

The Relationships Show

Cindra

Welcome to The Relationships Show! I'm Cindra Banks--

Luke

And I'm Luke Skewes. Our show is inspired by learnings from our past and present relationships with ourselves and others.

Cindra

We are bringing you this podcast to empower you with the knowledge to understand and better navigate through relationships in your life.

Luke

Our mission is to spread the love. And you can help us by sharing our show and following us at The Relationships Show. Thank you for listening.

Cindra

Hey everyone! Welcome to Episode 71 of the Relationships Show.

Luke

Good day to you. (pause, laughs) You're here with Luke--

Cindra

and Cindra.

Luke

Yes.

Cindra

Thanks for hanging out.

Luke

We are the co-hosts of The Relationships Show. As you heard on the intro, this thing is all about opening your minds and hearts to new ways of relating or learning more about how you're relating right now. This episode is one that we've been searching for, and trying to co create for quite some time. So we're pretty frickin' excited for it to be here.

Cindra

We have a queer dating coach on the episode today, all the way from New York. And it was an absolute pleasure to have Ariella on the podcast. And we dive into all kinds of themes and personal experiences around dating in the queer realm. And this is not just for you, if you are specifically dating, and if you are specifically in the queer realm. This is literally for anyone. We spoke about communication, we spoke about, you know, making the first move and things like that, we spoke about connection, we spoke about everything really.

Luke

Yeah, we did speak about everything. So, there's something in this podcast for everybody. But specific to dating, when you're queer, Ariella just knows that space, that field of play, and the specific challenges that come along with it. So if you have been looking for support around that, then we're so excited to be able to have this platform for Ariella to speak to our audience.

Cindra

Before we jump into today's amazing chat, we wanted to share with you that the doors are open for our brand new six week program.

Luke

Yes, it is a group coaching program, specifically to women or anybody who identifies as a woman or in their feminine energy, who are part of a relationship, that love that relationship, but are struggling to connect on an

intimate level. It's all about igniting that intimacy in yourself, and bringing that into your relationship.

Cindra

This is going to be super potent. We're going to explore self pleasure, we're going to explore how to bring that pleasure into your relationship. We're going to help you speak and ask for what you want in the bedroom and have a better intimate connection with your partner. So, this is now open for enrollment. We will only be taking a limited number of beautiful people into this program. So, if you're like, "fuck yeah! Finally a program for me!" then we want to welcome you in and you can find the details for that in our Instagram bio. So just head to @consciouscouplescoaching and click on our bio and the information will be there. Or just go straight to our website: conscious-couples.com. And you will find the tab for the group program.

Luke

Yes, this group program is absolutely amazing in the fact that both Cindra and I have a heap of experience in coaching women in relationships, and we get to bring both the yin and the yang of our experience into this group coaching space. So it's--yeah, it's gonna be so great. And it's literally this last week, we have had an influx of people that want to work with us--

Cindra

Yes.

Luke

--in our coaching. So, we're so happy and grateful to be able to create a space where we can serve a bunch of people in the space of six weeks to really ignite that intimacy.

Cindra

We'll see you in there. And here is today's amazing chat with Ariella @queerdatingcoach

Luke

See you on the other side!

Cindra

So, we are here with the gorgeous Ariella all the way from New York City. And I love when we can have these amazing people on from around the world. It makes me very, very happy. And also very, very excited to travel because we can actually like go and meet them all eventually. (laughs) Ariella helps kind queer folks date better, so they have courage to go after what they want in dating and in life. So, she is a queer dating coach, and we are so excited to talk about some queer dating shit, and we already started talking about that before we got on the podcast. So, welcome Ariella to the podcast!

Ariella

Thank you! I'm so happy to be here.

Cindra

We're very happy to have you.

Luke

Yeah!

Cindra

Very, very happy to have you. A happy accident on Instagram to have found your profile and your work. So, maybe you could share a bit with our audience about what, you know, what you do.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, sure. So primarily I help demystify dating. And that usually comes from a perspective of learning how to understand yourself better and what it is that you want, and then figuring out how to communicate that with others. So, it's a lot of building relationships, connecting to people and navigating conflict, and initiation, asking people out, basically going after what it is that you want.

[Luke](#)

Mm. Absolutely. I've got some clients that I'm already running through my index that I'm going to refer them to you. (laughs)

[Ariella](#)

(laughs)

[Luke](#)

But it's just so, so valuable. You know, in the straight cis world, there's, you know, dating coaches, there's relationship coaches galore that, you know, there's Tinder coaches. But, you know, I get a few people come to me saying, you know, I have finally come in touch with my sexuality and I've opened it up to the world. I'm out here doing me--the real me. But, you know, dating as the real me is fucking terrifying, so (laughs) what do I do?!

[Ariella](#)

Yeah! For sure, for sure. And that was part of the reason why I decided to focus on queer folks in particular, because there are a lot of straight coaches out there--dating coaches, relationship coaches--and some of the things that--there's a lot that really frustrates me about the dating coaching industry as it stands on a basis of real heteronormativity and monogamy, and inherently racism and transphobia. The fatphobia--there's so much that is intertwined in the narrative of who you need to be in order to date. And I just seriously want to fuck it all, and make something from the ground up, which is why my practice is--I work with non-monogamous folks and

monogamous folks. But, a lot of my thought process is influenced by non-monogamy in that way, because we kinda need to shake up the system to make something that works for us.

Luke

Yeah.

Cindra

Yeah. And obviously, we 100% agree. (laughs) And, yeah, we're the same. I mean, we both identify as sexually fluid. And we have worked and will work and love to work with people who, you know, are all different places on the sexuality spectrum, as well as, you know, we love working with people who are open to the idea of non-monogamy. Of course, most of our clients are monogamous, and we 100% respect that and love them about them. But it's also really fun to explore these other areas that feel so open to us, and so freeing to us, and to help people to be able to explore those in our relationships is really exciting.

Ariella

Yeah, I completely agree. And I'm glad that you're doing the work that you're doing, because we need that visibility, and we need to see single people and couples and throuples and whoever navigating the world in a way that feels authentic to them, not a way that's been prescribed by society for years and years and years.

Cindra

Absolutely.

Luke

Mmm, totally. It's one of those things that's very interesting, when you might have a client that comes to you with some some very real but very surface level relationship issues. And you start discussing, you know, a different paradigm of relating, whether it be open relating or not, and it

tends to shake you down to your core. Your core beliefs, your values, and whether or not whatever the outcome of the conversation is, it genuinely really just breaks down the walls of the, you know, the house that you've been living in. For you to be able to rebuild it from scratch and, you know, what you said, rebuilding this dating coaching from scratch from the ground up is magic. It's so great. I'm so glad that you're doing this in the world, so thank you.

[Ariella](#)

Aw, thanks! Thanks for having me. I felt that there was a real need here. Because a lot of the language is even like, "Hey, girl, figure out how to get your man to text you back" or things like that. Or, if you want to get ready to date again, maybe focus on losing weight and making and feeling good in your body in that way that I was like, we can't be telling people this in 2021.

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Ariella](#)

We can't be trying to change our behavior to make someone like us because we're now being inauthentic or following a script. I mean that comes down to the whole pickup artist industry too, of how do we get someone's attention? But, it's all kind of backwards and based on making other people feel small so they see us as bigger and powerful, when in reality, we really need to switch that and make other people feel really important. And then they feel good and seen and cherished for who they are, not who we are, and how we're making them feel inferior to us. So, I'm really trying to break it. (laughs)

Cindra

Yeah! I love that. I love that. And, you know, all you can be is you when you show up to a date. So why not really love that and show that instead of trying to be this other person, you know?

Ariella

Yeah. And, the interesting thing there too, if all you can be is you when you show up to a date, as opposed to trying to be something that you think the other person wants? First, there's a lot of guessing and what is it that you're thinking the other person wants, and you're already--that means that you've already decided that this person is worth changing for, when in reality, you haven't even given yourself the chance to be discerning about whether that's even someone that you want to get along with in the first place.

Luke

Yeah.

Ariella

So, if we move from a place of authenticity and abundance, essentially, then we'll be able to actually feel out the connections for what feels good in a given moment. Not, I need to be this thing, because I've already decided that you need to like me, and you'll like this thing. That's too much storytelling.

Cindra

That's so true.

Luke

I think that that's another--I love paradigms, paradigms and stories. I'm all about 'em. But, that's another paradigm around coaching too, is that, you know, we even have people come to us and say, hey, I want to get involved

in Relationship Coaching, because I want you to help me change my partner.

[Ariella](#)

Ha!!

[Luke](#)

And it's like, well, bro, that's not a thing. That not a thing.

[Ariella](#)

Right.

[Luke](#)

And, I'm all for self development and self exploration. But if it's for yourself and to benefit yourself, and one of the most attractive things in relating and dating is to see somebody that's living their truth and living their own path for them. You're like, Oh, my God, that's so attractive. Look at that human, I want to be a part of that. I want to be on that train.

[Ariella](#)

Yes!

[Luke](#)

Whereas, somebody who's constantly morphing and shifting to try and suit what you're putting out. It can be very obvious sometimes.

[Ariella](#)

Yes, I agree. Do you work with attachment theory in your work at all?

[Luke](#)

Not specifically, no,

Cindra

It does come up with people, but, yeah, we haven't specifically worked with it.

Ariella

It's interesting, I'm digging into it recently, for my own personal journey.
(laughs)

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

You know, facing hardship that you help other people through.

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

But it's almost--if we're not thinking attachment theory, I guess it's also like the Buddhist philosophy of how do you love but not love too tightly? How do we love things and also practice non-attachment in--not in an avoidant way, but in a way that I know that if this doesn't work out in the way that I think that I hope it does, I will be okay on the other side of it. And, I just think that's really, it reminded me what you were saying there, of this kind of how can we just be more secure in our attachment to each other and our attachment to the idea of relationships and our attachment to dating in general. How can it feel better? Because when we're resonating there, then people will gravitate towards us because there isn't that need and there isn't that clinginess and there isn't that anxiousness present in that way.

Cindra

Absolutely. Yeah, we talk a lot about codependent relationships and interdependent relationships and you can really see that in the dating sphere as well, from the very start, it's that waiting for the text and--

Ariella

Yes.

Cindra

--you know, really like "oh my god, I wonder if they liked me!" And kind of "Oh!" and attaching to that, you know, feeling of acceptance and likability from someone else, instead of being like, "Oh, I think it went well. You know, I'd love to see him again. But also, if they don't vibe with me, then that's not a reflection of me. It's a reflection of them and our connection." You know?

Ariella

Absolutely. And that winds up being something that I talk a lot with clients about, is how do we build that? And how do we learn that? Especially when we've been taught a lot of unworthiness and a lot of if we're outside of what society has taught us we should be, then what are we and how do we move about in the world in that way?

Luke

Yeah. Ugh, God, literally every Hollywood movie, TV show, every popular song is all "you're the only one for me--

Ariella

Yes!

Luke

--without you I'll have nothing, my life will fall apart if you leave me, I'm only on this earth to serve you.

[Ariella](#)

Yes!

[Cindra](#)

(laughing)

[Luke](#)

It's crazy--

[Ariella](#)

It's crazy! It's crazy.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Luke](#)

It's crazy. We got married...not last year, the year before in September, and we were scrolling through--we made a joint Spotify playlist of wedding songs. And, oh my god, it was so hard to find a non-codependent romantic song.

[Ariella](#)

Oh my god! I don't even know what that--I want to write one no! It's like "I love you just enough. You in my life makes it better, but it would be fine if you were gone." (laughs)

[Cindra](#)

(laughing) We ended up choosing a really--not obscure, but we ended up picking a song that wasn't anything really to do with love or relationships (laughs), it was just a song that we both liked and were like, "Oh, let's just use that song!"

[Ariella](#)

Oh my god, that is so funny! It just really goes to show you how embedded in us this idealized version of love is--

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

--and I was so obsessed with the podcast, the new paradigm of relationships that you two did. I was so obsessed with it, because--I'm forgetting the speaker you had on--

[Cindra](#)

I think it was Galena.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, Galena.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

I was so obsessed when she was asking you about, you know, as two young, sexually fluid people, why choose marriage again, and whatnot. And I loved your take on it as someone that has complicated views of marriage myself, I loved your take on it and talking about how you've committed to being in this as long as it serves you. And, what if those were the lyrics in the song? (laughs)

[Cindra](#)

(laughing)

Luke

We literally chose a song by Xavier Rudd called Follow the Sun. And it was kind of, for us, it was like being in flow, you know?

Ariella

Yeah!

Luke

So that spoke to the relationship and the marriage as well. It's like, follow the flow of love and it's gonna guide this marriage. So, yeah, but it was--

Ariella

I love that.

Luke

--it took months. (laughs)

Ariella

And I love "follow the sun," too. I mean, I don't know the song, but just that idea, too of something that is light and glowing and--

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

--and, you know, moving--that it's nice to be attracted to light. It feels good to cling to light, that can become a priority to keep turned on...in a relationship.

Luke

Yeah, it can be--it's actually a really great metaphor. We were talking about this the other day about relationships, long term relationships. You know, they're not a sprint that they can be at the start. And that the sun, you

know, sometimes it goes down for a while and you have to see the dark to see the light in relationships. You have to be able to show your full truth in a relationship and still have somebody be like, "yeah, I'm down for this."

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Luke](#)

I'm here for all parts of you, not just the shiny, easy to deal with, you know, honeymoon period parts, I'm down for all of it.

[Ariella](#)

Totally, totally, which is something I'm talking with my therapist a lot about recently (laughs)--

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Ariella](#)

--that that is unconditional love, by definition, right? And, how do we practice that with ourselves? Because I know for me as a super growth oriented person, whenever I see something that I label in myself as, "Alright, this is a growth opportunity, let's turn the ship, let's make this better, let's learn what we need to learn, let's dive into attachment theory, whatever it is, I want to change it so fast." And she's like, "Uh uh uh! You have to love it first!"

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Ariella](#)

Because that's part of the process. And I'm like, "Damn."

Cindra

Which can be really hard to do when you are starting a relationship, and you are trying to do that work. You know, it is really hard, because you don't want to hide that part of you that you're working on. And you're also scared to show that part to another person.

Ariella

Mhmm.

Cindra

And you're figuring out how to deal with that part yourself.

Ariella

Yes.

Cindra

Not 100% loving it yet, I'm sharing it with you. Oh, my God, I hope you still like me because of it.

Ariella

Totally, totally. And I also think that that's where boundaries can come in, too, because a lot of people that I'm seeing now clientwise, there's this narrative of, I'm too much of a mess to date. I'm too all over the place, whatever. And I'm like, "We're all over the place right now! Are you kidding? Not a single person's life hasn't drastically shifted over the past year!" If you are all over the place, that's okay, as long as you have the support systems that you need, like a therapist or whatever--if you're going through some pretty intense health crises, whatever it is--that you have the support that you need, fine. Or maybe you take a break from dating, fine.

Cindra

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

But the other part of it is to be able to share with people that you're dating what you're going through and not expect them to hold it with you.

Because, for me, I feel like that's where codependency can be created as well, where if I'm going through this hard thing, and we're starting to date, and then I'm also like, "Okay, I'm letting you see it. And also, can you carry the weight for a little bit?" And then I'm distracted and don't deal with it, and then--

[Cindra](#)

Yeah, yeah.

[Ariella](#)

--and then it becomes your business.

[Cindra](#)

Yes, a hundred percent.

[Luke](#)

Yeah, oh god--

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Luke](#)

--there's so much in that, so much in that--we could be here for days! Yeah, there's so much when you start dating somebody, there can be a lot of fear in saying that piece that you're still really scared of, possibly, or to show that you're convinced that surely once this finally comes out into the light, they're gone. So, this is just a short time thing, you know? I can't really commit to the dating and can't really commit to the relationship because I'm convinced that once this little bit of shadow comes out, then they'll be gone. And, the scripting that we can then put in place, like "So when I

finally put it out, I'm going to kind of offer it for them to carry for me, and then they'll have it, they'll have it and then, you know, they can't just throw it back at me." And, you know, it's preparing for that big dark day when, you know, all of our shadows come out. And it's, what you said, we all we all have shadow--

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Luke](#)

--we are all just a mess. (laughs)

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Luke](#)

We're just humans navigating this crazy experience called life. So, once you own the fact that, you know, this person over here's got some shit too probably that they're terrified for me to find out. And, I'm just curious. I'm curious to see what that is. It's...very easy to say from sitting on my bed.

[Ariella](#)

(laughs) For sure, for sure. For sure. I definitely...feel that and I was in a three year non-monogamous relationship until we broke up during COVID at the beginning of--well, I guess, towards the beginning of COVID. Well, not really I guess, but, anyway, figuring out how to, you know, as someone that loves dating, and I had dated throughout the relationship, right? So, this wasn't a thing where I'm like, "Okay, I really need to heal and you know, figure out how to get back out there." I never came in here--I've always been out there. So it's--dating felt so natural so it's almost, then I have to figure out "Okay, do I need to pause? Is there something even though dating feels familiar to me and I've been doing it consistently, is there still time that needs to be taken for myself to heal my heart a little

bit? Or, can I move through dating and be really transparent with where I'm at and just not expect anybody else to carry the weight of what I'm processing?" And it's been a question and it's been something that I navigate and help other people navigate, too. (laughs)

Cindra

Yeah!

Luke

I'd love to hear a little bit about your story that's led you into helping people in the way that you do. How did this come about?

Ariella

Okay, this is kind of a weird story, but the only thing I can compare it to, is, after coming out--I don't know if either of you have had this experience, but--after coming out, for me, and a lot of queer folks I know--I can reflect on my life and be like, "Oh my god, I was so gay all along!"

Cindra

(laughs)

Ariella

I was the gayest little kid there was and I didn't know!" So, that's what this dating coaching feels like, where after I started doing it--once I, you know, came up with the idea or the idea came to me or however, whatever materialized--I was reflecting, and I was like, "Oh, my God, I have been doing this all along. I talked about dating in that professional context, I helped that person roleplay, I helped that person negotiate their marriage." I have been doing this, just off the books, and I've always been the friend that people call for that. But, as far as my own personal dating journey, I have been an actor in New York. And, when I moved to New York to start auditioning, I felt uncomfortable in my skin a bit in college and whatever. I wasn't really dating, I was kind of prude. I was definitely in the

closet and very tightly wound, super type A. So, once I started kissing girls my senior year of college, all of that changed, and slowly and slowly, you know, I started to open up. But, I moved to New York, and I was going on a lot of auditions, and I was afraid of auditions, and I was afraid of dating. So I decided that for every audition I would go on, I would try to go on a date. (laughs)

Cindra

(laughs)

Ariella

So, I don't know if you know any actors, but actors audition a lot--

Cindra

A lot!

Ariella

So I didn't--it wasn't one for one, right? But it was this idea that I was like, "Alright, I'm putting myself out in both places to be judged, to have a lot of stories in my head about why I might or might not be being rejected, whatever it is." And I just started asking out everyone. Anyone I would see. We'd make eye contact at a store, I was like, "What are you doing?"

Cindra

(laughing)

Ariella

And then we would hang out. I see you on a subway platform, I'd be like, "I got some time to kill, you want to grab a drink?" I was just--I dated New York. I dated New York.

Cindra

That's amazing.

Ariella

And I loved it. I really loved it. Because I--like I said in our, before we started recording, but I really don't take for granted how impactful a brief moment can be on my life. And I'm really open to shifting quite dramatically based on an experience that I have. And honestly, I think a lot of that comes from backpacking. I know Australians backpack, and that's so normal. But, in the States, it's still very obscure for someone to spend time solo traveling or solo backpacking. And I did for five months when I was 24, right? Not impressive to any Australians listening, very impressive to Americans (laughing). But, it I would be with these people for one night or for one meal or one conversation and have my point of view on life so dramatically shifted, that I think it really went into my dating life, my life in general, where I don't know how this interaction might shift my whole worldview. And I'm really open to it. So, that's kind of how I got inspired to do it. And the logistics part of that was that I was life coaching. And it didn't feel quite right. And I always loved coaching queer folks. (laughs) I was like, "I don't know if I like life coaching, but whenever I work with a queer person, I'm very happy to be there." So, it was figuring out what is it that I am uniquely, you know, experienced to do, have an insatiable curiosity about, and that people will trust me to talk about. And that all became this queer dating coaching that it is now.

Cindra

Mm! That's so cool. How do you go on so many dates? I feel like...I don't know, we live in a relatively small town, I mean compared to New York, it's a blip--

Ariella

Sure, for sure. Yeah, theres six million people here, so it's easy to not run out of people to date. (laughs)

Cindra

I think the thing is always for me, in approaching women? Well, I don't know if they're into women, so...meh! (laughs)

Ariella

Totally, totally, and that can be really complicated for any queer person. And it can even feel dangerous, right, to start approaching people and to not know where they stand. So, that could make this, you know, that's a stranger category, right? That's when we're talking about approaching strangers, people we don't know. That could make it complicated. And if you don't feel safe, don't do it.

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

When I had--I've approached a ton of men in my life, and I've approached women sometimes to have a conversation with, sometimes to ask out, sometimes....But more often, with women or with trans folks, like non-binary folks--Well, actually, I should say with trans and non-binary folks, I usually assume that they're queer. (laughs)

Cindra

(laughs)

Ariella

So, that feels safer, in that way. With women, I'll usually have a conversation with them, and then within seconds of talking, I'll be able to know whether they're queer or not. And then, maybe I'll ask them out in that moment, or I'll connect with them on Instagram and ask them out. But, occasionally, I'll ask strangers out who are women who I can't know for certain whether they're queer, but based on what they look like, I can make some assumptions. (laughs)

Cindra

(laughs)

Ariella

So that's, I've done that too. I've kind of done a bunch of different things. But it's real to not know if someone's queer or not, it's hard to tell.

Luke

Yeah.

Ariella

And also, I should say that...I want to just correct my own language, because we can't, you know, when we're looking at these people, we can't tell whether they're men, women, or trans or non-binary folks. So, I more mean, when someone's masculine presenting or feminine presenting or some more androgynous presenting, then I feel--androgynous presenting folks I feel more comfortable going up to, and assuming they might be interested in someone that looks like me.

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

Where femme presenting folks, it can be confusing and for masculine presenting folks, it can depend, you know--

Cindra

Absolutely. Absolutely.

Ariella

So, it's all kind of a question.

Cindra

Yeah, especially for people who identify as male, like Luke. I mean, I guess homophobia is still very real in our country. And, even in our town, you know, even up until maybe, oh, towards the end of my previous marriage to a woman, people were still kind of staring and saying things--that was like, four or five years ago. So, just say, for Luke to approach anyone who was also masculine presenting, that is still very dangerous, I would say--

Ariella

Yeah.

Luke

Yeah.

Cindra

--you know? And it's really hard, because I mean Tinder is great. But to a certain extent, that's also pretty (laughing) challenging. So, I think this whole piece around what you do is so important, because it's really fucking hot. It's not, you're a woman and you're into men, and you just see a dude--

Ariella

Yeah.

Cindra

--and you're like, "Hey, dude!" And, you know, you have a bit of fluid. And it's just, there's so many other layers to queer dating, which is, yeah, makes it quite complicated. And we need people like you to (laughing) help us!

Ariella

It's so nuanced, and then it becomes nuanced, too, when you're trying to figure out, okay, if we've removed all the heteronormativity from this dynamic, which you were getting into a bit on that paradigm of relationship episode, if we are removing heteronormativity from a dating dynamic, then

we have to navigate what feels good from the ground up here, too, which is who's paying, who's leading, who's initiating the kiss, if there is one, who's taking the lead here at any given time. Which also becomes a question and something that people need help navigating, you know, when there is no assumption of gender roles in that way, then it's like, "Okay, well, we're kind of both left without a script here." And you have to--and you're forced to do what feels authentic to you and make it up?

Luke

Totally. Yeah, it's--sometimes I envy or get a little bit jealous of incredible humans like you that live in such liberal cities like New York or Sydney, because it can be a little bit more daunting in smaller parts of the world.

Ariella

Totally.

Luke

Yeah, it just can be. For instance, you know, I was swiping away on Tinder last night, and there's just not a lot to, you know, to choose from. There's a very small amount, and I know that there would be far more people out there that just aren't willing to be seen.

Ariella

Yeah. Oh, interesting.

Luke

Yeah. And, even--I'm an electrician by trade, and I still work in that industry. I help manage a contractor three days a week. And, you know, even though we've got eighteen tradesmen working for this company, and I walk past these crowds all the time, they'll be saying very homophobic things like "I bet he loves it in the butt." And I'll stop, and I'll be like, "I like it in the butt. That's literally where my G spot is, it's great!"

[Ariella](#)

(laughing) Good for you for saying that!

[Luke](#)

And they're like "That dude's weird as fuck."

[Ariella](#)

And they're like, "And now I know what I want to try when I go home."

(laughs)

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Luke](#)

Yeah, exactly. And, but every now and then I'll see some guys that look at me, and they'll be like, "Yeah, I'm with you, brother." And it's just subtle cues--Just talk about it! Just, be seen--

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, you got a long way to go, it's tough. And I can imagine--basically, the way that I think about meeting people is I think about four quadrants. This is something I talk to clients about. And basically, if you think dating's hard, that's fine, a lot of people do, but we have to pick one of the quadrants for you to start in. And, it's interesting hearing what you're saying, being in a smaller town, dating apps might be limited, might have less people, or people might be closeted more than in a big city. So it's interesting. I'm curious to tell you the four quadrants, and then maybe we can figure out where else you can meet people. Maybe, maybe.

[Luke](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

So basically, the four ways I think about meeting people is--there's really no reason that they're quadrants. I don't know why I always do this.

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Ariella](#)

So one is dating apps. And with clients, I'll help figure out, which dating app is most aligned with them, and how can they make their profile most evocative of their essence and also put the onus on other people to reach out so that they're not the ones that have to do all the weeding out and whatnot.

[Cindra](#)

Mmm.

[Ariella](#)

Anyway, so that's dating apps. The second one is: conscious communities. So, to me, that means where you know you're spending time. So, now it's interesting, because Clubhouse and Instagram can be considered those things if you're really showing up there in intentional ways. Or, it can also be your place of work, or any volunteer organizations, or any groups that you're a part of--anywhere that you are showing up to connect, it could be classes that you're taking, where you can find other people that have similar priorities or similar values or hobbies, whatever it is. So that's number two. Number three is friends of friends or friends of family--asking people "Hey, do you know anybody, can you set me up with someone who is blank blank blank?" And then the fourth one is strangers. So, from what it sounds like you two are saying, perhaps the stranger category might be complicated if it's a smaller town and people are closeted, and so is the dating app category. Potentially, if there are less people on it, or people are closeted, same thing. So then, alright, so then how do we beef up the

friends of friends? Or how do we beef up where you're showing up and what species you're showing up in so that you might have more exposure to other queer folks or people that might be interested in what you're interested in?

Cindra

Mmm.

Luke

Yeah.

Cindra

Absolutely. Well, there's no queer...anything here. There's no queer bars...
(laughs)

Ariella

Uh huh.

Luke

There's...there's Acorn, for instance--

Cindra

Yeah, but you can't go there and hang out.

Luke

No, I think--

Ariella

And it might be hard to hang out in general right now. I don't know what--

Cindra

Well here it's pretty normal--

[Ariella](#)

Totally fine? Oh, weird, that's good for you though (laughs)

[Cindra](#)

Sorry.

[Ariella](#)

(laughing) Rub it in, why don't you, going to bars!

[Cindra](#)

(laughing) Sorry!

[Luke](#)

Sorry, sorry to the whole world, but yeah, literally. We live three houses away from one of the most popular bars in Newcastle. And, there's people hanging out--

[Cindra](#)

It's crankin.

[Luke](#)

It's crankin.

[Ariella](#)

Wowww.

[Luke](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

Okay, I'm a little bit jealous in this moment, but--

Luke

Yeah, you come over...we've got spare bunk beds?

Cindra

(laughing)

Ariella

Aww. I'll sleep in a bunk bed some day.

Luke

They've got dinosaurs on the sheets and pillows and stuff, but--

Ariella

That's perfect. That's what I look for, actually, when I'm looking at Airbnbs is where are the dinosaur sheets?

Cindra

Right? Well, we're also gonna host one of our other podcast guests. So, we can just have this whole collaborative space. Gotta show her the kids sometimes, that's okay, we'll make it work.

Ariella

I think it's perfect, I think that's amazing.

Cindra

(laughing)

Luke

The kids are very social. You'll meet them for five minutes, and you'll be BFFs.

Cindra

(laughs)

[Ariella](#)

Aw! (laughs) That's awesome.

[Luke](#)

Yeah. But--

[Ariella](#)

(unintelligible)

[Luke](#)

Sorry?

[Ariella](#)

You have Acorn, you have a bar a couple houses away.

[Luke](#)

Yeah, that I'm sure that there's probably--I feel out of the quadrants, that's probably the more likely space.

[Ariella](#)

Okay.

[Luke](#)

Yeah, probably have to go looking for a more, you know, for instance, you start delving into Facebook groups. There's so many groups out there for everything and anything that there probably is communities in our area that we just don't know about--

[Ariella](#)

Same thing with Clubhouse, I'll say too.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

Clubhouse is a real resource to connect with other queer folks all over the world. Sure. And, also if you wanted to create a space that did concentrate queer folks in the Newcastle area--is that where you are again?

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

Okay. (laughs) Then, you can also see who shows up in spaces like that. People are using Clubhouse as a tool to make connections as well, since it's based on talking--

[Cindra](#)

Yeah!

[Ariella](#)

--so you are getting to skip some of the small talk and getting to dive into conversations that you care about based on shared interests or shared identities and getting some queer connection in that way, which is also pretty cool and different.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah, I love that. And that's one of the things about dating that can be challenging, too, is, I don't wanna have small talk. Let's just go into the cool conversations.

[Ariella](#)

You don't want to have small talk, right?

[Cindra](#)

No!

[Ariella](#)

Okay, this is so funny--

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Ariella](#)

--because so many people come to me, and they're like, "I think it's just me. I hate small talk."

[Cindra](#)

(laughing)

[Ariella](#)

I can't tell you how many people say that. They really are like, "What do I do? I am the only person that hates small talk." And I'm like, "bitch, everyone hates small talk! No one likes it!" But what we can do there is have, you know, recognize what is the person intending by having small talk, what has society taught us is appropriate? How can we acknowledge that that's their intent in that moment? And, how can we take responsibility to immediately shift the conversation to something we care more about? Because if we're talking about something we care about--(laughing)--what?

[Cindra](#)

(laughing)

[Luke](#)

I love that, I'm just--I need to write that bit down after.

[Ariella](#)

(laughs)

Luke

But, take responsibility to shift the conversation, yeah.

Ariella

Yeah, because if you aren't enjoying the conversation, the chances of connecting with that person have--you've basically turned the dial all the way down to zero. Where if we're generous with telling people what we like to talk about, or introducing topics of conversation that we find interesting, or if someone says something about themselves that we find really engaging--looking at that, instead of continuing whatever other by rote conversation we were gonna have, is generous, because it allows both people to step into something that they actually care about. And when we're lighting up in that way if we care about something, then I can see who you are when you're magnetic and glowing, and vice versa. And then we might like each other. But we all can shift the gears if it's not feeling good or interesting to us.

Luke

Yeah, there's a lot--I'm seeing, hearing what you're saying and being reminded of a really cool book that I read called Nonviolent Communication.

Ariella

Yeah, uh huh.

Luke

And he talks in one of the chapters about that--about, is this conversation giving you life? Are you being fulfilled by this conversation? You know, he'd walk up to people at parties and watch them having small talk and be like, "I just want to stop this. Are you guys getting what you need out of this conversation? Are you?" And they're like, "No, not really." Well, why are you having it? What do you really want to share right now?

[Ariella](#)

Wow!

[Luke](#)

What happened today that really affected you that you really need somebody to hear about? And ,yeah, that's a massive responsibility piece--

[Ariella](#)

Yeah!

[Luke](#)

--having the conversations that you want to have.

[Ariella](#)

With that book--so, I'm familiar with nonviolent communication as a concept and I've taken some workshops on it, but I have not read that book. Did this person mention how to do that and how to take responsibility yourself in the conversation versus an outsider then facilitating something that's more deep and meaningful?

[Luke](#)

Yeah, the book's written by, I think, Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, that he started nonviolent communication. And yeah, he talks a lot about doing it in non weaponizing ways. You know, this is not giving me life.

[Cindra](#)

(laughing)

[Ariella](#)

Right.

Luke

I do not like hearing about the weather today, talk to me about, you know, what's alive in you. So, yeah, there is some constructive ways--I don't feel fully adept in instructing on it.

Ariella

Right, right.

Luke

But the book's quite a consumable book--I think the audio--

Cindra

It's boring. (laughs) It's really boring.

Luke

--if you want to read it, then go for it. But, there's, like you said, there's videos and stuff out there, YouTube--

Ariella

Uh huh.

Luke

Watch the videos.

Yeah.

Ariella

But it's essentially taking responsibility and shifting the conversation in a way that is not abrasive or offensive--

Luke

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

--but moves you in a direction that you--

[Luke](#)

Yeah, small, small language tools like, you know, rather than saying, I don't like talking about the weather, I'd like to talk about something real, turning the conversation around in a more powerful way. If you're open to it, I'd really like to share something really important that happened to me today. Would you be willing to hear that?

[Ariella](#)

Yes.

[Luke](#)

And the person's normally gonna be like, "Well, yes."

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Luke](#)

But, you also give them the opportunity to say no, I'd prefer to find someone to talk about the weather to.

[Ariella](#)

(laughing) Right. Right. Absolutely, I love that. And I love the consent piece in there too--to make sure that someone has space for what it is that you want to share in a given moment.

[Luke](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

The other way that I'll do that is, if someone's talking about work, and it's feeling boring, or whatever it is, is to ask a feelings-based question about work. So that can be, what part of your job really lights you up? Or, what was your proudest moment from this last week of something that happened with a client? Or whatever it is...what's something magical you found out about yourself through your work this week, or whatever, something that elicits more positivity, and feelings, where someone has to reflect on their own feelings, because that allows, when you open that up, then people feel seen and validated, and then tend to like you more, because you're making space for who they are.

[Luke](#)

Totally.

[Cindra](#)

Absolutely.

[Luke](#)

And even that dynamic that we just had just a second ago, for a masculine essence, a lot of masculine energy, people really enjoy a process. They enjoy an instructive process that they can follow. So, a boring book can be exactly what somebody might need to be able to shift their language. Now, some of these books that I find super instructive Cindra might listen to him for five minutes and be like "No, not for me today." And, it might be more an energetic, you know, meditative session that, you know, somebody more feeling based will get more out of, but--

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

Luke

Yeah, it's about finding the support that you need that's going to speak to you for these situations.

Ariella

Yeah, for sure. And I love that feelings-based or process-based, and finding, even removed from gender, masculinity, whatever it is, you can have the power to learn these tools or to make these changes, and it's a matter of figuring out what resources speak to you through that and through what makes sense for your brain and your heart and your body and whatnot.

Luke

Yeah.

Cindra

Mm, absolutely. I wanted to go back to something that you said before, because I think it was really important. About when you are dating in a queer or like non-heteronormative format, about roles and who makes the first move and that kind of thing.

Ariella

Yeah.

Cindra

I would love you to talk a little bit more about that, 'cause I feel like this is where a lot of people get stuck in this kind of dating is where's the roles, where's the responsibilities lie? So, and also people that are new into this space, or new into kind of feeling outside of their maybe what they've done for a long time, it can be very intimidating. It can be a reason that people don't date. Because it's like "no, it's just too hard. I don't know how to navigate this." So--

[Ariella](#)

Right.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah, maybe you can talk a little bit about what you do with people around that.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah. So, sometimes this is super subtle, subtle work. So this comes up definitely more in specific situations, not these grand what should I do and stuff like that. It's more, I had a client who is really a femme woman. And she was also dating a femme woman and they went on one date, and they didn't kiss at the end of the date. And she was kind of processing it with me. And, so it's kind of--oh my god, I really want to hear whatever story you're thinking about. (laughing) I would love to dive into that.

[Cindra](#)

(laughing)

[Ariella](#)

Or, why don't we--do you have a story that is kind of reminiscent of that?

[Cindra](#)

No, keep going, keep going (laughing).

[Ariella](#)

Are you sure, 'cause we could dive into this, and we could talk about that instead, and I can work with you through that.

[Cindra](#)

It's a similar story.

Ariella

Okay. All right. So, what we wound up talking about was, in this case, it was when--was there a moment that it, was there a moment that came and passed that you were like, "Oh, we should have kissed there, or something could have happened there?" Were you aware of the moment that something could have transpired? In her case, she was like, "Yes! We were in the car, she was driving me home. There was a pause in the conversation. We had been talking--we had been hanging out for five hours", whatever it was, she was like, "I am aware that that would have been the moment to make a move." And then we talk about, okay, how could you have made a move in that moment? If it felt like--and did it feel like she would have felt comfortable enough making a move? Does it feel like she either knows the ropes, has been out for a while, is kind of more dominant energetically and she was like, "No, definitely not. I do kind of feel like the ball would have been in my court because I'm slightly more comfortable with those things." Whatever it is, right? This is all super specific to the person that I'm working with.

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

But then then it's like okay, how might you have made a move in that situation? And we've kind of workshop it. And if it becomes putting your hand on her hand or, how do you--and, you know, with COVID, that's a totally different thing here. Have you navigated physical boundaries earlier? Have you had conversations about what are physical boundaries before the date or whatever it is, on the date, so that you're not necessarily crossing any boundaries. But, if you know that you're out together, and you're in a car and you're sharing space, it's probably okay for you to touch. So how-- knowing that that moment could have been a moment where physical intimacy happened, or a kiss happened, what could have been the first move? And then I hear their ideas and we kind of talk about

how, okay, what happens if that went well? What happens if that person pulls away? How do we navigate the fear of rejection that's ultimately underlying a fear of making a move in any given situation? And once we address the rejection piece, then we can feel a little bit more free to do what we want, because we know that on the other side of it we'll be okay.

Cindra

Mmm. Yeah, definitely. It's very intimidating in those situations. And it can be hard to know how to approach it. So I think having someone to workshop that with would be really handy. And, especially when you are both very similar people.

Ariella

Yeah.

Cindra

You know, it's like "uh uh uh uh uh!"

Ariella

Yeah.

Cindra

It can be really clunky. So, I think breaking it down, and yeah, looking for those opportunities and the spaces that you could have stepped into or asked for consent to do whatever, you know, whatever it is in those situations.

Ariella

Because if you have--if you're able to recognize, "Oh, okay, I actually do think I was able to see the moment," then you can work on making a move. If you can't see the moment, then work on seeing the moment next time, and don't put the pressure on yourself to make a move. You can go slow. But I get that it can feel clunky--that's a normal, that's a normal thing. And,

ultimately, when you're starting to navigate outside of heteronormative gender roles, I am someone that does not believe gender roles need to exist at all whatsoever. I think that they're completely arbitrary and based on colonization, and owning property. I do not--there's nothing about gender roles I think we need to keep, I think we can abolish the whole entire system. So, if that's true, and if I'm someone that believes that way, then I really, no matter what my partner looks like, no matter if they're more masculine than me, more feminine than me, whatever, I cannot take that into account with how I'm going to act. I have to entirely act out of what feels good in a given moment, and what I feel comfortable with. And then that becomes about creativity and a bit about experimentation, not in the way that you're experimenting with your sexuality, but in the way that I'm experimenting--did it feel good to be dominant in this way, in this moment? Did it feel good to take the lead here? Because through that experimenting--and maybe it won't feel good, and then you're like, "Oop, I don't want to be that--that's not for me," and that's fine. But. it's through that experimentation that then we can find more power in, oh, actually, it does feel really good to to be more toppy in this way, or whatever it is. And then your sense of self expands through through those experiences.

Cindra

Yeah. What about with...I'm just going to use "women" here....that date other women--

Ariella

Mhmm.

Cindra

--getting caught in the chat...

Ariella

Before a kiss? Tell me more about what the chatting--

Cindra

Getting caught--because, okay, well, from my experience, I (laughs)

Luke

I am an audience right now. I'm loving this.

Ariella

(laughs)

Cindra

I have found that I get caught up in the chat. As in, if I was going on a date with say, Luke, when we first met, we'd chat for, you know, a couple of hours or whatever. And then he would make a move, say?

Ariella

Mhm.

Cindra

With women, because there isn't kind of that, I feel like you can get stuck in chatting, just chatting, chat, chat, chat, chat chat, having a couple of wines, and then you before you know it, you've chatted for five hours, as you're saying, chatted for five hours. And then it's like, "Okay, well, this is kind of just a friend hangout."

Ariella

Uh huh.

Cindra

It kind of borders on the line of, well, are we friends? 'Cause we've just kind of chatted for five hours.

[Ariella](#)

Totally, totally. So, I think that still comes down to, where might there be a moment to stop chatting--

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

[Ariella](#)

--or where can I do something that is...I don't want to say cross a boundary, but telegraphs interest in a way that moves beyond the friend zone.

[Cindra](#)

Mmm.

[Ariella](#)

So, whether that's putting your hand on her leg or being like "oh, let me refill your glass," or whatever it is. Something that is--and this is more, you know, if you're gonna be the one that is initiating or leading in this given moment--but I find it easier in those cases to talk about it from a perspective of how can I take responsibility here? And how can I stop the chat? How can I make this move into what I want it to move into, whether it's I am so obsessed with talking to you, and I also really want to kiss you, is that okay?

[Cindra](#)

Mmm.

[Ariella](#)

What can we do in those moments to change what it is that's happening that we don't want? And, I've had those experiences, too, where I went out with someone when I was in my last partnership. And we, very similar to you two, we did not identify as poly. We were non-monogamous, and we dated other folks and slept with them, and beyond that, we weren't necessarily

looking for tertiary partnerships or connections or whatnot. But, I went out with someone, and we went to dinner right away--we got set up by someone. And we were so chatty, so in it, and I was like, "I know that this person is gonna be my best friend. I know it! I already know it." I don't need to, I don't need to take you home because it feels too good, and I'd rather have you as a friend in this way. So I said to her--we wound up going back to my place. Okay, we wound up going back to my place, and we were talking on my bed. (laughs) Whoops--

Cindra

(laughs)

Ariella

--I guess I didn't do that great a job of creating friend boundaries, I guess I led...I led all the way home! But, we were basically talking on my bed, and I was kind of like, "Should we just call it? Should we just call this that we're probably gonna be best friends. And should we just not hook up?" And she was like, "you can hook up with your friends." And I was like, "I agree." And then we hooked up.

Cindra

(laughs)

Ariella

But, sometimes we can just name what it is, you know? And if it is feeling chatty, and if you are totally obsessed with the person, and do want to have them around. I don't know what your agreements are as far as--for us, at the time, if I was going on a date with someone, it was a little bit more challenging to then be like, "Oh, but I want to hang out with them all the time as a friend." That was--we had pretty specific agreements around that to make us feel safe and whatnot. But, I mean, now--then we wound up dating for a bit, and then my partner and I wound up dating her together for a bit, and then now, she and I are best friends. (laughs) And that's the

way it is. But we can call out what's happening and take responsibility for how we can shift it if that's not where we want to be happening. Does that answer that in a long-winded, personal way?

Cindra

Yeah, absolutely.

Luke

Yes, I think it's about, again, shifting the responsibility and for what you want and what you need, not just out of small talk conversations, but out of dating as well.

Ariella

Yes.

Luke

And, you know, if you've been used to a heteronormative cis system for a very long time, as every coach out there can attest to, it's really great to have a boundary breakthrough or, you know, an "aha" moment and realize this is the new way that I want to live. But, if you've been doing something for thirty years, it takes a lot of conscious--

Ariella

Yes.

Luke

--action to make that your new normal.

Ariella

For sure.

Luke

Yeah, so it's, it's one of those things. I remember the first night that Cindra and I went on a date. We talked for ages, talkin', you know, it would go from one thing that we both loved onto the next. It was Drake, it was like vegan food, it was, you know, it was this, it was that, it was, you know, breakups and divorce. And before I knew it was 11:30 at night, and I was like, "Can I kiss you?" And she's like, "Oh, my God, I've been waiting for you to kiss me." I'm like, "Why are you waiting? Just kiss me, girl!"

Cindra

(laughing)

Ariella

Right, right! And it's so interesting in those moments too--why are we waiting? And when we feel stuck in chat in that way, then what what is holding us back from doing the thing that it is that we want to do? And that's a lot of--that's why my messaging is what it is, that helping people have the courage to go after what they want in dating and life. Because, if what you want there is to kiss, how do we build up the courage for you to do that? And, how do we show you that you're gonna be okay even if that person says no. Or, if it's awkward. If someone's like, "Oh my god, I thought we were already kind of in friend territory." And then you're like, "Oh my god, my bad! I did not mean to make you feel uncomfortable. How can I make this better?" And we can handle it with a sense of humor and play and, you know, know it's okay.

Cindra

Yeah, well, it all comes back to communication, which is what we talk about all the fucking time--people are like, "Oh, here they go again talking about communication." And, it is and I feel like that is the missing piece in dating. There's no honest communication--

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Cindra](#)

Its all "Oh, do they like me? Oh, maybe not. Oh, I don't know. Ooh ooh ooh!" Whereas if we were just like, "Hey, I loved this date, let's do it again." Or, "Hey, really nice to meet you. Probably not into you romantically, but as a friend, I love our conversations. Let's get coffee again next week as a friend. Or, is that cool with you? You know, if not, no worries, have a great, you know, good luck with your dating." Kind of--

[Ariella](#)

Absolutely.

[Cindra](#)

--you know, being up front? And that is totally missing in dating, absolutely, one hundred percent missing.

[Ariella](#)

And, relationships. This is where I also attribute our lens to non-monogamy. Because in non-monogamy it is not taboo to ask for what we want, it's encouraged to ask for what we want. And we're gonna do it in a way that, you know, we feel safe moving through, right. But it is, it's okay to put our needs and our desires on the table. So that's how I feel my practice is so influenced by non-monogamy in that way. Because if you actually ask for what you want, or name what it is that you want, in a given moment, you actually have a higher chance of getting it. Wowie! (laughs)

[Cindra](#)

(laughs)

Ariella

We can demystify some of this and actually just show up honestly. And, at the same time, keep fostering our own sense of self and autonomy, so that we never--we're not clinging too much, and we're not needing too much. Even if we express explicit interest, we've got our own--we've got our own life! And if they want to participate, then they want to, and if they don't, they don't.

Cindra

Mmm.

Luke

Yeah, I'm even seeing that honesty flow into the lessons that we learn from dating, too. You know, sending somebody a message or a phone call afterwards and saying, "That was such a great night. I am sort of kicking myself about, there was probably three times that I think that I really wanted to kiss you, and I'm working on that."

Ariella

Yes!

Luke

And now I'm kind of, you know, in my stuff about having such a great night, but then now I'm home and I didn't kiss you when I wanted to. So, I just wanted to put that out there. That's the thing--

Ariella

I completely agree. I completely agree. And someone that does that has to be cool with, you know, has navigated their fear of rejection around that. But, ultimately, they'll have clarity on what it is that transpired between them. And I love that script of "I'm kicking myself that I didn't do this." And I totally--that feels natural, that feels like something that would have come out of my mouth, so I would--

Luke

Yeah, and you're taking ownership of it, those three times compared to those three times where I think that you should have kissed me on that day.

Ariella

A hundred percent!

Luke

Yeah.

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

That shit is based on what?!

Luke

Yeah, I was waiting for you to kiss me all night. So, there's a shift there. And it's--

Ariella

absolutely

Luke

--not throwing guilt or responsibility on somebody else for your enjoyment or pleasure. But it's putting it out there, if we go on a date again, that's gonna be on my mind of...I'm going to be looking for that moment. And it gives them an opportunity to say, "Oh, actually, I didn't feel that at all."

Cindra

Mmmm.

Ariella

Yes! And it clarifies if it is someone that you wind up having a lot of chat with, and you're just drinking wine and the hours got away, and then you kinda left, then it does also allow clarity for "No, this is my intention, actually. And this is what I want to happen next time, even though I didn't act on it this time."

Cindra

Yeah.

Ariella

And I think it's also interesting to examine if it was someone that was kind of there were three moments I felt like you should've kissed me or whatever it is. It's really, what led you to believe that the other person should have kissed you? And I would be hard pressed for it not to boil down to some kind of heteronormativity.

Cindra

Mmmm. Yeah, definitely.

Luke

Yeah. Oh, these are all the reasons why we have coaches in the world.

Ariella

(laughs)

Luke

Yeah. There's so much in that. Then, you know, there's the dynamic of the other person saying, "Oh, really? I didn't really pick that vibe up." And, so why am I seeing these connections that other people aren't seeing, you know? Or, you know, what am I desperate for in this situation? There's a lot of growth in dating.

[Ariella](#)

A hundred percent.

[Luke](#)

It's so revealing and so healing, even though we say--we've said a few labels, like "dating's hard." But especially like dating queer can be a little bit harder sometimes. But it's actually very revealing and very healing at the same time.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah. And it's super process-oriented, which is what I love. Well, I should say, my coaching is process-oriented. There are a lot of dating coaches out there that are like, "I'm gonna help you find your person," which really rubs me the wrong way. That it's not really about--we're not gonna evaluate the success on our work together based on whether or not you found your person, then you can arbitrarily find any person.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

It's really based on enjoying the process and this becoming a satiating part of your personal growth journey.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah!

[Ariella](#)

This is a place to learn and to be able to show up better and better and to be able to have connections with people, regardless of how they turn out. Because you don't know how brief moments might be of impact.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah, that's amazing. (laughs) Write that down, everyone listening. Write that down!

[Luke](#)

This is the Australian sign language for cluck--clucking?

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[Cindra](#)

Is it?

[Luke](#)

Yeah.

[Cindra](#)

Oh.

[Luke](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

ASL too, actually, American Sign Language, also--

[Luke](#)

Yeah. Ugh, god, I love this. So, I was curious, before we started, one of the things that I wanted to ask you is predominantly, who comes to you at the

moment for support? Would it be more people that--could be every people--but is it more people that are stepping into their sexuality, and you know, recently becoming, they're stepping into their truth and then navigating a new way of dating in that queer identity? Or is it--would you have more clients that have been, you know, concrete in their queer identity and struggling still with dating?

Ariella

Yeah, that's a good question. Right now, it's about half and half. Half of people being--well, that's not even a totally fair split, because there's also people that have never dated before, regardless of whether they were dating...regardless of their coming out journey, I have some people that have never dated before, period. I have some people that have dated mainly the opposite gender, or the heteronormative thing, and then they're moving into dating other queer folks. And then I have some people who have been out and dating the way that feels natural and good to them for a long time. And they're more interested in upping their communication or figuring out how to break certain dating patterns. Why are people that they're not interested, the ones that seem to be interested in them? So it's kind of basically, I'll teach you how to date or date better. That's kind of the two things I work with. So there's some people that I'm taking through a full how to date journey from square one. And then there are some people who are older and have been dating for a long time, but are either interested in more serious relationships and they want to figure out how to approach things in a different way than how they would approach having one night stands and whatnot, or they're interested in breaking patterns that they found in themselves, and they kind of want to up their personal development when it comes to attachment.

Cindra

Mmm. Love it. Love it.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah.

[Cindra](#)

And you said--as we're coming to the wrap up, and we could probably talk to you all day about this, so. You said that you had something coming out that may align with the podcast coming out?

[Ariella](#)

Oh, yeah. Well, so I think from--for a couple of days next week, I haven't decided how many days I'm gonna give this out for. But I am coming out with a sexting ebook, a switchy sexting ebook. So, switching is when someone is both dominant and submissive, or tops and bottoms if we're using that kind of language. But, someone who's comfortable both taking the lead and also, if the person that they're with or people that they're with want to take the lead, they're cool sitting back sometimes when it feels good. So, it's more for folks that don't necessarily have a Valentine date or aren't partnered, or if they are, maybe they're in long distance relationships, to kind of add some focus on narrative and consent and--I toyed with calling it Sexting with Soul, which is just, I'm not gonna do that. (laughs) But, adding a little more how I view sexting and how I do it, so (laughs). Just demystifying it in that way. So, I'll be giving that out for free as a download and the information will be on my Instagram, which is @queerdatingcoach.

[Luke](#)

I am downloading that.

[Ariella](#)

(laughs)

[Cindra](#)

(laughs) I also love that you got that Instagram name. That's amazing.

[Ariella](#)

Yeah, it was so funny. I could not believe--I mean, there just aren't a lot of queer dating coaches out there though.

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

[Ariella](#)

And the ones that are out there are more monogamous oriented, finding your person oriented, so I do feel like I'm kind of existing by myself a little bit right now, which is fine!

[Cindra](#)

Yeah!

[Luke](#)

Well, it's one of these things I feel like in the in the queer realms, there's just people that know stuff, right? So, we have looked and were searching for you without knowing that you were who we would find--

[Ariella](#)

Uh huh.

[Luke](#)

--and then we asked one of our friends and was like, "Hey, we're looking for, you know, these few people for the podcast" and she was like, "buh buh buh buh this one, this one, this one, this one, this one, this one's great." And, yeah, it's one of those things that we can get stuck in the story of "Oh, there's just nobody out there or there's just nothing out there."

[Cindra](#)

Yeah.

Luke

And it's--oh man, you'd have the smallest moments that change everything.

Ariella

Exactly. Exactly.

Luke

And you realize just how big this planet is full of amazing people.

Ariella

Totally. I completely agree, which is what we can think about when we're dating them, too. (laughs)

Cindra

Absolutely. Oh, it was so great having you on. Thank you so much for your time. And yeah, definitely encourage everyone to go and follow your Instagram and grab that free little download. Sounds very handy. So, definitely jump on that as well and check out Ariella's services if, you know, something has inspired you to reach out to her or even just to say hello and thank you for sharing, you know, doing what you do. So, yeah, thank you so much for your time today, and thanks for being on the podcast!

Ariella

Oh, my absolute pleasure. Thanks for having me.

Cindra

That was such a cool chat.

Luke

Ariella is amazing.

Cindra

And also, I just love how we can speak to people on the other side of the world in a totally different timezone. She said, "Oh, there's so much snow outside today!" And we're sitting here with our fan on because we're hot. So, it's always so amazing to touch base with people on the other side of the world. And, Ariella has so much wisdom, and I love how she's promoting conscious dating. And, yeah, it just lights me up. I'm so excited that we connected with her.

Luke

Yeah, me too. It was such a fulfilling conversation. I made an observation to Cindra that sometimes when we have such amazing conversations with amazing people, I notice in the video feedback that Cindra and I end up just lounging back in our seats, and just really enjoying what our guests have to share with us and just get to enter a real zone of just receiving. And I hope everybody that listens experiences that, because Ariella has got so much wisdom, just unlocking moments to hear their gifts is what I enjoy being on the other side of the podcast.

Cindra

Absolutely, yeah, you can check Ariella's work out on Instagram @queerdatingcoach and all of her links are in her bio there as well. So, make sure you head on over there, especially if you are listening to this when it first comes out. Because she does have that free sexting guide available just in time for Valentine's Day.

Luke

Yeah, I'm going as soon as this podcast is up, I'm going to be sending the link for this episode out to a bunch of people that I know that have been wanting support in, you know, dating as a queer person.

Cindra

Absolutely.

Luke

So, if you know somebody as well that may not be familiar with our podcast, and you know that they were looking for support in dating as a queer person, then, please share the link to this podcast with them and spread the love, because Ariella--there's so many people out there that she could be helping right now.

Cindra

Absolutely. And she's amazing. So, definitely connect with her, and don't forget about our group program, which is now open for enrollment and it closes for enrollments, I can't remember on what date, but it's not open for super long, so--

Luke

I think it's the 14th of February, so.

Cindra

Valentine's Day.

Luke

Yeah.

Cindra

Mmm.

Luke

So, yeah, that could be a nice little gift to yourself--

Cindra

Gift to yourself!

Luke

--a in turn, hopefully--

Cindra

Gift to your partner!

Luke

--will pay off to your partner and your relationship as well.

Cindra

Yeah, we're very excited to work with you. You can check out more about us @consciouscouplescoaching. My Instagram is @cindrabanks and Luke's is @lukeskewes S-K-E-W-E-S, so find all about us over there. That's mostly where we hang out. So you can DM us, you can find out what we do, you can get our vibe. And we always love to, you know, connect with you all. So, find us on Insta.

Luke

Fabulous!

Cindra

And if you have time and want to share this podcast with anyone that you think may be interested, we would really, really, really appreciate it. And if you're listening on Apple podcasts, a quick rating and review on there would mean the world to us. So thank you in advance for all of that.

Luke

Yes.

Cindra

As always thanks for being here, lots of love, and see you on the next episode!

Luke

Byeeee!

Cindra

Bye!

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>