

Joe

Holla! What's good bros and broettes? My name is Joe Knispel and this is my guest--

Ariella

Ariella Serur, my pronouns are she, her.

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, career and relationships. Today's episode is "Can I Get Yo Number?" Can I get yo number tho? (laughs) Ariella and I are going to talk about our favorite subject...dating! We are gonna discuss what makes dating so hard in today's world, common mistakes people make in their dating life and whether or not people can learn to be attractive. But first, cheers to the New Year. Happy New Year to you. Happy New Year to all of the listeners here. How are you doing today?

Ariella

I'm great. I'm pumped to be here. I--

Joe

Yeah?

Ariella

This podcast is awesome from what I've heard so far, so I'm thrilled.

Joe

I'm so happy to have you here. I am like, like we were talking before we started recording and this is like my favorite topic ever to talk about. I-I'm obsessed with it and I read about it all the time I read different books. I'm reading a couple different books right now. Um, and so I'm really excited uh to get going on this but first all my listeners are probably wondering what am I drinking? Guys and ladies, and everybody who identifies with whatever they identify as, I am drinking water today. Listen, 2020 was hard, so I needed to, uh, I think I needed to do a little cleanse. Um I wanted to just do a little dry January so we're drinking water; I hope all of you are drinking water. You know most of us understand that hydration is crucial for our health. But despite the universal acceptance on importance of hydration people across our blue planet at all ages live their lives at levels of hydration significantly below what leading organizations recommend. Even mild levels of dehydration, our physical and emotional abilities can be significantly in-affected and in fact, functionality of several organs and cognitive ability and our moods are also hindered to an alarming degree for our bodies total content drops as little as 1%. So drink your water people; I'm doing it right now. What are you drinking over there?

Ariella

I'm drinking cold brew and--

Joe
Cold brew, love it.

Ariella
--uh also some of your favorite current drink: water.

Joe
Water. God I love it. I'm just--I I need it. So I've been I--I've like cleansed myself for like five days and already I feel better. I'm like what am I I just needed to cut it out for just a little bit....um. Also, we're gonna go into our BIPOC Business of the Week. This week, uh, I wanna promote Ethel's club. It is a Black woman founded social and wellness club designed to celebrate people of color both online and in real life. It's a social meets wellness meets creative hub for people of color and until its Brooklyn venue reopens you can sign up for a digital membership to access to all kinds of wellness sessions, live streamed healing classes, and other events. Check them out @ethelsclub on Instagram. That's E-T-H-E-L-S-C-L-U-B and their website: msha.ke/ethelsclub/, I'll put that in the comment notes. Um, check them out. I'm all about healing right now. And so that really, uh, really spoke to me when I when I found that business. And there's something about... we'll get right into this dating topic here. Let's jump right in. I am so excited to have you on the podcast today. I think I'm going to say your name differently every single time that I say it. I just, I love talking about dating. This is actually the the episode title is so funny to me 'cause I--have you ever seen that skit from Mad TV? The guy who's like, "Can I get yo number? Can I have it? Can I have it? Can I have it?" And he's like, hitting on--

Ariella
Wait, actually, how you're saying it is actually sounding more familiar (laughs)...that is sounding familiar to me...it originally wasn't--

Joe
(laughing) This guy was like in a movie theater and he was like, "yo, the back of your head is ridiculous!" It's just so--that skit is so funny to me. And whenever I think of the dating world and like going out into the dating world, I always think of that skit and being like having to go up to people and be like, "Can I have yo number? Can I have it? Can I have it?" Like just like the desperate, desperateness of wanting somebody to uh love, like me? (laughing) You know what I mean?

Ariella
For sure. That's real, that's real. I can understand why that would be what is in your head when you're in those situations, absolutely.

Joe
(laughing) For sure. Um, so tell--I want you to just really tell us about yourself and, um, what it is that you do, like give us your elevator speech, uh, about what you do,

um. Because I think it's really cool what you do and why I wanted to invite you on. Uh, so get so go ahead and plug yourself.

Ariella

Thanks. Okay, well, I'm Ariella, I'm @queerdatingcoach on Instagram, or queerdatingcoach dot com, um, and you might have guessed but (laughing) I'm a queer dating coach!

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

A dating coach, particularly for queer folks. Um, and what I do and like, what my mission is, is to transform the dating pool into one we enthusiastically want to jump into. Um, I want to help people show up with transparency, generosity, and kindness, and help us tune into ourselves better so that we can communicate with others in a truthful way, and, um, in a way that allows us to ask for what we need, and then get what we want. Um...yeah.

Joe

Oh, that sounds amazing.

Ariella

It's really fun, and I work with people at all different stages in their dating process to ultimately help them date better. A lot of people think dating is hard and frustrating and impossible, and I don't. And I think it's really fun and full of growth opportunities. So, I help folks change their point of view on it and give them the tools to do so.

Joe

That's amazing, is this something that you just kind of launched in this new year or have you been doing it for a super long time? Or is the idea been brewing for a long time and then sort of come to fruition recently?

Ariella

When, so a lot of queer folks have the experience of...once they come out, and they reflect on their life prior, they're like "Oh, my God, I was gay all along." And this absolutely been my experience. Like, I am astounded that it took me so long to come out, because I think back on my childhood, and I'm like, "Oh, my God, sweet baby, like you were a gay kid, you were a gay kid." And I just didn't know that that's what I meant. So my dating coaching journey feels really similar in that way where I am, I've been doing it for about six months or so. But I absolutely reflect on my life beforehand, and I'm like, oh, my god, you were, you were a dating coach this whole time.

Joe

(laughing) Amazing.

Ariella

You talked about dating in that professional environment, you helped roleplay with that person on how to ask this person to transition from friendship into fuckbuddyship. Are we allowed to curse on this podcast? (laughing)

Joe

Oh, hell yeah, yeah.

Ariella

(laughing) Um, so I've always been, um, I've always been that person. I've always been the person, the person people go to for questions about dating and relationships. And um now I'm just being more generous and forthcoming with that information for people that I might not be friends with personally.

Joe

Amazing. Do you have anything like any, um, sort of events or specials or offers that you're offering like right now in this like current, like month or anything that you're really wanting to rep.

Ariella

So right now, I'm guaranteeing beta launch pricing through the end of January, there's a possibility that that might extend. But basically, I'm offering 75 minute one on one sessions for pay what feels good to you between \$65 and \$95. Um, in the future, I'll be doing more group coachings, because I've found that people really like to hear other people's point of views on dating and really feel like they're not alone in this. Um you know, people are struggling with similar things and established community, um and collaboration. So that's probably the future. But for now--and at that point, the one on one coaching sessions will become more expensive. So for now, I'm guaranteeing 65 to 95 through the end of January, possibly longer, we'll see.

Joe

And is the space that you um specifically inhabit is a space for coaching the queer community? Or is it like a wide range of anybody who wants to come in?

Ariella

Um, traditionally, my marketing and everything is geared towards queer folks. There are a ton of straight date coaches out there--

Joe

Mhm.

Ariella

--who market for straight people in a way that actually feels incredibly exclusive, which we'll probably get into. (laughs)

Joe
(laughs)

Ariella
So are the things that I'm teaching and offering applicable to people that don't identify as queer? Yeah, for sure. It's communication tools, it's um sensing yourself tools, it's, of course, it's applicable. If-if you're a straight person that's listening to this and you're interested in working together, send me an email. I'm not gonna blanket be like, yes, all straight folks are eligible

Joe
(laughing)

Ariella
because my um, my priority is definitely to serve the queer community, but--

Joe
Yeah, definitely.

Ariella
--I have worked with straight people before.

Joe
Yeah, I think I mean, I think you're definitely right. I think it is definitely, the dating scene and like coaches definitely does seem to only offer or advertise cis relationships. And so I think it's actually really cool that you advertise as specifically a queer dating coach.

Ariella
Yeah, I'll say that, um, as far as my use of the word queer in this context is more of an umbrella term for the LGBTQIA community. It's not necessarily just the Q. So, queer can mean a couple of different things. Sometimes folks equate queer to genderqueer, which is more trans, non-binary, gender non-conforming folks. My queer here is the, is really the umbrella, like anyone that identifies as part of the LGBTQIA community is welcome. Um, so that can include cis queer folks like myself--

Joe
Right.

Ariella
--where my sexuality is queer and my gender identity is cis...if that makes sense.

Joe

I see. Yes, it does make sense. Thank you for that clarific--I was actually gonna ask because I'm always...cause I've asked other friends before who were in the LGI-um, LGBTQIA community, and I always ask, like, what's the like, what is queer? Like, what's the difference between queer and lesbian or queer and gay or queer and, you know, like, I just never, I never knew because I've seen some of my friends come out as queer. And I'm not sure exactly what that means in their journey. Do you know what I mean?

Ariella

For sure, for sure.

Joe

So I, I'm always interested to hear so I'm glad that you clarified it. And I think I, doing some research, I found that it is that specific term is different for everybody that is--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--and it feels like something that you can say because trying to say the exact precise thing is, can be really long conversation, and it's just easier in passing to say I'm queer.

Ariella

Absolutely. And it's, it's often for me, it's what feels like it has the most fluidity behind it, where a lot of folks think that they know what bisexual means, for example, even though bisexual can mean you know, not necessarily split down the middle or, or whatever it is, since the middle is a false dichotomy anyway, but um queer feels like to me where I have the most fluidity to to move in whatever direction feels good. And I think it is your you're totally right. It is different for everyone that claims queerness as their sexual identity. It is different.

Joe

Yeah. What, so let's get into this then: what made you, like what draws you to being a dating coach? Like what where is this little fire that's letting you that's like just perks, your interest and your mind and your creativity in this arena?

Ariella

I am honestly obsessed...with dating--

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

Obsessed with it. And I think um what drew me to this specifically, as far as like the coaching is that I see a lot of other people struggle with it.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
It's really hard. And I don't think it needs to be that way. Specifically, what my journey with it, though, was that I was an actor went to school for theater, and I moved to New York, I decided I would go on a date for every audition I went on.

Joe
Wow.

Ariella
That is a lot of auditions.

Joe
(laughing) Yeah.

Ariella
So because it was because there is a similar skill set involved in both and a similar skill set of like, being vulnerable, but also knowing your worth at the same time being subject to other people's judgments. There's a lot of things that overlap. So... I felt like the the best way to get practice in both, when I'm afraid of both, is to do both a ton. That's not necessarily what I recommend to clients now I'm not like if you're afraid of dating, I'm not like you just have to do more. I think that was probably a little bit insane of me to... (unintelligible) But at the same time I learned a lot about dating and I've dated, I've dated more than anybody I know honestly. And you know what? I'm still fucking obsessed with it.

Joe
(laughing) I am, so what's your because I have a feeling maybe that like you, do you believe in, um, monogamous relationships? Or are you someone who dates because you just love dating so much? Or do you like to have one partner at a time? (laughs) You know, not for life kind of thing, but like (laughing)

Ariella
Sure. So this is like a whole other... monogamy versus non-monogamy. First I'll say that my belief doesn't matter.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella

Like for whoever, whatever your relationship orientation is, which is sometimes how we refer to non-monogamy versus monogamy, relationship orientation. You do you, like whatever feels good for you--

Joe
Mm, yeah.

Ariella
--is what you should go with. For me personally, I just got out of a three year non-monogamous relationship where I had a primary partner and we were both dating other folks during the relationship and we would also bring in folks for us to have fun with together, um (laughs)...

Joe
Sure (laughs).

Ariella
So, um for me personally, what I have learned through non-monogamy, um as far as building relationship agreements and designing what you want the relationship to look like from the ground up with the two people or however many people are involved is something I will always bring forward, regardless of whether my relationship outwardly facing appears monogamous or not--

Joe
Mhm.

Ariella
--is building it with that person, that very...

Joe
Sure. Yeah.

Ariella
(unintelligible) person, if there is one... (laughs)

Joe
(laughs) IF there is one.

Ariella
Well, I just don't in generally--I don't in general believe that, like there's a right person or one person, all that kind of stuff. Like I have very, I have very different views on that. But I am someone who dates because I enjoy dating. And then I love connecting with people. And I love learning about people. And I also really enjoy being in relationships. So it's not like I'm a serial dater, and I don't get into relationships, I think I find beautiful connections with many different types of people. Um regardless of that, of whether that stays in a dating sphere, or if that

becomes a friendship sphere, or it is a collaborator or a um... or a partnership, or whatever it is, um--

Joe
Yeah, yeah.

Ariella
What about you? (laughs, unintelligible)

Joe
I'm actually very, I'm--so I'm trying this, this thing this year, because I've never been--I love dating too. Um, but one of the things that really set me on the path of what I'm going on this year is actually your Instagram posts, one of your Instagram posts that you posted.

Ariella
Really!

Joe
Yes, it changed my entire, like, I was--I had to have a reckoning with myself. (laughs)

Ariella
Oh (unintelligible), makes me feel so called out.

Joe
You posted a post that said, because you were, you had launched your Instagram. And so you were, I think going through, you know, sort of your principles and the way that you are a dating coach, and one of them was I will not tell you that we must always be looking for long t-- long term committed relationships. I WILL tell you, to be honest with what you are looking for and to express that accordingly.

Ariella
Yeah, for sure.

Joe
And I, when I heard that, I was like, oh, fuck. So I was like, I had to be honest. Like, what is it that I am actually looking for? And what I am looking for is a long term committed relationship.

Ariella
Exactly.

Joe
But my approach to it was always like, oh, like, this is what I want. But if it doesn't turn into that, it's okay. And you know, if it turns into something casual, maybe some

casual sex, and I'm also definitely okay with that. But I wasn't sure if that approach was actually expressing my desire accordingly...

Ariella
Yeah!

Joe
...for a long term...relationship.

Ariella
For. Sure. For sure.

Joe
And then I started reading a book called "How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk." And it's incredible. And it also made me think I've been doing, I've been expressing this desire the wrong way all the time. Because he lays out like a system of like, how to build a foundation. And there's like five different levels that you have to move through. And there's like, you know, that it looks like everything is on like a soundboard. And there's different faders. And you have to turn up these faders on these different sections. The first section is, Know, obviously getting to know someone, you have to get to know them. And then you can start to raise that fader up. And there's a whole bunch of chapters on what it means to get to know somebody. Um, cause I was doing that all wrong. Not wrong but like I wasn't, I was ignoring one part of getting to know somebody, and--

Ariella
Which part?

Joe
He says that getting to know someone, intimacy is equal to he calls them the three Ts: talking, um, togetherness and time. And so I'm very good at mutual self disclosure, which is talking. And I focused on that a lot. And because I would divulge so much information so quickly, I would get attached to somebody that I actually didn't know that well--

Ariella
Why is that?

Joe
--because we didn't actual--the second, the second one, which is one that I didn't really allow much for was togetherness. And by togetherness, he means not just being together, like you know, watching a movie and talking or being at dinner and talking but together in different situations and doing activities together so that you can see how they behave in different environments and how they behave um in different situations--

Ariella
Yeah.

Joe
--so that you can gain more information about, you know, this person is putting their best foot forward with me, but how do they treat other people? And how do they, how do they handle stress and h--and all these indicators for what once the like, you know, uh love... th-the puppy love phase fades, I can start to see these sort of indicators of how they might behave down the line.

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe
And I did not do that. I did not put myself in different situations with people and give myself the third thing: enough time to see those things become patterns to allow myself to see the patterns that are there that I don't see because he says often, people don't actually expose their patterns in a dating relationship until about three months after.

Ariella
Mmm.

Joe
Because they're so busy trying to put their best foot forward.

Ariella
So interesting.

Joe
Yeah, so you have to get to know somebody and then once you raise that up, you can start to trust somebody, and you can start to raise up that level. But the thing is, is you can't raise your level of trust above the level of getting to know somebody, it's either got to be equal to or below.

Ariella
One hundred percent.

Joe
And I get into trouble with that, because I think I know them, right. So that's my thing. And so then after you trust them, you can start to rely upon them. After you rely, you can commit and then after commit is touch. Um, and so

Ariella
Interesting.

Joe

And he's not saying and he's not saying touching in like, you can't hold hands, you can't kiss or anything, but I think it was mainly so the dangers of when-- how soon you enter into a physically intimate sexual relationship with someone because that creates...um, a sense of bonding and a sense of knowing someone when you don't actually know them.

Ariella

Mhm.

Joe

And it can, it can have the dangers of um...lead-- in your mind, softening the edges of a relationship, because you feel so connected to them, and being able to justify bad behavior because you've become so--

Ariella

You're already attached. Yeah.

Joe

Yes, because you've become so attached.

Ariella

I think that's so interesting--

Joe

That's the thing about I think that's the thing about touch, not like I mean, like if I, if I couldn't kiss or hold someone's hand, like eff that, get out of here. Um, but uh the, and I know that sex for me can sometimes close my eyes and create a strong attachment. Not in all situations-- in a romantic relationship. I'm definitely, if I know that the purpose of this is just to have fun--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--that switches off, and I don't, and there's nothing, but if I do have feelings for somebody...I'm going to get really emotionally attached, and then I will tend to justify bad behavior.

Ariella

I hear that, for sure, and that makes me feel more on board, even you saying that, if I know that this is we're just here to have fun and the switches off from whatnot. Because as a, like, I identify as a big slut and an extrovert--

Joe

(laughter)

Ariella

I think that people have different relationships to sex and with sex and, um, I think what's most important is knowing your own tendency and if--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--you are someone that will have a higher degree of getting attached before, that's really appropriate, because you are physically intimate with someone, then you need to have that information, or you need to share that information with the people who that's pertinent information to, and if you're someone who can really separate it, and it feels safe and okay...um, which for myself, I need some degree of knowing someone. Um, but usually, um, I don't need to know 'em well! (laughing)

Joe

(laughing) I don't either. I really don't either. But like I said, I can go back and forth. Like if I know what the purpose is, you know--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

if I know that, if I'm putting out an ad, like the job title is, fuck buddy--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

or one night stand or whatever. Like, if that's it, then I know exactly what the terms of the arrangement is gonna be--

Ariella

Totally.

Joe

And I'm able to not turn on that switch. I'll just be like, Okay, this is this is what it is.

Ariella

Right, right. Totally.

Joe

I'm totally--I mean, I have been and am totally cool with that. And if that's what people are looking for, express that desire accordingly, right? (laughs)

Ariella

Yeah, for sure, for sure. And that's and that's the thing, like, part of the issue with the dating coaching industry is that it really assumes people's intention when dating.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

All dating coaches are geared towards finding your person, finding your life partner, finding the love of your life, all this language that I find maddening to be honest--

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

--really infuriating, because it is absolutely assuming that the only reason to date is for life partnership, and that's the reason to date and that is absolutely not the only reason to date.

Joe

God I love that. What are some what are some of the reasons that you can list out of why people might be looking to date.

Ariella

Um, I think if they're looking to have sex, for sure, if you're looking to connect with someone, you want to do a fun activity and you want someone to come with you like it can literally be for companionship, it could be friendship. I've had my closest friends are almost entirely people I slept with (laughing)

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

--who are now my best buds, which which happens in the queer community a bit like that is something that is not-- I definitely don't feel like a total anomaly there. But, um, I find that the line between friendship and sex and good communication is all kind of like this beautiful dance and as long as the people involved are being honest, then kind of anything goes. Um, so I think that there are tons of reasons to date and I've definitely found my-- two of my closest friends now were both people that I had met in a dating capacity who then we were kind of like, this isn't the vibe for us, and then we're like, okay, let's be fucking best buds. That's--that's cool, too. Anything. Anything's okay--

Joe

Yeah. What are some other--so you were talking about how one of your issues with the dating coach industry is this focus on long term relationships? Um, what are

some other issues that you find are really prevalent that you just like really grind your gears?

Ariella

(unintelligible, laughing) Um, well actually cause I told you I listened to your podcast episode on, um, He's Just Not That Into You or that's not exactly the title, but um--

Joe

Yeah, they're--they're just not that into you.

Ariella

They're just not that into you, okay. Um, but you brought up Matthew Hussey who is one of the-- I know you refer to him as a relationship guru and that--which I do think that his some of his content's interesting, um, but the problem that I have with a lot of dating coaches out there, him included, is one: that there's a lack of individuality, when you are giving people scripts to work with, for how to get that guy, like how to get your guy to text you back.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

That's one problem where there--there is like, this is not information that is targeted towards you, or the way that you like to communicate or the way that feels best and most authentic to you showing up which is absolutely the value of one on one coaching. 'Cause everything is about like, okay, what feels good to you? What feels like, okay, I would never approach someone in that way. You know, all that kind of nitty gritty, intimate detail stuff that is not gonna be covered by giving someone fifty seven scripts to have someone text you back.

Joe

(chuckling) Sure.

Ariella

The other problem is the gender piece where all of the marketing is, "Hey, girl, you need that guy to text you back-- like that, to me, is incredibly jarring to and--yes, identify as a woman. But it is jarring to be scrolling on an app and then be accosted by something that's assuming my gender, because I can only imagine how that might feel to people that don't identify as a woman. And then it's it becomes really exclusive in that way, which is something that I don't like. (laughs)

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

There's the problem of pickup, which is a whole other thing, but...in that case, people are really evaluating their own success of pickup by what's--what's called, like pulling people that are hotter than themselves, which is reeeally problematic--

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
--that we're reading how good we are at a thing by how physically attractive based on social standards, entirely things that are learned and absolutely untrue. That's making us figure out whether we're good at something? Like, it's--it all feels so backwards to me, honestly, it makes me really riled up. Like, it's--it is so problematic--

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
That I'm really just determined to switch the fucking noise.

Joe
Yeah, one of the things that I, that I appreciate about it, and I know that because I've seen this bit ab--you were talking about pickup artistry...um, is that it definitely like I think, is problematic when people have the wrong intentions, right? They're using something for not a good reason. I'm really interested in the piece, most of the dating coaches that I listen to, or, um, watch content is mainly about the psychology and about human psychology and what is it that we innately do as humans and how are people responding to certain things that we do? I'm really interested in the psychology part.

Ariella
Hundred percent, hundred percent.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
I think lot of that is involved in dating coaching. And I'll say, psychology--understanding human psychology is really important...

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
--if you're using it responsibly--

Joe
Right.

Ariella
--and using it to make other people feel safe, and heard and seen and valued.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
Not to create a false sense of I'm this big person, cause I'm ignoring you--I'm paying attention to your friends, which is gonna up your attraction to me, because that perpetuates a game that is not sustainable.

Joe
So do you think in...when you watch that kind of content then, um, like Matthew Hussey for instance, or someone else, um, in that arena, do you feel like they are promoting that kind of use of it? Or it's because they only ha-- they want to make their videos as short as possible because people's attention spans are short so, what would be better is if they...I guess, um, outwardly expressed the desire in which they choose to use it or saying, you know, you need to be responsible with the way you use this.

Ariella
Okay, well, first I'll say that Matthew Hussey is not a pickup artist...like he's not--

Joe
Yeah, no, no I would say not either.

Ariella
So like for your listeners that don't know who he is: he has interesting content. It makes me angry in the way that all dating coaches make me angry, except for myself.

Joe
(Laughing)

Ariella
(laughing) Maybe future me will be angry at past me, I don't know. But, so Matthew Hussey's content is good in it--like some of his content I'm like, yeah, I can see how knowing that is useful information to my clients or to myself, and some of his content perpetuates a stereotype and a sameness among all the people that are using the content. Pickup is different. So--

Joe
Oh, for sure.

Ariella

So it's...I'm forgetting your question. (laughs)

Joe

I mean, I think you answered it. I mean, like it because it was really like, so if because there are some things that I would think about psychology that maybe people would hear from his content or something and use it and be like, oh, like, I'm gonna use that next time I do have a text interaction with someone, right?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

Um, but so what--what do you feel like is their responsibility to say, listen, you gotta be really, you know, honest with your intentions when you use this kind of stuff.

Ariella

Um I think that the responsibility is first to be like...does this script feel authentic to you? If we take away the script, do you have the skills and the improvisational techniques behind the script because you're rooted in why the script works, to be able to figure out what your version looks like?

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

And all of that is missing from dating advice. All of that. It is not autonomous in that way. And it's like as actors, right? Like, we need to have skills of improvisation behind us if we go up on the line. And the same thing is, you are developing a dependency on a dating coach that gives you the scripts of what to say. So then when the script's gone, now what?

Joe

Yeah, I--I don't-- I'm not entirely sure whether or not if he did private coaching, he would do that as much as much as give you skills to, you know, use like you're talking about, seems like most of his content is quick hit stuff that people are like, um, I don't have enough money for a dating coach, but this is a situation that I'm in and I have no idea what to say, what do I say?

Ariella

Right. So that's a good quick fix. So it might be useful--

Joe

Right.

Ariella

--to some folks in that case, but--

Joe

Right, cause I think-- I think there might be a difference between, you know, what is his-- what is his personal coaching sessions look like and then what is the content he puts out on YouTube because those are super short..

Ariella

Totally. Totally. Absolutely. And that is like true of any coach. Um, I guess, in-- in my practice, it's really based around communication skills and personal development--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--which are tools and techniques that are going to be applicable to all the areas of your life, not just dating. So when--when I saw--

Joe

Love it.

Ariella

--someone leading with scripts--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

I am like, how is that serving me beyond creating a dependence for your quick hitting content? I don't know...

Joe

Mhmm. Yeah. Do you ever--do you ever listen to, um, or see or read, um, Shan Boodram?

Ariella

I have her book on my shelf, but I have not gotten into it yet.

Joe

Wh--which book? The Game of Desire?

Ariella

Yeah, uh huh.

Joe

I just listened to that, I on my, um, drive back to Utah I listened to the whole book and I love it. So I'm really--so whenever you get around to reading it--

Ariella

We'll have a conversation about it.

Joe

Yeah, please.

Ariella

I have like four books on my shelf that I ordered that I'm, like starting to get into but that's definitely one I'm, I'm really curious about.

Joe

Cause she's about the personal kinda thing too and like--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--there's a workbook that goes along with it that you can do and follow along and it's all--I'm doing it right now--about finding out about your, you know, what, you know, simple things like what's your love languages?

Ariella

Mhmm.

Joe

She talks about like, has you take a quiz like, what's your apology language? Which I had no idea there was an apology language that the guy who did the Five Love Languages created with someone? What's your attachment style?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

What is your--what are your turn ons? Like, what are--what, what turns you on physically sexually desire, um and all these other different things? Um, and then you kinda go through this whole process of really digging into like, what, what is it that you're looking for? And what is it that you, um, can work on and improve on? And one of the, one of the phases is she has you, she wants you to contact an ex. And there's like a set list of questions to ask about what were my shortcomings in this relationship?

Ariella

(laughing) That's interesting.

Joe

You can start to reconcile and do your own sort of digging to be like, yeah, these are things that are trying to make it show you that the common denominator in most relationships is you.

Ariella

A hundred percent.

Joe

And that people you know, sometimes we can get into like, well, this person did this, and this person did this--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--and this, this to me, instead of looking, how did I fail?

Ariella

Uh huh.

Joe

And I love that too.

Ariella

Yeah, taking responsibility, which I think is a huge part of dating in general, and life.

Joe

Huge.

Ariella

Taking responsibility for how we show up and also how we want the date to go.

Joe

Definitely. So what are your then--so, we've talked about these other people that infuriate you.

Ariella

(laughs)

Joe

What is--what is your...take us through your process? Like what are some of like the first steps that you would take people through when you're consulting with someone?

Ariella

Well, the first step is really evaluating where they're at in their journey. So there are folks that are on all different, like are on all different parts of this spectrum. Some folks are stuck with the: I'm by myself. I've never dated before. I have these self-limiting beliefs about dating, I don't think dating's fun, I think it's really hard. It's impossible to meet people and dating apps are impossible and all this kind of like very common rhetoric that we have going around. So some of it takes some mindset work, um and figuring out how to unlearn certain things, how to introduce new mantras and ideas into the dating sphere. Um, then there's folks that need help, like, they want to be able to ask people out in person, they want to be able to initiate. Um, they want to figure out how to meet people, how to approach people, all that stuff, and then there are folks who are able to get on dates, but they're not going in the way that they want or they're not, they don't feel like they're going on dates with people that are compatible with them, or they don't know what to talk about and they don't know how to initiate physical intimacy, they don't know how to read, um, someone's body language or create boundaries. So this is really like a vast, there's a vast amount of reasons-- or people want to consult with me on non-monogamy. So there's a vast amount of reasons why folks will come to me. So the first step is figuring out like, where are you in your dating process, and then doing-- giving them skills and tools and excavating what it is that got them there so that they're able to move on in a way with more freedom and possibility and autonomy.

Joe

Sounds amazing. (laughs)

Ariella

It's really fun. And that's the other thing I'll say is...books are great. Um, and for me, personally, I'm someone that's hired a ton of coaches in my life, for different things. And... as-- I like, um, collaboration, and I really like when someone's like, willing to get in the mud with me about things and like, willing to be in the room with me and kind of feel around, like, look with me through my eyes and like, what am I missing? Like, how can this be like--work with me, give me your ideas, and all that kind of stuff. Like, I'm a slot for collaboration, I really love it. And that's something that books don't give you. And I'll just say it like that, you know, like--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--it's not, I think workbooks are great. And there's an element to it that can also feel really serious and hard, instead of playful and experimental and I think that's where coaching can really come in and be helpful, is if it's like--

Joe

Wow.

Ariella

--this is feeling hard, and like you're doing serious, it--it's the same for therapy, right? Like, if you're like, I'm really trying to sort out my shit by myself and I'm--it's getting dark in here and, you know, it's like, sometimes you really need someone else to be like, hey, can you just like--you did a great job feeling your feelings this week.

Joe

Right.

Ariella

Sometimes that is really helpful to sustain any process that might be difficult to embark on.

Joe

Th-I agree, I love that um, you're talking about the collaboration part, I definitely agree with you. Um, and usually I'll do these things like right now I'll like, I'll talk about like, this workbook i'm doing I'm actually--I actually have somebody that I talk out through like with it, like, it's not like a dating coach. But it's like a friend who's also has a mutual interest in dating.

Ariella

For sure.

Joe

We talk about it together and sort of sort that out. So I definitely love the collaboration piece, um. I would love to be able to get a dating coach. Actually, first step one is I need to go back to therapy is basically that--

Ariella

I love when my clients are working with therapists. And I also have a therapist and then two coaches for other areas of my life--not dating, but for personal stuff and--

Joe

Wonderful. Yeah yeah.

Ariella

--for productivity and whatnot. Because for me, it's like, I ask myself two questions when I'm going to invest in someone and it's do I have this like, do I know what I need to do to be successful (whatever your definition of success is) in this arena? Do I know do I know what I need to do? So that's one. There's a knowledge gap, and you like literally don't have the skills and you don't know, then that could be a sign they need someone on your team? Or do I know what to do, but I'm not doing it. And if it's an accountability thing or if it's someone pushing--

Joe

Ohhhh.

Ariella

--or asking you questions that allow you to go deeper with whatever it is that you're working on, so those are the two questions I ask--sometimes I know exactly what to do. And I still hire someone because I'm like, and yet I'm not doing it so help me see the blind spots, like push me to see what it is that I'm not seeing. So ultimately, I can go further in what it is I want to go further in.

Joe

Yeah, actually, now that you say that like I--cause I'm one of those people, I know what to do.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

Obviously I'm not, yeah, obviously I'm not doing it.

Ariella

A hundred percent!

Joe

And I just did an episode about, um, I can't--the f--(sighs) the four different personality types anyway. I'm an obliger.

Ariella

Yeah, Gretchen Ruben's Four Tendencies--

Joe

Yes, yes four tendencies--

Ariella

So am I.

Joe

--and so I--accountability is something that I need in order to help me focus on things with me because I tend to focus on other people.

Ariella

Absolutely. Did you talk about the four tendencies in this podcast episode in the last one that you did?

Joe

Um, we--I did it with a guest named Alyssa so, um, I can't remember what the episode title was, but we talked all about the four tendencies--

Ariella

Okay great, so there's no--okay cool.

Joe

Yes, yes, I did.

Ariella

Totally. When I was doing--I was doing life coaching before I was doing dating coachin and I had all of my clients, um, take the four tendencies quiz before meeting up with me. So I would know how much, um, external accountability they need. And we would talk about it wouldn't be like, okay, if you're an obliher, I'm gonna be up your ass all the time, like make sure--

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

--it feels good, but, um, it is, it is a really interesting tool once you learn where you're at on how much--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

personal accountability or how you respond to expectations, um it's, it can be a really interesting and fruitful tool to dive into.

Joe

Yeah, what would you say then...moving on to this, um, I'm really interested in and it's gonna be completely different for you, cause you're in th--the queer community, what would you say is like the State of the Union of dating right now?

Ariella

(laughs)

Joe

Like, what--what is the state of relationships that people are getting into and like, is it--are people connecting with each other? Are people being more dismissive or more afraid to go out on dates? Like, what would you say, as you're been in the space, as long as you have? Is the state of it right now?

Ariella

Okay. I think that...people, a lot of people always think dating is hard. (laughs)

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

I don't, like in some ways, dating during COVID might be harder. Particularly if you're someone like myself. I rarely have used apps. I've met four people on dating apps that I've gone on dates with--

Joe

Oh wow!

Ariella

Yeah, I'm an in person.--I'm an in person, bitch. (laughs) I'll--

Joe

I find that incredibly interesting, because you said you were going on a date for every audition you went on, so like--

Ariella

I was like, okay, to be fair, that was the goal. That was the goal. I was not--I was not actually going on it every audition. That was very much what I was trying to do. But no, I was not going on dating apps. I was still--and this is six years ago. So it's like--

Joe

So you were meeting people like out in bars or out in public or?

Ariella

Out in public, baby.

Joe

(laughing hard)

Ariella

Every time I made eye contact with someone I would be like, what's your--what's your deal?

Joe

(laughing) Wha--tell me about like, one of the like, most fun stories of meeting someone in public. Like what--like, what, like coffee shops? Or just at the store grocery shopping?

Ariella

Everywhere, everywhere. I'd meet people everywhere. Everywhere.

Joe

Like, give me one example. If that's okay to ask.

Ariella

About my celebrity crush, you wanna know that one?

Joe

Oh, yes yes. Your celebrity crush, talk us through this.

Ariella

Okay. And, and truthfully, it's like, so this is like, whatever. This is one person that I really admired. But it is not that deep. To ask people out. In person. It's like, it is a skill and it is a skill that scares the shit out of people. And honestly, it scares the shit out of me too.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

Like, it is not if I see someone that I'm attracted to, or that I wanna, that I'm interested in getting to know, if you think that I'm immune to having my stomach drop in that moment...you're wrong, like I feel it too. It's just that my legs start moving--

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

(laughing) And I'm like oh fuck, like now I have to figure out what I'm going to say. And I too have like, seen a pretty girl and then like drafted what I'm going to say on my phone like, and then been like, okay, how do I have like the guts to go up to this person and say something? So, so yes, I've done it. And I feel proficient at it in general. And yet, every time I still feel like a beginner. It is not something that necessarily gets easier. It is, it's just a muscle that you can get used to. So also--

Joe

Right. Mm.

Ariella

I'm with you. I'm with you in it. I'm not like I--I'm just I'm with you and I'm and I get nervous, too. Like I'm--but I do it. Um--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

I heard a great quote that was: success in dating is the...wait, okay, is the capacity or the ability to make courageous choices, something like that. I'm butchering it.

Joe

That's okay, we get the idea.

Ariella

You get the gist, you get the gist.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

Um, okay. Anyway, so this, this celebrity crush, (sighs) I had seen a Broadway show he was in and I was like, I really want to get to know this person, some people just do that.

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

I just feel like wow, I'm seeing this person from afar, and I really want to get to know them. So what had happened was that after his show, he came out of the stage door like Broadway stars do.

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

And I noticed that he walked down the block a bit to--to hang out in a little alcove where he was, um, smoking a cigarette. So, this is like after he moved through the line of fans.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

So I wasn't in the line of fans, you know, like I'm gonna play it like, I'm gonna maybe act a little bit..

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

So, I wound up approaching him when he was smoking in a little alcove by himself and I just gave him like a very genuine, um, heartfelt compliment about the show, which what I will say about approaching people is that you really need to be, if you're gonna approach people, you need to be responsible as hell, and be able to tell

when someone wants to talk to you, or doesn't want to talk to you and respect the shit out of whatever that is.

Joe
Mhmm.

Ariella
So, that's why I feel comfortable approaching so many people is because I know in my heart of hearts, if I get an inkling that someone doesn't want to be in this conversation, I am out. And most often I will ask consent to be in the conversation in the first place.

Joe
Mhmm.

Ariella
So, this is not like I'm going up to every person I'm seeing, I will most often be like, do you have like--can I talk to you for a minute? Or can I ask you a question? Like, I will ask consent to be there. So I'll say that, okay, back to the story. So I give him like a very heartfelt compliment about the show, that was really true to me. And I left it. I walked away, whatever, I think maybe, maybe I friended him on Facebook or something like that. And I had introduced myself and had an interaction. Okay. Fast forward, we find out the show is going to close and I was like, I need to go again. I need to see the show again. And my parents were with me the first time I saw it, and they were like--and they knew I was like gaga for this person.

Joe
(laughs)

Ariella
And they were like, should we get a ticket with you? And I was like, no. I...think I need to do it alone. I think--

Joe
(laughing) I have unfinished business.

Ariella
I have unfinished business...so I would not like to be supervised, and I do it. Um, so I went back to the show and the whole show, I'm sitting in the audience and I'm like, I know I'm gonna ask out this person later. (laughs) I know I'm gonna do it. Like, how do I reconcile? And he's like the leader of the show, and very good. Very good in the show. Very good.

Joe
(laughing)

Ariella

So I'm like, okay, how am I gonna do this? So, basically, he, um, comes out of the stage door again, same way, and he goes to--he exits. Okay, so I thought in my head, what's the worst thing that's gonna happen here? And to me, the worst thing was not just this person says, no, that I don't care, you have autonomy you should say no if you're not interested in going out with me, like, please say no. (laughing)

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

I really don't want you to say yes if you're not--But I was like, the worst thing here will be like, if he doesn't remember we had a conversation before or if he thinks I'm like, if he if he lumps me in with all the other fans that are at the show, that to me will feel more awkward. So--so knowing that that's my, um, worst case scenario, how do I separate myself? So basically, what happened was that, he came out at the stage door, said hi to the fans, and whatnot. And I don't know what happened honestly, in my body. But I pick up my phone and I decide to fake a phone call. I am full on improv-ing. I walk away from the stage door, and I'm faking a phone call on the street. I don't know, I'm talking to my mother, like I am full on like, this is a scene, I am in character.

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

And I see him walk down the street, go back to his--he passes me to go to his alcove while I'm on the phone, to his alcove to go smoke and I just waved to him, but I don't--I'm not like oh, I'll call you back! I you know, I stay on the phone. Like I was like, hi, I'm still--like I'm on the phone so I can't say hello. (laughing) This came, honestly, this is not like, if you're listening to this, like you can't necessarily pull this off. Like, this is not useful to you.

Joe

(laughing) wh-what a power move. Um, I'm sorry I'm on the pho--

Ariella

...very famous celebrity who's doing a great job on your show. So anyway, I wrap up my phone call. Um, I take my time. And then I go over to him in his little, um, smoking alcove. And basically, I reintroduce myself, make sure it's cool that I'm in the space with him and, um, told him, gave him some more compliments about the show and then was like, if you'd ever like to get a drink, I'd be really interested in that. And he said yes. And then I got his number and then we went out. The end.

Joe

Amazing.

Ariella

(laughing) It was fun. It was really fun. Honestly, this is one of the moments where I know that I've always been a dating coach, because when I told my mother, the next day in person, we went to Starbucks on the Upper West Side. And I told her that I asked out this person and she was like, I am so proud of you. (laughing) Like I've been in training to be a dating coach. It was like, literally I was like, oh, I've never done better at anything.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

Like, this is the proudest moment my Jewish Brooklyn mother had had with me. So--

Joe

Yeah. (laughing)

Ariella

That's--that was my, that was my most uh, what feels like my most bold move, but honestly, anytime I go up to someone, it feels that big. It really does. Because we all care. We all care about like falling flat on our face, for sure.

Joe

Yeah, what's one of the most memorable times you've ever fallen flat on your face?

Ariella

It's interesting with that,

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

because it's, um, okay, in in, I want to call this out. So--so Joe sent me some questions that might come up in this podcast.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

And the way this question was phrased was what is, like what was your hardest rejection or something like that?

Joe

What was your most memorable rejection?

Ariella

Memorable rejection? Okay. And then I was like, what? Like, what? rejection has there been--not in the sense that I've never been rejected? I just don't take it as rejection.

Joe

Mm.

Ariella

Like, it doesn't feel like rejection to me. It's not like, we weren't that deep. Like, I asked you a question, you said no, like, it's not that deep.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

So it was actually hard for me to think of examples of rejection, because that's just not how my system interprets it. So I appreciate even this edit of like falling flat on my face, or whatever it is. It's like, okay, I can acknowledge that that didn't go the way that like, in my dreams, it would have gone.

Joe

Yeah. (laughing) right.

Ariella

But it doesn't feel--I don't feel rejected. Like--

Joe

I think that's a really cool way to look at it and I love the fact that you're saying you don't feel rejection, because I think maybe what holds people back from making that initial move, is that we put the moment on such a high pedestal, right?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And like you were saying, like, we're not that deep. And for some reason, like, I know that I can get it into my head that like, this would be the worst thing ever.

Ariella

Uh huh.

Joe

Because--but really, like if--if someone's like, not interested, they won't think about me for the rest of the, like they won't.

Ariella
Never. Never.

Joe
They won't give me a second thought

Ariella
No.

Joe
And so being able to separate that and knowing that, like, this is not--this is a very low stake thing, actually, uh, getting a--switching and rewiring my brain of taking away the high stakes and making it super low stakes, because I don't know them and they don't know me.

Ariella
Yes. And I will say that's a lot easier said than done.

Joe
Sure.

Ariella
In my body, it always feels like high stakes. I'll say that right now. It alw--my adrenaline's always pumping, I lose my sense of appetite, the blood is rushing, like, like, it always feels like fight or flight in that. And that is like literally, I mean, that's where butterflies come from like that is, that is how that is how it feels on me. So be--like trying to telegraph to our bodies, this isn't high stakes might--might or might not work for you, depending on who you are and how your system works. For me, it more feels like what's most important here is not making someone else feel bad or uncomfortable or upset. Like it's about like doing no harm, essentially.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
So, that to me if I asked someone out and whatever I did, made someone feel really uncomfortable or made them like how you're saying that if they say no, and they like they don't think about me, right? Like if they say no, like, I don't want them to think about me--

Joe
(laughs)

Ariella

I just want this to be like okay, that was like, that was fun. This person came and asked me out today and, like I wasn't interested and whatever, like I don't--I don't want them, I don't want to leave more of a mark, than intended.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
I don't want to make people feel...um, uncomfortable. I want people to feel safe and that it's okay to engage in interactions with strangers in this way. Um...

Joe
Do you think that it would be a--I'm trying to like piece this out then of like, how I can like help myself here. To say that the moment is high stakes--

Ariella
Yeah.

Joe
--right, like the moment is definitely high stakes--

Ariella
Yeah.

Joe
---but the, but the result should be low stakes

Ariella
Hundred percent. Hundred percent.

Joe
Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

Ariella
It's like auditioning in that way, right?

Joe
Sure.

Ariella
It's like, yes, auditions might not ever feel like low stakes to you, because you are--there's something you want and you're putting yourself out there.

Joe
I need money...(laughs) for a job

Ariella

in the grand scheme of things. auditions are like drinking water like you have to do it. And that's the way it goes--like it's not deeper than that. Like it's just something you have to do...if you're an actor.

Joe

Yeah, I think cause I--like now that I'm saying this I do, I can as I'm looking back really attach on to the idea that I really did have the result as a high stake thing.

Ariella

Yeah, no. And honestly, I think this is, this is also true of first dates.

Joe

(groans)

Ariella

I think we will--

Joe

Ugh ,yes.

Ariella

We feel high stakes about them sometimes if that's your vibe, whatever, but the results of first dates are also, like, if you think that this person is everything already, you are not giving yourself enough credit to be discerning--

Joe

Right.

Ariella

--in what people bring to you, like--

Joe

Talk about first dates for a second. I, cause I'm so glad you brought that up because first dates can be so freaking awkward.

Ariella

(laughing) Tell me why they're awkward.

Joe

Well, I mean, (sighs) okay, so, I think they can be awkward in because I, I don't tend to think that they're awkward, but I can feel the energy that's brought in--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--or when somebody, um, feels like they can't fully express or don't want to or sometimes when I feel like I have to carry conversation--

Ariella

Yeah, for sure.-

Joe

--Um, can definitely make that awkward. I think it's also like, I also...I don't know there's there's something about it that other people have made it into an awkward thing that I can definitely pick up on. And I wish that it was a little bit more easygoing, I guess.

Ariella

Yeah, for sure. And I think that when you're dealing with folks, I mean, what you said about carrying the conversation. That's, that's huge. That's--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--and that's a huge skill that people don't...like, it--people don't sometimes, sometimes don't take that as seriously as it actually is, of distributing conversation and asking thoughtful questions as like a really important skill for a first date, which, when it comes to teaching, um, I'll just say like, outside of one on one coaching, these are skills that like, I'm like, yes, get that from a book, for sure. Like you can learn how to have good conversations or ask topical questions or what it means to be a nonviolent communicator, or stuff like that, like there are scripts associated with human communication that I actually think I'm like, yeah, I can read about it. Totally, totally.

Joe

(chuckles)

Ariella

So with that, though...so it seems like what I'm hearing is that sometimes dates feel awkward because you can tell that the other person is feeling awkward or, um, that maybe it's not awkward, but you're like, okay, I'm really putting in a lot of emotional labor to ask this person questions and I'm not exactly getting things reciprocated.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

All of this is just information. So might that might mean that like, okay, this isn't like, this doesn't feel like we're vibing the way that I want to vibe and like, cool. That's

information. I think...I've been--I've been thinking about this a lot lately. Do you know the game like when you're a kid, and someone hides something in the room? And you like, what, like who the fuck came up with this game, I don't know. Where we're like, warmer warmer?

Joe
Yes, yes.

Ariella
Oh, you're getting colder.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
So that's how I view dates. That's how I view first dates. Where I'm like, okay, it does something happened on this date, that makes them feel like, Oh, I'm getting warmer like this is feeling in alignment with what I want, or does this feel colder?

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
Like, that's-that can be like, the only objective: be like, oh, is this? Is this feeling good? Or is this not feeling good? And in moments where you're recognizing, oh, I'm really having to carry the conversation, this is feeling like a lot of effort on my part, I feel like, I'm not getting met with what I'm putting out there? All we can do is take responsibility for how we're showing up, and if someone can meet us there, fucking beautiful. If they don't, a lot of people can't. If you're an expert communicator, and question asker, which you seem to be in our little brief knowing each other, it's gonna be hard--

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
--to find people that match you in that way. That's just the truth of the situation because we're not taught enough how to have those skills and not taught that that's an important skill to have.

Joe
Mhmm.

Ariella
Granted, how we're socialized, gender wise, you as a man looking for women, you'll have an easier time (chuckles) because women tend to be more socialized to carry

on conversation. You might have an easier time to find women that are able to carry conversations, then potentially, a woman trying to find man that are able--men that are able to find conversations, all of that is binary. All of that is not--should not be the way that it is.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
But socially that is what Esther Perel calls the feminization of intimacy where women are taught to talk, and men are taught to do. So...

Joe
Interest--yeah, I love her, by the way too. Love her stuff.

Ariella
Cool. We can get into more of that later.

Joe
(laughs)

Ariella
I didn't answer your question about falling on my face. Does that feel important to ya'll? Or should I--should we move on...

Joe
Um, you know, it really doesn't feel that important. I just thought it might be kind of fun to hear, you know, stories. I--cause like when you said that, like I'm also trying to think of the times that I fell on my face. And like you said, I can't really think of a really big time in my life where I was, like, super embarrassed. The only time, I will say this, was not by my own doing.

Ariella
Uh huh.

Joe
It was my friend thinking he was being super clever.

Ariella
Yeah.

Joe
And then it made me look like a jerk--

Ariella
Hundred percent.

Joe

Because, like, have you ever seen How I Met Your Mother?

Ariella

No. (laughs, unintelligible) other episode I listened to and I was like, I don't get it.

Joe

(laughs) Well, there's an--there's a thing where one of Ted Mosby's friends to introduce him to people at bars, he'll go up to people and just be like: haaave you met Ted? and then walk away. (chuckles)

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

And so--so I was--we were at a bar in New York in Brooklyn, and we were both sitting at the bar. And some girl came up to the bar and he just without prompting, without anything, just turned to her and said: haaave you met Joe? and then he left. (laughing) And this girl was like, did he think that was cute?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

Or clever--I was like--

Ariella

...she's gonna give you shit.

Joe

Yeah, and I was like: I--I did not ask him to do that. I don't. I'm so sorry. I was like, that was probably my own flat--and that's like, not even of my own doing right? But it was definitely a moment where I was like, yeah, I can never talk to you again ever, even if I wanted to. (laughs)

Ariella

Sure.

Joe

Which she was attractive, but I just can't ever talk to you again...

Ariella

I literally brought up a similar story to someone last night where, like people embarrassed me because I had watched another show and had been like, oh, I wanted to--I wanna talk to this person after. (laughs) And then the people I was

watching the show with were like: "Ariella wants to talk to you." And I was like, don't ever, EVER, get in the way of me asking someone out again. I was like, don't you ever ever think about it. That is NOT cool. And that is NOT fun. I will NOT stand for that. Because we're not going to embarrass people in public, when I genuinely want to connect with them. Don't even think about it. So I hear you and that shit sucks. But I will say it's like auditions in that sense too where you probably don't remember all the times you were mediocre, right? Like, I can't remember if I didn't nail some--and I'm like, okay, whatever, that was an audition and we move on.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
There are probably very few times that stick out as like, I fucked up--

Joe
Mhmm.

Ariella
--like I did a bad job. And those experiences can be a little traumatizing. So, it's like rejection in that way. It's just--it doesn't stay in my head in that way.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
I will say if it feels useful, I'll tell you very quickly. I was out to dinner with some friends for birthday. And I noticed two, now I know they identified as women, two femme looking folks at a bar--is very unclear from their body language, whether they were together or not. And one of them I was like, fucking heart eye emojis for--

Joe
(laughs)

Ariella
--I was like my god you're so beautiful. (laughs) I need to--I need to say something. So I--but I didn't know if they were together.

Joe
Right.

Ariella
So first, I just went up to them and I--so after I ate with my friends, and like, they all walked out and they're like, what is she gonna do? So I went up to the couple and I was like, I probably said, "can I ask you two a question real quick?" And they said yes. And then I was like, are you here together? And they said yes. (laughing) I was

like "Great. Um. I just wanted to let you know you're really beautiful, um, you two are really beautiful." And whatever the person I wasn't, overtly complimenting was like, "Yeah, she is really beautiful."

Joe
(Laughs)

Ariella
Cool thumbs up, you know, I was like (unintelligible) I'll get outta here, you know, it's not like it goes--but I--but I had to recall that right? Like, it's not, that's not...and there were moments were like, okay, it was a little more embarrassing than that, fine. But it's not--it doesn't stick with me as pain points. It's like, okay, you fuckin' put yourself out there and this person was in a relationship and it was unclear from their body language, you tried to be respectful, and you didn't make anybody uncomfortable and that's okay. Like that's--

Joe
When I want--and I wonder if this can put people's minds at ease because I think maybe I know, for me, one of my fears before I--when I had problems approaching people was that, that the rejection would be a pain that would stay for me for a long time.

Ariella
Mhmm.

Joe
But knowing that these moments don't stay with us--

Ariella
No.

Joe
--that they'll, they'll fade just as quickly as you did from the person's mind who rejected you. (laughs)

Ariella
And what will stay with you is the fact that you had the guts to do the hard thing in the first place.

Joe
Yes.

Ariella
Cause that's building the muscle--

Joe

Mhmm.

Ariella

--as long as you are responsible at reading the people you're talking to. Cause that, to me is the problem with pickup. And when you're watching-- there are videos of pickup, like there are things that, um, you can like see men pick up women in Vegas, things like that. And the problem is, if you were watching the person's body language who's getting hit on, by and large, they're laughing a lot, their body language is like really closed off, they're like crossing their legs or crossing their arms or looking away, they're looking down at their phone, if that's what you're receiving, you need to respond to that responsibly. If that's what you're receiving, you should exit the conversation. Or, if you feel like okay, I--this person--or if you're on a date, and someone's acting that way. It's like, I'm, I'm feeling like, like, you're, I'm feeling like something's something I said is, is hitting you the wrong way. Like, talk to me about what's going on for you like, whatever it is to get to either address what's happening in the moment, or exit the moment, if you see that what you're putting out there is not being received well, because that is where pickup is, is dirty, and that it does not respect how the other people are responding to it.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

I don't like that at all. I really don't like that.

Joe

Yeah. Totally. I totally agree with that, too. And I will also have to apologize for my gender because there are a lot of (laughing) assholes out there so that are not responsible in that.

Ariella

Yeah. But I think that if you were like, I...it's like um...it's like if you're inherently a people pleaser, like you don't--you don't need to worry about--you generally don't need to worry about hurting people's feelings if you're a people pleaser, because you're ahead-- you're always gonna do that. Like if you're clear and like I know, I'm someone that will always be able to recognize what someone else is feeling and experiencing and responding.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

And which factors tend to be great at?

Joe

Yep.

Ariella

Like if you're able to do that, then you can be like okay, you know what, it's actually okay if I try to ask this person out because I know the second I'm getting to know physically or verbally, like or or know ish, like if I can really--if I trust myself to see people that clearly, then it's actually okay for me to approach people in person. Because I will be responsible with how this interaction is going. And that is great. That's great.

Joe

I also love the fact that you brought--you bring this up, because sometime--um, about asking for consent to be there?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

Like being in the space with them, because most of the times I think, like when I look back on it, I was trying to find an interesting genuing way--genuine way to start a conversation.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

Right? But like, it would take so much pressure off if just like communicating your intentions right away. Like, can I ask you a question?

Ariella

Yes.

Joe

Or yeah is it okay if I--if I ask you something right now, or um, just cause that takes all of the pressure then off me if I'm being well received or not, instead of trying to create a genuine conversation and then looking for the cues?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

It's like, if they said it's okay to ask the question, now I get to ask the question.

Ariella

To me, that's my preferred--that's, that's my preference, always.

Joe

I love that.

Ariella

Always. The difference--the only difference I'll say is...I'm thinking about...actually cut that. Because--

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

-- (unintelligible) more nuanced--by and large, it's best to ask consent, by and large, best to ask consent--I'll say this, though, it is--it takes the onus off us if we're asking consent, I think it's best to ask consent at every step of the way.

Joe

Mmm.

Ariella

And for me, in the moments where I have not asked consent, I've been very in my head of like, is it okay that I'm here? Like, is it okay--

Joe

Right. Yeah.

Ariella

-- that I'm hanging out. So I was in Chicago this summer on my road trip. And I just gotten out of my last relationship, and I was, um, trying not to date, which is something that is very difficult for me. (laughs)

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

Like, I was trying not to flirt. I was trying not to date.

Joe

Oh, what a terrible time that must have been. (laughs)

Ariella

It only lasted two weeks. (laughs) Um (laughing) I was like two weeks is my max. Um, because it is very much. I mean, and by dating to me, it's like putting myself out there and being open to receive, who the world has to offer me and what the world has to offer me--that is like--that is by and large dating, it is connecting with other people. So and and it's--I have a general openness to how those connections go, which is why it's... when I am trying not to date, I really kind of have to put my blinders on a bit.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella

Because inherently, I try to connect. So, I was trying not to date and I saw this very attractive person with a very adorable dog. Very adorable dog. I could not stop looking at the pup. So anyway, I--but I was trying not to date so I had gone over and I was like, "Can I pet your dog?" or whatever? Like, can I play with your dog? And we're outside and we're wearing masks and whatever and um I go and I play with their dog. And I wind up staying in a conversation. But since I had already decided I'm not going to flirt, I never asked consent. Like, do you mind if I sit here and talk to you for a bit? I'm enjoying this. Like, and--I wish I would've.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella

Cause what happened then was that the moment that the conversation had a lull, I left, because I was like, I never got consent to be here.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella

I have no idea what's going on in this person's head. I have no idea whether they want to be having this conversation from their body language and from the questions that they're asking me it can appear like they're enjoying themselves, but at the same time, I don't know that and people are accommodating and people like to make other people comfortable so they could just totally be appeasing me.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella

Whereas I had known--like I you know, I'm gonna sit down here with this person, I should just be like, "Is that cool? Like, were you planning on sticking around for then minutes, like I have ten minutes to kill and like I'm really enjoying getting to know you, this stranger." You know, whatever it is, it will make you feel better to actually be in it instead of having to suss out like, oh, Is this okay? Is this not okay? Which ultimately, we're doing that subconsciously the entire time, right? So we'll still be able to pick up on like, okay, I know this person told me I can sit down but, now that we're here, it's seeming like they're looking at their phone a lot, they're looking around, it seems like they want a out they don't know how to express it? Then I'm gonna be responsible and call that out and excuse myself, right? So we're always sussing out for consent, but asking more explicit consent, I think is a great in always.

Joe

Do you think that that general approach of asking for explicit, um, consent right off the bat is something that is not done enough?

Ariella

Yeah, for sure. For sure.

Joe

Yeah. And then do you think then, do you think one of the reasons people might not be doing that is because we as a society have, um, put on a pedestal this idea of a fairy tale kind of meeting of, Oh, we just met and it was all natural and organic, and it was like, you know, genuine conversation just flowed or, you know, we looked across the room and we both were gazing at each other. Um, and it was really magnetic and there was like a fire or like something, a magical quality that I'm gonna miss out on if I ask consent, because asking consent in some way is gonna take away the magic of the genuine moment.

Ariella

(sighs) Um, I--that is not a society--that's not a societal view that's familiar to me to be honest, like, it is not--I have never thought of consent as taking away any kind of magic or making anything less improvisational or less, um, off the cuff? I've thought of it as a way for both people to agree to be in the magic together? Um, instead of--

Joe

Oof.

Ariella

--it's, it's way more likely, if you don't ask consent, that you will make someone uncomfortable, than asking for consent will make someone feel like they're not magical. Does that make sense?

Joe

Yeah, for sure. And that's what I like--I agree with that. And I think it's...agreeing to the magic together, I love that. Um, to be in the magic together.

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

Um I--because I think that's why there are so many terrible interactions with people because they, like you said, there--it's way greater risk to make someone feel uncomfortable--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--or to make--put someone in a situation they don't want to be in, than having the firework moment spark thing that was just totally natural and organic, um. It's almost like the same idea of, um, this is something--okay, like so like when--when to go in for a kiss or not? Right? Do I ask first or do I just do it? And that's another thing about the consent thing--

Ariella

Sure.

Joe

--is like, will asking for consent for a kiss take away the magic of a first kiss? Or do you just go in and do it?

Ariella

Um, that's an interesting thing. Um, I--I do want to get back to this firework piece to what we can talk about this later.

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

Um, I think, ultimately, if you are someone who is really able to tell what's going on with someone else, um that it's okay to lean in for a kiss. I think that if you have any doubt in your mind, whether that person wants to kiss you, you should ask. I think that that--that that's my overall thought like, that's my overall blanket statement on that. If you are with someone who was turned off by you asking consent, that's a real thing to recognize about what that person needs to feel turned on.

Joe

Mhm.

Ariella

And there might be some danger there.

Joe

Ohhh.

Ariella

Because even though the--and by danger, I don't mean like kink, or BDSM, or whatever, that that shit's cool, that's awesome if--

Joe

(laughs) Yeah, yeah.

Ariella

--you have to figure that stuff out. But I mean danger in the sense of like, does this need to be a game for you? Will this always be (unintelligible) Can I be forthcoming?

Joe

Ohh, interesting!

Ariella

Yeah. Like, can I say what's on my mind? can I express my feelings to you? Or does that turn you off because I'm not keeping you in-in the dark?

Joe

Right.

Ariella

Because that's what you need I'm--that that makes me have some questions. And I was talking to a straight guy this summer...and he told me that he once was out on a date with a girl who, where he did ask for consent to kiss and she was turned off. And then he was kind of like, okay, that's really weird and then they didn't kiss. But then she kept hitting him up and wanted to hang out with him. So then the next time they hung out, and he knew he was getting all the signs that she wanted to kiss, he just kissed her-- whatever. So it's fine. Like you can adopt--if there's someone that is being rubbed the wrong way, by consent, that's fine. But I will also say that, ultimately, I think that as people, we should be responsible for other people in the sense that like, if you ask me for consent to kiss me and consent isn't my jam, I would never want to make you feel bad about asking for consent, because you will probably kiss more people after me. And ultimately, I think asking consent is great. So I want to encourage you to ask consent with other people. And I want to let you know that between you and I, I don't need that here. If this is the way I'm treating you, notice this and you can take that as a yes from me until I say otherwise. Right?

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

So like, so no on me, you might not need to ask consent. And I've said that to people before too where like, someone is really asking for consent over and over. And I'm kind of like, I really appreciate this. Keep this up. This is beautiful communication. For me, I will tell you if something's not right with me, because I'm practiced in communicating my boundaries in that way. But a lot of people are not. So whatever you're doing, bring it to the next thing. (laughing)

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

I don't wanna to fuck it up for someone else, just because I happen to be skilled in this area. Does that make sense?

Joe

Oh, yeah, for sure. This whole--that whole idea of...of somebody--somebody who is turned off by consent to be a little leery of maybe is--

Ariella

Yeah, it's like--

Joe

--the idea that they--that they may be the type of person who plays games--

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

--or can't always, um, communicate what they want to communicate or needs to be turned on by that kind of approach is interesting idea to me, um--

Ariella

Or who might not want someone who's emotionally available.

Joe

Exactly, yes. Because like, honestly, like what, you know, it shouldn't be like, even if--even if it's not a turn on for them, there would be a way to say, like you said, "You know, I appreciate it. That's not something that you need to do with me."

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

But to be turned off to the point where you wouldn't want to continue a conversation.

Ariella

Right.

Joe

That (laughing) that's a little bit of a, uh what's going on?

Ariella

Right, and the other ways that that can be a turn off to someone is like if they weren't ready to kiss someone yet. And then they're like, okay, this is--like, I'm not there yet. But it still ultimately wouldn't make a negative thing against the consent. It's like, that's why consent's there. And, and it's, and it's just interesting, like, I

mean, when I think about the first dates I've gone on there--with first kisses, personally, I really trust my sense of assessing what someone's into or not into. So I don't often ask for consent when kissing someone, but I feel like I feel truly practiced in it.

Joe
Right.

Ariella
Like, if someone's not into it, I'm gonna know. Um, so that's--that's my own sense of self trust, um.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
But I've been on the receiving end of people asking for consent and if I'm just like, if we go through it, and then we have like, sex, or we're physically intimate, or whatever it is, later, I might say like, "Hey, can we talk about, um, the way that you kissed me earlier? How you brought it up? Like, I want to know between you and I, that that I don't that I love it, I respect it, um, but going forward for me, like, I'll tell you if it's a no and you can assume like I like you and this is like, this is a yes for me. So know going forward."

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
But I think with first kisses, it's always it's--that's playing it safe and I think safe is respectful and respectful is healthy.

Joe
Definitely. (laughs) Yeah, I think the idea of consent is super important. And I'm actually gonna do a deeper episode about that specific topic and I'm really glad it came up here because consent is just so important in today's dating world, it can just make things so much easier. Cause I had my own experience of that, that really kinda made me leery of relationships that I would get into in the future, um. And it also made me question, this idea of why do I always resort to physical, you know, physical intimacy first.

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe
And I, I have this, I think one of the reasons why I'm intentionally dating this year, is because I tend to go too deep too soon.

Ariella
Mm.

Joe

And I feel like that would--um, I can understand how that might be overwhelming for some people. Or it might be, um, a little too scary for them to embark on the first date. (laughing) Right? Like, like, dude, I just met you. I don't know if I want to share this much information. And for me, that's the exciting stuff. And that's the important stuff. And I sometimes don't understand--I have a hard time understanding, um. Actually, I should just say it this way, I get bored by small talk. And so I skip the small talk and I go right into deeper things, cause that's just what interests me. But I'm, I'm having this dilemma right now because I'm talking to this girl right now who, since I started on this intentional dating thing, I've made it clear to her that this is what I'm doing and being intentional and trying not to ask deep questions, or at least pace out the depths that I'm going to, right? Trying to first hit those first, like level of questions, you know, what, what are the facts about, you know, What's your job? Who like--what is your family like? How many brothers and sisters do you have? Um, you know, are your parents still together? All these kinda things that are just baseline kinda things, getting to know somebody and trying to slowly work into asking them then questions about what their opinions are about those facts. And then once I get those, then I can start going into their emotions, what are their feelings about their opinions about these facts?

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe

Um, and trying to pace that out? And where I'm having trouble is, I don't know what the pace should be. Because A) I've never done it before, but B) I'm fighting against every instinct I have to ask these kind of questions. (laughs) And, um, this girl that I'm talking to, we had our first like Zoom call the other night, and it was going really really well. And then towards the end, I started asking some questions that were really deep, and she even kind of called it out like, "Oh, is this something we should talk about on a first Zoom call?" And I was like, you're right. (laughs) Maybe we shouldn't--I don't, like I told her like, I don't know. I was like--cause I told her that thing about my habit of doing that um, and that it's fighting every instinct in me to ask those kind of questions.

Ariella
So interesting. First, I want to say good on her for--

Joe
Yeah, it was.

Ariella

--calling you out, like, that sounds like we stumbled upon a boundary. And it seems like she was able to express that in a timely manner, which I think is great information both for you going forward, and for--for you going forward as far as like evaluating this person's level of emotional intelligence, like, okay, she was able to express this boundary and, and good information to be able to trust, if you push against the boundary, maybe this is the type of person who will stand their ground in that way, and be able to express like, this is a little too far from me. So it's--that's it's good on both sides, both as like a person that might come into your life and how you treat her, she might continue to show up in this way, which is great. So--

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
I'm curious about what the question was, if you feel comfortable sharing, that made her kind of be like, "Oop, is this first date stuff?" Um, because I do have opinions about deep questions versus more surface level questions and this, um, hate of small talk is something that actually comes up a ton in date coaching, like it is really, a lot of people hate it.

Joe
Intersting.

Ariella
I have thoughts on how to adjust that, but I'm curious as to what--do you feel comfortable sharing what was the question if you were--

Joe
Yeah, yeah, there--well, there were two specific ones. Um, one was about...we started talking about, um, past relationships.

Ariella
Mhmm.

Joe
And she was talking about just her relationship with her ex, and I won't get into specifics, but basically my question was sort of like, you know, why did he make you feel that way?

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe
Or why did--you know like, um, or what was it that made you stay in this for so long?

Ariella

Yeah.

Joe

kind of a thing, and so I don't know if she was necessarily ready to talk about those specifics yet about, um, you know, there's probably some feelings of like, embarrassment or things like that, you know, that. So that was one. And the other one was, I brought up to her about this list in-- I referenced this book earlier, *The Game of Desire* by Shan Boodram, she has this list of her five quality--that you get five qualities in somebody that you are non-negotiable for you. And so I was telling her about this concept and so I was going through the list, and I was like, "Are there any that stick out to you right now that you would say are in your top five?" And she was talking about, you know, she said, some of them and then she said sexual compatibility--

Ariella

Mhm.

Joe

--which perked my ear, because that's a big one for me. And so I was like, "Oh, interesting, like, what does sexual compatibility mean to you?" And she's like, "Uh, I don't know how to answer that question." I was like, "Well, you know, like, what--what is something that's like, that would make you sexually compatible with somebody?" And then she was like, "Yeah I don't know if we should say, (laughing) these kinda things on a first Zoom call."

Ariella

Hm! Cool.

Joe

And, which is, again, me noticing A) that I asked these questions, but B) also that habitual thing of going towards physical intimacy.

Ariella

Mhm. Mhm.

Joe

And figuring out, trying to probe around in that arena when, I don't need to right now.

Ariella

Mm. Yeah.

Joe

It's not something that we're gonna figure out yet. (laughing) Ya know? And, yeah, so that those are the two things.

Ariella

So interesting. Um, it is, with this five, the list of five, um, my biggest question is how do you find out? If these--if the person you're talking to has those qualities? How do you find that out? So that's something we could talk about another time. But that is a huge--that is a big part of my, my, um, already, like slightly crafted pushback of this very, um (laughing)

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

--that there are easier ways to evaluate someone based on information you can gather quite immediately, um--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--then it's like alright, well my list is this. How am I gonna find out if I'm sexually compatible with this person? How am I gonna find out whatever it is, so, um, whatever we can, we can we can dive into that another time.

Joe

Sure.

Ariella

Um, but what's interesting to me is this sense of wanting to go deep with questions and what I'm seeing in you, what I'm gathering from talking to you is that in general, it seems like you just really like intimacy, which I do too.

Joe

Yes.

Ariella

But there's two sides to this coin. I love intimacy. Pillow talking is my favorite. Like seriously the time after having sex with someone where we actually get to talk. I am like chef's kiss, it is so good. It is so good, that even if I'm extensively sexting with someone, I want some pillow talking after like--

Joe

(laughs)

Ariella

--I'm not fucking around. I love intimacy. I love intimacy.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

However, with that, I am not--I don't lead with my own intimacy too much. I-I tread carefully because I actually don't know if this person can hold space for me in the way that I feel equipped to hold space for other people. That is a skill. Because of that, you might be able to hold great space. So you might feel like it's really safe for this person to share these intimate things with you. But you probably also need to be careful in the sense that this other person might not be able to hold the space for you back, they might not have the skills, they might not make you feel good or safe for sharing something. And even though you might be confident in your skills to do the same, they might not trust that they're gonna be held and safe and comfortable sharing these things with you, even when you trust yourself. So--

Joe

Right.

Ariella

--I think it's interesting what you're saying about this level of like surface level then opinions then feelings. In general, I actually think it's okay to lead with feelings-based questions. And, if we want to make them deep, but not too deep, there's--there's a difference between asking history-based feelings questions about your past and your upbringing and your relationship with your parents and your relationship with your exes verse present-based feelings questions. So an easy kinda switch to this is feelings-based questions about a specific timeframe. So like, in like, what's something that is really inspiring you this week, for example. It's deep, but it's not too deep. Because it's time-based where the question will still surprise you because you probably haven't been asked that question this week. But it's not too deep, where like, I really have to get into my shit with you--

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

--where I might not be ready to do that.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

And I'll say, in my current dating life, when I see people that I sense a hint of something painful, I don't press. Because for me, I--it takes me a little time to be able to share things that are painful for me. So I flag it, I'm like, I know I don't know everything there is to know about this person. I'm also not in a rush to know everything there is to know about this person. If I'm enjoying myself, if they're

making me feel the way I want to feel, hint hint, that will be a big part of how we're evaluating. (laughs)

Joe
(laughs)

Ariella
Um, then it's actually okay if I leave questions unasked for now. And I can notice that like, okay, you mentioned that your mom's an alcoholic, or whatever it is. This is something I'm curious about for sure. And I'm also not gonna ask about it on our first date because you might not be ready to share that information. You might not trust me enough to share that information, and I want to make sure when we have this conversation about things that might be touchy, that like we're both in a place to share and receive in a way that feels good and safe. So--

Joe
Mm.

Ariella
--it's honoring the fact that though you might be an open book, um, which it seems like you are. I'm curious about if you've had experiences where you've shared something vulnerable, and people weren't able to hold it, or people you know, then looked down at their phone and you're like, wow, I'm feeling not great that I just shared that thing and now this person is looking at their phone, like you might have had experiences where you felt unsafe knowing that you're being handled, and a lot of other people also have that experience. So if they're not ready, then that's okay. Then you switch gears.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
How does that feel?

Joe
I don't know if I've ever felt like I wasn't safe. It's kinda like what you were saying earlier about the um not ever feeling rejected. I don't know if because this person is someone I've just met--

Ariella
Yeah.

Joe
--they've never made me feel unsafe with sharing something vulnerable. The times that it really effects me are the people that should be holding space for it, because I've been with them in like a long-term relationship let's say.

Ariella
Yeah.

Joe
I was, I was I'm--no secret on here: I'm divorced. So I have had a relationship that was like six years long.

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe
And that was more painful when that person couldn't hold space--

Ariella
Yeah!

Joe
--for those feelings. Um, and, you know, the other people, random people that don't, it's just like, well they're not in touch with their feelings like I am and then it's not a big deal. Um, and they're not someone for me.

Ariella
Right! Exactly. Exactly. And I'm not saying that we need to, um...I definitely don't want you to bring in like, what I'm not saying is that like you should bring in the, um... tentativeness to be vulnerable with someone because your ex-wife was not able to hold space for you. But what I am saying is that you are using that--the way that you just explained that--you're using that as a tool of evaluation, where you're like, okay, this person, if they don't hold space for me, cool, that's information, we might not be compatible. All of this is still evaluative in that way. So--

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella
--you kinda need to test the waters: is this person able to hold space, if they're not able to hold space maybe they don't know how hold sp--like maybe, maybe they don't know how to trust me to hold space that like--it is all, we're all we're still in the learning process and we're always in the learning process. But especially as we're figuring out how different folks communicate, um, it's okay to know there's something deep here and to not press, because your ability to be vulnerable with people quite immediately as it seems like you are, is unique in that way.

Joe
Yeah.

Ariella

And a lot of people have not felt safe in those interactions, so (sirens heard in the background) another tool that you can use here, if you're interested--

Joe

Totally, because I think I'm addicted to intimacy. Like I feel like it's almost like a drug that it's like, I'm trying to figure out how to wean myself off or at least use it responsibly. (laughing)

Ariella

(sirens still in background) I hear you, I hear you. And it is, it's really good. And I, I really, I just hear you. Also, I'm sorry if you're hearing a--

Joe

(laughing) It's okay.

Ariella

(laughs) Offline we can talk about how deeply I hear you, um, but not online.

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

Uh, the way that I do this currently, is when I'm dating folks, um, and there is something that I want to press on or something that is, um, I feel there's a little pain there, or might be a little pain there. I'll just be like, "Can I ask you a question about blank?" Or "can I ask you a question about that?" If she talks about her ex, I would just be like, "Can I ask you something about that?" Like, because, if the answer is no, then like, cool, I didn't ask the question and the question gets, you know, turned down, or whatever it is.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

I think it might serve you to bring in consent when it comes not only to physical intimacy, but to verbal intimacy as well. So that the people that love your thoughtful questions are going to be really there for it. Because you're treating them you're holding space, and you're treating them with kindness and generosity in that, um, and the people that are like, oh, I'm, I don't feel ready for that, um, and are able to have the space to say that, before they get taken aback. You know what I mean?

Joe

Sure. Do you have any--and you might not--any advice, or any thoughts of, cause I love that and I think I do need to practice putting into my language: "Can I ask you something about this?"

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe
Prefacing it first, instead of just asking the question first.

Ariella
Yeah.

Joe
I would, I would love that and it's something I'm gonna strive for. But then what I think what maybe trips me up sometimes is because I feel like, I don't, um, when I sense there are deeper things that have been revealed, it's really hard for me to not want to know. (laughs) Like, it's just like, like I it's, it's I don't know what it is, there's like this, it's like an itch that I have to scratch, right? And so I'm wondering, what are some things that I can do in order to not itch--in order to not scratch?

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe
Because it's, it's gonna be there, and it's like, it's really hard for me to not ask because I do crave it so much. And I'm wondering if that says something that about me that there's something in me that I'm missing, that I'm not getting somewhere else?

Ariella
Mhm.

Joe
And this is where I've decided to try to get it all the time. Is there somewhere else that I can get it so that I'm not in--um in--invading someone's space before they want me to?

Ariella
Yeah, for sure. Um, I think that that's a great question. And upon like immediate, like, quick assessment, I don't know what that would be, we would--that would need to be a longer conversation between you and I, as far as like, what what is the thing that you're trying to touch in this space that like--where else can you get that? Which I think is a really valuable question in general, um, for relationships. For sure. I don't--I can't tell you what that is right now cause I don't know you well enough, but--I mean we haven't like worked together in that way--

Joe
Sure.

Ariella

It is something that we could explore in coaching. But, um, I will say that, um, if you're someone that's curious, which you seem to be, you might have questions perk up. I think that the--so the itch in that way, might not go away. You might not ever feel not itchy.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

When you hear a juicy piece of information about another person.

Joe

(laughs) Yeah.

Ariella

That might not be the reality of the situation. However, you can think about what feels generous and kind here. Does this person seem ready to talk about this thing? Assess them, ask for consent, whatever. If not, um, you can name what's happening in your body where you're like, I'm feeling really curious to know more about this, but I'm sensitive to the fact that this is a first date. So let's table this for another day if we, if we wind up coming back to the subject at some point in the future, something like that.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

That to name it will allow a little more space in your brain to be present than to be like, okay, this like ringer is going off where I'm like, but I really want to know about the ex! (laughing) I really want to know about it.

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

Like, if you just say it, which, when I got distracted during this podcast, I did that, right? Because something was off in my brain that was allowing me--that was distracting me from being totally present. So we paused.

Joe

Yeah.

Ariella

Like, it's, it's the same thing in any, in any situation, really. Where like, we can kind of call out what it is that's going on inside of us in a way that's transparent, kind, and generous, and be able to address it with the person in collaboration moving forward.

Joe
Right.

Ariella
You don't need to itch alone. You can be like wow I'm really curious to know this thing about you and it feels wildly inappropriate to bring it up right now. Like, it's, it's okay. And people will tell you what their boundaries are in that, in that way. You know what I mean?

Joe
Yeah, yeah, yeah for sure. Definitely. (exhales) That's good stuff. That's good, man--this has been such a great conversation. I'm just in love with you.

Ariella
(laughing) aw!

Joe
I just want to talk to you forever. Um, but unfortunately we can't, um. But I would like to take this as a public opportunity to ask you if you would be willing to come on and do a part two?

Ariella
For sure. (laughing) For sure.

Joe
God, I think--I think it's gonna be great. So let's, let's set that up, um. Quick: give people a shout out your again, once again, your Instagram and your website where people can find you if they're interested in finding you.

Ariella
For sure. So I'm @queerdatingcoach on Instagram, and that's also my website queerdatingcoach.com and I have a every other week newsletter, I never know if that's bi-monthly, or if that means every other month so (laughing) like literally jury's still out on like, what grammar is around bi-monthly.

Joe
(laughing)

Ariella
Twice a month, I have a newsletter that comes out so if you're curious about getting on that, too, um, I talk, I that's where I send my blog posts first, unless I have something on the fly that I want to post on Instagram. And that's where I will

sometimes talk more about my particular experiences in dating. So it's a little bit more of like the behind the scenes, uh, look at me and not quite as professional facing not quite as you'll always be able to find it because (laughs) you won't unless you're on the list. So, um, feel free, you can sign up for that on my website or through my link in my Instagram bio. And I'm always open to um, if you've got a question, um, as far as like working with me or whatnot, you can always DM me on Instagram. I don't answer advice-based questions there, but I take advice-based questions as an invitation to make a piece of content. So if there's something that you want to know about, or you want to see me write about, you can always message me and say I'd love to hear you speak on this. And I've got a pretty lengthy, lengthy boundaries highlight and my Instagram bio. Um, if you're confused on how to treat me, I try to make it pretty explicit so that we can all show up in the most comfortable way possible.

Joe

I love that. Oh, man, this was amazing. I can't wait for part two. But for right now, I think that does it for us. We appreciate everyone listening and hope you enjoyed the pillow talk as much as we did. (outro music plays in background) If you have any insight, feedback, comments or questions, please email us at pillowtalkbros@gmail.com. That's all one word, all lowercase pillowtalkbros@gmail.com or hit us up on Instagram or Facebook @pillowtalkbros is the handle. Make sure to follow, like, and subscribe and we hope to hear from all of you who are listening. I said before I just wanted 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. My name is Joe...

Ariella

...I'm Ariella. (laughs)

Joe

(laughing)

Ariella

(laughing) I forgot my line!

Joe

(laughing) Those improv skills came in really good...

Ariella

I'm like wait, pause.

Joe

(laughing) And...scene. Peace! (outro music gets louder and then ends)

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

