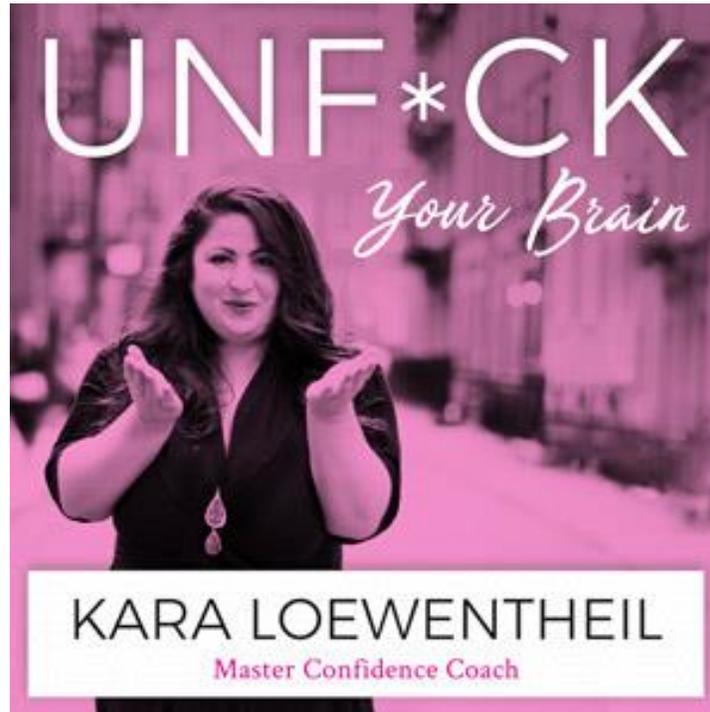


UFYB 224: Loving Your Single Life (Whether You're Dating Or Not): A Conversation with Shani Silver



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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Welcome to *Unf*ck Your Brain*, the only podcast that teaches you how to use psychology, feminism, and coaching, to rewire your brain and get what you want in life. And now here's your host, Harvard Law School grad, feminist rockstar, and master coach, Kara Loewentheil.

Kara: Okay my chickens, sometimes a conversation is so nice you need to have it twice. So I have been on Shani Silver's podcast twice, and it is high time that she was here. Shani is a friend of mine who I met when I went on her podcast. That's how I make friends these days.

And she is a - I don't know what you'd call yourself. A single woman's guide to happiness extraordinaire. Something like that. I'll let her introduce herself. She's an author, which is the most primary reason she's here right now.

She has a new book out all about - I'm going to just - the vaguest summary. Embracing your singlehood, not waiting for a partner to live your life. She has very strong thoughts about online dating, which we will definitely discuss because I'm actually a fan of online dating. So we will get into all of that. Shani, anything in that - let's call delightfully rambling introduction that you want to add about yourself?

Shani: My favorite introductions are the ones that my friends give me because we all like hearing about ourselves and I want to know what my friends think of me. But you nailed it.

I'm an author and a podcaster and I'm an advocate for a happy singlehood. I think that's the way I like to describe it these days. I think there's too much push-pull and separation and us versus them when it comes to being happily single and contentedly single and confidently single, versus being on the hunt or wanting a relationship.

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I like to think that a happy singlehood and wanting a relationship can coexist beautifully. I know they can coexist because that's how I live every day. And I've seen too much separation between feeling good about your singlehood, enjoying it, treasuring it, and searching for a partner.

And I want to kind of bridge that gap and help singles, particularly single women find far more self-worth in their singlehood than we have been encouraged to have. Because I think that self-worth contributes to an improvement in so many areas of life, and I include relationships in that too. As far as what the book is about...

Kara: Hold on. Let's not get to the book yet. There's so much we could talk about. Let's just talk about something because you just said something really important that I think is a place we really converge and that listeners to this really need to hear, which is it's not only possible to have a happy single life and want a relationship.

But in fact, that's the only way you're going to find a relationship worth having. This is one of the big things that I work with people on and that I teach and that people work on in The Clutch in relationships or anywhere else, which is you have to learn how to at least accept and ideally see the good in and love things about your current situation if you want to actually be able to change it someday, or if you want to hold both of those things.

Because you cannot go through your single and dating life telling yourself you hate being single and you hate dating and hoping to find a happy relationship that way. You're training your brain to look for all the bad things about your relationship life and your relationship status and your romantic persona and experience.

And you cannot complain your way to a happy relationship, you can't complain your way to making money and feeling good about it. So I think

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that these things, you're totally right. Society sets them up as either you hate dating and you want to find a relationship, you hate being single, you want to find a relationship, or you're happy single and you therefore have no need for human intimacy or companionship anymore, or no desire for it, which is such nonsense.

Shani: It's the biggest eye roll. It is the biggest eye roll. To say nothing of the fact that a relationship cannot fix you, making more money cannot fix you. These things do not fix you.

Kara: And Shani and I have tried. That's why we've written books and have coaching programs and podcasts. Listen, if you could fix it by changing your circumstance, 100% I'd teach you how to do that. But that's not what happens.

I am definitely going through - when Shani and I met, was I with my former boyfriend when I met you? But I've been through both. I was much more actively in the journey of working out the stuff I need to work out to get into the kind of relationship I wanted, and I - even being a coach and knowing this, I had no fucking idea.

I did all of this work to love myself, love my single life, and become open to love. I mean, we can talk about this later. But a lot of the people who are looking for love and think that they're so open to love are actually deeply emotionally and commitment avoidant, are not available for it really.

But once I even became available for it, I would say it was like, two weeks of fun, and then my brain was like, here's all the shit you've been avoiding in intimacy and relationships. And I am now working through all of that stuff in the context of my relationships.

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I had been in relationships before but this is the most serious one I've been in. It is not a fun picnic and I miss being single. I mean, I love my partner and I could be single if I wanted. And I'm doing this work on purpose because I think this is where my growth is right now.

But like, there's a lot of stuff I miss about being single. So you have to be able to love where you are or you're never going to be able to change it because just remember, you are training your brain to think a certain way.

You train your brain to think that your romantic situation sucks and you can't find somebody and there's not enough love in the world, even if you end up in a relationship, you're going to be in a relationship with those same fucking thoughts. There's not enough love in the world, my relationship situation is a problem I need to solve, and you're not going to be happy that way either.

Shani: Do you find that the stories we tell ourselves, the narratives we tell ourselves, however we came by them, whether we were socialized into them or bred into them or however they've been reinforced, do you find that they can sometimes literally close off your options from your viewpoint? Not just love, but so many different areas of life that if you let your assumed narratives lead, you can't even fathom different ones.

Kara: Yeah, 100%. And I think part of what happens in - everybody has different areas they do this in. For me it was dating. But other people, it's like business or money or their profession or their creative pursuits or having kids or buying a house, whatever.

The place where you have decided that the outcome has something to do with your self-worth or ego is the place that you are not truly available to experience it. You actually can't experience intimacy and what that means when you are using somebody else to prop up your own self-worth.

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When dating or finding a partner is about finally being allowed to feel good about yourself. That's why you have to feel good about yourself in the front end because otherwise what happens is you end up trying to date people because of what you think they will give you permission to think about yourself. And then it's not even really about them. And then you're not equipped for actual intimacy anyway.

Shani: I mean, how many parallels can we draw between the dating industry and the dieting industry?

Kara: Totally. So talk to us about that. You have a whole manifesto about this. Tell us.

Shani: Oh, about the dating industry?

Kara: About the dating industry and the dieting industry and how you see those. Because I think we agree on some of this and we have different thoughts on some of it, so I want to talk about it. But tell us your theory.

Shani: My direct experience is most heavily with the dating industry. And essentially, there are a lot of ways I could describe it but I'll just say it and where we disagree, we disagree.

Kara: Oh yeah, don't censor yourself. We're allowed to disagree on this podcast. This is not Kara's only truth podcast. I have weight loss coaches on the podcast sometimes.

Shani: Oh cool. So I call the dating industry paying for maybes. That's how I think of it.

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Kara: Shani has a way with a turn of phrase, I'm just going to say. She's a copywriter and a journalist. I mean, she's just got that...

Shani: Hey, it's a living. I think that it's paying for maybes because from my point of view, you know the old - this old chestnut, why are you single? That question.

Kara: Why do people call that an old chestnut? I've always wondered about this. Why is that a phrase?

Shani: I don't know but I love it so much.

Kara: Are chestnuts hard to get into? Are they easy to get into?

Shani: You know what, I'll Google it when we're done and I'll tell you.

Kara: So yes, you just haven't found the right person. Is that the old chestnut?

Shani: No. The question, why are you still single? And in my view, the only answer ever is because you haven't met your partner. That's what I think the answer is. And yet, the dating industry - first of all, I think the dating industry is incorrectly named because I think it's more of a focus on relationships and communication.

And I mean, things that I've seen you do so beautifully, the way that you talk about communication in partnership and showing up for both yourself and your partner in relationship, things like that, these are beautiful things and these are absolutely things where coaching is so necessary and beautiful.

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But I don't believe that you can be coached into being in the right place at the right time to meet your partner. I just don't think you can. And I think that we're single because we haven't met our partners yet.

Kara: Okay, so I want to talk about this because this is something, a place where I think we don't necessarily agree and I think it's an interesting conversation and I want people to hear the different perspectives on it.

So, I obviously think that - I guess there's a couple of places. I think yes, there's some amount of - or probably there's some amount of timing or chance. I mean, on the other hand, people used to find their partners in a village of 100 people if that's all there was.

So people have been falling in love and having sex in small and large communities for all of human history. So to me, even if I'm going to say like, yes, okay, there's some element of chance, my personal experience is that - and with so many of my clients has been that the way you think about yourself and relationships impacts how you show up in dating.

So I don't think that - that's not a problem because we're always operating to the best of our capacity and learning to evolve to the best of our ability. So when I look back at my dating history, I'm not like, "Those relationships were a waste because I hadn't fully worked out this stuff yet, or because I was dating somebody avoidant."

Still a great relationship in some ways, there was a reason I was in it, I was getting something out of it, I cared about that person. But to me, I think here's so much - I don't know how to reconcile your idea of it's just timing, when you meet the right person it works, with my experience that if you haven't done some work on your thoughts and your beliefs about yourself and your beliefs about dating, your beliefs about romance and whatever

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else, you are not showing up in a way that really will make you available for generally the kind of relationship you want.

I would have said that I deeply wanted a relationship and was so ready for intimacy and that's all I wanted. That's not really what was going on. Yes, there was some genuine desire for that, but also I had a lot of desire for validation and I had a lot of desire to be chosen.

And I had all this socialization and family and whatever stuff that I had to unpack. My current partner - I don't make a relationship success be like, you have to be together forever. But this relationship is certainly the best I've had, the most honest, the most intimate, the most moving towards things together.

And I would never have dated this painter five years ago, 10 years ago, 15 years ago. I would not have - literally, if somebody was too into me, I thought that meant there was something wrong with them, which is a pretty common thing when you have low self-esteem.

So I'm curious how you reconcile that. Do you think of it in a more globalistic way of like, the timing includes the work you're doing so that you're in a headspace that you can connect with someone?

Shani: I think what is meant for you will not miss you. And I think the narrative that tells single people, particularly single women, that they're not in relationships or they're not finding people because they haven't worked on themselves enough yet, I have a hard time with that.

I have a really hard time with that. I think what comes into our lives when it comes into our lives is meant to be. It's bisharat in a way. And you just said

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it, you're right. If this partner that you're currently with, they come into your life in years prior, you wouldn't be in the relationship that you're in now.

And timing has a lot to do with why you're in the relationship you're in now, and I agree with you in that any relationship we're in, it's never a failure. It's all an education. Whether we're learning about relationships, whether we're learning about ourselves, it's all an education.

And I think what comes into our lives when it comes into our lives, for the reason it comes into our lives is meant to be there. And I just really don't like the narrative that if you're single and you don't want to be, hire this dating coach and they will help you find your partner.

I really don't like that, but I also equate dating apps with that. It's all let's throw single women's money at the wall and see what sticks, without really having to be accountable to that single woman who just gave us our money. That's where I have a hard time with the dating industry.

Kara: I would definitely distinguish between Tinder and a mindset dating coach. To me, those are pretty different experiences and things with different levels of accountability to a person and different levels of priority.

Tinder is just trying to make money, obviously, so that's whatever they're doing. I mean, ideally your dating coach, or if coaching someone on dating, or the dating coaches I know are honestly - don't give a shit actually. This is the secret of dating coaching. They mostly don't give a shit if you actually find a partner. It's just a vehicle to help you work on your relationship with yourself, which...

Shani: Let's call it that. Then let's call it that. Let's call it that instead of dating, but we're using the word dating because we know we're going to

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grab single women with that word because of the shame associated with being single.

Kara: I don't think it's always because of the shame. I think that most marketing, especially coaching marketing, this is something I work on in my marketing all the time is how can I be as transparent as possible about what the true root of the problem is, while also acknowledging that other people who are - it's like with diet culture and body positivity.

People who are fully enmeshed in diet culture cannot hear the message, "You just need to learn to love your body and then everything's going to be great." There's this bridging of how to communicate, in the same way that you actually - and I think you say very clearly, there's nothing wrong with wanting to be in a relationship.

So if you want to be in a relationship and you're not, and for you that's a problem in your life, to me, I think I don't find offering coaching or people going to therapy for it or whatever to be any more predatory than helping people build their business or get a consistent exercise routine or whatever else they want.

And we're just not going to be eye to eye on this, but I want to talk about something you brought up that I think is - we are aligned on, which is the difference between the narratives for single women and single men, and why the dating industry - there certainly are dating services or coaches or whatever aimed at men, but not nearly as many. So let's talk a little about that. How do you see that socialization being different and how does that show up differently?

Shani: Oh, you mean the fact that single men are a catch and single women are a burden?

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Kara: Yeah, you know, that one.

Shani: Yeah.

Kara: Or that single men are single by choice, and that single women are single because something went wrong.

Shani: Honestly, it kind of goes back to the dating industry because who can make money off of you if you're happy?

Kara: But I mean, that would also appeal to men, right? So I don't think the dating industry didn't cause this patriarchal socialization. It's an outgrowth of it.

Shani: Correct. The patriarchal socialization is what gets women to spend buckets of money on self-improvement of all kinds. And I use the word self-improvement in massive air quotes obviously. But it's just pretty basic. Go to Walgreens. Go to Walgreens, walk down the aisle that is intended for women and walk down the end cap that is intended for men.

It's a double standard as old as time. It really is that repeated reinforcement that single men are so valuable and single women are a dime a dozen. By the way, I also find that reinforced in dating apps where faces are being swiped through like a buffet.

It's unnecessarily painful, it's unnecessarily reinforcing that single women have no value, that there are more where you came from. We are overabundant and single men are somehow rarities. But I really don't feel like there are different volumes of genders on the planet. I don't know.

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Kara: It's very small. More children assigned male at birth are born, but then more of them die in childhood accidents. So there's a few more women, but totally. It's obviously created scarcity. It's a false scarcity that's created so that women will feel - women are taught that they're in competition for this scarce resource, and that's what's used to keep women willing to perform elaborate grooming standards and not ask - facilitate inequality and not ask for too much in relationship and whatever.

But I think it's so important for - I mean, yes, you can see it in Walgreens, but it's always useful to spell it out for the podcast listeners that if you are single and you don't like being single, you need to look at why you don't like being single, right?

What are the thoughts behind it? And you're going to find that a lot of your thoughts are not really just created by you. One of the exercises I often have people do when I'm trying to teach coaches about internalized socialization is like, I have them write down all the thoughts they have about a certain category of person that they belong to.

Could be single, could be married, could be a mom, could be a racial identity, or religious identity, whatever. What are all the thoughts you have about those types of people? What were you taught about that type of person? And now what are your thoughts about yourself?

Notice how there's a lot of overlap there. So when you feel bad about being single, I think this is something that's so important to also distinguish because it goes back to the first thing we were talking about, about how to be happy with your single life.

The things that make you unhappy about being single are not things that are inherent to being single. They are your thoughts about being single and

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what you make that mean about yourself, that something has gone wrong, that you're doing it wrong.

And I think ironically - not ironically, but I actually agree with you that the message that people of any gender, but obviously it's mostly aimed at women, are single because they're doing it wrong, or there's something wrong with them is inaccurate because I just don't think it's about right or wrong.

But I do think that people's thoughts create results in their lives. So maybe that is a cleaner way to say this. But that's also true for people in relationships they don't truly want to be in, or unhappy relationships, or anything else. Our thoughts create those results for us.

We're releasing this episode right before Valentine's Day because that's obviously a kind of high pain point I think for not just single people actually. I feel like all the bullshit around it also makes people in relationships crazy. That's the perfect example.

I think if you're single and you think you hate Valentine's Day because you're single, wait until you're in a relationship and then you hate it because your partner's not doing the thing you imagined they would do, and you don't feel as ecstatically happy as you thought you would feel.

I mean, this is - I often wish I could just snap my fingers and give my students what they think they want so they could just experience how it doesn't change their thoughts and feelings at all. So tell us, what do you see come up for women around Valentine's Day and how do you handle it?

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Do you ignore it totally altogether, do you embrace it as a this is how I buy myself all the chocolate in the world? Shani's a baker so she probably bakes some sort of elaborate beautiful...

Shani: There's an umbrella thought for me that goes over all of our discussion today and it's certainly the first thing that I need people to understand if they're going to read my book or listen to my work or anything.

Because for me, this reframe is sort of the core of moving through any other thoughts we have around singlehood, and that is a very blatant truth that being single is not wrong. Being single is not a wrong state of existence. It isn't. We have been fed narrative after narrative telling us that single is a wrong way to exist as an adult human being...

Kara: Or even a teenage human being.

Shani: Even as a teenage human being.

Kara: I was basically like, by the time you're 12.

Shani: Yes. But being single is not wrong and for some reason, that thought just shakes single people like a snow globe. Because all we've ever been fed is that single is wrong.

Kara: And single for specific types of single. So if somebody is widowed, then we don't think being single is wrong, at least not at first. If you play with the thought, it just helps you see what the judgments are that are embedded in it.

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Because somebody who's alone on Valentine's Day may have incredibly self-critical negative sad thoughts if they think it's because they're unlovable and nobody loves them and they're not good enough. But if they'd been deeply in love and the person had then suddenly died and they were single, they'd have a whole different set of thoughts about it.

It's not the status of singledom that is making you feel the way you have. It's the stories we're fed about it and what we're told to think and believe about it, based on this sort of narrative, as you said, of if you're widowed then you were doing okay and then there was just fate involved.

Obviously I'm not making light of the grief that widows experience. I have an amazing student who talks about that on her podcast. But just in terms of this judgment around singleness. If you went into the institution, then at least you accomplished that. It's set up as this achievement or accomplishment that you're supposed to be trying to get to.

Shani: Yeah, then we have terrible narratives around divorce as well. We have awful failure messaging around divorce when in reality, something that needed to end, something that ran its course, something that for any number of reasons needed to end did end, and isn't that a good thing? Can't we learn to be proud of ourselves for moving forward from that as opposed to assigning failure messaging to it?

Kara: That is such a - I usually say you're in a relationship until you break up or one of you dies. But every relationship ends in one of those two things. And when somebody passes away, if you don't happen to have broken up first, it's a total accident, maybe if we lived to 200 everybody would get to 150 and be like, Jesus, I'm done, I'm out. Humans can't stand each other for any longer than this.

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It's that whole idea that a relationship is an achievement or an accomplishment that then can be tarnished retroactively or fail somehow because we're seeing it as a thing to obtain, rather than a relational experience with another human being. We are in multiple kinds of relationships already unless we're hermits in a cave, in which case we're not listening to the podcast.

Shani: Hi if you are. Greetings.

Kara: Yeah, I mean, hermit in a house sometimes. But I think all of that is what leads to this kind of orientation towards a relationship as if it is this goal, this accomplishment, this thing you do or get, as opposed to you're just living your life and then also, sometimes you have sex with this person, or they're in your house.

Shani: You said a very important word. You said the word also. Because it's not my life is incomplete or lacking or a failure until I find someone. My life is whole and wonderful and as full as I choose to make it. And then when I'm in a relationship, I also have that relationship. It is an addition to my life, rather than competing some fictitious missing piece.

Kara: And you have to create that for yourself. This is a place your thoughts create your results also. If you're sitting around being like, my life isn't full because I don't have a partner, no, your life isn't full because you're not traveling because you don't want to travel and see the couples and then feel bad about it, you're not whatever, lifting weights even though you kind of want to deadlift because you have thoughts about what the men in the gym - whatever is going on that you are sort of delaying and putting off your life until you're in a relationship, that's the reason your life doesn't feel full. It's not because you don't have a partner.

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Shani: Correct. And I have to just give a massive auditory hug to anyone who's listening to this and has felt that lack and any sort of failure, any sort of shame around not having someone. Because we have been fed this story.

Kara: Oh my God, I had that until I would say eight months ago.

Shani: We come by this stuff very honestly. So self-kindness and understanding where these narratives have come from is so unnecessary. And I don't mean to say that reframing singlehood for ourselves and learning that it's not wrong is a finger snap. It's not. It takes practice and time and patience.

I was miserably single and aggressively online dating and real life dating for a decade without one relationship resulting. And those relationships weren't resulting I think for a variety of reasons. And you and I have different reasons why those didn't come.

But I think they're both true and I think they can both coexist. Because there were timing issues, but there were also massive self-worth and thought patterning issues and this overall massive duvet of misery that I was swaddling myself involuntarily. So it does take time and it does take practice and it's allowed to. But we get to ignore Valentine's Day. I just want to point that out. And...

Kara: Also if you're in a relationship you're allowed to ignore it. It is not actually a mandatory national holiday.

Shani: What if - and I'm just spit balling here, but what if we all just started ignoring it? Would it not go away? I don't know if you've seen this in your email inbox as of late, but there are brands, very smart ones, that are

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allowing people to opt out of Valentine's Day marketing messaging and I keep thinking like, please do this for Mother's Day and Father's Day, please do this for all of the holidays where you are just...

Maybe they're finally starting to understand that the unsubscribes spike at certain times of year, and maybe we can combat that by giving people options. I know it's just something as simple as an email but when it's thousands of emails, it just reminds you over and over again of something that you think you don't get to participate in.

I don't know, it's so strange. I kind of like Valentine's Day. I like love and I like affection and I like pink and purple and red and flowers and love chocolate.

Kara: Listen, this is my color palette. It's not my fault Valentine's Day took it over.

Shani: That's fine. And there's just so much messaging that you choose whether or not you listen to it. You choose whether or not it's for you. And I'm sorry that we don't have more societal support for the choices that maybe are new and need to be made.

But until we have done, it doesn't mean that you're closed off from reframing the way that you think about Valentine's Day and experience it for yourself. I think women have a lot more choice than we've ever been led to believe we have.

And practicing making choices for yourself about how you are going to participate in the world, how you are going to show up in the world, that's one of the ways that we rewrite these narratives for ourselves.

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Kara: Yeah, I mean I think you can't exercise your choice freely and know what you really want when you have your ego and your self-worth tied up in whatever the thing is. That's true about do you really want to have a business and make a lot of money? Is it just all your friends are doing it?

Do you really want to write a book? Or is it just that your parents always told you you should write a book and you want their validation? Whatever it is, your friends from your PhD program are all getting book deals. Whenever you have your ego or worth wrapped up in something, you actually can't make a free choice about it.

So when we are so convinced the one thing we want most in the world is a relationship but our self-worth stuff is all tied up in it, we actually don't know what we want. The most profound shift for me, I actually had just recently started dating my partner but I don't think the relationship would have continued if I hadn't had this shift was that I had a breakup of a more established relationship a few weeks before my 40th birthday.

And this is why people need coaches. When you're in it, you have the problem framed wrong. I kept thinking I just need to get better and better at being alone, which as I look back, I'm like, yeah, of course that makes sense because I felt totally in control and safe that way.

But that actually was the problem. Not the solution. But because I was fucked up in the brain about it, my brain thought that was the solution. So I was like, okay, for your birthday you're not going to be with this person that you've broken up with, which is not my current partner.

We had just gone on a couple of dates. It was way too early to spend my birthday with him. So I was like, okay, I'll go upstate alone to practice being alone. And it was like, so emblematic of the way I was thinking, which is

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exactly for me and my experience what was blocking me from the type of relationship I wanted.

I had been in many relationships, but was that I was thinking of it as this on/off switch. You're in a romantic relationship or you're single, it's like you're alone or you're in a romantic relationship. And I was like, okay, the answer is to be even more comfortable being alone.

And then I had this moment where my mother had actually done this really sweet thing where she used this service where people - I can't remember if I've told this story on the podcast yet or not - where people send in little video tributes to you of what they love about you.

It's basically like having toasts at a party. You're just listening to your loved ones, but you have 20 of them. They're each two minutes long. So I was just bawling by the end of it. And I had all these friends who live upstate texting me like let's get together, and I had this total breakthrough moment, which let me just be clear, I spent 10 years building up to.

This is not like, you do not always get to have one of these and it's not overnight. Where I was like, oh, there's so much love in my life. I'm in so many relationships already, I am so fixated right now on the specific type of connection, or specific type of love, as if they're even different.

And actually, the solution is not for me to be more alone so I can get even better at being alone, which I already know how to do. The solution is for me to receive all this love that is already in my life.

So I spent time with all these different friends that weekend and I really don't think that I only was sort of set free from this prison of obsession

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about a certain kind of relationship by seeing that there was actually in some way nothing special about that kind of relationship.

And I don't mean nothing special. I mean, I don't have sex with all my friends, although some people do. There are things that set it apart. I spend more time with my partner. We have a different kind of intimacy in our relationship.

But fundamentally, love is love and relation is relation and being in connection with people is being in connection with people. And there is nothing something radically different about it. And releasing that is the only thing that allowed me to actually open up to a deeper connection and be more available for that intimacy.

So I think that when I think about what was the biggest mindset block that was getting in my way, they're all the ones we've talked about, that we're force-fed. There's something wrong with me, there's scarcity, there's not enough. But it was like, thinking this was this special, prized, different kind of thing.

Shani: But why wouldn't you? We've exulted romantic partnership above everything and balance is out the window.

Kara: I'm not like a mystery why I thought this. But I'm just saying, I want to offer to the people listening who maybe have never considered - who still have that thought process because that's what we've been taught. It can be a situation where the more you prize it, the less you can even be open to it in some way, or you can experience it, or you can whatever the setting for it would be, recognize it, connect to it.

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Shani: I see it as making it seem far too precious in comparison to all the other relationships. It's this fragile piece of fabergé and if you look at it wrong, it's going to crack.

Kara: And that impoverishes your life when you're single or in a relationship.

Shani: Correct.

Kara: Either way. One of my close friends and I call each other our platonic - we're not really platonic life partners because we don't live in the same state, we're not really integrated in that way. But in terms of our commitment to the friendship and how whatever, her husband knows, when I started dating my partner, I was like, just to be clear, high chance we end up living in a commune with these people, this is my - so I think the more you, if like Shani, you love love, then love all the love that's already in your life and the people you already have to love.

Shani: Absolutely.

Kara: Tell us about your book and where to get it.

Shani: Well, I was going to tell you this; if you are worried that you have ego around book publishing, just self-publish one. Because the amount of heavy lifting and solitude that is involved in publishing a book, you're not going to do that if it's just an ego move. It's too hard. It is just too hard. There's no way.

So my book is called A Single Revolution: Don't Look for a Match. Light One. And I wrote it for anyone who's exhausted. I wrote it for anyone who has been on the dating grind for years, who has been putting in effort and

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seeing zero ROI on it for years. Anyone who is exhausted and fed up and just spent.

It's for anyone who's spent. There is so much joy and fulfillment and wholeness and beauty in single life that we're ignoring because we're so laser-focused on finding a partner because we think that's going to fix us or whatever reason it is.

Kara: We think we ascend to some other plane of consciousness, as if you're in a different - it's like you think you skip over in the multiverse or something. Your life single is your life with a partner is your life with three partners or zero partners or 12 chickens or whatever.

Most of your time is with yourself and in your own head no matter what. So how do you make that a beautiful place to live? And if you occasionally have somebody else there you also have sex with, great.

Shani: Great. And you can do both. That's the other thing this book does.

Kara: You have to do both.

Shani: You have to do both. You have to locate your happiness within your singlehood.

Kara: Actually, rephrase, you don't have to do both. You can just be single.

Shani: Do whatever you want. You can do whatever you want.

Kara: You can do whatever you want, but if you ever do want to be in a happy relationship, that is going to be intrinsically connected to happiness in your single life, happiness with yourself because relationships may come

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and go, whatever it is, whether it's your thought work or timing and the universe, or however you choose to think about that.

Or the perfect person, and then you get hit by a bus. Those things can always happen so you can't base your willingness to live your life fully on what your romantic status is.

Shani: No, you can't. And you get to choose a happy singlehood and a desire for a relationship. You get to have both. And you also get to meet people and have relationships. There's nothing about being happily single that precludes you from connecting with future partners.

I've seen a lot of marry yourself messaging, or swearing off dating messaging. I'm like, who is making you do this? Why are you doing this? You don't have to. They're not exclusive. You get to be a happy, content, confident, joyous single person, and really look forward to your next relationship at the same time, and this is a book that I hope teaches us how to do it.

And there's a lot of shedding of shame involved, there's a lot of increasing our self-worth and de-centering the over-importance of dating, the over-importance of that romantic partner to find more balance. And to just - I want people to know that they're allowed to love their single life, and if you never felt that permission before, I hope this is the book that gives it to you.

Kara: I love that. So obviously you should buy Shani's book, but I'm going to also give you a mindset experiment you can do to help with this. This is something I used a lot, which is just imagine that tomorrow you meet your person.

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What would you miss from your single life today? Imagine that you met your person and now yes, you have sex and love and intimacy, and also you have to agree on what to have for dinner, and they want to live someplace you don't want to live, and you have to have their ugly La-Z-Boy chair in your apartment and sometimes they're cranky.

Whatever it is, just imagining that. Because what happens is we think it's never coming, I'm never going to get - it's this far off thing that we're idolizing. And then we're bling to the beauty of our current present experience, which listeners of the podcast know, that's where all suffering is, is resistance of what is, non-presence in the moment.

So I found that a useful hack for the brain is imagine you met that person tomorrow. How would you enjoy your last single day? What would you do today that would make you appreciate so much the beauty, joy, control of being single and only having to please yourself and getting to do whatever you want?

Shani: I like to think that my last single day and my first partnered day will look pretty much the same because that's how I'll know that I'm in the right relationship for me.

Kara: I just got chill. Yes, that's because you have - I hate to break it to you - done the mindset work to get there.

Shani: Of course I have, of course I have.

Kara: Alright my friend, thank you so much for coming on. Everybody go buy Shani's book. Is there a website they should go? Do you have a website? Where can people find you?

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Shani: Yes, Shani Silver is an incredibly Google-able name. Shanisilver.com has all the information you need on my book, my podcast, everything.

Kara: Yeah, she has a podcast too. I've been on the podcast, A Single Serving.

Shani: Twice.

Kara: Twice. You can listen to me talk about dating anxiety. Thank you for coming on, my friend.

Shani: Thank you so much for having me.

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