

Embodied
Friday 12 – 1pm
Lines For Quarter 3 of 2022

September 30, 2022

Category: Gender

The Tech – and Stories – Behind Our Bras

You've likely heard the statistic that 80% of bra-wearers aren't wearing the correct fit. Finding the "right" bra means negotiating a tricky balance of form, aesthetic and function — not to mention the cultural baggage associated with breasts and the garments that support them.

Host Anita Rao speaks with four guests about the history, design and cultural narratives that surround the brassiere. [Lisa Lindahl](#), author of "Beauty as Action" and "Unleash the Girls," tells the story of how she invented the sports bra and describes its impact on the worlds of sports, fashion and feminism. Bra expert [Jené Luciani Sena](#), author of "The Bra Book" and "Gigi Gets a Bra," describes the experiences that led her to become interested in bra fit and design and explains her recent role in developing the U.S. Army's first ever Tactical Brassiere.

Rao then hears about the connections between bras, body image and gender identity. [Destiny Liley](#), a freelance content creator based in Arizona, talks about her experiences of shopping for bras as a larger-chested person and going braless for a week at the beginning of the pandemic. [Ren Gutierrez](#), an advocate for queer and trans mental health, shares what it was like to go through their old, unneeded bras after having top surgery.

Thank you to Ashley, Caitlin, Adele Jenni and Audrey for contributing voice notes for this episode.

September 23, 2022

Category: Health

Don't Delete Your Period App. Here Are Other Ways to Protect Your Health Data.

Description: Experts, including an abortion doula and a sex worker, share tips on how to keep your personal information safe in a post-Roe world.

In early August, a Nebraskan woman was charged with helping her daughter abort a pregnancy after 20 weeks, which is illegal in the state. A key piece of evidence? Her Facebook messages.

Since the overturn of Roe v. Wade, there is growing concerns about how digital information will be used to prosecute abortions ... and how this affects both abortion seekers and those who provide abortion care and support.

Host Anita Rao talks with Amanda Bennett, project manager at the Digital Defense Fund, and Kestrel, an abortion doula and member of the Mountain Area Abortion Doula Collective in Western North Carolina, about best practices for keeping personal information safe from

hackers and third party surveillance. And Dr. Olivia Snow, a dominatrix and research fellow at the UCLA Center For Critical Internet Inquiry, talks about the lessons sex workers have to share about protection from digital surveillance.

September 16, 2022

Category: Health

The face we put forward: experiences and history of facial feminization surgery

Description: Facial feminization surgery has been growing as a gender-affirming procedure and a way to combat gender dysphoria. The demand also sheds some light on the ways we construct gender and sex.

Outward appearances play a big role in our perceptions of gender. Some of us have the privilege to not think too much about it. But for some trans folks, the way that others perceive their gender has implications for their mental and physical health. That leads some to pursue changes like facial feminization surgery — a series of procedures that shape brows, cheeks or chins to appear more feminine — to align internal and external appearance.

Host Anita Rao talks with Emma Ward, a songwriter, producer and community manager, about her experience getting facial feminization surgery. And Eric Plemons, associate professor of anthropology at the University of Arizona, shares the history of the surgery and its significance in shaping how we perceive sex and gender. Plemons is the author of “The Look of a Woman: Facial Feminization Surgery and the Aims of Trans-Medicine.”

Please note: This episode originally aired November 5, 2021.

September 9, 2022

Category: Religion

More than Horoscopes: Astrology for Self-Exploration and Social Justice

Description: Cultures across the world have consulted the stars about everything from agricultural practices and politics to romantic compatibility. Whether you're a casual consumer of astro memes or intimately familiar with each planet's position within your chart, digging deeper into astrology can be a meaningful form of self-reflection.

Omisade Burney-Scott is a proud Aries – and for as long as she can remember, she's used astrology as a tool for navigating her relationships with others and herself.

The regular host of the [Black Girl's Guide to Surviving Menopause](#), Burney-Scott guest-hosts Embodied's exploration of astrology as a spiritual practice and springboard for personal growth. With her cousin and best friend Cheyanne Headen, who now works as community and de-escalation specialist at [A Place at the Table](#), she traces her love of astrology back to its origins and discusses how astrology continues to serve as a starting point for thinking about parenthood, friendship and work.

She then speaks with two people whose practice of astrology informs and is informed by their social justice efforts. [Jessica Lanyadoo](#), host of “Ghost of a Podcast” and co-founder of [Zodiac the Vote](#), shares how the study of astrology has evolved over the years and the ways it can be used today to promote activism and civic engagement. [Zacchary Powell](#), a Black queer astrologer and former president of the [Association for Young Astrologers](#), explains the benefits and drawbacks of astro memes, as well as the role of astrology in navigating our relationship to identity.

Thank you to Emalydia, Rebecca, Brianna, Mariah, Angel and Katherin for contributing to this episode.

September 2, 2022

Category: Health

Aging Without Fear

Description: We’re barraged with anti-aging sentiment in our culture, whether it’s jokes about going senile or marketing focused on “looking young.” But there are folks out there accepting aging for what it is — and preparing to age exactly how they’d like to.

Growing older is just a fact of life. No matter what the Silicon Valley biotechnologists may promise, our bodies aren’t everlasting. And while some changes that come with aging are inevitable, changing our perspective about what it means to get old can change our quality of life.

Host Anita Rao talks about defying ageism with journalist Steven Petrow, the author of “Stupid Things I Won’t Do When I Get Old.”

She also talks with Vega Subramaniam and Mala Nagarajan, a married couple who are both nonprofit social justice consultants and coaches at Vega Mala Consulting, about how they are preparing to age in community.

Please note: This conversation originally aired November 19, 2021.

August 26, 2022

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.

August 19, 2022

Category: Health

Pre- and Post-Roe, Abortion Doulas Fill Abortion Care Gaps

With more restrictive laws on abortion going into effect across the country, uncertainty about the future of reproductive health care is growing. But there is one group of people who are prepared to do what they’ve always done to provide access for those who don’t have it: abortion doulas.

Host Anita Rao talks with abortion doula KáLyn Banks Coghill about how they help people with the practical and emotional parts of the abortion process and how their services have been affected by the overturn of Roe v. Wade. KáLyn works with the Richmond Reproductive Freedom Project and is a writer, organizer and doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University. KáLyn also teaches in the Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies department.

Anita also discusses reproductive health and justice with Raven Freeborn, a healing justice practitioner, full spectrum doula and community educator who has provided trainings for folks interested in becoming abortion doulas.

Thanks to Amanda, Lynn, Deonna and Linden for contributing their thoughts and stories to this episode.

August 12, 2022

Category: Health

The Science and Culture of Your Coffee Habit

Description: Many people start the day by reaching for a cup of coffee. But how much do you really know about the effects of your daily cup?

Whether it’s hot or iced, black or beige, first thing in the morning or at the start of a late night ... most of us drink coffee in some form every day.

But while you might be able to recite your coffee order in your sleep, chances are that you’re less familiar with the science behind its effects on your body and brain.

Host Anita Rao speaks with four people, each with a unique perspective on the science and culture of coffee. [Dr. Satish Rao](#) — gastroenterologist and professor of medicine at Augusta University (who also happens to be Anita’s dad!) — discusses what he learned about coffee’s effects on the gut from an experiment he administered in the 1990s. Neuroscientist and science communicator [Dr. Shannon Odell](#) explains the effect of coffee on the brain, including how it activates our fight-or-flight response and how it may or may not contribute to brain health.

Rao then shifts her focus to the cultures and communities that have been built around coffee consumption. Samuel Ngwa, who cultivated coffee beans as a child in his home country of Cameroon, shares his experience of learning about American coffee culture as an undergraduate in Wisconsin and how this eventually led him to found [Safari Pride Coffee](#). Austin Jeffries, co-owner of [Borough Coffee](#), discusses the importance of coffee shops as third places and describes the ways he fosters community with his mobile coffee cart.

Thank you to Elie Gardner, Kara Abare, Jacob Moore, Eric Hodge, Daniel Everhart, Hmellisa Mlo, and Bradley George for contributing voice memos to this episode.

August 5, 2022

Category: Health

Family, Friendships and Love After Aging Out Of Foster Care

Whether or not you are close to the folks who raised you, their ways of parenting, advice-giving and boundary setting leave their mark. For the over 400,000 young people in the U.S. foster care system, growing up in multiple households can make those parental dynamics more complicated. And when those young people leave the system at 18, they’re often faced with the responsibility of creating their own systems of support and care.

Host Anita Rao talks with two people about how aging out of the foster care system shaped how they build connection and community in their lives today. Ángela Quijada-Banks is a holistic purpose coach and transformational speaker. She is also the NAACP Image Awards nominated author of “The Black Foster Youth Handbook.” And Stephani Smith works in mental health care and runs a YouTube account where she shares stories of her experience in foster care.

Rao also talks with Jessica Lloyd-Rogers, the chair of the National Foster Parent Association’s Council of State Affiliates, about how her experience in foster care influenced her parenting style with her biological daughter and with her foster children.

Please note: This episode originally aired July 16, 2021.

July 29, 2022

Category: Health

Saying Goodbye to a Friend: Community Care After the Death of A Pet

Description: The loss of a pet is often diminished and deemed less important than other losses. But the grief that comes after is real and difficult for pet owners and veterinarians alike.

There is deep, difficult grief that comes with the death of a pet. And yet, pet loss is often an example of disenfranchised grief — grief not acknowledged or considered “valid” by mainstream culture.

Host Anita Rao talks with two people about the significance of losing pets and the realities of the grief process. Corban Smith got his dog, Dallas, as a puppy when he was 19, and cared for Dallas as he experienced seizures in the last years of his life. Sarina Manifold, a licensed clinical social worker with specialized training in veterinary social work, helps pet owners through end-of-life decision-making and conducting memorial ceremonies.

Smith is an adjunct professor at James Madison University and a jail/emergency services clinician at Valley Community Services Board. Manifold is also a certified grief recovery specialist and the owner of Authentic Healing Counseling.

In the network of care created for those experiencing the loss of a pet, veterinarians often do more of the supporting than being supported. Rao talks with Dr. Erika Lin-Hendel about the mental toll this takes on vets and what can be done to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue in veterinary communities. Dr. Lin-Hendel is a relief veterinarian and board member for Not One More Vet, a mental health advocacy group for veterinarians.

Thanks to Christine Stone, Angela, Haley and Erik Magnus for their contributions to this episode.

July 22, 2022

Category: Arts & Culture

Neuro-diversify Your Romance Bookshelf

If you're looking for a book with all your favorite, time-tested tropes, there's nothing like a romance novel. The well-worn storylines include the meet-cute and the forbidden love, and finally, the happy ending. That happy ending is the hallmark of romance, but that doesn't mean they have to be homogeneous. And there's a growing number of authors writing romance novels that feature perspectives long absent in the genre, including perspectives of characters whose brains work differently from what's considered “neurotypical.”

Host Anita Rao talks about the representation of neurodiversity, from autism to ADHD, in the romance genre with three neurodivergent authors. E.S. Yu is the author of the paranormal romance “Human Enough.” Ceillie Simkiss is the author of two romance novella series, and Emery Lee is the author of “Meet Cute Diary.”

Please note: This episode originally aired August 13, 2021.

July 15, 2022

Category: Economy

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!

July 8, 2022

Category: Health

Sobering Up: Questioning & Reclaiming A Relationship to Alcohol

Description: American drinking culture lies in the realm of extremes — but choosing to abstain is often stigmatized. After choosing sobriety or sober curiosity, how are social relationships and community affected?

Work parties. Weddings. Sports games. Many social situations are closely entwined with alcohol and a culture of drinking. But there are lots of people who are choosing a path outside of the mainstream ... and committing to a life without alcohol.

There are multiple reasons for being sober. For some, it's part of the recovery from a substance use disorder or addiction. For others, the choice is in response to questioning how alcohol makes them act and feel.

Host Anita Rao talks with two people who collectively have close to two decades of experience in sobriety. J.Nicole Jones is the co-host of the "Sober Black Girls Club" podcast and host of "The Grief Bully" podcast. And Tawny Lara is a New York City-based millennial who writes about the intersection of sobriety and sexuality as The Sober Sexpert. She's also the co-host of "Recovery Rocks" podcast and is writing a book called "Dry Humping: A Guide to Booze-Free Sex, Dating and Relationships."

Thank you to David, Cara Smelter, Chelsea and Madison Speyer for sharing their stories for this episode!

July 1, 2022

Category: Health

A Lot Has Changed Post-Roe Reversal. What's Stayed the Same?

Description: After the reversal of Roe v. Wade by the Supreme Court, healthcare providers and patients face an uncertain future...but for many, access was already difficult.

The landscape of reproductive rights and health in the U.S. looks unlike what many people have experienced in their lifetimes. Since Friday, June 24, when the Supreme Court announced a decision overturning Roe v. Wade, several states have already restricted abortion access, with more planning to.

In 2020, after the appointment of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court, host Anita Rao talked with family physician Dr. Rathika Nimalendran about the future of abortion rights. She joins Anita again in 2022 to talk about how the Supreme Court's decision affects how she is able to provide care and what continues to be difficult. Dr. Nimalendran works with Planned Parenthood South Atlantic and is a fellow with Physicians for Reproductive Health.

Anita also revisits another 2020 conversation with two women who terminated abortions for medical reasons and the challenges they had to accessing care.