

**Embodied  
Friday 12 – 1pm  
Lines For Quarter 2 of 2023**

**June 30, 2023**

**Category: Gender, Health**

**The Art of Safer Sexting with Confidence and Consent**

Description: Sexting is the sharing of sexual images or messages digitally. Though people of all ages sext, society is hyperfixated on women and girls. In the age of data privacy, how can people sext safely and in ways that empower their sexuality?

Whether in a long-distance relationship or not, sexting is one way to communicate desire and advocate for pleasure with a partner. But it can seem daunting if there's a lack of understanding and education.

Like many others, host Anita Rao feels timid about sexting. [Penda N'diaye](#), a pleasure enthusiast and founder of [Pro Hoe](#), encourages her with practical advice and approachable sexting prompts to help guide her — and listeners. She also breaks down consent and the importance of checking in with your partner's boundaries at every juncture when sexting.

[Amy Hasinoff](#) is an associate professor in communication at the University of Colorado Denver and the author of "[Sexting Panic: Rethinking Criminalization, Privacy, and Consent](#)." She joins the conversation to explain why some common concerns about sexting are misinformed. Amy also makes sense of unclear and varying legal issues, especially when it comes to sexting for people under the age of 18.

Then Anita speaks with teen and peer educator Aaliyah about the role sexting plays in her and her peers' romantic relationships. She teaches middle schoolers in an after-school sex education program in New York City. Aaliyah shares the types of questions and experiences her peers come to her with for support. She talks openly about the parameters she sets in her own relationships and why body image is a factor in sexting.

Thank you to Hannah, Sydel, Dakota and Mariah for sharing with us for this episode!

**June 23, 2023**

**Category: Race, Health**

**The Far Reach of Intentional Parenting**

Description: The trend of "gentle" or "intentional" parenting faces plenty of skepticism in the child-rearing realm. But by rethinking the way we communicate and set boundaries with kids, some folks are finding liberation in multiple types of relationships.

Over the past several years, the words "intentional," "gentle" and "conscious" parenting have been showing up more and more on TikTok, Instagram, YouTube and parenting blogs. Just like the concept has no one name, there's no specific regimen or set of rules that define gentle parenting. But those who practice it lean away from physical punishment and time outs in favor of age-appropriate communication and empathy to talk about consequences and respect.

And many find that it not only improves their relationships with their kids, but their understanding of themselves, their parents and their partners.

In this episode, guest host Omisade Burney-Scott interweaves her own journey as a parent into a conversation with two other Black mothers.

[Destiny Bennett](#) is from Southern California, a mother of three boys and a wife of 10 years. As a multi-viral digital creator, Destiny has shared her life-based teachings on parenting, marriage and overcoming generational trauma as it relates to the two. Destiny is a best-selling author and homeschool advocate with a heart for community and a mission to inspire and heal.

And Trina Greene, a returning voice to Embodied, is the founder of [Parenting For Liberation](#), a virtual community that supports Black people raising Black children through culture, equity and justice. She is also a mama, a lecturer at California State University, Fullerton and the author of "[Parenting for Liberation: A Guide for Raising Black Children](#)."

Omisade also reflects on her three-decade parenting evolution with her eldest son, Ché Nembhard. He is the co-founder of [CLIPS Co-Op](#), a digital media & film group, and he is a senior writer at [Instrument](#), a digital product and brand experience innovation company.

Special thanks to Gabriel, also known as [The Indomitable Black Man](#), and Courtney for sharing their thoughts with us on gentle parenting.

**June 16, 2023**

**Category: Health**

## **The Silence Around Male Infertility**

Description: About half of all infertility cases involve male fertility issues. Yet reproductive spaces are often dominated by women — and the male perspective goes unheard.

An infertility diagnosis can send some cis men down a dark path where their sense of self is shaken. Despite how common this experience is, men are often left without resources and community with other men to help navigate this challenging time.

Host Anita Rao talks with journalist Jared Wright about his own fertility journey that inspired a story for [VICE](#). Jared and his wife started trying for a baby when they got married in 2020 and are currently undergoing treatments. But in speaking with other Black men going through similar experiences, he found a lack of dialogue and a lack of resources.

Urologist [Dr. Paul Shin](#) joins the conversation to offer insight into the wide range of different causes and treatments for male infertility. Paul shares how men tend to not engage with the medical system in the same ways women do until they receive an infertility diagnosis and the importance of getting tested for early detection and intervention.

Anita also talks with [James D'Souza](#), a teacher and writer based in the U.K., about the decision to stop pursuing parenthood after a ten year fertility journey with his wife. He shares his perspectives on redefining success and masculinity for himself in hopes of bringing attention to overlooked stories and inspiring others to make healthy choices.

Thanks to Alex of [Pursuing Fatherhood](#), [Brandon Johnson](#) and Jon Summers of [Infertility Man](#) for their contributions to this episode.

**June 9, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Attention Deficits are Not Just for Kids: Experiencing ADHD as an Adult**

Description: ADHD is a common mental disorder among children and adolescents. But often symptoms continue into adulthood, where it is underdiagnosed and undertreated. A late-stage diagnosis can be life-changing.

One of the most common misconceptions about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or ADHD, is that it doesn't actually exist.

But this neuro-developmental disorder affects anywhere from 6 to 14% of school-age children, depending on the state. Symptoms frequently continue into adulthood, affecting relationships, jobs and sense of self. And for some folks, their adult ADHD goes undiagnosed ... leaving them to figure out how to manage without treatment.

Host Anita Rao talks with [Inger Shaye Colzie](#), an ADHD coach and licensed clinical social worker, about the experience of getting diagnosed in her 50s and how she helps Black women in leadership cope with ADHD.

Anita then passes the mic off to the team at "[Bodies](#)," a documentary podcast exploring medical mysteries. Contributing producer [Hannah Harris Green](#) shares how she experienced ADHD symptoms throughout childhood and into her adult life before getting diagnosed — and grapples with how much ADHD is part of her identity.

**June 2, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Unpartnered By Design: Reframing How We Think About Singleness**

Description: Nearly 40% of U.S. adults are single, and some choose not to look for a relationship or date. If singleness is common, why are single people treated unfairly?

"Why are you still single?" It's a question that seems inescapable at family dinner tables and holiday parties for many single folks. But why don't married or partnered people get asked about their life choices in the same way?

Host Anita Rao talks with sociologist and associate professor at the University of Maryland [Dr. Kris Marsh](#), who pushes to normalize singlehood in her research examining Black American singles and their lifestyles. She points to structural forces like racism that constrain the dating pool and encourages single people to establish friendships that are non-romantic and nurturing in her book, "[The Love Jones Cohort: Single and Living Alone in the Black Middle Class](#)."

Anita also talks with [Aisha Jenkins](#), a single mother by choice and the founder and creator of "[Start to Finish Motherhood](#)," a podcast that helps women navigate fertility and motherhood without a partner. Aisha shares her personal journey that inspired the podcast, how she navigates judgment from others and what she teaches her two young daughters about singlehood.

And writer [Lucas Bradley](#) joins the conversation to offer his perspective on singlehood as a man. Lucas knew that singleness was his natural orientation since he was a young adult, but outside messages caused inner turmoil. Over time, he discovered empowering ways to cultivate a life with purpose, which he writes about in his Substack newsletter, "[A Single Point of Light](#)."

Thank you to Carla, Christina, Justin, Mel and Michele for sharing stories with us for this episode!

**May 26, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Our Lips are Unsealed: Exploring the Science & Culture of Kissing**

Description: Kissing-like behaviors exist across the animal kingdom. But why? A scientist explains why humans are so drawn to each other's lips, and a photographer documents the power of a kiss.

Among the many "firsts" we experience in our lives, a first kiss is one of the most memorable.

In addition to being a novel experience, our brains receive pleasure and information from kissing. Our lips are the most exposed erogenous zones on our bodies, and a good, consensual kiss triggers hormones that give us a rush of desire and love.

Science communicator [Sheril Kirshenbaum](#) talks with host Anita Rao about these physical effects of a kiss and how they help us measure compatibility with a potential partner. She also describes the cultural history of kissing, including how locking lips has enforced power structures and how kissing is interpreted differently around the world, all topics discussed in her book "[The Science of Kissing: What Our Lips Are Telling Us](#)."

[Kadar Small](#), a photographer, director and filmmaker based in New York City, also joins the conversation to share the inspiration behind his photo series "[PDA](#)." Kadar photographs moments of kissing and intimacy between Black and brown queer folks in public and at home, exploring what this kind of connection looks like through his work.

Anita also talks about the cultural milestone of a first kiss with a group of current and former WUNC youth reporters. High school students [Parys Smith](#) and [Donna Diaz](#), along with college student [Chris Williams](#), share the stories of their first kiss, how they think about boundaries and what constitutes a good kiss.

Thank you to Caroline, Jeanine, Caitlin, Kristin, Lawrence and Steven for sharing with us for this episode!

**May 19, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Letting the Tears Flow**

Description: Humans are the only animal to produce emotional tears. Asking questions about this behavior can help us better understand how we live our lives.

Why do we cry?

That question has many answers. To start, there are actually three different types of tears — the tears you cry while chopping onions aren't the same as those that form in a moment of grief. One of the primary causes of crying is fatigue. Tears are a social signal, which communicate our distress.

But those facts only scratch the surface of why we cry ... and getting curious about when we cry, where we do it and what experiences produce tears can help us learn more about the role crying plays in our lives as individuals.

Host Anita Rao takes on that curiosity around crying with poet [Heather Christle](#), the author of "[The Crying Book](#)." They touch on everything from white women's tears to the sadness of a cut lemon that can never be whole again.

And creative director [Viorel Tanase](#) joins to talk about why he posted a [crying selfie](#) on Instagram for his 23rd birthday and how he's pushing back against toxic masculinity by embracing tears.

*Special thanks to Priska, Yulia, Celeste, Emily, Chessa, Christina and Amanda for sharing stories with us for this episode!*

**May 12, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Delivered: No More Postpartum Silence**

Description: When it comes to addressing the mental health concerns of new parents, the most common response is silence.

Bringing home a newborn involves a variety of stressors. New parents must learn how to feed, care for and console a new child ... all while contending with sleep deprivation, fluctuating hormones, cultural expectations around parenthood and, in many cases, an imminent return to work.

Stress and anxiety are so common for new parents that symptoms of more serious postpartum mental health concerns are often overlooked. And as with any mental illness, experiences with postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety and other postpartum mental health issues are stigmatized and frequently met with silence.

Host Anita Rao speaks with visual artist [A'Driane Nieves](#) about her experience of being diagnosed with bipolar II disorder after the birth of her second child — and about how painting became an important means of breaking the silence around postpartum mental health. Anita then speaks with Shannon Purdy Jones, co-owner of Scuppernong Books in Greensboro, about how a traumatic experience with bodyfeeding contributed to her postpartum depression. Darren Jones, Shannon's husband and the director of pricing at Mack Trucks, Inc, speaks about navigating postpartum mental health concerns as a non-birthing partner.

Thank you to all the voice note contributors for trusting us with their stories and helping to shape this episode: Kyesha Jennings, Taylor Matthews, Elice, Jamie, [Brianna Battles](#), Nick Knittel, Kate Gardner, Amanda Magnus, Priyanka Rao, Anna Wallace and BB Ware.

*Please note: This episode originally aired June 17, 2022.*

**May 5, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Delivered: In Support of the Post-Baby Body**

Description: Pregnancy is a full body experience. But when it comes to physical changes and recovery, the common sentiment is: Why did nobody tell me?!

Stop and think about pregnancy for a minute. It's WILD. Organs shift, a new organ grows, a new being emerges. Labor and delivery can lead to tearing or major surgery. And after that, it's head off home to care for a whole new person.

Support for postpartum bodies is a necessary but often overlooked aspect of the pregnancy and childbirth experience. But it doesn't have to be. Host Anita Rao talks to birth and postpartum doula Lydia-Carlie Tilus, whose practice SageFemme Wellness connects her with postpartum parents seeking help with recovery. Tilus is also a certified neuromuscular massage therapist, which she uses to help clients reconnect with their bodies.

Rao also speaks to ash luna, a social worker and photographer who founded the 4th Trimester Bodies Project. The project features photographs and stories of postpartum bodies to normalize the countless forms these bodies take.

Also joining the conversation is Letticia Solomon, a teacher and mother of two who had both her children while serving in the Marines. She shares how the intensely physical nature of her job affected her postpartum experience.

Thank you to Kyesha Jennings, Priyanka Rao, Taylor Matthews, Amanda Magnus and [Brianna Battles](#) for sharing their stories and shaping this episode.

*Please note: The episode originally aired June 10, 2022.*

**April 28, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Breaking the Cycle of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder**

Description: OCD often goes misdiagnosed and misunderstood ... and if left untreated, can impact platonic, intimate and familial relationships in challenging ways.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder, or OCD, is a mental health disorder characterized by a cycle of intrusive thoughts and compulsions. An unwanted thought or fear produces anxiety and distress, leading people to engage in rituals and responses that temporarily alleviate that distress until the intrusive thought appears again.

Half of OCD cases are misdiagnosed, and it can take up to 17 years for an individual to receive effective treatment after experiencing symptom onset. But why?

A lack of education and stigma make OCD less visible in the medical community as well as culturally. Host Anita Rao talks with writers and married couple Nicole and Mike Comforto about how they found out about Mike's OCD diagnosis and how the disorder and subsequent treatment [affected their marriage](#).

Anita also talks with writer and journalist H.T., whose OCD symptoms started in kindergarten, about the ways in which OCD has shaped her interactions with friends, family and dates.

A special thank you to [Dr. Monnica Williams](#) for contributing to this episode. Dr. Williams is the clinical and training director for the [Behavioral Wellness Clinic](#) in Tolland, Connecticut, which also houses the New England OCD Institute. She is also the [Canada Research Chair](#) in mental health disparities and a licensed clinical psychologist in the United States and Canada.

And thank you to Alexandra Reynolds for sharing her story with us.

**April 21, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **How Parents Make the Circumcision Decision**

Description: When the time comes to decide whether or not a child will be circumcised ... how do parents choose? The answer is not only answered medically but culturally.

It's a small surgical procedure, but one that's wrapped up in questions about medicine, religion and culture.

In 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics [released a statement](#) saying the health benefits of elective circumcision in newborns outweighed the risks — but that those health benefits were not so significant as to recommend routine circumcision.

Jewish and Muslim faith communities follow centuries of tradition in circumcising their newborns — but some parents are questioning how those traditions fit with their lives and values, or they are a part of interfaith families that may have differing perspectives on the procedure.

And if parents turn to the internet for clarity ... it's easy to fall down a rabbit hole and emerge without conclusions.

To get information on the procedure itself, host Anita Rao talks with [Dr. Emilie K. Johnson](#), a pediatric urologist, about the medical aspects of circumcision and answers common questions.

And two parents join to talk about their decision-making processes. Chris Silva and his wife initially thought they would circumcise their son — and ended up [changing their minds](#). [Rabbi Elyssa Cherney](#), the founder of [Tackling Torah](#), not only has her own experience but helps other members of her community make this decision.

Thanks to Erik, Cynthia and an anonymous parent in Johnston County, North Carolina, for sharing their experiences with us.



**April 14, 2023**

**Category: Relationships, Gender, Arts/Culture**

### **No Baby On Board: Perspectives on Child-Free Life**

Description: Experiencing parenting is often the assumed default for a fulfilled life. But more and more people are choosing to be child-free ... fighting stigma and finding happiness in that choice.

About 44% of childless adults between 18 and 49 are saying they are not too likely or not at all likely to have children someday, according to a [2021 Pew Research Study](#). That number has grown from 37% in 2018, and the most cited reason?

They just don't want any.

Host Anita Rao talks with three women about their decision to choose a child-free life and common questions and misconceptions they come up against: [Samhita Mukhopadhyay](#), a writer and former executive editor of Teen Vogue; Uriah Rex, a quality assurance representative; and [Sarah Deavitt](#), a certified holistic nutritionist.

Anita also speaks with [Merle Bombardieri](#), a parenting decision-making coach and psychotherapist, about strategies and tactics she gives people who are on the fence about becoming parents. Merle is also the author of "[The Baby Decision: How To Make the Most Important Choice of Your Life](#)."

Special thanks to Cara, Philip and the other listeners who contributed to this episode!

*Please note: A portion of this conversation originally aired in December 2020.*

**April 7, 2023**

**Category: Health**

### **Turns Out the Nose Really \*Does\* Know: How Smell Unlocks Memory and Identity**

Show description: Our olfactory system helps us survive, alerting us to burning things and rotting food. It's also directly connected to our emotions and memories. Why is it still one of our most undervalued senses?

It was in the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic that scientists discovered an early and telltale sign of infection: loss of smell, or anosmia.

The uptick of anosmia threw into relief the many ways that smell affects day-to-day life, from smelling gas leaking from an unlit burner to being able to fully enjoy food. The olfactory system is also linked to the parts of the brain that govern emotion and memory, which leads smell to affect even our moods and relationships.

Host Anita Rao talks with Dr. Rachel Herz, a neuroscientist and psychologist, about how smell works and how it affects our relationships and memories. Rachel is the author of "The Scent of Desire" and "Why You Eat What You Eat." Rao also talks with Bonnie Blodgett, who lost her sense of smell in 2005 and discovered how much it changed in her life.



Also joining the conversation is Christina Degreaffenreidt, the founder and creator behind Multifaceted, a candle-making company in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Thanks to Sandra Davidson, Jaime Gonzalez, Amanda Magnus, Ashley Phillips and Erika for their contributions to this episode.

*Please note: This episode originally aired April 29, 2022.*