

Ep 40: Second Adolescence w/ Tony C (he/him)

Wed, Apr 26, 2023 5:00PM 39:52

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adolescence, queerness, queer, experiences, people, curious, san francisco, mom, gay, parents, growing, guess, classes, story, dating, life, puzzle piece, feel, happened, therapist

SPEAKERS

Adam James Cohen (he/him), Tony C. (he/him)

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 00:09

Hi there, welcome to the Second Adolescence podcast. Here we talk about all things queer healing and Second Adolescence. So what is Second Adolescence you might ask? Second Adolescence is a sort of developmental life stage queer people navigate in our post coming out adult years after growing up within an anti queer world. For many second adolescence is about healing the wounds of our younger queer selves, gaining the experiences they missed out on and unlocking what it means for us to exist as our most free and true selves. I am your host, Adam James Cohen, psychotherapist and human who went through his own second adolescence. This week's guest is Tony C, who uses he him pronouns. I loved getting to chat with Tony and was really touched by his intention of wanting to come on the show about how it could in his words be helpful to some listeners to hear from someone who hasn't totally gotten their life together and is still in the middle of growing up. I so appreciated Tony's contribution of his story and his mental health journey to this show. And I'm really excited to invite you into the conversation. And as with each episode of second adolescence, I really want to invite you as listener to listen with open curiosity, knowing that each of her stories are different and unique, you might hear some guest share things that really differ from your experience, whereas other guests might share things that really speak to what you went through or are currently going through. And I really hope that all of this happens and that together, we can continue growing and expanding our awareness of what life and queerness and healing can be for folks, if after the show you want to connect further, feel free to head on over to secondadolescencepod.com for shownotes and more. Or you can follow the show on Instagram at [@secondadolescencepod](https://www.instagram.com/secondadolescencepod). All right. Welcome to the conversation. Thank you so much for being here. Welcome to Second Adolescence. I'm really curious to see where this conversation goes and to learn more about you and your story. But I guess Yeah, before going anywhere, I like to invite the guests to always introduce themselves to give the listeners a little mini taste for who the person is behind the voice.

T Tony C. (he/him) 02:19

So I'm Tony C, he/him. My mom's from Brazil. My dad's like a European mix. I went to public elementary school for five years. And then I was homeschooled. did not like school. For a lot of reasons I grew up around most of my people family, her aunts, sisters, my cousins. My dad

reasons. I grew up around most of my mom's family, her aunts, sisters, my cousins. My dad stayed home took care of us. So it's kind of unusual in the 90s. I have older brother and sister.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 02:54
You're the baby of the family.

T Tony C. (he/him) 02:55
Yeah. I'm kind of that stereotype movies used to have about like the 30 year old guy who lives in their parents basement and writes. That's about it right now.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 03:09
Cool. Okay, cool. And you say you say and you write?

T Tony C. (he/him) 03:13
Yeah.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 03:14
Yeah. So kind of tell me about Tell me about that. What is writing look like for you?

T Tony C. (he/him) 03:17
My dream job would be to like, write young adult novels with queer characters. So that may or may not ever happen. I read a lot.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 03:26
Yeah. Do you read a lot of queer YA?

T Tony C. (he/him) 03:29
Yes.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 03:30
Yeah. I think that so many of us do. And I'm curious to dive more into that, like our experience as adults being drawn to these queer teen young persons stories. I guess, maybe we'll just start

right there. Let's dive right in. What do you know for you? What draws you to that type of content?

T Tony C. (he/him) 03:51

Two things. One is I didn't go to high school. I was homeschooled. So that kind of gives you a stunted, adolescence to begin with. So it's always I'm always wondering about this question, what would High School have been like for me? And so I think there's a lot of like four years, kind of wandering, imagining myself in these situations, totally. And then also having queer characters and stories, which are very little in the 90s. Like, I remember it being a big deal when Ellen came out on her TV show. And willing Grace was like, brand new, like the only thing. I mean, so much has changed since then. But like, that didn't help me growing up. Right. So I think it's kind of like that combination. And that's kind of what started making me think about the Second Adolescence is seeing other adults who are also into a lot of like younger adult storylines books, movies, and I started to think, like a year ago, maybe they also didn't have like an ideal adolescence, exosphere. Green screen up. So they're like trying to have a nicer one. And I'm like, I saw a post on Instagram for your podcast. And I was like, Oh, that's it. Okay, so this is a thing, like having a Second Adolescence, and then having a curiosity about a more typical adolescent. So like the media shows,

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 05:20

yeah. Okay, got it. So like, before being exposed to this idea of Second Adolescence, you yourself were already because growing up in kind of a homeschooling context, you were already missing out on top of that was there as the queerness layer, but you were missing out in general, from kind of what is perceived as typical adolescence, typical high school, all of that. So you're already feeling kind of stunted and removed? Yeah. And then this queerness was another layer. And then yeah, you mentioned when, as you're reading, or engaging with queer, young adult stories, it kind of becomes this mechanism to kind of put yourself there and imagine like, what that would be like for you, if you were to have those experiences. I'm curious if you could share, like, what is it like when you're in that place? When you are in that state of imagining, gosh, how would that be for me? Or?

T Tony C. (he/him) 06:03

Yeah, it's a lot of daydreaming. Right? Before I wake up, before I go to bed, I'll they take certain moments that have happened and be like, well, what if I had gone that way? And like, I had a chance to go back to high school, because like homeschooling was very much a choice for me. It wasn't my parents were not religious or anything with it. So it's kind of like, almost every year is like, Well, do you want to go back to school or not?

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 06:29

And you mentioned your parents kind of checking in with you, like you want to go back to school or not, it sounds like you kept making that decision. To stay in the homeschooling context. What do you remember feeling then about what it might be like if you went to school?

Or why did you make that decision?

T Tony C. (he/him) 06:47

You know, there's a lot of like, stress and anxiety. And so going into like this huge, big unknown thing of school, what's kind of daunting? Totally, since my older brother and sister went to school, and they were more typical. I have friends and stuff. When I would have started high school, my sister would have been a senior. And I didn't really want to go to like the same school that she was in. Yeah. And they were building the new high school in this town. And like, if they were open, maybe I would go there. But they were still under construction. So I don't know. It was kind of also very superficial. Check in with me. The weren't diving deep and understanding questions on how things were going, it was very much do you like this? And I was like, I can just say, Okay. And that's that really?

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 07:35

Totally. Yeah. And I'm curious, like, as an adult. Now, looking back, how do you feel about the decision to stay in the homeschooling context?

T Tony C. (he/him) 07:45

Yeah, I remind myself a lot that I did what worked for me at the time. So sure, I could have made different decisions, but they would have been, like, very uncomfortable for me at the time, really pushing myself outside of my comfort zone. So I did what worked for me.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 08:07

Yeah, I love that. And I think like for any of us who have, like, whatever our history is, and whatever kind of happened for our adolescent selves, younger selves, like bringing in this self compassionate lens of even if, say, you were to go back in time now with the full understanding, or experiences or knowledge or whatever we have, as adults, if we could go back in time, and maybe we'd want things to be different. There's this real need to kind of give space to what like I was doing the best I could with what I had, like that whole notion I love and so I really appreciate you naming that. And also kind of modeling for a helpful approach that each of us can kind of take as we go back and look at these different parts of our stories. Okay, cool. Cool. Okay, wait. So back up, where? Where did you grow up? Where was this all happening?

T Tony C. (he/him) 08:51

So to places like my elementary school ages, were in like a small town in Santa Barbara County, and then we move to suburbs on San Diego? When I was 12.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 09:07

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 09:02

Okay. Yeah. Okay. And so like, What do you remember? And how old are you again?

T Tony C. (he/him) 09:07

I'm 34. Now. Okay, so

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 09:08

This was like, Yeah, born in late 80s. Kind of adolescence happened and kind of latter 90s, early 2000s. Like, what what do you remember, like, what was culture like that? Like, as you were growing up in like that middle school age? What do you remember kind of coming to learn about kind of what it means to be a human? What any messaging around queerness or gender norms? I'm curious, like, yeah, what? What was the soup you were kind of cooked within?

T Tony C. (he/him) 09:34

You know, I've really been trying to think like, when was my first like, exposure, like something good? Yeah, I remember there was this little book. And it was somewhere between like, ages 10 and four that I read this book, and it was about a parade. And one of the words in there was gay. I might because the only word I did not know in the whole book. I didn't know what it meant and never heard it before. So I asked my dad, he very matter of fact that he was like, Well, it used to mean half be going out. And it's like two guys or two women who were together. I was like, okay, my brother and sister would kind of be the ones that would be kind of like policing behaviors. Like, I remember my brother saying San Francisco was the gate day, one time, kind of like in a negative way. I'm just like, okay, whatever. There's also the story that I knew growing up, that when my brother went to kindergarten, he came home. And he told my mom, nobody else there can no like he has Barbies, because my mom was very much in test playing with every kind of toy. So like, I knew that going into elementary school, and I played with, you know, dolls and things like that way more than he ever did. So like, there was kind of definitely like an uncomfortableness with going to school. And like, all these things they do at home, like, I'm kind of not supposed to do them at school. So like my last couple of years of elementary school, like during recess, I just go walk around building myself over the school. And then probably the biggest impact I had from like, my parents was, my dad was talking on the phone to his friend who had a kid who was going into middle school, and he was telling his friend about things that he talked to my brother about, when my brother went to middle school. And he was telling my brother, like, you know, people tease you or bully you for things. Like they might say, you're gay, but you know, there's nobody else in our family. He's gay. So you're not gay. And I mean, I'm, like, eight years old when I hear this. And I'm like, okay, it seemed plausible. And like, yeah, my age when, like, your parents know everything, right? Of course. Right. Right. So with that, in this kind of like, well, that's not gonna be me.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 11:44

When it makes me curious, like, when in your story, do you look back and start to see queerness? Because I hear that you're getting these messaging around queerness. And kind of like messaging around how that's not going to be you or That's not who we are as a family.

Like, just like a lot of kind of not messaging. I'm curious what then happened as queerness perhaps started showing up in your story? How did you then experience that?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 12:07

So when I was a teenager, there would be other guys around, my sister had a friend, and they were other people. And my family would be like, they're probably gay. These guys. And I'm like, well, they're a lot like me. And I'm like, You guys think they're gay? And I'm like, I'm not gay. Maybe we're just like, not these macho, toxic masculinity type guy. Well, I guess turns out, there's a thing to us being gay. What really started me accepting my acknowledging that, you know, I am gay, was when I was 18. I moved back to a small town, Santa Barbara County. I lived with my grandma, I was going to a community college. My second semester I was taking enter the psychology class. And they had this like, chapter on LGBT issues was not pretty the assigned reading, but I'm like, I need to read that. And like, my jaw dropped several times. This sounds exactly like my life. Everything about it sounded exactly like my life. I was like, Okay, I'll have to come back to this.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 13:19

We had like, what parts like What do you remember in that section that was really communicating? Well, this is this my life...

T

Tony C. (he/him) 13:25

How you feel growing up, and like, kind of like disconnects you have with the world. How, like patterns of relationships with people kind of having a misunderstanding of things or distance between things. And as like, that's happened. That's happened. That's happened, like taking all these little boxes off. Yeah, kind of going up to that point. And like, I've noticed that like, there's a lot of so I'm always sation of things like, Okay, you're masturbating. And like, you know, you might kind of start thinking about someone of the opposite gender, sex. And then like, at some point, you kind of start thinking about things more like you're so and I got the time I'm like, Well, you know, I'm more familiar with that. Because those are the body parts I have. So maybe that's why it's just my familiar. So like, in college, there's like, generally, a lot more women in classes than there are men. And early on. So I'm paying like a lot more attention to like, the 10 guys on classes, so opposed to the 30 women. I like well, there's less of them. It's easier to like, keep track of them every day, paying attention what they're wearing. And then I'm like, Well, maybe it's just me comparing myself because I haven't been around a lot of people but then it's like, well, I guess there's something else too like my like, wanting to look at men more

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 14:43

And like, as that was happening for you, as you were just kind of starting to kind of have that observation and kind of starting to ask those questions for yourself. Maybe there's something more here like I remember feeling about that. About what if this is me?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 14:59

A part I was thinking like, well, that would answer a lot of questions. It might be kind of a relief. Because late teens to my early 20s, I was kind of getting very depressed. So it's like, well, maybe that will kind of be an answer to that. I didn't feel like you have like a real crush on a guy, like in person until 2019. I'm like, 21. And there's this guy in my math class. And that's like, I'm like, Okay, this is definitely a crush.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 15:33

What was that like to feel?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 15:34

I don't know, I might have been like, kind of like, Finally, that was kind of interesting, because I ended up coming up to a cousin, like, closest cousin I have. He's like a year younger than me. And we find our lives like at the end of 2008. And it was a good moment. But I was like, at the end of 2008. So it doesn't mind spraying out these classes. And like, I'm making friends. This is mostly class with the guy I have a crush on isn't like nothing happens with them. But it was those like ended up being like a year later when I finally it's like, just before my 22nd birthday. And 21. I'm like, I still want to kiss the guy for two whole. So that finally happens in March. And then like, in April, I meet some more gay guys. And like, in May I meet this guy, he wants to be boyfriends. And looking back, I'm like, I don't have the vocabulary to say what I needed to say. So I ended up just saying yes, because I'm like, Well, I do want a boyfriend. I don't want a boyfriend like right now. But so we started dating. And then I come up to my parents in June. Well, I come up to my mom, I was gonna come up to my dad, he was like, out of town. So like, we're having lunch one day, and I'm like, the guy was dating. My parents had met him. This was my friend. And for lunch, I was like, so we're dating. He's my boyfriend. My mom's all excited like 80 Guys like each other. And he really liked each other. And then she's like, do you want me to tell people in the family? Do you want me to tell your dad? I don't think he knows. And I'm like, Well, I'm not going to be keeping a secret from people. So you can tell people I don't care. I'm not telling you to tell them. But whatever. Associations coming out for me, basically. I guess they need to backtrack a little bit. Sure. So when I was 10, and like Titanic came out, I was really into that movie. And also, Leonardo DiCaprio is like Romeo and Juliet that came out. So there's one night when my mom asked me like, he was like, Leonardo. And I'm kind of like, trying. And like, I didn't know what to say how to respond to that. I mean, like, she wasn't like, okay, or anything, it's just kind of left it at you like him. And then early in 2009, I kind of like starting to feel suicidal. So I called my cousin who had come out to a few months ago, in the middle of the night. And by the time he answers the phone, I'm like, I've calmed down. So I'm like, I'm okay. Nothing's wrong. He's like, why are you calling me right? So talk for a little bit, and then it's done. Well, in the morning, my mom's like, so your cousin told his mom to talk to me, but you're not feeling well. And like he was in the military. So he's like, had all the students I training. So, January 2009, my parents find out I'm a little suicidal. So we'll go to therapy, I have my own therapist, some family therapy, that's kind of going along. And then in the summertime, my mom, I'm doing the wine on a little trip, my mom writes me this letter and gives me some books. And she's like, I know you've been having a hard time and like, get to know what it is. Maybe you should talk to your therapist about this. She's like, I don't know if you're gay or not, but used to talk to them. And she gave me these, like, young adult books with gay characters. And it's like, Oh, my God, have been talking to my therapist about this.

Because right at the intake, they ask you all these questions, and my friends gave me this little stack of like, different therapists that the insurance covers and I'm like, Well, hey, do you want to go to a go to, you guys can make the call. I was like three that like had LGBTQ experiences and like, could deal with that. And so like, the intake, they're asking you, like, how do you identify like, what's your orientation? And they're just like, I don't know. So that was like, a year before I ended up coming out with that my mom gave me these books. Talk to your therapist about this kind of supportive, like still on the outside, and then go into like, coming up to a herd thing like I don't think you'd done. Mike. Are you sir? Because like, since I'd read The intro the psychology textbook I had been I've kind of been more open about being myself stepping out and like trying out different things to see people's reactions. And like my dad made this joke like, my mom, her sisters, my sister are going on this girl's cruise, it gives us like the ladies. And like that was like, Well, you could go to me, I was like, okay, he's kind of seeing things. And then after he came out, my mom was asking about my therapist, and she's like, have you talked to her about this? Is he like, he's gay? So yeah, we have talked about my dad's like, Well, I knew I looked up the guy's website.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 20:41

What's it like, in this moment, to go back to that period of time, and to think about how all of that went down?

T Tony C. (he/him) 20:48

I don't know, in some ways, it was kind of a whirlwind. That seemed to be happening kind of fast. So it's actually something I really wanted to say was one of my kind of my suicidal times, I was like, you know, you haven't lived your life as an out gay man. So you need to do that before you like make this like life ending choice. To me that kind of really late. And just kind of like, all in on, you know, being gay, you know, and open. You know, like, I don't need, like suffer internalized homophobia and things like that. That's in the past. You can you can step past that.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 21:31

And how did you step past that? What kind of what did that look like? It looks different for each of us. And there's lots of different things we do to try to unlearn this internalized homophobia, this internalized anti queerness. And, you know, for many of us, it's an ongoing thing. But curious, like, what does that look like for you?

T Tony C. (he/him) 21:48

It was a lot of you know just accepting things, accepting people, not judging, you know, people's kinks, their interests, the countercultural things, like, you know, it's all okay. Yeah, I think that was a lot of it. There's probably still I have some I haven't dealt with yet. But kind of like, just a little reminder, when these things come up, like, you know, it's okay, if people are doing what they do. I don't know if there's anything else on that.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 22:18

No, yeah, no, I mean, that itself is like really helpful. It's just kind of being aware of when it pops up even now, and I like to even like, name it internally, for myself, whenever I noticed, like some type of anti queer belief pop up either about myself or as you're speaking to, it can also show up in our lens with how we look at queerness. externally. It's helpful sometimes for me to just even name it as that like, oh, okay, yeah, there's like anti queerness, like, skewing my lens, again, let me kind of bring in some new data and a new belief to recognize, hey, we yet that's not how I feel. That's not my perspective. Now. That's just what, like an old script that I came to learn. And gradually, we keep rewriting a new script. Yeah, thanks for sharing that. Okay. So then, like, after that coming out period, with your family, with yourself, being in therapy, it sounds like a lot is happening during this time. What happens next in your story?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 23:09

I started dating this guy, and I come out, like a month later than that's in the summer time. In January. I'm like, I'm gonna move to San Francisco. I do that.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 23:20

Why did you decide to move?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 23:22

I've always liked San Francisco, was kind of having the opportunity to go to school there. Figured I should take it. And I break up with my boyfriend because I'm like, we really jumped into this dating thing. I want to be single, wild and crazy. And he kind of wanted to go, like, no, I need to be single. And, man, I'm taking a lot of really great, like LGBT history. Community classes at the City College. They're, like, start dating around more. I was really nervous. The first time I went on Grindr. I know it's location based on like, I don't want people to know exactly where I live. So like, I went to the mall. I was like, That's it like that. And then I was like, I really don't like have a map that shows your peoples pictures in rows.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 24:18

and how was that for you to start? Sounds like you started dating. I mean, gosh, really what you wanted within one year it sounds like you'd like in March and in kind of back and kind of Santa Barbara County. I think you were starting to start having these experiences jump then quickly moved into this first relationship that ended move to San Francisco's this next level of kind of starting to pursue having experiences. What was that? Like? Yeah, to get on Grindr for the first time to start kind of trying to have these experiences what was going on?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 24:46

I don't know. It was a lot of fun. I'm like, Okay, I'm finally living life. I guess that was mostly I'm

a very shy person. So it's way easier for me to like talk to people online than to like, just go to a person in person. So I don't know, I've definitely taken advantage of a lot of things in San Francisco, like the clear poetry night, et cetera, in their groups, they had joined to the different theaters and shows in San Francisco. It was kind of weird, though, because there are several times they go to gay bars and the bouncer kind of be like, Do you know what place this is? Are you sure you're gay? And it's just kind of like, wow, I'm here. Oh, wow. Yeah, that's really weird. I'm like, okay.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 25:35

Oh, yeah, this bouncer policing your enough queer and like being queer enough? What? Oh, goodness,

T

Tony C. (he/him) 25:43

one of them by might have been a little more understandable. It was a place that had like this 18 and over again, so it's not like they're gay all the time. But I mean, like I was showing up there with all these other young gay dudes from the Federal league in the middle of this group. Why are you asking me?

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 26:02

As you look back at your San Francisco chapter, I think for a lot of us, there can be this desire to migrate to a place where queerness is more integrated into the fabric of the city, the town, and not all of us have the ability to make that decision and make that move, which again, kind of speaks to the power of the internet offering kind of queer spaces for folks. But it can also be common, though, to do this sort of like physical queer migration. And I'm curious, as you look back at your San Francisco chapter, what did it do for you to live there?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 26:38

I would say it was the education. I'm in several ways, like, the City College has, like some amazing classes about gay history and life and like queer cinema classes, gave out relationships, classes, and like, really amazing teachers. Really good books that they have you read in class. But yeah, it was just being around like the wider community. If I had made more friends, more of like a support system, I guess I might have stayed in San Francisco, at some point and kind of like, wasn't finishing like classes was like, kind of depressed and staying home all the time for like, moved back in with my parents, and they had moved to a nicer place to live in Long Beach in Southern California, and that has a gay community here. It's not a small town, I see a partner moving to San Francisco definitely was wanting to be around larger gay community culture.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 27:33

And then moving back to or moving to Long Beach. When did that happen? What year was

that?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 27:39

So I moved from San Francisco to Long Beach in 2013..

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 27:44

So then, like, you moved to Long Beach, what happens next for you? Sounds like kind of San Francisco, your depression got activated. And it got to a point where you were feeling pulled to come back and have the support of your family system? How did that next chapter go for you?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 28:01

Kind of interesting. There's this guy had started talking to when I was in San Francisco, he started talking, I live. And we still talk a lot before I start dating him for a few years, and he moves down to Long Beach, and then we break up, pee goes away. And then I'm single again. I'm in like, 2016. And it's 20. Around this time I am I have an aunt last night, what's it like to date because like, you're really shy. And I'm like, you know, if they can really, I can't easier to date people after going on dates with guys who are shy than I am. Excited, go on some dates. And it gets to a point where I'm like, if I don't say anything, nobody's gonna say anything. And I literally asked the guy like, a year, so I was like, yeah, like, Okay, well, he's not gonna talk, then I can just ask whatever I want to ask. That was actually nice, because when they got too late, kind of experiment with, you know, talking about things that I'm more interested in and not like, what society tries to push on you. This will let you talk about on a day. This is like, so it was kind of interesting, like, you know, being around Shire people and like that kind of like teaching me.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 29:13

Yeah, totally, totally. And like kind of inviting you to kind of expand both your zone of comfort, but also it sounds like it offered this interesting thing where it allowed you to kind of step outside of this as a person on date, we were supposed to show up and this way and ask about these things and talk about this. It allowed you to kind of shed that and just kind of gradually show up more authentically, where you are most curious about as your authentic self. Oh, cool. And then what happens next in your story,

T

Tony C. (he/him) 29:43

so I'm single for a few years here in Long Beach, and then one of the first guys I met, I guess 12 years ago now and we've kind of kept in touch. We're always like, dating other people or seeing like the wrong times or wanting to be single. They're not like just before the pandemic or boasting or both kinda like kinda ready to be boyfriend before we start dating. And it's funny people like, Oh, you just have any other 10 years. We just met each other way back when they've been dating started a pandemic. That's been nice.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 30:16

I'm curious, like, do you see as you think about how you experienced this relationship and show up now, versus relationships when you were younger? And how you experienced showing up, then like, what do you see as similar? And what do you see is different? Like, do you see where things have either changed? Or? Yeah, what do you see there?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 30:37

However, notice that it is kind of a different, I guess, skill set to like, stay in a relationship, as opposed to like a starting one. Like there's new things to learn about communicating with someone that has been around a long time, and you're around for a long time, and you want to keep things going. That's kind of its own little learning curve. So that's like, the biggest thing I noticed, like I'm learning like, it's always the advice out there communications in the park. And like, I guess it kind of is. Kind of interesting, because when I was a kid, like, the only couple that was like, together long term, and my family, well, my parents that I was around, my grandparents had been divorced. Most of my aunts were kind of single. My later childhood, some of them started getting married. So to me, it was always, you know, the American dream of like, the two parents white picket fence in house. That's not common for most people. I guess in some ways, relationship dynamics are kind of native. Yeah, I've always kind of like understood them that way. There's not one set way.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 31:45

Yeah, yes. making me think about hearing you talk about kind of your growth and kind of communication and kind of understanding of different relationship dynamics. And all of that makes me think about how it and kind of setting up, you have becoming under the podcast, you mentioned really identifying as someone who's like, really in the midst of your own second adolescence, in the midst of your own process with this, I'm curious, like, what else comes to mind to really illustrate that, like, where are you at in terms of what do you notice as the parts of yourself or your experience where you're developing more comfort or growth in where are there areas where you're curious to continue seeing some more evolution? And where are we at right now? And also, what does it mean for you to be in your second adolescence right now? How do you kind of describe what that is for you?

T

Tony C. (he/him) 32:27

You know, as they thought about coming on here, and like, I feel like the interpersonal relationship, part of my cycle, Adolescence is kind of like, that's had a nice development. But the what do I want to do with my life kind of question. That's the part that still has the struggle and like, you know, I've had plenty of relationship experiences, different types. So making I'm feeling comfortable with that, you know, what am I gonna spend my time doing? I don't know. That's what I don't know. That's where I'm like, Well, I'm kind of a writer, but I haven't that like actively writing. But hopefully, what else do I want to do? I don't know. I think it kind of goes back to you know, giving yourself some grace and space to be awkward, and, you know, do things that are uncomfortable, do things that you know, people might not like, because you

know, you don't know better. And like, I kind of wish, leave it off for each other, more space to like, Soul burn and grow. Cuz I mean, like, the queer community does not have the early foundation of an early cyclical first lesson. For me, like I try to model that we're dealing with other people and things. Don't know how successful that is.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 33:44

You mentioned earlier, kind of having this grace and compassion for yourself. And, again, that's come up and I just like, I want to scream that from the mountaintops like that is such the way to approach ourselves and others, but our ourselves and our experience to approach it from this space of acceptance and compassion and kind of understanding kind of, hey, this is where I'm at, this is what I'm experiencing, and not having to place any judgment, or shame or all of that. And it's not easy, like our world does not train us to be self compassionate. Our world has not trained us to have grace and give ourselves grace for ourselves. And so I just really appreciate you again, highlighting that and I really experienced that as an invitation for, for myself, for listeners to just to continue exploring, developing that way of being with ourselves. How did you develop that for you?

T Tony C. (he/him) 34:31

I don't know. Probably help from that in that 10 years of therapy.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 34:36

Hell yeah. Hell yeah.

T Tony C. (he/him) 34:40

I've been I've kind of in need spending so much time in my head, and you know, trying different things and like, realizing the scene and no learning but you know, those things don't work for me. Those things are kind of lead to other bad habits. So, kind of become, I guess, the best coping mechanism or like life skill they have. Yeah, cool. I guess I kind of want to say like, having to deal with depression and anxiety has also kind of like really led to that. Because it's kind of like, you know, I don't know what I'm going to be able to do when I wake up every day. Something could be right. I don't really know why.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 35:22

Yeah, so having the experience where the depression or the anxiety can come up, and there's some unknown unpredictable nature of that, at times has kind of given you more training to kind of be able to kind of just pull back and see, okay, let's see where I'm at. And if they if it's up, then Okay, then I'll adjust. So yeah, I really make sense how having that type of mental health experience can help train us to just take a step back a little bit, and accept, okay, here's where I'm at that. Okay. The depression is up. Okay. The anxiety is up. All right. Now, just roll with that. Yeah. Gosh, Tony, this has been so lovely. I'm looking at time. I gotta let you go in a

sec. But curious, like, was there anything that hasn't been shared yet? That wanted to be a part of this conversation? I mean, there's so much I'm sure. In your story, and in your life, so much to say, but anything within this conversation that wants to come up that hasn't yet?

T Tony C. (he/him) 36:13

you know, I was gonna say, like, when you're like, how did the Second Adolescence I kind of I really relate to you to me, after I saw the post about your podcast on Instagram, and I started listening to them, like, I was like, wow, like, in each episode, each conversation you have and like, I'm picking up little puzzle pieces of my life. And this is like, really great like to hear other people's stories, learn kind of like listen to their experiences, and like, see where mine fits with their so others fits with mine. And like, you know, a lot of people are having like a similar struggles. That's one thing I wanted to say.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 36:48

Yeah, yeah, well, I'm so touched to hear that previous episodes of this podcast has been a helpful tool in your own process. And I love that image of like, they're each different puzzle pieces that can help fill in some blank spaces and kind of connect the pieces that's really powerful and really cool. And I'm just struck by your now on the show, you're now offering a puzzle piece for folks. And I guess, like, what is that like to be here to have been on this conversation, to share your story?

T Tony C. (he/him) 37:22

I need to pat myself on the back for doing this is definitely like, stepping out of my comfort zone. And I was studying psychology for a lot in college, and kind of like, I don't think I may pursue that enough to like, become a therapist myself, which had been something I was going to do. And I'm like, Well, you know, growing on this podcast is kind of like a little in between stuck for myself, you know, sharing my story and my story and a story and possibly helping other people.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 37:53

Absolutely.

T Tony C. (he/him) 37:54

So I'm like, patting myself on the back.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 37:57

Yeah, that's so cool. And I, I feel so touched that you, you know, it's It takes courage to kind of share our story. And particularly if we're someone who leans more introverted or shy, like that

is absolutely not how we typically navigate through the world with a lot of comfort. And I'm just, I just feel so touched that you move through that to offer your story to this collective work. And again, to offer a potential puzzle piece for folks who themselves are in their own process of, of healing and their own process of growing, you know, as we all are continuing to do. And so I just feel so grateful that you wanted to be here and wanted to come on and share your story. And yeah, keep that pat on your back going. Really cool. Really cool.

T

Tony C. (he/him) 38:43

Well, thank you. And I'll say, you're welcome.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 38:46

Thank you so much. Thanks for joining us for today's conversation. Feel free to head on over to secondadolescencepod.com for show notes and more. And you can connect further by following the show on Instagram at [@secondadolescencepod](https://www.instagram.com/secondadolescencepod). If you're interested in being a future guests on the show and you want to come on and share about your own Second Adolescence visit secondadolescencepod.com/beaguest and you can submit your interest there. Alright, that's it for me for now. Whether it's morning, afternoon, night, wherever we're finding you and your day, go on out there and keep doing things that would make younger you absolutely thrilled. That is what it's all about. Alright, right. Take good care.