

Ghosts of Dates Past Podcast

Liana

(music plays) Hi everyone, I'm your host: Liana Pavane, founder of TTYL, human connection advocate, certified life coach, and most importantly, a human that's just trying to figure it out. I'm your unapologetic twenty-something native New Yorker, advocating self-ships--Yes, I'm in a relationship with myself--while navigating the dating world. I'm on a mission to break down dating stigmas in our society and to stop ghosting. I started this podcast after my ex broke up with me over the phone. I know. At least it wasn't a post-it! And I realized that our dating etiquette was severely lacking due to technology. Each week, I invite guests onto the podcast from all walks of life to discuss their first date horror stories and best dates. Because, let's be honest, we don't focus on the positives enough when it comes to dating. The best part about this podcast is that after each episode, I've walked away feeling more confident about myself and my relationships. So whether or not you're single, in a relationship, or find yourself in a situationship, I welcome you to get comfy as I dive into the uncomfy, so we can normalize it together.

(music plays more loudly and then fades) Hi, everyone. Welcome

back to another episode of Ghosts of Dates Past. I'm super excited about today's episode. I'm here with Ariella, who is the founder of Queer Dating Coach. Funny story: so I connected with her--I found her on Instagram, and connected with her to be on the podcast and then found out that we actually went to the same college, the same school within the college, we were both theatre majors, and we were there at the same time, but we never really crossed paths. So we know a lot of the same people and it was just a crazy connection. So I'm so happy to have you on today!

[Ariella](#)

Eee! I'm so happy to be here. Thanks for having me.

[Liana](#)

Yeah! Do you want to tell everyone a little bit more about your coaching practice?

[Ariella](#)

Sure! So, I am a queer dating coach. And basically what that means, is that I help people learn how to date or how to date better. And I coach folks--anyone who is underneath the LGBTQIA+ umbrella. And

it's a practice mainly focused on learning how to understand ourselves and express ourselves so that we're dating in a way that isn't dictated by what society says about dating, but instead is dictated by what our authentic selves want, and what our intuition is saying about dating--very much from a place of values-centered dating, so that we can create dating lives that are true and unique to us, instead of what we've really been taught. So it's very geared towards a lot of anti-oppression work and towards seeing the ways in which society has kind of groomed us toward dating in a particular way and investigating what is true, and what desires we have and how to fulfill those on our own terms.

Liana

Mmm. I love that so much and that's a huge part of the podcast, is just the conscious dating and authentic dating and I think that it's super important, and especially focusing on the LGBTQIA community, because I think a lot of people--there aren't as many people I think that are specific coaching-wise to that--

Ariella

Yeah.

Liana

--specific area and I think it's just super important. So happy that there's people out there really dedicated to that. And, yeah, let's just dive in and tell me the first date horror story.

Ariella

Alright. I'll tell you my first date horror story, but I will give the caveat that I very infrequently will label dates as bad, because I think it's important that we don't lump together "meh" dates as bad experiences. Because the more that we do that, we kind of have a story in our head that then first dates wind up being bad or all first dates are bad, or disappointing, or whatnot. So I like to be really, really selective about which dates I actually label as bad in my brain, so that I'm not developing a story that's actually bigger than it is, because I want to see dating as fun and good and first dates as enjoyable and learning experiences. So, more often than that, that is how I contextualize the experiences, regardless of whether I have a connection with this person or not. That's never how I evaluate whether a date is a success or a horror story. But, some dates are bad. Some dates are actually bad. And I usually reserve that for dates that are--where I feel gross or violated in a certain way or really

disappointed or hurt. Things along those lines. And sometimes support is needed after bad dates and I just want acknowledge all that's true. Okay. So my story is that I was traveling around the country during COVID and very COVID consciously, and would use dating apps to meet up with folks to have a night on the town with a queer stranger, essentially. So I did very little vetting of who I would actually be going out with as I was working, and going to school, and traveling the country all at one time. So I didn't really have a lot of time to look into who it is that I'm actually meeting up with. (laughing) It was more like, "I want to meet up with someone," and it was very difficult to organically meet people during COVID, especially one night, in a city I don't know very well, that kind of thing. So anyway, I wind up meeting up with this person and the whole time, they're basically trying to guess what it is that I do for work, and said that they were intuitive and said that they were psychic. And it was this bit where they were really trying to guess what it is I do for work. And a lot of times the fact that I'm a queer dating coach can be super taboo on a first date, because there could be a lot of pressure that other people feel--I feel pressure to show up and be an incredible dater. So it's my preference that it's not the first thing that's talked about when I'm getting to know someone, so that we kind of stay free of what

that might mean. Anyway, long story short, a lot of the evening was geared around them trying to intuit and guess what it is that I do. And then after our time together--we probably spent two and a half hours together--she had taken a picture of me, and she was gonna text it to me. And what had happened was that she went to go send me the picture of myself and I looked at her phone and saw her previous photos, like when you add a photo to text? And I saw that she had screenshot my queer dating coach account on her phone. So the whole night while we're out together as she's playing this game with me and trying to guess what it is that I do, she actually knows. And she wound up sharing that she thought it would be interesting to try to sabotage a date with a dating coach. (laughing) So I'd say that that's probably my horror story. Where after I was like, "I feel really uncomfortable. And I feel really hurt and very confused that I feel like I've been lied to for the past three hours on this date with you. And I think it's time to call it a night." So, we did. (laughs)

Liana

Wowww. Wow, that is--that's wild! I've never heard of anyone doing something like that, where they're blatantly trying to sabotage the situation or intentionally hurt the person just because they think it's a

funny game to play. But, in reality, not taking any consideration towards your emotions and how you would potentially react to something like that? I think that's so rude. And I'm so sorry that you went through that!

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, it was really intense. (laughs) Yeah, and it's interesting, because I like to frame a lot of dating experiences as--I mean, all dating inferences, all experiences in general--as learning experiences. So, for me, it's very much like, "Okay, what did I learn here? How could I set myself up so that that doesn't happen again in the future?" And I think that she was surprised that I actually love dating, that I do actually view it as a way to be transparent and kind and generous and get to know people in brief, but powerful ways. And when I shared that with her that I feel hurt because it feels like something that I love has been tainted a little bit intentionally--like if I had taken someone to see a Broadway show, and they were on their phone the whole time, or something like that. It feels like, "Oh, I love this thing and wanted to do it with you. And you wanted to make that experience not good." So when she--when I shared that with her and shared about my values of, you know, I don't expect anything to happen on

dates. I don't expect the connection to go anywhere. I just expect that there's a base level of respect and kindness and transparency. And when I shared that with her, she was basically like, "Well, you should have put that on your dating profile." And I was like, "I will. Thank you." So I did. And I actually encourage my clients to put their values on their dating profile. It's just, I am so down to go out with lots of different people that I wasn't--I felt like I could have a good time on a date with anybody. But what I learned was that not everybody deserves to go on a good date with me. So, it was a big learning moment.

Liana

Mmm. Yeah, you can't predict other people's actions. I think that's been a big lesson I've learned recently in dating and as hard as it is, but, you know, you can go in with the best of intentions and be kind and open-minded and vulnerable, but you're not always gonna be met with the same from the other person. And it's funny, this story segues perfectly into my first question, because I think when you first start talking to someone, they often ask that question of "What do you do?" And "what do you do for work?" And all of that. And I feel like a lot of people get so frustrated with those kind of "Where do

you live? What do you do?" questions, and so, how do you feel about those? And what would you advise people talk about instead on a first date?

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, it's a great question. And it's definitely one that I'm still experimenting with answering on my own, (laughs) like context dependent. What I want to say, first, I think that those questions are not as evocative as questions could be in the context of first dates. But what I will say is that I went out by myself last night in New York for the first time in a long time, and those questions--I don't want us to invalidate those questions as ways to start to get to know people that we're in the same space as, because they are familiar. So it was reminding me last night that I feel like sometimes we try to be really different, or do things that are not stereotypical or cliché, or like, "I'm not just gonna buy that person a drink, everybody does that." And I want to also honor and hold space for the fact that so many of us are transitioning back into being social, that if these kind of rudimentary questions are all we can grab at first, it's okay. And any question, any showing up with curiosity is most important, rather than "how do I ask the perfect question?" So I just want to give that as--if it feels like

however our questions that are offered here might be a little too progressed for what our potentially anxious brains can grab onto in a moment of heightened stress or meeting people, all questions are okay, and welcome. So if that's helpful, just wanna say that first. But what I will say is that I find, especially in the context of first dates, we can go for a question that's a bit deeper. And my vote here is, if you aren't into small talk--which is kind of what those rudimentary questions are--we can move back and forth between small talk and accessing a deeper layer. So if you ask someone what they do for work, and then you find out--sometimes you need something to grab onto to be able to ask a deeper follow up question. So if you ask someone what they do for work, and you find out that they are a recruiter, for example, or whatever it is, you can then say, "What's your favorite part of your job?" Or "What did you learn this week?" Or "What was something that feels meaningful about what you do?" Anything that inspires people to reflect on their own experiences, preferably in a positive light, because then they'll start to associate you with their own positive self-image, their own positive experiences, which I think is always a nice thing. And it's nice to see people talk about things that are meaningful and joyful to them. So

that's kind of the direction I vote on gearing conversations toward-- positive, more feelings-based questions. Does that make sense?

Liana

Yeah, no, that's an amazing answer. And I completely agree. I like the ebb and flow of more conversational surfacey questions that then lead to the deeper connection that I can grab on to, like you said. I like that kind of idea. That then that person associates you with those kinds of feelings and emotions, which is great, and super positive. And, I would also add, you know, if you're a kind of person--I know some people like to prepare before dates and come in with pre-planned questions, and other people just kinda wing it. I'm more of a wing it person, but it's never a bad idea to come prepared. And there are a lot of fun card games out there now that are conversation starter kind of games. There's this game called Actually Curious. There's a game called Let's Fucking Date by Serena Kerrigan. That one's really fun; I just bought both her packs, the Let's Fucking Date and Let's Fucking Fuck. And I played them with friends so far, but I could see them being super fun dating questions to ask--and especially when you're just starting to get to know someone--and also builds up a little sexual tension as well. So that's never a bad thing.

But you can kind of decide how far you want to go with that. And I think, yeah, it just depends on the kind of person you are, if you do want to go there. I was talking recently about the idea of getting vulnerable on a first date. And I like to get vulnerable. I like to have someone really I understand who I am. So I kind of, exactly like you said, ask a combination of those kinds of questions, and--but not everyone wants to and that's totally fine.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah. I think that that's the reason why I vote for kind of waffling back and forth between the two, because it allows you to also assess someone's comfort level. So as you're on the date, when we want to be like, "Let's just ask deep questions, meaningful questions," we need consent to do that. We can't just jump into really deep or vulnerable questions, because someone might not be prepared or comfortable enough with you at that point to trust that you're going to hold space for their answers, to trust that you are someone that they want to have a deep meaningful conversation with. So, I think that those kind of more quote unquote "rudimentary" or facts-based questions, small talk questions, are also a way to establish a bit of trust.

Liana

Mmm. Yeah, no, that's a really good point. And I think an interesting point that you brought up that idea of consent, because the episode that came out this week actually was all about more sexual consent. And, in relation to that, but there's also the consent on conversation and being okay with someone asking you those deep questions. Not everyone is okay with talking about certain things in their life. I think eventually, if there's a certain topic that the person continues to avoid throughout a relationship, they haven't dealt with something. It is, I think, important for everyone to address their traumas at one point or another. And especially if it's holding your relationship back. Your partner doesn't need to be that person to have that conversation. I think your partner can say, "Hey, I noticed that you're continuously avoiding this conversation, and I would love to discuss this with you. But maybe you just need a third party opinion here." And I think that's a great way to recommend someone receiving the help that they need to discuss those conversations with someone like a therapist. And I think sometimes people might feel uncomfortable consenting to having those conversations with their partner. There's definitely--and that's something that you need to discuss within your relationship. Yeah, I think that that's interesting and also something

that I don't think a lot of people think about. Because I've definitely been on dates as well, where I've felt bombarded by a really intense conversation, or someone just assuming something about me. And then I kind of feel the need to go off and tell them something about myself and my past and why I am the way I am, or something like that. And it's kind of--maybe it's not even worth going there with someone that you recently met, because it's like, "Hey, I don't really-- I didn't really appreciate that comment. And I don't really-- there's more to that story. but I don't consent to having that conversation with you yet."

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, I completely agree. I also teach clients, if you feel like someone has something kind of tender or dark or painful in their past, sometimes we can sense that on a first date. Or if someone asks about family, and you can--like if I'm on a date with you, and I asked you about your family or whatever, and then I see that you shift in your chair and cross your arms and look away and start to seem really uncomfortable, I might pick up--so this is all nonverbal communication--I might sense that there's something painful there or hard to talk about. I never advise people to push (laughs) or to even

ask a follow up question if it seems like the person you're talking to seems uncomfortable. Because I think that, first of all, we don't know the person--I wouldn't know you enough from the first date to know if I'm even gonna stick around--so it feels unfair for me to ask you to share vulnerable information with me when I don't know that I'm gonna like making space for that, so why should you share it with me? And I want to be able to be completely in control of how much information I decide to share with you. And to be able to assess a trust level first, before I share information like that. So, I'm a fan if you have a personal question to ask, or if you notice someone getting uncomfortable, you can either change the subject or be like, "It seems like something's going on for you. Should we change the subject or is there something else that you wanted to share?" Just to name what is and make space for that. And I'll say that very infrequently do I ask super personal questions--or not personal--like obviously what we're sharing on first dates is personal--but questions that have a mood or an element of hurt or pain or something like that, very infrequently will I ask that on first dates, getting to know someone. But the exception to that, is if someone keeps bringing something up. So I got to know someone recently in a first date type context, and she kept bringing up the fact that her mom had passed.

So she kept saying it in a way that I was kind of like, "It seems like you want to share more about that. Is that--Am I reading that right? I'd love to hear more about your mom, if you want to share that." But it was only because she kept saying it multiple times that I was like--the first few times I was like, "Alright, I'm not gonna ask about your dead mom." But when it kept going, I was like, "Okay, it seems like there's something here that she would feel more comfortable if it was said, than not." And it turned out what had happened was that I had watched her play music earlier in the evening, and a lot of the music was her music that she had written. And I didn't quite realize at the time how vulnerable it was for her to sing those songs in front of me, a stranger. So, it turned out that she really wanted to share more context about her mom, because of some of the context of the songs that I had heard her sing. And she wanted to kind of piece that together so that I didn't make certain assumptions about what the lyrics meant--things on those lines. So I'm glad I asked, in that case.

Liana

That's so beautiful, first of all, and I think it's so important to read the room, literally. And just really listen. think we oftentimes--well not even--it's, we listen to people, but we don't hear them all the time.

And I think really paying attention to what is actually--what you're actually internally hearing, because I think oftentimes, especially on dates, especially first dates, we'll kinda get ahead of ourselves, like we often do in a lot of conversations. And someone--the person we're sitting across from says something, and then they keep talking. But as they keep talking, we've already formulated our next thought, and what we're gonna say next based on that first section of their kind of monologue or whatever. And so I mean, similar, you know, on the podcast, now, you've said a bunch of things before, and then I'm kind of formulating what I want to say next, and I think, then we lose the rest of it. We don't hear what the other person said afterwards.

[Ariella](#)

Totally, we're assuming where the story is going versus staying present in what is actually unfolding in front of us. But it's a hard skill, too.

[Liana](#)

It is. It is. The act of listening and really turning off the brain in terms of formulating a thought, and sometimes it's just a practice of completely listening, staying silent, and then having a moment and

just saying, "Hey. Okay. I heard you. Let me just take a moment. Or not even saying--just pausing for five seconds, and maybe it's awkward, but it's really not that awkward. I mean, obviously, in the flow of conversation, it's usually natural back and forth. But sometimes, if someone's really talking about something quite deep with you and opening up, you know, just starting with "Thank you so much for sharing that with me." And then taking a moment--which is totally natural, a natural pause--and just kind of taking a breath and then speaking and I think that's something that we lose sight of a lot, especially on first dates.

[Ariella](#)

Totally. I completely agree with you. Did you watch Matt James's season of The Bachelor?

[Liana](#)

No, I have actually never watched The Bachelor before.

[Ariella](#)

I only started during COVID and I have totally become a Bachelor (inaudible, laughing) But Matt James, he was a great communicator

and he got a little flack for this, which is odd because I think people are just literally not used to receiving good communication. Literally I'm like "He did everything right." He responded a lot to people sharing vulnerable personal information with "Thank you for sharing that with me," which I think is a great way to respond to someone sharing something with you. And I'm not quite sure if those people were maybe giving that some flack because it was boring or he wasn't immediately complimenting someone back or, I don't know, to me that is so textbook a beautiful way to handle it. But if anybody's listening and you haven't watched his season, there are so many amazing examples of him doing that, that I would highly recommend watching. It's really a great lesson.

Liana

I gotta check that out. I definitely, yeah, I've been into the Too Hot to Handle--

Ariella

(laughing)

Liana

--world I'm like so--but it's interesting, because I realized--and I realize something. I like that show a lot because I actually relate to those people in a lot of ways that I didn't realize when I first started and I also--commitment is scary for me just based on past experiences. And if everyone who's been following this story from the beginning, the reason why I started this podcast, having my ex break up with me over the phone, being ghosted multiple times, still having this person kind of be circling around my life and not communicating well. And I've had a lot of guys say that they're gonna do things and not follow through...or say something about our future together and then end it a week later. And so I've been hurt so many times that when I hear those words now of "I see a future with you or commitment," I get really scared and pull away. And so I--that was so much of what this show is about and, you know, of course it's reality. I get that. It's been said that it's not scripted--who knows if that's true--but I definitely...those people, I understand what's going through their head, and what fears that they have to overcome and it is all in your head and it's totally subjective to each person. And it's subjective to each experience, because the next person I meet could be the person I end up in a relationship with, because everyone's

different. I can't compare. That's also unfair. I can't compare completely to my past experiences. But all I know is that I carry those experiences as the thing that I've been exposed to thus far. No one else has shown me anything but that. And so that's why I live my life like that, which makes sense.

Ariella

Totally. Yeah, it totally makes sense. I think that's literally how our own human psychology works.

Liana

Yep. Exactly.

Ariella

You know, treating the world the way that we have experienced it and seeing the world the way in which we've been taught to see it, it's really hard to break patterns like that when bad things have happened. It takes a lot of work and intentional effort to try to see what we feel like are the exceptions to the rule and make the rule--if it's a negative rule, a rule that we don't want to perceive the world with--try to see those instead of the exceptions and see humanity and

opportunity and goodness and possibility, if that's what we want to invite more of into our lives. But it's really--it can be really hard.

Liana

Yeah, totally. And and I think there's another point to first dates, you know, there's this idea that there needs to be this initial spark, and this form of connection and chemistry right away. And so what are your thoughts on that? What do you tell your clients? And do you have any tips? If you don't feel that, how many tries would you give someone?

Ariella

Yeah, it's interesting. I don't, in my own dating life, I never thought about spark in that way. What I advise clients on is something that I call feelings-based standards. So what that means is getting clear on how it is you want to feel in the presence of people that you are gonna date or be in relationships with or have as friends--people that you invite into your life, essentially, to know ahead of time, "How is it that I want to feel in the presence of people I invite into my life?" That's part one. Part two is: "How do I want to feel about myself around the people that I invite into my life?" And part three is: "How

do I hope other people feel that I interact with? What's my impact?" So I don't talk about spark basically at all. I just talk about "How do you want to feel? When you're with this person, how are you feeling? How do you feel about yourself? Do those match up with how it is that you hope to feel?" And kind of evaluating connection from that standpoint. This winds up creating more of a level playing field for honoring that we should have, quote unquote, "standards" for anyone that we interact with, for anyone that we invite into our lives. And I think sometimes when we focus too much on the spark, the spark can lead us astray. Because the spark is most often linked to sexual chemistry and the adrenaline and dopamine hits that come from familiarity. So it could be from getting involved with someone who doesn't give us enough attention, the way someone's more passive, or things along those lines. So basically, the grand theory out there is focus on friendship and allow chemistry to grow, if that's in the cards for you. So if sexual chemistry is super important to you, and if you are a sexual person, only you will know how many dates is right, if you don't feel like you are compatible sexually or don't have chemistry in that way. But I think it's very common for people to--for it to take time to feel chemistry with someone and for it to take time to lock into what your sexual chemistry and what your sex life will be like

with a particular person. Because sex can be awkward and clunky, especially at the beginning, especially as you try new things. So I think we need to allow more agency there and kind of ignore any hard and fast rules of "Three dates and it's a no." if you're showing up and you're really feeling the way that you want to be feeling around this person, and you don't feel the chemistry there, maybe you're not ready to say it's a no for you after three dates. Maybe you still want to give it a shot and see if something grows there. Because I think that that's an equally valid, if not more valid, expression of how love and connection can progress.

Liana

Yeah, no, I really like that. And something that I've been trying to invite into my dating experiences is really separating the sexual chemistry from the emotional connection that I have with someone. And oftentimes, obviously, it can go hand in hand, especially when you start sleeping with someone, it's really hard to separate the two. But I think in the beginning, I really want to form more of a deep connection and know that there is a deep connection there based on conversation and values. Like you said in the beginning, posting your values on a dating app and things like that. I have certain things that I

look for and certain attributes and I have the top three things that I look for in someone. And I was recently seeing a couple people who-- they weren't aligned on all three of those things. And to that--

[Ariella](#)

I'm curious what those things are. (laughing)

[Liana](#)

So for me--

[Ariella](#)

But finish your thought--

[Liana](#)

No, no, no--well, no, no, no it's okay. So, it makes sense when I explain it. So for me, it's kind of a combination of values and just...they're just my deal breakers, honestly. It's just what I've come to realize. I really need someone who's ambitious, I need someone who's adventurous, and someone who is a good communicator. And good communication doesn't mean you have to text me 24/7 every day, it just means if you're busy and you have something going on,

just let me know that you have this thing going on and you'll get back to me. That is a good communicator, someone who is also present when you're in person, isn't on their phone, is just being in the moment with you, and is open about discussing difficult conversations and not shying away from those things. And so, there was one person I was seeing who was a great communicator, but was kind of white bread, and the side of life that I'm looking for in terms of the zest for life--that was lacking for me and seeing in him. And so I just knew it wasn't gonna be a match, because I'd always be pushing this person to get outside of their comfort zone where that's where I usually live in my life. And so, I didn't want to be a mother to this person, in a way. And then another person who kept circling back in my life, it was I needed that additional meetup with this person to confirm that, yes, in fact, you have--you check all the boxes I'm looking for, but your communication is so poor, that I cannot even try and see a future with you--

[Ariella](#)

Totally, totally. Yeah, those are really interesting standards. I want to say a few things about that. For me, communication is such a learned skill, that there is a huge gray area of people that have the potential

to be great communicators that don't exactly know how to be great communicators. And as great communicators, we can help elevate their own ability to be better communicators if they have shown that they're essentially worthy of that kind of emotional labor. So obviously, in this case, that's not true. But I will say that there are so many different definitions of good communication. So even you saying, "Telling me, communicating to me when you're busy, if you're not responding, blah, blah, blah," is your definition of good communication. And if we have really specific definitions of that, or really specific needs based on communication, really specific communication needs, it's on us to communicate that to the other person so that they know the standards that they're working with. And they know the expectations that we have, so that they can choose to rise to the occasion or not. And it's not just "Oh, to me actually, not texting all day and just checking in at night is--that's good communication in my book." So it's so subjective. And there's a huge learning curve there. And I think a lot of people have the capacity to be great communicators, and I wish it were more intentionally taught. And it's just not. If you haven't had a partner that has elevated you in that way or intentionally looked into non-monogamy, or anything along those lines that might help

communication skills. So it is kind of tough, but I think your first two standards are interesting to me. I'm--is that okay that I'm giving you reflections of what I think about your standards? (laughing)

Liana

Yeah, no, I'm curious. I love it.

Ariella

I think it's interesting. Basically, the whole premise of feelings-based standards is that then I would be like, "Okay, these are your standards. You want someone ambitious, you want someone who's adventurous, totally understandable." And I think great qualities, and I think qualities are cool. Qualities are fine. I think where I get--bad standards to me are really check boxey things that are super objective, like a height. Sometimes I get weird about age, definitely physical type to me, even a little gender. So there are things that I'm kind of like, "Let's move away from that. Let's move towards how do we feel in the presence of this person." So if you were my client, I would say ambition and adventurousness is great. How is it--how do you think you'll feel around someone who is ambitious and adventurous? And to also hold that true. Because someone could be

ambitious and adventurous, and you could still not exactly be feeling the way that you think being with an ambitious, adventurous person might make you feel. Does that make sense?

Liana

No, that totally--that's such a good point. Because I definitely--within that, within those qualities--it is the feeling of that person. It is the the lust for Life, the open mindedness, the need to try things, the not wanting to get stuck in things that they dislike. I think I've been--I just have known so many people in my life--and I am not one to do this--I don't stick with jobs that I hate. I go out and fucking find something that I love, because I don't want to waste my freakin' time, and I don't care about what they say about the resume, you're supposed to stay in X job for a certain amount of time and blah, blah, blah. If you're unhappy, do something about it. And I think that's a huge green flag for me, when I see someone who wants something better for themselves and goes out and gets it.

Ariella

Totally. And I think that, quote unquote, "better for themselves" is just really different depending on the person, which is why I like to

bring it back to "What's my experience of this person?" Because what--you're listing things that totally make sense to me, and I feel very much like "Yes, those are the type of people I want around me too." But I think that what we have to think about in relationships and in dating, is to bring it back to you, and bring it back to "How will that impact you? And how will this open-minded, adventurous person-- how are you hoping that that impacts your life? Impacts your ability to impact others?" And that's a really important part, because just dismissing someone who--not that you're saying this--but if someone had a checklist, and they were like "I want someone who has a job that they love," it could be exclusive in the sense that maybe they don't like their job, and maybe they're an artist, and that what you really want is to feel inspired around someone. And even though they hate their job, they're able to really contextualize that and not bring it home with them. And then after they get home from work every day, they sit in their painting studio, and they paint for three hours. And that is so inspiring to you--that drive is inspiring. Where we can allow the rigidity of what we think that these things look like to open up a bit. And instead "How is this calibrating in my own body? And and how am I hoping that being with someone who's adventurous and

whatnot, how am I hoping that that affects me and my life, my existence?" And seeking people out because of that.

Liana

No, I love that. And that's such a good point and gives me a lot of things to think about too, I think because it's--yeah, and it's not like I don't go in with any checklist or anything in terms of physicalities with people, but I definitely--yeah, it's that feeling of being around someone that--if friends have told me that my ambition and my entrepreneurship has pushed them and made them get outside of their comfort zone. That's what I want someone else to be doing for me, too. And so that's kind of how I feel that--but, I want to get to your best first date story as well.

Ariella

It's interesting in thinking about that, I can tell you my most memorable first date story. But that's not even my--I have difficulty. Best feels--there's something about it that feels vague to me. And I have difficulty answering that question. I'm not quite sure why. I don't know. I don't know why that feels like it's so hard to measure my experiences with people in that way. They're all special and amazing

and interesting and awful and awkward and funny for so many different reasons. I don't have a categorically best date. Though, if you ask anybody else, and they've ever been on a date with me, I would definitely be their best date. (laughing) No, I'm just kidding. I can tell you my most memorable first date was when I had asked out my celebrity crush, and he went out with me. (laughs) So that was definitely my most memorable in the history books of my life. I will never forget. But it wasn't necessarily the best. I was just like, "Wow, I can't believe I'm here with this person."

Liana

Shut up! Oh my god, wait, can I ask who it was or is it not...not public?

Ariella

I feel like I shouldn't (laughing) I feel like not that part, but I'll tell you after. (laughing) If anybody is curious to know, you can DM me, but we're gonna not say that on air. But basically, he was in a Broadway show and I saw the show. And I was like, "Wow, I'm in love with this person," as you do with actors. And then I had found out the show was closing--oh, no after I saw the show the first time, I went up to

him after the show--he had come out of the stage door and I just told him he was great and whatever and introduced myself and blah, blah, blah. And then months later, I saw the show again and went by myself. And then he was smoking after the show in the same little alcove I met him in the first time. And I basically was just like, "I'd love to get a drink with you if you ever want to do that." And he was like, "Yeah." And I was like "you serious?" So then we exchanged numbers. And then a week and a half later, we went out and it was fascinating and so cool. And he was a really normal semi-boring guy. And we made out in the back of a bar and then on the streets in Brooklyn, and I was like, "Wow, this is my dream come true." (laughing) And my mom has never been more proud of me. She was-- when I told her I actually asked him out, she was literally so proud of me. And now looking back on that and having one of my mom's proudest moments of me being when I had the courage to ask out someone, I'm like, "No shit I'm a dating coach." This is so textbook that that is a milestone of my life to ask out someone who's famous. So that's my most memorable.

Liana

That's awesome. Well, you know, I think there's just not having the fear of rejection in your mind when you just put yourself out there and get outside your comfort zone. I think, you know, oftentimes, we think about comfort zones and fears as something adventurous and doing something kind of scary--heights or conquering some sort of fear in that way. But a lot of people fear approaching someone else and being vulnerable, and just anything to do with communication. So--

Ariella

Yeah. I'll say I'm not without fear. I am not without fear of being rejected. I think that dating is not a practice of learning how to not be afraid of being rejected, it's learning how to move through a fear of rejection. And learning how to take courageous action and do things that scare you and try to progress little by little. I am not--when I initiate with someone or when I show up to a place by myself, like I did last night, I am not without fear. I am like, "Wowie! This is scary!" And if I don't do it, I'm gonna be like, "Aw, you should have done it. You didn't know, there could have been cool things that happened. You should go do that thing next time." So it is still scary, even for me, someone that practices this and teaches this. It's scary, for sure.

Liana

Yeah, definitely. I think that's, yeah, keeping it real, keeping it legit. I think--I love that. And going back to a bit about the communication conversation, because there is the specific conversation around ghosting, which obviously, is a big part of the pod, and specifically being ghosted by the same person more than once. So, because I feel like I'm dealing with that right now, right? And it's really painful, and it sucks. And it's just so just like, "Really?!" I invited this person-- I've already set my standard up with this person, by the way, I've had a conversation with this person about communication, and what my standard of communication is, which then they met when they circled back and now it's like, "Oh, after you finally met up with me, we don't have to communicate anymore?" No, that's not how that works. So, yeah, what are your thoughts on this?

Ariella

I...getting ghosted is so painful. Getting ghosted twice is soooo painful! So painful. I can't remember if we talked about this in our initial meeting, but I was ghosted twice by the same person, one time. And it was rough. It was really rough. I would say two is enough, (laughing) we are not gonna give this person any more chances, first

of all, but I would encourage folks to investigate "What is it about this person that is making me latch on to them?" How is it that I feel around them? What story about being with them am I telling myself that like I really am liking--if I'm with this person, that means I'm blank? What is this entanglement about? What is this attachment about or what does it come down to? Is it that the sex was so good and this feels like a scarcity mindset around being able to have chemistry like that with someone else? Is it that--"I think it just takes a little investigating, and then anchoring back into our feeling-based standards. And if we know that we want to feel heard and valued and respected around someone, and we know that we want to be--we want to see ourselves as smart and capable and adventurous around someone. And when we're engaging with someone that is completely annihilating all of those words, we need to just be able to collect our brain and be like, "No, baby, we've decided that this is how we want to be treated. This is how we want to feel, and this person is totally not serving that. So it's best that we let this go and move on in whatever way we need to." It's tough. It's really tough.

Liana

Yeah, yeah. No, it's so true. And it's--I've been talking--so this was someone that was living rent-free in my head. And I was talking about this previously on an episode and they just kept circling back, but I hadn't let go. And so I've been in the situation before where someone--exactly like you said--it's this fantasy that I've built up in my head about this person, because when we're together, it's so great. But then when we're apart, it's like, friggin' chaos. And so, whenever that happens, I've actually met up with the person and that's--I feel like the majority of people don't do that. The majority of people are like, "No, they don't deserve me again, blah, blah," but it's like I need to see that person one more time to validate whether or not--I need them to show me their true colors once more. And so, that's what I did when they reached out and timing worked out. And they were coming and it was all happening. And so after the fact, now that this person has, yes, shown me their true colors, I actually did exactly that--I was reflecting last night in my journal about this person and just realizing, yeah, this is all the things that they make me feel. But the way that they treat me after--like when we're together, they make me feel all these things that I am looking for. But then the way that

they treat me afterwards is a complete 180. And that is so disrespectful that it counteracts everything else.

Ariella

The all of it is feelings-space standards. Yes, when you're with the person, but also just in general. So there is no--all of it's the same. If you feel this way, neglected and not important, and all those kinds of things. When you've set up the expectation of what it is that you need, then it's hard, but they're not worth it. (laughs)

Liana

Yeah. And it's so hard because I know so many people who go back to these toxic people in their lives time and time again. And I mean, for me, the biggest thing that I did for myself, I went back to someone last year as well. And I just unfollowed them. I don't--I didn't want to see anything on social media--I unfollowed all the people that I've dated where it ended badly. If it was a one-off thing or, you know, I met someone abroad and it was just this fun adventure--fine, I can still follow them. No hard feelings there, obviously. But if it was toxic in any way or any breakup, I don't really want to remain friends with my exes at all. And that's just my opinion.

Ariella

Yeah, that's fair. I do the same thing. I am friends with all my exes. Except for one. So it's a little bit different, but if something ended badly with someone that I dated, I definitely unfollow them, for sure. I also delete their number or I will change their contact name in my phone to be something that is either a personal affirmation for myself, or a joke about the person, so I can laugh if their thing pops up, or something that slows down my registering of who this person actually is, so that when their name pops up on my phone, I don't feel violated and attacked. I have a moment to kind of give myself consent to what it is I'm about to experience. So i'll often do that. Or I'll make jokes, or I'll put in a celebrity name. I'll do shit like that with myself just so that it's less painful. (laughing) Or someone else-- actually, I got ghosted by someone else, too who--they just kind of fell off, this person I was talking to--but I kept wanting to go back. And, yeah, it's just--for me, a lot of that comes down to sex, a lot of that comes down to what I assume our chemistry would be like, and I'm trying to not validate that as much as, you know, emotional connection, whatnot, but I did change this person's name to be like, "You are worthy of not being ghosted," or "you are special or you

are hot," something that's a nice message for myself to receive if they do choose to reach out or when they do choose to reach out at times.

Liana

I love that. That's great. I think that's a really good idea. I should definitely--gotta track some of my contacts down on my phone and just change them up a little bit for fun. But, I have one more question before we get into kinda the rapid fire round. So your opinion on non-monogamy, because I think that's something we discussed briefly. And you kind of mentioned it in our conversation, but I'm just curious to know.

Ariella

I love non-monogamy. I think it's great. And by non-monogamy, we're talking about the ethical stance, that all parties are consenting, everybody knows that this is not a monogamous thing. There has been some controversy recently about--sometimes non-monogamy is also called ethical non-monogamy. ENM, for short. But there was some backlash recently of being like "No, non-monogamy is ethical. Cheating is not non-monogamy. Cheating is cheating." So, just to clarify there for any listeners, because I've also been on podcasts

where people are like, "I only agree with non-monogamy if all parties know," and I'm like, "That's the definition of non-monogamy," but okay. So I think non-monogamy's amazing. I think that, like I was saying earlier, a lot of my stance on dating and a lot of the content I put out there and education I give, is based on questioning what it is that we've been taught is normal and good. I think as queer folks, we're already a little bit ahead of the game because we're already doing the thing that's taught to be not normal and not good. So we can kinda go even further with that and question all the systems that are kind of put into place and monogamy is one of those. It's a system that we've been taught is the best way to be. I do not agree that it's the best way to be. I think it's the best way for some people, and it's not the best way for other people. But there is no holy non-monogamy is better than monogamy or monogamy is better than non-monogamy. It's just personal choice. I think that practicing non-monogamy is one of the--is the greatest way I have one learned how to be a great communicator in my life, because it really honors having to voice your needs instead of sitting on them and it welcomes that. And it welcomes autonomy and navigating conflict in a really head-on way instead of shying away from hard conversations. So there are a lot of principles of non-monogamy that are so powerful and

important for all types of relationships, not just non-monogamous ones. So that's my brief stance on being a total non-monogamy fan.

Liana

Yeah, no, I love that. Yeah, it seems to be blowing up to--doubly clarify that, yes, this is the definition of what non-monogamy means. So yeah, I just have a couple of rapid fire questions that I ask everyone. So the first one is: what is your ideal date?

Ariella

Honestly, I'm boring. I like getting a drink and getting to know someone. Very simple. I just want to talk.

Liana

I love it. And how do you get excited for a date?

Ariella

I am excited about dates all the time. I don't need to get excited about them, I just am excited about them. I'm innately excited about dates. Dating, I find to be so freaking beautiful and fun and wonderful. So what I will do is remind myself that regardless of

whether this person likes me or not, that I'm amazing and I have a lot of value to give. And how this interaction goes is not a reflection of who I am or what I have to offer. And then I will put my energy on asking questions and trying to have the other person feel valued and respected and seen when they're with me.

Liana

Awesome. I love that. Well, this has been an incredible conversation. I've loved all the directions we've gone in and just--it's been really insightful to learn from your experiences and just what you teach your clients. So where can everyone find you so that they can be coached by you, too?

Ariella

Yeah, they can find me @queerdatingcoach on Instagram, or queerdatingcoach.com, and you can join my newsletter from my link in bio on my Instagram account. And that is where I put the most consistent content. And I also will be running another Date Better Boot Camp. I just finished my first round of it. So this is where I help people learn how to date or how to date better. So if you're interested in that experience--it's an amazing group program; it's so

fun--then DM me, and I'll tell you more about it or stay tuned on my Instagram.

Liana

Awesome. Well, thank you so much again, and I hope you have a great rest of your day!

Ariella

Thanks!

Liana

Bye. (music starts)

Ariella

Bye.

Liana

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