

Embodied
Friday 12 – 1pm
Lines For Quarter 4 of 2023

December 29, 2023

Category: Health

Stuttering out loud: embracing speech diversity and fighting shame around stuttering

Description: Stuttering has long been the butt of many jokes. People who stutter are working to change that.

In mainstream media, stuttering is often comical or a symptom in people who are overly vulnerable and nervous. But the condition doesn't stem at all from nerves or anxiety ... and instead of a source of shame, it can be seen as a form of neurodiversity.

Host Anita Rao talks about the science behind stuttering with Dr. Derek Daniels, a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist. Dr. Daniels is also a person who stutters and an associate professor in the department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at Wayne State University. He talks with Anita about his research and personal experience regarding stuttering in African American and LGBTQ communities.

Anita also talks with Jia Bin, who grew up in China surrounded by cultural fear and shame around stuttering. Jia is now a doctoral student at Michigan State University studying speech-language pathology and breaking down barriers for Chinese stutterers.

Also joining the conversation is Nina G, a comedian and the author of "Stutterer, Interrupted: The Comedian Who Almost Didn't Happen." Nina talks to Anita about changing the narrative so that stuttering isn't the butt of the joke — people who don't understand it are.

Special thanks to Courtland and Matice for their contributions to this show!

Please note: This episode originally aired March 31, 2023.

December 22, 2023

Category: Relationships

When a father becomes incarcerated

Description: Many incarcerated people are also parents. Their children navigate social stigma and barriers to staying in contact with their loved ones.

[Over half](#) the people inside federal prisons are parents to minor children, and the majority of those people are fathers. What happens to their kids and families while they serve time?

To answer this question, host Anita Rao talks with her former thesis adviser Ashley Lucas, whose father was sent to prison when she was 15. Ashley works for the University of Michigan as a professor of theatre and drama and the director of Latina/o Studies, and she wrote a play called "Doin' Time: Through the Visiting Glass" exploring her own and others' experiences of having an incarcerated family member.

Anita also talks with journalist Sylvia A. Harvey, who goes by SAH, about her experience of losing her mother to an asthma attack and her father to a prison sentence before she was 6. SAH put her story in context in her book, "The Shadow System: Mass Incarceration and the American Family," which contains her investigative research into the carceral system and its intersection with the welfare and education systems.

Please note: This episode originally aired February 10, 2023.

Some links from Ashley Lucas:

- An article Ashley wrote about [Russell Maroon Shoatz](#), who served 49 years in Pennsylvania prisons and was the father of seven children
- An interview Ashley did with Maroon's son, Russell III, "[Tell a Tale of Two Fathers](#)"
- A virtual panel featuring Ashley called "[What Prison Does to Children](#)"

December 15, 2023

Category: Health, Relationships

Living with adult acne in the era of 'perfect skin'

Description: In this digital age of flawless, perfect, poreless skin, dealing with adult acne can be incredibly isolating. Two skinfluencers and a photographer open up about their acne journeys, the pressure for perfect skin, and the work they are doing to normalize one of the world's most common skin conditions.

Between the [ages of 12 to 24, nearly 85% of people will experience acne](#). But for many folks, this experience extends far beyond the mid-twenties cut-off.

That was the case for acne skinfluencer [Patsy Chem](#). When she was in her early 20s, after an ovarian cyst removal and a buildup of stress, Patsy's face went from clear to severe in only three months.

Host Anita Rao talks with Patsy about her acne experience and how she ultimately learned to divorce her sense of self from her physical appearance. Skin-focused photographer [Peter DeVito](#) also joins the conversation to talk about his acne journey and ongoing "Acne Normalization" portrait project.

[Cassandra Bankson](#) also sits down with Anita to talk about her transition from an acne-ed adolescent/adult to a medical aesthetician, model and skinfluencer. They dive into the myth of perfect skin and the responsibility of being today's skincare influencers.

Special thanks to Lavinia Rusanda, Brian Turner, Susan, Kendra Daniels and Scott Lew for their contributions to this show!

December 8, 2023

Category: Relationships

The relationships and communities that sustain the last decades of our lives

Description: For older Americans, social isolation is a public health crisis. As we age, our relationships evolve and our communities change — how do we accept these changes and tackle their challenges?

For older adults, social isolation is a very real threat that can bring about a whole slew of [mental and physical challenges](#) — from premature death to an increased risk of dementia. While many Americans build new friendships in their independent or assisted living communities, others work to craft connections as they age in place.

Host Anita Rao meets one family in the middle of a move to assisted living and dives into all things relationship-relevant that are a part of this transition. Charles Owens is a 94-year-old man who currently lives in the assisted living section of Croasdaile Village in Durham, North Carolina. Charles' adult children, Eddie Owens and Rosa Rouse, also join Anita for the conversation. Together, they explore the shift from husband to caretaker, the grief of losing a partner, the changing parent-child dynamics that are a part of aging, and the challenges and joys of finding friendships in a new community.

Madeline Franklin, executive director of [STL Village](#) in St. Louis, also joins the conversation to talk about the innovative [“Village” model](#) that helps seniors build community while aging in place. Villages are neighborhood membership organizations that offer support and community engagement opportunities for adults wanting to stay independent.

Special thanks to Sarah Thompson, Robert Weinberger, Louise Vogel, Edith Kaplan and members of the Avenidas Village in Palo Alto for contributing to this week's show.

December 1, 2023

Category: Arts, Sports

From the strip club to the studio: the history, politics, and passion of pole dancing

Description: Art, sport, workout, therapy: modern pole dancing has taken on many forms. A veteran stripper, a pole studio owner, and a young dancer discuss politics and identity in pole dancing and how practicing pole can be the ultimate form of embodiment.

Pole dancing is an art form, sport, and fitness trend that centers around a beam of steel, running floor to ceiling. Pole's popularity has grown exponentially in recent years, but the humble pole has a storied history.

Many of the pole tricks, dips and flips seen in pop culture today were first developed by strippers. Veteran stripper [NatsHoney](#) tells host Anita Rao about pole dancing's roots in the strip club and shares her own journey as a dancer and teacher.

Pole sport athlete and studio owner [Paige Gabert](#) also joins the conversation to discuss how she is creating a more inclusive and queer friendly space in the pole fitness community. Paige is the co-founder of [Midwest Movement Collective](#) in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Anita also meets genderqueer dancer and college student [Celeste Ziehl](#). Celeste discusses how pole helped them explore new dimensions of their gender identity and how it has led to gender euphoria.

Additional thanks to pole dancers Cris Rivers, Moni Chow, Penny Wang, Erin Miller, Celia Ford, Poundcake, Starr Wise, and Nicole Tay for contributing to this episode.

November 24, 2023

Category: Health

Reclaiming wellness from the wellness industry

Description: The rise of the wellness industry and marketing of wellness products moves us away from the individualized practices that actually make us feel healthy. How do we find our way back?

The term “wellness” is a nebulous one — encompassing everything from your rest practices and exercise regimen to stress management and eating habits. This broad scope has led to a large wellness industry, full of companies and brands selling products responding to concerns about our mental and physical health.

But what the companies sell is often a Band-Aid to greater structural and collective issues that make us feel unwell.

Host Anita Rao talks with journalist [Rina Raphael](#), the author of “[The Gospel of Wellness: Gyms, Gurus, Goop and the Promise of Self-Care](#),” about how the wellness industry came to be and the marketing tactics behind it.

And [Kim Young](#), a licensed clinical social worker also known as the Dope Black Social Worker, joins to discuss incorporating our wellness into our work life.

Special thank you to Dr. Della Mosley, David Young Oh, Liza Kindred and Dr. Ellen Vora for their contributions to this episode.

Please note: This episode originally aired February 24, 2023.

Update: You can now sign up for a Substack newsletter from Rina Raphael called “[Well To Do](#)”

November 17, 2023

Category: Health

‘Survival through imagination’: understanding and healing complex PTSD

Description: Complex PTSD describes the existence of long-term trauma. An artist, a therapist, and a researcher seek to unravel the nuances of C-PTSD, while still pursuing joy and healing.

Post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is typically framed as the body’s response to a single, earth-shattering event. Complex PTSD considers trauma that is or was ongoing, lasting months or even years. It’s often viewed as trauma by ‘a thousand tiny cuts’ instead of by a single blow.

In her late 20s, artist [Fariha Róisín](#) felt ready to confront the abuse she experienced in childhood in all its complexities. While processing the abuse, she found solace in writing and

penned her thoughts for the world. Fariha has published five books, all of which contemplate the nature of complex trauma.

Guest host Anisa Khalifa talks with Fariha on how imagination and storytelling became her gateway to resiliency. [Dr. Karen Winkler](#), a psychotherapist and nurse with a doctorate in clinical psychology, joins the conversation to expand upon the mind-body connection of complex PTSD by discussing how persistent trauma can manifest as a chronic illness. Dr. Winkler serves people living with chronic illness and is a public health advocate in New York City.

Anisa also sits down with [Dr. Monnica Williams](#), a licensed clinical psychologist and professor at the University of Ottawa, where she is the Canada Research Chair in Mental Health Disparities. Dr. Williams discusses how racism can be traumatic and can eventually lead to complex PTSD in people of color.

Additional thanks to Dr. Tanner Wallace, Jess, Johanna Draconis, and members of the [Out of the Storm forum](#) for contributing to this episode.

November 10, 2023

Category: Relationship, Health

Citizens of the world: growing up as a third culture kid

Description: Third culture kids spend their formative years trotting the globe, moving between different cultures and countries. Two third culture families share an intergenerational conversation about how they have navigated identity and relationships.

“Where are you from?”

On its surface, this question may seem like a harmless pleasantry. But there’s one particular group of people who feel anxiety about this icebreaker. Third culture kids — or TCKs — are folks who spend a good chunk of their childhood outside their parents’ passport countries and are shaped by a blend of multicultural spheres. Think: the children of diplomats, international teachers, or military officials.

Host Anita Rao meets with two families, the Heides and the Trans, to discuss their third culture experiences.

[Rayla Heide](#) and her mother [Madeleine Maceda Heide](#) reflect back on their highly mobile life and discuss how they juggled relationships, identity and rebuilding home when in transition.

And [Phuong Tran](#) and her tween son Kaden join the conversation to process their recent move from Bangkok, Thailand to Carrboro, North Carolina.

Additional thanks to Judy Lee, Ruth Van Reken, Dani Osorio, Aria Spears, Ryan Alexander Holmes, Kyle Leung and Maria Garcia for contributing to this episode!

November 03, 2023

Category: Relationships, Arts & Culture

Here's what fandom can teach us about community and identity

Description: Fandoms have got a lot of media attention for their toxicity. But there's a big flip side — one that describes the mental health and community benefits of being a fan.

When psychologist [Lynn Zubernis](#) started watching the TV show Supernatural in 2005, it was mostly to be able to discuss it with a friend of hers who loved the show. Then, when she got to season two, it was like a lightning bolt hit.

"I said to my daughter who was in the room, 'Oh my god, this is the most amazing show ever.' To which she said, 'Mom, you've been watching it for a year. Are you okay?'"

Lynn had become a fan — and as her love for the show blossomed, she didn't just connect with fellow Supernatural lovers and discuss the narrative. She dove into the subject of fandom academically.

Guest host Anisa Khalifa talks with Lynn, who is a professor at West Chester University and the co-author of "Fangasm: Supernatural Fangirls," about how evolution has influenced our tendency to become fans and the mental health benefits that fandoms provide. And [Candice Lim](#), co-host of [ICYMI](#), Slate's podcast on internet culture, joins the conversation to reflect on the way the internet has shaped fandom communities.

Anisa also talks with her co-hosts of the podcast [Dramas Over Flowers](#). Anisa, [Paroma Chakravarty](#) and Saya (who goes by an alias online) discuss Korean television series, or K-dramas, on their podcast. Coming to Embodied, Paroma and Saya reflect on the ways the fandom has established their friendship and the responsibility they feel to call out issues in the fandom. Paroma is a professional audio engineer and student of storytelling based in India, and Saya is a bookseller in the UK.

Special thanks to Shawn Taylor and Alex Kormann for contributing to today's show!

October 27, 2023

Category: Relationship, Health

Unmasking: coming out as autistic in adulthood

Description: One [2022 study](#) shows 80% of autistic people assigned female at birth remain undiagnosed at 18. A self-empowerment coach, a lawyer and a photographer tell their stories about how late autism diagnoses shape their relationships and identity.

For the first 24 years of her life, content creator [Irene Chon](#) had never suspected she might be autistic. Sure, she had had trouble navigating social norms and managing sensory overstimulation, but she accepted these traits as personal faults and continued to trudge through the neurotypical world full speed ahead. When the pandemic hit, the routines and schedules that had kept her afloat began to crumble and so did she ... until she stumbled across [TikTok videos created by late-diagnosed autistic women](#) that resonated with her experiences.

Host Anita Rao talks with Irene about her journey toward a diagnosis and how having a name for her experience enabled her to reframe her past and craft a more accommodating future.

Anita also talks with [Kofi Robinson](#), a Black lawyer and content creator, about navigating work and friendships as an autistic person.

Photographer [Jenni Chapman](#) also joins the conversation to talk about navigating romantic relationships and intimacy as a queer, non-binary and autistic person.

Special thanks to Sara and Catherine for sharing their stories with us for this episode.

October 20, 2023

Category: Arts & Culture

Celebrating self-love and sexiness in intimate photography

Description: Intimate photography is more than just portraits of a nude or semi-nude body. Intimacy, eroticism and empowerment show up in this art form — in ways as unique as the subject.

It's an experience unlike any other — so the subjects of intimate photography photo shoots have described. In front of the camera, there's room to explore, embrace and find beauty in the body and the sensual self.

Host Anita Rao talks with artists LaQuann Dawson and Shoog McDaniel about their processes for conducting an intimate photo shoot and how they find growth and love through their self-portraiture. Writer, speaker, model and photographer Trista Marie McGovern also joins the conversation to talk about the modeling side of intimate photography and how those shoots have been a tool in her disability and sexuality advocacy.

Thank you to Courtney Napier and Detavius Niblack for also contributing to this episode!

Please note: This episode originally aired November 18, 2022.

October 13, 2023

Category: Health

'Integrating the stuff that scares you': life with schizophrenia

Description: The range of diagnoses that make up schizophrenia spectrum disorders are hard to define and tricky to diagnose. An author, an artist and a blogger tell their own stories about experiencing schizophrenia.

In 2005, writer [Esmé Weijun Wang](#) experienced her first symptoms of psychosis while in the shower. She had been diagnosed with bipolar disorder a few years prior, and while her psychiatrist changed her medication after hearing about the new symptoms, it wasn't until eight years later that Esmé received a new diagnosis: schizoaffective disorder, bipolar type.

Schizophrenia affects about 1% of the American adult population. But that number grows when accounting for the full range of schizophrenia spectrum disorders, which includes schizoaffective disorder — which is, as Esmé describes it, a “weird marriage between the schizophrenias and a mood disorder.”

Host Anita Rao talks with Esmé about self-advocacy, the medical system, relationships and her book [“The Collected Schizophrenias.”](#) Anita also talks with artist and animator [Christopher Grant](#) about how the physical act of drawing helps him get through moments of psychosis.

Blogger, mental health advocate and author [Ashley Smith](#) also joins the conversation to talk about parenting as a person with schizophrenia and how she approaches mental health conversations with her 11-year-old son.

October 6, 2023

Category: Health

What surrogate partner therapy is and is not, directly from the experts

Description: In surrogate partner therapy, a therapist, a surrogate partner and a client work together to understand and help resolve the client's challenges with physical and emotional intimacy. What helps provide a safe space for clients to explore their sexuality?

Many people were first introduced to the concept of surrogate partner therapy by a movie called "The Sessions" starring John Hawkes and Helen Hunt. It is based on the real-life experiences of the late journalist and poet [Mark O'Brien](#), who sought out the services of a surrogate partner to explore his sexuality.

But the movie was released over a decade ago and some experts, including [Brian Gibney](#), say it is not the best representation of the work. Brian is a surrogate partner, intimacy coach and educator based in Charlottesville, Virginia. Host Anita Rao talks with him about this type of therapy's process and reviews a few exercises he uses with clients on to help them connect with their own bodies.

Another surrogate partner, [Arianna Fernandez](#), joins the conversation from Los Angeles to talk about the importance of two-way touch and setting clear boundaries with clients. They also talk about how their own gender identity helps them to build understanding relationships with clients.

Anita also talks with [Deva Segal](#), a licensed marriage and family therapist and certified sex therapist based in San Francisco. Deva recently started incorporating surrogate partner work into her practice and helps give Anita insight into how she determines if a client is a good fit for the therapy.

Special thanks to Jeannie Miller and Michelle Renee for sharing their stories with us for this episode.