



The Millennial Life

podcast

with Liz Higgins

Episode 26: Finding Your Person, A Conversation With Keriann Long

Liz Higgins (00:02):

Hey, y'all! Liz Higgins here, and welcome to the Millennial Life Podcast, where my main goal is to share conversations that will inspire you and drive you toward the life and relationship you desire. I'm here to share what I've learned as a licensed therapist and relationship coach specializing in millennial relationships and wellness, as well as transformative conversations with other professionals. Thanks for listening and enjoy today's episode!

Liz Higgins (00:34):

Hey everybody! Welcome to today's episode. I'm really excited to introduce Keriann Long, who has a history as a clinical therapist like me, and also is in the world of relationship coaching. And she does lots of awesome relational-based stuff with her clients. And so I'm very excited to have her here today to talk shop a little bit and explore the Wild West of modern day dating relationships, commitment... All the things. So Keriann, thanks for joining me today. How are you doing?

Keriann Long (01:09):

I'm doing great, Liz. Thanks for having me.

Liz Higgins (01:11):

Absolutely. Thanks for being here. And, um, it's always fun to kind of meet people out in the online space and then do these collaborations together and to, you know... I've seen the stuff you've put out there in, into the, into the universe. And I think it really aligns with what I think about relationships and commitment, and just that journey that we all go on to find that sense of belonging in relationships.

Liz Higgins (01:36):

So let's just start, um, for listeners - tell a little bit about you and what got you into this whole world of relationship.

Keriann Long (01:44):

Sure. So yeah, I've been a therapist for about 12 years and I got my, uh, my degree with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy. Became a licensed marriage and family therapist. So relationships were at the core of my training and at the core of my early clinical experience too. And one of my philosophies about, um, kind of human wellness is that our relationships have a huge impact on the quality of our lives. And I've seen that in my clinical work. And so that became a focus of my clinical work. And I did some, some training and, um, also took on an emphasis in trauma later in my, um, my career as a therapist too. So I kind of bring those two

lenses even to my dating coaching. Even though I'm not doing trauma work specifically in my dating coaching, I have a kind of a trauma informed perspective.

Keriann Long (02:39):

So, um, I, and I've actually, you know, it's partially based on my personal experience too. I've been unexpectedly single a couple of times in my life where relationships that I thought were going to last forever, came to an end. And have been in that position of kind of, 'Oh crap, what am I going to do now?' I, that, you know, I had a partner and I'm going to be reentering the dating world at a time that I wasn't expecting to do so. And I learned so much from those personal experiences and found that there was kind of a gap in my clinical training. And, um, and then what I, that I kind of made up for in what I learned in my personal life. And so the reason why I became interested in doing this as a coach is that I see that there can be this gap for people who are seeking therapy to that.

Keriann Long (03:29):

Not every therapist is trained on the dating side of things. We learn more about how to, I don't know about if your experience reflects this, but I know my experience was more about how to maintain a relationship once you have it, but not so much about how to find and get that relationship to begin with and, and what to be looking for from the very start that sets you up for success. So it's exciting to be able to do more of that work as a coach now, so that I can help people get things right from the very start.

Liz Higgins (03:57):

Oh, that's amazing. And yeah, absolutely. I, it resonates with me because I'm like, you don't learn that stuff, not in grad school, not going through the education of like the science of relationships that makes a lot of sense. It really is more focused on when you're in that dynamic, what to do, what comes up and all of that. Can you back up? Because I think that's really amazing to hear that you've got the relational piece as an LMFT, but also the trauma-informed lens. Like, what does that, what does that mean? How has that enhanced how you're able to help people?

Keriann Long (04:30):

Well, thank you for that question. It's nice for you to say the word enhanced because I like to think that it enhances it too. Um, you know, I think that there's, well, we know that trauma has a big impact on our lives and well-being too. And the more we've learned about trauma in the last, particularly in the last 10 years, I feel like that has shifted, um, the way we see so many things. And, and when you look through anything through a trauma-informed perspective, I think you just see things from a different way. And so when it comes to dating and relationships, um, what I see in my work with clients is that, um, sometimes people who have trauma in their history (and let's be honest, we pretty much all do to varying extents), that can really impact how they're showing up in relationships.

Keriann Long (05:23):

It can impact, um, who they're choosing, who they're attracted to, who they're drawn to, how they behave in relationships. And so I like to help my clients see if that's something that's going on for them. Like I said, we don't do coach - we don't do trauma work in coaching. That would be something that I would refer out to a therapist, but I can help them see the links between what's happening right now in the present, in their dating life and their relationship life, and how that might be connected to earlier stuff so that they have the awareness to be able to do some more healing work about that so that it's not disrupting their relationship.

Liz Higgins (06:00):

Yeah, absolutely. And it's so refreshing to hear you talking on this, because I think even in our fields, we deal with a little bit of resistance of like, therapists looking into the coaching world and coaches not necessarily being equipped to handle the kinds of things that therapists are really highly trained and skilled to deal with. And, you know, I think you and I are in the similar realm and that we can do both things. And what is kind of the differentiator is just assessing like, you know, who needs the real trauma therapy. But to be trauma-informed with your coaching makes a ton of sense. I find myself educating clients a lot that like, just as you said, most of us have gone through some kind of trauma, um, specifically, like, relational traumas. And it's not just those big T like events that occur, but it could be environments we grew up in, it could be, you know, kind of the temperature of significant relationships that we learned about. And so I'm sure you see a ton of that's come up even with coaching clients. And, um, for listeners, I think that that really sets people like Keriann apart from those that are just maybe not... But you know, just the everyday dating coach.

Liz Higgins (07:20):

So this is really cool to hear. So tell, tell me a little bit about, you know, your clients that you work with. What brings them to you typically? What are some of the challenges that they are going through?

Keriann Long (07:32):

That's a great question. So I find a lot of people come to me after they've gone through a relationship that hasn't gone the way that they wanted it to. So usually something that was either... Didn't get as serious as they'd want it to, or as committed as they'd want it to, or, um, they're finding themselves in this kind of pattern of dating the same kinds of people over and over again. I've also had some people come to me who have kind of pulled away from dating to focus on themselves for a period of time. And they're, they're recognizing that being in a relationship is a value that they have and something that they want to put more kind of focused intention and energy behind. So we kind of get our heads together about, and, and kind of hearts together too, about how do you want to approach that? What's the... let's be, let's be conscious.

Keriann Long (08:22):

And thoughtful and intentional about how you're going to go forward from here. And for the people who've been in, you know, relationships that didn't go the way that they wanted it to go, or, um, who find themselves in the same kind of pattern over and over again, it's the same kind of thing. Being really conscious and intentional about, 'Okay, what's happening here that's, that's keeping this pattern in this loop?' And what do you want to consciously and intentionally do differently going forward so that you can change your experience? Because I find that that's often all that it takes. I've had things drastically, rapidly turn around for people, (even in as little as four sessions) with just bringing a different perspective, a different mindset, a different approach in how they're showing up, who they're choosing. Um, it can turn everything around quite quickly.

Liz Higgins (09:12):

That's amazing. That is really amazing. And again, I think, just speaks to the fact that we might not always need years of therapy to get to the roots of that whole big question - "Why am I the way that I am in my relationships?" It can really happen at a faster pace. What kind of shifts, (if you can think of examples or times you saw clients really create those quick shifts) um, what did you see?

Keriann Long (09:42):

Yeah. So I have worked with, uh... Kind of my specialty, even though I don't really, you know, outwardly say this, is working with folks who have an anxious attachment style. Because of personal experience with that. My, my attachment style has kind of shifted between anxious at times, avoidant at times, secure at times, depending on the circumstances. But definitely when I was dating, I (earlier in my life) found myself in quite an anxious place. And what I find often happens for people who have an anxious attachment style is they really shut down their needs. I'm speaking for myself here, too. This is what happens.

Keriann Long (10:23):

They shut down their needs and completely cater everything they do to the person that they like, the person that they want to be with. And so by helping people see that, and kind of develop more of an abundance mindset about dating - that really it's about finding a person who can take all of you in for you. And of course, we want to be mindful of the things that we might be doing, that, that repetitively caused disruption in a relationship. We want to take ownership of that, right? But on the grand scale, being able to like... Holding out for the possibility that the reality that this person who can love all of you for you is out there. And it's a matter of finding that person. Sometimes that takes dating a lot of people until you find that person. But if you are willing to kind of be persistent through that and be checking in with yourself all along the way about how am I feeling about all of this, you know, is this working for me?

Keriann Long (11:23):

How do I feel when I don't hear from this person, how do I feel when this person isn't willing to, um, move the relationship forward in the same way that I'm wanting to? And when you check in with yourself about those things, um, actually attending to and following through on what that message is, right? If you're hearing from yourself, if you feel internally this doesn't feel okay for me to make choices that are aligned with that. And to recognize like, okay, this isn't, this isn't the person for me, this isn't a relationship for me. I'm going to continue, you know, dating, meeting new people, putting myself out there until I find somebody that's more in alignment.

Liz Higgins (12:01):

Yeah. That's awesome. And while I'm sure those scenarios may not feel the most comfortable and could even come with pain or grief, I would imagine that feels pretty empowering to know that you're functioning from that place that's, like, authentic to your value system and what you're actually trying to create in relationship. That's very cool. So yeah. You and I are aligned with some things, including our anxious, relational tendencies. I'm like thinking - you got to come into my Facebook group! We should do like a live in there about this because I find myself sharing more just with my audience and stuff about my anxiety experience. And, you know, it's interesting because, and I'm, I'm married to my husband. We've been together over a decade and he's a great partner, very present and all those good things. But like, I still had that anxiety that was kind of related around the whole 'forever and ever till we die' thing of long-term commitment. I'm like, how can I actually know that I can do that? Like, how do you know when you find the one? And do you see that with singles or those that are, that are trying to reenter the dating world or whatever? That they're kind of carrying in these traditional, maybe cultural narratives of what we've told ourselves about long-term commitment? Like, okay, now I'm headed out there to find the one better, better find the right better, better, not make a mistake.

Keriann Long (13:37):

It's interesting because I can feel that that's shifting some, you know? It seems like people are starting to have kind of a different perspective about all of that. But I, but generally the people who have worked with me have had... It's interesting because not everyone has the goal of getting married. You know, I've, I've worked with a few people who just have the goal of... Either

been married before, or just don't have the value of, the value of marriage isn't important to them, but they want a stable long-term relationship with someone. So that's been interesting to see that there's a shift there. Um, I also, don't actually. I'm in a relationship, but I don't plan to get married. I don't really desire to get married. So while I'm totally supportive of people who do, I know that it's not the only path and I'm supportive of people who don't as well.

Keriann Long (14:29):

So yeah, I think there's still kind of that looming, regardless of whether the goal is marriage or long-term relationship. I think there is that looming kind of pressure of 'this has gotta be the right person. I've got to get it right. This is - I'm, I'm intending to try to be with this person, you know, for the long haul'. Although it does seem like there's also, um, more, (even if people don't call it this) more comfort around the idea of serial monogamy and, you know, being with a person for as long as it makes sense to. And then, you know, if something were to happen and they weren't able to be together anymore, it didn't make sense to anymore, that that would actually be okay.

Liz Higgins (15:09):

Yeah. And I, I, I think that the progressiveness and expansiveness of relationship dynamics today and all the different types of relationships there are, and arrangements you can do and all that stuff... I think it's actually done a lot of good for us to, to kind of revisit and, and dig into the belief systems that we are carrying into our relationships. I'm finding myself learning, you know, over the past 10 years as a therapist, learning so much from the clients that I've worked with. That's lucky for me is helped me go inward more to kind of explore what works for me and what exactly do I want, and where did that messaging come from? You know, it could be a plethora of things and it always is often, you know? So that's really cool that you see a lots of different things happening and people walking into different dynamics, but clearly still searching for secure connection out there.

Keriann Long (16:08):

Yes, that's definitely the theme. And I think it's really cool that, that that's even an option for people now, right? That like, there's, there's more than one possible path. That there's this option to be clear and intentional about what it is that you really want for yourself and to be able to honor that.

Liz Higgins (16:25):

Exactly. Exactly. What do you feel? I know I was thinking modern day commitments. Um, when I thought about our conversation together, like what do you, what would you say that that... Does take whichever path you end up choosing kind of on that notion of commitment? Like, what does it take for that to work?

Keriann Long (16:48):

I was just listening to your episode the other night about kind of the fallacy of compatibility being the most important thing. When I first read the description of it, I was like, actually I think compatibility, compatible is quite important. I'm curious to hear what she says about this. And I think I totally agree with what you said that compatibility isn't everything, because yes, over the long haul we are going to change. And so it seems like what the most important foundational thing is is, is good and open and honest communication and being able to sort through challenges and difficulties with one another to support one another through the things that we go through in our individual lives and to be able to work through things as a couple, because I feel like if you have that in your relationship, you're pretty unbreakable. You're pretty unstoppable.

Keriann Long (17:35):

If you've made this commitment to each other and you've decided we want to do what it takes to, to stay together. I mean, I think that's a choice too, that people have to make. Um, but if you have that foundational skill of being able to talk about what's coming up for each of you to be able to do it in a kind and gentle way, rather than being angry or aggressive or, um, demeaning or any of those things that it's, it just makes, it makes the things that are, that can come up in relationships so much easier to get through. And, um, yeah, I think a lot of the things that tend to end relationships.

Liz Higgins (18:16):

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. Well, and one of my mentors, um, Terry Real (he doesn't know he's my mentor, but he is) I do a lot of his trainings and stuff. He talks about how couples today, we have to be willing to take our partner on. And I, I just always think of that as this constant process where you're choosing to lean in, you know? Like, differences are gonna happen, difficulties are gonna happen, painful things are gonna happen. And it doesn't mean don't take space and go inward. We absolutely do that, but you're always making that choice to, to take on your partner's growth and development, and to be curious. And maybe that'll lead you different directions than you originally thought, but you carry in that value for, like you said, the foundation of your relationship, you'll at least be able to explore it all together.

Liz Higgins (19:14):

I love what Esther Perel talks about too, about, you know, if you're in a, I don't know exactly how she says it, but something along the lines of, if you're in a long-term relationship, you're going to, you're going to be in a relationship with several people over the period of the, over that period of time. Right. And for, you know, I think that's helpful for people who, who fear monogamy to recognize that yes, you might be with one person over a long period of time, but that person's going to grow and change and evolve and be different in different phases of your life and for the people who are pro monogamy to prepare themselves for that. Because I don't know that we all go into, um, I, I mean, I certainly don't remember getting that message as a kid or a teen or a young adult, like be prepared for the fact that if you choose to settle down with someone, they're going to change a lot through your life. It was kind of like you like this person now. And the fantasy was that they'll always be the way that they are when you first get together, which I've experienced in my life is not, there's not really...

Liz Higgins (20:14):

Totally not reality. Yeah. I mean, that resonates for me. I think when I finally dug into the anxieties I had, that was certainly one of them. I'm like nowhere... was I ever told or prepared, it was literally becoming a therapist that helped me learn actually a healthy, thriving relationship must change. Like it has to grow and change. It's a system, it's a living system, but before I was awoken by all that knowledge and understanding, I think I was certainly sitting in that murky space of, well, yeah, I want to get married. I, yeah, I want to be monogamous, but like, okay, nobody ever said, and it's going to be hard and you gotta be willing to, you know, take on the ups and downs and all the shifts that will happen. So I imagine a lot of what you find yourself doing too, is I guess, breaking down the expectations people are carrying into even the dating process.

Keriann Long (21:12):

Yes. I, I'm very informed by, by Esther Pearl. And another thing that I really liked from her work is moving away from this idea, this kind of cultural idea that we have, that a partner is going to meet every one of our needs. And that a partner is only a good partner if they meet every one of our needs, which just isn't reality either. So, you know, normalizing the idea that yes, of course we want a partner who is, um, who is available to us, who does meet some of our needs, but to

not solely rely on our partner to meet our needs, that our needs can be met by ourselves. Sometimes there's things we can do to meet our own needs. Our needs can be met by our other relationships outside of our partnership, like our close friends, our family members, and I think coming to a relay. So I talk about that with my clients, a lot, coming to a relationship with that perspective is helpful that I don't need to find this person. That's going to be perfect and meet every need in every area of my life, but I can find someone who's good enough and stable and it can show up for me and, um, you know, stay open to the idea that there's, there's other ways to get my needs met.

Liz Higgins (22:22):

Absolutely. So would you say in some ways, for some people does that piece there come in the form of almost lowering their expectations? Hmm. That's a good question. It sounds negative in nature to say it that way, but

Keriann Long (22:39):

Yeah. Well, you know, I've been doing some content lately about, um, you know, how to tell if you're being too, too picky. And generally I'm trying to encourage people, I think, especially anxiously attached folks to be more picky because they tend to settle for, at least in my experience, they tend to settle for less than they actually probably can get. Um, but yeah, for, for people, I think it can swing the other way too, where, um, having this expectation that this one person is going to meet all of our needs can, can make it really difficult to find a partner, right. Because there's, if one thing, if one box is not checked on the list and it's like, okay, that person's out the door and that seems to come up more for people who kind of tend toward the avoidance side of things. Um, and, and so yeah, when you say lowering standards, I think I might just slightly change the wording of that to having more realistic standards, which I think one way of looking at that could be like, yeah, you're, you're taking it down a little notch to what's what's more, what's more feasible.

Liz Higgins (23:42):

Yeah, absolutely. And, okay, so you were talking about like kind of the anxious attachment type, which sometimes can result in pulling back and avoiding and being avoidant in nature. What, what would be the other flip of that? Like if you're not in an avoidance stance out of anxiety, then are you more, like, just going into overdrive with things? Yeah.

Keriann Long (24:07):

Well, so folks who have anxious attachment often are really preoccupied with the relationship. So they're on hyper alert for any sign that something could be off in the relationship and that the default, uh, kind of behavior that tends to go along with that is, is kind of grasping or clinging toward, um, toward the person that they like. And so that can be really challenging for an anxiously attached folks. And avoidantly attached folks end up finding each other in partnership and avoidantly attached folks feel very threatened by being kind of chased or pursued or their kind of personal space being infringed upon. So you can imagine it's kind of a recipe for disaster when, um, avoidant folks, you know, might tend to pull away in a relationship or feel scared about having a lot of closeness and intimacy, anxious folks get activated when they feel that person pulling away and their, their response is to come toward the person who's pulling away, which feels threatening for the person who's feeling pulling away. And so it's just a cycle that doesn't work for either, but yeah.

Liz Higgins (25:18):

It sounds exhausting. Yes. One day, I'm sure you sit there and realize I'm exhausted emotionally and why, why do they find each other? Why does this happen?

Speaker 2 (25:31):

Yes. So, so the theory is that, um, that there's something in one another. I mean, my personal theory, I know I'm sure there's, there's some of this in the literature too, but my personal theory based on my observations is that there's something in each that is familiar to that to each person. So, um, you know, avoidant people often became avoidant because they had someone intrusive in their early life and they had to pull away. So whether that was a parent or a sibling, they had to pull away and kind of create this protective barrier around themselves to feel okay. And folks who are interestingly attached often had kind of inconsistent stability, uh, from an attention and love, um, from their caregivers. And so they're used to things kind of being up and down and Rocky. So while they might desire to in there also, I think we're also, um, you know, trying to repair and get something different than what we had in our childhoods.

Keriann Long (26:37):

So actually attached people are trying to, to find stability. They want stability, yet they're kind of drawn toward what's familiar, which is that same kind of pulling away energy. And I think the same is true for avoidantly attached people. It's, it's comfortable, it's familiar to be around that same kind of energy that they were around as a child. And then on top of that, we have securely attached people who are in the mix too, who are less likely to want to be in a relationship with somebody who's, avoidantly attached because they're very comfortable with closeness and intimacy and someone who's, avoidantly attached. Isn't a relationship between a securely attached person and avoidantly attached person can work. If the securely attached person is willing to kind of be patient with the person's, um, avoidance. So if you pull securely attached people out of the pool for avoidantly attached people, then anxiously attached people are going to be there.

Keriann Long (27:31):

Who's left? So, um, I think because of both the familiarity and the kind of how the dynamics play out within one, within one each other within the dating pool, it's just, it's the combination that's the most well, and I love the way that you just explained all of that. And I think it really, um, normalizes some of what we might try to pathologize or like negatively label ourselves as it's like, this is so helpful to understand your own relationship template. And maybe that even brings us full circle to some of that trauma stuff that you're talking about. Like, we are often adults living out our lives based on things that we learned a long, long time ago in certain environments or relationships or whatever. And it's not to blame I've, I've always really appreciated that about, um, our, our clinical background of like systems thinking. You can never trace it back to the one and only person that has ruined your whole life or whatever, but it's all meant as a way to help you have this comprehensive understanding of yourself. And from there, I think you can really be empowered to literally learn new skills, cultivate a new way of being.

Liz Higgins (28:48):

As you work with clients and maybe first introduce them to all of this stuff, is there any piece of it that you find is kind of the hardest for them to, to take in, like, do you, you know, whether it's attachment style stuff or like, you know, things for them to try differently that are more intentional and secure in nature, I guess, like what do you see? People maybe have the biggest challenges with the thing that I find people have the biggest challenge with is when you're in something with someone you really like, and you have awareness that this person is not a match for you for whatever reason. And being able to act on that and, and deal with the pain and the sadness and the grief and the loss of letting this person go. Like even if the, the, the rational awareness is there and they understand that it's the right thing to do.

Keriann Long (29:47):

I still see a lot of resistance and kind of bargaining that happens around, you know, I just really like this person and I don't want to let them go. But I find that, um, as people start to practice that skill more, it gets easier to do with time. And the pro - the process starts happening faster. That was certainly my personal experience, too. That like, once I felt how good it was to be able to let go of something that wasn't serving me and make myself available to other connections that could serve me better. It, it kind of, and I don't say it because I know that there's like, uh, people can, people can, um, feel really down about the fact like, Oh, well, you know, with online dating, it's just like this constant circle of people and nobody's willing to commit, and I truly don't come at it from that perspective at all.

Keriann Long (30:38):

I don't, I don't encourage people to write others off easily, but I want them to, to be making decisions from, like you said before, a really aligned place where they're, they are really aware of what it is that they want and need in a relationship. And that they're able to say no to things that aren't that, because who wants that, that doesn't serve anyone that doesn't serve the person who's seeking that relationship and that doesn't serve the person who's on the other side either. So, um, yeah, to, to get back to your question, it's the, it's the letting go once, you know it's right.

Liz Higgins (31:11):

That brings up so much. Cause I, I think about those scenarios that I've listened to clients walk through and just that piece of being in that moment where it's like, I have to, I need to let go of this. It's not good for me. It's not serving me. I'm overextended or not getting needs met or whatever. And it's like, um, I don't know. It's just so much, and you can't necessarily remove the emotional outcome. That's going to happen with that, which can be that pain, that loss, grief, whatever, like, these are real impactful moments that we move through. And whether it's a one-month long relationship or 10 years, not, not to compare those kinds of things, but in both your, if you're doing it right, you're going to be feeling something about all that.

Keriann Long (31:58):

Of course. Yes. Yeah. And so, because of that, one of the things that I really focus on with my clients too, is, is the concept of resilience, right? And, and, and being able to trust that we can feel our feelings and move through them. You know, that they're not going to destroy us. They're not going to completely take us down. And that feeling upset, feeling sadness, feeling lost, feeling grief, when a relationship comes to an end is a totally normal thing to feel. We wouldn't want to try to shut that down or pretend that that's not going to happen because it's going to bubble up to the surface at some point, if we try to do that, but to be able to recognize that we have to fear that we don't have to fear, um, because I think that's another big thing that gets in the way for people is, you know, they hesitate to hesitate, to end relationships.

Keriann Long (32:48):

They hesitate to put themselves out there because they fear the pain. That's going to be on the side of the potential loss, you know, perceived loss. If it's, if they're on the early side of things. And, and I really want to empower people to come from this perspective of recognizing all the things that they've already made it through in their life, all the difficult, emotional experiences that they've shown that they had the capacity to survive. And to remember as you're dating, or if you're in a relationship that feels like it needs to come to an end that you have that capacity within you, we all do. It's a human capacity. And when we can kind of rely on that and trust in that, then it makes those hard decisions, I think a little bit easier to make.

Liz Higgins (33:29):

Oh, absolutely. That's awesome. And I want to know what you think about the dating realm and this thing of like scarcity mindset versus abundance mindset. Cause I would think that might come up a lot for people that just feel like raw and vulnerable to the process and they've been burned and it's like, no, there's no good ones out there. I certainly hear that from clients from time to time. It's like, it's all just a bunch of mess out in the dating apps. I don't want to do it. What do you say to that?

Keriann Long (34:02):

I mean, the biggest perspective I have about that is you're only looking for one, right? You only need to find one, you just need to find one person, who's your match. Who's your person who you can have a good relationship with. So yeah, you might come across a lot of duds. You might come across a lot of people who just, you know, you don't feel excited about you don't feel like there's a real connection with. Um, and I think it's really helpful to kind of try to have acceptance around that, right? Like, yeah. It might take me meeting a lot of people until I find the person who I have that right connection with, but I genuinely believe that it's possible for everyone. And of course, if you live in a really rural area where there aren't a lot of single people who are close to your age, that makes it harder.

Keriann Long (34:45):

I want to validate the reality of that. But for people who live in, you know, fairly urban areas, um, there are so many, and here's the funny thing I was going to say. There's so many people out there. The funny thing is that I work with both men and women. So I hear things on both, both sides. Right. I hear women say like, Oh, there just aren't any good men out there speaking in a heterosexual context and men saying, Oh, there's just, you know, there's no, there are no good women out there. And it's like, I'll be like, you know, I have some local clients too. So I'll be here in Santa Barbara, hearing them from men and women in the same town. And it's like, I know that that's not true. I know that there are good women here. I know there are good men here because I work with both of them. And it's just a matter of, of connecting.

Liz Higgins (35:29):

Yes. So to that, it sounds like you're saying like stay in the game. You know, it's like, we're talking about earlier. I mean, you pull away, you avoid it all, you, you don't have an opportunity to lean in to see what's out there to keep pushing for something that is right for you.

Keriann Long (35:47):

And I know that dating can be exhausting for people. It can take a lot of your time and energy and you know, something that helped me when I was dating and something that's helped my clients is normalizing that it's okay to take breaks too. You don't have to be like going full force all the time. That's another piece of, I think of abundance mindset, right? It's like, you don't have to be there all the time for you to be able to make the connection when the timing's right for you. Um, so like really my biggest takeaway in everything is like really being able to check in with yourself, listen to yourself about what you're needing both, you know, in terms of how's your energy expenditure going with dating, how's it going in? Any relationship that you're in and being able to act on that and honor that, and that might mean taking a break at time, but, but staying persistent over the long-term and, and knowing that yeah, your person's out there, it's just a matter of you meeting them and finding them.

Liz Higgins (36:41):

I love that. And while I'm not hearing you say, like, it's gonna feel easy, the whole ride and the whole time through what I think I am hearing is that in a relationship that is quote unquote, right?

For you, it's going to feel collaborative. It's going to feel like who you're with is willing to, like I said, you know, take you on in the sense of learn your needs and learn how to become attuned to that and collaborate with you. And really co-create something. So some big dominators there, I guess, because I think our, our cultural shared emotion wants to believe it's going to feel easy, but it's just not supposed to, it's not going to all the time.

Keriann Long (37:29):

Yeah. And I would say that, I find that when people are, are in an aligned relationship, it might not, it doesn't necessarily feel easy in that there's nothing at risk there because there's always going to be something at risk there. So that part is always likely going to bring up some level of anxiety for everyone, because there's an uncertain aspect of it. Our brains don't like uncertainty. But what I do find happens in terms of ease is that it doesn't feel like you have to force anything. There might be things that you have to work out together and communicate about because you're learning each other and you're finding the way to be in relationship with one another. But what seems to shift for people's, I'll see people go from a relationship where everything is hard. It's hard to move the relationship forward. It's hard to communicate with each other.

Keriann Long (38:19):

When you go through hard times, the person's always confused about how the other person feels about them. They don't know what's going on to all those things go away. Like there's a, there's a somewhat effortless forward momentum in the, the person is clear about how the other person feels about them. They're able to talk about stuff. If things come up that are difficult. And so that being something to look for in a relationship, like, does this feel like it's just kind of moving along and yeah. Things might come up here and there where we have to work them out. But, but the general feeling is like, this is pretty smooth. This is, I'm not feeling too confused about what's going on here.

Liz Higgins (38:59):

I love that. There's, there's a real flow and you're in the flow and you feel the flow. And yeah, I think that makes so much sense. I love it. Well, you are clearly knowledgeable about these things and it's always nice to hear a fellow coach fellow therapist. That's kind of in that realm of, of attachment and relational mindfulness and all those things that really help these relationships thrive. So yeah. I want to ask you, as we wrap up, what is the best way for listeners to find you and to learn more about you and are you taking on your clients and all that?

Keriann Long (39:40):

Yeah, so the, the best way to find me, where most of my stuff is these days is on Instagram, @coachingwithkeriann. Um, you can also find me at my website, which is coachingwithkeriann.com. I am taking, I have a couple of spaces for new clients right now, for new coaching clients. Um, and I work with people in a kind of month-to-month customized way so that they can stay for as long as they want to, or as short as they want to. Like I mentioned, um, sometimes people get the results that they want within the first four weeks and then kind of follow up with me as needed after that. So yeah, it's, it's tailored to exactly what folks need, there's contact with me between sessions and, um, just make sure that they get exactly what they need from the program.

Liz Higgins (40:29):

Awesome. I think that's one of the things that's so nice about doing that, um, kind of accelerated work with a coach. You have this like real high touch, um, connection to you as the coach, and if they need you between those sessions, you're available and can help them walk through those, those moments that they maybe need you or something like that. So thank you so much!

Keriann Long (40:51):

It was a pleasure talking with you. It's, it's also fun on my end to talk with somebody who is like-minded about relationships, because obviously this is something that's important to me. So it's nice to be able to talk with you about it and hear your knowledge about this subject too.

Liz Higgins (41:04):

Thanks. Well, I pinch myself every day, cause it just feels like, uh, it is a privilege and honor to be in this field and doing something that connects so deeply to my own, um, alignment, I guess, and my value system. So I know it's the same for you. I have a feeling you'll be back here again soon talking about more relationship stuff. So thank you very much. And I definitely recommend that everybody go check out on, on Instagram and on her website. We'll put links in the show notes and... Yeah, until next time. Thanks.

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