

Ep. 24: Second Adolescence w/ Nicole Liv (she/her)

Sun, Sep 25, 2022 8:53AM 55:06

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

queer, queerness, life, blooming, adolescence, late bloomers, grief, people, person, healing, thought, joy, feel, moving, questioning, podcast, lesbian, mom, excited, attraction

SPEAKERS

Adam James Cohen (he/him), Nicole Liv (she/her)



Adam James Cohen (he/him) 00:08

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 Nicole Liv who some of you may know as the host of The Late Bloomers Clvb podcast. And if you don't know Nicole or don't know about Late Bloomers Clvb, get ready because she and her work are right up all of our alleys. The Late Bloomers Clvb is a community and podcast for other late blooming queer folks who identify as having come out later in life and find themselves later blooming into their most true queer selves. I cannot recommend this community and Nicole's work enough. Today, Nicole sat in the role of guest and offered her own story and journey with us sharing what led to her being someone who only recently in her 30s started having full awareness of her queerness and how so much of her story and healing has involved looking back in her story to see the moments when her queerness was hijacked from her repressed and not given space to fully breathe and develop. And she shares how so much of her work now has been an undoing all of this, she talks about joy and grief being the two primary markers in her queer healing journey and truly invites all of us to more deeply look at our own stories and our own needs for healing and liberation. I friggin love this conversation and love everything Late Bloomers club is about and I'm so excited to invite you in to listen. And as with every episode of the second adolescents podcast, I want to invite you as listener to listen with open curiosity, knowing that each of our stories are different and unique, you might hear something shared on the show that really differ from your experience. Whereas you might hear other things shared that really speak to what you went through or are currently going through. And I really hope that all of 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 adolescents pod.com](https://secondadolescentspod.com) For shownotes and more. Or you can follow the show on Instagram at [second adolescence pod](https://www.instagram.com/secondadolescencepod). All right, enough for me for now. Welcome to the conversation. Thank you so much for being here. Welcome to second adolescence. Thank you. I am so excited to have you on I was telling you before I press record that I've been kind of hoping to get you on at some point. And so I'm just really excited.



N

Nicole Liv (she/her) 02:38

I'm super happy to be here. Very happy.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 02:40

Awesome. Okay, well, I know a bit about you. But before going anywhere, like to invite the person on your end just to give a little mini introduction just to give the listeners a little context who the person is behind the voice. And I know that who are you question is a wild one that you could serve for hours. But it's

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Nicole Liv (she/her) 02:57

it's funny to me though, because right I have my own podcast. So I do this like all the time. But then you asked me and I'm like, where do I go with this? Totally. So my name is Nicole, I go by Nicole and Nick, my pronouns are she her. And I'm a as I like to call it a late blooming lesbian I came out at the age of 34. Last May. So just over a year ago, I came out not because I finally felt ready to do so I came out at 34 Because I just finally realized my queerness and completeness. And so since then I have been essentially on a journey of self discovery. But also with my podcast Late Bloomers club. The intention there is my two Jays joy and justice. That's sort of like what leads me that when I was going through my late blooming coming out questioning journey, I was on this phone and the computer constantly looking for information, stories, anything that let me know that what I was going through was valid and that I wasn't losing my mind and that it was a normal experience on that the human spectrum essentially. And so that led me to starting my podcast so I you know, everything I do now is related to being queer and coming out later in life. All of the projects that I have going on are all related to that. So my life has drastically changed since realizing my queerness I've done a complete overhaul and the person that I find myself now is so drastically different obviously I'm still the same core grounded but goofy person that I've always been but my life just looks completely different. I actually also this year left my job that I was with for five years. So I'm certainly right now just on this pursuit of self discovery and essentially creating a life for the first time that I really feel is mine. And that's where actually right now this in the next month, I have so many moving chips, I'm actually moving. I'm launching, like a research project and another project and a nonprofit. So I'm all over the place. But I'm here and I'm queer. And all I want to do is talk about being queer, and coming out later.

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Adam James Cohen (he/him) 05:30

Yes, ah, I'm just sitting here, just so struck by what this last year must have been like for you. And just like, I'm sure we'll go more into it. But I'm just thinking about gosh, like what? of pivotal and powerful. And I can only imagine what this last year was like, it what's it like right now looking back at even just at this last yaer?

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Nicole Liv (she/her) 05:51

I am truly proud of myself. And also a little like, mind blown that that much change has been able to happen within such a short period of time. But yeah, I mean, I was sort of gifted with

timing of the pandemic happening, when I was questioning and going through all of that unfolding, because I was really able to just go within completely and ask myself the questions I needed to without the input of other people. So when I finally got to that point, the past year, the two things that I can say that I feel the most within me, joy and grief, those are the two things the experience has been like a roller coaster of those two things. Just last October, through coming out, I've realized that so many other things about my life were untrue. Just last October, I finally realized I actually don't even want to be a parent my whole life, I thought, the only things that would make me happy, would be marrying a man, which I did do. And obviously divorced. And having children with a man, my whole life has been on this very narrow path. And so the unfolding of you know, realizing I'm queer helped me realize, like, oh, gosh, there's probably other things here that aren't really mine. And so I started looking around. And that was another part too, of letting go of feeling as though that's the only thing that will make me happy. It just ushered in all of this space for me to really start learning what I want. And so that's what this whole past year has been, it's been a lot of journaling, and a lot of tears and a lot of queer media and my podcast and through doing the podcast to I have, essentially, as you're doing to like, you're sort of like gently forcing yourself to deal with this late blooming, this queerness all of it. And so by continuing to do that, I have learned so much about myself that I don't know if I would have if I didn't have like the platform and the people on the other side, expecting each week to hear. So so the the podcast and the lead looming community has been a huge aspect in this past year of my life, too. I'm like, there's, it's there's so much that's happened that it's almost like I can't like I have to write it out for you, and read it to you like in order for it to sound like it makes any type of sense.

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Adam James Cohen (he/him) 08:30

But I mean, that's like the arc of healing, right? It's nonlinear. It's like, it's all every which way. It's unexpected. Yep. One thing flows into the other thing out of nowhere, this other thing pops up like healing is not a kind of easy to put into a nice little box or pie with a bow kind of thing. Right?

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Nicole Liv (she/her) 08:47

Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. No, and it never will be.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 08:51

No, no. And you mentioned joy and grief, kind of the cornerstones. And I feel like those are so the essence of queer healing and expansion. So I'm curious if you get to speak more about how does that look like for you? Yeah, for sure.

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Nicole Liv (she/her) 09:04

So the grief part, I think, is really the more interesting component. Because when we think of grief, we typically think of losing someone. That's really when you look up the definition of grief to our experience isn't really worked into that, that definition, it should be expanded. But to me, it's the recognition that the first 34 years of my life, we're not necessarily mine, and people

can argue all they want about what that experience was, but for me, I know what it was. And it wasn't. It wasn't someone else's life that I was living. It was just a formula that I thought it wasn't a life and so accepting that everything I had done and everything that I was working towards becoming a wife and a mother was essentially you know, not for nothing, I can't say that I am alive. But it didn't lead me to the place that I thought that it was going to. So accepting that I have nothing to show essentially I don't, I don't want to put it in like a victim framing of like, oh my god, I have nothing but it was the wrong path. And if I had stayed on that path, it would have just continued to make me happy and lead me to who knows where, but really terrible places. But then there's the other aspect of it too, of understanding that I can't go back, and I can't do it again, I can't be in high school and have my first queer kiss. As a teenager, I can't, I can't go to prom with the person that I'd want to go to prom with. And so it's like this reconciling and then also at the same time, looking forward and understanding that like, what I thought my life was going to be that any of that comfort there is completely gone, which obviously is truly a good thing. But that's just so much to hold all of that grief at one time. And I'm fully not fully I wouldn't say I'm fully in my queer life, I'm headed there, I'm almost fully in it. But my life is very clear. And even just last week, I had a really bad week where grief just settled in with me. And I was going through those feelings again, of recognizing that I am a 35 year old, almost 36 year old woman and I am I'm restarting my life. And as beautiful as that is, there is a lot of sadness and grief there. And I am just not somebody who, I don't want melancholy, I don't want grief, but I respect it. I know that it has its place that has a lot to teach us. And I know that it's just like you said, it's part of the clear healing, whether you've come out later in life or not. I know it's just part of the queer experience. And as someone who is coming out late in life, it's that aspect of grief and loneliness and everything that goes along with it, you know, as living my life as a straight person, before I knew that being queer was more of a there was a loneliness there. But I didn't, I didn't know it, I didn't feel I didn't feel that I couldn't know what it was. And now I do. And it's like, I wish I could take that away for our whole community. But you know, it is what it is. And then the other aspect, though, is joy. Because, as I said, you're dealing with all of this grief, you're learning that things didn't work for you. But it's giving you the opportunity to find out what really does work for you. I sort of look at this, like late in life blooming late life coming out thing as like, you have the wisdom of a person who's gone through some serious shit. But the curiosity of a child as well. So that opportunity combining those two things. I mean, there's so much joy to be found. Right? And so we deserve that joy, however many years you put your queer joy away, you know, you deserve all of those years and more. And I think that that is something that I want every queer person, every Late Bloomer to know that like prioritizing your joy, you deserve it, but it's also a necessity and you actually do need to practice prioritizing your joy, especially in the world we live in, you know, joy is hardly just showing up on our door. So we really have to like orient ourselves towards joy as much as we possibly can. And over time, the more that we do that it starts to become obvious to us that there's joy here and there's joy there Right? So those are the two most present feelings and experiences that I've been having with you know, coming out late in life this past year. So

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Adam James Cohen (he/him) 14:01

my body tingling listening to you speak I'm feeling so affected so much is resonating for me personally, I'm feeling so much inspiration. I'm so glad you're here. This is a I could listen to you talk all day before going more into kind of your backstory this idea this freezing late blooming, I love it. How did how did it come to you?

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Nicole Liv (she/her) 14:18

So actually, it came to me like really just organically in thinking about like what, you know, I was using it for myself. And then I was just looking on social media, what what terms are people using what are the hashtags, and that struck me it was popular, but the thing that I like about it is that there is intention in both of those words. People that come out late in life, they don't have to call themselves late bloomers, I am a late bloomer, you can decide that that means whatever it is for you. For me what it means is late and blooming. I do not mean anything more intense or broad or deep than that. I did arrive late. I believe I did. I'm okay with that. But I'm also blooming. And no matter what age or stage in life you're blooming, it's a beautiful thing. You know. So accepting that things happen the way that they did, that, to me, has opened the door for healing, because I'm not saying they should have been this way. And I wish they were. I'm not saying that. I'm saying they should have been this way they weren't. And now we're going to move on and we're going to bloom. Sometimes that's a hard thing for people to grasp. And I say that because I have had several people reach out to me and be like, You're not late. You're right on time, or I'm right on time. And hey, if someone tells me they're right on time, they are. Because that's their experience. Totally. And I just also I think, just like the the metaphor of blooming, it's, it's a nice one.

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Adam James Cohen (he/him) 15:48

Yeah, I love it. I love pretty totally. And then okay, I'm curious to hear about the evolution of your queer story and the arrival to this point. Yeah. As and I'm sure there's lots of places to go in that story. But how do you tell your queer story and that journey?

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Nicole Liv (she/her) 16:04

So I think I do like to start at the beginning, my childhood and what I now understand took place, you know, compulsory heterosexuality, cis heteronormativity, the fabric of the patriarchy is intertwined into our society, our culture, our religions, everything. But some families have it woven in a little bit more than others. And my family was like a perfect sort of like incubator for people to believe that they're straight, essentially, my mom, my aunt, my grandma, on my mom's side, we're a Jewish family on my mom's side, Italian family on my dad's side. And my dad's family, my dad is born again, Christian, he's very religious. My Jewish family isn't necessarily very religious, or very culturally Jewish. And so, at a very young age, I saw the examples around me of women, and understood as a Jewish woman, there's really one path here for me to take. I had attraction at a very young age to girls, women that I didn't understand. I didn't know what it was because I was like three and four years old. And at that point, attraction didn't make sense. To me. What I felt inside of me, didn't make sense. I didn't have a word. I didn't know the word attraction yet, right? So at a very young age, my mother, who I love her very much, but we're very different people. And she was put on this planet, by her belief, to be a mom and a wife. And as a child, she saw me playing with my Barbies, and my baby dolls. And I most likely said, I want to be a well, I want to be a mom when I grow up. And she loved that, to really love that. And so I believe that she nurtured that in me. She saw herself in me and she wanted that path for me. And I can specifically remember playing two games, board games when I was very young, three and four years old that I feel like perfectly describe my experience. There is a game called Pretty, pretty princess. I don't even remember like what you did exactly. You're shaking your head, you know. So the point is to collect your

crown and your pearls and your jewels. And at the end, you're a pretty pretty princess, right? So being a girl, be pretty be a princess, like, understood God. And I can do that. That's easy. And then for whatever reason, I had another board game that was called heartthrob, I don't even know if it was mine. It feels like it would make more sense that it was my mother's because that was three. But it was based on a the 90s dating game where it would be like the girl and then it'd be like three guys, they'd be behind a screen. She would ask them questions based on the answers. Then she would choose and then she could see, you know, Was she happy with what the guy looks like and everything. Terrible. But so there's this board game, right? And it's probably for kids that are like 12 Plus, which right goal isn't is right. You play no one in this game. But I had it. And I remember my mom strewn all the cards across the floor. And I remember her just saying let's just pick the ones that we think are cute. And so obviously I'm watching Disney movies. I'm there's a lot going on here as a kid growing up in the 90s. But those two instances like I really got the message of what I was supposed to be. And I so badly, Adam wanted to make the people around me happy. And I wanted to be like them. I was trying to it's not necessarily even that I wanted to be like them. It's that I was trying to figure out who I was supposed to be like, I could go into that for the rest of my life with my therapist. But But I I saw the way that I was supposed to, I thought I was supposed to exist as a Jewish girl as a Jewish woman. And I just latched on to that so tightly. The term that I like to use essentially, before I had an understanding of my attraction, my queerness was hijacked from me. And now I understand that I went through so much blame and guilt with myself, trying to understand why I would do this to myself. And with my therapist, I came to understand that I was just trying to protect myself that I was like, well, whatever it is, that I am, isn't what I'm supposed to be. And so that's what I'm supposed to be. So I'm going to go and I'm going to be that. And through that I suppressed my queerness so much that it basically disappeared completely. And my childhood and my adolescence was very much defined by my prioritization of men in my life. For whatever reason, I took that message so seriously, and felt as though when I was in relationships with men, I felt as though like the attention that I got from the women, especially my mom, and my family was like, Oh, you're succeeding, like, she called me more, she's interested more to hear about what's going on. And all of that, you know, there were signs as I was growing up here in there, but I didn't know that they were signs so much. And everything was so so so suppressed, that I see now I'm like, oh, gosh, okay, that that was telling, but I had no clue. When I got to college, it started becoming apparent to me that my sexuality might be a little bit more broad than I had understood. But I didn't do anything about that. I just sort of acknowledged it. And I remember instances of feeling intensely attracted to two girls at school. And I let myself sort of understand that I was attracted. But I didn't ask myself why or what that meant. I just, I do remember allowing myself to feel it. But I never asked myself, Well, does that mean you're bisexual or pansexual? It just, I just shoved it down and just kept on kept going. And then, years later, I ended up in New York for a few years. And I remember standing on the platform of the subway thinking about pansexuality. Like, I think I had just heard about it. And I was like, I think that makes sense. I think that's what I am. But again, just put that right back into my pocket and kept on with my life. I didn't explore it. I just felt like, oh, well, maybe that gives me a little bit of an understanding of why I have attraction to women. But I'm not going to pursue that that's, you know, clearly wouldn't ever make me happy. I'm a good Jewish girl who's going to get married to a man and I'm going to have babies, I'm going to do all of that. And I'm just going to keep acting like this doesn't matter. And time goes on. And I keep prioritizing these relationships with men. And unfortunately, through doing that, I really as as we know, de prioritized myself. And so when I would try to get myself ahead when I would enroll myself back into classes and try to finish school or whatever it would be something would happen in a relationship, or, you know, I'd meet somebody new, or whatever it would be, I'd have to go on a trip. And I would always just drop what I was doing and reprioritize and say, Okay, this relationship, this guy, these are really the things that are going to lead me to my

happiness. Spoiler alert, that's not true. So I ended up actually getting married to a man at the age of 32 years old. I felt as though I had you know, I'm like, I'm 32 I have said my whole life that the only things that I want her to be a wife and a mom and I haven't even done those yet. And I'm not even really like orienting myself towards those things necessarily. Even though I was in relationship after relationship. I was always either I was leaving the relationships, I was picking the wrong people where it wouldn't work out. And then I ended up meeting my ex husband and on paper Adam, he was perfect. He was so so perfect on paper. And what I had also learned about what attraction was to men. Was that because it was such a formula feeling wasn't really a part of that for me. So I did believe that my attraction was real. Because it was presented to me as a formula. Oh yeah, no, you're you attract men this way. You treat them this way. You speak to them this way. You give them this you keep them this really good. It felt like it just was a formula that had no emotion or no feeling. And that made sense to me because I didn't have emotions or feelings of attraction to men in a real way. And so but then when I met when I met my ex husband, it felt like, Okay, this is perfect, he fits all those specs, he's gonna make my family happy. He's Jewish, he's successful, but he's also a musician. Like, it was just like, yes, like, this is the thing, he's gonna get me across that, you know, finish line. Because of that I ignored every single red flag that there was. And we got married rather quickly. I was so ill during all of this, my body was really talking to me, I had ulcers in my stomach from stress, I had ulcers on my lips. I was so thin, I didn't sleep at all. I just thought that it was due to like all of the movement, you know, moving in with him planning the wedding, and it's just a lot of stress. Come to find out he was incredibly abusive, emotionally abusive, controlling. So I ended up actually leaving that marriage, not because of my queerness. But because he was just such a toxic individual. And I find it so funny now. Not necessarily, yes, sometimes it is funny, but it's kind of ridiculous. I would be doing the dishes after dinner. And he would be sitting on the couch watching TV. And I'm, you know, washing the dishes, and I'm sitting there, and I'm so pissed. Because I have no relationship with this person. I'm completely lonely. He doesn't help me make dinner or do the dishes. So I'm like washing these dishes every night at them. And I'm just telling myself, you will stay married, you will have children, you will raise those children with him. And when they leave the house, you will leave him and you will live the rest of your life with a woman. Oh, but you know what I did with that thought? Nothing. It was like existed in the sink with the dishes. And when I washed away the suds, I put away that thought and I moved on, and didn't question why I had that thought. At the same time I was Googling in the middle of the night when I was awake. Does my husband hate me? And Am I gay, but I would never connect anything. All the thoughts that I had, were all compartmentalized, I didn't connect them. And I realized now the reason I didn't even though it was becoming apparent to me that I was likely queer. I didn't have the space to hold that at the time, I had to deal with the trauma of my failing marriage and my divorce and my divorce. For me, it was so much more than just divorcing that person, it was me accepting that, like, I failed that this thing that I thought was the only thing that could make me happy. My mom was actually married four times, and my dad was married three times. So that's seven marriages between my parents and my brother, he saw that and he was like, I'm never getting married. And I saw it and was like, Well, clearly, if people are going to do it that many times and do it straight, well, then I have to this is clearly important. So now I'm grateful that my ex husband was a toxic person, I am so happy that he wasn't just a little bit nicer to me a little bit kinder, because I believe if he was I would have continued to suppress myself, and possibly to the point where I got pregnant and had children and then had to take all that and deal with that whole life and split my my kids and have my ex husband on my life forever. And that would have been terrible. So I'm really, really grateful that I did get out before I had the realization. So when I left him, it was about June of 2020. So it was like peak of the pandemic. And I got my

own place I moved in and I settled in and I would say within like the first month I started to really like okay, we're talking to myself and trying to figure out like, yo, yo, girl, you gay like what's up?

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 29:22

Yeah, wait - what did that look like?

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Nicole Liv (she/her) 29:25

So yeah, the analytical Capricorn that I am. It looked like an experiment, a project. So a friend of mine referred a book to me, called the artist way. And it is it's not just a book. It's like self led therapy. Essentially, it's a 12 week course and it's 25 years old. It is essentially just supposed to help you get back in touch with your creativity. And it's really not though it's so much more than that. It had me asking myself questions every day that I had probably never asked for myself and peeling back the layers and looking at my childhood and the experiences that I've had in this, like really emotional, but also analytical way. And so this book, The Journal prompts in this book specifically forced me prompted me to get more in touch with myself. And so on the pages I just a few weeks ago was looking back through my journals over the past few years, the amount of queerness on those pages, it is hilarious. Like I have a list, one of the prompts was write 50 wishes. And one of them was I wish I was a lesbian. And I looked back and I was like, Oh, honey, Oh, you heard you are like, Oh my gosh, like, How funny is that? But I wrote that again. And I just kept on like, I was realizing it. But at that time, I was still considering that I'm probably bisexual, I was still like, Okay, you're probably going to continue dating men like we'll explore this. So even though I'm saying I want to be a lesbian, I just couldn't allow it yet. Yeah, so it was a lot of that it was a lot of journaling. It was a lot of listening to different podcasts and a lot of Googling and reading books. And a friend of mine that I had met through a group trip a few years ago, she was the only lesbian friend that I had at the time and just talking to her and she actually was the person that told me about compact, compulsory heterosexuality. And watching The L Word. I mean, just like so many, so many things. And then, in May, last May, I finally was like, okay, like, this is real. Like, I finally got to the point where I could happily accept that I was queer. I was still not sure exactly what that meant. But I knew that my sexual and emotional attraction to women was very, very real. And I was okay with that. And I was at the point where I wanted to start exploring it. And I was also at the point where I was pretty sure that I was done dating men, but I wasn't 100% Sure. So, one morning, I wake up, and I'm like, You know what, I'm done. I'm done with men. It's women for me from now on. But this is how split I have been. I said that to myself. And then I went on to Bumble right after and was looking at my matches and saw this guy who was on paper. Perfect, perfect, perfect, perfect. Go over to the other app, her it's a lesbian, it's I think it's just now it's queer. I think it's open to everybody. But it started off as a sapphic lesbian site, and I opened that and I saw my first girlfriend. And as soon as I saw her, I just the smile came on my face that was so genuine. And right after that smile, my life with that guy flashed before my my eyes. And I was like, No, you're not like, that was the moment of fusion like mind, body and soul fusion were like, it came together. And my, my whole being was like, No, you're not doing this to yourself anymore. Like it is over. And I reached out to my now first ex girlfriend, and that was it. And we we started talking, we dated only for three months. But it was so beautiful. It was so it was great. It was a first my like the perfect first queer relationship, as she was at the point in her life. Like she just was dating again for the first time after four years. So we were both like at

this point where we're just happy and joyful to just be, you know, in a relationship together. So when we started dating, I said, Okay, this is it, I have to start telling people in my life, and so I had been telling my mom for a while, sort of just like dropping hints and things here and there, because I know that she's going to need some time to like, get used to this and everything. Even after probably about a month of dating my now ex girlfriend, I still was not sure like maybe I'm by that's what I was telling people like I think I'm by I am dating a woman now. And it was not necessarily terribly received, but it wasn't like wonderfully received by any means. My mom, I think still is struggling to this day with it. She's here she's my mom, but she's absolutely not enthusiastic in the way that she was about me dating men. My father who's a born again, Christian Republican. I actually waited about two months after I was dating her to tell him and it was truly because I was just really, really scared to do so. I was scared to learn that this love I thought was unconditional might actually not be because I knew that his beliefs were against the person that I am. I know how he votes. I know what he believes based on his rule. Religion and so I just, I felt like a child again. And like I just didn't want to disappoint my dad. And he knew actually, this is a funny story. My coming out to him, he came over to my house unannounced, because I had, I guess, been ignoring him, maybe I hadn't been reaching out as much. And he just got the vibe that like something was going on. And he needed to know. So he comes over, and my apartment is facing the parking lot. And I have a sliding glass door and we have the screen open. And I see him walking up. And every now and then I smoke a little or, and so that was out on the table, I had just gotten my head shaved, that was part of my coming out process was like, I needed to remove the most heteronormative thing from my body. And so there was another aspect of it, too. I don't know if you can see, but I'm gray. So I wanted to let my gray hair grow. And so I shaved my head head it told my dad, so he walks up, he sees this person in my home. And I'm wearing like all black like I'm like wearing my like prison uniform. And he looks in and he looks at me. And he's totally shocked. He didn't know who I am. So I'm like, How do I get to the front door? My lesbian poetry books are all over the place, my weed is out, my head is shaved, like, how do I get to the front door without him seeing that I'm putting all these things away? I do. I open the door. And he goes, You're so beautiful. And I was like, I immediately was just I crumbled because I never would have imagined that really anyone would be like, with a shaved head, you look so beautiful, let alone my own father, who I know has a very specific view of how women you know, or maybe I don't know, I believed that he had a very specific view of how women need to be and should be. And so that embrace, I was like, Okay, this is it. Like I have to tell him now. So we sat down, we, you know, did a little bit of small talk and everything. And then I said, you know, I know that you're here for a reason. I know that, you know that I have been avoiding you. And I have been and here's why. And I said you know I've been seeing somebody and he's like great, I go okay, calm down, calm down. And and I said, and there a woman, and he looked a little bit shocked. And then we just started talking about it. And I did tell him that I was bisexual, it was what I felt. At that point, I was pretty sure I was a lesbian and not bisexual, but I was still just that was the old that's as much as I could really give in this moment. And we ended up talking for two hours, I cried more than you could even imagine he cried a lot. At the point that I broke down in tears, he, excuse me, he became over and embraced me. And he's like, why, you know, why didn't you tell me? And why are you crying so much. And I expressed what I told you that I was scared to learn that your love was conditional. And I you know, I know how you feel I know your religion. I know your politics. And I just didn't want to learn that my dad didn't really love me. And he looked at me and he goes, Nicole, you first. First off, you are a human being. And I respect you. And second of all, you're my daughter, and I love you unconditionally. And I was like what I was so perplexed, I didn't, I did not see that coming at all. It was it was really, really beautiful. And it has, at times I feel closer to him since coming out. And then at times I feel farther as well, because I do know how he votes and it feels painful, just knowing those things. But every time I communicate with him, he creates such a space of love and support for me

that it's it's very confusing, but I will take it I will take and so after that after I told him I told everyone like he was really the last person to find out and that was really the beginning of of my unfolding and figuring out what my queerness really meant to me and how it was going to fit into my life. And I know it's for it's different for everyone, you know, some people come out and not much changes for them. And that's great. Maybe they just start dating people that you know of the same gender or, or whatever the case may be. But for me my whole life has become so queer, that there's no way that I could have continued to keep it from anybody. And then yeah, after I dated my my ex girlfriend and it did come to an end and I was so good with that because I was like okay, you know, like that sort of solidified for sure. I'm definitely I'm definitely gay. And now I can sort of just like move forward and I Understand my queerness personally, because despite what a lot of people believe queerness is not just about our gender and who we are attracted to. So yeah, it's just been this massive unfolding and blooming. And yeah,

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 40:18

I'm feeling so many things in this moment. I mean, I'm just I can't help but see this little you whose queerness was hijacked from her, the you kind of in college having these feelings, but kind of not letting them have any meaning you standing over the sink you with your dad, like these different, younger us at these pivotal moments in your story and just feeling so affected for her? Like, what's, what's that like for you? Like looking back at these younger yous?

N

Nicole Liv (she/her) 40:46

Yeah, I mean, I do that often. I know, child work is a lot. You know, it's a big part of my healing and, and it should be part of anyone's healing that's dealt with any kind of trauma, especially peer healing. So yeah, I understand that these past versions of me are still in me, they're still me. And so, you know, I'm not just honoring my queer self. Now I do what I can all the time to honor those past versions of myself that didn't have the support and the space to be who they were. So what that looks like for me is it can look like a lot of different things. But I'll do child work with my like young child self, we're all do like a creative, I'll paint with rainbow colors specifically, and I'm not by any means a good painter, but it's just a way of expressing and connecting, allowing that younger self to express in a way that they couldn't back then. And then just you know, anything from reading queer books, watching queer shows, making queer friends, like all of that feels like the most validating for me honestly, as far as dating goes, that's the last thing that I'm really concerned about. I know that my attraction is real, I don't need to do anything more to like build that up. What I want to build up is the rest of my queer life. And so yeah, a lot of that is constantly getting back in touch with those past versions, but then also focusing on the queer future, and being excited about what the queer future is. And a lot of what I do a lot of times do is tell those password versions like hey, like, this is where we're going, like pay attention, you know, like, this is the exciting part. And so speaking to that, I'm actually in the process of, of moving to I'm in South Florida, which is not gay friendly, whatsoever. Gays are everywhere, of course, but there really just is not too much of a community here. And it's also you know, the politics and everything, it's just no longer the place for me, and it doesn't feel like it's the place where I'm going to create that queer foundation and queer life for myself. So I was thinking, you know, I want to move somewhere that's less homophobic, less humid, less hot, less expensive, and, and has more accessible nature as well. And so I met a friend through my podcast, and she's out in Salt Lake City, Utah,

which everyone's first comment is, but all of the Mormons and I'm like, listen, I know. But Salt Lake City is actually a very progressive city. And it is very queer friendly, which I didn't know that previously. It actually has more gay people than LA. So

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 43:30

wow, whoa,

N Nicole Liv (she/her) 43:33

Yeah, I know. So I'm moving in with her mid October. I'm so excited because five minutes away for me. There's multiple queer coffee shops that do queer events regularly. There's queer birdwatching, lesbian, book, clubs, all of these things happening that are not happening here for me. So when I came out, I was like, let me create community, but my gosh, that's a job and I don't have the energy or the time. And I really would just like to insert myself into a place in which there already is this queer space in this queer community, and opportunity as well, because everything that I'm working on is related to the queer community. And so I'm so excited. I feel like this is actually going to be the start of my second adolescence of moving to this place where queer community already exists. So I've been dabbling in my second adolescence, but that's where it's, it feels it's really going to flourish for me.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 44:35

Oh, my gosh, I'm so excited for this next chapter for you. I'm just thinking about this last year, and all of this healing and growth that's happened and this just feels like this next iteration of it. Oh, my gosh,

N Nicole Liv (she/her) 44:47

I know I agree with you. I know it's exciting. It's a lot.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 44:51

And yeah, okay. Yeah, this idea of second adolescence. I feel like there's so much woven. Like I'm thinking about late blooming second. lessons, there's so much connection and overlap. I'm curious. Yeah, like this phrase second adolescence this concept like, how do you make sense of that for you in your own story,

N Nicole Liv (she/her) 45:10

for me the way that it feels like it the second adolescence is a first chance at living an authentic life. Right? You know, there were so many aspects of my childhood that were joyful, and real, and, and everything. But this is the first time where I get to just 100% Be myself. What that looks like, for me, aside from just the queer aspect, this might sound a little bit selfish, but I will

not do anything that I don't want to do. That is a part of my vibe, my movement. Since I came out, I said to myself, you have in your life before, everything that you did, was not for you. It was at the request of the rest of the world. And I said, Yes, every single time when I should have said no. And so now, unless something feels good, or promising, or interesting, I'm not doing it. It doesn't matter what it is. It could be a phone call, it could be someone's birthday party. I don't care. I am not doing anything that I don't want to do. So my second adolescence is just it's just honoring everything that I suppressed and allowing myself to say yes to what I want, and no to what I don't want. Yeah,

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 46:48

exclamation point. Wow. Like that. Yeah. Out of that. Is it that is it.

N

Nicole Liv (she/her) 46:55

Taking it back. Totally taking it back. Yeah.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 46:59

Oh, my gosh. Okay. So I want to talk with you all day long. I know. I'm just, I'm taking so much personally from this conversation. I just I'm so grateful for you, but I want to be sensitive to your time. But before we go, is there anything? Yeah, that wanted to be a part of this conversation that hasn't yet my dog? Yes. Tell us about your dog.

N

Nicole Liv (she/her) 47:20

My baby. Oh, my guy. So I got Lenny, actually, when I was still married, and she was like, Really, she was our dog. But she was really my dog. She's just gotten through so much because she is pure joy constantly. And so in my moments of intense grief, just looking at her petting her having her I mean, she is straight up therapy for me. And I remember one time I was when I was still married, and I was living, you know, where I used to live, I had a neighbor and she had a little dog. She's like, you know, this is my divorce dog and got the dog when I got divorced. And I was like, you know, I think my dog is gonna be. But anyways, I do want to say one thing importantly, to queer folks to anybody coming out later in life. My favorite saying my favorite line, whatever you want to call it is from my guiding light, Audrey Lorde, who's also queer. She says, Nothing I accept about myself can be used against me to diminish me. And that has gotten me through so many hard moments where I'm just scared of being rejected or whatever the case may be. As long as I accept myself, as long as you accept yourself. Nothing can be used against us that we accept. And then also, if you have any listeners that are still in that questioning phase, or they're not necessarily out to other people, just be kind to yourself, please just be kind, be compassionate, be patient, because you've already been through so much, and you're gonna go through a lot more. There's going to be a lot of joy, for sure. But there are going to be a lot of moments where you need and deserve compassion. So please, just be kind and be patient. Please.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 49:22

Nicole, thank you so much. You're allowed for this conversation for you sharing your story. Like I feel like so much of your work is about creating and holding space for queer healing. And that happened here that happens with the Late Bloomers Clvb. And so I just feel so touched and appreciative to have connected. Well,

N

Nicole Liv (she/her) 49:40

thank you, and you're welcome. Yeah, awesome. Yeah. So I'm glad that you get that from this conversation. That is I really just want people that come out later in life to know that, like I said that they are on the spectrum of a normal human experience that they are not alone. They're so valid and The closer you get to your truth, the more joy you have in your life.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 50:06

And then if folks wanted to connect with you and connect with the show and all that you're up to what's the best place?

N

Nicole Liv (she/her) 50:12

Okay, so yeah, I have my podcast it's called Late Bloomers Clvb and that is club with a V, it's always a V. You can find me at our website, Labor's club.com or Instagram is late bloomers club as well. We're on Apple, Spotify. I think all of the major players there. If you have any Can I like mention a few things that I'm working on? Please, yeah, that I have some resources. I have our 21 Late Bloomer healing and self love journal prompts, their journal prompts designed to help late living queer folks cultivate more healing and joy in their lives. It is such a great resources. As I mentioned, journaling and journal prompts were a big part of my process. So I really designed bees to get in touch with the joy, the excitement about the future, and also the harder feelings like you know, our grief and the pain that we deal with. So if anybody's interested, you can find that at our website, Late Bloomers club.com. And then if you have any listeners that are still in their questioning phase, and they're not out yet, I have our late bloomer, self care and coming out Guide, which you can download for free at the website. And then I'm really excited about this in holiday time. I think around the end of December, mid December and December, we're going to be dropping our first late bloomers club magazine. And it is yeah, I'm so excited. It's going to be comprised of work from the late blooming community. So Visual Arts and you know, essays and poetry, I wanted to create another space in which we can take up and make noise and see ourselves. I figured why not, you know, contribute, you can be showcased, and then other Late Bloomers can see themselves through this magazine as well. So I'm really excited about that, if any of your listeners are artists, or writers, poets, and would like to contribute, they can reach out to me at late bloomers club@gmail.com. And I'll get back to them with our submission guidelines. But I'm super excited about this. So yeah, those are the main things I am working on a few other things I can't quite mention just yet. But I'll be announcing those things on my website and Instagram and whatnot soon. So that's everything. I think my gosh,

A Adam James Conen (he/him) 52:33

oh, I am obsessed with this, because I already love your podcast. I think it's such a great resource for folks. I love your Instagram. And yeah, those resources. You mentioned big fan. And so this is such a great idea of creating a magazine from like the community as another medium of support. And oh, hell yeah.

N Nicole Liv (she/her) 52:55

You're so excited about it. Yeah, I was just, I had been thinking about the whole design thing, publishing your own magazine for a while. And then I was like, Well, why not do it about late bloomers, hello, you know, so people are so excited about it, you know how it is we want to we want to say, Hey, show Intel Look at me, I'm part of this community, I'm here. But we also want to see ourselves and other people and their work. So I felt that it would be a great opportunity for all of us. And then also having it come out around the holidays when a lot of the times we're struggling because we're you know, we're around family and we're buying gifts for other people. So it's a little something that we can, you know, give to ourselves and, and all of the proceeds are actually going to be going into a nonprofit that I'm starting that I wish I could talk about, but I can't just yet, but that's also in support of the queer community too. So lots going on over

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 53:49

oh my god, cool. I'm gonna link to all of that in the show notes. But gosh, okay, Nicole, this again, such a treat such a gift. Thank you. So thank

N Nicole Liv (she/her) 53:58

you. Thank you for creating this space as well. It's really important as you know.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 54:09

Hey, thanks for joining us for today's conversation. Feel free to head on over to secondadolescencepod.com for show notes and more. And 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 guests on the show and you want to come on and share about your own second adolescence, visit secondadolescencepod.com/beaguest and you can submit your interest there. All right, 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. All right. Take good care.