

**0:00:02.4 Nicole Antoinette:** Welcome to the Pop-Up Pod. A new podcast that's similar to a pop-up shop or a pop-up restaurant in that it's sporadic, sometimes it's here and sometimes it's not. Each 12 episode season dives deep into a single question, and our question for season one is this, should I get married? I'm your host, Nicole Antoinette, 36 years old, divorced, close friends with my former spouse, child free by choice, self-employed, almost three years into a committed romantic relationship with a guy I love, and I'm genuinely unsure of how I feel about marriage.

**0:00:43.2 NA:** This uncertainty got me thinking, How do other people really feel about their own relationships, what's working, what's not working. Let's find out. 12 episodes, 12 different people, honest conversations about the joys and struggles of long-term romantic relationships. In today's episode, you'll get to meet Sasha Glasgow. Sasha whose pronouns are she/her describes herself as a writer, doubter and doer. Even though she's been writing in some form since the age of eight, she only started calling herself a writer in 2020, a rebellious act against her self-doubting nature. The struggle of self-doubt is where today's conversation begins with Sasha sharing about when she knew it was time to leave her long-term relationship, but was held back for years by the fears and shoulds and doubts and questions that come with making a choice like that. She talks about how breaking up often means breaking your own heart, about how we can leave even if we still love someone, and about the fact that grief has no timeline. She's such a beautifully tender and honest storyteller, and I'm so glad that you get to meet her and hear some of her story today. Here we go.

[music]

**0:01:55.9 NA:** Alright, we are good to go. Sasha, welcome to the show.

**0:01:58.6 Sasha Glasgow:** Hello. Thank you so much for having me. I'm very, very excited.

**0:02:03.8 NA:** I feel like we're on our first friend date, we have some mutual friends, and I'm like, "Do you wanna come on my podcast and talk about heart break? Let's be friends. So."

**0:02:11.9 SG:** That's the new way people make friends, right? Do you wanna chat in the DMs in Instagram, and then do you wanna be real life. What's up maybe friends then maybe do you wanna come on my podcast? That's how it goes.

**0:02:27.4 NA:** Oh my God. That's hilarious. I feel like this conversation or the question of how do you make and maintain new friendships as an adult is something that comes up all of the time in various corners of my life, and so maybe we've just solved it. You move from the Instagram DMs, and then if you have a podcast, that's the secret weapon to making friends with awesome people. So great, we're off to a great start.

**0:02:45.9 SG:** I think we are.

**0:02:48.8 NA:** So I am going to ask you to introduce yourself a little bit, but perhaps in a non-traditional way, I think that at the start of podcasts, people are usually like, "Tell us what you do." It usually centers around work, but I'm gonna ask you for a relationship bio, so less like, what do you

do, and more who and how do you love, whatever feels true for you right now.

**0:03:11.4 SG:** Oh wow. Oh, this is great. Okay, I am gonna be shooting from the hip because you don't give me any time to prepare, you didn't tell me. I could have presented something really eloquent. Okay, how do I love? I love with my whole heart, I love with my time, I love with my words and... Yeah, I'd say that's how I love. Who I love, to be honest immediately what comes to mind are the women in my life who I class as my soul mates. I was just talking to a friend this weekend, and I was like, "You know what, there are so many different types of love, but I don't think I could do life without my female friendships, I couldn't." So that's the biggest, regardless of what else is layered on top or whoever else is around, that is a forever and eternal love that I can't do without.

**0:04:14.9 NA:** What do you mean when you use the word soulmate?

**0:04:23.3 SG:** It's a tie, it's a bind that's beyond circumstance or interest or kind of like parallel situation or living. It's in a way, I guess, beyond character, it's just to meet people who... Or more people who meet and it's like everything beyond who they are, what they do, what their labels are in life, what they do in terms of productivity or... I don't know, to make money or whatever, their beings just kind of recognize each other and they feel very much at peace there, that's to me what soul mates feel like, they feel like peace and they feel like coming home.

**0:05:16.5 NA:** Is that something you've only experienced in a platonic context?

**0:05:26.9 SG:** I think yes and no, which makes me think the answer is no. I have experienced it romantically, but consistently, I always experienced that platonically.

**0:05:41.6 NA:** I think that it's interesting how much that word soulmate is culturally put into the romantic relationship bucket, and yet, as you're saying, and as I can relate to and as I'm sure a lot of other people can relate to, those soul connections aren't just in those types of partnerships.

**0:06:00.8 SG:** Yeah, I don't know, it's something, it's a feeling and a realization that came to me. I don't know, it must be about seven, eight, maybe 10 plus years ago now, and I just think romantic relationships are wonderful, your relationships with some of your family members can be great, but I feel like for me personally, in my life and in my life experiences soul mate will only ever be reserved for my platonic friendships.

**0:06:29.9 NA:** If that's true, or since that's true, how does that change what it is that you're looking for from a romantic partner?

**0:06:38.6 SG:** I think the answer I would give you is 36-year-old me is probably very different to what I would have given you at 26 or younger. In a way, there's potentially less pressure in what I might look for in a romantic relationship, not to say that there's pressure on my friends and like I'm just kinda trauma dumping all my stuff with them, but yeah, I just feel like there'd be a sense of less pressure 'cause now I'm not looking for one person to be everything, 'cause I realize that's not

possible, sensible, true, yeah.

**0:07:22.5 NA:** Are you actively looking for romantic partnership right now, is that something that you want?

**0:07:27.0 SG:** No.

**0:07:30.5 NA:** Say more, tell me more.

**0:07:34.1 SG:** No. Full stop. Absolutely not. I am about 15 months out from ending a very long-term relationship that lasted 12 years, so most of my formative years in my 20s into my mid-30s, and it feels like grief, and I'm still making my way through it and learning a lot about myself, and I guess when you meet someone and you are in a relationship with them, a long-term relationship, you grow and you form and you change, and some bits intertwine with them anyway, but I think... It's a different circumstance, I think, when you're in your early 20s anyway, because you're learning who you are as a person, and so when you grow and you're doing that development with someone else, trying to be your own person in your 20s, when it's just such a steep learning curve to know who you are. I'm learning a lot more about myself that maybe if I'd have been in this relationship towards the end of my 20s onwards, I wouldn't maybe be in this kind of learning curve or very kinda closed off, shut down romantically now, because I'm like, I've got a lot to give back to myself and think about and mull over and learn and glean and ruminate on, and I only really wanna do that on my own.

**0:09:10.1 NA:** Which in its way is beautiful to have a clarity about, like the fact that you can say no, full stop, allows you to not let your energy be scattered in a direction that you know is not where you wanna put it right now.

**0:09:26.1 SG:** A hundred percent because there has been so much uncertainty, I think in most people's lives from 2020 onwards. But in my life, particularly, it's actually really nice to have one area where I'm like, "No, full stop."

**0:09:40.1 NA:** Yeah, no, that makes a lot of sense. Yeah, it's funny, I feel like this entire podcast came out of the uncertainty that I feel about whether or not I wanna get married again, which is why I'm so grateful to start to have these conversations when I was trying to think like, "Okay, if I'm talking to 12 different people, what are the types of relationships I wanna talk about, what are the experiences that I wanna talk about?" And I kept coming back to this idea of talking about heart break, talking about grief, and it was right around that time that I had found your work and I saw you lightly mentioned it, and I reached out to our mutual friend, Cait Flanders, it was like, "Do you think that your friend Sasha would wanna come on my podcast and talk about heart break? Is this an inappropriate ask?" but yeah, getting out of a 12-year relationship, that is quite a transition.

**0:10:28.7 SG:** Yeah, absolutely. And everything feels new. It's... I guess the only thing that came to my head just then, very strangely because it's not reflective of how I feel on the relationship, it's like if you went to prison when you were like 18 in the 1980s and came out and you're in your 40s, and

it's now, 2000 something, the whole world has changed, and so even though I'm not actively looking at it, the whole dating landscape has changed. I'm like apps weren't even a thing when I got into a relationship, I mean, there was online dating, but people were busy denying that they ever met people online, it was that kind of world, and now I've come into this world where there's a plethora of apps, and it feels like one of the only ways to meet people now and everything is just new. It's very new, and that's also something that's gonna be a big part of the transition 'cause I'm like, "How do I navigate this? I don't understand."

**0:11:35.3 NA:** Apparently, you need to find people you wanna date and go on their podcast, maybe that's the...

**0:11:39.9 SG:** Yeah, yeah, I think, yeah. And you DM slide, and then invite me on our podcast, we'll see if we have good chat and then maybe we can go from there.

**0:11:48.0 NA:** And that's if in the future you decide that you do wanna date and if not, that is also totally valid. So here's what I would like to ask. When it comes to break-ups in general, what's something that you wish that people were more open and honest about, or maybe when you were first going through this where you're like, "Fuck, I wish people had talked more about X."

**0:12:08.2 SG:** I think parts of the conversation are there, but you only know about them if and when you're going through it, because then I guess you naturally seek. It's probably reflected in your Google searches, and I don't know what you like on Instagram or... Okay, there's a few things. So one is, I wish people were more honest in talking about then what they know and then how long it takes them, or shortening the gap between the knowing and the doing. Knowing when something isn't right and when they do it. Because I was probably in my relationship for a few years longer than I probably should have been because I kept denying myself and my feelings and putting them off and telling myself I was wrong, and I guess if there were more people having the kind of conversations that we're having now, they would maybe be less... Potentially less doubt. And I wish people spoke more about the plethora of options that open up to you or that are possible post-relationship, because I feel like I was going down this road, which for me very much felt like, should, should, should, should, should. This is what I should be doing.

**0:13:45.0 SG:** This is why I should be doing... This is where I should be. This is where our relationship should be by now, and while I am, like I said, very much still grieving the end of a relationship that I hoped would last a lifetime, I'm actually, in a weird way, quite glad that it's opened my eyes up, because for me, I was kind of like tunnel vision with, this is what you should be doing, and this is how relationship goes, and this is how the path goes, and this is what you do. And actually, I'm quite glad that my eyes have opened up in so many areas in terms of how you can date, if you date, choosing not to date, whether or not you have children, how you have children, how you work, where you work. I feel like my whole brain has just burst open, and before I was actually quite rigid, I think in how I thought life should go. And I thought I was quite open-minded. It's been quite a learning to realize that I'm not... Or I wasn't... And I'm actually quite... I'm okay. And not happy, but I'm glad that I'm seeing life this way, to be honest with you.

**0:15:15.9 SG:** Yeah, I don't really... I don't know why, but I just know that I am glad to see this many avenues and paths.

**0:15:26.1 NA:** So I'm really interested in what you said about the gap of time between when you realize that something's not working, and then when you actually do take action on that, that's so relatable, not just in relationships but in everything. Can you tell me maybe about a particular day or a week or time period, like when you started to think that it was time to leave your relationship?

**0:15:47.9 SG:** Well, I journal a lot, and I have diaries, I've got a five-year diary that I think I must have started maybe around 2017, 2018, and I noticed that you come back around to January 1st in the 2019, and then 2020. And I was just noticing that I was writing the same thing over and over and over again each year, and it was a frustration that built up in me because the evidence of that allowed me to realize... You have known, or you have had inklings, powerful inklings for a while, and I started to question myself on the page and I'd be like, "Will you gonna be writing the same thing again next year and the year after?" and that kind of concrete evidence of me writing about my feelings at that time in the present in my own hand writing was very confronting because I think with... Sometimes you feel like we can deny our feelings or bypass them or blame it on something else, but these were just moments, a series of moments of me writing about what I was feeling in each of those present moments, and they were there for me to see like plain as day.

**0:17:18.3 SG:** So for me, there was years kind of evidence and also of evidence that I wasn't trusting myself. So honestly, I could say from maybe like three or four years previous, but my doubt was so loud and the shoulds were equally so loud, but then also there were good days and good times, and good experiences and the mix of everything just made me think, Oh, no, no, it's just bad. No, no, no. But yeah, years.

**0:18:00.3 NA:** Yeah, all of this is incredibly relatable. I thought about this a couple of years ago, that something that really changed my life was when I gave myself permission to admit that something was true and actually not pressure myself to take action on it, 'cause I realized that combining those two... As soon as you know that something's true, you have to do something about it. It was causing me to lie to myself a lot because I'm like, "Well, I can't know what I know, because then I'm uh, I'm gonna have to do something about it," and that just seemed so efforty and so overwhelming, and so I think what you're speaking to like sometimes that gap is really useful to be able to put on the page or say to a friend or whatever your truth telling comes out, this is how I'm feeling, okay, like I don't necessarily have to fix it, I don't need the five step plan, but there's something about being faced with your own truth over and over again, that does help you to realize what is just a passing moment and what is something that, okay, maybe down the line does need to be dealt with. So that's very relatable to me.

**0:19:00.3 SG:** 100%. And when you're having more days where you can't deny to yourself that it's a passing moment... Yeah, that's when... Okay, now, how are we gonna change? 'cause they say If nothing changes, nothing changes and... Yeah.

**0:19:22.8 NA:** So you mentioned that there were good moments also, I think one of the things that

gets lost is the nuance in relationships, when you talk about it, breakout wasn't working, so I left. And that pain, it is this very binary, like relationship working, relationship not working, and sometimes that can be true, but I have never experienced a relationship of any kind that isn't some degree of both over the course of... Especially 12 years or anything like that. And so I'm interested to hear when you were starting to write down your feelings, can you give some specific examples of what wasn't working or how did you know that it was time to go?

**0:20:07.2 SG:** Our communication wasn't working, and it was kind of off as well, because there was the layer of... We were living together at the start of the pandemic and... And I think of myself as quite the empath, I pick up on people's feelings, especially someone you've spent over a decade with, I mean, come on. And I was like, I know there's something wrong. And you're not telling me... And I just started to feel very lonely, even though we were in the same house and yeah, I felt mentally and I guess physically alone, and I started to think, if you feel lonely when you're with someone, you might as well be alone, like What's the point of this, you... You know what I mean? So that was something that was a... And it started with communication. And I remember him saying to me like, I don't think we should make any decisions right now because of the time we're in, and I was like, Do you know what, granted fair. There's a lot of pressure and psychological stuff and change and uncertainty in the air, and you don't wanna make long-term decisions based on this very stressful period of time.

**0:21:32.5 SG:** I understand that, but you also had to accept that I've been writing about this and feeling this from the two or three years before any of us even knew what covid was... Yeah, I think for us it stemmed from communication and not necessarily, even though we've been together for so long, knowing or wanting to hear each other, and for me, I felt like there were a lot of one sided conversations in a hollow of the podcast in my writing, I'm very, I'm a very open person, I just talk about stuff. I know that's not necessarily for everyone, but I would feel like I would give a lot and kind of be left almost emotionally naked after saying so much and not really be met with much back. And I think the other thing for me is that I got very tired of hearing me maybes, maybes that were essentially nos, but... But I don't know if they just wanted them to land more gently.

**0:22:43.9 NA:** Maybes about what?

**0:22:46.9 SG:** About future. Because this is something that I'm figuring out at the moment, but I'm like, This is not. This life I'm living right now is my life, it's the life... I'm not making the best of it 'cause I don't think I like that phrase. It's not necessarily the life I had in mind for myself with this person, I wanted to have a long-term relationship, I wanted to create our own rules and create our own lives and create a family with them, and I just felt like too much time had passed to still be hearing maybes and things that weren't concrete about our future plans, and the other things I don't feel like I had enough of the ours and we... And the us plans, and that's something that stands quite a lot. I remember feeling that Christmas looking on social media and stuff, and seeing loads of people talk about their traditions and being like, "Yeah, this is what we always do," and this is how we and this is how us... And I wasn't thinking of it from a bitter place, I actually thought... I wanted us plans, I wanted the things that we always do, and I don't think you can get that if you're constantly hearing maybes that never materialized.

**0:24:20.3 NA:** Yeah, absolutely. What, you mentioned before that there were some shoulds and some fears that kept you in the relationship for longer than you maybe wanted to be there, can you name what some of those were?

**0:24:34.2 SG:** I think some of them were... They weren't even societal shoulds, but they were... Me thinking, I've been in this long-term relationship, and therefore this is what that should mean, and this is what that should look like, and I think this is what other people are expecting to see. And so there are things like that wanting to get married, maybe thinking I should get it for a long time, it was thinking I should get married, and had to have conversations with myself on that about... I think if you want something for you, that's fine, but not many, if any, things should come from a should... There's a lot, I think, to deal with when you read a long-term relationship, and you're not following the timeline that society has deemed you should be following, and you start hearing things about, Okay, I'm in my... Approaching my mid-30s and should we be having kids? If we want kids we better get on with it, and where are we gonna live? And yeah, I think part of it was potentially a classic thing of, "Now I've been here for so long, therefore I am owed." But...

**0:25:57.5 NA:** But also that's a very real way to feel like I have put in all of this time for what...

**0:26:05.4 SG:** Yeah, it is. It is that thing of, "Oh, you don't have anything to show for it." I agree with that in some ways, and don't agree in others, because I've grown as a person, like I say, I have really good memories with this person, I'm glad I spent a chunk of my life with them. I don't have regrets about that, but I think if we're talking fear, the other side of that was thinking, "Well, what is on the other side if I do leave?" And you're telling me I have to go through all of this again with somebody else, I don't have the energy for that. And then that kind of is the grass greener. Should I walk to... What's here? Do I even want grass? Maybe... [laughter] Yeah.

**0:26:57.6 SG:** Yeah. I think there's a lot, maybe that's not not said, but a lot of the thoughts I were thinking, we're around, I've been here for X amount of time, surely whatever is just on the cusp, or maybe I shouldn't leave now because it's just about to get good or I'm just about to get everything I've wanted and waited for, and I actually started to have a whole lot of rebellion around the time of the pandemic, because in so many aspects, honestly, work, everything. And I was just thinking, "Well, even if what I want is five months down the line, why have I had to wait so long? And if I get that one thing... How long I have to wait for all the other things? Why am I waiting? Hang on what... " [laughter]

**0:27:53.8 NA:** That question like, Why am I waiting? And something that I really felt going through the lead up to the divorce process and all of that, is exactly what you're saying, that this... It's this uncertainty of like, Well, if I just wait a little longer, or if I pull this lever instead, or if I'm able to compromise on this thing... Right, and there was a lot for me of the... Have I tried hard enough? And a lot of what's wrong with me that I can't make this work because I wasn't categorically unhappy, my former spouse and I are incredibly good friends, and I know that that's maybe more rare than the norm, but this question of choosing to leave or transition or relationship or maybe it's not a transition, maybe it really is an ending, I don't know what your situation was, but

leaving when you still love someone, like leaving when you're not so miserable that leaving is the only option, like leaving wasn't the only option for me.

**0:28:57.1 NA:** And when you live together, when you to some degree, share finances together, a lot of my fears were also logistical fears, and I feel like that's the part as much as it's maybe not as emotionally sexy, that's a lot of the part that I wish people were more honest about. Of like there is financial privilege to sharing household bills with somebody else and to have someone else to do some of the chores with you, and not to boil down a parametric relationship into you do the laundry, then I'll do the laundry next week, but there is some of this stuff that I just felt a lot of fear around? Like if I leave, how much harder am I making my life for myself and that that isn't a reason to stay for me. That's sort of what I came to was like, he made so much more money than me, and I didn't know what I was gonna support myself, my business was only part-time and I came to, am I really gonna stay just for the money, and I'm not shaming anybody who does that...

**0:29:50.8 NA:** Right, but that's exactly... My parents are still married and shouldn't be, and it's because of the money, like my mom should have left 20 years ago, and I think about that, I'm kind of off on a rant tangent here, but for me it was very clarifying to say I can't stay because I'm afraid that it won't work out, that I won't be able to meet my needs on my own... And this is just for me personally.

**0:30:11.4 SG:** I 100% get that. Yeah, because I was like, Well, the state of the housing market in England and world-wide, I can't afford to buy a house on my own, but that's not a reason to stay in a relationship, and I don't think it does justice or honors you... The person or your relationship to think about stuff like that, but it's interesting to me because I actually quit two jobs over the course of the pandemic, and whereas a past version of me would have sat and thought about all but the benefits, and I've been here for X year, so then I would qualify for maternity leave, and this is this, when I wanted to leave those two jobs, I did not think anything about any of those pension contributions and whatever... None of that mattered. It boiled down to, Do you wanna be there? Or do you not?

**0:31:10.7 SG:** And I feel like it kind of got to that point with my relationship where I had to stop thinking about all of those what ifs, because they would have kept me there indefinitely and kept us in a place that that wasn't good for either of us. And there was something you said that made me think about control 'cause I've had to learn a lot about myself and what I contributed to the end of that relationship. And I think towards the end I was trying to grip onto it and control it into being what I wanted it to be, and even me thinking for myself, who wants to be controlled? I know, I don't... The first thing I wanna do is rebel. And yeah, and the only thing and the only person that I can control is myself, so...

**0:32:06.1 NA:** Yeah, do you have a clear memory of when you decided, Okay, I'm actually leaving?

**0:32:17.4 SG:** I don't know that it was a memory. There were a few things, there were a couple of books that I read, well listened to an audio book during the pandemic, and I was driving like an hour to work, and so I had a lot of listening time. So one of them was Glennon Doyle's Untamed,

and one of them was actually our mutual friend, Cait Flanders, her book *Adventures in Opting Out*, and both of them just felt like they spoke to me on such a level and they asked questions that I don't think I'd ever been asked before and they asked questions that should never ask, they asked what I wanted, where I was... Even if I'm scared, even if I made decisions while trembling, even if it looked completely opposite to what anybody else was doing at my age and my stage in life or whatever.

**0:33:12.8 SG:** And so there were some pivotal moments in that, there were some pivotal moments in the song lyrics, the lyrics of songs I would listen to, and I always think it's interesting about the things that subconsciously you pick out, 'cause you can listen to a song 10 times over and you're in a particular moment, and there's a song lyric, you're like, "Hang on, has that been there the whole time?" It's like, "Hang on, what?" [laughter]

**0:33:42.8 NA:** Oh, my God. Okay, so there was a period of time in my life where I had a post-it up above my desk that said, This is the sign you've been waiting for, because I don't know why this is coming to me right now, is that idea like you hear it in the song lyrics, you hear it in the books, we look for the meaning that we want, or we look for... I shouldn't say I look for the permission that I sometimes can't give myself in external sources, and that's a growth edge. I wish that I could just be my own permission slip all of the time, but that's not always realistic, and so I had this little sticky note up if this is the sign you've been reading for, so that when I was in these types of situations where I was searching for outside validation and searching for a sign, or searching for a meaning, I could just look at the post-it and be like, Oh, I could just decide that that's what it means, but that's so... That's so related, when you're like, "Oh my God, it was this song written for me, did they just do this just now for me and my impending break up."

**0:34:30.7 SG:** Yeah, exactly. So I remember one song, lyric, I said something like, 'cause a half left, a half lived life never satisfies, and the moment comes when it's do or die, and I was like... I almost crashed the car. I was like, "What on earth?" [laughter] And actually, for me... Well, if we are talking about finances and stuff, I spent eight years as a PA and working a lot in the management of people and their lives and where they should be and planning, and I was... 'cause I don't think I still am, but was a planner, that was part of the control thing as well, and so when I started to think, I don't think this is going the way I want it, I went to Google and I started to research, because if there's one thing that I'm gonna do, I'm gonna plan.

**0:35:25.1 SG:** And I found a studio flat near my workplace, and I went to view it, and you know you can do all this kind of posturing while you're in front of people and you're saying, "Oh yeah, so how much is the rent per month, and this is this, and when can I move it?" And then they give you a kind of deadline and a cut-off and they're like, Okay, you have to make this decision by them because we need to deposit by this date, otherwise we're gonna give it to the X person. And it was because there was a financial incentive to move into this place, and I was like, I need every penny I can get my hands on right now that I think, again, kind of forced, the...

**0:36:15.4 SG:** Didn't force, helped the decision along the decision that was coming, to be honest, 'cause I say the... I ended it, and for a while I struggled with thinking, "You can't be heart-broken

'cause you ended it... You're the one who did that." And actually, I don't think that anymore, because I know that I know in my bones that something needed to be said in the months and maybe even the years previous, and I feel quite convinced that I was the only one who was actually going to say what needed to be said, 'cause I think my partner at the time, he would have been happier too, but it would have been easier to just keep going and just getting worse and worse and worse and worse, and I also... I think there was also a quiet hope for him and for both of us, no one wanting to say like those words that end something. And I remember I wrote something on my blog a little while ago, I've just cued it up, I'm gonna read a couple of sentences, if that's okay.

**0:37:45.1 SG:** And it says, "I ended a long-term relationship of well over a decade in the middle of lockdown. Just because I took the action doesn't mean it hurt any less, imagine being aware, being awake while you break your own heart and burn the book that you thought would contain so many more of your stories. I've said many times over the months since I'm a mess, I have nothing less said more emphatically, half cried and croaked out, voice breaking between heavy sobs. The I have nothing bit wasn't true, but it felt it. When something or someone is made to be your everything you do feel like the absence of them is the absence of your entire being, but the misfit... I was... And I had to be able to say it too, to name it, to name this period of bereft unfamiliarity I found myself in, sometimes it felt like a vortex devoid of time or light, at others, it felt like I'd send my representative to work and she'd get on with it like a robot, happy in some ways for this distraction, mind elsewhere, completely."

**0:38:46.5 SG:** "But most of all, everything, and I mean, everything just felt gray for the longest time, nothing mattered, days were just hours that passed, painfully food, my great love was the fuel I had to eat sometimes." And so yeah, I struggled a lot with almost granting myself to be able to feel heartbreak because I was like, Well, you don't deserve it, the person who takes action doesn't get to do that, but I almost feel like the decision had been made in a way through our lack of communication and it was quite clear. It was just me that maybe took the decisive action or just... Or just said it.

**0:39:35.5 NA:** I'm feeling really impacted by what you said about if you are the one who said it first or made the decision that then you don't deserve to feel heart-broken. I don't know that I realized that I felt that way until you just articulated it so well, and my divorce was, I guess, as mutual as it could be right, but I'm definitely the one who I think brought it up first or nudged it more to the surface and I think it would have been a longer process if I didn't, and I think I have this really clear memory of when we went to the court house to pick up, you get a divorce packet, basically, if it's a non-contested divorce in the state that we were living in... You essentially just fill it out yourself and submit it, and a judge just looks over it, it's a relatively simple process, and the first page of the paperwork was basically like.

**0:40:26.3 NA:** You don't qualify to do this the easy way, if this, this, this, this, and this, is true. And it's like, if there's a certain amount of property holdings or if there's been any kind of abuse or if there's children involved, there was just this huge long list, and I remember reading through that list and having this moment of such gratitude that we did qualify to do it the easy way. That felt like such a relief to me. But I don't know that I realized at that moment that that sort of made me not

give myself permission to then also be really heart-broken and also be really sad, which is why I love having conversations like this because it's all so much more nuanced than just Well, if you're the one who does the breaking up, you can't be sad...

**0:41:08.4 NA:** That's such bullshit. Why would we ever think that you spent 12 years of your life with this person and it's just gonna be like a light switch, like, No, that's not how it works, and I just appreciate you opening up more space around... Yes, there is the difference, there is a difference in the experience of being the one who leaves versus being the one who is left. Right, I'm sure that that's the case. The transition is hard and heartbreak is hard, and the things that we have to break our own heart in order to give ourselves permission to do, we're allowed... We're allowed to grieve and tend to things even if they could be worse.

**0:41:43.1 SG:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I feel like it's been just over a year of allowing myself to feel all the feelings basically, and not question them and not necessarily interrogate them. There have been some things I've had to confront about... Like I said, what role I played in this? And if I made it difficult for him to communicate with me, but the one thing I'm not gonna do is not allow myself the compassion I need to get through what's a really, really, really, really difficult time.

**0:42:29.5 NA:** So you mentioned a couple of times navigating grief, can you put maybe some specifics on what was that like in the beginning? And then what is it like now? I think there's this fallacy that healing is a linear process, which it's not, of course, but I think I find myself being really curious about big words, so I think... Grief is a big word. I think love is a big word where I'm like, Okay, but what does that actually mean? What does that actually look like? Right, so if there's anything that you can speak to of what your process was of navigating the grief, what helped... What didn't help? Anything you wanna share?

**0:43:06.2 SG:** What helped? I did about six weeks of online therapy, talking therapy, and that was about maybe 10 months after it happened, I couldn't afford it, but 'cause like, I just... I need something 'cause I just... I feel like I'm in a pit of despair. And I've been here over 10 months and nothing is changing. I would have kept it going for longer, but unfortunately, my therapist had to stop seeing anyone pretty much quite abruptly, and it was probably good for my bank balance because like I said, I could not afford it, so in its place until I'm in more of a financial... Good spot to be able to pick that up because it's something I definitely want to pick up on a lot longer term basis for me it has been friends and journaling, massively and just writing whatever on the page, whatever comes... I've kept a lot to myself because part of my transition is actually... So we lived together and then I moved into a studio. And then I left... Well, I'd left London before, but I moved into my family home, and that in itself is interesting because it's, they've got that feeling of, Oh, you moved back home, Come in little good girl, let's look after you again, but that wasn't the case for us because it's very much been multi-generational living with three adults living here, my move was also motivated by the fact that my dad spent a lot of the last year, not well at all, with various health issues, and I think there's been a bit a part...

**0:45:10.6 SG:** Not even think I know. There's been a very big part of me that almost feels like I've had to kind of downplay my feelings in a strange way for their benefit, and I know my mom would

be like, I'd rather you tell me what's going on. 'cause obviously, I know this massive thing is going on and you don't wanna... You don't want to or don't seem capable of opening up to us, and I feel like I'm doing them some service by holding it all in. It's strange. But yeah, grief for me has looked like some days just feeling like nothing is possible, it has looked like unemployment and choosing unemployment for a little while because I did not have the capacity and I still don't feel like I'm there to work full-time, and I'm lucky that I've got the set up, like I say, where we're doing multi-generational living, I don't have dependants as such, so I don't... There's not that need or that expectation on me to go to work full-time, I've only just gone back to part-time work because they're still a part of me that is still processing and just... Can't do it.

**0:46:32.4 SG:** Can't do it. And it's weird and as well, 'cause it makes you feel like... It has made me feel like... I don't feel like I'm a failure in my relationship, but I feel like there are other areas where I'm failing and it's like, Why can't I do this, why can't I just... Make work work. Why is everything crumbling? But it does have that kind of knock-on effect on everything... What else has grief looked like for me? It's been tough because it's a grief where the person is still here, and also it's been hard because we were two people now living as two single people in a pandemic in lockdowns, I got put on furlough at work, and so I had all this time to myself in this small little space, and then my dad was unwell, and the only person that I felt like I could turn to or wanted to turn to was him, and I was like, But how can I do that when... We've just were going through this... Our own monumental thing, and so the grief for me has been different because we did speak quite a lot during that period, probably co-dependently, and there's as much of an emotional crutch for each other, and there's been like an extended grief maybe because it's only now that we're starting to slowly loosen, like those strands of communication and it hurts all over again, all over again, and sometimes it feels like you're starting again, but I know enough of myself to know that it's not.

**0:48:32.0 SG:** And one thing that a friend shared with me from a conversation she had with a therapist is that when you think you're coming back around to the same place again and you're going around in circles, it's spirals not circles, and so even if the place where you are looks familiar, you've got new evidence, new experiences, emotional growth, things you've been through, and it hurts a little less, and I do recognize some kind of progress, I guess, because it's not days and weeks of just an absence of any kind of feeling... It might be an hour instead...

**0:49:15.7 NA:** Yeah, it's like that idea that progress doesn't always feel like progress when it's happening, you almost have to take a step back and realize like, Oh, okay, I'm knocked on my ass for three hours instead of for three weeks by this thing... Oh, okay. Progress, yeah.

**0:49:31.3 SG:** Shit feeling progress, but progress.

**0:49:34.0 NA:** But progress... But like real, I don't know, this time window that we're all supposed to have for grief where it's like you get your two days of bereavement, and that's if you're lucky, but for something like this, that's more nebulous. Yeah, I often thought... I have a friend who went through a really tough breakup in a similar time frame to when I was getting divorced and they weren't married, and we were... And we had a conversation about what is the societal opinion, how much weight we put on marriage that people took it more seriously that I was getting divorced than

that they were breaking up, but I was married for five years. You are with your partner for 12 years, it's so interesting the way that the capital M of marriage, the institution of it that we've internalized can also change that. For me, I felt like almost like because I was getting divorced, that there was some legitimacy there, but because it wasn't a bad divorce, I didn't really get the support that I needed because I didn't ask for the support because I was so busy trying to tell everyone that I was fine, 'cause I wasn't totally un-fine, there's just something in that that's like, it's all so much more complicated than we want it to be, and I really did...

**0:50:50.6 NA:** Not that I felt like a failure as a person. But marriage, I had always been sort of taught, we were told was, you could get married forever, and so that was the goal, and I'd failed to reach that goal, even if I can say that in a neutral way, I'm not a failure, but this thing that I had set out to do or idealized, I failed to do. And you do sort of have to reckon with what it feels like to be taking steps backwards in a world that gives so much couple privilege and has so much stigma around being single.

**0:51:25.0 SG:** And in a world that only focuses on moving forward, what do you mean backwards. What do you even mean standing, still standing still may as well be going backwards.

**0:51:32.4 NA:** Yeah, and so I guess I'm curious, what were your experiences of either like other people's reactions or opinions or the transition from being in a long-time couple and being seen that way to being single, whether that's how you saw yourself or how other people kind of saw or reacted to you. What has that been like?

**0:51:56.0 SG:** A little bit, a little bit shocking for me because I thought I was doing an excellent job of covering everything up and being like, "No, no, we're great, we know what we're doing, we're doing this, and in three years, we're gonna do that, and then three years comes and I be like, Oh no, we're gonna take an extra couple of years." I was doing a great job of like all the smoke and mirrors and pretending everything was okay, we're fine. And there are not many of my friends who were surprised when we broke up, and that shocked me partly because like I said, I thought I was doing an excellent distraction dance, and just... These are people who know me, who know me to my core.

**0:52:50.6 SG:** Who have outlasted my longest relationship, they weren't surprised, potentially maybe they were surprised. I wanna say that it took so long, but everything in its own time, right. I don't even think it was their reactions to it, it was probably my own reactions to myself based on what I think and thought of myself and where I thought I should be, because there's a really... There's quite an uncomfortable thought that sits within me, and it's that even when relationships don't work out...

**0:53:28.8 SG:** And this is only based on the things that I was growing for and wanted with this person, it's that, okay, the relationship might be over, but at least we got married, at least I got there, or at least I had the kids. And it's that whole thing of what we were talking about before, getting something out of it, kind of thing, and it makes it feel so transactional, and it's bullshit actually, because there were so many rich, warm, developing experiences that I wouldn't trade for the world. That happened and came from that time, but because we live in this bloody capitalist, productivity

obsessed society, you must always have results, you must... And I'm really learning and feeling into the fact that there are other reasons to do things other than results, and there are way more results than you people love seeing... Are the only outcomes?

**0:54:37.0 NA:** Yeah, if the only purpose of the relationship is like check box, I got married checkbox, I bought a house, check box, I had kids, and none of those things are inherently good or bad really, they could all be neutral, depending upon what it is that somebody wants, but if we boil down like a relationship is for those purposes, it can make it really shallow and you ignore, like you said, all of the rich and beautiful experiences and things that you get from relationships in a less transactional context that maybe you don't have as much to show for that, other people understand.

**0:55:08.4 SG:** Exactly, and for me, one of my big learnings and one of my big focuses over the last year or two has been as a former planner, to move away from living life like it's a to-do list, like it's a rigid to-do list, and they are just these things, because if you even think of a to-do list, it's like you write that tick, you move to the next one, tick you move to the next one, then it's down and there's these square little narrow boxes. And for me, I don't want to live my life by lists anymore, I want to live by breadth and the things that make me feel expansive, and that comes from my senses, my values, the people I spend time with, the experiences I have, not from these stupid little boxes that you can get to the bottom of a ticked list and half the time it's because you've been so focused on doing and smashing the goal and whatever, and you get to the bottom and you just feel... If there's a word less than fulfilled, it's that... Because it's like, Okay, now what? Now now what? Okay, you did the list and?

**0:56:17.1 NA:** Yeah, right. Like what next?

**0:56:20.5 SG:** Exactly. And you spend the whole time while you were working on the list going, Okay, what's next, what's next, what's next, and you get to the bottom of the list and you still go, what's next?

**0:56:30.0 NA:** It's such a hard habit to break.

**0:56:34.3 SG:** It's incredibly hard. It is incredibly, incredibly hard, and it's something I deal with most weeks, the thoughts and bringing myself back around and be like, no, no, no, you've worked past this, you've got past that bit. You know better for yourself, this may not be for somebody else's life, but for you, that's like, I guess your North Star or whatever, don't sway or depart from that.

**0:57:06.7 NA:** So within the realm of breakup or the umbrella topic of breakup, is there anything that we haven't talked about that you wanted to bring up?

**0:57:19.6 SG:** I think you just have to meet yourself every day on such a compassionate level because it's really, really hard, harder than anyone will anticipate, harder than you'll feel comfortable telling your friends that it is, because I remember some point last summer, I just put something on Instagram because I write, I write from my heart. That's what I do. And I remember getting a whole lot of messages and people going, "I had no idea you were feeling this way, I'm

really sorry I didn't check in." And there's not anything for them to be sorry about, you don't wanna put it on them, and also I think there's an element of shame and thinking, "Oh my gosh, it's been so long, can I still talk to them about this? Can I still tell them I'm in this place and I'm in really, really deep, deeper than I'm letting on?"

**0:58:12.7 SG:** And I think the other thing about breakups is that where you resurface for the first time, don't think that's it, because you're gonna pop back down and come back up and pop back down and come back up, the first time that you feel like you've resurfaced and you feel like a semblance of yourself is great, it's wonderful, but I mean, like I say, I'm some 15 months deep, and I cried hard tears the weekend before last. It's just, it's life, it's life, and it's not linear, and that's kind of how it's meant to be.

**0:58:57.8 NA:** Yeah. I have had similar experiences of just almost like being surprised by the amount of time that things take, like I got divorced in early 2019 and got into my current relationship very, very soon thereafter, and that was also an interesting like... Is this the right decision? Is it too soon? And who's to say, we always want the crystal ball, when you were saying like, Is the grass greener? Should I water the grass that I have? Do I not want grass at all? Right, for me to say, Well, how much time do I need to spend alone before I'm ready to be in partnership with somebody else or what... I wanted someone...

**0:59:36.2 NA:** Again, I wanted someone to hand me like the checklist of things. And of course, that's not how it goes, but so it's been years, it's been almost three years for me since getting divorced and over the holidays, I was back in that town and I was house sitting for my former spouse and his girlfriend I was staying with their pets when they were visiting her family for the holidays, and I knew that I was gonna be moving more permanently to where I am now, and it just felt like everything came up for me all over again, 'cause I had been using that as my permanent address for the last three years still, getting mail there and everything, and to feel like, Wow, this is the last time that I'm gonna be here, that this is my address, and I was really surprised by how emotional and kind of what the grief was that came up in that.

**1:00:21.4 NA:** It really hit me, it was the experience of, Wow, I thought that I was over this. And in some ways I am, but I wound up doing what felt to me like a really necessary little ritual, maybe this is gonna sound silly, but in the name of honesty, I will share it where I lit a candle and I walked from room to room and in each room, I thought of a couple of really beautiful memories or moments that had happened in that room, and I went through the whole house, and I was crying and I'm not a crier, and then at the end, I blew out the candle and I felt like, Okay, the time of this being my home is complete, and I had no... I could not have predicted that almost three years in I would have needed that.

**1:01:01.1 SG:** Wow, that's beautiful. I think I wish I'd had that 'cause I just kind of left on a random day, with a boot full of stuff when I was going to work and no one at work knew I was moving. I would no longer be an hour away, I would actually be five minutes around the corner, and I remember turning up and carrying on my work day and... Or starting the work day, my manager at the time calling me upstairs to have a meeting about something, and I just burst into tears. I burst

into tears and she was like, "Okay, you need to take the rest of the day off and move your stuff and we'll talk in like maybe two, three days." But yeah, that's really nice. That was a really nice ritual. The other thing that surprised me, and I don't know if this is for people who class themselves as having been in long-term relationships but even though I made the decision, how much time I spent thinking and hoping that we would get out together, and so actually, I don't think the whole time hasn't been about a grief process of moving on, it's maybe even been like a process of coming to a realization that it wasn't gonna happen, and that's when the other bit started.

**1:02:27.2 NA:** Yeah, that's incredibly honest. This is such a good conversation, I'm really glad that you wanted to come in and share these things, these things that have no answers and no processes, I'm interested... This is maybe a strange question, but some of the specific things that you feel like you gained and lost by ending this relationship.

**1:02:53.7 SG:** Oh, this is a good question. Okay, let's start with the losses, I've lost a future that I thought I was gonna have. We are still friends and figuring out what that will look like for us, but I feel like I've lost a certain type of friendship, but I think it just is gonna be forever changed. That makes me feel really sad. I've lost the chance to continue living in London. I don't know, I miss it sometimes. And I was determined I wanted to move out of London, and I have now, and I'm happy here but there are some things that I just miss sometimes. I used to think of it that... And this is close to the bone for me. I used to think that I've lost out on the chance to be a mom because I'm 36 and I'm not interested in dating, and maybe by the time I meet someone who knows whatever, I don't think of it as a loss anymore because something else that's changed for me is how I think about motherhood and all the options of becoming a mother, and actually if I want to. I don't know if that's something you can be a bit ambivalent about, but I don't know, it's just how I am.

**1:04:44.4 SG:** I used to think... Again, that's something and I've lost. That's when I was in the kind of real deep, "Oh, woe is me, I have nothing," kind of stages. But what I've gained, I have gained a ever hardening, concrete sense of self-trust. I can trust myself, I know myself, I look inside for peace, and where I find peace, I know that's my answer. Even if I'm unsure, even if I don't know what the next steps are, I can trust myself, and that is why I feel like I'm a reforming planner, because I don't need to micro-manage and plan and control everything into being, because I know that when the next right thing comes for me, I can trust myself to just get on with it. So even though I've gained uncertainty, there's always been uncertainty, I just think I've gained a sense of certainty in myself, should we say, I've gained a broader outlook on life and I'm really grateful for that. And I've just gained the knowledge that stuff can not work out, but still kind of work out, it might be different, but it will still be good and it was to be yours and it will still be true.

**1:06:12.8 SG:** Yeah, I think that's what comes up off the top of my head for the things... I've also gained a really neat, well-coordinated bedroom where the bed is always made to my standard. [chuckle]

**1:06:30.2 NA:** I feel like I've talked about this in some other episodes of this season, it was through the divorce process, so when we decided we were getting divorced until when I actually moved out. It was like five or six months, and so I moved into the guest room, just so we could have some

space with some actual tangible space, and I had been in partnership for such a long time, and I had co-habitated with so many partners, and we had always shared bedrooms and shared beds, and that was my first experience of like, Oh my God, I hate sharing a bed, do you mean this is an option, and now my current partner and I don't share bedrooms, and so it's so funny when you say the bed made exactly to your standard, like I was... One of the thoughts that I had was I had that same experience and I was like, This is actually something that I'm not willing to compromise on. So if I'm gonna be partnered, I'm gonna be partnered and have my bedroom look the way that I want and not have to deal with whether they're messier than me or less messy than me, and obviously that involves having the space and the financial privilege to have separate spaces, but yeah, having a space that is mine and realizing that it's not an either or of either I'm in partnership, or I have my own space and my own time alone, and being able to have partnership without self-abandonment.

**1:07:44.8 SG:** Oh my gosh, that's beautiful. Yes, because that's something else I've gained. I'm gaining each day, each week, just a knowledge of what I like. I think 20-something-year-old me who got into a relationship was so concerned with being chosen and being picked and being wanted and being desired that I did not think for years about what I actually wanted. And then when I did actually dare to even ask myself quietly the question, I had so much self-doubt and everything heaped upon me, I felt shame for almost asking the question about what I wanted. And it was almost, that doesn't matter, like, do they want you? And actually, I think one thing, one other thing I've lost what I'm hoping, wanting, working towards gaining, I think I've lost a bit of a sense of myself in a lot of ways, in terms of how I want to be viewed, how I want to present myself to the world, a level of confidence, body confidence, confidence in the attractiveness I feel for me, I guess, and for other people, there's a lot in terms of the physical, where I think I've lost so much confidence and I feel like a shell of myself, but yeah, that's what I want to spend the next however long working on bringing back together and strengthening.

**1:09:20.1 NA:** And collecting the pieces of yourself that you've given away either intentionally or not intentionally.

**1:09:27.1 SG:** Yeah, for sure.

**1:09:28.6 NA:** Yeah, it sounds like you and I had very similar like late teens, early 20s of, Oh, this person picks me, that's a good enough reason. I can think of one, not to throw this person under the bus but there's no way he listens to this podcast. I could think of one relationship in particular that literally was multiple years long that I'm like, I don't even remember if I liked this person that much, but he picked me and it felt special to be someone's girlfriend. I honestly wanna gag a little bit when I say that, 'cause it's like so not something that I would do now, and I need you to just sit here and have so much compassion for younger me that that was all the validation that I wanted in the world.

**1:10:02.5 SG:** Yeah. 100%. Yeah. The question was not, Do I like them? It wasn't even a question, it was, They like me, okay. [chuckle]

**1:10:12.6 NA:** Look at that, progress, growth is possible. Yeah, when you talked about the loss of

the future that you had envisioned, I feel like that's a really particular type of grief, like this idea of breaking your own heart, it's not just losing the relationship, it's losing what you thought was going to come in the future, and I have also found this has actually been more poignant with a really painful friend break up that I had because we're not in each other's lives anymore. One of the things that I felt like I lost, that I had to grieve and I'm still grieving is like all of those memories or those experiences that that person was the only other person that shared them with you, and so you don't have someone to reminisce with about the... All the things that you just shared singularly with that person, if that person isn't in your life anymore, it's not that you lose your past, but you kind of do. You almost have to remake it in a way, especially if it's a painful thing that you don't wanna touch or think about, years of my life with this friend, I almost have to put in a box and I couldn't even think of myself at those ages because it was too painful because so much of it was shared with this person.

**1:11:20.1 SG:** Yeah. Exactly the same because at first all I could see was the fact that there would not be this thing. I didn't care. It's strange, and it's, again, it's one of those of a very sticky points. I think I did a lot of work, and I even saw a life coach in the couple months before I ended our relationship, the question was... It was essentially, what do I do? Do I stay? Do I go? And I did so much work to figure out what I wanted and almost justify it, but I wanted to want it without justification and to let myself want it because that's what I wanted, and it was okay for there to be a full stop at the end of that. But I find myself in this place of, I know what I didn't want, I am here in the middle, and I'm still trying to be okay with, see my value and my worth because I'm not... This is tender, I'm not sure sometimes I feel good enough for what I want to come or what I hope to come, I find myself in the middle, and it's not that I was too good for what was before, it's not that, I just find myself in this really uncomfortable place and that makes you even question your decision because it's like, Well, what did you leave for, do you know what I mean?

**1:12:55.0 SG:** But it's two uncomfortable things, I guess, that sit together at the same time, and that's where I find myself at the moment.

**1:13:04.2 NA:** Yeah, and I often think about in hard situations, can it be enough that I'm just working on learning to hold what hurts? I want there to be answers so badly, and sometimes there just aren't.

**1:13:22.1 SG:** Yeah, yeah. Holding what hurts. I think I'm starting... The mist feels like it's starting to clear, Hey, today could just be a good day, I don't know, but it feels like the mist is starting to clear and I'm maybe starting to be able to put down what hurts because it's also heavy. I'm able to take breaks from it some days, which is good, and I don't know, depending on who's listening to this and where they are at the time, some people might be thinking, Oh my gosh, this is so elaborate like, is it really that deep? But to me, it really is like living through this, I'm like, This literally feels like it's taking two years out of my life, and for some people it won't be that, but this has just been my experience.

**1:14:13.6 NA:** Well, yeah, if you are someone, which it sounds like you and I both were, that defined at least some degree of your work by being picked in a romantic context that's still buried

under there somewhere, and so when you are either when someone leaves you or you make the decision to leave or when you're losing, you're no longer being picked whoever's choice that it was, that can be in itself heartbreaking, and there's just so much in that.

**1:14:44.3 SG:** Yeah, the other realization that I'm having and I've had to spend a lot of time with it is I've read something on Instagram the other day, I can't quite remember what it was talking about, I think it was this whole pick me thing and it was saying essentially, Work on your self-esteem before you date again, and I'm like, Yes, that is me, [chuckle] because I think I would view myself sometimes as not being good enough for the person I was with before, and a lot of what took up my time in coming to the decision to leave and end my relationship was when you know what it feels like not to feel good enough, how can you then tell somebody else that essentially, it feels like you're saying to them, they are not good enough for you. When you know what that feels like, how can you put that on someone else? And what I'm having to learn or have had to learn is, it's not a thing about the person, it's about both of us, it's about what we're willing to commit to and change, and the love we wanted to show versus the love that we wanted to receive, which isn't necessarily, it's not an attack on each of our character, yeah.

**1:16:10.3 NA:** Yeah. Which is something that sometimes we need to remind ourselves like over and over again. [chuckle] I think that's a really good place to start to wrap up, if you could leave folks with one affirmation of sorts based on this conversation, what would it be? Basically, what is your wish for everyone listening?

**1:16:31.1 SG:** It would be something like, I don't need to second guess what I already know.

**1:16:46.6 NA:** Yeah, like giving yourself permission to know what you know.

**1:16:49.4 SG:** Yeah.

**1:16:54.6 NA:** I love that. What's the best place for people to find you and say, Hi, if they wanna say hello? Are you open to that? Do you have a favorite way to connect with new folks?

**1:17:00.9 SG:** Oh yeah, I love a chat in the DMs on Instagram to be fair. Yeah, so you can find me on Instagram, I write under the handle frankandfeel, and you can also find me on my website, which is frankandfeel.com. And you can find out more about me, what I write, what I do, how I live life. Yeah.

**1:17:21.0 NA:** Yes, I will put links to all of that in the show notes. Sasha, thank you so much.

**1:17:25.7 SG:** Thank you for having me.

**1:17:34.6 NA:** Thank you.

[music]

**1:17:35.1 NA:** Thank you so much for listening to this very first season of the Pop Up Pod, all of the intimate and honest conversations you'll hear on this show are 100% listener funded, paid for by my sliding scale patreon community, that means no ads and no sponsors, just a couple hundred people coming together to ensure that everyone involved in making this podcast gets paid, that includes me as the host and creator, my sound engineer and musician Adam Day, as well as every single one of our guests. The patreon community also funds the creation of a full transcript for each episode, which you can find in the show notes to help make these conversations more accessible for all. Those are our production ethics here at the Pop Up Pod, and if that aligns with your own values I would love to invite you to come check out our community at [patreon.com/nicoleantoinette](https://patreon.com/nicoleantoinette). It's a fun, easy and welcoming space, you also get access to lots of bonuses, and remember it's run on a sliding scale, so you can pay whatever amount makes most sense for you each month, depending on your circumstances. That's [patreon.com/nicoleantoinette](https://patreon.com/nicoleantoinette) and hopefully, I'll see you there.

[music]

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