

## Pillow Talk: "Can I Get Yo Number, Part 2"

### Joe

(Opening music plays) What's good bros and broettes? My name is Joe Knispel and this is my guest...

### Ariella

Ariella Serur, Queer Dating Coach.

### Joe

And welcome to Pillow Talk with Bros exploring masculinity with open beers and open hearts. We are gonna dive into what it means to be a man in the modern world and the different issues we face in our lifestyle, health, and career, and our relationships. Today's episode is "Can I Get Yo Number Part Two." Ariella is back with me on the show to discuss our favorite subject...dating. I'm not even gonna list what we're gonna talk about because, you know, with us we just tend to talk about whatever enters our mind. And it's always a great conversation and I'm super excited to have her back on the show but first...(cork pops). Cheers everybody! My drink of the day. You heard a little pop there; that wasn't champagne. That was my water bottle. I'm still drinking water, people! Dry January has been very successful and it is helping me feel so much better. So go out get some water today. Drink up, stay hydrated. I also wanna talk about--if you are or have already done your dry, you know, maybe you did a dry December, I don't know. If you have, check out our BIPOC business of the week, Theopolis Vineyards, owner and founder Theodora R. Lee, AKA Theopatra, Queen of the Vineyards. A bold and dynamic Texan and San Francisco trial lawyer is now bottling her own award-winning wines. Theopolis Vineyards is a small lot vineyard and handcrafted winery located in California's prestigious Yorkville highlands of the Anderson Valley, situated along Highway 128 in southeastern Mendocino County. I don't know if I said that right (laughs) near the border of Sonoma County, the AVA is a highly elevated rugged interior wine growing area. It

was established in 2003. Wine critic Robert Parker bestowed upon wine made from grapes harvested from Theopolis Vineyards, a stellar rating of 94 to 96 points, a spectacular showing for the vintner's first harvest in 2006. So go ahead, check them out: [theopolisvineyards.com](http://theopolisvineyards.com). I'll put their information in the show notes. And without further ado: Ariella, welcome back to the show!

### Ariella

I'm thrilled to be here. Thanks for having me.

### Joe

Yeah, thank you for agreeing to come back. Because, as it so happens, I mean, dating has always been one of my favorite topics. But I feel like it's sort of my focus for 2021 in terms of how I want to--what I'm focusing on in my life is making myself better so that I can prepare to be in the dating pool as a, a joyful participant instead of a--instead of a scared, unsure, needy, desperate participant. (Laughs) You know what I mean?

### Ariella

Yeah!

### Joe

So I'm really excited to get some more of your thoughts. Last episode was so great. I also want to just let in on my listeners, a little thing--changes to the podcast, especially after talking with you last time about just different ways because you're starting your own business here, and you know, my podcasting is a small little side hobby that I do. But, after talking with you, I really solidified and it felt good for me to only release an episode every other week instead of every week that I was doing. So, listeners out there if you're wondering: "where's all the content, [Joe](#)?" It's coming every other week, this year 2021, which will be about two episodes per month. It's just allowing me to A) make the episodes that much better and more focused. I have more energy to do it twice a-- twice a month instead of four times a

month, cause my new job is just really really busy. It was stretching me really thin. And I was getting super stressed out about being able to put out good episodes. So, thanks to Ariella for, you know, helping me think through that. And it really feels good. And I feel like super excited this year for the podcast and see where it can grow from there. So thank you for coming on and starting the year off right!

Ariella

Yeahhh.

Joe

I'm so excited. So, let's--I'm just gonna jump right in here cause I saw one of your Instagram posts--everybody check her out.

@thequeerdatingcoach?

Ariella

Just @queerdatingcoach

Joe

queerdatingcoach, @queerdatingcoach on Instagram, she's got a lot of great posts. And...what I really want to start with here today is what you posted. Most recently maybe? Or maybe the second to last thing you did, but I'm really interested to know what your definition--what do you mean by dating, because I think a lot of people out there they hear dating coach like what does that mean? What does that do? And a lot of people are unclear of what their dating life should look like. So, I think it's really--would be great for us...and for you to define what we're gonna be talking about is dating today.

Ariella

For sure. Yeah. So this is something I've been noodling on recently because there are some articles and things. I mean, going back to our

(laughing) my whole rant on the last episode about the dating coaching industry?

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

I find these articles sometimes that are like, "how to ready yourself to get back to dating once the world unpauses." And it's stuff like, make sure you're at a weight that you feel good about. Which, to me, this is crazy stuff that people are telling each other in 2021, you don't need to lose weight to date, are you insane?!

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

Or like, get your home ready for someone--at any moment, someone could come over. And that shit's literally untrue. That's not true.

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

No one's coming over unless you literally plan it out, it is not usually spontaneous. So, for me, I think the main way to get quote unquote, ready to date again when the world unpauses. If you're not currently, what you would call dating, is to orient your mindset to a feeling of dating. So to me what that means--dating is just an openness to connection.

Joe

Mmm.

### Ariella

It is seeing people--literally taking the time to see people that you pass on the street. It's honoring other people when you're in virtual spaces with each other. And really allowing this openness to connect. And then that evolves into...into connection in general, which could mean in a more dating romantic context, or just great friendships or people that can introduce you to people. It's allowing your network to widen organically with intention, instead of feeling like oh, I'm not allowed to meet up with people right now. That means I have to stay really closed off, and I can only text my family and, you know, it's not that at all. You can still make beautiful connections during this time. So that to me is what dating is.

### Joe

Oh, that's so beautiful--an openness to connection. I read that and I was like, "Oh, fuck, damn, that's good," especially for someone--because I feel like this approach would help me more, because I think myself--maybe a lot of other men, maybe a lot of other women out there feel this way--that dating tends to bring with it a bunch of high stakes, right? It's like, "Are you the person that I'm gonna be with for the rest of my life?" (laughs) And I found myself getting into that mindset too at the beginning of this year, like "Okay, I'm intentionally looking for my long term partner." (laughs)

### Ariella

Yeah.

### Joe

And then I'm, you know, making judgments really quickly, you know, just closing myself off to connection really--where it's, I don't--this person doesn't need to be that person. If they grow into that person, that'd be great. And that'll probably make the dating life a lot more exciting and easier, because then it naturally happens that it just grows, right? (laughs)

### Ariella

It's so funny, I love talking to you because you are so self aware in so many ways. So it's really fun, because even you saying this high stakes, evaluating people for a long term partnership. (laughing) Is something that, before we started recording, we were kinda talking about Joe's love life a little bit.

### Joe

(laughing) Yeah.

### Ariella

This high stakes piece, and really trying to see on date one whether someone has long term partnership potential was one of the notes I had written down as far as like "hmm I'm gonna address that a little bit, because that's a lot of pressure..."

### Joe

Yeah!

### Ariella

...going into something where if you, you know, we met at a Zoom--at a virtual hang with our friend Clarice, right?

### Joe

Yep.

### Ariella

But, you would never go into that being like, "oh, let me evaluate all these people I'm coming into contact to see if (unintelligible)..."

### Joe

Well, but I kind of do. (laughing) That's the thing is that I kinda do. And I don't want to. That's the thing, I'm like, Joe, why can't you just be open to

whatever happens, stop looking at them: "gosh, man, I wonder if they're single? I'm wonder if I can ask them out on a date or something." You know what I mean?

Ariella

Okay, to be fair, to be fair, I too (laughing)

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

But it's not about how can I see if you fit into this very long term vision of my life. What do we have that we can give to each other right now in this moment, even if it's super, super brief?

Joe

Ohh.

Ariella

How can we change each other if our interaction never goes beyond this Zoom hang or this one coffee or this one time going out to eat, whatever it is. It's all about in the moment, what can we give? And then through that, we're also assessing how we're feeling in this person's company. And then a little bit later, we can start to be like, "Okay, let me look at this. Let me look at how this is going. Is this moving in the direction that I want it to move in or do I feel like we're just great buds or collaborators?" Our impact on each other can still be profound even when they don't fall into the long-term relationship category.

Joe

Yeah, I mean, my mouth was just agape during that whole explanation you gave me there because I was like, "Oh, my gosh, I love that." What can we give each other in the moment? That oh my--oh, that is just such a

beautiful image, a beautiful philosophy. I'm just obsessed with that: what can I give to you in the moment right now?

Ariella

And receive. And I can tell you where this comes from if you're curious.

Joe

Please. Oh, I'm so curious. (laughs)

Ariella

Cause you like to talk, is that why I'm here?

Joe

(laughing) Yeah.

Ariella

(laughing) So for me, and this is something that I've written about, but I haven't released it yet. But, I think part of the reason why I'm such a great dater has to do with the fact that I solo backpacked for five months across Southeast Asia--

Joe

Uh huh.

Ariella

--when I was 24.

Joe

Wow.

Ariella

And this is very--it's kinda "crazy that Americans--Americans that solo backpack is crazy!" (laughs) But in another country, they're like, "yeah, so



what? Everyone does it." So I just want to put that out there that this may feel wild, but other countries would literally be even rolling their eyes that I'm even saying I solo backpacked because--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--it's so part of the culture to go explore in a way that that's not part of our culture. Anyway.

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

What that time showed me though, is that I can never take for granted how impactful a brief encounter can be on my life.

Joe

Mmm.

Ariella

There were moments or nights I spent with people, or conversations I had that were literally split second, maybe ten second conversations that profoundly impacted me.

Joe

Mmm.

Ariella

That, in any interaction now, or any first date, I am still open to this change in my life. I'm open to the change in my life, not because you and I will

become partners forever. But because this exact moment, this conversation, might impact me in ways that I can never fortune tell.

Joe

Mmhm.

Ariella

Does that make sense?

Joe

Oh, yeah, for sure. Gosh, and I can just--I can feel a sort of weight lifted just thinking about--Because I do, I have this habit of going in and not wanting to say something or not wanting to do something that will ruin my chances later down the line, right? And then I immediately end up always doing that! (laughs) Because it's a self fulfilling prophecy almost. But if I can go in and just think, "What do I have to give to this person right now? What can I receive?" And then leave it at that, and not trying to plan out a future or plan out a second or third date or plan, you know, start looking at what this person would look like if we were spending all this time together? What do they have to give me and what do I have to give them in this moment right now? And then give it, and then...that's it.

Ariella

And that's where generosity comes in. We can--and I know that on the other end, I've been on dates with folks who have been profoundly impacted by something I said that I think--I don't think twice about. I went out with someone this summer who I just told her I was driving across the country. And she messaged me weeks later being like, "You telling me were traveling really ignited my travel bug. I am prioritizing camping now." And just this kind of thing, right?

Joe

Mhmm.

### Ariella

Where that was just me sharing--that was just a normal fact about my life, it felt very not...a big thing to share. But it was something that spoke to something in her that really resonated with her that she's like, "Oh, I wanna--I wanna do that, I want to step into that."

### Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

Which is cool, and comes from all types of conversations with all different people. And dating is one type of interaction--when you go on a date with someone--one type of interaction where you can have a conversation that is deep in that way, and might inspire each other.

### Joe

Yeah. So what would you say cause this is so now we're talking about this, and now I can already feel my fear start to climb up in me. (laughs) Like, "Joe, you're scared of something." And this is what I'm scared of, and this is what I think might be the reason that keeps other people from approaching dating in this way...is the fear that--and I'd be interested to see what you would have to say to these people, an age group of people who are now in their, like mid 30s, late 30s, early 40s, who feel that the clock is ticking.

### Ariella

Mhm.

### Joe

And if they don't prioritize this in a certain way, that they're never gonna find it, right? If I just leave open to connectedness I'll just be meeting a ton of people and having all these connections, but still being alone when I get home because nothing has solidified...in that way. Do you know what I

mean? And so that ticking clock of I'm running out of time to find somebody. Do you--what would you say to someone who has that fear, or even people in that age group that that fear might be prevalent in?

Ariella

Yeah, so first, I would try to investigate a bit of where does that sense of running out of time and where does that ticking time clock come from?

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

It's gonna be different. Sometimes it's like, "Oh well my parents keep saying I should be married, they keep bugging me about this." And that would be more of a process of to excavate some of the origins of that story and the origins of those beliefs. I don't want to completely generalize--

Joe

Do you want me to say mine? And then we can talk about--focus it a little bit?

Ariella

Yes. Yes.

Joe

(laughs) So for me, if I'm gonna excavate it, it's because that--where that fear comes from, is based on the dating pool that I've been exposed to recently. So, and it feels like the options have gotten incredibly small. There's a scarcity of people that would in my mind--and maybe that's a mistake I'm making is because I'm looking--the amount of people that I would want a long term relationship with, are very very few, it feels like. There's--I come in contact with a lot of people who've, I've had great

conversations with. Great, I mean, for lack of a better--I mean, yeah, no great dates. I'll say great dates, cause I was gonna say it didn't turn into something, but it's like, "Get that out of your head!" (laughs) Get it out!

Ariella

Totally.

Joe

So it's, but I, you know, been great dates, but it wasn't a long term potential. So I guess the fear is, the longer that it happens, that the smaller the pool is gonna keep getting, right? Those options will keep getting smaller, every year that passes. And so it's like, "Man, if I think it's hard now, it's gonna be 10 times harder when I'm 40." Do you know what I mean? And that's, I think, where the fear comes from.

Ariella

Totally, I hear that. To me, that would be something that--this is a bit of a self-limiting belief in that way. There's simply no way to prove that--

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

--the dating pool is getting smaller and smaller.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

I think one of the only...I don't want to say legitimate reasons. One of the ways in which timing comes more into the forefront in dating is really when people are thinking about carrying children.

Joe

Mm.

Ariella

That is, to me, one of the ways in which, okay, you might be working against the clock if that's something that you really want, and you want to be the one that carries. Not that you want kids, but you want to be someone that carries children in your body, which needs to happen before the age of, let's say, 45. If we're being truthful and generous at the same time.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

Granted, there are huge complications. So...everything else as far as scarcity, it is a mindset. And, to me, I guess the reason why I really prioritize this connection. And let me clarify, it's not--when we're cultivating a feeling of dating and a feeling of connection. So...we really look people in the eye when we're checking out at the counter, or we really are willing to strike up a conversation with someone we're on a train with, or--that's kind of what I mean by cultivating this feeling of honoring that everyone has their own story and might have something to teach us. That doesn't mean you're asking all of these people out. It doesn't mean that you're going to give more time. You're just allowing your life journey to be more flowy and penetrated by the people around you, as opposed to staying in your lane and exclusively focused on this one thing that you think is best for you.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

Does that makes sense?

Joe

Yeah, for sure, definitely.

Ariella

So with the dating pool getting smaller and smaller. I...what I would probably work through with you is trying to see the opposite.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

My therapist says--

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

--beliefs are thoughts that we choose to think over and over. So it's really getting to the core of that belief and figuring out how might we adjust that so that you can start to see that there are an abundance of people to connect to? Does that make sense?

Joe

Yeah. And I think there are an abundance of people to connect with. I think part of my fear or part of the thing that maybe is limiting it is because I've sort of set this age range for myself. Plenty of people in their early twenties (laughs) here that I could connect with. But that's not necessarily-- I've connected primarily with those people in the past. And so it's...I'm weary of continuing to do that. Just because I feel like I've got into a

pattern that has not led to successful experiences. Do you know what I mean?

Ariella

You're saying that in the dating apps themselves, you are orienting the pool to an older range, and it seems like there's a bunch of younger folks on that--is that what you're saying?

Joe

Yeah, yeah, I guess so. Or, you know, when I run out of my--I run out of options pretty quick. And then, I get curious, always (laughs). So, you know, so I'll start to drift that number down, and then all of a sudden, more and more and more and more and more start to pop up.

Ariella

Yeah!

Joe

And then it's like, "Okay, well, (laughs) I really don't want to be connecting with these people, but there's a lot more opportunities here to connect," you know what I mean?

Ariella

Totally. Totally. So what's interesting there, too, cause then we're kind of blanketing a whole group of younger people into a group that we don't want to connect to, right? Which may or may not be true.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

Also, we're talking about just dating apps, which is one way to meet people.



Joe

Right.

Ariella

Though, the--perhaps what might be true, which I'm still weary to even say...

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

--is let's say that older people, the people that you're looking for in your age range and in your location, right? You're in a very, a pretty remote place right now.

Joe

Yes, specific clientele, let's say (laughs). Specific fish.

Ariella

This might not be the pond you want to swim in.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

Who knows how long you're staying out there or, you know--

Joe

Right.

Ariella

Or maybe you know--

Joe

I don't know yet. (laughs)

Ariella

So, who knows that. But, this is still--we're looking at one area of meeting people. And it's not evocative of the whole dating world that's out there.

Joe

Mhmm. That's true.

Ariella

Something I've been finding really interesting is the ability to connect and to create relationships with people online, off dating apps. How do we do that? How do we connect with people more genuinely? And not have it be in an experience where we are swiping and judging so--

Joe

Yeah, well, and I think I was gonna ask you that question, because you were talking about, you know, apps. That's just one way to meet people. And I think it's a big surge right now, because it feels like the only way to meet people with COVID, right?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And so, how do we deal with that? And how do we find different ways outside of the apps to connect with people during this time? And maybe you have some thoughts, I don't know.

Ariella

Yeah. So, generally, the way that I think about meeting people is in four quadrants. I didn't talk about this last--

Joe

No, you didn't, and I'm already super excited about it. I was like "Four quadrants! I've got four tendencies. I've got five love languages. I've got four quadrants now."

Ariella

(laughing) To be honest, I know why I think about it in four quadrants.

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

It's a list--it's a bullet list--

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

(laughing) it just always comes out of my mouth.

Joe

This sounds super marketable, by the way. (laughing) You need to--this could be a book, this could be--

Ariella

I have something written about it. I guess I write a lot of things and I actually don't share them because it's written--it's just you don't have it.

Joe

I can't wait to hear about it.

### Ariella

Okay, it's not super remarkable. It's just how my brain categorizes how to meet people. Okay, so, the four ways that I think about meeting people are that you got your dating apps--

### Joe

Yep.

### Ariella

--I'm swiping for you. Fine. Then you've got your friends of friends, like your wider network--

### Joe

Mhmm.

### Ariella

--a friend of a friend, or friends or family--having a conversation with other people being like, "Hey, I'm looking for someone that's like this," which we can go more into what this would be, but "I'm looking for someone like this, can you keep your ear to the ground, introduce me to someone if you know them?" And I've been set up with people in that way before and it's really fun. Okay, the third one is what I call in quotes "conscious communities." Not necessarily because they are conscious as far as higher thinking, whatever, it's more like places I know I am. So, that's your place of work--which is up for debate if that's appropriate or not appropriate for you. Fine.

### Joe

Mhmm.

### Ariella

That is the communities I'm a part of, the spaces that I'm showing up to. That can be virtual spaces that are not dating apps. It's where I am--I know

I'm going to be and I know that I have the possibility to meet people that perhaps are more in line with my values, my interests, whatnot. Does that make sense?

Joe

Mm. For sure. I mean, already artist's circle I'm like, yeah, that's (laughs)--

Ariella

Yeah. Totally. A hundred percent. Hundred percent. And then the fourth one are strangers. And that is--

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

--people on the street, work at the coffee shop, the server at the restaurant--

Joe

I just wanted to let people know because people can't see us right now. But you said strangers and you immediately lit up your nose got a little curl in it. It was just, I don't know, you seem so excited about strangers. So--

Ariella

I do--I really fuck with (laughs)

Joe

(laughs hard)

Ariella

I think it's really fun and it can be so scary, but that's the one that people are get-- they're like (gasps) "Strangers! I could date strangers?" And I was

like, "Yeah, you can! Are they people that have feelings? Of course you can.

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

You know? But that's the part that is usually more shocking for people.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

But I think I might have mentioned, when I was--when I first moved to New York, and I was asking out everybody?

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

All of those people were strangers. None of those people were people I knew, and all of them are people I saw. (laughs) Literally just saw and was like "You, I think we should go out."

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

So it is a lot less...elusive than I think people think it is.

Joe

Yeah, well, and so going on this--because I think this is actually a really great topic for the topic of masculinity. Because, when--I would assume

that, if you went up and asked a bunch of people to go on dates, you'd have a lot more success than if I went up to random strangers, right? Because I'm the straight white male. And so, it can be really hard to, I don't know, signal non-threatening, right? (laughs) But even then, so then I can run into the problem of trying to come off as SO non-threatening--

Ariella

Yes.

Joe

--that I seem very not romantic or not attractive, right? Or not that little edge that gives people a spark. And so, I would be really interested to know your thoughts about the ways that men--and it doesn't even have to be straight men, right? I mean, it...I think it would be less of a problem-- maybe not less of a problem for gay men, I don't know, I'd have to ask one of them. But, for men in general to introduce--to make that connection with a stranger in a way that still provides spark, but still also provides that sort of autonomy for a woman to feel like she can say no.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And doesn't feel pressured, right?

Ariella

Totally. And I think you're bringing up (unintelligible), because the majority of my clients are queer folks.

Joe

Mhmm.

### Ariella

So the question sometimes is more, "How do I tell if this person's queer?"  
How do I go up--

### Joe

Ohh, yeah.

### Ariella

And that's what comes up more often with gay men than not. It's not really how do I go up to this person and make sure that we're not threatening and also intriguing, that kind of stuff? It is more, what if this guy's not gay? Then what? So that becomes more of a question. So with your--with this question more with straight men, which we can stick to the question of balancing respect, and intrigue, flirting, but being--gathering consent is a great--it is something totally to balance and to figure out. So I think we can let's try to do this in real time. My--I have thoughts on this. And my expertise is more in the queer world. So let's figure this out. Because I mean, I used to ask a ton of straight guys, and I can see your thought that maybe it would be more, quote unquote, "successful" for me to lead that kind of interaction than for you to lead that kind of interaction? I think thinking that thought won't help. So--

### Joe

(laughs)

### Ariella

--I'd like to allow that to, "Yes, I can acknowledge that that might have been my experience in the past, and let's gently and lovingly let that go." Let's see if we can figure out something that would work. And, I want to say that strangers--let me put a button on this quadrant conversation and then let's get back to this.



Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

The reason why I think about the four quadrants is really because some people are like, "I can't meet strangers during COVID. I'm not part of any communities. I hate dating apps." Whatever it is, "my friends don't have anyone to introduce me to." So the point of the quadrants is really you have to pick one. You have to pick. You don't have to focus on all of them. But you do have to focus on one of them.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

Or if you're cool with kind of seeing, you know, how things flow in and out of your life, that's fine. But the point is more to make you recognize that if you're discounting all four quadrants, the chance of you meeting someone is near impossible, that means that the ball is entirely in someone else's court to happen to find you and find you interesting. Does that make sense?

Joe

Mhmm, Oh yeah, for sure. Definitely. Love it.

Ariella

So we can button up this stranger piece. And, I want to say that at this time, this stranger piece might be more difficult because of the constrictions as far as meeting people in real life.

Joe

Sure. Definitely.

Ariella

So do you still want to dive into that?

Joe

Oh, for sure I do. (laughs)

Ariella

Okay, so, I think the first thing to kind of give weight to and this is something that Matthew Hussey put out--which I know that we shit on him or I shit on him--

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

-- the last podcast, but I did think that this piece was interesting. He put out a video of basically, I mean it's really gendered about how can a woman go up to a guy? But, there's something interesting and I'm not sure if he says it in this way, but it's essentially about how flirting and expressing--flirting is essentially the balance between expressing interest--expressing genuine, specific targeted interest, and showing that you're okay without it being reciprocated.

Joe

Mmm.

Ariella

That you are an okay full human being that will continue living your life--

Joe

Yeah....mhmm.

Ariella

--if this person says no. Does that make sense?

Joe

Yep, it sure does.

Ariella

Okay, so knowing that, combined with the--our conversation last episode about gathering consent, kind of more off the bat with starting conversations with people you don't know?

Joe

Mhm.

Ariella

How might we--how might you do this?

Joe

This is an actual question for me now, okay. (laughs)

Ariella

We can think about this, scenario specific--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--like with someone that you've had a bit of a conversation with, at the grocery store, or whatever it is.

Joe

Uh huh.

Ariella

Or think about someone that passes you on the street. What feels...

Joe

I mean, I could strike up a conversation about, I mean, I guess if I like what they're wearing? Is that something that's like, "Hey, I just wanted to take a moment to say I really like your outfit?" Or I don't know! (laughs) Or is it okay if I say--if I give you a compliment right now?

Ariella

(laughing)

Joe

Would that be okay? I really think that those shoes make your outfit look fierce.

Ariella

(laughs) Okay, they will not think that you're straight if you say that, but--

Joe

I know! (laughs)

Ariella

What--let's try to make this a specific--let's try to make this a specific situation. Have you been in a situation where you have come across a stranger, a server, someone that's shopping with you, someone that's working at the checkout counter, anything along those lines that you have been like, "Hmm this person is piquing my interest?"

Joe

Definitely.

### Ariella

Is there one that you can tell us about that we can dive into? How could that conversation have gone?

### Joe

Hmmm. Okay...yeah, okay. So...let's say...so somebody at work, when I first got there--my new job--definitely piqued my interest. I'm not so sure if they pique my interest anymore, but when I first got there, and so there was the weird thing of trying to figure out, how do I initiate this without, you know, because it is--sometimes work can be tricky, right?

### Ariella

Yeah. Mhmm.

### Joe

Because you have to see each other, you work together, if something goes wrong, that could make the workplace environment awkward. Luckily where I work, there's a bunch of different departments. So it's not like I actually interact with her on a day to day basis. In fact, I never really interact with her.

### Ariella

Okay.

### Joe

And I've really only had one or two conversations, but every conversation really was just, I didn't feel--we talked about this last time too about, you know, being able to pick up on people's energy? Right? And so that energy--I didn't feel like there was any sort of, NO energy whatsoever, this person was turned off to any sort of...possibility for connection. Right?

Ariella

Totally. To clarify, are you saying that this person WAS completely turned off, or you didn't feel a turned off energy?

Joe

No, I felt like she was completely turned off.

Ariella

You felt like she was completely turned off, okay.

Joe

Yes. So that was like, do I try to express interest to gauge it? Or do I just trust my instinct? And I eventually just trusted my instinct, right?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

But...I didn't know--when I was first trying to decide. I didn't know. I was like, "Yeah, how do I--what do I say to acknowledge that there's interest, right?"

Ariella

Yeah,

Joe

I didn't exactly know--besides just saying, "Would you like to go get lunch sometime?"

Ariella

Mhmm.

Joe

You know, that could also mean anything. So, (laughs) when you're talking about the balance of expressing direct interest, and then also being--what was the thing from Matthew Hussey?

Ariella

It's the balance of expressing direct targeted interest and showing that you're gonna be okay.

Joe

Oh, being okay. Yeah. Yeah. And I think it was the, "How do I express the focus targeted interest part?"

Ariella

Yeah. Yeah.

Joe

Because sometimes, like I said, you know, asking someone out for lunch or whatever, could mean anything.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

That's not a targeted interest, right? So, that' I think the balance that I was working from was "how do I balance this thing out first?"

Ariella

Yes. Okay. I love that. I love that also, because...sometimes in this, why don't we--if I were to ask someone to get lunch, the problem can be if someone doesn't know what they're getting in for or if someone has ulterior motives, we can really feel that sometimes or it can feel really confusing.

Joe  
Mhm.

Ariella  
So, if you were to have asked her, "Would you want to grab lunch sometime?" She might be like, "Oh, this guy's new in town, probably doesn't have many friends, sure I'll get lunch..." but she might not know your intention, or what you're looking for from it. So, I'm a fan of using clarity and awkwardness over--which I think we've talked about--over not being clear.

Joe  
Yeah.

Ariella  
So, with her--granted, I want to say that if you did get the vibe that she was completely turned off, she might be and I think it's totally cool that you respected this. So, we can allow this to be a closed thing for now. But let's rewind a little bit from before you knew that that was the quote unquote "answer--"

Joe  
Right.

Ariella  
--and kind of look at this situation for how could it have gone?

Joe  
Definitely.



### Ariella

And I don't want to give too much weight to if you felt like she was closed off, she probably is. And, she might have been closed off because she didn't know what she might be open to in the sense that if she thinks that you're a new coworker, and she's not in the mood to bring on new friends. Or she already is too close to her coworkers at work, she might be closed off to that. There's so many reasons why--she might be prioritizing her love life, you know, so--

### Joe

Interesting, because I saw her on the apps too. And I resisted the urge to send the like, because I was like, "Ah, that'd be weird if I just send it here and I don't say anything at work? What a weird thing that would be."

### Ariella

Yeah, yeah. I agree. I agree. But we can talk about--

### Joe

Sure.

### Ariella

Yeah I just wanna, I definitely wanna lead with respect the energy that you feel like you're getting, and one of my coaches Jen Waldman talks about--I can't remember if I put this in a post or not. Mmm, I don't think I did. But when we're in the acting world, asking for an audition appointment, or wanting to get representation, or whatever, she says, no is the answer to the question that you asked. No doesn't necessarily mean--it can mean not now, it could mean not in this way, it can mean a bunch of things--

### Joe

Mmm.

Ariella

--from the question you asked. So if your quote unquote "question" is muddy, or unclear, she might have just not known what to receive or not receive. Does that make sense?

Joe

Yes, yes, definitely.

Ariella

Okay. We can still--overall, any bros listening to this, respect the energy you're getting, you do not need to push back, there are plenty of fish in the sea.

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

Okay, so...let's rewind before you felt like you had your answer if she's not interested in me. What piqued your interest about her?

Joe

My age. (laughs) She was around my age. I don't know exactly how old she was, but I knew that she was in my age range, right? She was somewhere in her thirties somewhere.

Ariella

Uh huh.

Joe

Which I found appealing, because before that, it was mostly people in their twenties. And it was almost a decade difference. And it's just, yeah, so we'll put that there. She was attractive.

Ariella

Okay.

Joe

Is. Was. Is attractive. Yeah, she was in the arts.

Ariella

Okay.

Joe

We would have similar interests, you know, at some point, cause we shared that sort of interest. I'm in a different kind of field, although I was in her field too, so it doesn't really matter.

Ariella

I want to ask you another question about that. How did you know that she was in the arts and what is your...what is your experience of that with her? How is that--how do you have that information?

Joe

So I teach at a university. I think I've said that on the podcast before. I'm always weary of revealing too much information about my personal things on here, just because sometimes, I don't want people to stalk me, (laughing) but at the same time, they could find out information, I guess, through my Instagram. So yeah, yeah. So, I teach at a university and so she--I'm an actor, so I teach in the theater department, acting. And she is the head of the voice program there.

Ariella

Okay.

Joe

So, she was a vocal instructor and she was a singer as well. So, my undergraduate degree was a Bachelors of Music. So I was in the music

department a lot, and I took voice lessons a lot. And, even though it was a Bachelors of Music in musical theater, there was still more music dominant education and not theater dominant. I had to take theater as extra classes to fulfill my role. All my core classes were music theory, piano, sight singing, and ear training, music history, all these things that I definitely now know that, if I would have done it differently, I would have tried to find a program that had more emphasis on the theater part.

Ariella

Uh huh.

Joe

And more minor in the music part, because I'm more interested in theater than I am in music, although I love music, too. And I love singing. So that's how we knew, was cause she was in the same office as the row of offices or whatever, right? And she was on the music side, and I'm on the theater side. And so, I'd see her walk by my hall, my office or whatever. And we've talked a few times based on that.

Ariella

Okay, cool.

Joe

She's also super--she seemed like a super strong and confident woman. And that's something that--I really want someone who's not gonna acquiesce to my interests, or who's going to call me out on my bullshit, who's going to force me to think about things in a broader context so that it will help--it'll help me grow.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And in confidence, just in general, I want someone who wants to take responsibility for themselves, right? Like you said, I'm a whole person if I leave here and nothing happens, that's super important to me, too. So that she seemed like she gave off that energy of, I don't need anyone else. (laughs) You know what I mean?

Ariella

Okay, yeah, cause that was my next question of, how do you know? And maybe it might feel like I'm beating a dead horse to ask for the how do you know piece? But it's very important, and I'll explain why after.

Joe

Yeah. I don't know. It's just the energy. It's just the energy I got, right?

Ariella

Right. The energy you got. Okay. Cool. I'm deciding if I want to--is there anything else that you were like, "this is why she piqued my interest?"

Joe

I think that's about it.

Ariella

Okay.

Joe

Maybe scarcity a bit? (laughs) Yep, we're gonna let that go or let that let that float away.

### Ariella

(laughing) But I hear you. And that's where the age--that's where I roll my eyes a little bit at the age, I'm like "okay fine," but that's not--basically I'm asking these things because when we're talking about expressing--if the two parts are expressing this targeted interest, and showing that we're okay without the person reciprocating--

### Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

--the targeted interest and what you said this, how do I do this piece is what I'm trying to get into. Which to me, what that really means. And, I want to say real quick: I know, I beat this all over the place when I talk about this podcast (laughs).

### Joe

I love it. I love it. I do too. I do too. That's I think a calling card of this podcast is I just bee boop everywhere, I'm a bee booper. (laughing)

### Ariella

I think that this piece might be the most important piece, when we're talking about gender and sexuality. When we're talking about what it would be like for me to go up to a guy, let's say a straight guy, and ask him out versus what it would be like for you to go up to a woman and ask her out. Which in general, I don't--I really don't love gendered advice. But, in thinking about how we're socialized, and in thinking about how men can be seen as creepy or intimidating, or whatever it is, I do think this piece of expressing targeted interest is important. Because, what it will allow you to do is show the person that you're asking out that you see them. That this isn't just--because it's not, it's best when it's not about age or attractiveness.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

Because that is what is cliché, and that's what is expected. Where, when I've been asked out by straight men, I'm like, "Okay, you think I'm cute. You don't know anything about me? Why would you think we should go out just because you think I'm cute?" Where in the reverse, it still works with men for me to go up to them and just be like, "I think you're cute." And then they're like "Okay!" (laughs)

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

So though I don't love gendered advice, when it comes to more of the straight world, I think that men can help themselves better. They can help themselves more by being generous with what they see in someone else. Not just "you're hot." Because the amount of "you're hot" that any woman has ever gotten is exorbitant.

Joe

Right. Yeah.

Ariella

They won't even take you seriously.

Joe

Yes.

Ariella

You haven't seen anything about me. You know what I mean?

Joe

Oh, yes! Oh my god, I'm gettin' chills right now. I'm snapping, I'm like (snaps): "Come on!"

Ariella

But to me this is a bit particular to straight men, because queer folks can still go up to other queer folks and--I mean, I have, I've just been like you're--I mean, I express the whole thing, right?

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

Which I think that I've mentioned in the last episode of going up to someone that worked at the counter cafe who i'd never spoken to before.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

Yeah so, I mean I was--I got consent to talk to her and then was basically like, "I think you're really attractive and I want to go out with you." (laughs) You know, but I think when it comes to this more fine line of trying to not be intimidating, but to express genuine interest, but genuine interest should be anchored to something that is not physical attraction.

Joe

Ahh! The interest should be tied to something that isn't physical attraction.

Ariella

Because in that way--

Joe

Anchored--did you say anchored cause I love that word.



Ariella

Yeah. You love that word anchored? (laughs)

Joe

I just--I think it's such a better, it's just more specific, you know, your interest should be tied to no, your interest to be anchored in, right? This should be your core thing of when you're approaching somebody, it should not be rooted in--your anchor should not be physical attractiveness.

Ariella

Yes. Yes. I completely agree. I mean, I said it so I guess I do (laughs).

Joe

(laughs hard) I'm so glad you agree with yourself. So glad you agree with yourself.

Ariella

(laughing) I happen to think that's brilliant. I think that the--ah shit, I'm losing my train of thought. Okay, anchored to--yes.

Joe

Physical attractiveness--should not be anchored in physical attractiveness.

Ariella

Yes. Especially when we're dealing with coworkers, or in your sense, where you're looking for a long termy kinda thing--

Joe

(laughs)

### Ariella

--is to anchor something into just, hey, I think you're cute. That's fine if you just want to fuck someone. But, if you're looking--since this person's gonna be a coworker, you're gonna be around her, you don't want to make her feel objectified.

### Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

How do you want to make some--I guess I should ask you instead of me saying all the answers but, how do you want to make someone feel when you ask them out?

### Joe

The first word that came to mind was desired, but...that was the first thing that came to mind. I guess I want them to feel like they have something that's worth sharing?

### Ariella

Uh huh.

### Joe

Yeah, I think that's a good way to put it. Because I know if someone were to ask me out, and this has happened very few--actually, I really am pressed to find a time that I was asked out by somebody.

### Ariella

Really?

### Joe

I don't really--that doesn't happen ever to me. I really can't, I'm trying to think of my brain. I'm like, "Has this actually ever happened?" I guess I've

had people like me on dating apps, which I guess is the equivalent but dating apps just feel so--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

Blase anyway. But yeah, if someone were to ask me out, feeling like that person saw something in me that they wanted me to share something with them, right? They wanted a deeper piece of me.

Ariella

Great.

Joe

And so that's---oof, God, that kinda just sounded sexual. I want to deeper piece of you.

Ariella

(laughs)

Joe

But that's I guess what I would want them to feel, is like they have something worth sharing.

Ariella

Yeah. So--and this is really interesting the language that you chose to use there is that they saw something in you. Not that they saw you.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

Because the age and the attractiveness is any old Joe on the street. I mean, sorry, I used your name (laughs).

Joe

(laughing) No, that's okay. Happens all the time. (laughing) I'm still fighting the stigma of sloppy joe's, okay? I'm still trying to get over that.

Ariella

(laughing) Oh my god, so funny. Whoops! But it's like anyone on the street (laughs)

Joe

(laughs) I am any old Joe, though, you know, so--(laughs)

Ariella

So funny. But if anyone can see anyone, but like to really see them in a way that, something that piques your interest isn't just that I think you'd be good in bed, or I think that you're hot--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

It's really about something deeper than that--

Joe

So my question, my follow up question, and sorry if I just interrupted--

Ariella

No, go for it.

Joe

--you going through your notes would be--because I do actually feel like that that is the anchor for a lot of people: physical attractiveness, right? Especially for straight men.

Ariella

That's the anchor for a lot of people, can you tell me what that means? In this context, like the anchor for people to be interested in someone's physical attraction?

Joe

Yeah, like their reason for approaching somebody would be physical attractiveness.

Ariella

Mhmm.

Joe

That would be their anchor, right? And, as we're establishing, it will work out better if you have--because women, that's what they get all the time, every day, all day, every time they go to the bar, every time they go anywhere, right? It's somebody telling them how good they look in those pants or you have a beautiful smile or whatever. It's that is usually the anchor, it feels like to me, I guess.

Ariella

Yep. Mhm.

Joe

So...because that's the anchor, what are the things that people are missing? Because, you know, you say we see somebody or we saw something in them?

Ariella

Mhm.

Joe

Because they're making the physical thing their anchor, they're ignoring some of the things that they could see in people. And what do you think are those things that maybe they should try to open their eyes to so that way they can get rid of the physical attractiveness as the anchor?

Ariella

Yeah, that's a great question. I think a big thing is someone's energy. And not in a way of an aloof kind of...I'll just explain more what I mean by that is how they carry themselves, how they interact with the world around them.

Joe

Mm.

Ariella

How they--I'm thinking about if you were at a bar, right? And you see a beautiful woman, and she is--everyone's gonna come up to her and be like, "You are--I think you're really good looking." Whatever.

Joe

Mhm.

Ariella

That might work or might not depending on what someone's mood is, but watching her--standing back and watching her a little bit, not in a creepy way, just in a way of, okay, first of all, just because she's beautiful does not mean I'm going to like her at all, knowledge that first.

Joe

Yeah, yeah.

### Ariella

To only approach people because they're hot means I'm actually not paying attention to my own needs.

### Joe

Oh, wow. Yeah.

### Ariella

She might be like "it makes me feel like shit." So, it's (laughs) so energy is something a little bit broader, and it's these quality things, like where you were saying qualities, things I should say, like, confidence, or how she's caring herself. So, what I would be more interested in is, if I see someone at a bar, it would be like, "How are they looking at the world around them? How are they talking to the bartender? Are they making their friends laugh?" Those would be the things that I would be more interested in, as opposed to some hot person who's just on their phone in the corner.

### Joe

Right.

### Ariella

I would never approach someone like that just cause they were hot. I'm not able to learn about what they're like in any way. Not that we can totally learn what people are like based on observing them, right? This is, you know, we're trying to gauge split second judgments for lack of a better word. We're trying to ascertain something about these people outside of "Oh, they put together a good outfit", or whatever it is.

### Joe

(laughs) Right.

Ariella

This is just one step lower. Are they making eye contact with people in their circle? Is that making sense?

Joe

Yeah, for sure, definitely.

Ariella

Just to try to see them more as a whole being instead of a sexual being, especially when you're not looking to fuck that night.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

If you're looking for a one night stand, it can be different. The rules can be a little bit different.

Joe

Right, yeah.

Ariella

But if you're interested in connecting to people in a deeper way, then start in a deeper way?

Joe

Yeah. So then, what would you be your advice? So...we can also kind of relate this back to that person, cause I did say that there was an energy about her that seemed like she didn't need anybody else? And that kind of strength and confidence was attractive.

Ariella

Yeah.



Joe

And so, then what does that look like? What does that sound like?

Ariella

Are you actually saying something?

Joe

Yeah, saying something in that, acknowledging what I saw in them--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--not what I'm seeing.

Ariella

Yes. So, and I definitely want to go back to this piece. So first, I would probably still try to excavate a little bit more of how do you know these things? Because it doesn't feel great when someone makes an assumption about you or says something about you that doesn't resonate. That doesn't ring true. Does that make sense?

Joe

Yeah, for sure. You've totally misread the situation.

Ariella

Right. And then it's like, "Oh, no, actually, I need a lot of people. I talk to my therapist every single lunch break, and you don't know anything about me."

Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

So it's how can I--how can we say things that are kind of showing that we see something in them, but don't...doesn't feel like we have all the information about them?

### Joe

Yes, yeah. Yeah, exactly.

### Ariella

And this is, I know we're really beep booping. And like, this is kind of a messy...we're in the mud of this together, right? We're figuring this out together. Especially since I don't usually work with straight clients. So, we'll move through this and then we'll try to figure out the bullet points so that it feels a little more concrete for the people listening and for you in the future.

### Joe

Sure. (chuckles)

### Ariella

But I appreciate being kind of in the mud with this with you.

### Joe

Yeah, I love it. I live in the mud. I feel like. (laughs)

### Ariella

Okay, so how do we say things that--so that we're seeing someone in a bit of a deeper way without making them feel like we think we have all the information or that we know them better than they know themselves, right?

### Joe

Mhm.

### Ariella

With this, you get a sense that she's really confident and strong. This sense of, she doesn't need anybody? I would be like, "Okay, how do you know that? How do we know these things to be true?" Because even the sense of, the head of the arts program. How do you know she likes it? How do you know that she actually feels like an artist? How do you know that this was the path she chose for herself? If we're trying to relate to people, it's, it's more we have to kind of dig a little bit deeper to be like, "Okay, is this a true thing that I'm gonna say to this person?" And it's okay to say things that aren't, that maybe the person doesn't like entirely a hundred percent resonate with, as long as we're phrasing it in a way that makes that clear. So, for example: that would be using language like, "It seems like", "I get the feeling that something about you is, is making me think that this blank", so it's not--"You don't need people and I really like that about you." And she'll be like, "Oh, I...all people need people..."

### Joe

(laughs) Right.

### Ariella

So thinking about how to say things that show that you've been paying attention, but don't show that you think you have all the answers.

### Joe

Right, right. So it is something as simple as just saying it seems like, feels like, you know, you have this certain energy that I'm kind of picking up on but, you know, I'm not really sure, but I'm really interested to know if it's true or not.

### Ariella

Yeah, yeah. It could be any of those things. Just to show that you are paying closer attention.

Joe  
Right.

Ariella  
So if we're thinking about the script of asking someone out, in this way, there's a few things that we need to hit. I don't like giving people scripts, but--

Joe  
Right.

Ariella  
--we could talk about what the bullet points are, and you can develop your own script, right?

Joe  
Process. Yeah, there's a process we have to go through.

Ariella  
Yeah, yeah. And then, because when we give people scripts, then they forget the lines and they don't know how to improv, but if they know--

Joe  
(laughs) Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ariella  
Okay. So if one of these pieces are, let me show you that I have been....I don't want to say observing you, but I've been paying attention. I've been paying attention. I like that. Sorry, I'm scribbling notes down like I do (laughs)--

Joe  
Uh huh. (laughs) Okay.

Ariella

Okay. So, if we were to kind of rewind this a little bit, and talk about the first time that you--or maybe you've had a couple of conversations with her in passing, and you weren't getting the sense that she was super closed off, you were getting the sense that, you know, she's taking the time to talk to you, or whatever it is. What else--and what's the thing? What do you want to do? What's the thing you want to ask her?

Joe

Just like about her life, you mean?

Ariella

No. What is--do you want to go to coffee? Do you want to go on a date?

Joe

Ohhh.

Ariella

What's the actual thing, if you were to ask this person out, or try to connect with her in a way that is outside of school, like, what is--give me some examples.

Joe

I feel like--yeah, and I feel like maybe my go to thing is getting pizza, cause I feel like everybody loves pizza. And there's a great pizza place here that I like and because it's nicer here, we can eat it outside. Which is, you know, even better.

Ariella

I love that.

Joe

You know, considering today's world.

Ariella

Totally. I want to say that I also love that because it's different to say "Do you want to get pizza sometime?" It's different to say--that's different than "There's a pizza place I really love in this neighborhood, because of this reason," or whatever it is. That even shows more thought and work or a lack of laziness to be like, "This is the ask, and this is the piece that I'm already bringing to the table. I've done some research, I've been checking out all the pizza places in town, this is my favorite place. And it feels really safe to eat there outdoors," whatever it is.

Joe

Yeah, for sure.

Ariella

Just kinda give you a little check mark there.

Joe

Yeah, do the work for them. (laughs)

Ariella

Yeah. Especially, at the beginning.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

If you're going to be presenting this kind of offer, it's nice to show that you've put a little thought into it. This is gonna be different. The scenario we're talking about is not--this is not gonna look the same as you're meeting someone at the bar. So I just wanna say that.

Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

We're talking specifically about this situation now. Okay, so that's the ask. And you are definitely going to include the bit that you've been paying attention, whatever that means, whatever that winds up looking like. What else do you feel like needs to be acknowledged in this interaction asking out a coworker, assessing her interest--what else feels, if you're not just gonna be like, you know, "you seem like confident and I'm interested in getting to know you, would you want to grab a slice of pizza sometime I have a favorite pizza place that I'd love to show you if you've never been. And you might have been because I'm new in town and it might be really famous, but I don't know that."

### Joe

(laughing) Yeah.

### Ariella

But what else needs to be part of this?

### Joe

Well, I feel like the thing that comes to mind right now is because we do work in the same building, to acknowledge that in some way and acknowledge that, you know, I understand, you know, that dating within the same workplace can make things tricky. So, you know, if that's something that is uncomfortable for you, I totally get that.

### Ariella

Great. I love that. I would be curious around the use of the word dating in this context, if you're not using the word dating in asking her out.

### Joe

Right.

### Ariella

If you are then totally cool. But if the ask--if you say, "I'd love to take you on a date, I've got a favorite pizza place, and it feels really safe to sit there." That's cool, but I wouldn't throw dating in if you aren't going to acknowledge that that is your intention, does that make sense?

### Joe

Right. Yeah. So yeah, be clear with your intention, too.

### Ariella

Yeah, for sure. And I think that, if you know that you want to take her on a date, that's fine. But if you're...what else could it be? If it's not a date?

### Joe

I mean, just, I mean I'm thinking a lot about, well, you know, that post, he said, like, open to connection, because--it doesn't have to be a date, it could just be getting to know this person, and then I'd find out information that would lead me to want to ask them out on a date in the future, right?

### Ariella

Yeah.

### Joe

Or I'm getting information and it's like, "gosh, you know, actually they'd just be a really good friend." And we cut out all of the stakes of trying to, you know, because then if you if you go straight to the piece of this is a date, then it might make being friends after more awkward.

### Ariella

Mhm.



Joe

(laughing) You're like, "you're learning." (laughs)

Ariella

(laughs) I think that that's great. I think that that's great. Because in reality, you don't know her enough to want to take her on a date yet.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

Which is fine, and that happens in the online dating world for sure. But if she's someone that's gonna be around you, regardless, playing it safe would be like, "Are you interested in getting to know me?"

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

And that's really the question, because it's not really "will you go get a slice of pizza with me?" She might be like, "sure." And then she's like "ugh, I just told a coworker I would get a slice of pizza." But it's really, are you in the market for new connections? Do you--are you curious about me and what I have to offer? If not, totally cool. But I'm looking to meet people and expand my network here, and you seem cool for this reason. Does that makes sense?

Joe

Yeah, so I can in the, when I'm making the ask and letting my intention be known, I can set up the intention of you know, I would really like to get to know you more, you seem like somebody that--there's something about you that makes me want to know more about you. I just wanted to know if you'd be open to getting to know each other a bit more.

### Ariella

Yeah, for sure. And I think that you can make it more specific as far as like there's something about you, I think you can say, I'm like I'm watching the way that you interact with your coworkers and everybody really likes you here. And you have this very confident air about you and I love hanging out with competent people. I feel like confident person myself, like you can you can say something that is more like I think it's okay, if you want to beef up the I've been paying attention.

### Joe

Yeah, okay. Yeah.

### Ariella

And this sense of, I guess what I want to give a little more weight to is this sense of, are you in the market to get to know new people? Because, when we're asking people if they wanna grab lunch, especially as coworkers, it can feel like a...an obligation.

### Joe

Mhm.

### Ariella

This person's new here. I'm supposed to show him around town, like whatever it is, and you'll get this vibe from talking to someone. But, if you're more like "I've been connecting with other people here, I'm new, you seem interesting for this, this and this reason. If you're in the market for new friends or new whatever, if you're open to making connections and you're curious to get to know me at all and my story, I would love to spend some time with you outside of work. If that feels like tricky territory for you or you're not interested in getting to know new folks right now, totally cool. I just wanna throw it out there." Whatever it is, does that make sense?

Joe

Yeah, yeah, for sure. Definitely.

Ariella

Because in that way, then it's not--she has every right to say no, and some people might be strong enough to say no, even if their coworker asks them to lunch--

Joe

Mhm.

Ariella

--but coworkers going to lunch, or maybe you're not thinking of lunch. Maybe pizza is-- you're grabbing dinner or whatever. So maybe that will feel different. But, I guess I'm saying with the coworker to lunch thing might feel like, "Yeah, I guess, I'm here anyway." But it's really, "Do you want to get to know me? Are you interested in me? If not, there's plenty of other people I'm getting pizza with, it's totally cool." You don't have to say that exactly, but that's the vibe. And that is--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--the "I'm cool if this is a no for you."

Joe

Yeah. Yeah. (chuckles)

Ariella

How is that feeling with you?

Joe

I mean it feels good. It's just, yeah, it's something that I've never thought about approaching it in that way before, you know what I mean? Because there's that piece of the, you know, looking at what I want is a long term partnership--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And so it feels, yeah, I don't know. It's just not in a way that I would have ever thought about it before. But it does take a lot of pressure off. Do you know what I mean?

Ariella

Yes.

Joe

I'm sure you know what I mean, cause you're the one giving the advice. (laughs) You're like, "um, yeah, there's a reason why I give this advice." (laughs)

Ariella

Well, it's also the fact that, you don't have enough information to see this person as a long term partnership--to see this person as long term partner potential yet.

Joe

Exactly--yeah, that's the piece that I'm really--my ears perked up when you said that you don't have enough information to know whether or not you want to go on a date with this person--

Ariella

Give yourself the ability and the grace, to have to be discerning about the people that come into your life.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

Even what we talked about last time with thinking about the person that you were meeting up with as a high value--

Joe

(laughs) Yeah.

Ariella

--contact, whatever it is. You don't have enough information to know that yet.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

What that person did was potentially check some boxes that you have for yourself.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

But in reality, you don't know how this person is going to make you feel. You don't know, even if this person seems confident that this coworker, if she seems confident, you don't know how that confidence is gonna make you feel. So you can go into it with the sense of wanting to know more, but it's really wanting to pay attention to what's going on inside your own

body when you're interacting with people around you. Does that make sense?

Joe

Yeah, I just...my head just exploded. And you're like, you don't know how that confidence is gonna make you feel and, damn, if that probably ain't the story of my dating life--of not knowing how these things that I attribute to them as things that I'm looking for is actually how that's going to make me feel.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

'Cause most of the time, I'm so concerned about how am I gonna make them feel?

Ariella

Yes!

Joe

And I completely ignore: how do they make me feel?

Ariella

A hundred percent. And last episode, when we were talking about how I wanted to push back on Shan Boodram's--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

So my entire philosophy on evaluating people for potential matches, or evaluating people for dating or relationship, or whatever it is, it is

exclusively centered around how do I want to feel when I'm around someone.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

It's so crazy, but our lives are really about chasing feelings. It is really about, I want to feel happy, I want to feel excited, I want to feel a sense of adventure, whatever it is. Some other people it's I want to feel stable, I want to feel calm, I want to feel like this partnership is nurturing. So it's tuning into what that is for ourselves and establishing what I call "feelings oriented standards." So that we know--I know how I want to feel by someone that I'm in the presence of. I know that. I'm really clear on that. But I'll give a lot of people a chance, I'll go out, I don't know how this is gonna impact my life. I don't know how you're going to change my worldview, from a sentence that you say, I don't know how this is gonna change my trajectory of where I'm spending my time, I don't know how you're gonna impact me. But, I'm open to feeling the way I want to feel. But I never expect it. The way that I want to feel is deep and it takes someone who's really in tune and communicative and knows how to have difficult conversations. It is a high level skill, the way that I'm looking to feel on a date. So the chances that someone would actually be able to do that are kind of slim! A lot of people don't have those skills--

Joe

I was just gonna say, 'cause that's how I would want to feel too and that's part of the scarcity thing. It's like, there aren't a lot of people like that, that that can do that.

Ariella

Those people will come.

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

It is more give yourself the credit that you are someone that's really in tuned and you are someone that has worked on yourself and that you have a lot of gifts to offer. If you are someone that is exclusively--or puts the priority on focusing on how you make other people feel, we really need to flip that back on yourself. Because--and a lot of clients are like this, right? They're usually one or the other. Either they're sitting there in judgment with their arms crossed, being like "This person is not making me feel the way I want to feel. Blah blah blah." And I'm like, "Okay, how are you focused on making the other person feel?" Right?

Joe

(laughs). Right.

Ariella

--and the other side are people like you and I who are really in it with people, really focus on making them have a good time, whatever it is. And then, okay, but how does this person make you feel? Why are you building them up to be this thing? Why are you building them up to be this long term relationship prospect, when they haven't even asked you single question?

Joe

Mhm.

Ariella

It's the balance of both of these things, and that's having responsibility for how we're showing up. And then also having responsibility to take care of ourself and assess, okay, now it's just me and me, how did that go? What did I--dow did that person make me feel? How do I feel in their presence?



How does that match up to how I want to feel in the presence of someone else? Does that make sense?

Joe

Totally. And it's, I think there is some part of me that gets a little sad, because I feel like I've had some interactions go this way that you're talking about, and I've just been open to seeing whatever, however, makes me feel, whatever. But it does feel like because of the way that society and standards have been shaped, over the course of, you know, this millennia, it feels like, the other person is also going into it with the attitude of: if this doesn't end up in something long term, it's a waste of time, kind of a thing. Do you know what I mean? And that makes it harder to want to genuinely give something 'cause they're here basically to take from me, you know what I mean?

Ariella

I want to know more about this. This is--this feels similar to...yes. Tell me this, or explain this, explain this a little more to me.

Joe

So for example, I had a really great again, pizza thing, it was pizza thing. It was outside, it was (unintelligible) go to. And I had a really great conversation with somebody. But it was only a great conversation because--I mean, they asked, they were really interested and they were asking me a lot of questions, but it was all about...it felt like me giving them things that made them feel better about themselves.

Ariella

So what type of questions were they asking you?

Joe

It all had related to just whatever conversation we were talking about. So then they would be like, "Interesting. Can you explain what you just said a

little bit more?" Because, I don't know, we were talking about a lot of different things. And I can't remember the specifics of that interaction 'cause it was only once.

Ariella

Uh huh.

Joe

It seemed like she had a lot of walls up. And there were a lot of things that happened in her life that caused those walls. But it didn't feel like she was really interested in ever hanging out as a friend again, do you know what I mean?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

So it was that openness for connection, it felt--I get into situations where the openness might only be one-sided.

Ariella

Yeah. So then. So then you get to think about, do you want to hang out with this person as a friend?

Joe

Definitely not. (laughs)

Ariella

It doesn't matter if it's one sided. That is all information. What you can do is shorten the length of your date. Or you can take care of yourself around the date to help keep the stakes low, right? This is stuff I go into with clients. But ultimately, all that matters is that you're able to discern for yourself: "Okay, how did I feel about that? How'd that person make me

feel? Is this someone I want to have around? And in what capacity?" Or maybe I don't know yet? Maybe I just want to keep hanging out--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--and see if something happens, but if she is not--if you're getting the sense from her that she's closed off, or she has walls up and it doesn't seem like she has, you know, maybe done the work to be like, "You know what? I know, I'm super fuckin' guarded right now. I think you're cool. I definitely wanna hang out again, but I obviously have shit to work through and the the more you get to know me the more comfortable I'll feel." If she's not able to verbalize these things, or whatever it is, then you might not want to be her friend, and that's totally okay.

Joe

Yeah. And I think I'm actually just noticing something about myself that I'm finding really interesting about behavior. That I think maybe I'm...so I guess, is what I'm hearing you say that I need to, regardless of whether or not I think there are a lot of people who have the capacity for this openness, that I shouldn't make the decision that there aren't many just because I've had a handful of experiences where I haven't met people...like that.

Ariella

Yeah, for sure. You cannot make the decision that there aren't many.

Joe

Right. And that's what I think I'm doing is, and that's what's causing me anxiousness. That's what's causing me the scarcity complex is because I've had these experiences, I don't know, a handful I'll say, that have seemed

like would then make me to believe that the general pool here is filled with people not open for connection.

Ariella

Yeah. Totally.

Joe

And so then I'm making the decision already. And now--I have this on my phone as my screensaver it's a message that it says: "Nothing ever is worth closing your heart over." And yet I feel like, I'm letting that close off that part of me if that makes sense. There's something that's making me close my heart a bit. And it's this perceived lack of people who are willing to be open to connection. And it's, I think it's also because I think I may be getting a little resentful towards it too, because it's a lot of work to maintain an open con--you know what I mean? It's a lot of work to allow yourself to be open to that kind of thing, and to give in a way that might inspire someone else to give back?

Ariella

Yes, okay, are you talking about within the context of an actual date?

Joe

Of an actual date, of a random encounter that I set up for pizza with a friend to get to know someone better, it takes a lot of energy and work to be open to and to continue to facilitate things that might inspire the other person to also give back, you know what I mean? And so, I feel like I've been doing a lot of that work, but A) people aren't inspired, so maybe I'm just not inspiring enough? (laughs) Or people are closed off, and they're not willing to give, they're looking to take. And so it feels like "Ah, man, I don't know how many more times I can go out and facilitate this kind of a thing, because it takes a lot out of me to do."

### Ariella

Okay, so this--my coaching question would be: what feels like it's taking a lot out of you? But for the--I wonder if for the purpose of podcasts--coaching can seem like quite unremarkable. It is thoughtful questions, but it's not...most of the time, people say with coaches, if you're watching a coach work, you shouldn't be able to see what they're doing. It's not entertaining. So, for the purpose of this podcast, I feel like I'd rather speak a little more and then--

### Joe

Sure.

### Ariella

--kind of save what coaching would be?

### Joe

Sure.

### Ariella

So instead of that, my question, and the question you can noodle on is what is feeling exhausting here? What is feeling like it's taking a lot out of me? And more jumping to advice giving, which isn't how I lead my coaching practice by any means. But, what I'm really curious about here is what is the difference between going into an interaction with your heart completely open, ready for connection, versus something else open? So for me, the way that this looks like is--or the sense that I gather, if you're going into a connection, or potential, or a pizza hang, whatever it is, with your heart open? Why does your heart need to be open like that? Why does it need-- if it is so open in that way, are you hoping that someone holds it? Are you hoping that someone is there to help uplift it? When we're really just genuinely seeking connection, or if you're going to hang out with a new friend, is your heart open like that? I don't know. For me, it's not. For me, it looks like my eyes are open, my eyes are really open,

I'm really hungry to know about this person. And my skin is porous. I am lit up and tingly, interested in knowing how I can--how I might impact this person's life, how they might impact in mine, right? That same sense of never taking for granted how impactful a brief encounter can be? That's what's open: my eyes and my skin. And then, if you ping something in me, if you make me feel the way that I know that I want to feel based on my feelings-oriented standards, then maybe my heart's like, "Oh, should we take this person--hm, that's interesting. We didn't quite expect this person to, to see me that way, or to make me feel that way. Interesting." Maybe my heart will open up a little bit. Are you someone that deserves a little space in here, whatever it is. I'm not going out on every date being like, "Is this person going to receive me and my heart and hold me in it?" No. It's those--that is inherently high stakes, right?

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

It is like, "What can I give you? How can we have a good time together? What can we teach each other? How can we enjoy the company of someone else? And what interesting conversation can we have?" And if secretly I know really well how I want to feel on a date, if you ping that, my ears perk up. And I'm like, "Huh, I didn't expect that from you. Okay."

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

You know? And that's--

Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

--that's how I approach dates. My heart is not out there for you to receive. I can talk about things that are meaningful to me. But I am not expecting you to hold my heart, I'm not even expecting you to look at it. All I'm doing is seeing if you happen to make me feel the way that I know that I want to feel when it comes to partnership. And that is background to enjoying the moment.

### Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

How's that land with you?

### Joe

Yeah, I mean I definitely don't do that. (laughs) I definitely am--I can picture myself or see myself back in other interactions that I've had that I'm definitely--I am curious to know about this person, but I am looking to see if they hold my heart in a certain way. And I feel like I--and I've heard myself say this before, that I'm not looking for new friends, I have plenty of friends. (laughs) Right? And so that's that part of it that it's like, "Am I actually open for connection or not?" Because if I'm just looking for an openness to connecting with somebody, that could turn into a new friend, but there's something in me that has closed that off. I don't have time to waste on friendships that I already have that nurture me very good.

### Ariella

Totally, totally, I would be curious about how that relates--how that...even if we've said in the past: I'm not open to new friends, I'm curious about how that works, based on the fact that you're in a new location? So I would wonder if that's entirely true. But, even if that is entirely true, when I'm saying that we can go into these experiences more open, it does not mean that you need to be open to friendship in the sense that you need to take

this person on. If you feel like you're really maxed out with friends, that is totally cool. It just means, give yourself a little credit to discern you are someone that has really worked on yourself and works on your communication skills and being in touch with your own feelings, that it might not be the next person, every next person that walks into your life will be this person that you're looking for.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

If you can learn to enjoy the process, the process will be able to be something that you can continue doing. That's the whole thing.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

For me, I think, whatever it is that we want, we have a goal, or we need to get ourselves to do things that are hard. For me, my in is to make it fun. I'm a slut for a good time. I really just love fun. So the reason why my dating practice and my coaching practice is centered around let's make the process more enjoyable, is because if it's not enjoyable in my own body, I won't do it. I just won't fucking do it. So, if you do want to date and you do want to look for partnership, that's fine. You don't need to pretend that you're looking for friends, and then maybe our...if you really aren't looking for friends, and you really aren't looking for connection, maybe that would adjust our script with the asking out the coworker that we were talking about earlier.

Joe

Right.



Ariella

Or maybe you're open to knowing your coworkers better, whatever it is.

Joe

Right. Yeah, yeah. I think that would be--coworkers are different, because I would like to get to know my coworkers--

Ariella

Yeah, for sure, establishing community at your place of work. Totally.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

But it doesn't mean that you need to go on every date and be like, "Oh, do I want this person to be a friend? Or do I want this person to be relationship material?" Whatever it is, you don't need to think about it beyond the date. All you need to do is figure out how to enjoy the moment if fun, or enjoyment is a value that you have. That's something that is important to you. It's not to everybody, really, I--

Joe

Really?!

Ariella

I feel like I am--I always want to have fun. It is a thing in my life. I'm really just obsessed with fun. My mother tells me that she thinks that not (laughs)--

Joe

I think that's odd, because I feel like most everybody, if they were to make a dating profile, one of the things on profiles is like, "I just like to have a

good time, I just like to have fun." You know? What a generic--everybody likes to have fun.

Ariella

Okay, great! And if that's the case, and it's important to figure out how to make these moments fun, even if they aren't what ultimately land in a relationship.

Joe

I would love then to hear your thoughts about--because I think one of the things that doesn't make this fun for me is because what's really fun for me, are deep conversations.

Ariella

Mhm.

Joe

That is not fun for the majority of people. (laughs) And in conversations is not something that the majority people are good at having. And so immediately what makes these interactions not fun, is because they're just not good at communicating. And they're not good about thinking more deep. So I guess, maybe I need to think of ways then, instead of only defaulting to conversation, what are some other ways to make a date fun?

Ariella

Yes. For sure.

Joe

And I would love to hear what your thoughts are about that.

Ariella

Okay, I'll get into that in a second. And I also want to say, for you, in particular, for someone that is like "I love deep conversation, I really want

someone to be able to think critically, I want someone to get in the mud with me on certain things." Two things I want to say about that. One, is that that is not a skill everyone has its own interest everyone has, like you said.

Joe

Mhm.

Ariella

I think by and large people do like to have deep conversations, I really do. But, they really need--some people really need a sense of trust and stability, for lack of a better word, in order to do that. So we'll open up slowly. And some people know how to have deep conversations that don't cost them emotionally. For me, I can have a deep conversation that is not necessarily vulnerable, but I can talk about deep shit. But it's not--you don't have to hold my heart. You know?

Joe

(laughs) Yeah, yeah.

Ariella

So, I just want to say that if you're not getting that on a first date, that might mean something about this person's ability to be compatible with you, in particular, or it means something--it might mean something about their own needs of establishing some kind of common ground a little bit before they're ready to dive in. Does that make sense?

Joe

Yep, for sure.

Ariella

Okay, so if that's what makes--if deep conversation is something that you find really fun, and maybe it feels a little too...too deep or too taboo to

kinda talk about which, granted, what kinds of deep conversations are you trying to have on first dates would be something else we would like to get into. But, what else? What else do you like? What else do you find fun?

### Joe

I love--this is one of the dates that I would bring up a lot in New York. I just love taking walks or going hiking, you know what I mean? Which is also perfect for a pandemic. (laughs) Being outside and taking walks. But also, walking also facilitates conversation too, I feel, because it gets the blood moving, it gets your breath flowing, it makes the ideas start to spin a little bit more because you're active. So I feel like sometimes maybe the way-- the reason why I would ask people to walk is because it would allow them to be more forthcoming with information because the ideas are starting to spin because their body is active. And not trying to do other things like digesting food while we're sitting down and eating. You know what I mean? Like, the body can then start to divert energy elsewhere, when we're just sitting and doing other things and then it doesn't allow ideas to flow. Which is why I love going on walks. I feel like that makes people a little bit more talkative, I guess for lack of a better...

### Ariella

Okay. Yes, and you are still ping-ponging back to the fact that you enjoy conversation--

### Joe

I know, I know! That's what I'm saying. (laughing)

### Ariella

(laughing) Which is fine and totally cool. And maybe that's something that you can be really forthcoming about in your dating profiles. That can be something that you are leading with, so that the people that like that, like you, because that is something that will garner people's attention. The right people.

Joe

See, and I feel like sometimes though, I feel like I've seen this a lot on dating profiles. Everybody says, I just want someone who's honest, who's a good communicator, all these kind of things. And it's like, you actually don't know what that means. You say you want this, but you actually don't. (laughs) And that's something that I've come across a lot, too, is, you say you want one thing, but you don't actually want this. And sometimes it's hard for me not to say that because I don't want to be rude. But it's just like, you don't know yourself at all, you don't know what you want. (chuckles)

Ariella

Or, what they think that means is different than what you think that means.

Joe

That's also true, probably (laughing).

Ariella

So, the work becomes not worrying about the people that you believe are lying to themselves. The work becomes how do I make clear what I value in a really specific way that the other people that have the same definition will be like, "Ah, yes, that's what I like. That's--"

Joe

Yeah. For sure.

Ariella

So, and this is a whole other conversation of, what do we put on dating profiles, right?

Joe

(laughs) Yeah.

Ariella

I mean, we are totally beep booping today. (laughs)

Joe

(Laughs)

Ariella

(unintelligible) so far, fucking power to you.

Joe

(laughing) Ah!

Ariella

But it becomes a, you know, maybe your version of that is, my friends tell me that I, I'm known for asking really thoughtful questions. I really love having deep conversations. Even some sometimes admittedly too early on. But if you're curious to have someone ask you questions and want to-- and be really open to, you know, deep conversations, get at me, swipe right, whatever it is. You can be more generous with what your definition is, so that people can either vote themselves in or vote themselves out if--

Joe

Sure, definitely. Yeah, yeah.

Ariella

Or don't swipe right on me if you aren't going to want to like you get deep real quick, I love talking.

Joe

Well, and that brings up the thing of, should I be getting deep really quick? In terms of building a long term relationship? You know what I mean? That's actually one question I've been thinking about a lot this year.

The short amount of time we've been in this year was, am I getting deep too quick? Is there a process for that that lends itself better to building a long term relationship? Those answers I don't know, I don't have any answers for that yet, but--

### Ariella

I think that the depth needs to be balanced by your own personal autonomy. I think that you can get deep if it feels good. You don't need to be excavating like we talked about in the last podcast. We don't need to be excavating really hard shit from the people that we're dating as fast, right? You can be like, "Oh, this seems like it's a closed door right there and maybe a first date's not the safest time for someone to start talking about this dramatic thing that happened to them, whatever it is."

### Joe

Mhm.

### Ariella

But there's a difference between deep conversation that is rooted in trauma, and deep conversation about what do you think about the world? What are your ideas? What are things that are presently happening in your life? That is also deep. And I don't think that managing that as far as what's appropriate for a first date, what's appropriate for a second date, whatever it is, it has to do with what feels good. There's no script here, right? We establish connection in different ways with different people. Sometimes we get really deep on a first date and feels great. And sometimes it's like, "oh, I shared too much. And I really need to practice really feeling out my own sense of autonomy when I'm on first dates, and not just trying to have intimacy for intimacy's sake, especially when I have not evaluated this person as someone who can hold that and deserve that."

Joe

Mhm. Yeah.

Ariella

So, I think that if you want to get deep, that's fine. And just make sure that you aren't tasking this person with holding something that they've not agreed to hold and that you're not, you know, "trauma dumping" is what some people call it, where you're sharing really painful hard things, that can be too much.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

But if you want to have real conversation about things that matter to you, fucking beautiful. Go for it.

Joe

Yeah. Interesting. (laughs)

Ariella

How is that landing with you?

Joe

I mean, it lands. It lands, it's just it's--yeah, 'cause I mean, I don't necessarily think that I trauma dump. I'm not out here talking about all the traumatic things. But it is I do, I think, when a question comes to me, it's something I can't turn off in terms of when I'm listening to someone talk. My next question is always "Interesting. Why do you feel that way?" You know what I mean? And I start to peel back the layers, and I'm starting to get--it's just a natural thing. And I think, as an acting teacher and an acting coach, it's this, you see things and then you're like, "Okay, what makes



you feel this way, or what makes you react this way, or what--you know?" And then just, we just keep going deeper and deeper and deeper.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And that's just, my nat--I can't--it's my natural setting. That's my baseline.

Ariella

That's fine. If you are watching, they're responding.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

If you get a--you can have your actor brain on there for deep questions, but your skin needs to be fucking porous as hell. They're gonna ask questions like that, and really dive in with someone, and you need to assess how it's going.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

But, you need to really be vigilant with yourself to be like, "Okay, I know I asked that question, because it came to my mind. And I didn't want to do the thing that Ariella said last time and be like, Oh, I have this question, I think I'm gonna table it." That's fine. If you want to ask the question, ask it. But, if you get a sense from them that that made something in them close off, or they're like, "Oh, I don't...yeah, I don't...yeah." If you're watching someone go through an experience like that, you're like, "Oh, my God, I need to change the fucking temperature of this! I'm so sorry. This is my,

you know, that's my natural tendency, I like to get deep, I was transparent about that from the get go. And I'm still figuring out what the boundaries are on that. And especially with you, new person, I want to respect that. So, let's move on from that and, you know, if it feels good to get back to it at a different time, let's get back to it." You have to be practiced in calling out what you're seeing, and in receiving really deeply what someone else is experiencing. Because if not, then you might make people uncomfortable in that way.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

If you're practicing feeling and watching and observing at the same time as your brain is going like, "Oh, the curiosity in me really wants to know this thing," then it's okay. You just have to quickly receive.

Joe

Mm. Yeah.

Ariella

I'll tell you real quick, I went on a date this summer. And I, this person that I went out with, she had been engaged in the past. And I was really curious about that, right?

Joe

(laughs) Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ariella

So I was kinda like, "Oh, what happened there?" You know? Whatever. And she gave me a really brief answer. She was like, "Oh, it just didn't work out." And I was like, "Okay, clearly, you don't want to talk about it." Right?

Joe

(laughs) Yeah.

Ariella

She wasn't like, "Do you really want to know the story?" And then I would be like, "I mean, if it feels good for you to share in that way, I'd love to hear it. I want to know more about you." And then she would tell me. But, this is very understood that we were having--we were only gonna hang out this one time, I was passing through a state. And, so she does not owe me her depth of emotional intimacy at all--

Joe

Yeah, yeah.

Ariella

So that was her response and then I was like, "Oh, she didn't want to share that? Then, let me ask a different question--"

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

So, we have to be responsible.

Joe

For sure. So then, what are some things that might be fun for me to take me away from this conversation bit, 'cause I do--thinking back through it, that is basically what is the most fun for me, and I tend to throw that on other people a lot, probably.

Ariella

How does this go for you in your friendships?

Joe  
Huh?

Ariella  
How does this go for you in your friendships? With this conversation piece?

Joe  
I mean, that's the majority of my close friends are people that I have conversations like this with--

Ariella  
--conversations with?

Joe  
Yes.

Ariella  
And when you were first getting to know those people, was that also true?

Joe  
I think so? I guess I can't remember back to when I first met those people, do you know what I mean? But...I think so...I guess I would also say that I may be a more--as I've gotten older, this capacity has gotten larger. Once I was given the tools, I would say that also after my divorce, conversation became such a big point for me, because we didn't talk about anything--

Ariella  
Yeah.

Joe  
--and so it was like, well I can't have that again. (laughs)

### Ariella

Totally, totally. Totally. And I am so with you. I am so with you on this. Conversation, to me, is a really key key component, seriously key. And because it was not key in my last relationship, right? We were always you know like, "Okay, how do we fuck up? How do we ignore our standards? How do we know that something wasn't right and yet we stayed in it?" It is all--that is the work that we were constantly doing, right? Of evaluating how things went in the past and figuring out how they can be better moving forward. So, the fact that conversation is so important to you, especially based on the fact that you didn't get it in a past relationship, a hundred percent makes sense that, literally, it checks out in a very linear way. That this is something that you're looking for.

### Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

So the thing is, though--and we could talk about the what can be fun without conversation piece, but I think what I'm more...what I think potentially is more helpful is maybe even looking at your standards for a first date. Not to be like, "Oh, this person really gets in the mud with me in deep conversations right off the bat and doesn't need any kind of sense of safety or, you know, trust in any kind of deep way, since it's a first meeting." But it's, does this person have the capacity to have conversations, deep conversations? Is this something that this person's interested in?

### Joe

Mhmm.

### Ariella

Not get we there right off the bat? We don't. But, what--is this someone that has, that I can tell probably has these kinds of talks with the people that they're close to? You know what I mean?

### Joe

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

### Ariella

Because it's okay that that is a really front and center standard for you. It's great. And, it's not something that you're going to be able to ignore ever again. You will inherently hold on to this piece. But it doesn't mean that you need to get to the depths of deep conversation on the first date. And if that means that you keep your first dates short, and then you see a second date, maybe that'll give someone a little bit more time to trust you? Maybe that's the way to go. Does that makes sense?

### Joe

Yeah, and that part--the time thing--that's, I think, probably a real issue for me. I have a really hard time setting a time limit, you know, 'cause I want to just be open to whatever happens happens, right? But if I set a certain time limit, I'm automatically cutting myself off from something just because I'm taking the time away. And that's something that is hard for me too, is setting that time limit of it's only gonna be this long, and I'm gonna stick to that. And even if I'm having a really great time, I'm gonna stick to it and leave. That's something that's hard for me to do. (laughing)

### Ariella

It's hard, but when you're in your place of trying to be really vigilant about what your own personal boundaries are, and...(laughs) I have things going on in my head that I don't know that we talked about on the podcast, so I'm not sure what to say or not--

## Joe

I would say just say it--

## Ariella

Okay. If you're not trying to have casual sex with someone right now, Joe, then it's okay to lean into these boundaries that you're setting for yourself ahead of time and communicate them with the other person. Even if you're having a great time, then you can have a great time again. It doesn't mean that everything needs to happen on this one exchange, especially when you're someone who's also saying that you can find these experiences to be a little exhausting, or makes you a little resentful if you're showing up with your heart so open and whatever, keep your first date short. You know that you're gonna be asking questions, assessing whether--asking questions and assessing whether this person has the capacity for deep conversations. And if you feel like you're really getting nothing back or that this person isn't gonna be someone that you're interested in, it's okay to allow all your first dates to kind of be short hangs. Allow it to not take emotional weight from you. Just go into it seeing what you get as far as feeling if they make you feel the way you want to feel but really just anchoring into the present moment of "What am I learning here? What am I giving here? What's transpiring between us removed from a long term relationship?" Keep it short, assess how it went to yourself by yourself after. And then you can be spontaneous on the next hang. It's okay to be boundaried in this way and I think that the question is always how do we stay true to the plan that we set for ourselves and how do we stay open enough for something else happening? But it seems like as someone who's usually open to whatever else happens happen, and then having experiences where you're like, "Oh, that actually didn't go the way that I had hoped it would, or I really didn't want to break that boundary with myself right now." Then maybe practice the other thing, practicing your boundary and see how that feels. And then you can find an in between place of okay, I know that this is when it feels worth it to go with the flow instead of what I had thought might happen here. And this is

when I--no, my plate's full at work, I really do need to only be with this person for an hour, and I have another date set up this week and I don't want to be exhausted. I'm still--this is a first date, it does not need to cost us much.

Joe

(laughs) Ooh, yeah, I like that. Doesn't need to cost us so much. 'Cause I feel like it does sometimes.

Ariella

It does, but that's the process of lowering the stakes and figuring out how to lower them. Because if we, if every audition we went on, we thought that we were gonna book Broadway, we would be so depleted. Right?

Joe

Yeah, well, that's the way--and that's the way I felt in New York too, though. Guess this is the same issue (laughing), putting a lot of stakes on each one.

Ariella

A lot of stakes, as opposed to, how did that relationship go? Did I feel like I connect with people behind the table? Did I meet a new person in line, who now I'm gonna grab coffee with and we're gonna become great buds on Instagram, or whatever it is. What else can we count on getting from these experiences removed from our ultimate goal so that we can enjoy what's happening in the moment?

Joe

I'm interested--so you were talking about how you're addicted to fun, or you're a fun whore, or whatever.

Ariella

I am.



Joe

So, if you're asking people to go get coffee, it seems like maybe coffee is the thing for you? Is that something that's a common go to thing for you or no--

Ariella

(laughing) No, I ask people to get a drink.

Joe

Drink, okay. But let's say--so what are the ways that you then keep it fun? If you're so addicted to fun? And it seems like you have a lot of fun on dates, which is why you go on many, I'm assuming. (laughs) So what are the ways that you keep it fun?

Ariella

Honestly, I love learning about other people. Like I, to me, it's not a matter of having a deep conversation. I love hearing people's stories. I love knowing what makes them the way that they are, what they enjoy. And I love...I love the experience of newness, I love going to a place I've never been to. I love being shown something if I'm in a new place, I love if I'm, you know, passing through a place I love learning about the city. On my--I was driving cross-country during the pandemic and I had a Tinder profile up. And I was like "In exchange for you indulging my questions about your city and what it's like to live here, I'll show you a good time", or whatever it is, you know? There's things like that. But ultimately, I find the process of learning about people to be fun. But I don't expect that to end in partnership. I expect it to end there. And, in the cases where it doesn't, in the cases where I really--or my ears perk up, and I feel the way that I want to feel, I pay attention. So--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--I am someone that has been in consistent relationships. And I've never been someone that's like, "I want a relationship right now--"

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--when I connect with people.

Joe

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, one question I have, because I feel like we've talked about me extensively. And I'm sure that people are loving hearing all this stuff about me. But I wonder how we could open this up. For more people that might, they might hear something that perks up that might resonate with them like, "Oh, yeah, that's what I do." Because they might not be relating to my issue--my things, right, that hang me up--

Ariella

For sure.

Joe

--in the dating world. So, in your experience, are there common things that you see other people, maybe mistakes or just approaches that you see people doing in the way that they approach their dating life that is making them unsuccessful?

Ariella

Well, I think that would require us looking at what the definition of success is.

Joe

Success, yeah. (laughs)

### Ariella

As specific as your circumstances are, and what you're saying about people might not be totally relating? The experience of having dates feel really high stakes is actually really common.

### Joe

Sure.

### Ariella

In my practice, that's what I'm getting a lot, too. Where people are like, "I'm exhausted, dates feel exhausting to me. I'm not having a good time. The stakes are really high. I just want relationships," so know that whoever is listening, probably a good chunk of people will feel the same way you did. So all of that information is applicable, right? So--

### Joe

Sure.

### Ariella

--reiterate how to do that is to think about what makes you have fun, take responsibility to do those things on the date, outside of fun only being the result of this connection going to date number two, day number three, long term relationship, whatever it is. So--

### Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

--whether that's an activity you like, or whether that's the pizza place that you love that you're like, "Alright, well, at least I'm getting my fucking favorite place--"

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

--you can take responsibility for having agency in that way to give yourself a good time. Does that make sense?

Joe

Yeah, yeah, yeah, for sure. For sure.

Ariella

The other thing I want to say just because...with this, okay, we had a lot of beep boopy conversation--what is tangible that you can take away here? I'd love to come back to the conversation about asking out the coworker real quick, is that okay?

Joe

Sure.

Ariella

Just so that we can put a little ribbon on that?

Joe

Yeah, yeah.

Ariella

For folks that were like, "Okay, so how would I ask out someone who maybe is a coworker, or maybe someone I had a conversation with," I think that the three things that we had kind of landed on as far as your bullet points to hit are 1) acknowledging the circumstance. So, in Joe's case, it was acknowledging the fact that we work in the same building, and maybe this is awkward, or maybe it's not, we're gonna keep seeing each other around and, whatever it is. The second one is showing in a way that

I've been paying attention, that is from what I've gathered about you, from the way I see you interact with your coworkers, people really love you and it feels like you have this confident air and I love hanging out with confident people. I feel like a confident person myself, and I love to get to know you better. Blady blah. The third thing would be the ask: Are you in the market for new friendships, new connections right now? Or is your plate kind of full? I'm looking to get to know people, if that feels true for you, if you are open to connection with coworkers, or friendship, like we said. If that's not true for you, and you want to ask them on a date, I have this thing in my head where I'm really trying to really take people out and go on dates with them. I totally understand if that feels uncomfortable, because we are coworkers. But there's something about you that I'm curious to get to know you more. And if the feeling's mutual or you want to get to know me, I'd love to share about myself with you as well. Whatever it is, the genuine ask, and and then I'd say the fourth piece about this is a little bit of showing that it's okay if they say no. Which is-- could look like in this case, totally get and, you know, if you said this earlier then don't say it again. But, I understand if this feels like a boundary for you with working, totally cool. I didn't mean to be awkward, I'll see you around these parts, anyway, and we'll be able to kind of laugh about the fact that I asked you out my first week working here, or whatever it is. And all of this can have like a sense of humor to it, and an air of lightness. And I'll say one more thing at the beginning of the conversation can be consent to have the conversation, like Joe and I talked about in the first episode, which is more like, "hey, do you have a second to--do you have a second to talk? Or are you rushing off to your next next class, I want to ask you something?" And then start via the four steps, like I just said.

### Joe

Mhmm. I love those steps. I feel like those are just a good bullet points to have in mind of this is the thing I want to hit. And then however I say it can change or be malleable, but these are the bullet point subjects that I need to go through and get across.

Ariella

For sure. For sure.

Joe

Yeah, I love that. I love systems. I love steps that I can follow.

Ariella

Me too.

Joe

I don't need (laughing, unintelligible)---

Ariella

(laughing) I love 'em. And I love helping people figure out bullet points for having conversations that might be awkward or might be difficult or whatnot. So, that's one for you all listening to be more bros that are sensitive and go after what you want and do it in a way that's respectful and show people that you've been paying attention.

Joe

Yeah, gosh, there's so much more. I mean, I just glanced at our recording time, and I'm like, "Have we been talking that long already?"

Ariella

Yeah, and we talked before we even started recording. (laughs)

Joe

I know. But it's just so easy to!

Ariella

Yeah. 'Cause you love deep conversations and so do I.

Joe

'Cause there's so much more in that that I feel like we can cover 'cause I feel like one of the things you said earlier about the--you were talking to the bros, you're just like "bros, respect the energy you're getting."

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And I feel like there's so much advice out there that is trying to teach people how to change the energy--that you can change the energy you're getting. Do you know what I mean?

Ariella

Yeah, and my question would be, why? If someone's not giving you the energy that you wanna get, why don't you have enough...you should be able to move on and look for people that do give you the energy you wanna get. (laughing)

Joe

Right! And that's the thing. I feel like that's what's causing a lot of problems is that we're spending too much time trying to figure out how we can change the energy instead of finding the energy that's already there.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And I think that's a huge problem, I would think, because I feel like that's where the advice is...and I understand now, saying that the reason why you have problems with a lot of dating coaches, 'cause it does seem like the psychology in the short term is getting other people to get out of their

own way, I guess, and that would signal I can change your energy by saying this certain thing--

Ariella

Yeah, or I can make you feel less intimidated by this by hitting on your friend first, and then you feeling good about yourself, because then I started to hit on you. That's pickup, right? So a lot of that is centered around using human psychology against us, instead of leading with transparency, showing that I've been paying attention and then miraculous thing, people usually like you!

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

Because you've been paying attention. It's fucking wild. Oh, like actual empathy and compassion and kindness and generosity works? I would much rather do that from the get go than try to perpetuate a game that I don't know the rules of, and I don't know when to stop playing. Just--

Joe

Right.

Ariella

--and forthcoming, and then fucking go on your merry way, and you'll be okay if this person doesn't like you.

Joe

Well, and changing someone else's energy is so self-serving, 'cause the reason I'm trying to change it is to feel good about myself.

Ariella

Yeah, yeah.



Joe

You know what I mean? Not to create a connection with you.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And that's a lot of, I think, other fears is just like, the big underlying fear is that nobody likes me, or I'm not worth liking, right? And so I'm trying to pull all of these other tricks out to convince myself that people do indeed like me, and that I'm worth being someone who is liked by someone else.

Ariella

For. Sure. And I work on that kind of stuff to clients as well--that sense of "I'm not worthy for connection, or I bring chaos where I go," or whatever it is, that is--a lot of people deal with that. And so, figuring out how to establish a sense of worthiness and how to be really in tune with and aware of the gifts that you bring to the people that are in your life and are lucky enough to be in your life is a really, really important step here.

Joe

Definitely. Oh, gosh I love that. How do you want to--how do we roll this out? I feel like we've been bebopping everywhere, but is there anything else--'cause I feel like we should be wrapping up here soon. Just because, you know, people got other things to do with their day today. They might--their laundry might already be done and folded. They've already cleaned their entire house--

Ariella

They did like three loads.

### Joe

They are--(laughing) Yeah, exactly, right. They've completed their commute. (laughing) So I guess what would be your kind of--is there something, a button that you feel would be really great to put on this--something in your mind that feels like a good thing to, out of the notes you've written down, or something that you feel like it would be good to sort of tie this all together?

### Ariella

Yeah, I guess the main thing that comes to mind with me is the sense of trying to keep the stakes low on a first date. You don't know that this person is gonna be good enough for you in the ways that you're looking for. So, to be really clear about how it is you want to feel when you're in the presence of others. And especially if you're someone like Joe or I, who has a real tendency to focus on the other person. If you're the other way, and you're really focused on how other people--what other people can give to you then then you need to switch the mindset. So focus on how you're showing up, how you're being generous. But, for people like Joe and myself, it's really paying attention to how do I want to feel in the presence of this person? And then keeping that kind of in the background as you go on these first hangs with people and see if they make your ears perk up in that way. So we can really enjoy what is happening in front of us, we know that we're gonna get the information that we need, as far as if this person winds up having more...if they're able to make us feel the way we want to feel and we can kind of assess them for more seriousness, if that's something that we're looking for, fine. But, as much as we can, try to enjoy what's happening in the moment 'cause you don't know what's gonna happen right after the date. Who knows if this--we could die at any moment, fucking have a good time!

### Joe

Yeah.

### Ariella

So try to keep the stakes low and focus on how you want to feel and take responsibility for doing things that you enjoy. And yeah, ask people out in a way that shows that you've been paying attention and honor your own boundaries with time on first hang as well. And understand that if you are someone that has worked on yourself, and does really value things that can be more, let's say high level as far as deep conversation and communication skills and whatnot, understand that not everyone's gonna do that for you and that's okay. And that's why you've worked on these things so that you can have people that enter your life that are really able to meet you there and that you can really pay attention to and honor when those folks come along.

### Joe

Mmm. Guys, I'm just smoking everything you're rolling right now.

### Ariella

(laughing)

### Joe

I am completely jiving with this energy, with this philosophy, with this thought process. I'm--I'm in love with it. Yeah, and I think probably the big piece for me, too, is that piece of really focusing on how people make me feel.

### Ariella

Yeah.

### Joe

And paying attention to that. And then also taking off the stakes a bit because I do-- because I was so centered on "Yes, I want a long term relationship!" And so anything that didn't feel like it was facilitating that piece was not worth my time, right?

### Ariella

It feels like when you're going on a first date, Joe, it feels like you've taken your heart and you've put it in the center of the table. It feels like it is there exposed entirely. With this person sitting across from you, where you have not evaluated whether that person even deserves to look at your heart!

### Joe

(laughs)

### Ariella

Just keep it in your body! Or keep it in your pocket, or next to you. It does not need to be the centerpiece of the conversation.

### Joe

I feel like you have fully seen me. (laughs) I feel fully seen in this moment. Because that's exactly what I do. And I think that's probably what scares people off too because they're like "I don't want to see that!"

### Ariella

I'm not ready for that! Put that away! Let me see if we have a good time first, you know? Let's keep it light, we can keep it buoyant, we can know that we have the capacity for deeper things. And in the meantime, we can just kind of--we gotta feel each other out slowly. It's okay.

### Joe

Yeah, yeah, put it away, Joe. Put it away, bros! Keep that heart in your sleeve. I don't know if any other bros have problems with that. And if you do, email us, email us at pillowwalkbros. All one word all lowercase @gmail.com. God, thank you so much for coming back on again. You're so generous with your time, you're super busy. Name some of the things--do you have something else in the works coming up in the next month or so that you'd like to sort of promote that you feel like guiding people towards how they can get on a mailing list for you if they're interested?

## Ariella

Yeah, for sure, you can join my mailing list at the link in my bio, and that's @queerdatingcoach or you can also go onto my website, queerdatingcoach.com and scroll down and you'll be able to sign up for the newsletter. I will be having a...ah, I'm not gonna announce it just yet. (laughs) Join the mailing list, you'll see what's up and I am gonna be a guest on quite a few more podcasts coming up. So, I'll let you know about all those things on my newsletter.

## Joe

Sweet. I'm on the mailing list. So I can tell everybody out there to jump on it, 'cause there's a lot of good information that just, you know, gets you thinking about your own... what do you want? It got me thinking a lot about what do I want, which I think is a really important piece for me specifically. Because I do tend to put the focus on other people. So it's really great for that if you're looking to really start asking yourself questions about yourself, I would totally recommend signing up for that, as well. Yeah, again, thank you so much. This was so great. I love having you here. You're welcome back anytime you want. But, as far as today, that does it for us! We appreciate everyone listening and hope you enjoyed the pillow talk as much as we did. If you have any insight, feedback, comments, questions, again, email us at pillowtalkbros. That's all one word, all lowercase pillowtalkbros@gmail.com or hit us up on Instagram or Facebook. PillowTalkbros is the handle @PillowTalkBros. Make sure to follow, like, subscribe. We hope to hear from all of you who are listening. If you want to comment on the podcast episode, go ahead and comment. If you want to send me an Instagram DM, do that as well. I'll respond to you. I said before I just want to create a place where people can come together without being dicks and just talk about all the things in life that maybe we don't feel comfortable talking about. So hit us up. We hope to see you in bed next week for some more pillow talk--ah! I should change that. See you in bed in another week, in two weeks for some more pillow talk. My name is Joe--

Ariella

I'm Ariella.

Joe

Peace!

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>