the decision I want to make. Or sometimes, if something is happening, and something's not feeling right in my body, then I'll be like, "I have something going on in my head. I want a moment to kind of figure it out so I can explain it in the best way I know how. Can we pause for a moment and can I just--do you mind if I just take a second to see what's going on with me?" And I think that we can normalize those things happening and if this is--you know, whatever it is that you're thinking about disclosing--if that's coming up on your mind a lot in a date, and you want to name it so that you can be more present with this person, I think it's an honorable goal, presence. So, just say what you need to say or pause and figure out how you want to say what it is that you want to say.

Lauren

That's so great. I think there is a not so fine--but we think it's fine--line between something like that, and quote unquote "oversharing," which we are very afraid of doing. And I don't want to say that oversharing does not happen, because I've been on dates where there's overshares. I think that's a stereotype also, for women--you talk about the ex and the breakup on the first date, and that. But, I don't think that equates to what you're talking about. And I think maybe in our mind, we've made--oh, if I'm honest about feeling freaked out, or this is my first time, that's an overshare. And I don't think--

Ariella

Oh, yeah.

Lauren

I think an overshare--you know when there's an overshare.

Ariella

For sure.

Lauren

But let's group honesty and transparency into that big pot of overshare. I think we maybe do that--

Ariella

That's so interesting. Yeah, I wouldn't even think that those are even remotely related, to be honest.

Lauren

I don't they are, I think people think they are, and some of the questions we got did mention the word overshare. And I think that's become a buzzword, where now we think anytime we're telling something personal, that's a quote unquote "overshare." And it's like, "Let's pull away from that."

Ariella

Totally, totally. I can see where the fear of these two blending would come into play. But, I don't know, with oversharing it's...if something's happening in your body in the moment, it's okay to say it. If something's happening in your body in the moment, and it's related to trauma, I think there's probably a different way to handle it in case you're worried about triggering the other person, or whatever it is. You can pause for any reason and not need to disclose the reason to the person. There are so many elements of disclosure when it comes to pausing something, that you can just pause and be like "Something's happening in my body. I need to sort this out and take a couple breaths. I do not need to tell you why I'm feeling triggered."

Lauren

Exactly.

Ariella

I can just tell you what happen--that I need a second. All you need to know is that I need a second. So it's--

Lauren

Perfect. Yeah, it's not black or white. It's not I'm telling you nothing or I'm literally telling you all of my past up until this moment that we're sitting here.

Ariella

Yeah!

Lauren

There's an in between, which is "I need a moment. You don't need to know why." (laughs) That's perfect.

Ariella

Yeah. It's the same thing if people cry during sex. You don't need to be like, "Why are you crying?"

Lauren

Yeah.

Ariella

You can just hold space for the person! It's okay, you needed to cry, whatever it is. No need to dig.

Lauren

That's interesting you bring up crying, because I think when crying happens, people think "Oh god, something went wrong," or they take it on themselves, or "I've done something," or whatever it is. And people forget that we hold so many emotions in our body, in our physical being. And sex is literally a release. (laughs)

Ariella

Totally.

Lauren

And sometimes, that's where that's been living, or whatever emotion was being held comes out when we had the release of the orgasm, or whatever it is, you know? And it has nothing to do with the person or even really the act necessarily. Yeah, yeah, I'm glad you brought that up. Yeah.

Ariella

Yeah, totally. After my--I went through a cute little pandy breakup, and then immediately started sleeping with people because (laughs) we got tested! But anyway, the first person I had slept with I absolutely cried when we were together. And she was just really amazing and handled it like a total pro. And was just like "You're safe. Take some breaths. You're good." Didn't ask me a damn thing, was just like, "You're okay. You'll be okay. Take some breaths."

Lauren

That's really lovely.

Ariella

Yeah. Thank you, if you're listening to this. (laughs)

Lauren

That's so cool. Crying is a big part of lesbian sex, you guys. (laughs)

Nicole

It's a big part of any sex, to be to be honest.

Ariella

Yeah!

Nicole

But, yeah, I mean...oh man, it's so funny as I hesitate to say this because I don't want either of my partners to feel anything in my saying this--but, man, you're making me miss dating!

Lauren

(laughing)

Ariella

Yeah, totally.

Nicole

I love my partners and they don't, you know, it's fine, but, man, it's a really fun and interesting thing. And, you know, you talking too about--talking about being slutty or not--I also want to, you know, say to people out there, if you're

like, "Well, but I don't want to sleep with everybody so maybe I shouldn't date that much." Whoa, those two things are not--

Lauren

Yes!

Ariella

Not at all.

Nicole

We don't have to follow one another. And I spent a lot of--

Lauren

Not at all! I mean ace people date all the time!

Nicole

Oh, sure!

Lauren

So absolutely those things aren't--

Nicole

And I spent a lot of my like twenties thinking that they had to go hand in hand, and having sex at times where I really wasn't in the mood or because I felt like I

owed it to somebody at the end of the date. And, let me tell you, that is just simply not the case. Sometimes--often, for me, if I were to start dating again, it would be probably for the joy of just dating. Not, honestly, especially man right now my libido is at rock bottom, cause my whole body is just being used for utility as a feeding source. So sex is really not on the brain. but when I say miss dating, what I mean is that act of getting dressed up and having--and going and having a drink at a bar with someone and being like, "Let me get to know you," you know? That excitement of just connecting with a new person and then saying good night afterwards and going our separate ways. And being on that high of I just had a connection and that was fucking great. You know?

Lauren

Yeahhhh.

Ariella

Totally. I define dating as an openness to connection. That's kind of it.

Lauren

That's so much better than having an end game goal.

Nicole

Yeah!

Ariella

Oh, my God. So even that--like what you're saying about how you love it--all of that can be introduced with partners, right?

Nicole

Yes.

Ariella

I mean, granted, if you have the time. But--

Nicole

I know, I'm trying--we're trying to make date nights right now and I'm so excited, but it's so hard to--

Ariella

Oh my god, of course. And this will fluctuate in anybody's life of what we have time and space for. But, when we think about dating as an openness to connection, and when we move about the world with a sense of openness, not just looking down at our phones while we're waiting on line at the grocery store, and all that kind of stuff. If we lead with curiosity in that way, then connection comes next. And it's not this huge barrier to entry. We can--you might get that high by having a conversation with your Uber driver, or whatever it is, it's kind of all the same skill set of acknowledging that we all have unique stories and we all have unique ways that we can impact each other.

Lauren

Yeah. Yeah.

Nicole

Love it.

Lauren

Let me let me ask you this, because we were just before this a little bit talking about the concept of disclosure--disclosing things to people--and a lot of the questions had to do with it. You know, someone wrote in and was like, "When do you say you have kids, and you used to be in a hetero marriage?" People saying, "When do I tell people it's my first time?" I'll say, without getting too much into it, for me personally I have a chronic pain condition that if I'm gonna have a one night stand with someone, it doesn't have to come up. But if I'm gonna have a long-standing intimate relationship, that is something I have to disclose, and I think a lot of us don't know when to do that. You don't necessarily want to lead with it, but the other person has a right to know it. So, yeah, do you have any advice for folks who feel like--I mean, if people have STIs that's certainly something that--how would people navigate those kinds of conversations?

Ariella

Totally. Okay, well, I think the STI conversation is a little bit different than a disability or something else in the sense that if it's going to impact the other

person--as soon as it's going to impact the other person, the other person should definitely know. So STI I do think should happen before having sex with someone--

Lauren

Oh, obviously! A hundred percent!

Ariella

(laughing) But, as far as a chronic pain condition--and a lot of the work that I've been doing recently has been looking at the intersections of disability and queerness and disclosure as it relates to that--so, I am not the...this goes back to the coaching versus advice. I don't feel like the disclosure connoisseur in this way.

Lauren

Sure.

Ariella

I would ask you "How has it worked in the past? How did you feel? When did you feel like it was too soon? When did you feel like, you know, this would be a good time. I'm comfortable enough with this person." And for folks not necessarily related to pain condition, or disability, but related to trans disclosure or things like that--

Lauren

Sure.

Ariella

Are you publicly out? Where will you feel most safe disclosing? If you're not publicly out and you disclose on a dating app, could this person--since dating apps are not, you know, confidential in this way--could this person having this information about you feel really scary if they were to take screenshots and let other people know. If disclosing in public would make you feel safer, because other people are there watching or if disclosing in public might make you feel more vulnerable? It's a matter of assessing your own...I think it comes down to assessing your own safety and presence, again. So, I think that you're asking the right questions of like, "When should the other person know about my pain condition?" That is--and that's largely up to you, right? You're the only person that can really feel that in yourself of "Okay, if this is feeling more intimate, they should have this information."

Lauren

Yeah.

Ariella

I'll say, for me, the thing that I...there's not a ton that I feel the need to disclose. Just as my own dating life happens, but I will say, I am someone who feels firmly

non-monogamous. And that sometimes is a thing that comes up as far as disclosure. So--

Lauren

For sure.

Nicole

Sure is.

Ariella

I'll say how I've handled it in the past is...well, I'm not really on dating apps, right? So that's not usually a thing. And, most recently, I've been dating outside of partnerships, so people know ahead of time, but I'm involved with someone now, and when we were first hooking up, I didn't really feel the need to hammer home the fact that I identify as a non-monogamous person. But, when we started to be more invested in each other, I was kind of like, "Look, we do need to have a conversation about this, because I'm not sure where this is going to go, but if it is gonna keep moving in the direction that we're moving." Or, I don't even like that phrasing because it implies that there is one path. But, "if we're going to keep spending time together in this way, I want you to--we need to have a transparent conversation about non-monogamy, because this feels like a non-negotiable for me." So, you need to have that information, as someone that's involved with me. We can decide how it's gonna look for us. But non-monogamy is always gonna be part of the equation of my dating life. So, let's

figure out how this--we will in time figure out how this will work for us and I want you to have this information now, even though we're not talking about agreements at this point.

Lauren

Mhmm.

Nicole

Yes, yes. And I totally feel that. And I'd say on that note, just about disclosure in general, and two things--and please feel free to contradict me if either of these are just me talking out of my ass--but I feel like one of the calculations, probably the most common kind of calculation, that comes up when you're thinking about disclosing something is is this going to make someone not attracted to me? If I say this thing is their attraction going to leave?

Lauren

Sure.

Nicole

And we can give the the answer of, well, if then they're not attracted to you because of this thing that's true about you, then they're not a person that you want to be seeing anyway. And I think that that's brass tacks true. I also though would add that when you are standing confidently in who you are, and what your identifiers are, and these things about you, and that if you are healing your

own shame around them and so that when you present them it is with confidence, and it is you standing in yourself...people pick up on that. If they're-- if they feel, if you're disclosing something and there's a lot of shame and reticence around it. We're all animals, right? If we sense somebody else feeling shame, and if there's negative feelings that transfers and we go "Wait, should should I feel negatively about this? Am I supposed to be scared of this too? Maybe now I am, is this not a good thing?" You know? Versus if somebody stands right in who they are and says it and we go, "Oh, oh, okay." Even if I still need time to process that, I see that you are very okay with that. And that is making me feel better even in the moment. You know?

Ariella

One hundred percent. I completely agree with you. I think this actually leads back to the attraction conversation as well. A lot of people have also been indoctrinated by society if they have bodies that have been traditionally marginalized, and by folks standing in their own power in that way too, you teach everybody else that there is nothing to be afraid of or there is nothing-- afraid of is an intense way to say it--but that if you find yourself attractive and worthy of being attractive and other people won't be able to help but find you attractive too. And question their own ingrained beliefs about "Whoa, why was it that I dismissed this person?" I think it is--the more that you can really stand in whatever way society has told you you're not good enough or worthy or quote unquote "normal." That's how we all facilitate each other's liberation through that.

Nicole

Yes! I love that idea. And I think--and this is the only other thing I'll say, and then I'll toss it back to you guys--but on that note, I've been...after two near, very near run ins with my ex in Silverlake. I haven't even told you about this, Lauren.

Lauren

Yeah. I know. (laughs)

Nicole

Two days ago, it was she and her wife and they literally had to move off the sidewalk to make room for me and my stroller and my dog.

Lauren

Ahhh!

Nicole

And I pretended that the sun was in my eyes, and I did not see who they were.

Ariella

Wow.

Lauren

Scandalous.

Nicole

Yeah, but anyway, we're not gonna go into it. But I've been unpacking why I have felt avoidance around this and what it is that's making me feel not confident enough to just stop and be like, "Hey. Hi!" And I realized it's because, for many factors, I've been putting myself in a subordinate position to her, because of certain things that happened in the relationship, but also certain facts about her life and my life, and ways in which I've been putting value on things that she has, or does, and devaluing things about my own life. And I think we do that often when it comes to people that, in any types of romantic or sexual situations, we approach a date thinking "Well, I'm in the subordinate position here because they're more good looking than I am," or "I'm in the subordinate position here because she's a lesbian, and I'm bisexual, and she probably already has an inherent bias against me, so I'm going to prove something to her," or, you know, "They're a cis person and I'm trans and that's a problem for some people, so now I feel subordinate and I'm gonna have to prove something." Versus entering into the potential connection, being like, "No, no, we are very much on the same playing field. There's no hierarchy here." There's no subordinate, and, you know, whatever...what's the word?

Lauren

Dominant?

Nicole

Whatever. Person who's not subordinate--I have a child, I don't even know what's going on anymore. But that doesn't have to exist, but I think we are so taught that. Anyway--

Ariella

What you're naming is entirely systems of oppression.

Nicole

Yes! Right?

Ariella

So all of these things, all of these kind of subordinate things, are, I mean, cis sexism, and probably compulsory monogamy and all these things that you're kind of labeling as these power dynamics are essentially all coming from socialization, and probably capitalism and colonization.

Nicole

Oh, definitely capitalism!

Lauren

Patriarchy! Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Nicole

A hundred. percent.

Ariella

So I think it's on all of us, right, to yes, show up to those situations acknowledging that we're as worthy as the other person. But more than that, acknowledging that the only reason why we would think that we aren't is because of the system that we've been taught to uphold certain people in power.

Nicole

Yes!

Ariella

So, it's really...to do away with any kind of hierarchy is really the work. To understand that this is all, you know, marionette puppets and that we have to all do the work of cutting the strings, not showing up as an equally tall marionette puppet to the--

Lauren

Oh, I love this! The analogy of a marionette puppet!

Nicole

I love this, this is feeling so empowering. Thank you.

Lauren

I'm on board for it.

Ariella

Well, I'll say that my work is very influenced by Sonya Renee Taylor, *The Body is Not An Apology*. I had an amazing DEI consultant on my curriculum for the boot camp that I'm running, who was so incredible, and he taught me a lot. And also I just read *Disability Visibility* by Alice Wong, who was recommended by someone that I've connected to on Instagram. So, I am dedicated to having my dating coaching work be as anti-oppressive as possible and acknowledging my privilege in that. And, also I just want to acknowledge that other people are really teaching me how to do this. And I'm going to school and this was very addressed at school. So this is not--I'm not coming up with these things. This is just the way in which I've been taught about these systems and I hope to continue teaching and uplifting the other people who are teaching better than I am.

Nicole

That's awesome.

Lauren

Oh my god, well said, geez.

Nicole

Well said.

Lauren

I am super impressed. So, let me let me ask you this, which is a number one question that we get from folks. So as someone who is not speaking to you, you are not on the apps, but you are very much dating and getting out there. How-- people constantly want to know, how can they do that? Where can they do that? And then the second part of that is, if you get the courage up to get into that space, then how do you--people, you know, are terrified of making the first move asking a girl out, things of that nature. Yeah, so these are the two most common problems is where and how.

Okay, these are both quite involved.

Oh, I'm sure. We'll scratch the surface and then have people follow you.

Ariella

Okay, I'm gonna try to scratch the surface of this. Okay. Down and dirty, how to meet people. There are four different ways I think about meeting people. There's dating apps and online--I call this the four quadrants--dating apps and online. There's friends of friends--that's like your wider network, or, you know, you telling people that you're looking for someone, set me up, blah blah blah."

Nicole

Yes!

Lauren

Putting it out there.

Ariella

Then there's what I call conscious communities, which is basically anywhere that you know you're gonna show up. So that could be a book club, a bike club, a volunteer thing, a class, whatever it is...work, if that's not a boundary for you. Just where I know that I'm going to be in this space, either with my body or in a virtual space, whatever it is, I'm showing up here. And then the fourth one is strangers, (laughs) like anybody you see on the street.

Lauren

(laughing)

Ariella

So, that's kind of how I break it down. And if you aren't--the purpose of that framework is to reduce overwhelm so we can be like, "Okay, if you're not a dating app person, if that volume dial is set to zero, which one are you going to turn all the way up then? How are you going to walk about the world in a way that is really inviting stranger interactions, if you're only working with the stranger category." It could be difficult, especially during a pandemic, that was a

really difficult category. So it's kind of you get to decide what knobs you want to turn up when.

Lauren

Ooh!

Ariella

So that's how I think about meeting people--how I think about finding people to meet, rather. When it comes to seeing someone that you're interested in...this is tricky. How do you actually say the thing that you want to say? And I would say my biggest piece of advice is to stick to what is true for you. That could even mean "I feel so awkward. I really want to come up and say something to you. I have no idea what to say, I feel very out of practice, but you caught my attention and I want to introduce myself." And I agreed with what you all said on the last episode of, and then you can walk away or then you can contribute something--show your value in the conversation as well. Or offer a little tidbit about yourself--what I call a conversation nugget--that then someone can ask you a question about if they're interested. But but I'll say this, like I said in the beginning of the of this episode, I am not a flawless initiator, right? I am--I'm seeing someone now and we were out the other night. I'm writing about this for one of my next newsletters, and I was writing about it this morning. But, there was someone that caught my eye. And it's very much a part of a conversation between the person I'm seeing where we'll be very open to threesomes and dating together and whatnot. So, this isn't...this is not me going behind her back or anything like

that, and we didn't mind initiating with anybody in this space. But I was thinking to myself, "How would I have initiated with this person who caught my eye?" And we were just coming back from a trip, so we were both kind of tired and not really available for connection in a deep way. We had just come from meeting a ton of people. So it was fine. That wasn't the vibe for the night. But, I am like, "Okay, if I went there that night, and I wasn't available to connection in that way, but I know that I really want to go back to that very queer space in the future, how might I do things differently?" And I think this is where dating becomes part of our personal growth journeys. You can just go and test the water, you can just show up at an event, notice that people there is to notice, and you can be like, "Okay, I am not ready to initiate." You don't have to do it all at once. And then you can go home, make a little game plan for yourself, and if you see that person that caught your eye next time, you can say something. Or you can go for it all at once. It's just I think that it's important to be kind and gentle with ourselves and understand this is a learning curve of assessing how things went and then recalibrating and trying something new next time. And I think a lot of that comes from my acting background, which I think y'all act too--

Lauren

Sure do! (laughs)

Ariella

So that's--and that's what I talk about in this blog post I was working on--when you go on up gajillion fucking auditions, I got very much in the habit of being

like "Okay, how'd that go? I noticed that my shirt rides up when I held my arm out and that made me feel weird. I'm not gonna wear that shirt next time," right? So it's these little things--that accompanist couldn't play that song--we get in the habit of assessing and self reflection, and I think the same thing can go for this. So in my little blog post I drafted, if I see that person that I was interested in next time my honey and I go to this event, what might I say to this person? Because I didn't say it this last time, you know? So I think it's more--it's okay if you don't feel like you have all the tools. And, for me, what I came up with is I don't need to be perfect. I don't need to initiate in a way that is perfect or better, even. I just hope to initiate in a way that's truer. Truer to what's actually going on with me, truer to what it is that--how it is I hope to make them feel in our brief interaction. So that's the lesson that I learned from this past week that I'll bring into my next initiation. It's all process.

[Nicole](#)

Oh my god. Amen!

[Lauren](#)

Yeah! That's great!

[Nicole](#)

Not "How do I do better?" "How do I do truer?" That is just (muah). Chef's kiss.

[Lauren](#)

And also, I really like the idea of thinking of, you know, the experience of dating or just existing as an ongoing--it's not like each individual interaction's like "Oh, I fucked that up. I failed that."

Ariella

No!

Lauren

No, it's a marathon, not a sprint. We say all the time. But, yeah, the idea that this is an ongoing thing. So it's not, yeah--

Ariella

Right. Because the whole thing here is that I think that we should be focusing on how dating enhances our lives. How dating itself enhances our own evolution, not how we think this one person will.

Nicole

Yes!

Lauren

Ah, perfect. Really, really good.

Ariella

Stop, you're making me blush.

Nicole

I am obsessed with this episode already. (laughs) I'm really, wow.

Lauren

And so the last question we wanted to take on is someone wrote: "When to know if a friend could be more than a friend but you don't want to jeopardize the friendship?"

Ariella

Okay. So (laughs) I'm trying to think if I've ever actually gone through an experience like that--I'm not remembering in this moment. But, my personal values are transparency, kindness, generosity. And that's what my coaching business is based on. And then also curiosity and fun. (laughs) Those are the other two that are really important. But anyway, so this comes down to the transparency and kindness generosity piece, where if I were in that situation, and I would--if you were my client, I would ask you more questions about this, and I would try to suss out kind of "Am I picking up on indicators of interest here? How do I think your friend might be feeling?" Whatever, that's all a guessing game, right? So ultimately, I would suggest that you have a conversation about it. And this goes back to the communication stuff that we were talking about earlier. And if it's true for you that you are most worried about preserving the friendship and not jeopardizing the friendship, I absolutely think that that should be said in the conversation. So, what the conversation could look like is: first I would get consent to have a kind of potentially difficult, somewhat awkward

conversation with someone that's a close friend. Make sure that they have the space and time to receive something that you're about to say. Then I would probably say, "I enjoy--I really enjoy hanging out with you. I'm curious if there is more here than just friendship. It's most important to me that our friendship stays preserved in this. And I want to check in with you about how you're feeling, if you feel like you have feelings for me. If not, we can totally pretend this conversation didn't happen--"

Lauren

Great, yeah! (laughing)

Ariella

--and I will do my best to not be awkward. And I will text you tomorrow about that date you went on and I will totally support you in this. But I wanted to name what I feel like is happening on the off chance you're feeling that way too."

Whatever, something like that. I mean, I'm improv-ing--

Lauren

No, that sounds so great, though. Yeah, yeah.

Nicole

And I love the idea of acknowledging--something you said is "and I will totally text you to see how that date went." I feel like that is so key, is acknowledging in that moment that, "and if you don't feel this way, I am going to be 100% on

board with whoever you want to date, and I never want you to feel like you have to tiptoe around me, like I am good." And because I think when people say I'm worried about our friendship being lost, it's that they're worried, I think often, that the person is going to then start withholding information, which then will distance because they're like, "well, now I can't talk to them about this person I like because they like me."

Ariella

Yes!

Nicole

And so it changes that dynamic. But if you make that--if you address that--if you, you know, get in front of it, then that would make a huge difference for me if somebody was saying that to me.

Ariella

And also you need to be honest with yourself, though.

Nicole

Yes, of course.

Ariella

Do you really want to hear about this person's dating life?

Lauren

Yeah, that's like such a great point, don't be a hero. (laughing)

Ariella

You might need boundaries. You might need more boundaries once you tell this person this thing. You might need to be like, "Okay, if this conversation doesn't go the way that I am, fingers crossed, hoping for, I will probably need a week of space. And then I'll come back guns blazing ready to be your best friend again."

Lauren

I love that.

Ariella

It's okay to just ask for what you need in that way. I think it is cool to be like, "This is how I am prepared to show up for you as a friend." Because if you're worried about the friendship being jeopardized, it's a two way street, right? You might be afraid that your friend's gonna withhold, and you might start to act like a weirdo around them. So you got to figure out how am I showing up that I'm gonna show you that like, "No, I'm actually okay. And I'm glad we had the conversation, it would have been on my mind making me not present in the moment. And I'm ready to be here and be your friend the way that I've always been now that we've had the conversation." So, I say name it.

Lauren

I feel the same way. I mean, it feels like the underlying theme to all of this is honesty, transparency, and confidence. And confidence, meaning knowing yourself--confidence doesn't mean you have to be swagger and cocky and a guy with sunglasses and a Porsche, I think that's what we think it means. But confidence just means, like you're saying, standing in your truth, being comfortable being vulnerable and transparent and honest. Yeah, but that seems to be the thread through all of this discussion. (laughs)

Nicole

A hundred percent.

Ariella

Totally. Totally. I completely agree.

Nicole

Oh, my gosh, thank you so much. This has been awesome.

Lauren

It's amazing, yeah. Thank you.

Nicole

I personally feel relieved and healed in several ways.

Ariella

(laughs)

Lauren

And ready to start dating with that four-month-old baby!

Nicole

But maybe approach my ex on the street now. So thank you--

Ariella

Yeah! Totally.

Nicole

Truly. Where can people find you online?

Ariella

I am @queerdatingcoach on Instagram. Very creative handle, I know. And also queerdatingcoach.com. And...yeah, that's it. I'm really active on my Instagram. So, come play over there.

Lauren

Yeah, you really are, which is awesome. And is your--is the website you gave, is that how people can subscribe to your newsletter, your blog, all of that good stuff?

Ariella

Yes. Yes, it is. You scroll down. You'll find it. My newsletter. Yeah, that's where you can do that.

Lauren

Yeah. And it's worth saying Ariella is doing--it's sold out--but, she's doing a queer dating bootcamp, and because of the the speed with which people signed up for that, I believe you said it's likely that there will be another one in the future.

Ariella

Yes, for sure. For sure. And this is basically all of the stuff that I go over with different one-on-one clients. It's kind of condensed into video modules. And it's a four week program. It's called Date Better Boot Camp. This first round--yeah, it sold out pretty quick. So, I'm gonna do this round, assess how it goes, get feedback from the folks involved, and then I'll probably do another one in the very near future. So, if you're curious on getting on a waitlist, you can DM me about that. Or sign up for my newsletter and the newsletter will have the information before my Instagram does.

Lauren

Ah, great.

Nicole

Nice. Awesome, thank you! And we are @nicolepacent on Twitter and Instagram.

Lauren

We are also @laurenflans on Twitter, @lauren_flans on Instagram.

Nicole

I've been really throwing Lauren curveballs in the way that I say all this recently.
(laughing)

Lauren

I like it. Keeps me on my toes! I don't wanna get too complacent.

Nicole

We collectively are @comingoutpod on Twitter and Instagram or hashtag comingoutpod.

Lauren

Hashtag foundricky. Shout out to our patrons: Simone, Jim W, Kim, Adrie, Sarah, (unintelligible), Kaz, Tonya Jolene, Mandy, Tia, Sarah Wilson, Pooh, webleedphilly, Brittany Ray, Sammy, Helen, Michelle, Carmel, Mx. Michelle Forbes, Kristin Erikson, and former guests Kieran Smiley, Vanessa Hunt, and Kirsten Vangsness.

Nicole

If you would like to be on that list or check out any of our tiers of giving, you can start it at \$1 a month. I mean, very low commitment. You can go to patreon.com/comingoutpod and look at all of the good options there. You can also head over to Apple podcasts. If you love the podcast, you can give us a nice little review, five star rating. It really helps people find the podcast in and amongst all of the bazillions of podcasts out there. And that is what we want. So ,thank you very much. And...Happy Pride everybody. Good luck with the dating.

Lauren

Yeah, happy pride! Get out there, this is the month to do it!! Take a chance, there's more queer events, both virtually and in person, happening in the next few weeks than all throughout the year, so--

Nicole

So do it to it!

Lauren

Take a chance.

Nicole

All right. Thanks, everybody!

Lauren

Thank you so much.

Nicole

Thank you. Thank you. All right, we'll talk to you next week. Bye!

Lauren

Bye!