

# Conjuring Up Courage #131

Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi & Jessie R.

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**Shohreh Davoodi:** You are listening to episode #131 of Conjuring Up Courage. Happy Pride Month, y'all! Both this episode and episode #132 are part of my annual Pridepalooza celebration, where for the entire month of June, I post all queer-focused content on all of my platforms.

If you've been waiting for the tea on my relationship, I am finally serving it up piping hot in this episode. Today, I'm joining forces with my girlfriend, Jessie, to answer questions about our relationship as well as some requests for advice that were submitted by listeners.

To access the show notes and a full transcript of this episode, head to [shohrehdavoodi.com/131](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/131). That's [shohrehdavoodi.com/131](http://shohrehdavoodi.com/131).

[Music plays]

This is Conjuring Up Courage, and I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. As a self-trust coach, I help people come home to themselves so they can be more of who they are and less haunted by who they think they're supposed to be.

I created this podcast to celebrate what's possible when you commit to being brave. You'll hear from diverse guests who are refusing to let fear and self-doubt stop them from building fulfilling lives and creating a better world for everyone. I'll also teach you my favorite tools, strategies, and mindset shifts so you can do the same.

Consider this your invitation to stop living according to "shoulds" and to step into your motherfucking magic instead. Stay open, get curious, and let's grow together.

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[Music fades]

Hello, everyone! It is Pridepalooza, and that means it is all queer content all month long on all of my platforms. And today, I have a very special treat for you because I have invited my girlfriend on the show, formerly known as Riot Grrrl, but now you know her true name, which is Jessie. Hello, Jessie, welcome.

**Jessie R.:** Hello.

**Shohreh:** [Laughs lightly] So for those who don't know, we actually put out a call for questions that we are gonna answer today. So, listeners submitted questions that they wanted us to answer, whether about us and our relationship or about advice that they wanted to get from us, and we're going to answer as many of those questions as we can today.

But first, because y'all don't know Jessie, I wanted to give her a chance to give some background information about her, let y'all know how she identifies. Y'all know my story of queerness, but you don't know anything about Jessie, so I'm gonna let her launch into that and then we'll get to some questions.

**Jessie:** My name is Jessie, obviously. I identify as a lesbian.

**Shohreh:** And a soft butch.

**Jessie:** And a soft butch, yes. Pronouns, though: she/her. I have known I was queer since I was probably four years old. My first crush, ever, was on Punky Brewster. She was really cute, and I knew that I wanted to be

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with her and not *be* her. I had my first girl kiss when I was four years old, in a closet.

**Shohreh:** Can we point out the irony of you kissing a girl in a closet?

**Jessie:** Yeah [light laughter]. So, I've known I was gay for basically my entire life.

**Shohreh:** Distinctly different [laughs lightly] from my queer life story.

**Jessie:** Very, very different, yes.

**Shohreh:** Wonderful. Well, thank you so much for sharing. So, the first question I want to get to is my favorite question of all the questions, and I want to thank the person who submitted the question, "How are y'all so fuckin' cute?" and signed it on behalf of everyone. Well, thank you, world, for asking that question. You know what? We're just really lucky to be this fucking adorable, all the time. We're disgustingly cute. And we talk about it all the time because we're really vain like that.

**Jessie:** Awful. You shouldn't tell people this.

**Shohreh:** No, you know what? They need to know. They need to know the inner workings. Um, look, the world needs cute queer love, and so I'm not gonna apologize for how adorable we are.

**Jessie:** More representation.

**Shohreh:** Exactly, this is representation. The world needs to know, and I'm also not going to, like, try to be humble about how cute we are. Clearly the

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people know; someone took the time to submit a question on behalf of everyone about how cute we are.

**Jessie:** It was me! I submitted it [Shohreh laughs]. I'm kidding.

**Shohreh:** [Laughing] That would actually be really funny, though.

**Jessie:** I'm really kidding; I didn't do that. But it would be funny if I had.

**Shohreh:** It would have been. Well, somebody did, so thank you to you. I think we've now answered that question, so we're gonna move on to some of the other questions we got.

So, we will start at the beginning, which is a very good place to start. If you caught that reference, you're old like me. And the first question comes from Eryn, who I adore. Eryn has been on the pod before, I've been on Eyn's pod before, so I appreciated this question coming from her. And the question is: "I love queer love, so I would love to hear about your love story." [Cheering] Yay!

**Jessie:** Yay!

**Shohreh:** Do you want me to talk about our love story first?

**Jessie:** Uh, yes, please.

**Shohreh:** Or do you want to?

**Jessie:** I feel like you should do your version of it.

**Shohreh:** Okay, that's fair. My version of the love story. Okay. So, my version of our love story is that I had moved into this house, what is now our

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house, last year—so this was 2021—in mid-June. And I was getting settled, you know, trying to do the living on my own thing. Which I had been doing for many months at that point, but it was in my own place. And I was like, okay, I think I'm finally ready to get out there and start dating. And to be clear, what I was looking for was something very casual.

**Jessie:** Right.

**Shohreh:** I was like, I'm just gonna, like, go get some experience, you know. This is my first time doing queer dating, getting to date women. This is very exciting to me. So, I'm just gonna go on a little dating spree, get some sexual experience, do the thing, have a great time.

And so I was like, well, where do we do this? We get on some dating apps. So, I finally after, like, living in the house for, I don't know, maybe it was like, three weeks? It was almost a month. And I was like, okay, I'm gonna get on some dating apps. So, I got on Bumble, and I got on Her. I was briefly on Tinder, which I do not recommend to anybody—

**Jessie:** Nooo.

**Shohreh** —because it's just a dumpster fire on Tinder. I mean, I guess it works if you're looking for real quick hookups; that's what I've heard other people say.

**Jessie:** That should've been perfect for you.

**Shohreh:** Yeah, but—okay, to be clear, I wasn't looking for, like, one-night stand type of hookups necessarily. Like, I actually wanted to get to know the

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person and maybe it could be, like, an ongoing sexual relationship or something like that. I have never been, like, a one-night stand type of person. Which is not to say that, like, if it happened, I would have a problem with it. It's just not what I was really looking for. I was more just like, oh, I want something casual; I'm not looking for a serious relationship.

So, I get on these dating apps. I'm on them for a few days [laughing lightly]. It is not going great. I've had a few conversations, a few matches, but I just was really not seeing any profiles that were truly resonating with me or anybody that I was super interested in. And even the people I was talking to, like, I had reservations about them and I was just kinda like, alright, well... And I was trying to tell myself, I was like, you're gonna date for the experience, so it's okay. You're not looking for something serious, so someone doesn't need to be, like, a perfect fit. And maybe you don't need to be totally, a 100% attracted to them in every way. Like, that's fine.

So, I'm doing the thing and I'm frustrated. And I happen to come across a profile of one of my friends as I was scrolling, and I laughed, and I texted her. I was like, hey, came across your profile. And she was like, oh, how is the online dating stuff going? And I kind of was venting to her about the experience and the different profiles I was seeing. And she was like, oh, you know, you should try Hinge. It's a really great app, and I've had much higher quality of connections on the Hinge app. I'm like, alright, whatever.

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So, I download Hinge, and I have, like, immediate reservations because Hinge's slogan is something like, "a dating app to delete." You know, they're really like, we have a strong algorithm and we're, like, trying to hook people up. And I was like [sucks in air], ooh, but I'm not really looking for something serious, so maybe the wrong kinds of people are gonna be on this app. I don't know. And I was like, that's okay, Shohreh; you have strong boundaries. Like, as long as you're clear about what you're looking for, it'll be fine.

So, I get on this app. I make a profile. And maybe, like, two days later, I'm scrolling in my bed. And this is when I was on my social media sabbatical last summer, where I was, like, off social media for a number of weeks and I hadn't ever done that before since I started my business. And so, I was kinda using the dating apps as, like, my pseudo social media. I was, like, waking up and scrolling through those instead of Instagram or something. And I saw this beautiful human's profile. And I was like, well, shit.

Jessie's profile picture, which I will put in the show notes for you—

**Jessie:** Awesome.

**Shohreh:** —so you can see how beautiful and stunning that she looked. I was immediately like, okay, now *that* is somebody I am 100% attracted to. Which, again, going through all these profiles, I was like, I don't know about these people. But yours, I immediately was like, okay, yeah, that's what I'm looking for. And then, I was, like, scrolling through your profile, and everything was like, check mark, check mark. Like, you're a

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musician, and you were talking about soccer, NWSL, and I'm a huge Megan Rapinoe fan. And there was video of you singing. Like...oh, and you loved science. Like, you put in your profile how you fucking love science, you put it in, like, all caps.

**Jessie:** Yes, correct.

**Shohreh:** And especially, like, you said quantum mechanics?

**Jessie:** Quantum mechanics.

**Shohreh:** Yes. And I was like, who the fuck is this girl who loves quantum mechanics? Like, what? Who is this person? So, anyways, I was super intrigued. And so, the way Hinge works is that you, like, have to comment on something on the profile. So, I sent three heart-eye emojis to your profile picture.

**Jessie:** That's correct.

**Shohreh:** And you decided to respond. I mean, I guess you can jump in at any point to tell, like, your side of things, too. You get my request, right? You get my heart eyes emojis?

**Jessie:** Right. I get your request.

**Shohreh:** Wait!

**Jessie:** Yeah, should I back up?

**Shohreh:** Yeah, let's back up. Why were you on Hinge?

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**Jessie:** Okay, I had been single for four years and not really looking for anything serious. I had pretty much, at that point, just given up on it, basically. On love, on any of that. I was just kinda like, oh, this isn't real. That doesn't exist. Everything that I had wanted doesn't exist.

**Shohreh:** And for the people who are listening, Jessie had gone through, like, a serious of horrendous, like, break ups and relationship experiences that had left you super jaded, basically, about love.

**Jessie:** Oh, for sure. Very jaded. Very not trusting in anyone or anything. At that point, I was just livin' my life, just being me. Like, had so many hobbies. You know, I was not looking.

I think I had been on Hinge prior to that. I'd got on, got off. I would always delete the app after, like, a week. Sometimes after a few hours, because like... [Shohreh laughs lightly] I just, there was nothing there. I had gone on a few dates but, you know, obviously nothing turned out.

Right before that happens with you liking my profile, I was so close to deleting it. And then I had talked to one of my roommates, and she was just like, just stay on for a little bit longer. Like, you never know. Like, you never know what's gonna happen. And I was just like, fine, whatever. You know. I'm just gonna have the app, I'm not really gonna use it. Whatever.

So, I get that notification—and I did check my notifications, but I didn't really get on the app. So, I was just like, alright, let me look at it.

**Shohreh:** And you responded, like, right away, to be clear.

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- Jessie:** Well, because you were hot.
- Shohreh:** No, but I mean, like—I'm just saying because, you know, if you aren't checking it that often, it just so happened that you, like, checked it right after.
- Jessie:** I'm sure I was, like, scrolling through social media and it popped up and I was like, oh, who's this? So, I clicked on it, and your profile—
- Shohreh:** And I was hot [laughs].
- Jessie:** Yes, very clearly, you are hot. And then you said something about being a glitter bomb emo, or...
- Shohreh:** Okay, so I think the line was that "just your everyday glitter bomb with a black emo heart."
- Jessie:** Yes.
- Shohreh:** That was, like, a caption for one of my photos.
- Jessie:** That was everything for me. I was just like, okay, I'm done.
- Shohreh:** [Laughs] The black emo heart, specifically.
- Jessie:** Yes, specifically that because I am super into emo. Grew up on it. And, uh, still fucking love it, so.
- Shohreh:** As we both do.
- Jessie:** But hadn't really had interactions with people that like emo except for, like, a few friends here and there. But for somebody, like, a hot girl

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[Shohreh laughs], to also be into emo, and she reached out first! I was like, okay, yeah. Yeah. I've gotta respond. So, I did.

**Shohreh:** Yes, you did. So, she responded, and we had some back-and-forth communications on the app that morning. I mean, we were going back and forth pretty rapid fire. We were both kind of using it like texting. And we're kind of figuring out, based on our profiles, like, what else did we have in common. You know, I asked you some stuff about soccer, and then I was like, oh, I think maybe our love of Megan Rapinoe is in common. You were like, Megan's great, but not my girl [laughs].

**Jessie:** For everybody out there, Christen Press is my girl.

**Shohreh:** Christen Press is, like, Jessie's, like, number one celebrity crush.

**Jessie:** That's correct.

**Shohreh:** If you're out there listening, Christen Press, stay away [light laughter]. That's what I have to say.

**Jessie:** Like I could have her, so...

**Shohreh:** You're not supposed to even want to.

**Jessie:** I don't. I don't want her. She's just my favorite, you know—

**Shohreh:** Uh-huh, [sarcastically] she's just so talented.

**Jessie:** —soccer player to look at. That's all.

**Shohreh:** Mhm. That's fine, that's fine. Anyways, so we were talking about that, and then I saw that you sang. So, we were talking about your band, and

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you were telling me that you had just put out an album. Oh, let's do a plug! Jessie's band just dropped an album.

**Jessie:** Yes, we did.

**Shohreh:** It's called "End of Everything," and her band is named Langton Drive. And I'm gonna link to it in the show notes so that you can check it out.

**Jessie:** Aw shit.

**Shohreh:** It's actually really good. And I say this as a musician more than I'm saying this as Jessie's girlfriend.

**Jessie:** Mhm.

**Shohreh:** It's really good.

**Jessie:** I paid her to say that.

**Shohreh:** [Laughs] How much money am I getting for this plug?

**Jessie:** I'm kidding.

**Shohreh:** Are you my newest advertiser?

**Jessie:** Baby.

**Shohreh:** I kid, I kid. Anyway, so we were just kinda talking back and forth and going through different questions with each other. And at one point, I asked you, what is the best date that you've ever been on? And you were like, probably going on a hike, and, like, having a picnic at the top of the hill. And then you were like, I wanna ask you the same question, like, what's the best date you've ever been on? And I was like, I hate to

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pick favorites of anything. So, I was like, I don't know, like, maybe getting cocktails and people watching and then, like, going to dance at a gay bar.

And Jessie, very smoothly, was like, would you wanna do that with me? [Jessie laughs lightly] So, I said yes, that I would like to go on that date with her. So, we made plans. Then, of course, we exchanged numbers, and we moved off the app. And I won't give you, like, the nitty gritty details of the rest of that week, but we basically—this was on a Monday, I think. And then we made plans to go out on a date on Saturday here in Austin.

It was at this time that I learned that Jessie didn't live in Austin, and she actually lived in San Antonio. Which, we, to this day, don't know how we even were shown each other's profiles on Hinge because I definitely had my profile set to Austin and maybe, like, some miles outside of Austin. But not as many miles as it is between Austin and San Antonio. And, of course, people who aren't in Texas, you don't know. We had about an hour and a half between us on, like, a good traffic day, like, an hour fifteen on a great traffic day, and two hours on a terrible traffic day. So that was the range of driving distance between us.

**Jessie:** Yes.

**Shohreh:** And, again, let me remind you that my goal here was something casual. But I was like, well, not the best for casual because we live in two different cities. But I was like, this girl seems awesome, and she wants to come to Austin. Like, you basically were like, yeah, we can go out in

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Austin. And I was like, okay, well, if you want to drive up here, then that's fine, I guess, and we'll just see what happens.

Then we're texting each other, like, pretty much all week. We reach a point where we decide to FaceTime as well 'cause we're both kind of wanting to see will the connection still be there not through text. And it was

**Jessie:** It was.

**Shohreh:** Clearly very strongly there. Meanwhile, I am holding close to my chest the cards that I am, like, a newly-out lesbian, that I am divorced, used to be married to a man, and that, like, this would literally be my first date with a woman.

**Jessie:** Yeah. Mhm.

**Shohreh:** Because I just didn't feel like it was a conversation for text, or even FaceTime, without knowing each other. Like, I really felt strongly that I want to get the chance to explain this, like, together, and give you the whole backstory, was my feeling. It wasn't me, like, trying to hide anything. And we even had conversations where you were like, I kind of have some questions about things.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Because it had come up that I had dogs that I shared with an ex. And you were like, oh, lesbians. And I was like, ha ha, except my ex is a man. And you were like, oh, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have assumed.

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**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** And then I was like, I will explain it all to you later.

**Jessie:** Mhm.

**Shohreh:** So, I mean, I imagine you were feeling anxiety about the potential of whatever.

**Jessie:** I definitely knew something was off, or up.

**Shohreh:** Yeah.

**Jessie:** I wasn't sure what it was, but I knew that there was something you were, like, not saying, so.

**Shohreh:** Yeah, I mean I made it pretty clear about that. So, we go through this week, and other than that, like, as we're getting to know each other, it's like, everything is aligning. Like, we have the same music interests and hobbies, and, like, we just seem to get each other, like, really, really well. Like I just personally felt like a very instantaneous and strong connection with you.

We did do the lesbian thing, of, like, checking our charts and—what's the app that we used?

**Jessie:** Pattern.

**Shohreh:** The Pattern, yes. You were like, have you heard of The Pattern? I was like, no, I've never heard of it. So, of course we run our, like, relationship pattern, and the thing is like, rare, super strong

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relationship! And we're like, fuck. And we're reading through all this stuff and it's, like, pretty accurate to us individually and basically, being like, "yep, you probably have a really fucking strong connection. You probably also scare the shit out of each other." And I was like—

**Jessie:** Correct.

**Shohreh:** Ooh boy. Yeah, there was really, really strong feelings before we'd even met each other. So, Saturday comes around, and I had plans with The Girl Gang to have, like, a pool day during the day, so we made evening plans. And you were gonna come up to Austin from San Antonio, and the plan was we were gonna have dinner, we were gonna go get some drinks, and then we'd go out to Rain and go dancing.

So, you show up at my house.

**Jessie:** Because she very smoothly invited me to her house [Shohreh cackles].

**Shohreh:** Okay!

**Jessie:** I was expecting, okay, I'll meet you at the restaurant at this time, you know, and then we'll go, whatever. I could have been a freakin' serial killer. I mean, yes, we had been talking, but you never know!

**Shohreh:** We'd been talking for a week; I'd seen your face!! You're right; you never know. But here's the thing: Women are almost never serial killers.

**Jessie:** Okay.

**Shohreh:** Had this been a date with a man, I never would have invited you to my house.

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- Jessie:** I could have smelled awful. And then, like, how would you have gotten rid of me? [Shohreh laughs] You know?
- Shohreh:** Okay, yes, but...
- Jessie:** I know where you live.
- Shohreh:** Again, you, [Shohreh giggles] you were coming up from San Antonio.
- Jessie:** What if I was a stalker?
- Shohreh:** It's a long drive and my thought was, like, it makes sense for us to meet at my house and Uber downtown together. Because, okay, rightly or wrongly, I also assumed even if things went terrible that, like, you would stay the night and I would let you stay in my guest room versus, like, driving back after drinking.
- Jessie:** I was planning to not drink that much and then drive home because, like, who knows, like, how it would have gone?
- Shohreh:** Well, you know what? I had my assumptions.
- Jessie:** I was not just assuming—
- Shohreh:** That's fine.
- Jessie:** that I was going to spend the night.
- Shohreh:** That's fine.
- Jessie:** Did I have a bag packed? Absolutely.
- Shohreh:** Yeah, you did.

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- Jessie:** But I was not assuming that that was going to happen.
- Shohreh:** Well, that's fine. It was my house. And I wouldn't have assumed if I was going to your place. But I was just like, well, I want you to spend the night, so. Ha, I hope that you do. How do we facilitate this? And I was also trying to be accommodating because you were coming up from San Antonio.
- Jessie:** She was trying to keep it casual.
- Shohreh:** Mhm. So casual. I was doing a really great job of keeping everything casual.
- Anywho, so you show up.
- Jessie:** I show up.
- Shohreh:** And you have flowers. And you have champagne. Really good champagne that I still need to go buy another bottle of. And that was very cute. And because it's me and I had spent the whole day, like, at the pool, and I'm always running behind on things, I'm, like, not dressed yet. I don't have fucking makeup on yet. My hair's not done yet. Which, like, this is bold of me in meeting a new person to not, like, show up fully done up.
- Jessie:** Yeah.
- Shohreh:** But, again, I just felt really comfortable with you. And I was like, well, if you can't handle my naked face, then why should you, why should you get the done-up version of me?

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**Jessie:** Yeah. Yeah, that makes sense. I get that.

**Shohreh:** But this is also me at—you know, I was 31 at the time. But, like, I'm at that point in my life. Where there was one point in my life where I was, like, if I was gonna go on a date, like, I was gonna be done up to the fuckin' nines. You can't see my naked face. Now I'm like—it's reversed for me where I'm just, like, no, you get to earn that face.

So, you show up. We have, like, a little bit of time before we need to get ready for our dinner reservation. And so, I suggest that we watch some Drag Race, which you've never watched before.

**Jessie:** Ever, yeah.

**Shohreh:** I pick an iconic episode of Drag Race, which is episode one of Season 12 to show you, which, um, for those of you not well-versed in the exact episode numbers, it's an episode where Nicki Minaj is the judge. And you're hooked immediately, which is great.

**Jessie:** It blew my mind [laughs]. I was just like, what? I was not expecting to love it as much as I did.

**Shohreh:** Mhm. It's a great episode of television. And we're like, we're cuddling on the couch. You know, it's cute. And then I get ready and I'm, like, you can come up and chill while I get ready. So, you, like, hang out while I'm doing my makeup and stuff.

We go out to dinner. Our waiter was super high.

**Jessie:** Oh yeah, spaced out.

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- Shohreh:** Totally spaced out. Kept forgetting us and saying really weird things. But we're having a good time and we're talking; we're starting to get into the backstory. And so, you're telling me the basics of your dating history.
- Jessie:** Yes.
- Shohreh:** And then I'm like, alright, well, I will tell you mine. And at some point, we moved to a bar on Rainey Street. We get drinks. We're sitting there, And then I'm, like, telling you the story. So, I give you all the background, up into the point of having to admit to you that this is my first date with a woman.
- Jessie:** Yes.
- Shohreh:** Which I was terrified to tell you. Because I just thought that you might just, like, get up and run away and be like, goodbye. Like, fuck this woman. And there are lesbians out there who would have done that.
- Jessie:** Um, yeah, I'm sure.
- Shohreh:** You know, people who just would have been like, I don't wanna deal with this mess, whatever this is. And I know you had your own reservations. But like—
- Jessie:** Yes.
- Shohreh:** —you weren't just, like, instantly, like, nah, I'm turned off by that and I'm out. I tell you all of this. You might have been panicking internally, who knows.

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**Jessie:** Sure, yeah [laughter].

**Shohreh:** But—but, at this point we're like, pretty buzzed, we're at the bar. And we're, like, really close to each other. And then I ask if I can kiss you.

**Jessie:** Yes.

**Shohreh:** Mhm. You say yes. And so we kiss. And it's great.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** And then we, like, part. And we go to kiss again. And then what happens?

**Jessie:** [Laughter] Our nose rings get stuck together. [Shohreh laughs] And I pull yours out, and we lose it.

**Shohreh:** And it's lost forever!

**Jessie:** Forever, it's lost.

**Shohreh:** In the boards of this deck at this Rainey Street bar.

**Jessie:** I am so sorry.

**Shohreh:** That's okay.

**Jessie:** I apologized profusely.

**Shohreh:** [Laughing] You did apologize profusely. Yeah, that was great. And I'm gonna write it into my book that is loosely based on our love story.

So, I lose a nose ring, but I gain you. So, I would say that, like, that's a pretty good math for me.

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- Jessie:** I would say so.
- Shohreh:** So, then at this point, I'm like, alright. Like, we need to go. We didn't make it out dancing 'cause things were getting hot up in there. You did end up staying the night at my place.
- Jessie:** Yes, I did.
- Shohreh:** That's all the details [laughing lightly] that I will reveal about that evening. Um, it was a good time.
- Jessie:** It was fun, yes.
- Shohreh:** It was fun. And then, like, I don't know, you leave the next morning. No—we made pancakes. We watched more Drag, and then I think, like, you left in the middle of the day to go back. So, we did the standard, like, almost 24-hour lesbian date for our first date.
- Jessie:** Yep.
- Shohreh:** And it was great!
- Jessie:** But look at us now!
- Shohreh:** Look at us now. So that's where we started. And then the next few months after that were rocky for us.
- Jessie:** Oh yeah.
- Shohreh:** There was, like, really high highs and some really low lows. Because—this is how I would describe it. You were butting up against, like, your trauma. Like, of all the shitty relationship stuff you've been through.

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Had a lot of trust issues and just a lot of concerns about the ways that parts of my past, like, reminded you of aspects of, like, past relationships. And just your fears about fully giving this everything.

And to be clear, obviously casual had gone out the fucking window—

**Jessie:** Yes.

**Shohreh:** —because once we had, like, gone on our date and everything, I just was like, well, fuck. I'm fucked. [Laughing] Like, this girl has just destroyed my heart. And I didn't want to let you go. I had previously been like, yeah, I just want something casual, whatever. And then as soon as I met you, I was like, this could be the best thing that's ever happened to me. Why would I say no to it just because it wasn't what I was looking for?

That was my thought about it. I was like, yes, I had an idea of what I wanted, but I've had an idea of what I've wanted so many times in my life and been wrong. And so, when presented with the thing that I actually want, which is you, I was, like, oh, I'm not gonna let go of this just for the sake of, like, oh, I could go have sex with some other people that it's not a good fit or go on, like, shitty dates. I didn't wanna do that.

So, I was very much like, I am invested. I wanna do this thing. Like, let's try to make it work. And so, the first milestone was that a month later, we officially became girlfriends. That was after some—

**Jessie:** Rockiness.

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**Shohreh:** Yeah, some rockiness where you invited me to your birthday party, like, the weekend after our first date. So, it was literally our second date. And the party itself was great, you know, I met all your friends. Like, generally speaking, had a good time. Except [laughing] when Alexis told me not to hurt you when she was really drunk on the dance floor. And I was like, I just met this person. Like, I'm panicking.

And then, like, we both, like, had, like, a moment of panic where we were like, we're getting too close, too fast. This is gonna spin out of control. And, like, we literally had to take a beat and step back and be like, we actually really like each other, and we want this to work long-term. And if that's gonna happen, like, we need to set some boundaries. We need to, like, not dive into this headfirst. Like, we just both had reservations. I actually think it was really healthy that we—

**Jessie:** I think so too.

**Shohreh:** —took a step back and, like, looked at it. And even then, I remember our next date, you thought about not showing up. [Laughs lightly]

**Jessie:** I did. It was just because, I mean, at that point, you know, it had been four years that I'd been single. And for me, it was just, like, I see the potential of where it could go. But is it enough to take me away from the life that I pretty much had set for myself? To get into something with somebody that I don't know that well? It could very well turn out to be just another catastrophic, like, just awful thing.

**Shohreh:** And you were really happy single. 'Cause some people aren't, right?

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**Jessie:** I was.

**Shohreh:** And they're, like, desperately looking for a relationship. And you were happy.

**Jessie:** I was, I was great. Like, I didn't need anybody. I had my music. I had science. I had all the things that I loved. My friends. Family. I was fine. So, for me, yeah. It was a struggle to kind of give that up.

**Shohreh:** Yeah, and that was a recurring theme over the next few months of you fighting with kind of "losing your freedom"—I kind of put that in quotes because you were, but you weren't. But just your life was gonna change, right? If you were gonna have a serious girlfriend, your life was gonna look different than if you were single.

And we were also long distance, which really complicated shit.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Because we were seeing each other on weekends. And San Antonio is not so far that it was impossible to see each other on a weekday, so I was really, like, I would love it if we could also see each other on a weekday. And for you, you were like, this is too much.

**Jessie:** One day is good.

**Shohreh:** I cannot do this. Like, the weekend is fine.

**Jessie:** Yeah. It's just because I, within those four years, I just spent so much alone time, and I valued my alone time. I was like, I need it. And I'm also an introvert, so being around people, you know, it takes it out of me.

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And at that point, like, you weren't my person, so...it was still kind of draining for me. And also, I had all these things that I wanted to do on my own, read books, like this and that, and this was kind of taking away from that—kind of.

And it's like, I really liked you, though. And so, it was just that internal battle of, like, well, do I like her enough to give this up, kind of thing.

**Shohreh:**

Yeah. That, plus, then, like, the trust issues and, like, the trauma, and things like that. So, it was a lot of up and down for a few months. And we basically reached a point where we ended up breaking up for all of three hours. The specific reason at that time was because I'm 99% sure that I don't want kids, which I was up front about. And you had always wanted kids.

**Jessie:**

Yeah.

**Shohreh:**

And in that initial conversation, you had kind of told me, I've reached an age where I just have assumed that I'm not gonna have them. And so, weren't as up front about the fact that you were still holding onto this hope that you might have them. Yeah. Because you were like, I just met this person—I get it—of not wanting to say that and basically being like, well, why should I mess with this if I don't even know where this is gonna go? And, of course, it does go somewhere.

And so, it ends up coming up again. And we basically breakup over it because I'm like, I told you from day one, like, I can't promise you kids. So, if, like, what you really need to be happy is kids, then let's just end it here because I'm already deeply invested. And this already fucking

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sucks that we're gonna break up over this. So, I was like, I can't. Like, let's not even try to do this anymore.

So, we break up. We're both, like, a fucking mess. I drive back to Austin, and it's like—what was going on that weekend? I think it was, uh, ACL, and so traffic was abysmal. So, it's like the [laughing lightly] worst drive of my life. I'm just, like, sobbing my eyes out.

You do call me, like, before I get out of San Antonio.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** To be like, you know, maybe you should come back. And I was like, well, have you changed your mind about this? 'Cause if you haven't, then, you know, I don't think I should come back. Like, for me, I was like, I'm gonna need a clean break on this because this hurts so much. And so that's why I was kind of like, I don't think so.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Well, you can tell it. How were those few hours for you while I'm in the car losing my mind?

**Jessie:** Um, really emotional. I...I mean, I'm not a crier, you know. Unless I'm about to start my period.

**Shohreh:** Then we're all criers.

**Jessie:** Then it's anything. But I'm not really a crier. So, you leaving, it was just, like, waterworks. I just started crying. And I was just like, like can I

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actually picture a life without you at that point? Because we had already—everything with us was, like, flowing.

**Shohreh:** Mhm.

**Jessie:** It was just, you know, everything was great except for this one thing. And, you know, I just—I cried about it. I think I went downstairs, and I cried to my roommates.

**Shohreh:** Mhm.

**Jessie:** And I was just, like, you know, it's like, I could see a life with her. And maybe I don't want kids. Like, I don't know. It's always been a thing in me that yes, eventually, I did want kids. But in this world, in this climate, and... it was always just, like, a maybe. Maybe someday. Maybe someday. And thinking and then talking to my roommates and crying to them [light laughter] about, like, losing you over this, they were just, like, well, can you picture your life without her? And I couldn't. Like, it was just—it was really hard to do that. It was just, like, agonizing to think about not being able to see you. And so, I called you again.

**Shohreh:** You did. So, Jessie called me when I was, like, about to make my exit to, like, come back to the house in Austin. So, I had already made almost the entire drive. And you call me, and you're like, I don't think we should break up over this. And I was like, please explain to me how we are not gonna break up over this. And you basically explained all of that, or parts of that, and you were just like, I think I can be very happy in a life with, like, you and me, and dogs, and like, moving to Colorado, and all these things we've talked about, with or without kids.

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And you were like, obviously, I can't give you, like, a percentage of, like, you know, what are the chances that five years from now I might randomly decide that I want kids. So like, we knew we'd both be taking a bit of a risk that someday you might reach that point. But, in the same way, I obviously couldn't picture my life without you.

I was devastated. You can ask Sarah Gray who I called, my sister who I called, like, on that, just, like fuckin'—Sarah was at a wedding. So, thank you, sweet Sarah, for taking time away twice—

**Jessie:** Thank you, Sarah.

**Shohreh:** —to, like, hear me fucking sobbing. She's a wonderful, wonderful friend, and has also been on the podcast before.

And so, I was like, alright, well, I'm gonna turn around and, like, come back to San Antonio. I was like, let me get out of my car, like, breathe, eat some dinner, and I'll come back.

**Jessie:** And before everyone calls me an asshole for making her drive back [Shohreh laughs] to San Antonio after driving, I was like, I'm gonna drive to you.

**Shohreh:** You were. You were gonna drive to me. But we had plans with your mom the next day.

**Jessie:** We did.

**Shohreh:** And I was like—the plan was for me to stay through Monday anyways. I was like, whatever. I'm just gonna drive back to you, that makes the

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most sense. You absolutely offered. You were like, I'll come drive to you. And I was like, fuck it, I've already been in the car. My bag's already packed because I was supposed to be staying the whole weekend. So, I was like, I'm just gonna turn around and come back.

And so, I drove back. That was a much better car ride, but very anxious car ride 'cause I was like, I just wanna fuckin' get there, you know? And so, I get back, and you're actually not there yet 'cause you're out with your roommates 'cause you also needed, like, a moment. So, you, like, went out and had dinner with them. And so then you got back maybe after, like, ten minutes, and then I was like, hey, let's go for a walk because I need to breathe and I've also been in a car for, like, fucking four hours at this point.

And so, we, like, take a walk, and we, like, talk everything out. And at this point, you're like, I'm all in.

**Jessie:** Yeah. And I had been, like she was saying before, it was just like the back-and-forth struggle with, like, everything. But at that point, yeah, I was just like, why? [Laughs lightly] 'Cause I literally could not picture my life without you. So why hold back anymore?

**Shohreh:** Yeah.

**Jessie:** So, yeah.

**Shohreh:** And, to your credit, that, like, has been the case. Like, not once since we had that conversation, which was in October of last year, like, when we broke up and got back together, have I felt the way that I did during

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those first few months when there was, like, the up and down where it was clear that you were holding back and you couldn't, like, fully give yourself. Like, it was like a complete change after we broke up and got back together.

And, oh, I didn't mention that while we were breaking up, I told you that I loved you.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Because I did, and I had been wanting to say it for a while, at that point. And what I had said to myself in that moment— 'cause I hated it. I absolutely hated that that was the moment that I was gonna tell you that I loved you. But I also was like, if we're really breaking up and this isn't gonna happen, I will regret it if I do not tell you that I love you.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Like, 'cause, I was like, you deserve to fuckin' know. You deserve to know that someone out there feels that way about you. And so, I told you. You obviously did not say it back.

**Jessie:** [Laughs lightly] No.

**Shohreh:** Nor can I blame you for that 'cause like—and I wasn't expecting you to. Obviously, we were breaking up. Um, but I got it out there and I said it. And then, after that, when we got back together, I was like, okay. I've let my feelings be known. Ball's in her court. So I'm gonna wait, and I'm not gonna say it again—she knows—until you were ready to say it back.

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So then, about—well, we went to Colorado like a week later and had a really wonderful trip.

**Jessie:** Yeah, it was awesome.

**Shohreh:** Just a great time together. Had some serious conversations about our future on that trip because we wanna move to Colorado.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** And we were talking about, like, what would that look like? And how would we do it? And moving in together and all of this stuff that previously, when we'd try to talk about those things, you'd panic. [Light laughter].

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Yep.

**Jessie:** Yeah, very badly. I would panic. Yes

**Shohreh:** Yeah, so you did not panic so much that time. And then it was about a month later, we went up to Dallas for my nephew's first birthday party and you met my whole family. Which was a whole other story we're not gonna get into. But, like, you met my family. And then we went back to the hotel room. And then what happened?

**Jessie:** I'm probably not gonna tell it as great as you.

**Shohreh:** No! I love the way you tell it. You tell it. [Light laughter]

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- Jessie:** First of all, this hotel room was ridiculously huge.
- Shohreh:** It had a ton of floor space, is what it had.
- Jessie:** Yes, there was so much floor space.
- Shohreh:** And, like, wooden floor, so it looked like a dance floor. That's what we said.
- Jessie:** Yeah, so we kind of put on some music and I was just like, dance with me. So, we were just dancin' around the room.
- Shohreh:** You were trying to dip me, and I'm terrified to be dipped [Jessie laughs], so it was going poorly. [Laughter]
- Jessie:** You did allow yourself to be dipped a few times, so.
- Shohreh:** I did, I did. We worked on it; we're getting better.
- Jessie:** Anyway, yeah, so we're dancing. And I think at one point, I just kinda, like, grab you and I push you up against the wall.
- Shohreh:** Yeah, you were kissing me, and you, like, moved me to the wall.
- Jessie:** Yeah. Yeah. And so, I'm just kissing you and I told you I loved you.
- Shohreh:** Well, no, you said, in, like, a mumble, "I think I love you."
- Jessie:** Okay, yeah.
- Shohreh:** And my ears are like, what? So, I was like, I'm sorry, can you say that again? [Laughing] And then you were like, "I love you."
- Jessie:** Yeah.

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**Shohreh:** And then I kissed you and I told you that I loved you too. And now we say I love you every minute [laughing] of the damn day.

**Jessie:** Yep. Pretty much. It's sickening.

**Shohreh:** Mhm. It was very cute. It was very special.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Since my "I love you" moment kind of sucked, I was glad that we got a good one from you. That was special.

That's the basis of the love story. So, at that point, we love each other and it's great. And I guess we can just go straight to the U-Hauling aspect of this.

**Jessie:** Sure, yeah.

**Shohreh:** So, I'm technically gonna move to another question but it's part of the same question. So, someone said, "How did you decide that U-Hauling was right for you?" Anna said that. Or maybe Ah-na, I'm sorry, I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing your name correctly. Anna or Ah-na.

**Jessie:** There was a time where I still freaked out thinking about moving in together.

**Shohreh:** Yeah.

**Jessie:** And I think I had brought it up at one point.

**Shohreh:** Initially, yeah, you brought it up, like, early on. This was during the rocky period. So, we were out to eat, and you brought up moving in

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together for some reason, or, like, asked me about when I thought that we would do that. And I was like, oh, I don't know about a specific time, but, like, it would be nice to have an idea. Because if we're gonna do the long-distance thing, 'cause long distance sucks, even Austin to San Antonio, which is relatively close for long distance, especially for lesbians, it still sucks. The driving back and forth, like, all of it, it's just very disruptive.

Like, I felt like our lives were compartmentalized where I'd just be like, okay, I have to shove everything into, like, four days in the week. All of my work.

**Jessie:** Yep.

**Shohreh:** All of my errands. My life. And then, like, either I'm gonna come to you or you're gonna come to me and we're gonna do our thing for, like, three to four days, which is amazing. But it was just really tough doing that for as long as we had been doing it.

But this was early on, you asked me about this, and I was like, I dunno. And then you had, like, a total freakout about the fact that we had that conversation at all.

**Jessie:** Almost a panic attack, yeah. It was bad.

**Shohreh:** Yes. And you, at that time, had said, I can't imagine moving into together until we've been together, like, at least a year. And I was like, okay, like, a year is fine. If that's what you need, whatever. And so, we had kind of left that.

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So then, we were getting to this point where this was seeming increasingly likely that we would be moving in together sooner than a year, I would say. I didn't know what the exact timeline would be, but we were starting to spend a lot more time with each other, in general.

So, you were gone for Christmas. You went to see your sister and your nephews, so we didn't get to spend Christmas together. And you were gone for, like, nine or ten days or something.

**Jessie:** Yeah, it was like ten days.

**Shohreh:** It was the longest we'd gone without seeing each other since we started dating. [Laughing lightly] And it was miserable.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** [Laughing] I spent, like, the whole time taking edibles and just trying to make the time pass. Ugh, it was so miserable. And then we vowed we would never spend Christmas apart again.

**Jessie:** Yes.

**Shohreh:** Or ever spend that much time apart from each other, if we could help it. So, this whole time, I have been, like, ready to tell you that, like, you can move in anytime you want. Because, like, at this point, it was pretty clear, like, you would be moving in here to Austin because I had and have—we have—a two-year lease. So, our lease does not end until the end of June 2023. And you also lived with roommates, you weren't in a lease because your friend owned the house. And so you were much

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more flexible. Your job would also allow you to move, so it made the most sense that you would probably be moving to me.

So, I was ready to be like, you can move in whenever you're ready. And so, you come back from Christmas, and you, I think, started the conversation.

**Jessie:** Yeah, I did.

**Shohreh:** About moving in. And then I said, you can move in whenever you're ready. And you were like, I'm ready. And I was like, okay. Well, let's figure out an actual timeline. What are the steps that we need to take to make it happen? And we decided, like, April is when you would move in.

**Jessie:** Yeah. So, it was nine months, okay? We were together for nine months before we decided.

**Shohreh:** Was it technically U-Hauling? Not by lesbian standards.

**Jessie:** Lesbian standards is, like, a week.

**Shohreh:** Yeah, and also, you are 38, about to turn 39.

**Jessie:** Exactly.

**Shohreh:** I'm 32. We've been doing the life thing for a little while. Like, we have a very clear picture of what we want.

**Jessie:** Right.

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- Shohreh:** So, I think, like, nine months is not really U-Hauling, by lesbian standards.
- Jessie:** Nah.
- Shohreh:** But kind of.
- Jessie:** We'll take it.
- Shohreh:** We'll still take it. So, we make a plan that you're gonna move in in April. Ultimately, you end up moving in in, like, mid-March. We barely spent any time apart January/February/first half of March because you get COVID and then I get COVID.
- Jessie:** Yeah. That sucked.
- Shohreh:** So, we ended up quarantining together for that period of time. So, I spent most of January just, like, quarantined in the house with you. And then you're coming here way more than I'm going to San Antonio and you start moving stuff in.
- Jessie:** Yeah.
- Shohreh:** You start bringing big piles of stuff with you. I start packing my car every time I leave San Antonio with stuff, so we're moving all your things in, making plans. And then you're basically going back to San Antonio for two or three days at a time in the middle of the week and then coming back here.
- Jessie:** Pretty much.

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**Shohreh:** So, we're basically making the moving in together thing happen. But in terms of how did we decide that U-Hauling was right for us, so I would say for me, one is just straight up logistics, right? The long distance sucked. The driving back and forth sucked. It was expensive. And the compartmentalizing our lives thing sucked. Like, I knew that we were not gonna, like, truly get to settle into our relationship unless we were living together. Or, at least in the same city. But, in this case, it was gonna mean living together because of the way that things were.

And we do want to move to Colorado eventually, and it doesn't really make sense to have not lived together and then move our lives to another state. So, from a practicality standpoint, it made a lot of sense to be like, well, we should test living together.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Make sure that, like, we're good, we can handle this, work out any of the kinks before we take such a huge step as to, like, move to another state.

**Jessie:** Yeah, and then I think it was just, like, we were ready.

**Shohreh:** We were ready.

**Jessie:** We were ready for that step.

**Shohreh:** Yeah.

**Jessie:** We were basically living together, except for a few days of the week, you know. So, at that point, it was like, yeah.

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**Shohreh:** Yeah, we had started to develop our routines, and, like, you know, we had our own offices, our own spaces in the house. Like, we knew how, like, we would co-work. So, we both work from home, and so we needed to figure out, like, okay, how is that going to work? And we each have our own office spaces, so it's actually worked out really well. We get to be, like, cute coworkers who kiss during the day.

**Jessie:** Yes.

**Shohreh:** Which is my favorite part, personally.

**Jessie:** Mhm. Our lunchtimes.

**Shohreh:** Our lunchtimes. Yeah, we have lunch together. We take the dogs for walks when they're here. All that good stuff. So, yeah, I think it also felt just like the right step. Like, I was ready to live with you. I was ready to spend more time with you. Like, I had already been all-in on the relationship, but I was, like, extra all-in, and I was like, I know that we have a future together. And so, why not? Like, why wouldn't we spend more time together, and, like, keep building our lives together, right?

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** So, that's the love story and that's the reasons why we decided to U-Haul. So, I feel like we've answered these questions well.

Alright, so, let's move on to our next question. This comes from Rocky and Sarah, who have also been on the podcast and are one of my favorite couples in the world. And I'll link to their episodes in the show notes, too, because this is basically just the, like, Shohreh Pod Squad,

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apparently, who decided to submit questions. But their question was: "Do you feel like your families have shown you any type of different support or acceptance now that you are together?"

Mm, families. So, I feel like I've talked about this on the podcast before in terms of my family. But the basic rundown is that my parents are accepting of our relationship. My dad, in particular, has been the most accepting of me coming out as a lesbian and was the most accepting when I originally came out to him as bi prior to that. And was very supportive of our relationship. And when you met him, my dad was, like, super warm and kind to you and was great. So, I don't have a very close relationship with my parents, but to the extent that I do have a relationship with them, like, my dad has been very accepting of us.

My mom was a little more, like, iffy, about the whole me being gay thing, about us dating, like, all of it. But I will say that she is definitely warming up to everything. She's coming around. She's showing more of, like, an interest in our relationship, and in you, and in wanting to get to know you. So, I will give her credit because I think that...

**Jessie:** It's a big step.

**Shohreh:** It is a big step. And, you know, putting aside all of the issues that I have with my mom, I know that my divorce and then me coming out as gay was really hard on her. And while that frustrates me and saddens me and, like, all of the other emotions, it was hard on her. That's just a fact. Her taking the steps that she needed to take, however long she needed to take to get to this point now where she's kind of able to set that

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aside and, like, be accepting of, like, this is the path that my life is taking, so get on board or go away, you know, she's trying to get on board. So, I want to give my mom credit where credit is due to that.

That said, we don't see them very often because my parents live in Dallas. I don't see them, in general, that often, because I'm not that close with them. You've only interacted them one time, which was at my nephew's birthday party. We'll probably see them in the next couple of months. But, in general, we're just not gonna see my parents a ton because of the nature of my relationship with them.

So, have they shown us any type of different support or acceptance? Kind of. It's definitely changed a little bit over time and it's getting better.

What about for you? What about your parents?

**Jessie:** So, prior to being in a relationship with Shohreh, I would see my parents every week. Like once a week we had family dinners. Were we close? I don't know. I guess there was a closeness there because we saw each other a lot.

My family is a military family, so my dad was stationed in Panama where my mom is actually from. So, we were living in Panama when I, like, knew, like, I'm gay. Like, this is not gonna change, like, you know, I've never had a crush on a guy. Like, I only have crushes on, like, all of my friends and my sister's pretty friends, so.

**Shohreh:** Pretty girls forever.

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**Jessie:** Yeah. So, I knew. So, I grew up in New Jersey, that's where we were stationed until I was 12 when I moved to Panama. And from Panama, then we moved here, to San Antonio. So, I moved here when I was 16. And, uh, since it was a new place, I knew nobody. I was just like, okay, this is it. I'm just gonna be me. I'm gonna, like—the first people I meet, I'm not gonna lie, I'm just gonna tell them I'm gay and see how it goes.

And my first day of high school, I'm late, first of all [laughs lightly]. I walk into the bathroom because, like, you know, I was wanting to hide, basically. I had no idea where I was going in this high school, and I was just like, okay, I need a break. I go into the bathroom and there's smoking going on, you know [light laughter]. And, uh, this group of girls are chilling in the back, smoking. And, uh, I walk in and they're like, "Hey, who are you?" And they're all gay, basically [laughs lightly]. And they looked very gay. And I was like, holy shit, okay [Shohreh laughs lightly].

They were literally my friends all through high school, these group of girls that I met, like, my first day of high school. But it was very easy for me to come out to them, especially since I knew nobody, and you know, they had no expectations of who I was.

Well, first of all, I joined a punk band and shaved my head [light laughter] and was just kind of, like, an anarchist type of just fuck any authority kind of.

**Shohreh:** You still have that streak.

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**Jessie:** I do still have that in me. Very punk rock, in spirit. My parents already were just, like, not on board with who I was becoming.

**Shohreh:** Mhm. Well, your mom's super religious.

**Jessie:** They were both very religious. We grew up in a Christian household, and that's all that we believed in. We went to church, like, three times a week. It was, like, very, very religious.

Well, my dad and me basically got in a physical altercation where he basically told me that I shouldn't live there.

**Shohreh:** This was when you were 17?

**Jessie:** I was 17, yeah. And so, I had a girlfriend at the time, I think, and I stayed with my friend, Cece, a lot. And, uh, it was a hard time, basically. I didn't really talk to my parents for a while. Uh, my mom, you know, she would always be there. Like, she was always calling me and making sure I was okay. It took a while—it took a long time for us to get back into, like, a good space. I think I was around 26 when I started just going over to see them every week so that they could see me, and, like, have me in their lives and me have them in my life. So, that just continued until, you know, 38, still going over and, you know, having dinner with my parents.

So, yeah, our relationship has drastically changed. But it's like a back-and-forth. I still have issues with my mom about the Christian thing 'cause she hasn't changed her beliefs. She just...

**Shohreh:** She loves you.

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- Jessie:** Yeah, she loves me. But she also thinks I'm probably going to hell. So, she prays a lot for me.
- Shohreh:** Yeah. Your mom is so sweet to me.
- Jessie:** Yeah.
- Shohreh:** She's very kind to me.
- Jessie:** She's actually *really* sweet to you. So is my dad. My dad hugged her [Shohreh laughs] and my dad is not, like, a very warm guy.
- Shohreh:** Yeah, so you've had girlfriends in the past that you've introduced to them, and it's been, like, okay.
- Jessie:** Yeah, it's been okay. But I feel like with you it's, like, a different level. Like, I think they're just like, yeah, this is it for her, so—
- Shohreh:** Yeah.
- Jessie:** —might as well get on board.
- Shohreh:** Yeah, get on board, hopefully. Yeah. And, who knows, if it's just, like, age, enough time has passed, they just want to see you happy. Like, there could be a lot of different factors at play. It could be that I'm just so wonderful.
- Jessie:** You are wonderful.
- Shohreh:** That I clearly make you happy.
- Jessie:** Yeah, yeah, I think they see that.

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- Shohreh:** Right.
- Jessie:** You know? They see that I'm happy and in a healthy relationship.
- Shohreh:** Right. And I think my parents see that too. You know, I think at the end of the day, as parents, like, regardless of your beliefs, a lot of parents can, like, try to dig into at least that. Well, like, my child seems really happy. And not all, especially if you're queer, but, you know, I think both of our parents seem like they can see that and so they're doing their best. Is it, like, the picture of love and affection and whatever? No.
- Jessie:** I don't think any kid has a relationship with their parent that's, like, you know, picturesque. Maybe there's kids out there, but...
- Shohreh:** Well, not perfect, but.
- Jessie:** There's always gonna be that parent, you know, kid, whatever, dynamic. Like, it's just...
- Shohreh:** There is. But there are things you and I have both had to go through just on account of being queer that other people will never have to go through.
- Jessie:** Oh, for sure.
- Shohreh:** Or that there are queer kids with parents who were always, like, loving and accepting. And, like—
- Jessie:** Yeah, you're right.

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**Shohreh:** —they didn't have this religious stuff. It is what it is. That's what we have. So, things have been interesting on the family front.

**Jessie:** Yeah, interesting.

**Shohreh:** But they could be way worse. Which we always say to each other, you know what? This situation could be a lot worse. We'll take it. And we have our chosen family. Outside of, you know, that, we have a very wide group of wonderful people that we call chosen family, including each other.

Okay, so, the next question comes to us from someone who is calling themselves LGBTimeTraveler, with the "t" capitalized. So, it says: "Shohreh, I'm a fellow late-bloomer gay and sometimes I grieve for the queer childhood/youth that I didn't have. I know Jessie knew she was gay pretty early on. If Baby Jessie and Baby Shohreh had met in, like, high school or something, what quintessential gay teen stuff would y'all have gotten into together?"

And then the second question is: "For those of us who missed our gay youth, is there a way to help our inner child claim their beautiful queer self? How have you caught Baby You, who thought they were straight, up to date with your present experience?"

So, we'll tackle this in two parts. So, had we met in, like, high school or something...

**Jessie:** I'm older than you, so.

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**Shohreh:** Yeah, okay. You can do the math yourself, but we have a six-and-a-half-year age difference—

**Jessie:** Yeah, so.

**Shohreh:** —between us. So, this is a total alternate reality in which we meet in high school. But let's say we're both gay and we meet in high school. What would we get up to? I'm sure it would have revolved around music. 'Cause, like, when I was in high school, I was an emo kid. When you were in high school, you were, like, punk scene. So, whichever of those we met, we probably would have related around that. And then we would have gotten up to shit with that. So, we'd probably go to concerts together.

**Jessie:** All the shows, yeah.

**Shohreh:** And, like, talk about music. And I'd scribble lyrics on everything. I'd put 'em on your backpack and shoes.

**Jessie:** I'd make out with you in the hallway at school.

**Shohreh:** Oh yeah, we'd get to make out in the hallways. See, I love this alternate version of my high school life where you and I get to make out in the hallway at school. It sounds amazing. It's fine, we make out a lot now.

**Jessie:** I'd make you skip a lot. Your mom would hate me.

**Shohreh:** Yeah, my mom would have hated you because I had a perfect attendance record.

**Jessie:** Wow.

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**Shohreh:** This is just, like, a ridiculous thing about my mother. She was so obsessed with perfect attendance that if we were sick, like, we would—not if we, like, had something really bad, but we never did, 'cause, doctor. So we'd go to school, we'd get counted for the attendance, and then we could call to go home, if I was, like, really sick.

**Jessie:** Oh my god. Just so that you would have perfect attendance.

**Shohreh:** Yes! Yes! And I did, I had a perfect attendance record. Like, I got the fucking award for it.

**Jessie:** Wow. I think my mom got a bunch of calls about how I was always gone, so.

**Shohreh:** Yeah. I never skipped. I wasn't allowed to do senior skip day, none of it. Not allowed. And I hated it. And also, I just wanna say, like, if you're a parent listening, do not push perfect attendance on your children. Like, outside of skipping, the reality is, like, sometimes your kids need a physical health day; sometimes your kids need a mental health day. Like, this idea that it is more important to have some arbitrary bullshit, like, perfect attendance, than it is for your kid to learn to listen to their body goes against literally everything that I teach in self-trust and is the kind of shit that I'm having to have my clients unlearn now as adults, of, like, this is one of the things that contributed to why they can't listen to their body. Because this kind of shit was pushed on them by their parents about, like, oh no, your body doesn't matter. Go to school, that's what matters. External accolades, that's what matters.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

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**Shohreh:** Okay, anything else we would have gotten up to? Feels good?

**Jessie:** I would have gotten you into a lot of trouble.

**Shohreh:** Yeah, you would have gotten me into a lot of trouble. I did have friends getting my in a lot of trouble, so you would have been one of those, for sure.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** And my parents would have hated you. 'Cause I had friends who were like you. I wasn't dating them, but, like, who had your vibe, and my mom hated them, so.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Now we know. [Laughs lightly] The question next was if, for those of us who missed our gay youth, is there a way to help our inner child claim their beautiful queer self? And how have I personally caught Baby Me, who thought they were straight for a long time, up to date with my present experience?

So, I think this is, like, an ongoing process that I need to keep working on and keep unpacking. But I have done a lot of work on this with my journal. And so, for me, I think that some of the ways that I have kind of connected with that inner child is one, queer media, right? So, I'm consuming as much queer media as possible that I didn't have growing up. So, reading all the books, especially lesbian love stories. Like, you give me all the recs for all the lesbian romcoms, love stories.

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It's one of the reasons I want to write one. Like, literally, that is inner child work to me, the fact that I'm writing a novel that is a lesbian romcom. And that I want to write more, and I want to write, like, youth ones—like YA novels and stuff like that.

**Jessie:** It's kinda like you're reliving it.

**Shohreh:** Yeah, it's like I get a chance to, like, relive what I didn't have. So that's one of the ways I'm doing that. And then, like, queer music, queer books, queer podcasts. Like, just immersing myself in that culture is a way that I'm doing that since I only had, like, straight representation growing up. It's like, getting myself that queer representation.

I think our relationship, in a lot of ways, has, like, kind of let me unleash that queer inner child because, you know, they always say that when people come out, especially later, it's kind of like you get this, like, second shot at adolescence.

**Jessie:** Right.

**Shohreh:** 'Cause that's what it felt like to me. It's like, the giddiness of, like, I get to do this all again, but I get to do it right. [Laughing lightly] You know, in a way that feels right, like, in my body, finally.

So, like, falling in love with you, I think, was a lot of that, right? It's what I always wanted to get out of, like, love and sex and romance, all these things. And now I get to, like, live it. And so that is extremely affirming for my, like, inner child, to be like, yeah, all of those things that you worried about and wondered if it existed and, like, wondered why

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things didn't feel that way, like, you were right. You were right, little baby me, that something was off. You know, and had I listened to you, we might have gotten here sooner. But we have that.

And then, I think, for me, another way is also, for sure, like, queer fashion, queer makeup. Like, my obsession with Drag Race. All of that feels really good to, like, my queer inner child because it's just like, had I been out as gay, like, I know that would have been something important to me expression-wise. And also, I probably still wouldn't have been able to express it because of living in Texas and also being a femme and my parents and all of these things. So, I think I would have had to keep that inside anyways.

So, when people try to come for my, like, queer slogan t-shirts and my, like, rainbow makeup and all that shit, I'm like, first of all, fuck you. But second of all, like, all of the things that I had to get through to be able to, like, express all these things, like, you're not gonna come for me. Because it is so important to me and it feels so good to, like, get to express that in whatever way feels good for me. Not everybody is a rainbow gay. Not everybody needs to be a rainbow gay. But, like, *for me*, that feels really good. And I think part of it is, like, I didn't have that expression before, but I get to have it now.

So, for those of you who also missed your gay youth and you're wondering, like, any of those avenues, I think, is a wonderful way to connect with that. I think just, like, trying to go inward and asking, like, what does baby gay you need? Like, what would they have wanted? And that might be, like, creative projects. That's another thing that I

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love to do, is just, like, make things gayer [laughs lightly]. So, I just painted a beautiful pink accent wall in my office. I love doing projects with rainbows and glitter. I love getting, like, cool queer artwork for the house. There's, like, an entire shelf behind me right now that has, like, drag queen art and rainbow shit. Very gay.

**Jessie:** The whole house is very gay.

**Shohreh:** The house is just gay. Yeah. I mean, we live here, so it's gay anyway.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** But it just looks gay, and we love it that way. So, that's another way that you can do it. But it's gonna be so personal to you because while that stuff is really affirming for me, like, you might have been a very different child who liked different things, or, like, would have wanted something different. So, I think you have to ask yourself, and be like, hey, what is it that I would have wanted or needed or would have felt really good at that time that I didn't get? And then feel, like, how can you express that now as an adult?

And I find if you look at pictures of you as a kid, that can be a really helpful way to tap into that if you're struggling, and just try and remember what it was like at that time. If you have a therapist, you can tell them you wanna do some inner child work. Journaling is also an awesome way to think about a lot of this stuff and process it. That's something I've spent a lot of time doing; I love my journal.

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Um, some really great resources, also, Tiffany Roe is a therapist who posts a lot of content and Reels about inner child work, and she also has an inner child work course, I believe. So, I will link to her stuff too, in case you want something that's a little bit more formal. But that would be my recommendations.

So, my dear friend Mia has asked us two questions, and they are: "What has been the biggest challenge of your relationship? And what has been the biggest joy of your relationship?"

Jessie, biggest challenge?

**Jessie:** Definitely that break up.

**Shohreh:** [Laughs lightly] Yes.

**Jessie:** Just learning to trust you, to trust myself. Just opening up myself to the possibility of what I expected it to be, what I thought it could be.

**Shohreh:** I would say general biggest challenge was just those first few months, with the break up being at the head of it. That was a really challenging time for us.

I think biggest, like, overall challenge has probably just been learning how to communicate with one another, like, in a way that doesn't trigger each other's trauma, that is, you know, respectful of each other's needs. And, like, I think that's gonna be true in all relationships. Like, part of the process is learning each other. But because we both have, like, some significant trauma in our pasts that have affected our communication, like, we've really had to learn to be aware of our own

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stuff and then, like, how to navigate each other's stuff so that, like, we can have productive conversations and productive conflict.

And let's say biggest joy next.

**Jessie:** You go first [laughs lightly].

**Shohreh:** Okay, I have to go first for this one? This is hard because, well, you know I don't like to pick favorites, and I've already said that on the show because there's so many things. So, I'm gonna cheat, Mia [Jessie laughs lightly], and I'm gonna say a lot of things here.

Okay, so, one of my biggest joys, for me personally, and nothing is too TMI on this podcast, but I'll say this, is, like, our sex life. Because I thought I was straight for a long time, turns out that I wasn't. And so, as has been discussed before, was not having great sex when I was having sex at all. So, that has been such a fucking 180 in my life. And, obviously, we also just have great chemistry, which is why we're together. But that is, like, extremely joyful for me. I never got to experience anything like it before, and then, like, just with us specifically, it's wonderful. So that's a big joy for me.

But I would also say just a big joy for me has been, I don't know, just, like, being with you. Is that allowed to be the biggest joy of the relationship? Because, I don't know, you just make me very happy, and you fill me with a lot of joy. And I think that a hallmark of my marriage and that relationship was, like, a lot of seriousness. And some of that was the nature of the relationship itself with, like, me not realizing all this stuff that's, like, going on internally. Some of it was, like, hard stuff

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with, like, going to law school and being a lawyer and running a business. Like, I just had this series of extremely stressful, like, blergh, years together. And then both me and my ex were lawyers and just, like, together, we could often be very serious people. Great problem solvers, but, like, very serious people.

And so, I just really did not have much lightness in my life for a long time. And then, of course, fucking pandemic, divorce, coming out as gay all happens. And so, I was, like, in grief land for a really long time. And it's like, you came into my life, and it was like, just this light, and I was working less than I had worked in six, seven years. Like, since I'd been a lawyer to working in this business, I used to work, like, 80 hours. And all of the sudden I was like, well, I don't wanna work 80 hours, like, I wanna be with this person, like, all the time. So, I was like, I need to rearrange my life, 'cause I finally have something I'm, like, excited about doing that isn't work. I don't have to use work as a coping mechanism anymore. And so, it's like, I was working way less. And, like, being around you was a great time.

So, like, our relationship has just been this great joy for me, and I've been able to feel, like, a lot more peaceful and light and just, like, happier as a human since we've started dating. So, thanks, baby.

**Jessie:**

For me, it's you literally being the picture that I always expected, you know, like, the great love. You know, the love story. You fall for this person and they have everything ticked off that you've ever wanted.

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**Shohreh:** We're gonna get our periods in, like, three days, so the fact that I'm not already sobbing is impressive [Jessie laughs]. I just want everyone to know.

**Jessie:** Everything that I could have wanted, you checked that off. I never knew that it was real. You know, like, earlier when you were talking about how you didn't have that with your other relationships because they were men, probably?

**Shohreh:** Right.

**Jessie:** I think I felt some sort of love, but I've never felt like this, you know. This is so different than anything that I've ever experienced. So, for me, it's like, that itself is joy.

**Shohreh:** Mmm.

**Jessie:** And we just have a good time. Like, we're also just...

**Shohreh:** Yeah, we have a great time together.

**Jessie:** We're always laughing about whatever. You let me, like, try to flip you in dancing [Shohreh laughs lightly]. Sometimes we just dance in the kitchen just to dance, you know. It's, like, fun, and it's light.

Yes, we have our arguments and we have our things. But for the most part, it's just lovely to just be with you. And you're my person, you know? It's like, before, I was just so, I just want to be on my own, I don't need anybody. And super introvert. People just, you know, whatever

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[laughs lightly]. But with you, it's like, I don't ever want to be apart from you. Like, it's...we literally—

**Shohreh:** Well, I don't wanna be apart from you.

**Jessie:** —live in the same house and work from home. And when we're, like, at our separate offices, I'm just like, baby! Like, I bug you all the time.

**Shohreh:** I know, I know. Sometimes we have days where we have to spend, like, three or four hours apart and I feel like I don't talk to you all day and I'm like, I miss you!

**Jessie:** Yeah, like, it's crazy. But you're just like that person for me.

**Shohreh:** Okay, well, I want to jump forward to a question because I feel like it's a good fit here. So, C, someone named C, has written this question: "I had a long-term partner for nine years, from the time I was 14 to 23. After we broke it off, I did lots of healing and didn't date for a while. When I did date, for the first time in my life, about six months into that process, I found my current partner and we've been together for five years and intend to get married. They haven't ever been in a long-term relationship like I have, and I do have insecurities about that. I worry that neither of us has experienced enough people outside this current relationship. But I also know how happy we are, how well-balanced, and I am nowhere near wanting to risk that. My question really amounts to: how do you know when you've found 'the one'?"

**Jessie:** They tick off all your boxes [laughter].

**Shohreh:** That is not a fair definition.

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**Jessie:** You feel it. And it's scary as hell, you know, and you push against it. Like, the fact that this person is all of the things that you've ever wanted, obviously it's gonna make it really scary. But I think you just know.

**Shohreh:** So, I'm torn on how to answer this question because there's my personal experience and then there's, like, my coaching hat. So, I'm gonna try to approach this from both.

So, I am in agreement with you. Like, with you, I just fucking felt it. Like, I literally went into my therapist's office before we had ever met in person and sat my ass down and said, I think I've found the love of my life. Which, if you knew me before that is, like, bananas coming out of my mouth. Like, when people used to tell me that, like, they had love at first sight with their partner, like, they had this whatever, I was like—I'd be like, that's great for you. But I'd be like, I don't think that exists.

And yet, before I even met you in person, like, I felt that way about you. Like, I was envisioning our future. It just had that effect on me, and it only got stronger after actually getting to know each other, dating, moving in together, all of the things, right? Like, it just continually gets stronger, and I'm just like, this is my person.

And it's like, I don't know if I believe in, like, soulmates, and everybody has this one person they're supposed to end up with. I think the reality is, there's a lot of humans on this planet. We could probably be happy with other people, with multiple people in different ways. And, I also think that, like, we do have soul-aligned people, which are the people

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that, like, tick the boxes, as you said, which for me is just, like, you're vibrating on the same frequency.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Which we just were, and we felt that, and we were like, ride or die for each other.

**Jessie:** Oh yeah.

**Shohreh:** So, from my personal experience, it's like, we got fucking lucky. Somehow Hinge decided to, like, use the algorithm and put us together even though we never should have because of our settings. And then we both had to, like, get over our shit to be able to be in this relationship together. But, like, I feel very strongly about that.

Like, to me, you are the love of my life. God forbid, if something ever happens to you and I have to, like, keep living without you, like the thought of it is, like, excruciating for me.

**Jessie:** Hey.

**Shohreh:** I know, it's not gonna happen.

**Jessie:** People are probably puking right now.

**Shohreh:** I don't care!

**Jessie:** This is dis-gus-ting.

**Shohreh:** These are the questions we were asked, so they have to sit and listen.

**Jessie:** And way too sweet.

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- Shohreh:** No, that's your own uncomfortableness that's coming out right now.
- Jessie:** Haha.
- Shohreh:** Not actually what people are thinking. Maybe some people are thinking that, but that's their own thing. I am speaking from the heart.
- Jessie:** I know. I love you.
- Shohreh:** I love you too. So, anyways, [Jessie laughs lightly] should that happen, I'm gonna be a fucking mess. And I think that, like, even if I were to go on to date anybody else, you would always be the love of my life, right?
- Jessie:** That's right. I would haunt you if you did that.
- Shohreh:** You would haunt me. If it were to happen, like, whatever, I have to date, because I've gone 30 years now with nobody and I'm lonely, I just don't think anybody else would ever be what you are. Maybe we could be happy. Maybe we could be in love. But, like, you are that for me.
- Jessie:** But it's okay, baby, because we'll just die together.
- Shohreh:** We're just gonna die together. We're not going to die, we're going to have, like, our essences put into a microchip and then we'll live on forever.
- Jessie:** That's correct.
- Shohreh:** Some very *Black Mirror* shit, is what we're planning for [laughs lightly].
- Jessie:** It's coming. And we will be a part of it.

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**Shohreh:** Exactly. Hopefully we'll never have to deal with that, but the point is, that is what we are for each other and that's what I feel.

That being said, let me speak to your specific situation, switch to my little coaching hat on, not my little romantic melting heart, and I want to say this to you: So, you mentioned that you are worried that neither of you have experienced enough people outside of your current relationship. And I guess what I would tell you is that I want you to examine that, and, like, what is "enough people." Right? Is there a specific number that you have in mind? What is it about having more experience that you feel is important? Because if it's important enough to you, then that's maybe a conversation that you need to have in your relationship, right? And there are reasons that sometimes people open their relationships or do other things.

But that seems to be the sticking point for you, is that the worry is, like, well, but we haven't dated enough other people. There are obviously people who are high school sweethearts and they only date each other, and, like, they're super fucking happy and they're together until they die, right? Those people exist, so clearly dating other people isn't a necessity. And that's, like, a societally constructed idea of, like, how many people we need to be with, how many is enough.

So, I guess you just need to ask yourself, why does that feel important? Are you happy with your person? It sounds like you're very happy with your significant other. Like, you love them, you want to marry them. And, so, like, what would you get out of dating somebody else? Is that

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more important to you than the relationship that you have? And only you can determine, like, if they're the one.

But I'm also going to just push back a little bit on the idea of the one, too, and how important that is to you. Because yes, while I find that Jessie is the one for me and she finds that I'm the one for her, we have just—that's a decision that we've made, right? We're not saying that this is some, like, starstruck, magical, whatever. Like, it's rare. We both acknowledge that the connection that we have is rare and so we want to, like, fucking hold onto it. But at the end of the day, we are deciding to be together. We have decided that this relationship is important to us. And so, like, the one is really just, like, the one that you want to be with.

And so, if your partner is that for you, if you feel really good in the relationship and you see a future with them and, like, they are the one for you in that way, then, like, they are the one. So, I also don't wanna put, like, a definition on it has to feel this way, the way that we feel about each other. Because this is one iteration of what a great relationship can look like. This is what we have together and what we've experienced. But like, I don't want you also being like, ah, I have to doubt myself because I don't feel exactly the way those two feel.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** Like, people are complicated. Relationships are complicated. Not everybody experiences relationships the same, or feelings the same, either. We're also both, like, fucking neurodivergent and so we feel

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feelings really strongly. So, you know, that can be contributing to how we feel about each other, too. So, I just don't want there to be anybody listening thinking that I'm like, your relationship sucks if it's not like ours. Right? I want you to examine that for yourself.

So, just going off of your question, I think there are some things that maybe you need to ask yourself and that you also need to talk to your partner about. But like, at the end of the day, if you're happy and you see a future with this person and you don't feel like something is missing, then I think that this could very well be the person for you. I know for me, like in my past marriage, obviously the thing I kept butting up against was that something was missing. Something was not quite right, I just didn't know what it was until I figured out that I was gay.

So, if you're having a nagging feeling of that sort, I would recommend that you examine that. Because that could be a deeper issue that you need to figure out. But besides that, it sounds like you're on the right path.

Okay, so we have just a couple more questions. Leslie M. asks: "How do you resolve conflicts? How has that changed and evolved over the course of your relationship together?"

Let's talk about how we resolve conflicts now.

**Jessie:**

Sure.

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**Shohreh:**

Let's talk about that. So, I think that as I was mentioning before, we really have had to learn each other's triggers, how each other communicates best, and go from there. And so, we have learned a few things.

One of the things we've learned is that, like, I tend to be, like, withholding when I am in conflict in my head about something. Like, I can have a really hard time bringing it up and talking about it. And so, what Jessie often does when she notices that, like, there's been a change in my demeanor, is she will kind of give me a little bit of a push, and be like, hey, it seems like something's wrong. Can we talk about it? Which I appreciate and I need. For somebody else, that may not work for them.

But I actually need that push because I grew up in a family where we did not talk about feelings, and we did not hash out conflicts in any kind of a healthy way. And so, I habitually lean towards kind of holding things inside and, like, feel afraid to talk about things. I'm getting better at it; I'm working on it. But I need that little push, sometimes, from Jessie, to be like, hey, we should talk through this thing. And to remind me that, like, actually, this is a safe space where I can talk about this and she's not gonna, like, scream at me like someone in my family might have.

So, that's been an important thing to learn. And then, on your end, it's been for me to learn that, like, sometimes, you kind of like, your brain gets hijacked by, like, feelings and emotions and you get triggered.

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And, like, you need to walk away for a moment to regroup, you know, breathe, remind yourself that you're in a safe space.

**Jessie:** Exactly.

**Shohreh:** That it's okay. And come back.

**Jessie:** It's definitely a process. For me, it's definitely I get triggered by something that she's either said, or, you know, didn't mean it in maybe the way I thought she meant it.

**Shohreh:** In the way that you interpreted it.

**Jessie:** And it just kind of, you know, sets me off. Not off, like, I don't go crazy, but I just, like, react. You know, I'm just like, well, what does that mean, or, you know. And then, if I start getting heated and I feel myself getting to that place, it's like, okay, I just need to take myself out of this. Like, give me a second. And I'll go wherever, I'll breathe, and tell myself that she's not against me. Like, she's trying to help me. It's like constant just, like, talking to myself.

**Shohreh:** I also talk to myself; give myself little pep talks.

**Jessie:** Right. Yeah, it is a pep talk, 'cause I'm just like, hey, just calm down. This isn't what you think it is. You know, just go back there. And if it is what you think it is, like, have a decent conversation about it. You don't have to get heated. And so, once I'm done doing that [laughs lightly], I come and talk to you. And sometimes we'll say goodnight or resolve it there and then you'll bring it up a day later, or we'll talk about it later.

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**Shohreh:** Yeah, sometimes we—like, if we're in that space, it's like maybe we can talk about it a little bit, but we're not gonna get to a finish point on the topic. And so maybe the next day, or later that week, we'll be like, okay, let's sit down now that we're just in a very calm headspace and just talk it through. And be like, what happened, what next steps need to happen for us to both feel good about this situation. So, I would say we definitely try not to bury our conflicts. We try to bring it out into the open and have open and honest communication.

**Jessie:** And I think that that, like, actually really helps, that we take, like, the day or whatever. Because it just takes that heatedness out of it. It's just, you know, we're having a conversation at that point.

**Shohreh:** At that point we are just talking.

**Jessie:** It's so much easier to just deal with then than try to resolve it in...

**Shohreh:** Yeah. Well, I think one of the biggest things that I have learned about conflict, to have healthy conflict, is, right, it's not like you versus them. And I think for a long time, I looked at relational conflict, whether it was a romantic relationship or friendship or family, where it was like, it's them versus me and I'm trying to win. And I don't wanna give any ground because I wanna win this. Or I'll walk away if I don't think I can win it, you know? And that's, like, a horrible way to look at conflict.

You know, I had a therapist in the past who helped me reframe this as, like, healthy conflict is where it's the two of you together as a team against the problem. It's not the two of you against each other. So, that's part of the pep talk I have to have with myself. And I think that's

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also why the conversations that we then have later work really well is because we're problem-solving. That's really what's happening, is we're trying to understand each other better and we're trying to be like, here's a problem, whatever it may be. Let's see if we can solve it.

And not all "problems" in relationships are solvable.

@yourdiagnonsense is one of my favorite accounts on Instagram, who has also been on the pod before, talks about this all the time that, like, some ridiculously high percentage of conflicts in relationships are not solvable conflicts. And it's something you'll just keep coming back to and that you just have to learn to, like, tolerate and be like, we actually just aren't on the same page about this thing.

**Jessie:** Right.

**Shohreh:** It may keep coming up, it just depends on how you deal with it. So, that's a piece of it too, is being like, we can't just magically solve everything. Some things you're just not gonna see perfectly eye-to-eye on, and so you have to learn to, like, tolerate and accept that as well.

And, you know, we've been together now for ten months and so we're kind of starting to see some of those things where it's like, oh, this, you know, may be a recurring issue in our relationship. And so, let's figure out how to navigate it.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** So, we've come a long way, I think, in this time. I don't think we were terrible at conflict at the beginning, but we just didn't know enough

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about each other to do things in a healthier way. Part of, you know, having healthy conflict is just you need safety to do it. And we've built that over the course of the last ten months.

**Jessie:** Well, that's definitely a big deal for me.

**Shohreh:** Yeah.

**Jessie:** Feeling safe with you. And that's what, I think, helps me when I do need to walk away and chill for a second, just to know, like, it's Shoh. She's got your back. It's okay.

**Shohreh:** Yeah. Well, and for me, when you do that, like, I'm now at the point where I'm like, I know you're gonna come back, you know? Like, I know that you're not gonna, like, just disappear completely or, like, go downstairs and throw shit.

**Jessie:** Absolutely not.

**Shohreh:** You would never do that. But just like, at the beginning, like, I don't know what's gonna happen if you walk away, right? There were times where you walked away and I was just like, is she coming back? Are we, like, not gonna talk about this? Like, I don't know what's happening. And like, now, I'm like, I can recognize when you need the break to the point where, like, I can be the one to be like, you need to go—

**Jessie:** [Laughs lightly] Yeah.

**Shohreh:** —just walk out of here for a second. Like, usually you say it and I don't need to say anything. But, like, I can see those signs in you now to be

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like, we're gonna need to take a break in a moment. And you do. You do your thing, and you come back, and then usually we can, like, talk in a better way like we've talked about. So, I would say, just in general, conflict is—there's always room for improvement in conflicts.

**Jessie:** Oh, for sure.

**Shohreh:** And we've gotten so much better. And I think, like, there's still things that we could do better and work on and there will always be.

**Jessie:** Yeah, we're constantly learning new things about each other, so.

**Shohreh:** So that's what I would say about conflict.

Okay, so we have one final question. This is from Cody Cummings, and the question is: "Do you have advice for gay divorcees? I divorced my wife in December and I'm still struggling with loneliness and feelings of inadequacy." So, of the two of us, I am the only one who has been divorced, so let me tackle this. But Jessie's been through some shitty break ups, so you may have some thoughts to add.

In terms of gay divorcees, specifically, I mean, I was technically a gay divorcee [laughing lightly], but I was getting divorced from a man. So, like, in that sense, we're in different situations. But I think there's some universal things about divorce, for sure, that I'm happy to give advice on.

The first thing I'll say is I just did an entire podcast episode about all the lessons that I learned from my divorce that if you haven't listened to, I think would be extremely helpful for you. So, I'm gonna link it in the

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show notes. Definitely go give that a spin because I talk about all the things that I thought were helpful during that time.

But the loneliness, the feelings of inadequacy—I think the shitty thing about divorce is that societally, we just look down on it. We look down on it, and we say, divorced people failed. They got it wrong. They declared their love for the whole world to see, and then they fucked up. And the relationship ended. Like, that's what it felt to me when I was getting divorced. I just was like, the weight of other people's expectations was so heavy, whether it was my family, or other people or, you know, my spouse, anybody where I was just like, this whole thing just fucking sucks. And that's without adding on top of it all of the personal shit I was going through with, like, coming out and all of the extra problems that that added.

But, like, the loneliness sucks. And I talked about in that podcast episode how important it is to find community because the people who were most helpful when I was going through my divorce were other friends of mine, or people in general who had been divorced. So, if you don't know other people who have been divorced, like, go find that. I guarantee you that there exists support groups for gay divorcees on the internet somewhere. Find one. Join, like, a group therapy, like, whatever, anything you can talk with other people who are going through that. Because there's just nothing like it.

Yes, the end of long-term relationships is and can be very similar to a divorce. But the legal aspects that are also added on top of the divorcing and then the societal things because you've been divorced,

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like I said, that's kind of unique to just people who are getting divorced. So, I would say that that's one piece of it.

The other thing is you said that you just got divorced in December, which was like, what, five months ago? So just be kind to yourself because it takes a long time to feel okay again. And, like, let yourself fucking grieve because that was the biggest and strongest emotion that I felt going through my divorce, was like, not only grieving the relationship but, like, grieving the future that I had planned for a long time and what I thought that was gonna look like. And grieving all these other aspects of it. So, give yourself time. There is literally no timeline of which you are supposed to be fully healed by; whatever the fuck that means. It takes as long as it takes. And obviously do as much self-soothing as you need to during that time, but also don't completely ignore your emotions either. Because they will come for you. They will fucking come for you.

So, make sure you're processing however you need to. I did a lot of journaling. I did a lot of therapy. And those things were very helpful for me to make sure that I was processing that successfully. So that by the time I was ready to date, by the time I got into a relationship, I had really felt like I had processed the vast majority of, you know, my previous relationship, the divorce and all of that stuff so that I could healthily enter into a relationship with another person.

So, that's my biggest advice for you. And just, like, be really kind to yourself because divorce is fucking hard. It's just, it's hard. It doesn't matter what the circumstances of your divorce are. And I'm sure there's

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some, like, even extra hard things about being, like, a gay divorcee too that I can't speak to just because that wasn't my personal experience.

But be nice to yourself. Shit's hard. You deserve it.

**Jessie:**

I was not divorced so I can't speak to that. But, you know, break ups are hard. And my last one, it took me probably two years to get over. And then I was, you know, single for that four years. So, two years getting over that, writing music and just getting it out, you know, and then learning who I was from it, and coming out and just, like, having all of these things. These new hobbies. Just honestly, like, I love that I went through that. I love that I had that time to just grieve it. But then also just learn who I was from it outside of it. I'm not saying that it should take a certain amount of time, but definitely, like, sit with it, like you were saying. You should sit with it and feel. Just feel. Like write in your journal. Or, you know, if you play music, play music.

**Shohreh:**

Make art.

**Jessie:**

Make art. Some of the best art comes from hard breakups.

**Shohreh:**

It does. Well, and I think was a good point too, what you're saying Jessie about how you took that opportunity to find yourself again and kind of like, come back to you. And I will say that going through something like a divorce, like, at first, it's like, fuck. Because you're just trying to be like, how can I even live my life without this other person? Not even the like, this is my person aspect, but logistically. Like, I remember like, just trying to be like, how do I run a whole ass household, take care of my dogs, do all of these things that I've

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depended on another person for, by myself? It was really hard. Like, anyone who's been in a long-term relationship that ends can attest to the fact that, like, reverting back to singledom is just, like, logistically difficult.

And so, you're gonna struggle with that at first and you're probably still in that right now. But then after that is this cool part where you're actually being given an opportunity. And that's how I framed it to myself. Once I had, like, pulled my head out of my ass enough from the heartbreak to be like, okay, let's look at this a little bit more objectively, I was like, okay, I'm being given an opportunity to be single again. And I told myself that this could be my last chance to be single in my life.

Because I knew that I wanted to eventually get into a long-term relationship and probably marry someone again, just a woman this time around, and the right person. Love you. And so, I was like, if this is my last chance to, like, be single, live on my own, what do I want to do with this time?

And I, like, made a list and I wrote down some ideas. I was like, okay, what parts of my hobbies have I maybe given up from my marriage that I want to put more time into? Like, what will I do with all this free time that I have now that I'm not in a relationship? And I came up with, like, this list of ideas of stuff that I wanna do. So, when you get to the point where you can do that without, like, wanting to break down and cry, I recommend that you try to shift your thinking and see it as an opportunity.

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Like, Jessie, you purposely had that time that you were four years single, and other people may not wanna do that, but the best thing to come out of that for you was that, like, you did a ton of reading. You got really curious about what you were interested in. You discovered all of these podcasts and you were making music. You put out an album with your band. You just did a lot of cool stuff. You taught yourself a bunch of shit. You recorded an audiobook. Like, Jessie's amazing, y'all. She does really cool things.

But you did all of these things because you were like, well, I don't have to answer to anybody else.

**Jessie:** Exactly.

**Shohreh:** So, you got to just live by your own whims and interests.

**Jessie:** It was literally, what do you want to do today?

**Shohreh:** Yes!

**Jessie:** And do it. Amazing

**Shohreh:** And there's, like, a real power and freedom and beauty in that aspect of singledom. And so, for you, I'm excited for you because that is what's gonna come once you, you know, have moved through some of the loneliness and these feelings of inadequacy—which you are not inadequate.

**Jessie:** No.

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**Shohreh:** Relationships end for all kinds of reasons. Divorces happen. There's nothing wrong with you. And there's nothing that needs to be fixed because, like, that was, like, the result of your relationship. This is just the reality.

But once you move through that, you're actually gonna have this really exciting time. And it may not end up being very long, right? Like, I thought I was gonna be single for at least a year, probably several years, and it ended up being a little bit shorter than that for me. And I'm okay with that, 'cause I get this one. This extremely sexy, wonderful, smart human right here.

But I still had that attitude, and, like, that made it better for me. And there was still, like, some loneliness and sadness and all the other stuff that can come with being single—annoyance. But try to do that for yourself. Have that trust in yourself. Or build the self-trust if you don't already have it. If you don't know the answers to the questions of, like, well, what do you want? What's fun to you? Now is the time to explore all of that shit and put yourself first, 'cause you literally can. There's nobody else.

So, if you didn't take the time to do that, depending on how long you were in this relationship, like, who are you now? Like, that's such a fun question to answer and to, like, get really open and curious about it, I think it could be a blast to figure that out.

**Jessie:** Yeah.

**Shohreh:** So, I'm excited for you. We wish you luck on that.

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Alright, y'all. Well, we have gone through all of the questions on our list. We hope that you have enjoyed it and had a good time. Reach out to me, talk to us about whatever. My DMs are open, as always. We'd love to hear your thoughts and your feedback. And we appreciate you letting us share our relationship with you. And if you want Jessie to come back on the pod in the future, let me know that too, because maybe she will.

**Jessie:** Possibly.

**Shohreh:** Dun dun dun...

**Jessie:** Dun.

**Shohreh:** We shall see. So, thanks everyone. Hope your Pride Month is off to a gay-as-fuck start. And we'll just continue to get gayer as Pridepalooza continues. We love you and goodnight!

**Jessie:** Goodnight.

[Music plays]

**Shohreh:** And that's our show for today. If you're enjoying Conjuring Up Courage, don't forget to subscribe through your podcast provider of choice so you never miss an episode. Additionally, if you haven't left a rating and review in the Apple Podcasts app yet, you can do so from any Apple device to help more people find and benefit from the show. I also love hearing from listeners, so feel free to take a screenshot from your podcast player, post on social media, and tag me. My username is @ShohrehDavoodi on all platforms. Finally, you can sign up for my email

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newsletter, The Queer Agenda, and get more details about how to work with me by going to [ShohrehDavoodi.com](http://ShohrehDavoodi.com). Thank you so much for listening, and I hope you'll join me for the next episode.

[Music fades]