

Ep. 27: Second Adolescence w/ Jordan Killebrew (he/him)

Wed, Oct 19, 2022 11:30AM 47:20

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

adolescence, feel, queerness, people, community, parents, family, friends, unlearn, grew, life, brother, church, jordan, hear, dating, grateful, thought, person, relationship

SPEAKERS

Adam James Cohen (he/him), Jordan Killebrew (he/him)



Adam James Cohen (he/him) 00:08

Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the Second Adolescence podcast. I'm your host Adam James Cohen. On this week's episode, we have community organizer Jordan Killebrew, I loved this conversation sitting down with Jordan was truly such a gift. I was so affected by his story and feel so honored, he is wanting to share it here and invite us all in as witnesses to On this episode, you'll hear him sharing about the journey that he's traveled from growing up within a context that was really oppressive to who he was. And he had to encounter so many attacks to his humaneness really, he goes on to share about how really setting his sights on college that was his tool to get through adolescence, I just got to make it to college and things will change. And that was where it seemed to change for him and really marked the beginning of his second adolescence and his own healing journey. He shares with us about what this healing has looked like and what has been helpful for him to get to the place he is at now that really seems like living a life his younger selves might dream of I so love this conversation and getting to connect with Jordan, and I think you will do and as with each episode of second adolescence, and each guest story, I really want to invite you as a listener to listen with open curiosity, knowing that each of her stories are different and unique. You might hear some guests share things that really differ from your experience, whereas other guests might share things 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 adolescence. pod.com](https://secondadolescence.pod.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. Let's dive in and get started. Welcome to Second Adolescence. I'm really happy and excited and curious to have you here excited you said yes to come on. And so before kind of diving in anywhere, I like to first give the listeners a little context to who the person is on the other side of things. So I'm wondering if you could just give just like a mini little introduction, just to give a little context of who the person is playing the voice.



J Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 02:34

Absolutely. Hi, everyone. My name is Jordan Killebrew, I like to say that I have an abnormal love of community. And we can talk about that later, because I think I craved it as a child. But I've been living in Santa Barbara, California for 16 or 17 years. And you can catch me out in the community with local nonprofits I founded co founded a couple and yeah, that's me.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 02:58

Cool. Awesome. Okay, I'm so curious to hear about your work and about all the things you're doing in Santa Barbara. Okay, we know each other from a mutual contact mutual friend, when I reached out to you, why did you say yes,

J Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 03:11

I was reading your email. And the term second adolescence or the title really resonated with me, because it brought me back to my upbringing, it brought me back to trauma that I experienced. And it brought me back to, for me living on this earth and being in community with one another. If I don't share my story, I don't feel like I'm contributing. And so when you sent me that email, it was like, wow, that's a topic that I haven't really talked a lot about. And I hope that my story can help somebody else. That's what I've learned. When I share, it sometimes helps. And you never know what part of your story will. But I grew up in a very religious household that was not approving of queer identities. And I had friends that actually committed suicide, because they didn't feel like they were a part. And I think of them quite frequently. And that's my goal is if I was able to make it, and if I can share my story, and hopefully make help somebody else make it. That's that's all I need.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 04:16

Gosh, I mean, just on that I'm so sorry to hear that. And I'm just feeling in this moment are so affected by kind of you taking all of that with you and carrying them with you in this kind of as a responsibility to attend to them and what could have been to attend to the greater community. Wow. Yeah. Okay. Gosh, I'm so glad you said yes. I'm so glad you're here. Very excited about this. Okay. Well, so Yeah. You mentioned kind of the beginnings of your story, kind of starting within a context that wasn't necessarily supportive for queerness. Curious, like, what was that beginning of your story? Where did that take place?

J Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 04:52

Yeah, I have to start my story off with my parents. I'm a product of my dad. Who's from Compton, California and my mom, who grew up in the Bronx, New York. And when I think about their life story, it comes to me as a product of generational inherited trauma that were experienced by my ancestors that were passed down to their parents passed down to my parents, Jim Crow era, Civil Rights, continued injustices against bi-poc individuals, and then passed on to me. I think of the culture that developed in my family being in a church that was I don't want to say it's a cold, but it feels cold ish. And I think it was the culture, the culture made it feel like a cult, and was an approving of anything that seemed like the other, including

LGBTQ stuff. And so what was hard to navigate was, I always knew that I was different, but I never knew where I had a safe space or a place to just be myself. And so I always found myself being on the quieter end, and being highly perceptive. Because I was fearful of being found out fearful, somebody was going to catch me, if you will. And what's interesting is that Trey has actually helped me now as an adult, where I'm able to read people where I'm able to notice things and pay attention to detail. So like, kind of reclaiming this trauma, and putting it to use form, but there was a lot there, that was really hurtful. And I would say, I didn't feel like I belong to the church community, I didn't feel like I belonged many places at all. And so I just kept to myself, and just kind of kept my head down power through school, in high school, I did come out as bisexual. And that was much to my parents dismay, they were not approving, initially, and in many ways, kind of in denial about it. And I don't want I don't want this to be a bashing on my parents, I think my parents did the best that they could, with the resources and knowledge that they had. They were adults in the 80s, where they saw harsh and awful things happen to queer people. And I think in their love and in their faith, they wanted to protect me as much as possible. And at times that protection was not okay. But I also I can see their their point of view, although I disagree, I can see their point of view. And that was just how they could show love and how they could show empathy is just trying to protect me and telling me it's a choice. Yeah, and I remember High School distinctly, and actually had a recent recently a friend who's now out said thank you to me. And I was like, I don't know what you're even talking about. What are you talking about? Thank you. And it was just like you were you were out before any of us. And you were kind of a how do I say, helped me in my own awareness and understanding of what it means for me to be clear. And I kind of was taken aback because sometimes you just live life. And like I said, sometimes you tell your story, you don't know who is going to be affected by it. So that was nice to hear. Because I you know, when I thought about high school, I really really didn't like it. So prior to high school, I lived in Los Angeles, about a year and a half into high school, my parents decided to move to Bakersfield. And I remember, within the first month of me being there, I got jumped for being black and being gay. And, you know, I had heard my parents talk about silver rice, and, you know, you see all these things on TV. But when it doesn't happen directly to you, you're like, oh, you know, that's just kind of some fantasy world. But when that happened to me, my world kind of crumbled a little bit. It was a harsh reality that I'm not grateful for it. But I've grown from it. And it taught me how to choose my own happiness. I remember my dad pulling me aside, I was in a deep depression after it, I hated this new place I was at I hated the school didn't feel like I had community. And my dad pulled me aside and said, Jordan, only you can make yourself happy. And that has always stuck with me in many facets, I think in that moment. And as I continued to learn how to love myself, and learn how to find happiness for myself, I continue to challenge what my happiness was. And that really was an underscore. For me being able to accept me despite the religious background that was not accepting despite upsetting half of my family, probably home, my home, my family, but being true to myself. One little anecdote. I was President, my class by the time I graduated, I turn that around, and I went to UCSB and I never went back, unfortunately. But I would say when it when it comes to second adolescence, I think UCSB was A place where I can attribute where I feel like I grew up. I really, really grew up, I felt my progress as a person really was stifled until I was able to fully leave the church. Because every Saturday I would have to go go to church. And I would have to put on this facade to make my family happy. Meanwhile, I wasn't. And at college, that was when I was able to actually start breaking away and developing my own identity that I was proud of. Yeah, yeah. That's a lot. There's a lot. Oh, my

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 10:34

gosh, yes. Can I Can I jump backwards a little bit before kind of starting with college? I guess I'm curious about when little you first started to develop awareness of queerness. within you. How did that happen? Also, what was that? Like? What do you remember feeling in response to that?

J Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 10:51

So it actually came out of like a third party. It was my brother was my childhood boy. We can laugh at it. Now. We're better off for him. But he I remember him making come a little Jordan are a little weird. Like you're a little fruity. In my head. I was like, what does that even mean? And being queer and the church there for me, there was a fog of like, I feel numb. I can't get past what this is just feeling stifled, like I can't get beyond who I am. And so things socially and emotionally would take me a little bit longer to process because I was being fair to certain narrative. And then I was feeling this other narrative that didn't align. And so there was internal conflict. But my brother was probably the first one to be like, Yeah, you're a little fruity. And that was like, oh, yeah, I am. And what does that mean? And I remember being really upset. And then I remember being really hating myself, I really did go through some like loathing, and self hate, because I was not living up to being that perfect child that my parents wanted me to be. And I would say, as I continued to unlearn items from the church and items that made me hate myself, and find my path to loving myself, I would say that I started to not care so much what my parents thought, and started to not care about so much my brother thought and my family thought because they already had their preconceived notions of what it meant to be a queer person. And I remember distinctly telling my brother once, that there is many ways to live an honorable and beautiful life, and that can be outside of the church. And so I guess my story that's coming to me now, my story is really one of continuously fighting for me and fighting for my self preservation and survival. In a toxic what I felt was a toxic and unhealthy upbringing. I hope that answered your question. Again.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 12:55

No, yeah, totally. And I'm thinking about like, the different structures of toxicity that were around you on like the micro and macro scale and having to navigate that. And I guess like, what's it like today, in this moment, like looking back at kind of younger you responding to all of that, and kind of moving through it, moving with it, moving beyond it, like, what comes up as you just think about this little you who's traveling through that?

J Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 13:21

you know, I am fortunate to have lots of therapy. And you said that, because my therapist, and I think it was last year, I've recently been thrown back into a lot of family stuff. My mom's not well, and I become power of attorney, and being thrown back into family stuff, triggers a lot of things. And my therapist did recently say, Where was the moment that you're looking back? And what would you tell your younger self, and there's a moment, but I remember when I was a kid, and I was crying on my bed, I was just so frustrated with life. And I thought this wasn't going anywhere. What's the point? And I remember just crying. And I remember just feeling this notion of like, just keep going. Just keep going. And I was recalled that to my therapist, like that's how I would tell myself, I would tell my younger self, it'll get better just keep going. And I

think that's why I also have thrown myself so much into community work, because I now live with this purpose of like, if you're not doing it, then what's the point? Like, if you're not giving your all if you're not going for what you want, if you're not finding your happiness, then what's the point? And I'm fortunate enough to be able to have the opportunities to do that. But to answer your question directly, yeah, I remember the pain I remember the suffocation of not being able to be my full self. And I remember just keep on going. And I remember just college once you get to come Wash, it'll be free.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 15:02

And then you got there when I got there. Yeah, I mean, what, what was that like?

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 15:12

college was hard in terms of, I had to face my self hate and self loathing, while also trying to study, I worked three jobs, I was just trying to do everything. And I completely failed. I was placed on academic probation within my first quarter. And I'd never drank before started drinking, started drinking. And they like it brought out the suppressed emotions. And I heard a lot of people in my awake, because I hadn't taken the time to pause, and really, really figured out me, but at the same time, just the anxiety of school anxiety, and trying to pay for tuition, anxiety of trying to keep three jobs, something had to give. And so I had to be honest with myself, I was like a pre bio major, and I love biology. But then they wanted me to take organic chemistry. And I was like, I don't know what I'm doing. And so I switched my major to graphic design and photography and sculpture, because I've always been a creative. And I often kind of neglected that still trying to be the perfect child, to my parents and trying to find a lucrative career and realizing that that wasn't really me. And so switching the studio was probably the best thing that happened. And then what also helped is I became a resident assistant. And that was like the first community that I actually felt really connected to, I was able to help first year students acclimate themselves to university. And I was able to foster this beautiful, beautiful community that I love to this day, I still hang out with some of my, my, my residents, to them actually got married a couple of years ago, after meeting on our floor, and they still all are like really close friends. And I'm really grateful for them and love them so much. Because at the end of the day, I told them, we are family, like, your parents aren't here, you have each other. And they've held on to that. And so that was more of like, the structural things that helped me realize who I was and helped me to be better.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 17:30

Because yeah, I mean, I'm just thinking about you going into college sounds like yeah, you came out in high school, but then there was also this suppressing the shutting down. It's just, I'm just trying to get through. Also sounds like I'm gonna just achieve I'm gonna like do well in school, I'm going to try to just get out like there was such like, a, like, yeah, this image of just like putting blinders on almost. And then like, putting a box around you is that was that the experience?

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 17:53

it was exactly what it was, I think I was still in the mode of like, get just get to college that I applied to college. And then it just all imploded on itself. And I think that's good. It was good. I needed that self realization moment of, hey, something's not working. Something's not right. And I was grateful for it. And so you just funny you said it came out in high school, I've come out my family and like, four or five times.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 18:19

Okay, tell me about that. Yes, you're right. It's never just a one time thing. What is coming out meant for you?

J Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 18:27

So I came out to my parents a long time ago. In high school, I mentioned that again, alcohol thing, and I was drunk at a party, my sophomore year of college, and I texted my brother, hey, I'm gay. And that wasn't great. Drove up, put my mom and dad on the line and said, Don't you have something to tell them? And I don't, this is again, not to bash my brother. That's just the truth. really dramatic. My parents next week, picked me up and took me home and kind of just like, locked me in a room with a Bible. It was there's just a lot of stuff that was like, what's happening right now. And I knew they weren't ready. But I was ready. And so that was the second time. But then I again was trying to challenge it. Am I really gay and so I dated a woman for a year. And so I think that confused my parents too. And having this fluidity, Sexuality is fluid. And I really, really appreciated her as a human, but that didn't work out. And then I felt that I was actually really ready to be fully gay. And I waited actually until I was dating somebody seriously, which is now my husband to then just be like, now this is me. And then I was fortunate to have such an amazing and loving, current husband that is just amazing. Like he always has my back and walked with me through it was very, very awful. First initial impressions with my immediate family and other things. Yeah, I remember, I think it was a baby blessing. And my cousin, or my brother, one of their child's is getting blessed. And they asked me at York United go. And when I say that all these church folks who hadn't seen me like 10 years, saw me walk in with my, my fiancée at the time, jaws were like, on the floor, and it was just a nice reminder that this place isn't for me.

A Adam James Cohen (he/him) 20:31

How do you remember feeling going into that getting the reminder, this isn't for me, this place isn't for me. But what do I remember feeling walking into that space?

J Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 20:38

I remember things it for sure. It's just. But I felt like you know what, this is important to my family. I'm going to show up. And I think my family, I don't know what they were thinking, I think they perhaps that I maybe wouldn't have come. Or I maybe would have just said, Oh, this is my roommate or something like that. But I had a firm belief that this is the truth. This is my truth. And I just share it. That's what that's who I am. And I think that was the last time I went to church, that church in particular, I've had very interesting relationships with especially

around queerness. I remember one time in college, my brother and his now wife were getting baptized, and there was just a lot of drama around it. It was the time of when gay marriage was legalized. And my brother was having a really hard time with it. And he wanted me to come to church. To see him get baptized, and I'm sitting there in the church. And this is before I met my husband, I'm sitting next to my aunt. And the pastor goes on to talk about how he has a brother that's gay and how he needs to come to church and my hands rubbing my thigh. And I'm just like, did you all just like stage this whole thing to try and like, save me? Later, I found out that was the case. And it was just very disheartening, because time and time again, I found that the people that say they love me and the people that I like they do they have their version of love. But it's so detrimental because I wasn't being seen. I wasn't being heard. There was no you need to live this way. And that's it.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 22:22

Yes. When it gets tricky. I mean, tricky is a light word for it. But like growing up within a context that is so oppressive to your identity, and the translation of messaging around the wrongness of your identity that like even at the unconscious level, we it seeps into us like that's why it's so tricky. That's why it's so tricky. You mentioned the phrase unlearning. I'm thinking about like, was that some of the stuff you had to unlearn? Like, what did unlearning look like for you in your own healing?

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 22:53

And that's what is healing. So there's a lot of healing going on. Yeah, I'm learning that I'm not worthy. Because in the church, the messages that I would get consciously and subconsciously, were no. Like, you're you're not, you are, you are less than you are a sinner. And everything in the church is such a binary that it for me, that was just always hard to grasp that everything is so black and white. And I think in, in unlearning, in my my own learning journey, is I learned to rely on finding my own happiness and finding my own joy, not looking towards the church to do that, for me, was another type of community or anything like that. It really made me look in the mirror and say, What do I love about myself? And it also made me unlearn like, I have learned a lot of religion, and religious things that were very negative, because for me, the tenants of what they're preaching is that everybody's welcome. And everybody should be deserving of love and should be deserving of equity should be deserving of joy, peace, happiness, etc. And learning that for myself, I'm learning whatever negativity was around it. I remember when I came out to one of my friends, and I don't know why I sent an email, I sent him an email, and I was just like, disgusted with myself. I was writing awful things about myself. And he wrote me back and said, Hey, man, why are you being so down? I'm like, what? reread this, and I reread it and I was like, wow, I really hate myself. I had to unlearn that hate. I had to stop and reflect. And I think reflection is really huge. Because sometimes, you know, like I was in high school, just going, going, going like I was in college at the beginning, just going, going going. I found that sometimes when I just go go go and I don't take a moment to pause, reflect and see where I've how much I've grown, then I lose sight of who I am and what I've done in that worth right then in there. And so, for me, I had to unlearn that blinders. Because it was really it was really a survival mechanism to just like, I'm just going, I'm just keep my head down, nobody will notice me had to unlearn that. I also had to learn how to when I do something good, except that I did something good and accept the compliment. Because a lot of times, I was trying not to be noticed. And now when somebody noticed me, I freak out. And so just trying to unlearn that I'm

worthy of praise. And at the end of the day, I'm worthy of love. And that's something that I needed to figure out, especially before I got into a very serious relationship, just how to love you. And me and my partner are very, very keen about we are two whole individuals, we are not trying to fill each other's cup. And so it's been the healthiest relationship I've ever had. Because we are sometimes probably too much honest and open with each other. But I don't think I would have it any other way.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 26:06

When did your story together begin? When did you meet your partner?

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 26:09

Yeah, so funny. Ironically, 2016 was a reluctance to happen. But that's when I met York. So we met on a dating app, and he calls it a hookup. But this romantic, and I had had very awful experience on dating apps prior. I had a person, catfish, me and pretend to be me. And it got to the level of like getting police involved. It was just a very traumatic event and made me go off of the apps for a while because it was just like, I don't need that. But of course, how do you meet people nowadays, and living in Santa Barbara. What's interesting is, you know, York, and I met on an app, Santa Barbara is only like 100,000 people. And the LGBTQ community is like a fraction of that. A very small fraction of that. So it was interesting, because he grew up here born and raised. And when we decided to meet up, mind you my profile, just had my height, my photo, and like a little Beyonce trivia. And he definitely thought it was an Axe Murderer, because he was like, why is going on here. But he decided to meet up and I was I was very quick to be like, let's meet up. I don't want to get into a text report on these. These apps. I've seen how that happens. And then you never meet up. And then it's just like, so we tried to meet up on a Monday at 9pm, which is way past her bedtime. All night. And we just hit it off. Right there. It was I still get butterflies thinking about that first date. And what was funny is he had gotten dinner with somebody before that. That was somebody I'd worked with 10 years before. And so it was interesting, as we started to get to know each other's friends, we had like 50 or 60 mutual friends, which makes me think that it's all about timing. Like I wasn't ready to meet him. He wasn't ready to meet me in the small town. And now we have all these overlaps of relationships. And it's really interesting how we've been in people's lives in different iterations. Just never never crossed back. Wow.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 28:24

Wow. And yeah, you mentioned for you and yeah, perhaps for your partner as well, like, there was some individual work that needed to be done until you would be at a place where you'd be open to a partnership like this. I'm curious like, because I'm hearing you're at UCSB become an RA you start to find community, like what happened next, in that process of healing and of doing whatever work you needed to do, to kind of get yourself to this point where you you are feeling healthy and ready and open to something like that. I'm thinking about you start to first date, like all of that. Yeah,

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 28:58

so I did do quite a bit in my early 20s. After college, I would say the biggest thing is I did live in a different city and Philadelphia, which I will always have a special place in my heart. I went to Penn Academy of Fine Arts and hated the program, hated the master's program. And I read through but I stayed in Philadelphia, because it was a moment for me just be on my own, to be on my own in a city of Grand zero family. And I was not familiar with and was able to when you go to a new place, there are certain things that you start to have to face and have to be aware of about yourself. You'd have to make new friends you have to really get outside of your box and I was grateful for those six months. I did move back Santa Barbara after Sandy hit. I don't know hurricanes. I'm a Southern California boy for sure. So that's critical. And that's when I started making my own kind of adult friends and we called ourselves we used to go to at music festivals and call ourselves the turnips, started developing what was like the show Living Single, or like friends started developing like core friends like that, who, in our 20s, we all challenge each others to be better, we all have some growing up to do. And I was really grateful to them. Through everything that we went through, we are able to talk through it and help each other out. And so, I hope in my story, people hear that I'm a beneficiary of so much feedback, all the way through from my dad telling me, you know, you can only find your own happiness from my director when I was a resident assistant Bala, she told me to never have too much of an ego because it blocks you from growth to even my grandfather, my grandfather, I remember asking him when I was younger, while you're turning 80, you must have everything. And he told me, are you mad? Every day I learned something new. And if you don't learn you're debt. And so just like product have so many stories and so much feedback? Yeah, I feel really grateful. I take that to heart and take it very seriously. Because that feedback is really important here. Listen in engage with process and body. I tried to do that. Yeah, I think I answered your question.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 31:20

Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. I mean, gosh, I like now we just I want to write all the all these lessons you've learned on the wall just to have around like what a gift that type of feedback is, and I appreciate you naming that, like, in different way these people may or may not have realized, like they are our guides, in many ways, saying something that really we needed to hear that sticks with us that helps us get where we need to go like how special that can be. so special. Wow. And then okay, so then dating, like, that's always such, you know, I smile at this topic. I see you smiling too. I think like whenever I talk about this topic, with guests on this show, particularly within the framework of second adolescence, and like those beginning, dating years, years, whatever, it's wild, and like, particularly if we don't have a lot of dating experience, prior to kind of, on this other side of coming out, right? Like, it can be a really interesting time, to say the least. So curious, how do you look back at those beginning dating years and kind of how you were finding yourself relating to people and what the process was of getting to this point?

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 32:33

And slowly forgiving myself. For some cringe. Yeah, my friend, one of my friends reminded me he lived with me at the time, I was always dating somebody or I was always trying to be in a relationship. And I think that was that crave of having my community and like having a person. Yeah, but Whoa, did I have the wrong people I was dating like that were really listening to me, or at the time, maybe it wasn't reflecting the worth that I wanted, maybe I wasn't as full in my

cup. And so they were treating me as such. And that's being really nice to them. And I remember, I wanted to always prove love to people that probably wouldn't think twice about. And I took me like eight or 910 different types of relationships, to finally get it through my thick skull, but I can do better. And in those relationships, you know, you take little things and you learn, you take little things and you learn real hurts. Because again, I have like I said, I'm gonna help us romantic. And I was always just searching for that best friend that I always have. And you know, it's you see it in the movies, you see it, you know, in TV shows, that's what I wanted, I wanted that person. But I had to also have the realization that this isn't a movie, this isn't a TV show. This is my life. And the choices that I make. And the decisions that I make are integral and they stack up. And so I had to one again, love me be competent me and loan, just let that lead. Really when I wasn't looking for it. That's when you're popped up in my life. I was not looking for a relationship I got into a plan was just like, let's just see where it goes. Yeah, I'm on this dating app. But then this very cute gentleman popped up. And it was like, well, we're in a relationship. Like we were like, Whoa, we're there. We're old souls. But dating dating is hard, because you put so much of yourself out there. And in a very, very vulnerable and real way. You can get rejected, you can say one wrong thing. And people are like, Oh, this person's this. And that's like, there's just so much stakes at play. And I think in many regards, I tried to rush things To get what I want, but actually, we just needed to take time. And I needed to take time for myself to understand myself.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 35:06

Totally. Because yeah, like, again, like, growing up with anti queerness. We're not set up to succeed in dating, when we start, like we come in with so much of our own stuff. And so much of our own limiting beliefs and so much of the people we're with, like, I use this phrase, the necessities to talk about these, like messy, necessary experiences, right, like the but they propel growth, but they're messy, because we're coming in with our own shit, the other person's coming in with their own shit. And like, we're like little babies, trying to learn how to both understand how we're feeling and communicate that be in relationship with someone else navigate needs, and there's just so many layers to learning how to be with and integrated in with our romantic selves, and how that can show up in relating to a partner. Like, it's just a journey and a process. So it takes time.

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 35:59

it absolutely does. Yeah. And I think that was my mistake. I was trying to rush it until I needed to realize like, I can't, I can't rush it. And so that came with some heartbreak, for sure. But it was like you said and necessary.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 36:14

Yeah. Another part of your story that I keep being curious about is the way I hear you talk about your family now. Like, I hear so much compassion for kind of understanding the why behind certain ways of kind of fostering your growth and socializing you into yourself, while also still holding, of course, like where things were not okay, in terms of serving you long term. Was that there at the beginning, this compassion was that a journey of like, what does that look like?

Because I think that's a really challenging thing for a lot of queer folks who come from either a family system or some other like smaller community contexts that were sources of harm that we have to then later undo. So yeah, what was that like for you?

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 37:01

So I distinctly like I said, when my brother is getting baptized, and even before then there was a time where I needed a break for my family. I just needed and I think was like, around 10 years, where I didn't go to family events, I didn't really do much aside maybe Thanksgiving. And there was always a family joke like, Well, Jordan ever comes around in my head, I would say, that's because I don't feel welcome. And I think at times, there was anger, but I very early on came to a place of anger is not really going to do anything. It's not going to serve me. And it was showing up in different ways. Mostly when I was drinking. And that was not me. And I had that realization, like, This isn't me. So let's figure out what that is. And thank goodness for therapy, cannot advocate for behavioral health supporting them. But I came through a lot of phases of emotions towards my family, because yes, there was those three hour calls with me and my brother going round and round of hadn't debating why I'm gay. And there's anger there. But when I pull myself up to a higher level, and look at it from a bird's eye view, of where they are coming from, and what they've seen and what their life experiences are, of course, they're going to be like, this is four. And this is something I don't know, I know religion. I know this path. I know this works. I know what American society is, I know what's easy. The path you're choosing is not going to be easy. So why do it that was at the core of the challenge, just like, why are you doing this to yourself? I see you're being a detriment to yourself, and me having to take that narrative and say, No, there is a narrative, my life is out here, being who I am, and I'm gonna prove you wrong. And I'm gonna do what I can to be that light, and show you that there are so many ways to live a beautiful life, regardless of sexual orientation, regardless of race, etc. Like, there's so many ways, and I stayed consistent. And so the compassion comes from is, you know, I married my husband, I was able to do that. But I remember my vows. I was crying because I would never I had never in my wildest dreams, five year old Jordans, 10 year old Jordan 15 year old Jordan would never imagine that I would be at the altar with a man with my family. Some of them with their arms folded, but whatever the year they're witnessing. And for me, that was a huge moment of understanding that I did it. I went through it. Like whatever told myself is where I'm at. And for me that that that was just kind of the best. I I got to marry the person, man of my dreams and have my family there. And they may not understand it, but I at least understand where they're coming from. I don't like it, but, but there's a respect. They're just like, Okay, you have your, your thing. And this is my life. And it's interesting, because I remember they would always say, I don't agree with your lifestyle, and I would retort I don't agree with your lifestyle. And that would really knock them off their, their seats. Because who's to say that your lifestyle is holy? Yeah. And so it was really interesting, the growth that my family, especially my immediate family has come to because we all experienced trauma in our different ways. It's intentional now, especially with me and my brother, that we have healing. My dad was always kind of, okay, like he had clear siblings. So he kind of understood it. My mom was super religious and had a hard time, but was really, really mean to York. I love her. I love her. But we're, we're just saying the truth. And then one day, she wasn't. And I don't know what what was, but she came around. And I think what also was nice is meeting your family, having my family meet your family, your family, I don't know what it is, but they don't have any drama. And I'm like, how you all like to hang out with each other is amazing. And I think my family being around that and seeing that it's not a big deal, to be a person that's LGBTQ was really healthy. And it's been really helpful.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 41:37

I'm feeling so many things. And at first, I'm just feeling so appreciative that you're letting all of us into your story and being so generous with it. And I'm just feeling so touched by this image of you at your wedding. And these little us being there with you. And like witnessing this moment, like, so powerful. I like can't put words together made like I'm tingling that well. That's really really, really powerful. I'm so happy you got that moment. I'm so happy they got that moment of these little us getting to see where things went. That's amazing.

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 42:17

It was worth it.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 42:19

Cool. Okay, I want to talk with you all day long. I know, I have to wrap up. I don't want to. But was there anything that hasn't been brought into this conversation? I know, there's lots of parts of your story. Sure. Was there any other part of your story that wanted to be included in this conversation?

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 42:36

I would say that I like I said the beginning. I'm very involved in the community. Yeah. The community has given me so much affirmation that I'm on the right path. Like I said, I've co founded Juneteenth Santa Barbara, I was co founder of product IV love, which helped create a park and a year after the victims of Iowa's shootings in 2014 happened, and from my day job to my extracurriculars, I am so grateful for a community that loves me and shows that love when I step out, and I try and get back, and I have to really, really grateful that a community like Santa Barbara, is so open and willing to take my ideas and let me run with them. And so I have to share gratitude for that I have to share gratitude to my family, you know, I wanted to divorce my family. And that's just not going to be the case. And so, how we learn to coexist, even though we have drastically different ideals and still find joy is really important. I really am grateful for the journey. It was a journey for them just as it was me. And then my rocks have served as like my friends who have been with me all throughout it. But I've seen me at my absolute and still propped me up, like Molly Lewis is Melissa VANOS. Sarah bunches. There's so many people, Jamie, Tao, so many people that have pulled me up and believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. I am so grateful for that. So yeah, my community, my family and most definitely my friends have been my chosen family. He's the constant. He's always there and has really made me a better human.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 44:41

Well, if anyone listening is feeling pulled to want to either connect with you or reach out. Are you someone who is open to receiving that or

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 44:53

Yeah, so on my website, jordankillebrew.com folks are able to reach out I think there's a Contact button there. And I'll send an email to me. So I'm happy to talk more about these really important conversations because I don't again, like I don't think when I saw the second adolescence, and I read about this, I was like, Yeah, we don't talk enough about the developmental phases for LGBTQ youth. I hope that in sharing, and this is why I share that helps somebody, thank you.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 45:26

Thank you. I mean, just even selfishly, I feel like, I've been helped, I feel like I want to immediately go re listen to so much of what you shared. And I know I'm not going to be the only one experiencing that. So I just want to really, again, express that gratitude to you coming on and sharing your story with me. And then with everyone listening, like it's such a gift. And I really do get to believe sharing our story, and letting others kind of hear it and be in connection with it. Like it totally is the antidote to feeling alone and to feeling just all the suffering that like Unfortunately, our community has placed onto us and so I just feel so touched and appreciative. Thank you so much.

J

Jordan Killebrew (he/him) 46:06

Of course, thank you keep doing what you're doing.

A

Adam James Cohen (he/him) 46:10

And you too, it sounds like you're doing incredible work in Santa Barbara. So fantastic. 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 guest on the show and you want to come on and share about your own second adolescence visit [secondadolescencepod.com/be a guest](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 in 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.