

## "My Letter Isn't Scarlet, It's Fucking Gold" Podcast

Hosted by Kayla Yoder

### Kayla

(Intro music plays) Welcome to My Letter Isn't Scarlet, It's Fucking Gold, where we talk about sex, intimacy, sexuality and how we as women can show up more authentically and fully expressed in the world. This is a space designed to embrace the taboo and bring our inner darkness into the light. We'll talk about everything from fear and shame to joy and pleasure, all through the lens of sexuality and intimacy. I'm your host, Kayla Yoder. And I'm here to help you challenge yourself, break free from your conditioning, say "fuck no" to societal expectations, and say "fuck yes" to the powerful, badass woman that you are. Welcome. And thank you so much for being here. It's so good to be with all of you amazing humans who are listening. And today, I have a guest that I'm so excited to talk to about all things sexuality, and fluidity and all the juiciness. I have Ariella Serur. And, she is a queer dating coach, which is so unique. And we're gonna get all into her personal journey and how she ended up here, but it feels like such a unique niche that is so aligned with what I do. And I'm really excited to chat as coaches who are non-heteronormative--(laughs)

### Ariella

Ooh baby! (laughs)

## Kayla

--dating coaches. Yeah! So, ready to dive in. Welcome, Ariella. So good to have you.

## Ariella

Thank you for having me. Before we go into rapid fire, do you want to explain a little bit more about what you do?

Sure. So, like Kayla said, I'm a queer dating coach. And basically, I help queer, and/or transgender folks understand themselves and learn how to communicate with others, so that ultimately they have the courage to go after what they want in the dating pool and in life in general. I help people learn how to date, and how to date better. And I work with folks who have never been on a date before or who are new to queer dating specifically, or who are looking for, you know, monogamous relationships or non-monogamous relationships or they're in a monogamous relationship looking for external partners. Kind of the whole gamut of queerness and relationship orientation is who I seek to serve and help because a lot of conventional, quote unquote "conventional" dating advice out there, was not made for folks who live beyond the binary, who aren't heteronormative. And a lot of contemporary dating advice is really steeped in systems of oppression. So, I am hopefully here trying to change some of that noise and give us advice and education that is actually useful to people like us.

Kayla

Amazing.

Ariella

Thanks.

Kayla

Okay (chuckles). Also, so beautifully put.

Ariella

Thank you.

Kayla

Succint--

Ariella

Ah, good, I can give myself a pat on the back, cool.

Kayla

Yeah! That's a great elevator pitch, like you've got it.

Ariella

Ride the elevator with me. So fun.

Kayla

Okay, rapid fire.

Ariella

Okay.

Kayla

Who is your favorite female icon?

Ariella

Hmm, okay, rapid fire. means I have to go quick. (laughs) I'm being a total nerd in this moment, but Jenn Colella is coming up for me, who's a Broadway star, who's a queer poly Broadway person. I guess that's where my head's at today.

Kayla

Love that. Great. (laughs) Okay, what is your favorite dance move?

Ariella

Groovin' with my knees bent...I can do it for you. I don't know that it has a name, just what feels good in my body in a given moment. But I also love to dance with the architecture in the room. So, if there's a column or a chair, I'll also be a weirdo kinda using this space.

Kayla

That's not weird!

Ariella

I don't usually openly share that but--

Kayla

I love that--

Ariella

(laughs) thank you

Kayla

--a good chair dance or a good pole dance or even a good wall dance.

When I'm dancing in my room, I'm definitely grinding up against the wall.

Ariella

Use the architecture. That's what I learned in acting school. (laughs)

Kayla

Yes. Okay, if you were doing a power pose, and standing in front of a mirror giving yourself three affirmations, what would they be?

Ariella

"It's okay if you fuck up," "you're not being held to a standard of perfection." And the other one was, "people are hungry to hear what you have to say, and they're lucky that they get to."

Kayla

I love those.

Ariella

Thanks.

Kayla

I feel like I need to write them down. (laughs)

Ariella

(laughs) Well they're recorded forever and ever now--

Kayla

Yeah, yeah, they're great. Thank you.

Ariella

(laughing)

Kayla

Okay, so, there's so much running around in my head right now of questions that I want to ask you. But, let's start off by talking about your personal journey. And, obviously, you've been through some shit that has led to realizing there's a market for a queer dating coach--

Ariella

Yeah, that's true.

Kayla

--and wanting to serve people in that space. Yeah. So, tell me a little bit about your experience with dating, you even coming into being queer, and what that felt like, what that process and transition was like for you, if it was a thing? And, yeah, how that's evolved?

Ariella

Totally. Okay, I'll address the dating coach part first. What I actually noticed was that I love dating, and no one else did. So, my dating coaching is not born from bad experiences that I had. It's more born from realizing I am totally obsessed with this thing. And no one else I know likes it. So it's like, "what is it that I'm doing that other people aren't?" Or "how is it that I can help make this process a bit more enjoyable, because I've really been obsessed with dating for a while now." So that's kind of where this journey

was born from. And it's interesting, because I often equate my dating coaching journey to my coming out journey. So, it's funny that these questions are kind of back to back, because I feel like when I came out as a dating coach, I had already been doing it for so long. And there were all these moments that I realized that I had been dating coaching for years, or that I was in this professional setting talking to this person I was working for about their dating life, or role playing with this friend, or whatever it was, I have always been that friend who's dating and sharing and talking about it. So, my business is kind of naturally born out of what it is that I love, not necessarily what it is that I struggled with. I struggled with it a bit in college and whatnot. And there were some, you know, rocky parts after coming out. But, ultimately, I'm obsessed with this thing. And I find dating to be such a beautiful opportunity for personal growth and connection. And I'm sure I'll talk more about why I love dating later. So, I can leave that. But, that's where the business inspiration came from, was more asking the people what they needed help with and it happened to be this thing that I love that I know a lot of people struggle with. So, that's that side. The sexuality journey for me was kind of interesting, because, again, in reflection, I can recognize a bunch of things that I did as a kid that were so queer. But, only in retrospect, do I, you know, think about the fact that I remember the first time I heard the word lesbian. And what that meant, learning that as a kid. And you probably don't remember that as much if that doesn't resonate to some degree. But, basically what it happened was



that I was in college, and I had had a boyfriend at the time, and it was my senior year. And this freshman came in to school. And, they were bi and really vocal about being bi and being queer and that wasn't something that happened so much in my program at school. And I really took an interest in this person. And then I asked my boyfriend, if we could be open, not really knowing how to do that ethically or responsibly at all, just knowing I really wanted to make out with this person. (laughs) And he was like, "No, we can't." And I was like, "Right, right right, yeah, that makes sense. That makes sense." And then a couple weeks later, I called him again, I was like, "Look, either we're open, and I can make out with this person, or we break up." And he was like, "I guess, make out with the person." And I was like, "Okay!" (laughs) So then I did, and then we still broke up a couple weeks later. But anyway, that was kind of my first queer experience. And then, I had basically continued to sleep with people in a queer way, but really did not identify as queer at all. And I would be eating out friends in the bathrooms of parties, some really gay shit, but was just like, "Oh, not everybody does that?" There was something that didn't compute in my brain that I would actually be queer, I just thought that my hobbies looked different. So, it wasn't until four years later or something like that, and I had slept with the freshman bi person that had come into school. They were basically like, "You have to stop. You need to take this seriously and go date queer people." I was like, "Do I really have to do it?" So then I did. So then I was in Philly for a couple months for work. And when I got to Philly the first

night, I was like, "Alright. We're dating queer people. Let's try this out."  
And I thought my roommates might be queer. And I was like, "Are you? Are you guys queer?" And they're like, "No, but we can introduce you to someone." So I was like, "okay!" so they did. And then I wound up being in my first queer relationship. And, that's kinda how that evolved. And then the last relationship I was in was with a cis straight guy, and we were practicing non-monogamy for three years. And then that ended. And now I'm back to more queer partners. And yeah, that's kind of my journey--it was really sex-based first. And then--

Kayla

Yeah.

Ariella

--it evolved.

Kayla

Yeah, I resonate with that. (laughs) Was there, for you, at any point, the hesitation or the fear or shame around starting to date or hook up with people in a queer way?

## [Ariella](#)

In the very beginning with the freshmen person, I remember feeling comfortable making out with them at parties. But then when we would walk outside of the parties, and be on the stoop of a house, even though we were up in Ithaca, which is a pretty liberal town, I was pretty nervous and uncomfortable walking around holding their hand and that kinda thing. And I think that, I mean, we wound up having kind of a long saga where I was never really able to give them what they wanted. And I think a lot of the trepidation that I had, at that time, looking back, and my inability to take them seriously in that way probably stemmed from shame and discomfort with my sexuality. But, by the time that they actually were like, "You're kidding. At this point, you slept with people for four years, and you're still not dating queer folks." By the time they said that, I was like, "All right, you're right." (laughs) I'm okay to do this. And then navigating my first queer relationship in reality was...I was kind of like, "Wow, do I --am I liking this person?" And there was a lot of question marks there. But, there wasn't so much--I was at the place where I could accept it. I was not battling myself. So then coming out to my family was different, cause I hadn't really done that so much. But, I was okay by the time that I was actually engaging in a responsible way. And I went back and apologized to all the people that I fucked over in my denial of my sexuality, and made amends. (laughs) So, there were some some rocky parts.

Kayla

Yeah, I mean, I'm curious also, because I know for me in my first queer relationship, it was really confusing. Like at the beginning there were a lot of question marks and trying to identify, okay, what are my feelings? You know?

Ariella

Yeah. Totally.

Kayla

What is this? Am I really just wanting to have sex with this person?

Ariella

Yeah.

Kayla

Am I wanting to date them romantically? Am I--yeah, just lit up by them as a friend? You know?

Ariella

Totally, totally.

Kayla

It was super confusing for me. Yeah.

Ariella

And then there was--also my experience there, too, was--part of me was really excited to be there. And just be like, "Wow, I'm doing this thing" that I completely ignored five gajillion red flags (laughs) in the actual relationship itself, like it was not a great one. But I was just like, "I am so happy to be queer and to be doing this," that it allowed me to kind of not see some things that now I'm able to see really clearly. But, that was also part of my contextualizing what this was for me, was kind of having a different set of standards, I think.

Kayla

Yeah, yeah, totally.

Ariella

You learn! (laughs) You do it, and you learn and that's how we do it.

Kayla

Mhmm. Mhmm. Yeah, that's life. (laughs) Okay, so, first of all, thank you for sharing about your journey and your sexuality--

[Ariella](#)

Of course!

[Kayla](#)

--and how do you see it continuing to evolve?

[Ariella](#)

I feel pretty determined to be in relationship with queer folks. Queerness is a big part of my identity. And I care a lot about it. And I love being queer. So, I found that even in my relationships post my last relationship, to be able to connect on the point of queerness feels important to me. That's not necessarily reflective of who I'll be sleeping with. Just cause I'm a big slut, but I--

[Kayla](#)

Yess!! Love that!

[Ariella](#)

--will probably be in relationships exclusively with queer people from this point on.

[Kayla](#)

That's so interesting.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah. Wait, where are you out with that?

[Kayla](#)

Well, for me...what's most important to me is that I continue to explore my sexuality with people that are not cis males. (laughs)

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, totally.

[Kayla](#)

And they tend to be primarily women. But, also I am super attracted to plenty of non-binary people. (laughs)

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Kayla](#)

Which, we can get into our sexual identity here in a second. But yeah, for me, it's really important that I continue to explore my sexuality because that's the aspect that I'm passionate about--

[Ariella](#)

So interesting.

[Kayla](#)

Yeah. But then as far as dating or being in a primary relationship--

[Ariella](#)

They're flipped.

[Kayla](#)

Yeah, then, for me, I'm--I don't know.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Kayla](#)

It could look like men or women or non-binary. And, I will say that after being in a queer relationship, going back to dating a man has felt good for me and feeling supported and--we'll say this, a really masculine energy.

[Ariella](#)

Mhm.



Kayla

And again, that doesn't have to be tied to a cis man, right? That can be, but just having a really masculine energy to balance--

Ariella

Yeah.

Kayla

--is what feels good for me in a primary relationship.

Ariella

Totally. It's so interesting. Your kind of growth mindset as it relates to your own sexuality is so interesting. And I think really admirable, that that is so clearly a priority for you. And I think that that makes a lot of sense, where I feel like I'm more attracted to the identity element of queerness. And the--feeling like I'm on the same page with someone identity-wise in that way, for understanding purposes or whatever. Where it feels like the sex is, kind of, I don't wanna say secondary, because sex is so--it feels so important to me. But, as far as who I'm having sex with doesn't feel quite as where I focus on my attention being, where it feels the opposite for you. Which I think is cool.

Kayla

Yeah, it is cool. Yeah, but it is definitely interesting that we're pretty much exactly opposites.

Ariella

Totally. And we're both probably having a lot of sex anyway. So-- (laughs)

Kayla

Well, definitely. And, oh god, you're giving me flashbacks. (laughs)

Ariella

(laughs) Of what?

Kayla

I definitely skipped my morning routine this morning for morning sex...(laughs)

Ariella

This morning? (laughs) Ah, my heart is so full knowing that and knowing that maybe I was the first thing you did with your day right after.

Kayla

It is!

### Ariella

I'm touched. Thank you. This is the exact place I like to be in someone's day, if I'm not part of the sex itself. I'm so--I really, I love sex and I'm screaming about this in my parent's apartment. So, you're welcome. But, I used to--I'm one of those people that if I hear roommates have sex, or if I hear anybody I'm like, (clapping) "So good. That's so good." And I--in one of my New York City apartments, I shared a wall with one of my roommates. And, by a wall, I mean, a paper thin sheet, you know, it was not a wall.

### Kayla

Yeah.

### Ariella

But our heads shared the wall. So, trying to explain this to people that are listening. There's one wall--on one side of the wall is her bed, on the other side of the wall is my bed. And both of our pillows, if the wall were removed, would be next to each other? So the beds were both--I think that that makes enough sense. Hard to explain this. I'm doing a visual with my hands. But anyway, if one of us were having sex, the wall would move and the other person's bed would rock and it was this really involved experience (laughin) for this other person in a unintentional way. But I was always like, "I'm living for it. Please, go off." (laughs) So--

Kayla

Yeah! That's hot.

Ariella

Really fun. Great.

Kayla

Yeah, I'm into it. Yeah. Okay, let's circle back to the identity piece.

Ariella

Okay. I'm here wishing I had sex before this podcast recording, but ,yeah, sure, we can go back to that. (laughs)

Kayla

Well, can you go have sex after it?

Ariella

I'm gonna try to make some plans. (laughs)

Kayla

Okay, great. I support that.

[Ariella](#)

Thank you.

[Kayla](#)

Okay, so, yeah, for me, at first, I will say, I was really no label, no, you can't define my sexuality. And I kind of thought that it was all bad. You know?

[Ariella](#)

Mhmm.

[Kayla](#)

I used to think that it was all bad and I've come to realize that actually labels can be super empowering for people. And that's just personal preference.

[Ariella](#)

Totally.

[Kayla](#)

So, explain to me how you feel about it. And also, I would love to know how people you work with feel about it.

## [Ariella](#)

For the most part, people I work with have defined themselves with labels pretty clearly. But you know what? That could also be my messaging though, right? Because, I am really about calling out queer and/or transgender people. And by queer, I mean, the LGBTQIA+ spectrum. And I make that clear, too. So, it's really anyone under there, but you would have to be like, "Yes, I know I'm under there," probably in order to feel seen by my messaging. So, I am really catering towards people that are like, "I am part of the queer community and I need help." So, how I feel about it, I think that you're right, I think it is empowering for a lot of people. And, I guess in my own experience, where I was probably avoiding a label for four years, right? When I was just sleeping with folks, and not really honoring that I could be taking queer folks seriously more than just having sex with them. Because I wasn't dating. In your--you're not labeling, and you've also been like, "Okay, this person's come along, and I can honor this?" Where I was like, "Nope. This is just for play." And I would kind of shut things off. That embracing a label, and allowing myself to have that freedom has allowed me to continue to evolve in that way. So the identity was kind of part of what opened me up. And, I'll also say, the identity is important not only because it can be empowering, but it can also be where you find community. So, that's another part of it, where it's harder to find your people, if you don't define yourself. So it's--it is personal preference. And, if you feel like you don't know who to talk to, or you're having these

experiences, and you don't know where to find comrades in it, the easiest way is to go to language. And then from that language find your people. So, labels are also really useful in that sense for community building.

### Kayla

Yeah, that's a really great point. I think, for a lot of people who struggle and are trying to figure out what they're feeling, who they're attracted to, that having those resources of a community would be really, really helpful and supportive.

### Ariella

Totally. And that's the LGBTQ, the Q is for queer or questioning. So, you could already be in the community if you want to be, but it's--it can be helpful to kind of be like, "Okay, what is it?" And I think it's interesting to try labels on too, and be like, "Okay, how does this feel for me, does this language resonate?" And I know the identity, the language that I've used for my sexuality has kind of shifted a couple of times, too. So it's--you got to find what what feels like home and home can also change.

### Kayla

Yeah. Would you share more about that and how it's changed for you?

## Ariella

So in college, I wasn't really using any kind of label and that happened through a couple years after. And then when I was in Philly and with--kind of involved in my first queer relationship, that person had used the label of gay. So I also was like, "I'm gay." So I was using gay pretty exclusively and then we also were kind of open for a brief, problematic time. I know a lot more about non-monogamy now (laughing). I just want to say to everybody listening, I'm such a fan of it. So, I know my way around, I can help you through it. I was a mess, and I'm not now. So I was saying pretty gay. I was saying gay. And then, when we ended things, I started to say queer and queer was also coupled with non-monogamous, so I would tell people I'm queer, and non-monogamous. That felt like really important terminology for me. And honestly, that's kind of stayed. I usually say I'm queer and I'm non-monogamous. And, sometimes I'll say pretty gay. (laughs) But, yeah, I tried on pansexuality for a bit, but the label just doesn't feel right. And neither does bisexuality, for some reason. Queer feels like home for me, obviously, since I am called the queer dating coach. (laughs) I guess that's where home is now. So that's my take. Have you always--

## Kayla

Yeah, yeah, I was just gonna say I think it's important that you can change it. You know?



[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Kayla](#)

If you choose one thing, you don't have to use that every day for the rest of your life. You know?

[Ariella](#)

Totally.

[Kayla](#)

You can--your sexuality can change and evolve. And you can switch labels with that evolution.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Kayla](#)

Yeah, for me, I've never liked the labels.

[Ariella](#)

Uh huh.

Kayla

But that's just also very typical of my personality.

Ariella

Tell me more (laughs).

Kayla

I pretty much run from anything that tries to put me in a box.

Ariella

Totally. Except for gender--(laughs)

Kayla

And freedom...hmm? Except for gender.

Ariella

Freedom is important to you, it seems.

Kayla

Freedom is super important to me. And, yeah, or even, certain hobbies that I have, right? I'm, yeah, I danced most of my life. But I, you know, I guess maybe I could be okay with being called a dancer because I did that for 18 years.

[Ariella](#)

Uh huh.

[Kayla](#)

But, yeah, it's just for me labels feel like they don't describe who I am as a person, you know? And they don't allow me the freedom to express myself in whatever way feels good to me. It's just, for me labels feel like they give people a way to define things that I like, which isn't who I am. You know?

[Ariella](#)

I hear that. I'm curious. Does that feel the same as far as relationships for you?

[Kayla](#)

Did that feel the same as for what?

[Ariella](#)

As far as being in relationships? Do you feel the same kind of aversion to definition? As far as entering into a relationship specifically--

[Kayla](#)

Yes. (laughs)

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, totally.

[Kayla](#)

I'm like, "I'm just existing, and you're also existing, and we're doing this thing." And, yeah, like pretty avoidant. That's the other thing is, classically speaking, I'm pretty avoidant, right? So I'm like, "Don't put me in a box! Don't tell me what to do. Don't confine me to anything, or else you'll never see me again."

[Ariella](#)

Truly. I hear you. I hear you.

[Kayla](#)

Yeah. So now I'm actually trying to lean in to the parts that are just my fear based.

[Ariella](#)

Yes, totally. But also understanding the difference is really tricky sometimes, to be like, "What is--Where is my freedom actually being infringed upon when this is something I really value? And where is this old trauma coming out and trying to protect itself?" (laughs) It can be a really fine line. I mean, I've been on some of that journey, too. And I get curious about the

relationship piece, because--I get curious how partners respond because I too am in a place where I'm not interested in labeling relationships right now. And, so I get curious for folks that are also like really freedom-oriented, autonomy-oriented, I want to be able to do what I want to do when I want to do it, blah, blah, blah. How folks like that, essentially, folks like me, also handle that while taking responsibility to nurture intimacy and connection with other people. When I hear you talk about sexuality labels, or nationality labels, or whatever it is, that could be controversial as a dating coach that I am feeling a little hesitant about relationships in this moment, because so much of dating has traditionally been tied to this hierarchical view of ending up in relationships. But for me, right now, I've been describing relationships as feeling like putting on clothes, and you can pick your clothes. If I'm in a relationship, my clothes are going to be non-monogamous. They're going to be, really fun, probably including group sex, whatever. But, I'm still not in the mood to get dressed right now. That's just how I'm feeling about--just I'm in the mood to be a little bit naked for a longer time. So, I'm curious if that feels like how your sexuality or how some of this feels to you?

### Kayla

Yes, at times of my life, yes. 100%. It's like, actually, I'm just not in the mood to get dressed right now.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Kayla](#)

And I really like having you in my life. (laughs) And fostering deeper connection, and whatever, all the things. But yeah, just not--just in the mood to get dressed.

[Ariella](#)

Totally.

[Kayla](#)

And it's interesting, because right now, my current challenge--so you know, how for you, dating has been fun and easy, and that's how you ended doing what you're doing?

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, mhmm.

[Kayla](#)

For me, sex has been fun and easy.

[Ariella](#)

Mhm.

[Kayla](#)

And that's how I ended up doing what I'm doing. But, intimacy and vulnerability has not been easy. And my biggest challenge right now is really, really going full in-depth of my heart space, allowing myself to be fully seen and received and loved in all of the raw, shadowy all the things--all the things, you know?

[Ariella](#)

Yeah. Mhm.

[Kayla](#)

So, yeah, so that I also am finding--as I said, right? with my work and exploring my sexuality and having those experiences with primarily women, but open to whoever else, is still a priority, but having somebody who I am in partnership with and I am saying I'm in partnership right now--I have put the clothes on. I'm snuggled up in a big sweater.

[Ariella](#)

Mhmm (laughs). It looks so good on you!

Kayla

Thank you, thank you--is allowing me to access new levels of intimacy that I have not previously. And I'm finding a lot of freedom in that which I hadn't before.

Ariella

Yeah. Totally.

Kayla

But yeah, there's always phases, right? And there's always--we're being presented with new ways to move forward and grow and learn more about ourselves and be of better service and have new experiences and the universe brings us what we need to go to the next level.

Ariella

Yeah.

Kayla

And it's like all about following your joy, right? So if your joy is staying naked right now, then that's exactly what you're supposed to be doing. Right? And that's the other part of it that I've just come to trust, I'm like, "Well, I guess I'm getting dressed." You know? And then I'm like, "Oh, actually, there is some more freedom here." But yeah\.



## Ariella

So interesting though cause even you saying, following your joy is interesting to me, because as someone who also has avoidant tendencies, I mean it when I say it can be difficult to figure out where--when is my freedom actually being encroached upon or when is this fear? And I wonder if joy is part of the key here of deciphering the two? Because, I don't know, this isn't a fully formed thesis. So I'm kind of thinking this out loud. But, is the joy that you experience being part of this thing more meaningful than the fear or the parts that feel really scary? Which is louder? I don't know. I feel like maybe following what's lighter and joyful is kind of how to move through some of that, instead of staying naked because you decided you're gonna be naked, but really the cozy sweater over there looks really nice and warm, or whatever it is (laughing).

## Kayla

Yeah, it's a fine line.

## Ariella

Yeah, totally.

## Kayla

And I was actually presented with this pretty much exact scenario a few months ago, and I couldn't tell, you know? I was like, "God, like, the cozy

sweater or ugh?" and I had to ask for help. You know? And I asked people that I know and that I trust and that know me.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah!

[Kayla](#)

You know? What was coming through intuitively from them and, what they saw in it, which also meant that I had to be super, I had to be really raw with it. Put it all on the table. Like, "Okay, guys, circle around, I need help. I'm struggling." And, I meditated on it a lot. Pulled cards, you know, but that's a big part of my practice, right? Is my connection to source, to intuitive guidance, you know?

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Kayla](#)

But it was really, really challenging. And I chose the cozy sweater, obviously.

[Ariella](#)

Well, I think that it's great that you obviously have these practices of getting in touch with your intuition, which I think is amazing, a lot of people don't

have and that you are able to honor, at some point, you do kind of need other hands on deck to act a bit as a mirror, and to get some affirmation that you are following something good and joyful. I think it takes a lot of courage to do that. And to ask for help in that way. Maybe even especially if you're someone that's like, "Wow, usually I can source this myself, and I'm still feeling cloudy." That can be really challenging. And I think that's awesome that you did that and that you were able to find some kind of clarity. And yeah, I think it's cool.

Kayla

Thank you. How are you feeling in this spot?

Ariella

In the spot? How am I doing? (laughs)

Kayla

Yeah, yeah, are you feeling really clear and joyful staying naked?

Ariella

I have been putting on socks very slowly. (laughs) So I need to go so slow. Partially because I feel like I just got out of a relationship. I did. I did. And then, you know, big slut I am, slept with two people the next week. And, the rest is history. So I'm just going really, really slow. But, I will say it's

validating to hear you asking for help. Because I think a big source of clarity for me was having this person meet my sister, and seeing how my sister reflected on the person I'm seeing and I didn't realize that that would feel as good for me as it did. I didn't think it mattered. I didn't think--I was kind of like, "I need to figure this out on my own. And this is my own shit." And yeah, for some reason, and I'm really close with my sister and I just didn't quite realize how big of an impact her affirmation and her support would be for this. So I'm slowly putting socks on, but I might still run around naked with socks on. But, we've started to establish some non-monogamy agreements and things like that. So, we're definitely honoring the fact that we are intimate and connected and really involved in each other's lives. But they're okay with me being label-resistant in this moment.

### Kayla

I was just thinking when you said that, communication--I think for me, that is also been a key to freedom.

### Ariella

Mhm. Totally. Communication's huuuuge! It's so big. And it's such a crucial part of what it is that I do, too, because I think that it's okay that we have a lot of desires, and there are things that we want and need. And if we know how to talk about it, then we actually have a chance of getting it and going

after it. So, I do you think that asking for what we want is so important. And voicing where we're at is so important. So, I agree.

### Kayla

Yeah. Okay, so we have so much that we can talk about, I feel like, but I really wanted to ask you about two things, really. One, your experience of the concept of dating and how a lot of people have been asking me "Oh, like, should I start dating? Should I not?" And I would really love to hear your perspective on what it means to be dating, and then how you also work with your clients in that way.

### Ariella

Totally. Okay, I'll speak from my own kind of theory first. Dating, to me, is an openness to connection. So I think when people aren't clear on whether they should start dating or not. And I think before we talked about how that could look like when people, quote unquote, "start dating" is them turning on apps, or making a profile. And I think that actually, the easiest way to start dating is to start honoring connection, and to start opening ourselves up to connection, not just on dating apps, just in the world in general, as long as it's safe. Sometimes this has to be a thing that we turn on and off for safety as we move through the world and getting attention, whatever. But, for the most part, there's less of a barrier to entry, and less pressure that we're putting on ourselves, when we view dating as just an openness to see

what is revealed to us and openness to connection in this way. And, I mentioned before, but the biggest reason why I love dating is because I don't take for granted how brief moments can impact my life. And I see dating, and every conversation I have with a stranger to be just that, to be an impactful, brief moment. So, I think that before we start figuring out, "Okay, how do I exactly say who I am and what I do on this dating profile?" it involves now if you're able to walk outside, and you know, walk around, if your area is open in this way, it's to just start seeing the people around you first, and approaching the world with a sense of curiosity, because people don't come where we think they're going to come from all the time. So it's really allowing ourselves to be receptive in that way in the real world. And also, if we want to be on apps, whatever, that's one strategy, that's one tool to meet people. But, I think there can be a lot that you learn, or people that you notice, when your eyes are actually open to it, especially if you're in a city. If you're in the suburbs, it could be a little different. But I work with folks that are usually based in cities. So, I would suggest walking around and seeing who you actually recognize in the world, who you see in the world. And I encourage clients to do that well. And to me, that's evoking a feeling of dating, and that's part of the dating process is to be open in that way. And, that looks like putting phones down when you're waiting online at the grocery store, it looks like making eye contact with strangers. Looks like asking to pet someone's dog. It's like, engaging in the world around you in

a way that's a bit more active. Because, I think if we lead with curiosity in that way, connection is the natural second part of that.

### Kayla

Wow. Ahhh! That feels so good. And, thank you for sharing and explaining that when we were talking about it the other day, I felt like that was a really, really important and beautiful concept and the way that you describe it to really empower people that they can be dating all the time. And that it doesn't have to be this really intense or scary or hard thing. And that it's just an openness to connection.

### Ariella

And I think then the skills become transferable. If we're open to connection in this way, if we're engaging our family members, our friends in a way that is curious and also demonstrating our own value and honoring the fact that this person has made time for me, I want to add something to their lives. If we're doing that, then the concept of dating, of meeting this stranger, becomes less precious. I already know how to engage well in conversation in my everyday life. I know how to say hi to my neighbor and ask them a question or whatever it is, it becomes all how we treat the world, not how we show up in front of this one stranger with our arms crossed, measuring them up, or really leaning forward wanting them to like us. Dating becomes

kind of a natural way that we're connecting with someone in the same natural way we connect with everyone.

Kayla

Amazing.

Ariella

So that's why I love dating.

Kayla

Yeah! It's so fun.

Ariella

It's so fun.

Kayla

I was actually driving by last night, there's a restaurant that just opened that's one big table, and you make reservations, and you go and you sit at a big table with a bunch of strangers.

Ariella

Love it.



Kayla

And I was like, "I want to go there."

Ariella

Yeah.

Kayla

I love meeting new people. So fun.

Ariella

Oh my god, I love it. Yeah.

Kayla

Yeah. Are you coming? Should I make a reservation for next week?

Ariella

(laughing) Honestly, I might. I've got some family on the other side of the world. And I was like, "If I fly there, I should just go to Bali though." So, I'll let you know, but I remember when I was over there, though, I felt like-- when I was in Ubud, I was like "I feel like I'm at a big college campus." Or I thought everyone that I saw there was a potential friend. And often, I would--which I feel is really the vibe there, from my brief moment. But I remember being at this restaurant and not being able to finish my food, and

then just looking over to the person next to me being like, "Do you want that? I can't finish it." And then them being like, "Yeah." And I was like, "Here you go." (laughs) It was kind of like, I don't know, that was the vibe I got there, with folks that were visiting and with the folks that are from there. You know? It wasn't just Westerners, it was--that was the vibe in general, with actual Balinese people and with European people, you know? I just felt like Ubud kind of cultivated that vibe for everybody.

Kayla

Yeah, absolutely. It's a magical place.

Ariella

Yeah. It feels like it honors connection really well.

Kayla

It does. It does! Here I am with a sweater. (laughs)

Ariella

(laughs) That's so funny.

Kayla

Yeah, yeah.

[Ariella](#)

It makes sense.

[Kayla](#)

Yep. All right. I could talk to you for hours. And I do think we are gonna have to schedule another one of these at some point.

[Ariella](#)

Okay, that sounds good to me.

[Kayla](#)

But let's wrap with a couple questions.

[Ariella](#)

Okay. Are these more rapid fire?

[Kayla](#)

No.

[Ariella](#)

Oh, okay, cool. That made me nervous.

Kayla

(laughs)

Ariella

I felt nervous. You didn't make me do anything. I felt nervous. (laughs)

Kayla

No, no reason to be nervous. Okay, if you give a gift to people, collectively.

Ariella

I guess my answer is a hug. Keep eye contact, and a breath where we can really see each other. That's my answer. Probably a kiss, too, (laughing) like an energetic--we're in this, it's going to be okay.

Kayla

Yeah. I'll take that. Thank you.

Ariella

Okay. Yeah. All right. We'll see how that does. (laughs)

Kayla

Okay, if you could give a piece of advice to someone who is really struggling to explore their sexuality, they're feeling stuck...what would you say?

Ariella

I would say something that my acting teacher used to say. Well, she still says it, Jen Waldman. She's great. She says, "What if this were easier?" So I would allow folks struggling to ask themselves "what if this were easier?" And follow people on social media that makes you feel good about yourself.

Kayla

Yeah, I love that question. I feel like I need to ask myself that every day.

Ariella

(laughs) I think a lot of us could serve to.

Kayla

Yeah, yeah. Well, before we jump, where can people find you? What are you up to? Tell us all those things.

## [Ariella](#)

Yes, okay. Easiest place to find me is on Instagram @queerdatingcoach. I'm very active on there. I have a great time. I take a lot of pictures very close to my face and do a lot of gay polls. Also, I am starting a group coaching program called Date Better Boot Camp, which is basically a four week intensive with twenty plus video modules PDFs, three live group coaching calls, and then a virtual community for everybody to be connected to in between, and that is for all kind, growth-oriented, queer and/or trans folks who want to learn how to date or date better. This is basically where I've taken all of the contents that I've been going over with all of my different clients one-on-one and putting it into a more digestible package to be able to serve more people at one time. So it's gonna be really fun. Our kickoff call is June 11th. And I'll probably close registration at the end of next week. So, probably around June 4th. So the week that you're listening, I think, if registration is still open, you can find out details at [queerdatingcoach.com/datebetter](http://queerdatingcoach.com/datebetter).

## [Kayla](#)

Perfect!

## [Ariella](#)

That's me!

## Kayla

And it was so good to have you. Thank you for being here. Thank you for sharing so vulnerably and for being of service.

## Ariella

It was so, so lovely. I feel like the time just flew by very quickly. So thanks for having me. Thanks for doing what you do.

## Kayla

(outro music plays) Thanks for joining us today. My Letter Isn't Scarlet, It's Fucking Gold is a safe space for women to share their stories, so that you can connect and know you're not alone in your journey. If today's episode resonated, please reach out and let us know and share the episode on your Instagram. Tagging @talksexwithkayla. And if you're interested in sharing your story on our podcast, visit [kaylayoder.com/talksex](https://kaylayoder.com/talksex). That's [kaylayoder.com/talksex](https://kaylayoder.com/talksex). Thanks again for listening and come again next week. Pun intended.

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