

**UFYB Bonus: De-Centering Romantic Relationships  
from Your Life:  
A Conversation with The Girls Gotta Eat Podcast**



**Full Episode Transcript**

With Your Host

**Kara Loewentheil**

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# **UFYB Bonus: De-Centering Romantic Relationships from Your Life: A Conversation with The Girls Gotta Eat Podcast**

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.

Hello my chickens. I have two important things to tell you. The first is that I enjoy this bonus episode with the host of *Girls Gotta Eat* which is a sentiment that I always agree with. We talk a lot about being single, choosing to have children versus choosing to remain childless, aging. There's just so many great topics in this episode that we're going to dive into.

But before we dive into all that I wanted to put on all of my chickens' radar that normally historically I have not really ever chosen to do public speaking. We get a lot of requests all the time, of course and I generally just have said no. That hasn't been something that I've been prioritizing in building my business, and in my lifestyle. But now that we are gearing up for the release of my book next year, *Take Back Your Brain*. I am starting to entertain speaking requests.

So, given my schedule and my kind of commitments, I'm not able to come and speak for free to your book club, or something like that but. If you run an organization or on the board of an organization or work in a corporation or a school, a university, something like that and you have some budget for speakers. I would love to hear from you and hear what you would like to see me come and talk to your audience about. I can do more kind of workshop format, I can do fireside speaker chats.

I can at the kind of higher investment level do more kind of traditional keynote talks. Really just depends on what is the right fit and the schedule and all of that. So this is something I am opening up now that we are

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moving back towards the book. So I'm starting to book up my speaking for 2024 right now. And I want to hear from you if you have somewhere you'd like me to come speak, please visit [unfuckyourbrain.com/speaking](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/speaking), all one word [unfuckyourbrain.com/speaking](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/speaking) and you can submit a request.

Tell us a little bit about who you want me to come speak to. What you want me to talk about, what your budget is and we will figure out if it's a good fit. I am super excited to meet some of you in person, come share this work, this life changing thought work with your colleagues, your direct reports, your alumni club, your corporation, your university, your students, whoever you've got, I want to come talk to them.

So [unfuckyourbrain.com/speaking](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/speaking), come, submit your request. We're booking the first half of 2024 right now and maybe into the fall. And in the meantime, until then let's listen into this bonus conversation with the girls of *Girls Gotta Eat*.

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Kara: Hello, my chickens. I am here with two guests and I'm extremely jealous because they have a hot pink neon sign with the name of their podcast behind them. You can't see it, but now I desperately want one. And feel like I need to get one for behind me. So we're already off to a good start. So I am here today with Rayna Greenberg and Ashley Hesseltine, who are the hosts of *Girls Gotta Eat*, which is such a good podcast name. And my favorite thing about this name is just that it could be in so many different things but we're going to talk about what it actually means.

So I would love as I told them before we started, I think that women should talk about their own accomplishments. So I would love to hear kind of how

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you guys came to the podcast, how you started it and then tell us how big and amazing it is.

Speaker: Thank you for having us. We'll tell you it and we'll also send you the neon sign person [**crosstalk**].

Speaker: Yeah, we love her, this is her second version. We had to enlarge it when we moved to LA because everything's teeny, tiny in New York.

Speaker: Everything's bigger in California.

Kara: I'm still in New York, so I need the mini version.

Speaker: You can have the mini version. We can just send you our old one.

Speaker: Yeah, you can have the old one if you want.

Speaker: You love the name.

Kara: Listen, whatever, I'm *Girls Gotta Eat* New York now, [**crosstalk**].

Speaker: Put it in your kitchen.

Kara: There you go. That's a good one.

Rayna: Well, thank you for having us. I'm Rayna. And do you want to say your [**crosstalk**]?

Ashley: Yes. I'm Ashley. I'm the nasally one today. We are both just a little under the weather, but it's fine. We're clear, but yeah, We're *Girls Gotta Eat Podcast*. We've been doing a show about sex, dating, relationships for five

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and a half years. We have been on tour for five years. It is really everything we say from fetishes to finance. So if it applies to sex, dating, relationships, we cover it.

Kara: They're two of my favorite things, so I just really like that.

Speaker: Fetishes and money, us too.

Kara: Yeah. You just covered a lot of my interests right there so I like this.

Rayna: And Ashley always talks about our origin story. I'll kick it to her. But we met six years ago and the rest is history. And we in that time have amassed an amazing audience and following and have incredible people on the. And since launched a premium sex toy business in 2022 and that's our story.

Kara: I think that's a good story. Yeah, well, let's talk.

Rayna: Can I drop any numbers right now.

Ashley: I was trying to be humble. We have over 100 million downloads.

Kara: Yeah, don't be humble. You have what?

Ashley: Yeah. Well, 160 plus sold out live shows internationally.

Kara: Amazing.

Ashley: Yeah. So Rayna is usually, she's the numbers girl. But yeah, we started this in February 2018 and we were newer friends. We had only met a few months prior on this influencer trip. We were both doing this

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influencer thing. My personal trajectory was writing to blogging to Instagram. I had a parody comedy account. I was also doing stand-up comedy and some TV and radio and different things like that. Podcasting seemed like the next natural step for me.

And Rayna had her food blog, and she was in that world. And we both met at a time when we really were trying to figure out the next step. I had recently moved to New York. And was kind of not seeing the end of the influencing income I was doing, but it was just I needed to pivot. And I felt that the podcast was what I wanted to do. And I really wanted to talk about dating and relationships and sex and that's something I'd always been really open about in my life.

And I met Rayna on this trip. We bonded immediately and we're both kind of talking about our careers and where we were. And we had a similar lifestyle in terms of working for ourselves and creating content and being really open in sharing our lives on the internet. And I just asked her to do this podcast at the end of 2017. And it's so funny because I still have the text messages. It's just this special thing I want to frame one day of me being like, "Have you ever thought about a podcast?" And she was like, "Yeah, I actually have."

And I was like, "Would you be willing to share about your life and your sex life?" And she's like, "Yeah, duh. What do you think?" But it was kind of funny because you don't know for sure, you don't know that someone's going to be like, "Wait a minute I thought I would, but my dad's going to hear this or people I grew up with, and I don't want to be judged or shamed or anything." But it was no issues there.

Rayna: The opposite.

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Ashley: Yeah, we took off running right away and the format has stayed the same. I mean we still catch up, talk about our lives and have people tuning in to see what's going on with us. But we bring on guests and we do solo episodes where we really tackle one topic. It's never been this, let's just shoot the shit for an hour. So we have learned so much in the last five years. We feel like we have all the knowledge in the world. We've interviewed all the foremost experts. We're complete experts ourselves now and it's just been such a fun journey.

Kara: I think any journey that ends in you launching your own sex toy line, that worked out, that went well. That's always a sign things are going in the right direction.

Ashley: Absolutely. And if you're like, "I've been in business with this person for five years, let me start another business with her."

Kara: [**Crosstalk**] renewing your vows or this marriage is going well, let's have a baby.

Rayna: Yeah. So we have a media company and we're like, "Let's start an ecommerce and tech business together." So it's been a lot of learning and a lot of fun and I feel really proud and honored and so does Ashley, to just give people orgasms and enhance their sex lives.

Kara: So good. Alright, we're going to get to where people can find the sex toys at the end. So I feel like I have a couple of different things I want to talk about with you guys. But they're all circling around kind of something that I think is really an overlap between our missions, which is telling the truth about women's lives and helping them make peace with whatever choices they've made, even if those things are unconventional, or even if

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those things are different. Not feeling like you have to fit into all the little boxes that society tells you, you have to fit into.

So I kind of wanted to start talking about age. I know Ashley, you recently turned 40 and you had an episode talking about the anxieties you had around that, which I think is something that I see this in women I coach a lot. That even women who sort of feel like, yeah, I feel I'm a feminist and I've done my work on my body image. And I feel all empowered. And then as they start approaching 40 or whatever age is that age to them. Those old thoughts start to creep up. So I'd love to hear kind of what your anxiety was about and kind of how you dealt with that.

Ashley: It was a combination of things swirling around in my head for why I felt that. I for one, just didn't feel like I identified with it. I was just like, "I'm a girl in my 30s, thriving and being single and crushing it professionally and doing all these things." And I joke that you say girl in your 30s. You don't say girl in your 40s, you say woman in your 40s. And not that I think of myself as a girl, but it was this hump and this next era. And there is part of it just being a woman in entertainment and just value being placed on youth.

And I don't like to buy into that too hard, that certainly wasn't the sole reason. I think there are so many women crushing it, they're in their 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, whatever it is. You have Martha Stewart On the cover of Sports Illustrated. I think things have certainly changed and all of the women that I look up to and aspire to be are 40s and older but it was still on my mind. I think that there are obviously double standards.

And even if we're just talking about physical appearance, men get hotter when they age and women are over here trying to fight time and gravity to still be perceived as beautiful in society standards. So there was that,



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you're thinking, did I accomplish everything I wanted to by this age it just was a big deal to me. I didn't feel so much like this when I turned 30. It felt like the end of something and the start of something new. And I really just didn't want to be single. I had loved being single, no one loved it more than me.

I think it was the best time in my life. I think there's so much power in being single and creating this life for yourself and doing all the things and making friends and thriving in your professional life and achieving success and all the things that you do when you're not in a romantic partnership. But I was ready to start that next phase of life and be in love, and with somebody and have a partner. So that was weighing on me too. I just felt like that would make a difference. And it's just what I wanted. I mean, I've been talking about it since the beginning of the year.

This is the year I really want this deep down. I hadn't really felt that prior. So that was part of it. And it was just a bunch of different things and I grappled with it because I wanted to be so excited. I wanted to really own it and be so excited and just be posting on social media and inspire other people the way that I felt when I saw Chelsea Handler turn 40 or Beyoncé turn 40 or whoever it may be who you look up to. And I was like, "I want to be that." I wanted to get people excited to turn this age and not worry about it.

And I got to that point and I was in a relationship. We really defined the relationship right at the buzzer.

Kara: You were like, "Listen, I have a manifesting goal we've got to get to [crosstalk]."

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Ashley: It's the most I've ever manifested everything, I can't even believe it. I had this feeling at the beginning of the year, I was like, "I think I'm going to meet somebody right before I turn 40." And that's exactly when it happened. We weren't dating, but we had the conversation of we're together, we're in a relationship, we're committed on July 8<sup>th</sup> and my birthday is July 9<sup>th</sup>. So it really worked out. And I just was like, "It's my personality, is always to own who I am and I want to be this person. I want to be excited about it."

And so I just kind of also had to decide, so much of it is just having to change your own mind and choose to think about something in a different way or a certain way and just really be true to yourself. So that was kind of what did it for me and it is so genuine. Now I can't bring it up enough. It's turned into this, all Ashley talks about us being 40.

Kara: So what do you think shifted? What are your thoughts about being 40 now?

Ashley: It's funny when you look back and you thought something was a big deal and then it's not. I think that's a lot of things. You're like, "Why did I care about that?" How dramatic was I? So part of it is just, what's the big deal. Part of it is, I have just come into the place where I do want to be someone that other people can look up to, the way that I looked up to women who were older than me when they crossed over into 40. And I feel like that. I see comments and I get messages and I'm like, "I really am in that role that I wanted to be."

And I also just achieved everything I want. I mean, there's still much more to do but I achieved a lot of success. I have a lot of love in my life. I'm with this partner who I'm very much in love with and see a future with. And I have Rayna and we have our businesses and it just felt like I'm really

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happy at this point in my life, how can I not be so excited to have made this life for myself and achieve this and embrace this age?

Kara: Do you have thoughts about this Rayna, do you struggle with kind of thinking about aging and whatever age you are?

Rayna: I wouldn't say it's my story at the moment, ask me again on the edge of my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday in a couple of years. But I think every woman struggles with it. I remember being 23 and thinking, oh my God, I'm maybe 25 soon. That's so old. I remember being 29 and thinking 30 means something. I think every major milestone, everybody immediately takes stock of their life and says, "Did I find the love I wanted? Did I find the career I wanted, the friendship, the money? Am I good with my family?" I think it's everybody's story around any milestone.

And we say this on the podcast constantly. The podcast is about sex, dating, relationships, but it really, ultimately is about the relationship you have with yourself and building this life you're so proud of and I've done that. So I hope that at every milestone, I'm really proud of where I'm at. And I am single today, but I've been in really wonderful relationships with men that respected me, loved me, dicked me down well. I've built a business with somebody that I really...

Kara: [**Crosstalk**].

Rayna: [**Crosstalk** ], yeah. I've built a business with somebody I really love and respect. And I feel like I've made a really positive mark on the world and I try to be good to other people. So, at every birthday, I think we take stock of our lives and you want to just feel like, have I checked a lot of the boxes that I'm really proud of? And if you haven't then you can start today. I think that Ashley hadn't been in a relationship in a while and she turned 40

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and she met this incredible person who I love, who she loves, and it's a great relationship. And I hate to be like, "It's never too late", because 40 is not that old.

Ashley: I know. We always want to tread carefully because it's not, I hate talking about [**crosstalk**].

Kara: I have a great uncle who met his second wife when he was 80, and then he lived to be 94 and they had a great 14 years.

Rayna: Yeah. So I don't subscribe to this it's never too late. I mean, sometimes you have to pivot and we certainly believe in that. And that goes for the friends that you have around you, what you do in business, the type of people that you're going after romantically, but you can create a whole new life for yourself tomorrow if you want to. I certainly didn't seek out to have a job in media. I had a food Instagram business. I really enjoyed the social media aspect of it and photography and writing my blog.

But I never thought about having this podcast and now I think through doing this I know that we've become these experts in this field. We, like Ashley said, have interviewed everybody in psychology and writing and I'm just so proud of what we've built. And now I'm an expert in that.

Kara: I think the reason women fear aging, is that we're taught that our value and our worth comes from how we look and conforming to these conventional beauty standards. So it's completely natural, because I think women also then feel like they're being a bad feminist or they shouldn't feel this way. But it's totally natural if you've been taught that your sexuality and your youth is the most important thing about you, that you're going to fear that. But I think what you're saying is totally the antidote.

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The way that you don't fear aging is that you live a life that you feel good about now. Where you are the person you want to be now and you are having the impact you want to have now. So you're not like, "Oh, God, the expiration date is coming. My sell by date is ticking down and I'm not going to have that value or that impact or that respect from the world or whatever, when I hit that certain point." Because you're creating it for yourself.

Rayna: I do want to say something about the looks thing that you said. I think it's silly to not acknowledge that everybody cares about how they look and there's different levels to it of course. But we all want to feel beautiful and confident and it would be silly to not admit that yes, of course I have a feeling about how I look today versus how I looked when I was 25. But Ashley and I both try to be really open about, yes, we get Botox or filler. I've had veneers done. I've had my boobs done.

So I like to be honest about it, but both things can exist. You can be nervous and maybe not confident all the time, but also still really like yourself, both things can exist at the same time.

Ashley: And I always want to say that it's easier for us in terms of children, so I don't want children, I never have. Rayna's pretty certain, she still wavers sometimes. But I really feel for women who are approaching a certain age and really want children, it hits different. So I always want to acknowledge that. And there is actually a biological clock and you're thinking about your fertility and your value there too. And that's something that has never had to cross my mind.

So I always just want to speak to that because you talk about women in their late 30s, they're turning 40 and if they want children, that's the top thing that they're even thinking about, so just wanted to add that in.

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Kara: Yeah. I think that socialization is really important there too though, because it's not just that we're taught, we're also taught there's a certain way you're supposed to have children. That's the way that counts. You have to find that partner. And that sort of it all feeds into this narrative that women get that basically, when they find the right person, mostly it's for straight women, man, or they find them. That's going to sort of solve all of these problems in your life. It's going to solve the problem of who you're with. It's going to solve the problem of having children. It's going to solve the problem with being socially acceptable.

So I feel for sure there may be different reasons that you're worried about aging, but I think always that solution is okay, if this is the life I want, if I know I want kids then what's my action plan? What do I need to believe about what I'm capable of or how I can create that family? And how am I going to do that versus sort of feeling I hope he comes along soon. I hope that guy shows up and solves this problem for me.

I think that, I don't know how you feel, I'd be curious to hear because I have talked about this on the podcast before that I was single, I mean I had relationships, but none of them were like I'm building a life with this person. So there was always this, I think that one of the things I loved about that that I really struggled with when I met my current partner, who I also met a month before I turned 40. And I'd always thought I was going to meet my partner when I was 40.

Speaker: I love that story.

Kara: [**Crosstalk**] that the same way was really mourning the loss of the open-endedness of that in some way. I think there was something about being single that felt like, well, this big thing about my life isn't determined yet. Who knows who I'll end up with. And of course, you can have all these

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different fantasies of what that's going to look like. But it really felt something big was undefined, which I actually think was part of what feeling young felt like.

It was feeling like a big area of my life had not been decided yet whereas now I'm like, "Okay, this is the person with all the things we love about him and also the way that he chews or whatever my thing is that makes me crazy." This is the reality and now that's kind of settled for a while. So I'm curious, were you just like, "Yes, great. I feel amazing, I'm all in or did you feel some conflict about that transition?"

Ashley: I love this question. For me it's exactly how I wanted it. I wanted to be a single icon in my 30s, and then I wanted to find a partner at 40. So it worked out. I do feel like I manifested it. But I guess I struggle more talking about marriage because I have a lot of thoughts on marriage and what it really means and where its roots are. And I go back and forth because I am who I am because of my parents' marriage and they're still married 45 years later, but they also have children. And I think there's a lot of value in getting married when you want to have children, have a family. So I look at it two different ways.

For me personally, I was like, "I don't want to buy into this. I don't want to be part of the engagement culture. And I'm not changing my name. I'm going to have a prenup to protect my money. I don't want to do this." And I always tread carefully because I have zero judgment for anybody that wants to do everything traditionally when it comes to marriage, engagements, bridesmaids, whatever the fuck you want. So this is just my personal opinions. And I was like, "I just don't think that's me."

And listen, I'm not engaged, but I have talked about this with my boyfriend because these things, I think they're important to talk about, kids, marriage,

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where you want to live. Those are kind of the three main things and it's important to him. And I was like, "I would do it." I really care for him. If it goes in that direction it's something that I would definitely consider and probably end up doing. And I would do it my way and make it work for me, for us. But that was more of the thing that I struggled with, I was like, "I just don't want to be a wife."

Kara: Really there's so much baggage with that term. That term totally, actually last week's episode of the podcast was, I just did two episodes about my ambivalence about getting engaged and getting married. We are engaged and getting married, but I feel very ambivalent about it. But yeah, I do not think of myself as a wife, that's such a culturally loaded term.

Ashley: Yeah, but I joke, I told my boyfriend one time, I was like, "It's so embarrassing to be a fiancé." And he was like, "What is that statement?" There's something about it. So I don't know. It worked out for me. Rayna can speak to this also. But I really liked being single for most of my 30s. I really liked having Rayna as my partner, really cultivating this circle of female friends we have. And being on this professional journey together and traveling the world and doing all these things. And then really kind of hitting a point where I'm entering kind of a new phase in life and now this is who I am now.

Rayna: I like that you talk about mourning your singledom. I don't think we hear that term applied to women very often. I think that we apply it to men all the time. But it's so hard for men to come around to be in a relationship. But I am somebody who really likes my alone time. I really, really need it. I regenerate from it. I like to sit outside at night by myself on my porch and read a book. I like to spend long periods of time by myself. I like to go where I want to go, when I want to do it. I want to make friends. I want to plan for friends' last minute.



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I get a little anxious when I have too many plans, I have to commit to too many things, I can't relax. So it is hard for me to think about dropping all that for another person. But the people that I have dated and have been really in love with, fold really seamlessly into that.

Kara: [**Crosstalk**] my partner just basically lets me do what I want and that's why.

Rayna: Yeah, because I think that you can provide a lot of value when you aren't needing me time. I plan really fun things. I have great friends. What I do for a living is really exciting. You can be a part of it, Ashley and I do live shows. You can come to the live shows, when I will let you in, which is most of the time, it is really fun, but I do need space. And anybody that I've had really great relationships with is usually pretty similar. They want their own downtime too. They want their space, they enjoy being a part of my life and my friends when they are a part of it.

So, I think it's always about just finding somebody who folds into your brand of craziness, neediness, alone time-ness. And I think that when you find those people, it feels easy. And I've dated people where I've said, it's trying to fit a square peg into a round hole, they won't do it and it feels unnatural. And as much as they maybe look good on paper, you kind of have to abandon those people if you just keep trying and they don't fit into your life the way that you need to.

Kara: Yeah. I mean, I feel there are so few models of what are different ways of having these relationships. I mean (a) we live in New York City, so rent is insane, (b) he has children half the week. And I think I wanted to live together at least in the beginning, but I could totally see us in 20 years being we have two houses next to each other.

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Speaker: That's my dream. Living together is a whole another animal.

Kara: And your house could be [**crosstalk**] and you just come over to my house, which is nothing is ever out of order in here and I don't have to [**crosstalk**].

Speaker: Yes, small spaces are really hard and I'm really attentive about my house, I just am. I like things exactly as I left them. I tidy up constantly. I like to clean. I like to cook and clean everything before I eat. I just, I'm a little anal retentive about where stuff is. And I did live with somebody in New York City, I've lived with three people in my life. One was very short lived and it was because the apartment was so small. And just after COVID time so many people were working from home. So I would leave the house in the morning to go to our studio down the street.

He'd be there and I'd come back and he'd be there and I would just be like, "I don't get any free time" I mean I don't know what people with kids do. I was like, "I don't have any free time from you, let alone children."

Kara: Yeah, I think about Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Is that right? Yeah. They had a compound where they each had a wing and then there was [**crosstalk**].

Speaker: That's the dream. I want a walkway like an airport.

Kara: Yeah, a walkway, that is the dream.

Speaker: I mean I've talked about this with my boyfriend. This is part of my personality is not wanting to live together. And I think we will get there eventually. But you need space. It wouldn't be in the house I'm in now. I

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just think and I've always said my dream is just to live in the same neighborhood, just date forever, come over, spend the night.

Kara: Yeah. And women aren't, as Rayna was saying, it's very culturally accepted for men to be into their bachelor phase and to think men want space, even though of course all the statistics show that marriage is better for men than for women. But the cultural trope is still that men have to be somehow lassoed and then corralled into it or somehow tricked or whatever. But I feel women are socialized to think, okay, well, once you're in a couple, if you become a wife, now you have this enmeshed identity.

Now you have the subservient identity as opposed to encouraging women to think, yeah, you might love somebody and not want to live with them, not want to cook for them, not want to do their laundry.

Speaker: I don't want to be woken up by them. I'm a light sleeper. I can't have you rolling around in the bed.

Kara: Oh my God, don't get me started on this.

Rayna: You know what my perfect scenario is? So I live in a house, there's a wall between the house. It's two houses and there's this gorgeous man that lives on the other side of the wall and he has an entrance on one street and I have an entrance on the other street. So we don't have to see each other going in and out. But if I want to ever have a drink with somebody at night, I text him. He comes over sometime and hangs out with me and Ashley and the dogs during the work day. I love looking at him and having him around. That's my perfect relationship.

Kara: So you're already in your perfect relationship.

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Rayna: We don't sleep together, but once we start sleeping together, it's on.

Kara: That's like one little tweak, you're so close.

Ashley: That's so funny.

Kara: But I think for people listening, I mean one interesting exercise you can do is to ask yourself, what would my ideal scenario look like? If I wasn't worried about money and I wasn't worried about what my mom would think and I wasn't worried about whatever, what would be my ideal scenario? Is it living together? Is it being on two sides of a house? Is it living across town and seeing each other twice a week? I think women don't take the time or even feel the idea is possible of thinking through what is an alternative way of doing these things.

My partner, definitely when he approached me for moving in like he was trying to like attract a feral cat that he had to very slowly and gently.

Speaker: It's important to see people doing it differently. I mean I think a lot of our friends, Hannah Berner, who's a comedian, podcaster.

Kara: Yeah, she's been on my podcast.

Speaker: She's incredible and she's really of this whole deprioritize men from your life. And she's married and she has her own apartment and she's decorated it the way she wants. And I think they're next door to each other. I think they live in the same building. And I think it's nice to see people to look up to, because some of these things are on the newer side. They shouldn't be so novel. It shouldn't be so crazy that a woman would want to have her own space, or that she's not just with her partner all the time.

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But I think it's nice to have role models, for lack of a better word, to be like, "I can do that. That's working for them. That's really cool and they seem happy and healthy." And so it's just so important to share these stories so people don't feel like they're crazy or weird for wanting to do things 'differently' than it's always been done.

Kara: I mean, how many marriages would maybe actually not have to get divorced if they just knew that they could move out and live separately?

Speaker: I think it's a new idea also. I think that of course, if you have children you should live together, it's each to their own. But it's nice to grow up in a two parent household. And I think it's a newer thing for women to even be so open about not wanting children. For couples to be open about not wanting children. I always say more and more I'm finding men on dates that either say to me that they don't want children at all or that they would just defer to their partner.

I'm finding this more and more as I get older, that I don't meet as many men as I used to that are like, "Yes, it's a foregone conclusion, I will have children." It's a newer thing to come around to this idea that you don't live together because you don't have children to raise together in the home.

Kara: Well, I think even if you have children [**crosstalk**]. Listen, I'm a co-parent half the time so I'm in this situation. But also every single divorce person I know who has kids is basically like, "Obviously this wasn't how I wanted to get here, I didn't go into it assuming this, but this is by far a superior way to parent." Part of the problem with parenting is the unrelenting this of the caretaking and a total lack of any time to yourself.

So if you're splitting the week with somebody, I mean, my partner talks about this. It's so different. I didn't want kids. I was childless by choice and I

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ended up partnering with somebody with children. And none of the things that I was worried about turned out to be wrong. It is unrelenting when it's happening. I can see even myself, how fucking insane I would feel if I didn't know that there was, and I love these kids, but that I didn't know that there was a break coming every week.

And all my friends I know who have gotten divorced, my partner, all my friends, obviously they miss their kids. They love their kids and they weren't trying to end up in this situation. But it's just partly a testament to how parenting has become so siloed. We don't have the village. We don't have the extended care networks. People aren't living with three generations of family who can help. So most parents these days, it's just them and it's all the time. And so I don't know, I feel like, what if you're married and have kids and you still want to live apart and trade the kids every once in a while?

Speaker: Love that.

Speaker: And then the kids get to be like, "I have two houses."

Kara: You can do that also.

Speaker: They get to brag at school. I have two houses.

Speaker: I love this idea.

Kara: Maybe **[crosstalk]** four nights a week and then one night a week you're each off and go to the other. There's a lot of options.

Rayna: Well, we did that growing up. My parents divorced when I was four, and my mom really was the school parent, of course. And she was the

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responsible one Sunday through Thursday, that made sure we did our homework. And my dad took us on the weekends. And he was a great parent and loved to do so, took us to baseball games instead of the library and the museum. But yeah, they each got a break. And I was really lucky that my dad chose to live down the street from my mom.

And I didn't really know that much about their relationship. I heard some stuff about money growing up, but nothing so terrible. And I think that I was really lucky to grow up with two people that decided to not hate each other in the same home. My dad was there all the time. My stepdad couldn't stand it. But my dad was unrelentingly at the house. He would go into the fridge, eat some food, take a shit for 30 minutes.

Ashley: He still does that.

Rayna: It was crazy.

Ashley: He still does that.

Rayna: Yeah, my mom hates it.

Ashley: He lives down the street.

Rayna: He does, he lives down the street from my mom, it's very funny, and her husband of 25 years. But I love that idea. I've never heard anybody describe parenting as unrelenting but I like the notion of it. I always say my aversion to having children is that I had a really wonderful upbringing, so did Ashley, my parents were really wonderful. And I don't know that I want to do the things for somebody that my parents did to make my life so wonderful.

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Kara: Yeah, relentless. That's how I think about it because it is, it feels like somebody needs you all the time. And that goes on for much longer than you maybe would think that it would age wise. And even if once they get to be teenagers, okay, they don't need you, but they still do in the sense that you can't, you still have to be thinking about them and concerned about them and figuring out what's going on and making sure they eat or clean their room or whatever.

But especially when they're young, I think I just knew for me, the sensory overload of that was going to be so intense. And it's not like an adult where you can just be like, "I need a break. I'm going in the other room" and closing the door. So I don't know. That's definitely my experience of [crosstalk].

Speaker: I'm just curious, a client of you, you don't know. I'm curious what your partner is it a joint custody?

Kara: Yeah, it's close to 50, I mean, a week can't be spent exactly 50/50 because of having, it's four nights, three nights. But yeah, it's every week we have them for half the week or one-third plus, half of a quarter, whatever it would be. It's three nights a week. Yeah, so we have them half the time.

Speaker: But do you live together now?

Kara: Yeah, we all live together.

Speaker: You do? Okay.

Kara: So my partner and I live together. Yes, I got trapped like a feral cat, very willingly.



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Speaker: That's right, the whole, yeah, okay, [**crosstalk**].

Kara: That brought in the little treats and a real hands off approach and then all of a sudden there I was.

Speaker: And then there's kids in there and you're like, "How did this happen?" I'm just kidding.

Kara: All the time. No, I mean because we also moved pretty quickly. I mean we were older when we met. He was 52 when we met, he had already been married once. I was 40 and I think we did start out being supposedly casual, but pretty quickly it wasn't. And then when somebody has kids also, it's a much higher stakes thing to be like, "Are we doing this?" So it was pretty fast. But yeah, so two years ago, I was living in Morningside Heights by myself, essentially single, I mean, four months ago, two years ago, single.

Being like, "I don't know, maybe I'll marry some guy in Paris and move there." And then now I, yes, now I live with a man and his children, [**crosstalk**]. A lot has happened in the last two years. I'll talk about it when I come on your podcast, just a lot happened there.

Speaker: I'm really interested in it. We have a girlfriend who is dating somebody who is recently divorced and has two young children. And she's just sort of navigating what does that mean? And how am I allowed to fit in there? And she had said, "He's having dinner with his ex and her parents and what does that mean?" And I was like, "They're doing it for the kids. It's just for the kids. It's not romantic thing." But I'm curious how you sort of navigate all of that. I find it really interesting.

Kara: I mean, that's a big conversation.

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Speaker: Yeah, we'll have you on our podcast, we'll do this, [crosstalk].

Kara: [Crosstalk] on the podcast, but we could talk about it there. I would say that we have it as good as you could have it in terms of the kids being accepting, it's all amicable and it's still fucking complicated. I'm not just marrying you, I'm marrying your children and I'm basically marrying your ex-wife. And it's the thrapple you didn't want. You're just now just involved with this person. This person is now basically part of your family who your partner isn't even married to anymore.

So it's a weird, that part is definitely, I think, to me that feels, obviously, the children themselves are the biggest difference, but also the sort of having your life be very impacted with and integrated with this third person that you didn't choose. That part's very weird.

Speaker: Okay, well, I'm excited to talk about it with you on our show because we get we get that a lot. We get that question a lot, dating someone with kids.

Kara: Here's what I'll tell you, be careful when you tell yourself, this is just casual. It's never going to, I mean he's got kids, and I don't want kids. So nothing's going to happen. It's fine. And then six weeks later, he's telling you he loves you and then this is what happens. There you are, you end up there.

Okay, I have other questions. I'm just trying to think about what I want [35:59]. I think the last thing I kind of want to touch on, because I do feel like my listeners, I felt this also. There's not just grief about mourning the singlehood. But I mean you talked a little bit about this Ashley, being like, "I was just icon of singleness, now I'm in a relationship." And you wanted that.

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transition. But I did feel a little like I've taught so much around this thought work around being single and how to fall in love with being single.

And now I'm like, "And now I'm getting married to a man, which is the most heteronormative thing I could do." That was a weird mind fuck. So I want to make sure we talk about something other than that also. I think you referred to Rayna as your partner in your 30s. And I feel like I have a friend who I feel is my platonic soul mate and is a partner in that way.

We don't live together but I'd love to hear kind of what your thoughts are around, how artificially we construe partnership romantically, what it's been like having a very significant friendship, work relationship like really having a partner who's not a [crosstalk] romantic partner.

Speaker: [Crosstalk].

Kara: Who's not what?

Speaker: What did you say?

Speaker: A very significant, non-romantic other.

Ashley: Well, what is it, OSOs, other significant others. We've talked about this with Logan Ury on our podcast and the clip went crazy. It's not the hottest take, but to put a name to it and kind of people would be like, "I have that." So, I don't know, it works out. We're late 30s, 40 I think sometimes those relationships are a little harder to navigate in your 20s. You're younger, you have a best friend and you're running around living your best 20s life and partying and dating. And then they get in a relationship and it can be kind of hard.

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I mean, I've ran into that. I was always the single friend and you just change, you grow up and you realize that your friendships ebb and flow. And it doesn't mean that they are over or they're even going to change drastically, long term. So I think a lot of it is just maturity and growth and having someone who's on the same page. Rayna just gets it, the same that I was when she was in a relationship. And I don't know. I think I'm navigating it well, just like you did and you would the next relationship you get in.

Kara: This is like a couple counseling reality moment, then Rayna is like **[crosstalk]**.

Ashley: No, we get this question a lot, people saying, "What happens, one of you get in a relationship? And a few people recently that we're really close with, two of them have asked me, "What has it been like? Are you still getting attention?" And yes, I've been in a long term serious relationship during this podcast also. I mean, first of all, the business always comes first. Nothing's ever going to be more important to me than *Girls Gotta Eat*. And yes, of course, love is important and people are important, but what we've built is really...

Kara: But I think that's so important, can we just pause? Women are not taught that they can say that. You're supposed to always be like, "Of course, my husband and my family would be the most important thing." And I once went around this table of coaches at a business conference we were at. And I was like, "If you had to break up with your partner or close your business, what would you do?" And most of them were like, "Oh, shit, I would get rid of my husband."

Ashley: Anybody can get a husband, not everybody can build this empire.

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Rayna: Well, I mean of course, the business comes first but what I'm also saying is I come first and if I'm happy, then I can be a better partner. If I feel successful and fulfilled then I can be a better partner. And yeah, *Girls Gotta Eat* is always going to come first, but we're just really, really lucky. We don't really get sick of each other. When we do, we just take a little break. We were just away for 10 days and we spent the whole day together yesterday. And we know how to work together really well and when we need to take a pause from each other.

But I really was thinking about your questions before we got on today and thinking what has the difference been in our relationship? But I don't know. I don't really feel it that much. I root for her. I want to give her space to be in love and be in a relationship. Having social plans has always been really important to both of us and we still continue to do those things. And we have lots of friends that are married, that have children, that are in long term relationships that we see all the time solo. I don't feel any lack of attention to myself, my friendship with her or the business since she's been in a relationship.

And maybe that came up a little bit when I was in a relationship, I think maybe I was not giving as much attention to the business as I had been because I'd been single for so long. But we talked about it and I refocused. So I think that that we can always make missteps as long as you're willing to look at your own behavior and acknowledge it, then you can move forward from it. But I really was thinking about your question this morning and I don't know. I haven't felt much difference in our relationship. If I didn't like the person I would feel a difference.

Ashley: Yeah, I mean it's him too though. He knew this coming in. He knew the show. We met at a live show, met at a live show. I mean he knew

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Rayna had been so important. He has just stopped at nothing to win Rayna over.

Kara: [**Crosstalk**] non-monogamous, he knew you had a partner already. And he's like, "I've got to fit in."

Ashley: Exactly. It makes me love him more. And we're long distance. So to Rayna's point, that's part of it too. Although I think if we were in the same city it wouldn't change much. And then he would be here all the time and I wouldn't have to, and now I have to have a whole schedule of when I'm seeing him. I've just sent it to Rayna. She has to be on the calendar invites and all that stuff. So I really love how much he knows how important she is. He sent her flowers to our show. He's coming here this weekend.

He's like, "I can't wait to see Rayna." I'm like, "What?" He really has made that effort. The worst thing in the world would be them being at odds. I can't even picture that. I don't think that that would be someone I would be in a relationship with in the first place. So I don't know. We're all one big happy family, but we're grown, we're grown ass people. Again, I think it's a little trickier to navigate when this hits you for the first time when you have that best friend and they get partnered up.

And I just want to say to people listening that are dealing with that, I really think friendships ebb and flow. And I think that when people first get in a relationship and especially when you're younger, it just is all consuming. And certainly you don't want someone that's a friend that just drops you the second they get in a relationship. That's not a friend that you want. If you're someone that values friendships and realize that female friendships are what make our lives so important, they're our existence. And if someone doesn't feel that way, that's probably not someone you want to be friends with in the first place.

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But it's a mix. It's realizing that that's just how it is and you want that same grace when you get into a relationship as well. And that was sort of my story with my more serious relationship when I was 30, early 30s of, I felt like the last single girl. And then when I got in this relationship, no one gave me any shit. I was with him all the time. He was my priority and no one ever was like, "Been there, done that." It was kind of nice. It was just I didn't have anyone to answer to.

I didn't have any friends that felt neglected. They were all partnered up and they had just done that already and they were like, "Just let her fly. Let her just be with him all the time." And I still had a balance, but it's just one of those, it's the circle of life.

Kara: You can find partners that are respectful of those relationships [crosstalk].

Rayna: I'm glad that you brought that up, and it's age, it's the relationship that you're in and it's the person that you're in the relationship with. And to zoom out just from our relationship, we should all be picking partners that really encourage us to have other things in our lives because loving me means loving Ashley. It means loving my family. It means loving my friends and you don't have to be with my friends all the time.

We could do it sporadically, but I think that we should all have partners that encourage us to have other good relationships in our lives. And to love Ashley means to want to have a relationship with me because it's important to him that it's important to her. And that's one of the reasons why, I mean, I also just like him. I think he's smart and funny and cool, but he treats my friend really well and it's important to him that we're friends. And I have certainly had relationships mostly in my 20s with people that my friends didn't really want to be around and it was a real problem.

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And I think we grow out of those things, but it can make you feel really isolated when you have a partner that maybe you have to lie to other people about a little bit, that doesn't treat you well, that breaks up your friendships. I've certainly lost friends over partners that they've had, it's extremely painful. I know that it can happen. And it is also hard in your 20s and early 30s when you're in love for the first time, all you want to do is be with that person and you're like, I don't care about other people."

Kara: What are friends? I don't remember.

Rayna: You're like, "I don't care about you. I'll catch you on the next round." So it's a balance. And if you slip, you can always just acknowledge it. You can always go to your friends and be like, "I know I've been a little self-involved with myself and this relationship, but it's important to me to hang out more so I'm going to do that with you more." And like Ashley said, these things ebb and flow. Just because you're in an ebb doesn't mean you can't get back to the flow.

Kara: I love it. I mean, I think I kind of want to close on that point. I mean we talked about this a little, but it's just so women are just not taught to think this way of you're the center of your life. And you can choose which thing is the center of your life. Maybe it's your business. Maybe it's your platonic partnership. Maybe it's your romantic partnership. But just giving yourself that, even ask yourself that question. What is the most important commitment in my life, or what's the most important project in my life or what do I want to be the center of my life?

Versus, well, it's supposed to be a romantic relationship or supposed to be parenthood or it's supposed to be whatever else. I mean, how many politicians, women politicians or CEOs, do you hear, say, "Well, being a mom is the most important job I'll ever have." And no fucking dudes are out



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there, the CEO of JPMorgan is not like, “Being a dad is the most important job I’ll ever have.”

Speaker: No man has ever said it.

Kara: [**Crosstalk**] multinational financial corporation, being the president is the most important job I’ll ever have.

Speaker: Yeah, so I really, truly believe my dad does feel like that.

Speaker: I think my brother feels like that, yeah.

Kara: I think some men feel like that. I just don’t think we require it. My partner definitely feels like being a dad is the most important thing he’ll ever do. There are men who feel like that but they’re not required to say that when they actually have the most important job in the world.

Speaker: They don’t say it. I’ve never heard my dad say that.

Kara: Whereas the first woman president is going to have to be like, “Being a mom is always my most important job.” And you’re like, “It’s definitely not. You’re in charge of the whole country.”

Speaker: Being the president is hard, but being a mom is harder.

Kara: No. I don’t think that’s true.

Speaker: So funny. I’ve never been the president or a mom so I can’t speak to it.

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Kara: Well, listen, I don't know, I've been a part-time mom, a sort of stepmom and it's challenging, but I don't think it's like being the president. Anyway, that's another whole soapbox. Tell people where they can find you, where they can find your sex toys? We have a lot of places to go.

Speaker: You can find everything about *Girls Gotta Eat* at [girlsgottaeat.com](http://girlsgottaeat.com). We are on tour through the year. We are in the Texas, the Southeast, the West Coast, we're going to end in New York and Toronto for the holidays. So get tickets, our tour, our shows are so wild. They're not like a live podcast. We don't record them and they're just like a circus and they're so much fun. They'll be the best night of your life, just a wild [**crosstalk**] on steroids. Yeah. I just want to be clear, we're not sitting there and doing this.

Speaker: Esther Perel's not there, yeah.

Ashley: It's insane. There's just dancers and strippers and CO2 cannons and t-shirts flying through the air, everything. So they're wild. So [girlsgottaeat.com](http://girlsgottaeat.com) for those tickets. You can listen to the podcast where you find podcasts. And then *Girls Gotta Eat Podcast* on Instagram. I'm @AshHess, Rayna is @rayna.greenberg and [vibesonly.com](http://vibesonly.com).

We have so many new products that we just launched for fall. We have the vibrators. We have a paired app, they all connect with the toys via Bluetooth. We have blow gel if you want to step up your oral sex game. We just dropped pumpkin spice for fall. And we have all the things that it's just a really fun company and again, there's this very cool tech component. Your partner can control your vibrator from anywhere in the world, so great for a long distance relationships.

Kara: Or you can control your partner's vibrator.

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Speaker: Yeah, exactly.

Kara: I'm going to be dying about pumpkin spice oral gel now for a while.

Speaker: Yeah, we'll send you one. We'll follow up, get your address, we'll send you. We have really fun vibrators, whatever you're into.

Kara: [**Crosstalk**] for show. I'm like [**crosstalk**].

Speaker: We give away vibrators at the show, too. But whatever you're into and whatever you want. If you want a butt plug, if you want a rabbit, if you want to clit sucker, whatever you want, we've got it.

Kara: Amazing. Thank you for coming on.

Speaker: Thank you so much.

Speaker: Thanks for having us.

Speaker: We loved this.

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