

Embodied
Friday 12 – 1pm
Lines For Quarter 3 of 2023

September 29, 2023

Category: Health

Trichotillomania: The Calm and Chaos of the Hair-Pulling Disorder

Description: Although references to hair-pulling can be found as far back as ancient Egypt, the hair-pulling disorder known as trichotillomania is still riddled with shame, misconceptions and lack of awareness.

“I could pull my hair out!” is commonly used as an expression of anxiety or exasperation. But for folks who live with the hair-pulling disorder trichotillomania, the urge to pull out hair can also arise while thinking, out of boredom or from a desire to induce a brief moment of calm.

Host Anita Rao speaks with three people about their work to unpack the shame and stigma around trichotillomania. [Haruka Aoki](#), a writer and illustrator who recently published [a comic about their trich journey](#) in the Washington Post, describes what it was like to learn the name for the disorder later in life, as well as how her response to hair-pulling urges has evolved since childhood. [Dr. Suzanne Mouton-Odum](#), a licensed psychologist, director of Psychology Houston and board member for the [TLC Foundation for Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors](#), provides necessary context for our understanding of the disorder and describes her counseling work with folks who experience it.

Rao is then joined by [Dorin Azérad](#), a hairstylist who works with clients experiencing all forms of hair loss, including from trichotillomania. A self-described “trichster” of over 20 years, Azérad describes the impact of her own experience with trich on her relationship with her hair and offers tips to others with hair loss about how to have a positive experience at the salon.

Thank you to Chapel Hill-based listener Tova for pitching this episode topic, as well as to Sarah, Naomi, Erin, Tova and Jillian for contributing to this episode.

Please note: This episode originally aired November 11, 2022.

September 22, 2023

Category: Arts

'Build A Body': How Tattoos Can Be An Avenue for Reclaiming Body Image, Identity and Agency

Description: Tattoos have been around since the beginning of mankind. How does this form of body art change the relationship we have with our bodies?

Host Anita Rao came close to getting a tattoo once but the permanence of it overwhelmed her. If she had followed through nearly a decade ago, she would have joined about 32% of U.S. adults with a tattoo today, according to a [recent survey by the Pew Research Center](#).

Though tattoos are more widely accepted in our society today, every tattooed person is not treated equally. [Beverly Thompson](#) is a professor in the sociology department at [Siena College](#) in New York and the author of "[Covered in Ink: Tattoos, Women and the Politics of the Body](#)." She helps Anita understand how heavily tattooed women like herself push against the status quo and fit into the larger cultural history of tattoos.

Anita talks with Jewish tattoo artist [Joey Ramona](#) about reclaiming tattoos in their faith and using the artform as an expression of their gender identity.

[Oba Moori](#), owner of [PUSH TATTOO STUDIO](#) in Wilmington, Delaware, also joins the conversation to deconstruct misconceptions people have about tattooing folks with melanated skin tones. And he talks about how he comforts his clients and surpasses their expectations with his designs.

Special thanks to Je'Jae, Blake, Chuck, Aleah, Julian, Jarrod, Andrea and David for sharing their stories with us for this episode.

September 15, 2022

Category: Sexuality, Health

What BDSM Can Teach Us About Community, Safety and Consent

Description: It's time to put down "Fifty Shades of Grey" ... and learn about BDSM that's rooted in community, healing and self-exploration.

Bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism. These are the sexual preferences and behaviors described by the acronym BDSM.

Yes, there are leather, whips, chains, humiliation and pain. But these practices, which have been around for centuries, are a path to opening up a world of self-acceptance, healing and community.

Host Anita Rao learns about this inner world of BDSM from two educators and leaders in the community. Smoky is the co-founder of [Obsidian](#), an organization that creates kinky events and education for people of color in Los Angeles. And [Dia Dynasty](#) is a professional dominatrix in New York (check out her previous interview with Embodied [here](#)).

Anita also talks with scholar [Amber Jamilla Musser](#) about how the concept of “masochism” has evolved over time, including the way that feminists have critiqued and embraced it. Amber is the author of “[Sensational Flesh: Race, Power and Masochism](#)” and an English professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center.

Additional thanks to Bodacious Beatee, Phrygian Monk, Allie Eve Knox and Vanessa Carlisle for contributing to this episode!

September 08, 2023

Category: Health; Aging

Grief & Life After Losing A Parent In Early Adulthood

Description: Tens of millions of Americans have lost a parent by the age of 25. What is grief like for these young adults just starting out?

Young adults who lose a parent are forced to enter a new reality without that significant person in their life. The grief that follows can feel heavy, disorienting, helpless — and lonely.

As a way to cope with the loss of her father from cancer, photographer and model [Liz Zorn](#) created a [YouTube video](#) sharing some takeaways she learned about grief that she says no one talks about. Liz shares her story with host Anita Rao and talks about the shock of her sudden loss and how it changed her views on afterlife and spirituality.

[Naomi Edmondson](#) is a grief educator and space holder who lost two mother figures when she was in her 20s. Naomi sought community and help within virtual support groups but often found that she was the only Black person present in those spaces. She talks to Anita about how this inspired her to go into grief work with a special focus on the needs and experiences of Black, queer folks like her.

Anita is also joined by [Jeff Dingler](#), a writer and journalist who was 14 years old when his father had a psychotic break. He died of congestive heart failure 12 years later. Jeff contends with grief over a long period of time and the feelings of anger and frustration he had towards his father in a piece for [Insider](#).

Special thanks to Felicia, Tiona, Trevor, Sarah, Christine and Dulani for sharing their stories with us for this episode.

September 01, 2023

Category: Health

Growing Up Mixed Race: Biracial Child and Monoracial Parents Reflect

Description: In her college application essay, host Anita Rao described herself as a colorful parrot living in a cultural jungle — with her English and Indian sides occupying different realms. Now, she reflects on her biracial experience with her parents.

When host Anita Rao’s parents got married in 1984, their interracial marriage made newspaper headlines in her mother’s small hometown. The novelty of their marriage made Sheila and

Satish Rao determined to prove that race was not an obstacle to their relationship — nor to the raising of their children.

Three decades later, Anita reflects with Satish and Sheila on how they approached biracial children, their thoughts on the Embodied [mixed race identity](#) episode from July 14 and what questions it brought up for them about their daughter's racial identity.

September 01, 2023

Category: Health

Becoming A New Man: Redefining Masculinity

Show Description: Toxic masculinity has become a popular — and loaded — term in conversations about gender. Anita meets two people who are questioning the definition of manhood and inviting folks of all genders to explore what masculinity means.

What does it mean to be masculine? There are historical definitions that describe masculinity in terms of stoicism and strength, but younger generations are more frequently questioning those rigid expectations.

Host Anita Rao talks with college student and trans writer [Ocean Wei](#) about experiencing pressure to walk and act like a “typical” man when he first transitioned and how he’s found a sense of masculinity that feels comfortable. Also joining the conversation is [Anjan Alavandar](#), founder of [Masq](#), who talks about the in-person community gatherings they organize to discuss everything from expressing love in male friendships to the impact of colonialism on masculinity.

Special thanks to Charlie, Donat, Nikilesh and Erin for contributing to this conversation!

August 25, 2023

Category: Relationships

When It's Your BFF Who Breaks Your Heart

Show Description: Friendship breakups can be just as painful as romantic ones, and we don't talk about them nearly enough.

There's plenty of common wisdom about how to handle a breakup with a romantic partner. But when the breakup happens with your *friend*, there are far fewer models for how to move forward.

Host Anita Rao speaks with three guests about their perspectives and stories in relation to friendship breakups. Life coach, activist and author [Michelle Elman](#) shares stories from a time she calls the “mass exodus,” including what this period taught her about the importance of boundaries. [Tony Liu](#), a medical student at the University of Chicago and former NPR producer, describes the relationship between friendships, friend breakups, and our health. [KB Newton](#), founder of HEART Convos, shares strategies for having tough but necessary conversations with our friends and tells us why it's important to check in regularly with those who make up our inner circle.

Please note: This episode originally aired March 4, 2022.

August 18, 2023

Category: Relationships

Navigating the Shifting Landscape of Work Friendships

Description: *The people you work with can drastically shape the experience of a job. And while the pandemic and hybrid work systems have changed how we interact with our colleagues, there are still common themes and conflicts experienced in employee relationships.*

Whether you have a work spouse or a work frenemy, the relationships we make at work shape our well-being and productivity. And just like outside-work friendships, they go through changes and conflicts.

Host Anita Rao talks with psychologist and author Dr. Marisa G. Franco about how promotions and job changes can affect work friendships and why companies are so invested in their employees having friends at work. Katherine Hu, a Gen Z assistant editor at The Atlantic, also joins to talk about how younger generations are shifting away from considering offices as their primary social hubs.

Thank you to Clint, Georgia and Nick for their contributions to this episode!

Please note: This episode originally aired December 2, 2022.

August 11, 2023

Category: Relationships

“Dear Embodied”: Breakup Advice for the Brokenhearted

Show Description: *With the help of two relationship advice columnists, Embodied responds to listener stories about ending romantic relationships.*

From classic poems and romantic comedy plots to the numerous musical careers that have been built on the heartbreak anthem, it’s clear that we’re endlessly inspired by breakups. But when you’re still in the middle of one, the feelings of grief and isolation can seem like the end of the world.

In this episode, host Anita Rao talks with relationship advice columnists [Meredith Goldstein](#) and [Stacia Brown](#). Goldstein writes for The Boston Globe’s column “[Love Letters](#),” and Brown writes for Slate’s “[Care and Feeding](#).” Both columnists respond to listeners’ voice memos about breakups and their often messy emotional aftermath. Prompted by these stories, questions, and perspectives, they explore a wide range of breakup-related topics, including the question of whether to go no-contact with an ex, the process of consciously uncoupling, and the healing power of breakup songs.

Please note: This episode originally aired February 25, 2022.

Update: You can check out the latest season of Meredith’s podcast “Love Letters,” all about love and money, [here](#).

August 4, 2023

Category: Relationships

No Strings Attached

Since the term “hookup culture” first became part of our collective vocabulary, we’ve been led to believe that casual sex is the standard for young people. But while it’s true that hooking up might be the norm on some campuses or in certain small communities, this idea of an overarching, large-scale hookup culture doesn’t appear to exist – at least not in the way we once thought.

In this episode, host Anita Rao speaks with writer and researcher Sophie Aaron, whose undergraduate thesis project explored the effects of COVID-19 on hookup culture at Oberlin College. Atlanta-based counselor and sexual health educator Dr. Cherlisa Jackson discusses the relationship between hookup culture and our self-esteem, as well as how the expectations for casual encounters might look different depending on your culture, gender or community.

Also joining the conversation is motivational speaker and TikTok user Cindy Noir, who has spent periods of her life abstaining from sex as a way to reclaim her body and sexuality from hookup culture. Through a discussion of Celibacy TikTok and the healing power of abstinence, Cindy explores some of the reasons why hookup culture is being sworn off by those thought to be its most enthusiastic participants.

Thanks to Joseff Inspiration, Jordan Jeppe and Single Woman Chronicles for contributing audio to this episode!

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

Update: Since we recorded this show, Dr. Cherlisa Jackson started a weekly podcast called [“Even Me”](#) and released her first published book, [“Empowering the Broken.”](#)

July 28, 2023

Category: Religion

Building a Life Outside Your Religious Community

When you’ve spent your whole life immersed in a religion, what happens when you begin to question the tenets of your faith?

The decision to cut ties with a religious community often requires a renegotiation of relationships with family and friends – not to mention the monumental task of rebuilding your relationship to your own body, sexuality and core beliefs.

Host Anita Rao speaks with two guests who left the religious communities in which they were raised. [Nicole Hardy](#), author of the memoir “Confessions of a Latter-day Virgin,” speaks with Rao about Mormonism’s law of chastity and the crisis of faith that ultimately led her to resign from the Mormon church. [Dr. Jon Paul Higgins](#), who holds a doctorate in education and educational justice and is the creator, executive producer and co-host of the “Black Fat Femme Podcast,” speaks with Rao about their experience of growing up as a queer Jehovah’s Witness and the surveillance that ultimately pushed them to leave that community.

Thank you to Stacie, Taylor and Rachel for contributing their stories and perspectives to this episode.

Please note: This episode originally aired August 26, 2022.

July 21, 2023

Category: Arts, Health, Race/Minorities

Our Fascination with Fabulousness: A Historical and Cultural Examination of Nail Art

Description: Tens of thousands of nail salons across the U.S. are places of connection, reinvention, and community. They also make up a multi-billion dollar industry that tells stories about power and economic mobility. Why are nails so culturally and economically significant?

The modern manicure isn't simply a Sunday pastime or vain beauty ritual; it's a form of self-expression with a significant global history. From mummies with henna-stained nails in Ancient Egypt to the first salon opening in New York City in 1878, the history of nail art covers topics of race, culture and class. It also tells deeply personal stories about identity, family tradition and immigration.

Host Anita Rao speaks with fashion historian [Suzanne E. Shapiro](#) about the connection between nails and what's happening in the outside world over the centuries. Suzanne is the author of "[Nails: The Story of the Modern Manicure](#)." She talks about the origin behind some of Anita's favorite nail colors — like Chanel's "Vamp" — and the communities that contributed to the industry as we know it today.

Anita is also joined by her personal nail artist [Crystal Sanders](#), who talks about entrepreneurship, her design inspirations and the legacy Black women have had on nail art — including that of Olympic track star [Florence Griffith Joyner](#), whose jeweled acrylic nail extensions were broadcasted on national television.

Vietnamese-American writer [My Ngoc To](#) also talks with Anita and shares her experiences growing up in her parents' nail salons and the observations she made about the [lives of nail technicians](#) that often go untold. My Ngoc speaks about her own complicated relationship to manicures considering her intimate exposure to the challenges of the business and working conditions.

Thank you to Leslie, Náosha, Merissa, Mimi D, Crystal, Reign and Megan for sharing with us for this episode!

July 14, 2023

Category: Relationships

Growing Up Mixed: Identity, Race and Early Adulthood

Description: The number of people in the U.S. who identify as two or more races is on the rise. So, what can help diminish the sense of unbelonging that is common for mixed folks?

There are [more than 30 million people](#) in the U.S. who identify as two or more races. But there are a lot of questions that come with a multiracial, multicultural background: where do I belong? What does it mean to be mixed race? One key point in life that brings up these questions is the transition to adulthood, brought on by life events like college, new friends and new jobs.

Host Anita Rao talks with two mixed race college students about family life, dating and identity. [Adiah Siler](#) is a rising senior at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia studying creative writing. And [Claire Gallagher](#) is a rising senior at the University of Michigan studying public policy.

Anita also talks with [Sarah Lotus Garrett](#), a life and goal fulfillment coach who works with mixed adults and parents of mixed children, about how she helps folks feel confident in who they are.

Special thanks to everyone who contributed to this episode, including Naomi, Sarah R. and Gabrielle!

July 7, 2023

Category: Relationships

In Business and In Pleasure: How Couples Who Work Together Find Balance

Description: Some couples don't get enough time to spend together, between work and other commitments. But couples who work together experience the opposite, juggling business and personal time while keeping the romance alive.

What is life like when your life partner is the same as your business partner?

Austin and Sarah McCombie, the married duo of the band Chatham Rabbits, and Brandé Elise and Danielle Gray, co-founders of CBD product and lifestyle company Unoia, describe the joys and challenges of work and romance with host Anita Rao.

Thanks to Areli & Leon Barrera Grodski and Joe & Terry Graedon for their contributions to this episode!

Please note: This episode originally aired July 15, 2022.

Update: Chatham Rabbits is on tour this summer — learn more [here](#). And Unoia is making more of a shift towards CBD for pets — learn more [here](#).