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Brandon: ([00:05](#)):

Welcome to the Sex with Dr. Jess Podcast. I'm your co-host Brandon. We're here with my lovely other half. Dr. Jess, how are you?

Jess: ([00:26](#)):

I'm good, man. You know, I'm excited for today. Cause I have a lot to learn about this topic. We are going to be talking about friendship and it is such an important topic because friendships just like intimate relationships can have such a significant effect on your mental health, your physical health, happiness, life fulfillment. And as I started digging into the research, uh, well, one thing I found is that social isolation has actually increased over the last few decades in North America. And I'm talking far prior to COVID and I was looking at the, uh, 2006 study found that the number of friends, people feel they can discuss important matters with,

Brandon: ([01:10](#)):

Let me guess, two.

Jess: ([01:13](#)):

Well, there's a two in there. That's pretty good. Yeah. So it fell from 2.94. So almost three in 1985 to 2.08. In 2004,

Brandon: ([01:26](#)):

Let me ask you... Sorry about that.

Jess: ([01:29](#)):

It's alright.

Brandon: ([01:29](#)):

Is, does, does your partner, if you're in a, in a relationship, does your partner count as a friend to the, in the study? Do you know? That's a great question. I'm not sure because I feel like I don't know that I would have 2.9 or three friends with whom I would feel comfortable discussing serious matters. I think I can think of one, maybe two, depending on the topic, but if, if you're not in that mix, it's, it's...

Jess: ([01:59](#)):

No, you know, you can't tell me serious stuff. Uh, that's interesting. Cause I start to think about my numbers and how do I say this? I'm not sure it's particularly relevant how many there are. Right. I don't know that it's, that I need eight versus four or, you know, it's so easy to say, like when I was counting, you know, as I do this, I have you, and there are four others in my life whom I feel I can approach with really serious stuff. There are probably actually more than that, but there's four that I'm kind of close with. And I don't want to look at this and say, Oh, I'm above the 2.08. I think really what matters is the quality of the relationship as opposed to the number of friends. But as I did dig into the research, Ooh, there's so much data, uh, suggesting that, you know, strong social ties are tied to overall health. So from lower blood pressure to recovering from disease to lower inflammation, to lower risk of dementia as we age, which makes sense. And apparently your social connections are, are actually associated with living longer. So I looked at this research review of 148 previous studies and it included 300,000 participants.

And what they found was that the effect of your social ties on your lifespan is twice as strong as exercising or the equivalent to quitting smoking.

Brandon: ([03:30](#)):

Wow. That's pretty intense. It was funny that you mentioned this whole numbers game because it goes back to this concept that you've thrown out before in this podcast, which is, it's not always about the quantity as it is about the quality it's like we measure relationships based on how long they have lasted as opposed to how good they are, even in shorter periods of time. Um, I think about my friend game and I feel like my friend game is lacking and I think in a lot of ways, it's my fault. I think that I haven't, um, you know, really made an effort at times in my life to reach out to my friends. And I think that there are, um, social elements that have played into that. There have there's um, the patriarch plays into that. Like there's a lot at play there.

Jess: ([04:16](#)):

Yeah. I think one of the things I'm sometimes a bit self-conscious about is that I don't have many life, life, lifelong friends, right? Like I'm not really in touch with a ton of people from my super young years. And so when I think about the people who are in my life, I haven't been friends with them for decades upon decades, but there's some story I'm telling myself that says, Oh, you should write, it should be a childhood friend. I can think I have one only one childhood friend with whom I'm still in touch. And we don't talk often just cause we live kind of across. We live very far away. And then I have one high school friend who wasn't really a high school friend, cause she only went to my high school for a couple of months and I stay in touch with her. But very it's, it's very sporadic. Like we could not talk for years, but I, I value the friendship and I love when we connect. So I think I'm a little, I have to admit, I'm a little self-conscious about this topic, but I'm happy that Dr. Shari Nicole, she's a psychologist and the key consultant with Everyday Psychology, she's going to be joining us to help us better understand our friendships. She's going to help us understand how to know when a friendship is worth keeping versus how to know when it's perhaps time to end the friendship and how to go about that. But before we welcome her, I do want to shout out, LetsGetChecked.com where you can order almost any health test online. Anything you can imagine from hormones to S T eyes to liver, to diabetes, you order online at LetsGetChecked.com. They ship you everything you need to collect your and send it back in and you get your results online in a matter of days. And I know a bunch of people are already using this because I do have a discount code. Please go learn more at let's get checked.com. Please use the code Dr. Jess to save. And also so that they know that you heard about them here. And now I guess we dive into this sort of sensitive topic without further ado. Let's welcome Dr. Shari, Nicole psychologist with Everyday Psychology. Thank you so much for joining us to chat about friendships and breakups today.

Dr. Shari: ([06:33](#)):

Yes. Thank you for having me. I'm so excited and amped to be here.

Jess: ([06:37](#)):

Now. I thought of this topic, not only because it's something that I think I've struggled with and Brandon has struggled with, but you also have a podcast, 3 Psychs and a Mic. And you covered this recently with a couple of other psychologists.

Dr. Shari: ([06:52](#)):

We did. We did. We actually talk about friendship quite a bit on our show. I was just going back and listening to some episodes in prep for today. And we've had a couple of episodes around friendships, around friendships as an adult because that's just a whole other ball game. And um, we think it's so important. One because the three of us are actually really good friends. And so we've actually been through kind of the ups and downs that happen with friendships, but also because friendships are one of those central relationships in our lives and we don't often talk about them. Um, and so, yeah,

Jess: [\(07:33\)](#):

So working with two close friends, yes, that's really interesting. I don't, I don't, I Brandon and I, you know, work together only very, very, very part time only on this single project of the podcast, but it brings up issues in the relationship.

Brandon: [\(07:48\)](#):

What?????

Jess: [\(07:49\)](#):

Mostly my fault.

Brandon: [\(07:55\)](#):

I wouldn't say, but we've had our moments for sure.

Jess: [\(07:58\)](#):

Like, wait, let's just admit it. I freak out about things.

Brandon: [\(08:01\)](#):

You know what, normally you don't freak out, but I've found I just, over the last six to 12 months with the pandemic and some of the added stressors, there've been moments that I think you've overreacted. Maybe I'm speaking out of place, but I feel like you've overreacted. It's just not normal for you because normally you're quite level headed and rational, but all the other emotions that come to the surface come out in some of our discussions.

Jess: [\(08:26\)](#):

I'm a shaken pop bottle right now. I've been a shaken pop off for awhile.

Dr. Shari: [\(08:30\)](#):

So I think we're all there.

Jess: [\(08:32\)](#):

Yeah. Yeah. So working with friends has that shifted the relationship at all?

Dr. Shari: [\(08:38\)](#):

So there are moments of course, where, you know, the work blends into the friendship, but I think we're very, um, intentional around when we are doing work. So when we're recording, when we're prepping, it is specifically focused on work. And then when we have our friend moments, we don't talk about the

pod. We don't talk about the work together. Um, and it doesn't help that, you know, we're all psychologists. So, you know, we, we have that added layer of being able to notice if things are spilling over or if those lines are getting blurred. Um, but there have been moments where if there is a little bit of a rift in the friendship, it kind of spills over to, you know, how much patients we may have with one another on recording day or, you know, those types of things. But we really try to catch him, try to catch those rips early. Um, but there have been moments where it's like, wait a minute, that's, that's not a podcast feeling at all. That's a friendship feeling and vice versa.

Jess: [\(09:41\)](#):

That, that makes total sense. Now as a psychologist, how much do you see friendship issues coming up in practice with your clients? Like, are they talking about their friends often? Are they struggling with communication with friends?

Dr. Shari: [\(09:55\)](#):

For sure. No, it's constantly. It's constantly. Um, and I think because our friends, like I said, is one of the most central relationships that we tend to have and it's central throughout our entire lives. Right. So even if, you know, I wasn't, I always joke and say, I wasn't allowed to date until I was like out of high school, but I still had friends at that point. Right. So even from our earliest relationships, friendships kind of mirror throughout our lives. And so you hear, or I hear so many people coming in throughout the lifespan, talking about how their friendships are either adding to or depleting or kind of taking away from their enjoyment from their day to day, um, values and things of that nature. And so there, there's always a tension there of, you know, what are those relationships like? What are those friendships like and how can we continue to enhance them so that they continue to add to the life that we're building for ourselves?

Jess: [\(10:59\)](#):

You know, we often think about attachment styles with regard to intimate relationships, but our friendships are also shaped by our early experiences. And one thing that really strikes me and I really want to get your take on attachment styles and how it affects friendships. But I wanted to note, and I don't know if you've observed this, but so many of the friendships that are represented in popular media are not always the not, Oh, I don't want to use the word healthy, but not always necessarily what we'd like them to be. And I'm thinking about, um, I'm just going to describe this to people for folks who don't watch it. But I'm thinking about Brooklyn 99, which is a show that tries to take a stand on things that tries to model a variety of, I think, behaviors and interactions that, that other shows haven't touched, but the friendship between Jake who's kind of the star and his, his best friend, Charles, Charles is possessive and jealous and doesn't want him having any other friends, even the cannibal

Brandon: [\(12:07\)](#):

Subordinate.

Jess: [\(12:08\)](#):

Yes.

Brandon: [\(12:08\)](#):

There's that, there's an element of subordination.

Jess: ([12:11](#)):

Yeah. Where he worships Jake and Jake kind of feeds into that. And that's just one silly little example. So if we ended that makes me think about Charles' attachment style and you know, his upbringing, so let's go back to attachment styles. How do our attachment styles that we learn? And in our early years shape relationships, friendships, not just intimate relationships.

Dr. Shari: ([12:36](#)):

And I love the TV reference, cause I am always in a space of like, Oh my gosh, let's look at these dynamics here. You know, and people are like, let's just watch the show. Definitely. I think, you know, our attachment styles are, they play a huge role in just how we engage in relationships, period, and friendships are not exempt from that. Um, so for those who may not know fully about attachment theory, it basically just describes how we create bonds in our lives, based on the ways in which the bonding was carried out in our early relationships. So it's, it's, it's focused on bonds, it's focused on how we typically connect to others around us. And those bonds in our early relationships are usually mirrored by, you know, what we gained from our caregivers. So parents or grandparents or whomever was the caregiver for you in that moment. Um, and so in our early lives, we always get these messages about how safely, how to safely engage with others. And we also learn how to gain love from others and how to give love to others. And so this often leads to how we attach it, bleeds to how we engage with the closeness that happens in relationships. And so that's kind of a, a brief overview of a full attachment theory. But, you know, as we are going through our lives, we get so many messages, um, whether they be indirect or direct, right? So whether people are saying, Hey, this is how you behave in friendships, or you see how others are behaving in friendships. Um, and so we get these messages and sometimes they leave us feeling securely attached, which means that we're often grounded in our ability to trust the closeness and the distance that will happen in relationships, um, or we're happening in friendships. And then on the other hand, we can also be left with those more insecure attachments, which are mostly described as like avoidant attachment or dismissive attachments. And we can have more anxiety or angst around that closeness or that distance and that trust that happens in our friendships. And so depending on kind of where you fall in that continuum, whether those attachments can be secure, you're going to be able to, or you're going to engage in different ways. Right. So if you are developing those secure attachments, you're okay with distance you're okay with talking to a friend, you know, and then maybe go in a week or so, and then being able to not think, Oh my gosh, that friend has left me. They forsaken me, but you're secure in that closeness and that distance, you are able to trust that. However, if you have that more anxious, that more, um, avoidant or dismissive attachment, oftentimes there's a lot of anxiety around the connection. There's a lot of anxiety around the distance. So if that person isn't there, isn't attending to you in a certain way, there may be this thought of they've left me, you know, what do I need to do to get them back? What do I need to do to connect them to me again, or to attach again? And so it's, it's really an interesting way to look at the ways we act in friendships and the ways that our friends act or engage with us. Um, and so, like I said, those messages are sometimes explicit around those relationships. Um, and then sometimes pretty, pretty inexplicable as well. Um, I can say I've got very specific messages from my mom growing up about the need to have one to two best friends, no more like, yeah, more than that, you just need one or you just need to, um, but I've heard others say that they got messages about leveraging friendships as social capital, right. So being able to have a wealth of friends because it opens up connections. And so, you know, it's just different, you know, depending on how you're getting those messages throughout your early childhood,

Jess: ([16:45](#)):

You know, when you talk about attachment styles and friendships, and it's maybe not something I've considered, because I've always thought about it in the intimate context, it really offers a reminder that your attachment style isn't fixed, right. You can be very securely attached in some relationships or types of relationships and more absolutely insecurely or anxiously or disorganized in others. Like I can say for myself that I feel very secure, loosely attached, always in my intimate relationships have sort of felt okay. Um, but in friendships less so, and I can kind of go back to my younger years and maybe not fitting in and being mixed race and kind of not really having a group. Um, and I, I look back at like high school, really not having a lot of friends, um, partly of my own doing, because I kind of, I would say I ditched them for a boyfriend and also not fitting in, in a, in a really homogenous high school. Like really just not liking it there. And so that's, you know, I'm thinking back to 1994, um, that still affects me today. And of course, you know, I'm wondering, you know, do we hold more unrealistic standards for friendships? Like maybe we're more avoidant in intimate relationships. We hurt each other. We fight, we apologize. We make amends, we move forward. We don't give up and walk away for the most part at the first sign of disagreement or tension. And we've been told that it is okay to engage in conflict. We've been told it's normal. Um, so, you know, of course there are people who avoid it, but for the most part people don't. So how do you kind of, how do you make sure you apply this to friendships? Like I can say I'll just speak for myself. I'm more avoidant of conflict in friendships. So how do I kind of push through this and be more straightforward now that I've given you my history and, uh, just therapize me?

Dr. Shari: ([18:46](#)):

No, I think that makes sense. Right? So I think we get so many opportunities to talk about intimate or relations or romantic relationships. Like we have like, Hey, you know, I've got a new friend and friends are like, Hey, tell me about them. Let's talk about them. But if you're like, I've got a new, like best friend people are like, Oh, good for you. You know, it's, it's not, it's like, great. Okay. And so I think, you know, there that it's so important to create these spaces where we're able to say, how am I engaging in my friendships in a way that is healthy, right? We put those labels on it. How, how am I engaging in my friendships that is, is connecting us and how might I not be? And it's going to look different because with intimate relationships, with romantic relationships, there are different dynamics. You do different things. You're hanging together in different ways. And so with friendships, I think we often don't put the level of thought into them. We don't think about it as you know, we have to intentionally be invested in the relationship. I think with intimate relationships, you know, you hear people say, Oh, you know, intimate relationships or work, you know, you always have to come and you gotta be ready. But with friendships, it's like, Oh, you just click or you don't. And that's not always the case because you may click, but there may be moments where that clicking isn't happening for different reasons. And in those moments, it's really important to say, wait a minute, it's not a, Oh, we just don't fit together anymore. I actually do have to come and I have to put in the work as well, because this is a relationship, just like any other relationship in my life.

Brandon: ([20:34](#)):

Do you find that there's a difference in terms of what, you know, the sex is like, how, how people interact? Like I'm listening to everything that you have to say. And I'm thinking about my own relationships. And I've found that I'm of not having had invested into my, really my friendships and they still work. I'm still friends with those individuals. But when I think about how they've not dissolved, but maybe become less intense or less, um, we just, we interact less. I realized that I'm not investing into those relationships like I did before now, whole bunch that we could probably unpack there. But do you find that, uh, the men tend to do this more than women? Is there a difference there in terms of who's willing to invest into friendships?

Dr. Shari: ([21:24](#)):

That's a great question. That's a great the question of the sexist, right. But no, I do think that we, women and men, um, and across the genders, we get different messages about friendships and we get different messages about how to show up in friendships. Um, and so I know I can speak for my own personal self for black women. Oftentimes the messages that we get about friendships are, you know, you can't really get along. Like, you know, if you think about TV shows, right? If we go back to that, we think about like the Housewives series or, you know, all of these different, um, reality shows that are showcasing friendships. Oftentimes it does say like, Oh, you know, you should cut this person off. Right. We get that cut off culture. That's really evident. And so I think being able to think about just all of the pieces and identities of who we are and how friendships are characterized in those pieces. Right? So for women, oftentimes our friendships are that, you know, that leaning force like this is the person that I go to. This is my person. Right? Think about Grey's anatomy. This is my person. Um, but for men, I think oftentimes they don't get those same messages around. You can have a person that's also a guy, or that's also a friend that doesn't have to be a romantic or intimate partner. And so I think there is that gap in messaging that often impacts our behaviors and how the choices that we make when it comes to friendships. Right.

Brandon: ([23:02](#)):

Again, I reflect back on growing up and my friendships were really, they really revolved around sports and activities and those friendships, we weren't encouraged to open up and be vulnerable. And it's only as I've gotten older, that I've sat, I've found the opportunity. And I think I've pushed my comfort zone with certain select individuals to try and open up. And that's more, I'm comfortable doing it. And I think it was also comfortable just putting myself out there, but it wasn't something that I grew up being that was reinforced where it's like, this is your friend. They're here to support you in good times and bad. It was like, this is your friend. You go play hockey with them. Or you go to the bar or you may ask you, did you have any friends? No, I don't want to put my dad on the spot here. I don't want to speak entirely on his behalf, but what I grew up experiencing was that his, um, he didn't have as many close friends and the friends that I saw him have there w there wasn't that disclosure, that vulnerability, those con those deeper conversations. And again, I don't, I didn't sit on all the, all the conversations that my dad had with his friends. But when I did see them, they tended to be very what I perceive to be one dimensional. So I mimic that behavior when I started having my, my friend circle. But again, over the last five to 10 years, it's changed. But it only changed with what Dr. Shari you're saying about that in that investment, it was like, did you put in the time and the effort that took me realizing

Dr. Shari: ([24:40](#)):

No, I love that point. I think you raised a really amazing point because for women, our friendships are centered around vulnerability. They're centered around, this is the person you can share your soul with. Right. And then you do activities if you can. And so I hear you saying, like for men, it's based around activity, there's a task. This is what we're coming together to do. We're coming together to play sports or to build something or to do something. And then if there are moments where we need to be vulnerable, we can do that too. So that's that reverse around the role of the friendship and what it plays in your life?

Jess: ([25:18](#)):

That that's an interesting commentary from me because my friendships more revolved also around activity, for sure. And I think that's maybe why I had, you know, friends of all genders, but a lot of my

buddies, like we played sports together, or we went for a drink together. And only in the last few years, have I developed these more intimate friendships with a small handful of people I want to go back and just say that I kept talking about intimate relationships when that's not even the right language, because friendships can be intimate relationships. What I really should be saying is like romantic relationships. And I have a couple of friends in my life right now where I look forward to growing old with them. Right. Like, and that's, that's for the first time in my life that I've felt that way. Yeah. It's very interesting. I still have the insecure attachment style where I worry about it. Um, and I'm aware of that, but my take home from what you've said thus far is really, I need to invest in those relationships. And part of why I haven't is that my lifestyle has not been, has not facilitated that. Right. Like prior to COVID, I was just flying around all the time. Right. And really just traveling and traveling and working and working. And my friends are on the ground here in Toronto. And so that's a very different lifestyle. Brandon, as my partner can fit into that, because he would come with me or he'd be like waiting for me or, you know, he's included in it. Um, so you really have given me something to think about, about this intentional investment, which I think I've done over. I've really done. I don't know if that's the word, but I've made that investment over the last year because of COVID. Cause I've been home. And I need to think about when life returns to normal, how am I going to do that from afar? Now you brought something else up, which is cutoff culture. And I want to talk, I mean, about this a little, how do you know if you should break up with a friend because not every relationship ought to last forever. And I always say that the measure of our relationship is not its longevity. It's the quality. So what do you do if you feel like breaking up with a friend? How do you know if you should break up with a friend? How the heck do you do it?

Dr. Shari: ([27:37](#)):

That is a great question. Um, we often talk about making friends and the importance of meeting new people, but sometimes we forget how difficult it can be to keep friends. Um, especially in, like you said, that age cut off culture. Um, but when thinking about whether your friendship is worth saving, I often encourage people to think about the friendship as the star of the show and not the friend. And I do this because friends are people and guess what people do from time to time, we mess up. We hurt those. We love, we hurt, hurt those. We care about, we do things that aren't always consistent with our intentions. So when evaluating the friendship and whether it's worth saving, I often say put the relationship itself on the stand and ask yourself a series of questions about the friendship and not the friend. So asking questions, like does this friendship add to my life? Um, do you honestly believe that the friendship is an obligation? Like you said, sometimes we're friends because I've known them since kindergarten. Right? So is it an obligation or do you truly feel like this friendship is needed in your life to flourish? Right. Um, do you feel like you're growing as a result of engaging in this friendship, um, after evaluating the friendship in this way, then you can get some clarity around the worth of the friendship to you, not the person. Um, because sometimes we say, well, this person just made me mad today, or they've been, you know, falling short over the past month. Maybe I should cut off the friendship. It's like, well, we're comparing apples to oranges right now. So thinking about the friendship as the star of the show can give you some clarity around that.

Jess: ([29:31](#)):

So if you come to the conclusion that maybe the friendship isn't serving you or it's causing you more distress than it is bringing a joyous support, Where do you even begin? Like, do you like Brandon? You'd be, we're talking earlier about, maybe we accidentally, you kind of accidentally goes to friends.

Brandon: ([29:50](#)):

It's not that I've...Yeah. I mean, thinking about the friends that I've had, or my friend, some of the friends that I grew up with that in high school, after high school became acquaintances at best. And it's not that I don't like them. It's just that we had a falling out. Everybody kind of went in their separate direction. So I was wondering, is it okay to just kind of naturally let those relationships dissipate or kind of dissolve? And if I were to reconnect with some of those people, I'm happy to, but I'm also don't want to be a jerk because over the last five, 10, 15, 20 years, we just don't talk to each other anymore. So, you know, I guess it goes back to how do you effectively break up with a friend and is ghosting somebody which was an accidental, considered a form of breakup?

Dr. Shari: ([30:43](#)):

Yeah, that's a great question. And I think it, I hate to give the, it depends answer. That's a good answer, but it does. It depends on the closeness of the relationship. Right? So I have friends that I was absolutely close to in high school. Um, but then after graduation, we kind of just faded the friendship faded. And I often say those are period relationships or period friendships, as opposed to kind of those really close those really, um, kind of life partnerships that you see with friends. Um, and I say like partnerships, not meaning over the span of life, but like partnerships, meaning the depth of the friendship. Um, and so I think it's important to think about what type of relationship or what type of friends this is. Um, I am not a big fan of ghosting, um, for a number of reasons. Um, I often say it's really important to be able to state where you are in someone's life so that you can act accordingly and so that they can act accordingly. Um, but it's also important to note that all friendships go through rough patches and Rocky moments. So if you've actually gotten to this space of thinking about breaking up with your friends, I always say, I assume that a few stages have already passed. You've already kind of passed a couple of checkpoints. One is that there has been some prior conversations, um, where you've honestly, and openly stated the needs that you need from this friendship. The next checkpoint is that you haven't experienced that for him putting forth any intentional efforts to change or any [inaudible] intentionality around meeting those needs that you've stated the third checkpoint is that you've put that friendship on the stand. Like we said, you know, you've, you've put it on the stage and you found it unworthy of, of saving. And then the fourth is that you've been able to make that decision to sever the ties at, on your own without others or without other friends in the friend group saying like, yeah, you should, or no, you shouldn't. Um, and after you've kind of gone through those stages, then you can start to have this space of conversation around the need to break up. Um, and I often say that first step after those stages is the conversation that you have with that other person, because it allows them to know where they fit, um, or where they don't fit in your life. Um, and allows you to be able to set boundaries with yourself when it comes to that other person,

Jess: ([33:25](#)):

That's all super helpful. And also it's heavy on the harsh to even just like, think of that process. And we don't give ourselves necessarily the space to grieve the loss of a friend relationship. Right. We don't call and ask people to rally around us. Uh, I find this so interesting and also, so like, it's sad to me, but some things in life, I guess are sad. I would love to ask you one last question and I've never wanted to have someone back so quickly cause I'm like, there's so many more questions. Yeah. Is it okay? Maybe it's a two-part question. I lied it, is it okay to put some of this in writing for a friend versus face to face? Not necessarily that it's like, here's my email don't contact me, but for some of us we're more like I communicate more through the written word. Yeah. Is that okay? And then what, what even language do you begin to use?

Dr. Shari: ([34:21](#)):

Yeah, those are great questions. And the first one is absolutely. I think communication, whether it's written, whether it's verbal, whether it's like liturgical dance, like it's still communicating, right?

Jess: ([34:35](#)):

I'm in a dance you out of this group, like Gina I'm Brooklyn 99.

Dr. Shari: ([34:42](#)):

Exactly. It's a, it's a way of communicating. And I think written communication can often be, um, extremely, um, needed in these situations because when speaking, oftentimes we feel like we have to say the first thing that comes to mind. And sometimes the first thing that comes to mind is not you being in your best self. Right. And so being able to write out I'm a written person, too, I write out everything. That's how my brain just kind of works that way. And so if you're able to write out those words that you need to say, and then being able to either send them to a friend and then saying, we can still talk about this, you know, not completely shutting it off at that moment, but being able to write it out, being able to kind of give some space to what your thoughts are, give some, some backstory to where it is. Like I said, conversations will have been had, but it just allows you to, um, get all of your thoughts in a space that feel, um, congruent and feel like you're able to say what you need. So often say with communication, it's whatever works best for you and for their friendship. Right. Um, and so you don't have to do a long speech if you're not an orator, you know? And so being able to know, like this is something that is going to, it has to feel comfortable for you because a breakup from a friend is just uncomfortable and sad and difficult in its definition. And so we don't want to add anything. That's going to make it more difficult in that space. Um, as far as the language to use, I think it's very important to be intentional about the language that you do use to state the importance around what this is to state. You know, I often say talk like, be authentic and transparent and how this process has been for you. So if it's been difficult and you've been kind of mulling over this for a couple of weeks or a couple of months, it's okay to stay that, to allow the person to know this wasn't a split decision. This isn't something that I just woke up today and want it to throw you out. You know, this is something that I actually thought about I was intentional about and being able to allow that can also allow the other person to have a clean break, right. Because oftentimes people want to come back and say, but did you think about, but have you thought about, you know, and so it just allows for that to happen,

Jess: ([37:19](#)):

That that's so helpful. And it's really the opposite of cut off culture, which is so reactionary. This is thoughtful and intentional for me personally. There's just, there's a lot to unpack here and I'm so grateful for your time and your perspective, and even walking us through those checkpoints, it's not this thing that comes out of left field. Like it does on reality television, you know, where they throw a drink in your face and that's it. In fact, this is something really thoughtful. So I don't know, to me there's a lot to digest here. A lot of action items for me, especially around the intentionality of investing in friendships, the way I invest in my romantic relationships. And also my familial relationships are very intentional, but I think I've lacked that and I need to work on that. So thank you so much. Thank you for your insight, your time Dr. Shari Nicole psychologist, Everyday Psychology. Also one of the three hosts of 3 Psychs and a Mic, which I really encourage people to listen to. We'll be putting all your links in the show notes. So thank you so much. I learned a lot eh babe?

Dr. Shari: ([38:23](#)):

Of course!

Brandon: [\(38:23\)](#):

So much. As always, so much.

Dr. Shari: [\(38:27\)](#):

Yeah, thank you for having me. And like I said, you know, talking about friendships is an ongoing process and so definitely open and willing to talk about this more with you all.

Jess: [\(38:36\)](#):

Oh, I would love that. Thank you.

Dr. Shari: [\(38:39\)](#):

Yeah. Yeah.

Jess: [\(38:42\)](#):

This is such an interesting and important discussion. And these are my favorite conversations because I'm not just learning professionally or engaging, you know, with researcher data. I'm really getting a lot about a lot out of this personally.

Brandon: [\(38:57\)](#):

Yeah. There's so much here for me to reflect on and I'm, I look forward to taking the time to reflect because as I've gotten older, my friend game, as I coined before, has gotten a little bit weaker and I've had to actively go out of my way to maintain the relationships, seek different types of friendships, ones that, yeah, I still meet up with people to play sports or to hang out, but there are others where I do that. And we also have a deeper, um, more vulnerable or emotional conversations that I take a lot out of. And I hope that I'm also giving back to those people in, you know, being able to listen or being there to share in their experiences too,

Jess: [\(39:45\)](#):

Based on my relationship with you, I imagine you are well it's it really is such a rich conversation. And I do want to, uh, part two with Dr. Shari, because I have many more questions and some theories about how we make our friends when we're younger and why sometimes it makes it harder to make newer friends. Cause you only have so much space in your life. And when you're young, you don't kind of, how do I say it? You don't hand select your friends. You fall into these friendships because of proximity because of, I don't want to say. Yeah, absolutely.

Brandon: [\(40:17\)](#):

So as a child that you, your interests are not more basic, but as a, when I think about being a kid, it was let's go to the park, let's ride our bike. Let's um, you know, play a sport, let's play cards, whatever. Now

Jess: [\(40:30\)](#):

Exactly the things I do with my friends.

Brandon: [\(40:33\)](#):

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Your interests are different. There are also, you know, as an individual, you've created opinions and you have beliefs and you have things that, you know, will differentiate you and stop you from being friends with some people and change your friendships over time. Like these are all things that, again, just so much more to just to discuss it,

Jess: ([40:51](#)):

Right. And it's not that we want to exist in an echo chamber, but sometimes the differences can be, can be quite traumatic, right. It can be really, or at least very emotionally wearing. So that's something to talk about for next time. Well, thanks for chatting with me, babe.

Brandon: ([41:08](#)):

Thank you. And thanks. Thanks to Dr. Shari. That was great.

Jess: ([41:11](#)):

Yeah, really good. Thank you to you for listening. We'll be back next week and every week with a brand new episode.

