

# Ep. 07: Second Adolescence w/ Becky Blanco (she/her)

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

queer, becky, adolescence, feel, thinking, remember, happen, life, story, parents, people, christian, means, queerness, year, healing, person, point, therapy, woman

## SPEAKERS

Adam James Cohen (he/him), Becky Blanco (she/her)

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### A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 00:08

Hello Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the second adolescence podcast. I am your host Adam James Cohen. On this week's episode, we have Becky Blanco, whose Instagram @Becky.with.the.good.repair will be her new favorite account to follow for sure, I stumbled across her on the internet, the story of which she'll hear at the beginning of our chat, and I'm so glad I discovered her. She, as you'll hear has such a powerful story. As someone who came out at 30, she shares about the complicated experience of growing up receiving limiting messaging around what it means to be a girl and what it means to be a Christian, as well as remembering being a young person who so strongly believed that being gay was the absolute wrong thing a person could be. And now this then made her 20s An incredibly difficult time, she then shares about what healing has looked like since and how her second adolescence was really jumpstarted. By finding this queer community that sounds amazing, and also finding a partnership that has been such a safe and supportive place for her to do this healing work. I'm beyond grateful Becky came on to share her story with us and really excited to invite you into this conversation. As with every episode of second adolescence, I want to invite you to listen with open curiosity, knowing that each guest story is going to be unique and different. And you might hear some folks share things that absolutely differ from what you went through. And you might hear other things that really speak to exactly what you're currently going through or have gone through in the past. I really hope that all this happens and that together, we can continue growing and expanding our awareness of what life and queerness and healing can be for folks, if after the show you want to connect further feel free to head on over to second adolescence pod.com For show notes and more for connect with the show on Instagram at second adolescence pod. Alright, enough for me for now. Welcome to the conversation. Thanks for being here.

### B Becky Blanco (she/her) 02:09

My name is Becky, I have this Instagram account where I build and fix things. So I'm always on the internet somehow. I'm a queer creator, just living my best life.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 02:20

Awesome. And yeah, on the internet is how I came across you. I'll share with the listeners how we got connected. Maybe that's a good place to start. And then we'll go from there. And so yeah, maybe several weeks back few weeks back, a friend of mine sent me a post that this Instagram account queer sex therapy had posted, which is run by a therapist named Casey Tanner, great account big recommendation for everyone listening. But the post was about coming out in adulthood. And Casey was speaking to this concept similar to the a lot of the work that I do was second adolescence. And for some reason I like maybe your comment was like the first one I saw or something. I don't know why. But like I read what you said, I don't even remember exactly what you wrote. But something in me was like, Ooh, I feel like this person has a story I want to hear and I want to reach out. And so I just like a stranger on the internet reached out to you sent you a DM and it was like, hey, like, this is random. But here's what I'm doing. Here's this idea of second adolescence. I kind of am curious if this resonates with you. Do you want to come on and talk about it? And so I guess what do you remember about receiving that message from me?

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 03:26

Yeah, I remember thinking, I have never heard the term Second Adolescence. And what just a powerful phrase that sounds like and how much that just sounded like me. And I thought, yep, I feel like I've told people, I feel like I'm going through puberty. Again. I feel like this is all new. And I have so many questions, and what am I doing? So I think it's a beautiful opportunity to kind of take a look at coming out as an adult. I think it's really cool.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 03:51

Yeah, awesome. Yeah. So it sounds like you're kind of in process with it. This is very much part of your experience right now. Yeah. Tell me kind of, I want to go back into your story. But also now like, where are we at right now in your life, Phyllis, and kind of right now in your own process of coming out and into yourself?

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 04:07

Yeah. So I came out when I was 30. I'm 36. Right now. I'm married. My wife and I've been married about a year and a half now. So I'm fully out in any way that I can be with random strangers that I meet on the internet or with people that know me. Well. But it's been a journey, for sure. For sure. Coming out as a 30 year old was bizarre, but yeah, here I am trying to figure out what it looks like.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 04:36

Yeah, you've mentioned it was a journey. Like I feel like there's probably so much to say in what that journey was. Where does your mind first go when you think about what that process has been like?

**B****Becky Blanco (she/her) 04:46**

Yeah, I feel like there's parts of my story that are pretty cliché and, um, which can feel like it takes away from it but also that's my story. So it is what it is, but I have a lot of like, really conservative religious upbringing. And I think I did the playbook the way I was told that should be done for most of my life. And I think it took, I think first like meeting somebody that just really I connected with for the first time in a really long time. And I think it just was this aha moment for me that like this is not going away. And this is something I don't want to go away. I think for a lot of my life, I did everything I could to keep that beach ball underwater, and to just hold it underwater with all my mic. And I think the release the final like exhale of being like, Okay, this is me, and I really liked me. And I think maze. Okay. I think it took a little while for me to get there for sure. Because I had so many people telling me, I needed to change. So yep, just a whole lot of backstory. Yeah, totally.

**A****Adam James Cohen (he/him) 05:48**

Okay, gosh, I want to talk about so many parts of your story, but maybe it'd be helpful. Yeah, to bring us back to the beginning. You mentioned coming from this religious context. Tell me like, Where did your story begin? Where are you from? And then then we'll go from there.

**B****Becky Blanco (she/her) 06:01**

So I'm born and raised in Miami, Florida, grew up to two Cuban immigrant parents. Yeah, like grew up like Southern Baptist, which met from a really young age, I think the mold of what I was supposed to look and act like as a woman, or as a young child, as a girl, was pretty different than maybe what my parents expected. For me. I remember being I must have been eight years old, and my sister who's older was getting ready for prom, I believe. So she's in front of the mirror of my mom and mom's kind of like, you know, playing with their hair. Just kind of get the gist, right. And I remember walking in and I don't know where this question came from. But I just remember saying something like, oh, I don't have to be a girl. This is like so boring. And my mom saying like, Becky you get to dress up and wear makeup and be fancy. And I remember being like, bar. I hate that's the worst answer ever. Mother. You don't know me at all. I just wanted to play basketball, etc. I just want to be picked on the team. Yes, I remember just being young and being like, wow, being a girl sounds like the worst. I don't want any of that. And so some of those I think struggles with gender. I think were early for me. And I identify as a woman and I think I've come to a place in my life no asked me in 10 years, but we'll kind of see but right now identify as a woman and I think I would say that I am okay to change what I think a woman might look like I think to me, like all that I do is feminine. All that I do is loses womanhood and doesn't necessarily because I may be fit to some stereotypical masculine or male role means that I am leaning towards the male on the spectrum, whatever that means. So yeah, that was a little Becky was outside running and playing and just wanted to be hyperactive and not sit still look pretty. No interest in sitting still looking pretty. But yeah, just grew up a really conservative Christian home. So that meant I had no understanding. I just had no exposure no concept of what it meant to be queer except for I don't know Mrs. Doubtfire. You got me like what? No, whatever, like media was telling me what it meant to be a queer person was the the villain and Ace Ventura was the enemy like was the just all these like

social constructs of what, what it meant to be queer or trans or there was absolutely no understanding of queer Christian. So in my mind, it was either a Christian or you're queer. So I think for me, it was just a really early on of array like, that's my humanity that I need to stuffed down to be more divine to be more pleasing to God, to be holier to be more faithful person would mean less of me less of what makes me me. So yeah, that was just part of me growing up was me saying, I need to somehow find a way to be happy. In what I'm being told is my path forward is what it means to be a woman, a Christian woman. And that was just a huge part of my story. And now I look back and I think like, man, what if I had known somebody when I was younger? What if I had just been exposed a little bit more, but if my mom would have given me a different answer, and I think my mom was trying the best she could, I had no idea.

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 09:31

Sounds like, Yeah, you were just given this small box for what it meant to be a girl. And the expectation was to fit in and if you don't, then something's wrong. Ah, and then your phrasing about like, learning from a young age that you kind of had to make yourself small. I think that's so relatable for so many of us. And it's just so heartbreaking. And so much of the process of like, our own healing is learning what is my fullness and how do I fully take up space as my whole self? And that's so the journey okay. I I am pumped, we are talking. Thank you so much for sharing your story. Okay. And so teenagehood oh man can always be complicated for us.

**B** Becky Blanco (she/her) 10:09

It's funny because I want to say I was like, Boy crazed, but also had no desire to pursue any sort of relationship with boys. I think as a young person, again, just everything being very wrapped in religion, I think my understanding of dating was with the goal of being married was with the goal of having a family like that was just always the course the path. So it was never the idea of dating, to experiment to learn about myself to learn about my peers. It was dating to marry. So therefore, if I'm 16, and not ready to be married, then I shouldn't be dating anybody. So I think a lot of my perspective was, I don't need a boyfriend, like, what's the point? Not? I'm not interested in any bullies. So I think it was really easy for me to just kick that can down the road, and just say, like, Well, I remember the first time I was kissed, I was like, 19 years old. And thinking like, I'm old. I feel like this new should happen a long time ago. And like, no shame. Like, I think people can have that journey whenever but I know for me, I think I would have loved to have been kissed earlier. But I think I just had no frame of reference for what a positive or healthy like sexualities young person, or healthy sexuality outside of marriage, a Christian marriage between a man and a woman would have looked like. So I just kept my head down. I was focused on anything and everything else that I could be.

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 11:36

Yeah, what were those things that you were focusing on instead?

**B** Becky Blanco (she/her) 11:38

So I wanted to play volleyball in college, I wanted to sing in the choir and go on youth trips with my church and stuff like that. So I remember, as an adult, I got a job at a nonprofit. And I was

my church and stuff like that. So I remember, as an adult, I got a job at a nonprofit. And I was working at the YMCA, as an adult. And I remember asking my mom, my mom again, poor thing. Nope, she doesn't hear this. Why did I ever do YMCA and Grenada would have loved and like hiked in the woods and kind of camping that would have been right up my alley. And I would have like, blossomed, right as a young person at the Y. And she was like, Becky, you had church. I was like, Oh, sir. And she was like, you had the youth retreat and the choir trip. And she's right, to an extent that church was our life. Like, if the doors were open, I was there, if there was an activity, I was volunteering, I was signed up. That's all I could see around me. There wasn't a world outside of this Christian wave. That was all around me as a young person under my parents upbringing. So yeah, my life just looked very programmed, and scripted in the ways of Christianity.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 12:50

And what do you remember, like feeling about that, at that time, were you like, okay, with having that structure and kind of fitting into it felt like, okay, I can get some value out of this. I feel like, I know how to do this.

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 13:00

I was headfirst. I was absolutely like, Let's fucking go. Like I, I am going to serve harder and love harder. And yeah, I absolutely was in and I think I had like a deep passion for cutting the bullshit, like being authentic, which is so ironic at this point in my life, to be like, I was so hungry for authenticity, I was so hungry, for like truth and for people to stop being fake. And I think now I can look back and say like, Oh, little Becky, of course, you were, of course, you're so so hungry for something real. Because you, I think in the crevices of your mind, even then didn't have any understanding of what it would be like for you to live your most authentic self. I don't think at that point, I would, I wouldn't even have said I was closeted. I wouldn't have said I have same sex attractions. Like that was just not an option. And that wasn't in my mind. And that was so therefore it wasn't and therefore I was maybe closer to like, asexual or just I just wasn't that interested in boys. I was just very interested in being a good Christian. Yeah, I think at that point, I was doing anything and everything I could to prove myself. Good enough, I think maybe is is maybe a good understanding of what I was like as a teenager.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 14:24

Totally. Yeah. I mean, think in different ways. So many of us have some sense of that of leaning into these other parts of our experience to feel enough even if it's like an unconscious, distancing from something that we don't know within us. That doesn't feel right. We just like are kind of full steam ahead with something else. That's like a part of I think many of our queer stories. So yeah, I just personally resonate with that. I really appreciate you sharing that because I think that's something that so many of us in different ways. It looks different for everyone but experience and it's also heartbreaking when we look back to it Be like, oh, like Yes. And there was so much fullness that you could have had access to. But our younger selves often Yeah, either didn't know or had other blocks or all the things. So then what happened next? You mentioned at that point, you'd never experienced same sex attraction. You weren't conscious about any queerness within you. When did you notice that start to shift? A backup just the hair? Oh, yes, please.

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 15:23

I remember being in sixth grade. And being at a trip retreat. And sitting in a group of maybe 15 people that were like, quote, unquote, my family for the trip. And there were even the kids are broken up into all these different families. And so these are just random kids from sixth grade to 12th grade, right. So some of these, everybody basically was older than me in this circle. Everybody's going around and saying how the trip has impacted them how they have walked away, just feeling like just so much better about, you know, how they're going to move forward in their life and their focus and their journey. And I remember sitting there and just, it was my turn, and I was like, ready with my speech. I remember saying to them, I'm just so glad that Jesus saved me. I'm just so glad because I think if I wasn't a Christian, I probably would be like gay or something. A little spot, sixth grader. And I remember thinking, like, in that moment that that was such a genuine like, I would be so lost without God, like, thank goodness, God has saved me. And like, who knows where they can go. Now I can look back and say I know exactly where I'm from. But that wasn't even. I don't even know how to explain that moment. But I feel like I have that vivid memory. And now I look back, I think goodness, like there was this like, battle. In my mind. I just thought, well, the furthest from God would be this. It wouldn't be like in a jail somewhere murdering people, it would be being queer. Like that would be the ante of this religious high that I'm feeling right now. And like, thank goodness, it has a high because it's Matt, I be in the lowest of low. Like talk about struggling with some self hate scary stuff, right? Oh, totally. So I think I had they were breadcrumbs along the way. But I had no idea. But they were they were absolutely so breadcrumbs. But I was a freshman in college, and I fell in love with my best friend. I think that's like the only way I can describe that. And I remember thinking, I don't know what's happening right here. But I want more of this. And it didn't take long for her to be like, Oh, I don't think I want this anymore. I don't think that this is exactly what I want. And that was soul crushing for me. I had my first encounter with therapy, and thought, Okay, I need to talk to somebody because there's no buddy that could possibly begin to talk about this in my family, with my friends, because I'm going again to a Christian college. I could literally get kicked out of my school for this stuff. So I can't talk to anybody. Right? Wow. Yeah. So I'm literally online searching, like therapists, no understanding of like, different kinds of therapy and finding a therapist that is gonna help me on this journey. Remember, just being in therapy for a little while, you could just a few months before the school year was over. And I just was feeling so alone and feeling like just really frustrated and confused. And at that point, I still very much didn't want this to be a part of my story in any way. But I knew that this was very much a part of my story, because I think something was so obviously desirable about that relationship. And I didn't understand just what that meant for me. I remember somewhere towards the end of therapy, where I've just been talking to this lady and trying to figure out how, how do I get rid of this? How does this like, stop, right? It's like an 18 year old. And I remember like on the last session, her just kind of talking to me and then talking about some Bible verses and then basically kind of giving me her like, final pitch to why maybe it was okay for me to like women, and maybe it was okay for me to be a Christian. And I remember thinking like, the betrayal of this woman, she right to make any insinuation that I actually am And this poor therapist was probably like, Oh, I was not ready to hear that I wasn't not ready for anybody to tell me that this maybe was who I was. And that was that was hard, right? That was just hard. I want to say the next three years of college was hard. I had two other relationships with women that were very closeted, and very hush hush, and my major ethic it was called cross cultural and Urban Studies, which I think is code for like missionary. I want to say that that's like learning about other cultures learning how I want to say it was like a Christian social worker, but maybe with like, just a much heavier leaning on international studies, I remember

being a senior and just like failing my classes left re because I was all sorts of messy in my personal life and not being able to focus anything and knowing that I needed to talk to my parents somehow cuz I wasn't graduating in two months had a conversation with I guess my academic advisor who talked to the school disciplinary in person. So I'm in this room with my parents, that academic advisor and like the school like disciplinary, none of which, right? We're queer affirming, none of which, including myself, to be really honest, at that point. I remember telling my parents just kind of what I've been going through, and just kind of like coming out to them. But I think at that point, it definitely wasn't, Oh, this is me, it was a confession, it was way more of a. So this is what's been going on. This is what I've been dealing with and struggling with. And this is why,

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 20:59

That it was a problem

**B** Becky Blanco (she/her) 21:03

Right. You gotta like, help me figure this out. Because I don't know what else to do. I remember that being like a really quiet car ride home. And I remember just like breaking down with my parents like being in the kitchen, and just like sobbing, and then being like, it's gonna be okay, we're gonna get through this, and we're gonna, like, get you some help. So then began the therapy. That was the therapy that I was searching for, but obviously, obviously ended up being pretty damaging, which was therapy that just caused me to really, really just doubt everything about what I was feeling versus what I knew to be true. And how those two things not meshing, right, like what I believe to be true was like one lane of the highway. And the other lane of the highway was what I felt to be true. And then what I knew to be true, and how those two things weren't actually going side by side, but they were intersecting. And there's like that intersection, the more aggressive that intersection. That is where I just felt like was mental mental, like harm. That's where my like depression, that's where just you start to feel like you don't know who you are. It's like incredibly damaging. Somehow, I made it past that. And I think I felt like I was in a place of, of healing. And I knew where I was, and I wasn't in relationships than women. I wrote my church asking me if I wanted to help out. And I remember thinking like, Oh, you don't want me to work there. If you only knew there's no way.

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 22:33

Well, so you totally were holding this identity that like, I am damaged.

**B** Becky Blanco (she/her) 22:37

I felt like I was a hurricane. Like I was I was a twister. And just destruction was like in my wake. So I remember them saying like, you're great with kids, you're great with youth, like it'd be a blast, we'd love to have you on team and me thinking like, there's no, there's no way if they only knew if they would find me out. But I went ahead and got that job started to date a man. And that was, I remember on our first date, him just like, being really honest with me about some stuff he'd been through and me being very honest with him about these relationships

with women, and just kind of it was my past. What do you think? And him being like, that's your past and your future? And maybe like, well, that's really beautiful, like, Okay, I never thought there would be a man that would accept me or be okay with me. So I thought, Man, I am lucky right here. So a few years later, we get married. There's lots of ups and downs in that relationship, for sure. But yeah, I'm about, I guess, 28 At that point, and we get married,

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 23:37

and what was going through your mind then, like when you're getting married?

**B** Becky Blanco (she/her) 23:39

I think he was just trying to do all the right things. I look back and I and I think like, man, if there's one thing I could change would be would be getting married, right? That marrying a man that I don't think I knew I could ever give myself fully to that I don't think I could ever, like truly trust and truly feel myself with. I think that was unfortunate, obviously, for him, obviously, for me. And I think again, that just was another example maybe I don't know if that's a good word of like this hurricane right, Hurricane Becky just coming through and being like, Well, alright, he's going to be wrecked. And I'm going to be wrecked.

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 24:15

And you also couldn't see in any other way.

**B** Becky Blanco (she/her) 24:17

I think I was like, Well, I am doing all the things. I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing right. everything I possibly can. And it's been years since I've been with another woman or you know, even like look the other way out of the woman. Like that's part of my past and I'm getting married and like finally this is going to be behind me. Yeah, and about two years in. I remember just being just so alone feeling wilted. It's a good it's a good word. Just feeling so like thirsty and not ever like realizing that I was even thirsty. You know, like just not understanding what it was like to be filled up and to feel whole and Feel a piece. At that point, I had a very brief relationship with a woman. And I remember thinking, oh, oh, how could I have thought that this was something that would like go away or that I can get rid of like, it was just so obvious to me, Adam, it was so, so obvious to me at 30 years old, that I was gay. Like, it was just this moment of like, I have no idea how this makes sense with my religion. But I know it's me. And I know, God is gonna make sense of it. Eventually, one day is gonna make sense. But I know I cannot be married anymore to this man. I need to come out to my family and let them know. And I need to like to anybody who can take two seconds and listen to me. This is 1,000,000%. Me. And I think looking back like, I think I am more at peace than I ever was before. Obviously, there's a lot of ups and downs between that 30 year old Becky and now 36 year olds, Becky. But man, it was it when I knew I knew it was just so so obvious. And then, well, what else was I wrong? About what what other questions do I have? And then I'm in this feeling of like, I feel like a 12 year old that has so many questions about what it means to be queer, and what I should and shouldn't like, and what I'm allowed to like, and just kind of allowing myself to be



that little eight year old that got to see, well, what is a woman? Okay, well, it's not that no, what is it? And I get to, it's been an interesting journey, to figure out what I look like and what I get to enjoy about myself, and what I get to love about myself.

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 26:45

And what did it look like, specifically, first off, I like, have to remember that I'm the host of the show, because I listen to you, I like to last in your story that I'm just like, I want to listen to you talk all day, and your story is so powerful. And so just giving myself a reminder to show up to because it's just so beautiful and powerful. But Okay, question you mentioned, after coming out, having to like that, like, opened up all of these other questions, and opened up these new feelings. You mentioned feeling like a 12 year old, like, what did some of those moments look like? What did it look like to be kind of asking those questions and kind of trying to figure out the answers? What did that look like for you?

**B** Becky Blanco (she/her) 27:24

I knew that like, in my world, in the world that I had set up around me, I didn't know anybody. And I just knew that I was so so alone. And I needed some sort of queer community. And I had no idea where to find that. And I remember thinking like, Well, okay, you're Christian churches, is that a thing? Remember just googling. And every Sunday visiting another random church and thinking like, well, I don't know who these people are. Like, this is not how I'm used to worshiping or something. And I remember when church they had, like a food drive, after and I thought, okay, food drive, I can get behind that. Let's go to the food drive, let me volunteer, like, that's my sweet spot, I'm going to show up, it's going to be the best to ever go into this food drive. And having this this one guy actually show up and like six other people coming out of the car, and they had bags and bags and bags of food and thinking like, okay, somebody's showing up to the food drive ready to go. And this guy walks up to me, he's like, Hey, like, I'm the receipt, what's up? And I found this like, little group of Christian queers. Really, that some were like, united by faith, but some would probably not even say that they have any sort of specific faith, but they were just this like, group of people that just wanted to hang out and be queer and be okay with each other. A lot of whom had similar stories to mine. And I think finding a group of queers was the best thing for me. And I remember just picking their brains and being like, asking questions, and I just was so I had so many questions, mostly about like, queer culture, what terms mean about sex about just all sorts of stuff. I remember them explaining to me what a dental dam was. I mean, like, Oh, okay. All right. That's important. Is it just kind of some basic like sex ed? Yeah, kind of stuff that I should have had right as a 12 year old but had just no concept of especially with a queer lens, just feeling like okay, okay, I got six more questions. And they would take me to like a drag show or we just have a game night. We I remember that first Halloween feeling like oh my gosh, like what is like Christmas like this is this is the gay Christmas I love this was everybody would just like to the nines get dressed up. So I had this just beautiful network where I was able to be an awkward tween and figure my stuff out with people that I could trust and who were very happy to answer questions or to let me ask questions. and just have fun in that process. And I think that was like, best case scenario, because I was safe.

**A** Adam James Cohen (he/him) 30:07

Oh, how pivotal finding that community was for you Holy smokes, in both dislike being a source for information, but also just like a source of not feeling alone, a source of like, just them showing up as they are to connect with us to show up more in ways that we haven't shown up fully. Like, there's so much that happens when we find our queer community, like both in direct conversation with them, but also just being in the energy of queerness. That, like, activates more within us and breaks down these walls we have within us even just by being a part of the community. Okay, cool. Okay, so you found this community then what happened

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 30:48

I with them for a little while, and reconnecting with was that my wife, and her nice starting to date long distance again, I am like a serial monogamist. I am just like, Okay, if we're gonna do this, then we, you know, have the intent of marriage and her being like, alright, chill out. Let's I don't even know if I like you. Like, let's take it slow. Me being like, like casual dating, what does it even mean? We're long distance, right? I'm In Miami, and she's in North Carolina, we would talk on the phone a lot. And I think it was really fun to have somebody that was in my corner as I was dealing with the quote, unquote, fallout with my family, and just them kind of going through their own Armageddon, as they received. That means for me and divorce and just kind of what all that looked like, right? So there's this, like, the side that's, you know, chaotic, and my parents have lost control of me. And I am very much also stepping into my own and stepping into this place where I feel just really comfortable my own skin. And she was able to be somebody, for me, that was just in my corner. And on my side. And I think that was really, really beautiful. She was able to, like, help me process through some of that family stuff at a distance, right? Because we weren't, we weren't together in Miami. So she was able to just be a really sweet support really early on, which was pretty powerful.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 32:10

Yeah, I mean, I can imagine really needing support at that phase. Like, it must have been so confusing. There's so much for you to hold with, like you personally are having this like, liberation in your own individual life, while this chaos and destruction is happening in your family, but from afar, like, what was it like for you having both of those two energies happening at once?

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 32:30

I think the idea of trying to live out right trying to not have this continue to be this like long distance over the phone closeted thing. But how are you out with somebody that's not around, right? You can like hold their hand in public or do those things. And then there was also a sense for me that I didn't want to embarrass my family or do anything that would they were still telling their friends that I was married or that, you know, we're going through a hard time. And I think for me, I was like, Nope, we're very much done. And this is not gonna come back where you think it is. And this isn't some weird phase or anything. I think that was that was incredibly hard. And it didn't take long for me to say, I don't know how to live as an out queer person, as a publicly queer person next door to my parents, you know, I didn't physically live next door to them, but just knowing that their watchful eye was on me, and that I think I felt like I needed the space to like, be messy, and not worry about what that did to them. I think I needed that

space, I remember thinking like, I need to move up to North Carolina and see if this is number one, or relationship number two, to just be me and to you know, I can move up here and two weeks later, we break up and okay, for that to be okay for me to give myself the space to follow my face and not have to do that like at the front doorstep of my parents house. So I remember moving up here, and just kind of every step along the way. My wife's name is Alex, between Alex and I like every step along the way, things just getting for us like thriving, like the closer and the more opportunity we had to hang out together. So I feel like I got super lucky to meet somebody that was super awesome for me really early on in my coming out experience. And she's like so intertwined in that like second adolescence, right? So I got to just all sorts of stuff. I remember, I this might be a little TMI. I remember like the very first time using a strap. I remember like after that experience, looking at her and just bawling, just bawling. And her being like, Hey, what's going on? And me just being like, that was amazing. And like, Should I not have like that? Am I like, just really just going through the process of like, what does that mean? What am I was that what just really wanting to be like not sure of what I was allowed to enjoy or what that meant. Right? What did that mean? For me, and for her to be able to look at me and say like, Who fucking knows, but if you liked it, let's do it again and like, and let's keep trying new things. So I think the idea that she was so supportive and like willing to I guess be messy, I think is the maybe a good term for it, but just willing to say, No, we're not gonna do that again, or figure it out, right? I have a ton of baggage because I had all these closeted and bullshit ideas of what it was like to be a partner, and no understanding of what it was like to be in a queer marriage. All my understanding were on these like, stereotypical roles for men and women and religious views of a man and a woman's role in marriage. So I think we've loved going to therapy, and we've loved seeking help left and right, because it hasn't been super easy. I feel like I've been really fortunate that we just have loved each other really well. And again, in 10 years, we may not be together, and that will be okay. And I hope we are you know, I love her with all my heart. But just being able to just hold the hold our relationship with each other lightly. And being able to say like, we are still figuring it out, we don't, by any means are going to sit here and say like happily ever after here. But that we're still I feel like I am kind of coming out of that adolescence, but at some points, I still feel so. So right there with so many questions, specifically as it relates to like a long term relationship with somebody in a marriage. I don't know any older queers. I think that's problematic for me, I think I want some old lesbians in my life. I want some called queers to hang out with and have dinner with and pick their brain, right. And the idea that like queer marriage is a fairly new concept, right? Having a committed queer relationship is it but just the idea of having this, like queer marriage is fairly new. So I still have a lot of questions about what that looks like. And are we doing it right? And if I am curious about this, should I not be? So I feel like I still have a ton of tween kind of questions swirling around, that we still bubble up or once in a while, we have to kind of talk it out.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 37:08

Yeah, and it sounds like you and your wife have the foundation to talk about. It sounds like so much healing has happened within the context of this relationship. Like it's been such a container for you to have all of this shit pop up, whether it's related to sexuality, identity, gender norms, all of this, all of these scripts that we have ingrained in us, based off of different experiences we've had throughout the years, and get to look at it and see kind of what's true, what's not, what does this mean, and together kind of create what the meaning is. And so much can happen in a space that's so supportive like that to allow you to kind of feel what

you're feeling, share it, ask the questions, and then have the space to examine it all. It's gosh, I hear so much healing that's happened. Wild. What's it even like to think about like, Okay, you're 36 Now like six years ago? 30, like two different Beckys?

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 38:02

I don't think I had any idea that this was possible. I don't think I thought that I could be even at that point, even knowing like, I'm not just like married to the wrong guy, like, No, this is like, I'm starving, I'm dying of thirst. And this is this is never going to satisfy me. And this is never going to feel whole. And you know what I mean? Like I am playing a part. And I need to like sit down that role. And I need to just be me. So I think I had like fantasies of this like perfect world where I get to be with a woman that is also possibly a Christian maybe. And we can figure out life together. And I had this like idea of like this perfect world and honestly, just couldn't see past the heartache that was currently happening at that time. And I think again, finding that like community, these queer people that I was able to meet pretty early on was a game changer. They helped me kind of see past my current situation. And then I think, again, moving out of the city, and being able to see there's so there's such a bigger world, there are far more Christians that are affirming that I ever realized that my circle and my upbringing isn't as big as I thought it was, isn't the entire like world. Yeah, six years ago was rough. And I think for family like they were struggling with a lot. And I think just even this past Thanksgiving, we were all together. And I think that's wild, wildly, wildly crazy. My parents are still not affirming. But I think they are recognizing that if they want to continue to have me as part of their life, that they're going to accept my family. And they're going to accept my wife as part of the family. So there's been a huge learning curve there. But I don't think I ever would have thought it would have taken within six years that my parents would be sitting at a table with me and my wife, and we'd have my nephews running around and I don't think I ever thought that that would happen ever.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 39:59

Oh, what was that Thanksgiving like? Holy smokes.

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 40:02

So this past Mother's Day, so Mother's Day, last year before this Thanksgiving, my dad gave me a call and said, Hey, come to Miami for Mother's Day, Mom would love to have you. And I remember saying like, Oh, man, that's like, we can have Rupununi. I don't know, like, let's see. We're still like, cautiously optimistic. But thinking like, okay, we're all vaccinated. Like, if we can make it happen, let's make it happen. Alex is about to graduate from grad school at this point. She graduates a couple weeks after that, and I thought, Well, come let me check on Alex. And let's see, like what we can do. And if we can make it work, or two weeks, like, we'd love to see you, or we haven't seen you in a year, you know, we'd love to make it happen. And my dad and his, like, thick Cuban accent is like, what, let me ask you a question. Let me ask a question. When you come to Miami, you can bring anybody else you bring in anybody with you. And I remember thinking like, oh, oh, okay. I was like, Yeah, pop, I'm gonna bring my family. Of course, if I go, you know, of course, Alex would go, and him having just a hard time understanding why we both had to go, Why could it just be because he just didn't want to see

it. He didn't want to accept it. He didn't want to believe that this was what was happening. Even though at that point, we had been married for eight months or so. And I remember that just being like a really pivotal moment, for me to have pretty strong conversations with him and my mom, my brother and sister have been fabulously affirming. And they've been pretty wonderful and supportive. But that being just a really hard conversation. And ended up that I did go to Miami, we both went to Miami. And we had a pretty big family conversation about what do we expect gonna happen here? Like, what is what is this family look like? What does everybody want? Realistically, you know, like, how do you see a family vacation moving forward? How do you see Christmas happening? And being able to be pretty upfront, and I think that set the catalysts for my brother saying, Hey, I'm going to host Thanksgiving this year, and whoever wants to come come. My parents were always the hub of any sort of holiday. Right? We all come back down to Miami. My brother's out in Seattle. And he said you I think this year, it'd be a good year for me to host and Becky, you're absolutely right. And Alex, you're absolutely right, a mom and dad, you're invited. If you don't want to come, then that's up to you. But we're gonna have Thanksgiving in Seattle, they decided to go, which was a big deal to have the whole family there. So there was a lot of awkwardness for sure. But I think smashing success for for my standard of what it would look like for my parents and my wife to be in the same room. I think there were a lot of little sweet moments. And then a lot of moments of just I am people out. I haven't been around people this long for a while. And it's been four days, and I need a break. But I think overall, everybody was civil, which is kind of all I can ask for at this point. All I would hope for Ask me in six years, maybe we'll be laughing and dancing together. Who knows? But this Thanksgiving was a huge win.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 42:54

Becky, I'm so glad to hear that. I mean, yes, there's room for improvement. Sure. But to have had a Thanksgiving like you had with your family. Like, that sounds huge. And it's it's not an easy task for a family to go from this belief system where queerness is just so not okay. So not allowed to be at the table to one where it's integrated in celebrated it's a non issue like that is that is an that's not an easy task, and not an easy journey. It's complicated and messy and hard. And it's through conversations like you all had. And then these Thanksgivings, like you just had having these new moments and these healing moments and all of it like that's how families shift. And it sounds like your family is really in that process of shifting. And I'm so so glad to hear that. Gosh, like, I want that for all families. And so thank you for sharing that part of your story. I think it's gonna be really helpful for folks and like so much of your story. I mean, and yeah, like, on that note, like, I know, I can't keep you all day, I want to keep chatting with you. But before winding down. What was that like for you to spend the time we did so far? Going back in and sharing your story

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 44:06

just now? Yeah. It's been a little while since I've kind of mapped out this like windy room. I think like Hindsight is 2020. Right? I can look back and say a little eight year old Becky sitting in that circle, like a little Becky. She just needed to know a queer high schooler that loves God. She just needed a an inkling of a possible future that she could have. Right. And then I think back to 19 year old Becky, you're 28 year old Becky getting married. And the reality is like along the way, for whatever reason, I wasn't ready, right? You know, with a therapist telling me like this might be you as a 22 year old that wasn't really I needed to like, go through some shit,

unfortunately. And I think now looking back, I can say, Oh man, if only but the reality is like, the story is messy as hell. But it's beautiful, right? Like I'm super proud of where I am now. It's by no means perfect, but it's Even more, just more a piece. And I think, like one more class for the work that I want for myself to feel more whole, and as Rocky or awkward or disturbing, or as much of a hurricane as it felt, to kind of go through all these different stages, at this point, just feeling good spark.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 45:23

Whenever I talk with people, other career people not in personal and professional context, I can't help but feel and see our younger selves with each other throughout the conversation too. And as you were talking, I could like feel and see eight year old Becky 16 year old Becky, Becky, like all of these use, and it's really, it's complicated. It's heartbreaking, it's because so much compassion for where they were at. And it's so powerful to be able to give to them, where we're at now, you know, for a second adolescence is like a dual part of us kind of gaining these experiences and knowledge, like learning what the fuck a dental dam is, and how to use it and all the things and such healing work of looking back in our story, kind of like you just illustrated of going back in our story and engaging with our younger selves and offering this understanding and compassion and empathy for what was happening at them at different points in the journey. And that's this that's like the path towards getting to this place of wholeness and okayness and knowing like, Hey, I am good. I am okay. I'm enough. All the things, I'm really grateful you came on to share your story, because it really seems like that's, that's what you've done. And it's for sure, an ongoing process for all of us. You know, healing never stops, particularly for queer folks. And on top of that people who have not just like a queer identity, but also navigating kind of cultural scripts around like, religion and gender, like there's so much stuff that interferes with us being able to be our truest selves, and like, that's the jam doing what we need to like, clear the bullshit out so we could just let ourselves be. I'm so happy to hear yes, we like literally just met, but I'm so happy to hear like where you're at now. I feel tingles. That's very, very cool. Thank you so much. Okay, we're gonna be friends after this. I'm very excited. Okay, this is great. This is great. I want to respect your time. But before we go, if anyone listening to this, I was curious to reach out to you or connect further, how can they be in touch with you and follow what you're up to?

B

Becky Blanco (she/her) 47:30

I want to say the best way to do that would be through Instagram. So my instagram handle is @Becky.with.the.good.repair, which is a blast. And we talk about sex, positive things and DIY, all sorts of fun stuff. It's a lot of me and my wife doing silly dances and making our home. Awesome. I'm always there hanging out.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 47:51

Tell me a little bit more about what you're doing on Instagram. So your DIY projects is and document the repairs makes me think I could maybe learned a thing or two about some home projects?



**B****Becky Blanco (she/her) 48:00**

Yeah, so we bought our first home in April. We're just making an art. So recently, we've just painted our entire interior pink, which is super fun. And I think I never would have been a super pink house kind of girl. But I think there's something fun and rebellious about it right? Just getting to be like, You know what, I'm gonna paint a pink because nobody thinks that would be a good thing. And it's gonna be awesome. So I think just getting to play with all the fun things as an adult, say, You know what, we want a bed in our living room, maybe that's what we're gonna do. Yeah, it's definitely just trying to figure out what adulthood looks like as a homeowner, and how to replace our faucet or fix a leak and stuff like that. So I think all of that owning our world is kind of the name of the game.

**A****Adam James Cohen (he/him) 48:48**

Cool. Thank you with good repair. Awesome. Well, Becky, thank you so much for coming on and sharing your story. It was just such a treat. And I'm just so touched. So thank you appreciate Hey, thanks for joining us for today's conversation. Feel free to head on over to [secondadolescencepod.com](http://secondadolescencepod.com) for show notes and more than you can connect further by following the show on Instagram at [@secondadolescencepod](https://www.instagram.com/secondadolescencepod). If you're interested in being a future guest on the show and you want to come on and share about your own second adolescence visit [secondadolescencepod.com/be](http://secondadolescencepod.com/be) A guest and you can submit your interest there. Alright, that's it for me for now. Whether it's morning, afternoon, night, wherever we're finding you and your day go on out there and keep doing things that would make younger you absolutely thrilled. That is what it's all about. Alright, take good care.