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**Intro:** Hey friends! Welcome to Girls Night. I'm Stephanie May Wilson and I am so happy that you're here. Each week I have a girlfriend over and we talk through one of the biggest questions we have about our lives as women.

We're talking about friendships and faith and relationships and self-confidence, about our calling in life, and how to live every bit of our lives to the absolute full. Life is so much better and easier and more fun when we navigate it together as girlfriends. And I cannot wait to get started.

Today, we have my dear friend, Kait Warman back on the show, and she's going to talk to us about our must-have lists when it comes to dating. A little while back, Kait shared a mini-series on her own podcast—It's called Heart of Dating. It is so good. Go listen—all about compatibility factors and non-negotiables and I knew we needed to have her back on Girls Night to tell us what she learned.

So here's the thing: most of us have a pretty clear picture of what we're looking for in a significant other. It might be a general idea of yes this, no that, or it might be something that we took the time to formally write down. But this must-have list guides us along the way. It's why we swipe left and why we swipe right. It's why we say yes and why we say no. It's why we give some people a chance and why we don't for others.

Listen, knowing what you want is a really good thing, but every once in a while there's something on our must-have lists that doesn't need to be there and it causes us to miss out on some really wonderful guys, one of which might be our person. That's what happened for Kait. There was this one item on her must-have list that would have totally eliminated her now fiancé. Changing her must-have list changed her life, but she'll tell us the whole story in this episode.

Friends, if you've been trying to put yourself out there, trying to meet new people, and you feel like it is just not working, this episode is for you.

But before we dive in, I am so excited to say that registration for my online course Love Your Single Life is opening up again on April 4th. You guys, I love this course and I would love to have you join us. Now, if this is your first time hearing about it, I want to tell you just a little bit about it.

Love Your Single Life is the only online course for Christian women that teaches a step by step plan to help you savor and enjoy and truly make the most of your

single life all while setting yourself up for amazing relationships and marriage in the future.

Here are just a few of the things we talked about in this four-week course. We talk about how to start really enjoying your single life and making the most of every moment. I'll teach you a powerful tool for building confidence which also happens to be your dating secret sauce. We'll talk about how to find good, quality men to date even when it feels like you've run out of options.

We'll talk about how to invest in your friendships, your relationship with God, your calling and passions, and yourself. We'll walk through what to do with your sex drive while you're single because it doesn't wait to show up until we're married. We'll talk about how to stay close to your girlfriends even when you're in different stages of life and so much more.

I want to take a second to share a few of the things that our alumni have had to say about the course because their stories are seriously incredible. Hilary said that "since taking the course I've become more of the woman I always dreamed of becoming. Even my family has noticed." Amanda said, "This course completely transforms the way I view not only my single life, but my life as a whole." And Bianca said, "I believe this course will be one of the biggest things I did in my single life to set me up for a wonderful married life."

Friends, we've had more than 6,000 women join us for the course so far and I am not kidding when I say that the ways God has been using in women's lives has completely blown me away. Registration for the course only opens up twice a year and the next time is on April 4th.

You can find out all about the course and get your name on the waiting list at [loveyoursinglelife.com](http://loveyoursinglelife.com). That link will also be in our show notes.

One of the things: I know some of you may be listening to this after registration closes in April and that is totally fine. Head to the website anyway, put your name on the waiting list, and that way you'll be the very first to know next time the registration opens back up. I cannot wait to share this with you guys.

Okay, with that said, let's jump into the episode. Here is my conversation with Kait.

**Stephanie:** All right, friends, I am so excited for who we have today. Kait Warman, my dear friend, welcome back to Girls Night.

**Kait:** Hey, girl. I love that we get to hang out again. Is this the third time that I've been on? I think it might be the third time.

**Stephanie:** I feel like it must be at least third.

**Kait:** At least three. But we are friends in real life. So I can't even keep track of how many times because we have so many conversations regardless of the podcast.

**Stephanie:** Like which ones are actually recorded, which ones are not, which ones are for my show, which ones are for yours.

**Kait:** Yeah, exactly.

**Stephanie:** We don't know. But seriously, thank goodness that we have to do this together. Just all of it. All of life. Everything.

Kait, for women who haven't gotten to meet you yet, tell us who you are, what you do, and a fun fact.

**Kait:** Okay, yay. Hey guys. If you haven't heard of me, that's awesome. I'm so excited to meet you. I'm Kait Warman. I live In Southern California. I used to say in this part that I am a single woman and a dating coach, but I no longer am saying that I'm a single woman because I'm not really. I am taken. Y'all, I have an engagement ring on. I am now engaged. But I am not married yet. So I'm still in that stage of preparing for marriage.

I'm a dating coach, and I get to really help men and women in this weird area called Christian dating. We help a variety of people from the person who's never been on a date before, to the person who's dated more than they can even recollect and it still hasn't worked for them, to the person who's been divorced, to the single parent.

We just help a whole bunch of different people and varying ages. And I love it because my story has so much to do with brokenness and dating, and really in trauma, a lot of trauma, and figuring out who I am. Who does God call me to be? Who is Kait with or without somebody in the picture? And that's something I really strive to help other people figure out as well.

We have a podcast called Heart of Dating. I have a dating program called *Drop the Hanky*. Last year in 2021, my first book came out called *Thank You for Rejecting Me*. And we get to host yearly conferences, which Steph you've been a part of all three of our conferences, which has been awesome. We just wrapped our last one in

February 2022. And it was honestly the best thing because we did it both virtually and in-person.

So, if you're listening and you're single, come join us with Heart of Dating because you'll just get a really great community of men and women who get what you're going through. That was a long-winded intro.

But my fun fact: this isn't maybe not so fun, but it is interesting. People don't often know this, but I am allergic to corn, which people don't know this. I don't even think you knew this stuff. I'm allergic to corn, which was the most depressing thing ever when I found this out because I thought it just meant like popcorn when the doctor told me. You know, like popcorn or corn on the cob. And the doctor was like, "No."

**Stephanie:** Corn is in everything.

**Kait:** Corn is literally a hidden ingredient in like over 70% of foods in America specifically. So I'm highly allergic to corn. I have to be really careful. So that's a fun fact people don't know.

**Stephanie:** That is a lot of work, Kait. That's so much to navigate. That was my first thought was like, "Whoa, corn is in everything."

**Kait:** It's so weird. Because you go to restaurants, you're like, "Can you check if there's corn in that?" It's not one of the most top. It's not the top 10 biggest allergies in America.

But here's another fun fact, if you have ever eaten corn or corn on the cob, you know that we can't really digest corn. It is not very digestible. So almost everyone is at least minorly allergic to corn. Actually, it's not good for any human. It doesn't have very good properties. So all of us are mildly allergic to it. I just happened to be majorly allergic to it. So there's your second fun fact for the day.

**Stephanie:** Oh my gosh! Okay, I have so many questions. I need more information. What in the world?

Well, Kait, I'm very glad to know this about you. And I feel like I will keep this in mind next time we eat together because I didn't know that.

**Kait:** I know.

**Stephanie:** Kait, you mentioned this briefly, but you have had a major, major, major life thing, a wonderful thing happened since we talked to you last. So I would love to kick off by hearing about JJ, how you guys met.

Today we're talking about compatibility and we tend to write people off really early before we get to know them or kind of as we're making sort of our must-have lists of what we're looking for in a potential partner, we eliminate some really great people because of a couple different criteria. And I know that JJ actually probably wouldn't have made your list. So tell us all the things about JJ as we dive in. I'm excited to hear.

**Kait:** So my fiancé's name is JJ Tomlin. A few fun facts about him because we're doing fun facts. He grew up in Belgium and in the south in Tennessee. So he has a fun, interesting mix. He's one of five kids. His parents were missionaries. So those are just some things you should know about him.

He is also five and a half years younger than I am and we started our dating relationship long distance. So we didn't live in the same city for the first about three months that we dated.

A lot of people don't know this. I used to work in fashion before Heart of Dating. I used to be a buyer. I lived in New York City. I did a lot of fun buying, went to Fashion Week, and I love fashion. I'm way more chill these days. I'm good with an oversized sweatshirt. But I still love fashion and style and putting together outfits.

So when I first saw JJ, which I'll tell you where I met him in a sec, when I first saw him it was somebody had sent me his Instagram profile. And I remember going to it, finding out that he was five and a half years younger and then seeing his style, which if you go to his Instagram, you'll see bits and pieces of this. It's all over the place, girl.

But at the time that I met him, it's like you could cue the song Avril Levine, *Sk8er Boi*. *He was a skater boy. She said, "See you later, boy."* He was a skater boy. He literally, the time that he asked me out, had platinum hair that he had dyed blue and he had a black earring and he wore drop-crotch pants and just had like this really interesting style that was just, "That's fine. If that's your style."

Well, you know a guy that that's their style and you're listening, it was not my thing. I was like, "This is interesting. This is like fashion faux pas all over the place. And unless you're Justin Bieber, I don't think you should have platinum hair as a guy."

The way we met, I'll try to trace back to that quickly, is I actually was speaking at a Women's Singles conference. So how do I meet a guy, the singles conference for women? Well, this singles conference had live blind dates happening as a fun part for the ladies.

I was a speaker there and he was one of the bachelors that was going on a live blind date with another girl. So I was on the Zoom call. I actually was chillin'. I didn't really watch his date. I'm not gonna lie. But then he stayed on after his date, and he ended up just staying on and watching my talk.

So he's just being that one creepy guy on the call just watching me. And on Zoom, you can really gawk at somebody. He tells the story this way. He was like, "Wow, I was just captivated by you and your story." And on Zoom, nobody can tell that I'm just like literally staring at you." It's so funny.

So the next day when the people are leaving the conference, which by the way, actually I think you know them too. They're my friends, Mac and Kenz from Delight Ministries or For The Girl. It was their conference. And fun fact, nobody knows this yet. I haven't shared it publicly yet. But Mac met her man, her now almost-husband Tyler, also on the Zoom call. He was also one of the live blind date contestants. So JJ and Tyler ironically, both Mac and I ended up marrying these two bachelor guys from this conference.

**Stephanie:** I do know that. I love Mac so much. Actually, I just interviewed Kenz for Girls Night this morning. So we were just talking this morning.

**Kait:** That's so fun. Oh my gosh. So Mac and I met both of our guys from these blind dates. But Mac and Kenz messaged me the next day. Or they messaged JJ first and they asked him how his blind date went. He was like, "You know, it was good. She's a nice sister in Christ. But who is Kait?" He was like, "I want to ask Kait out." And they were like, "You mean the dating coach? You know she's a dating coach." And he was like, "Yep." And they're like, "Okay, well ask her."

So then they proceeded to group text me. And they were like, "Hey, one of our bachelors, JJ, wants to get your number. He wants to ask you out." And I was like, "Wait a second." Because all I remembered was that there was one bachelor and it was Tyler actually, that was 21 at the time. And I was like, "For me, that's a pretty big age gap. That would be 10 years. That would be 10 years."

So I was like, "Is it the 21 year old?" And they were like, "No, not the 21 year old, Kait." Though Tyler is awesome and very mature for his age and marrying Mac. But it was JJ. And they were like, "He's twenty... at the time. He was 26. Here's his Instagram. And that's when I hence did the Instagram stalking."

And I was like, "But y'all he has blue hair. What is going on with this? I was so close, Steph, to saying no, because I was like, "Oh, he's younger. I never thought I would date a guy younger than me, especially younger than my brother's age. My brother's two years younger." I was like, "Oh, I don't know. Is it gonna be weird?" And then on top of that, his style, the hair, I was like, not sure if I was physically into him at first.

But I said yes because I was in a season of really working on this whole phrase I've been saying a lot, which is "date the unexpected and God may do the unexpected." So I had that in the back of my mind. And I was like, "All right, date the unexpected. JJ is the unexpected. Let's see what happens." And here we are. I'm so glad I dated the unexpected.

**Stephanie:** I love that so much. Was it over the summer you did mini-series on Heart of Dating all about compatibility? I know you did tons of polls for your audience and asking people, "What are some of your must-haves? So what are some of the things for you?"

I know for me I always thought that I would marry someone who's blonde. I'm blonde. I don't know why I just thought I'd always marry someone who's blonde. Carl has brown hair but it's kind of light brown. I don't know.

My girlfriends and I always were about dating and marrying people who are tall. Because my girlfriends and I are all tall. I'm 5'9". My best friend is 6'1". We always were like, "No, tall guys, those are the guys for us."

I had a couple of those things on my must-have list. I think that a lot of us do. We all have things where it's like, "I don't know that I would go on a date with someone if they had this trait," or "I don't know if I would even consider someone if they had this trait." But as you and I have gotten to see, both in our own lives and then in the work that we do, we're really missing out on some awesome people when we make our criteria that narrow.

I wanted to just start off by hearing from you, I guess what is the purpose of a must-have list? Why is it important to know what we're looking for in general?

**Kait:** I just want to back up for one second. Because if you are anything like me, my story is filled with a lot of trauma. And that trauma led me to date a lot to fill a void. The trauma for you may lead you to not date a lot or to be really cautious because you don't really trust men.

So it could look differently for you or your story could look similar to mine in that you did date, or you often put your identity into relationships. So it's really important to know for somebody with trauma wounds, which is a lot of people, that oftentimes healthy looks boring.

So for us with trauma wounds, healthy will often look boring to us. We'll be like, "That guy is boring," or "he's not my type." That was what I said for a long time. A lot of guys I was attracted to were charismatic, they were interesting, they were successful. And at the end of the day, not all of them, but a lot of them, especially some of the ones I seriously dated, again, not all, were really bad for me and caused a lot more drama for me and toxicity. And if you know my story, you'll know that I was in a two and a half year abusive relationship.

So I just want to say this off the bat that if you've any trauma in your past at all, any trauma wounding, or if you find yourself avoidantly attaching to relationships or anxiously attaching to relationships, then you need to know that oftentimes healthy for you will look very boring.

And this is why it's so important for us to have less things on our non-negotiable list. I'm not saying to have nothing, okay? I'm not saying have zero things. But I really think it's important to narrow down your list, in the beginning, to be just a little more open and not eliminate people quite so quickly.

Because again, otherwise, if you don't feel that spark, if you don't feel that big connection, if they don't have everything on your list right away, you're gonna say no to them. And maybe that was actually a really good person for you.

One part of the figuring out your list is, and a lot of people haven't done this, but I want you to consider what are your top values. If you're a Christian listening, which probably a lot of you are, then one of your top values would be faith. That makes sense. But outside of faith, like what else is your top value?

We often don't ask ourselves that question: what are my top values? Some of my top values, I'll just give you a spoiler, outside of faith, its growth. Growth is one of my very top. If there were two top values I hadn't have in life, it's gonna be faith



and growth. I just got back from a therapy retreat. I value growth so much. So growth is huge for me. Somebody who is growth-minded. That is big for me.

Another, a third really top core value for me is reliability. Can I rely on that person? Are they dependable? Do they say something and follow through with their words? Knowing my trauma wounding, that's really important for me to be able to build trust. It's something that I really valued and strive towards for myself.

That's just a baseline. Do you know your core values at all because sometimes we're eliminating people based on some of these more superficial things, and they have nothing to do truly with our core values. So ask yourself what some of your core values are.

Now, know in the core value discussion, that as you do this process, and by the way, if you want to actually do it, you can go on the internet and look up... Brené Brown has a great exercise on her website right now that is up from the beginning of 2022. It's all about your values. So go and check that out. It's a worksheet you can do to really figure out your values. There's like a list of top values you can actually work through what are your core top values.

But while I say this, you also have to know that you will not know on first date or maybe even second date, or maybe even third date, or maybe even just in the first few dates at all if that person has all the parts of your core values.

So having a small list is important. You want to have some level of standards. But you don't want to have this list of like 15, 20, 30, 40. Oh y gosh, some of y'all out here having 50 items on your non-negotiable list. You are going to eliminate amazing people if you have that many things that you are looking for.

You need to have a very thin list, and those items need to be based on character and values. They should not have anything to do with physicality or the fun to have items like I call them. Fun to have. Like loves Disney or it can get down with Celine Dion or loves a good karaoke night. Those are fun to have things. Those are not non-negotiable things.

I think it's really important because I think a lot of Christians are going out here, and we have this really tall order of what we're looking for. And it really eliminates so many great men in the world.

**Stephanie:** That's so good. That's so good. One of the things that I got to find out that I didn't know for a long time was that just because someone shares your faith doesn't mean that they share those other values.

So there were people that I dated that were perfect on paper. I think it felt like finding someone who shared my faith was such a big deal. And it is. But there are also other things. There are character traits. There are personality things. There are having similar hopes and dreams for your life. Other things need to line up, not just that one thing. That thing is really, really important but it's not just that.

I was thinking about my must-have list, and the things like he must be this tall, or he must-have this color hair, or this occupation or whatever. Those things got checked off or eliminated pretty quickly.

But one of the things that I got to find out a lot of the guys that I dated, I called them almost, because they were really close. Like really, really, really close. They were really wonderful people and we could have maybe almost worked. But each of them was missing some really important thing. And it wasn't actually about who they were as a person, it was more about our relationship or how I wanted to feel in our relationship but didn't.

That's kind of where my actual end of the day must-have list came from was this relationship was really good and it had all of these components to it. You know, the way that we interacted with each other was like this. I loved that. But each of them was missing something.

That's how I actually started to really narrow in on what I was looking for. So that by the time I did meet Carl, it was pretty quick that I realized, "Oh, this one is someone special because of the things I learned through those previous relationships."

But that's different than a must-have list. That's different from "I'm not going to go on a date with this person because they don't like baseball," or "maybe they like football and that's really fun." And you can teach them about baseball, and they can teach you about football and you can go to all the games and that'll be really fun. And you go with one of your girlfriends to baseball games. There are different things that people can bring to the table with those more nice to have things.

**Kait:** It's funny you said that because I actually on the flip side always said I was like, "I don't want to date somebody who loves football because I don't really like football

that much." And football people are really intense on it. If you love football, and you're listening right now.

But funny enough JJ is like the biggest football lover that I personally ever met. And this last year of my life I never have watched so much football as I have this last year. It is so funny and it's been a struggle. It's definitely been a challenge. But guess what, me not wanting to date someone that loves football to an extreme is a preference. So I didn't get that specific preference with JJ. And that's okay.

I mean, it's not his preference to have gotten a Disney pass and come to Disney with me. That's certainly not his preference. He would rather be golfing or watching football or doing something active outdoors sporty-wise. It's sacrifice and compromise. You don't have to have every single preference on your list fulfilled. It's so important.

**Stephanie:** I will say as a wife of a fellow football lover, I take really good football naps. Like a really Sunday afternoon is a great time to nap. But also I actually really do like football, not anywhere near as much as Carl does.

But there are things that you can figure out in your relationship when things like that don't add up. Like Carl really likes whatever show is new and interesting and cool and really well done and stuff. He's always if people are like, "Oh, we're all watching this. Have you seen it?" Me, never; Carl always.

Because for me, I'm like, it's a little scary or a little violent or little, I don't know. I don't know. It's not my taste. So I never watched those with Carl. And that's something that he's had to give up on. He has to watch those things by himself. And I watch a lot more football than I probably would on my own but I'm happy to do it. Because the rest of the time we watch like Kids Baking Championship and stuff like that.

Kait, I have a couple of things that I know tend to be on a lot of our must-have lists. I want to go through them and just have you help me debunk them a little bit, and help me figure out what are some questions we at least need to be considering as we're considering crossing these things off of our list.

So the first one, which I know you're gonna have a ton of thoughts on, is age difference. Should age be a factor? And what kinds of questions should we be asking ourselves as we consider that?

**Kait:** It's so good. And I did this in my series last year. So this is so exciting. But there are so many people, including myself, okay, that were like, I don't... Everyone has something. For me, I didn't really want to date younger. I had this idea that all guys younger than me were more immature. And there is a stigma there: that guys develop later emotionally, whatever.

But it's just not always the case. When JJ came along, I was like, "I'm not gonna date a guy younger than my brother. It's my little brother." And then someone younger than that? So I had this immediate taste in my mouth I would always date older guys.

In fact, when I started dating JJ, I was talking to a guy that was about nine years older than me, and then JJ rolls around, and he's five and a half years younger than me. So there was big age gaps happening. I have almost 10 years older and then I have almost six years younger. It's like way different scenarios here.

But I think that with age, it really, it truly, oh my gosh, there are some challenges with age. There are some. But it really varies case by case. And I want to encourage you to just be open. Just be open.

What is really important when it comes to age is two things. Are you both looking to build the same kind of things in life? Because if you are, that's the first thing, if you are, it doesn't really matter what your age is. If you're looking to both have kids, to both have a family, if you're both looking to do something similar, a mission for God, that doesn't really matter then, the age difference.

Now, where that question comes into maybe where it might not align is somebody who may be in their 40s, they've already had children, maybe they're divorced, and somebody who's a bit younger that really wants to start a family. Those two people are in very different stages. And that's not necessarily aligning where they want to go in life because one is done having a family and has already created it and the other one really wants that and they want their own children.

So I'm not saying that's a non-negotiable, that it's like not going to work at all. But that would be a harder moment to say, okay, is this even possible? That question comes into play? Are you looking to build the same things in life?

The second question to yourself: are you both growth-minded people? Is the person you're talking to in dating growth-minded? Because no matter what age they are, if they are growth-minded and you are growth-minded—you have to have that

characteristic as well—then you're in a good place. Because I've actually dated guys older than me that are not very growth-minded.

Actually, JJ has been more mature and more curious to learn than some of the guys I've dated that we're older and should be. Maybe. I'm putting quotes here. Should be, may be more developed emotionally and spiritually and other ways. But then JJ comes along, and he's like, "I may not know all those things, but I'm willing to learn and I'm excited. I'm going to go to my therapist, and I'm going to seek counsel." It's so refreshing.

So having the growth mindset and a similar vision for where you're going or what you're desiring in your life is probably the biggest thing for age. If I could narrow it down to like the two main things, those would be it.

And now of course, there are some times where age gaps are a little inappropriate. If you're in your early 30s and you want to date someone that's in college or just starting college, you're not in the same place in life. The person in college is looking to be in college and grow learning and understanding. It's a very different life stage than somebody who was in their 30s. And you're not in the same place at that moment for where you're wanting to grow and build your life.

Again, I'm not saying that it could never work. But that would be an area where it's like, eww, eww, maybe not exactly the right thing. So we do have to have discernment. We're just considering where is that person truly at? Where am I at?

And there are some things that... Like, if you're in your mid-20s and you want to ask someone out in high school, not appropriate. Let's be real. That's not an age gap that would be appropriate. So it's not always gonna be a fit. But if you're 25, the person is 35, it could be fine if you want similar things in your life and you're both growth-minded. So that's my thought on age gaps.

**Stephanie:** I love that. One of the things that came to mind. So my little sister is three and a half years younger than me. It's far enough. Like where our birthdays are makes it so that we're four grades apart. And so we've never been in school together. So there have been times in life where we're closer and we have more in common and then times where it's like we're a million years apart.

And I think that that's kind of similar. Like when one of you is in elementary school and one of you is in middle school, you're in different galaxies. And kind of same middle school and high school and high school and college. But like, as my sister

and I have both graduated from college and now we're both married. She's actually about to have her first baby.

**Kait:** Oh my gosh, yay.

**Stephanie:** So in the last however many years, we've been in really similar life stages. So it's so much easier to have so much more in common. Whereas even when she's in high school and I'm in college, we're just in a really, really different place in terms of life stage.

So that four years can either mean a ton in certain times in your life. Like being four years old versus a newborn, that's a pretty big difference in terms of developmental stages. So there are times in life where four years makes a really huge difference and then times when it doesn't make a difference hardly at all.

The other thing I was thinking is I think that there's a time in life where I think for a long time we assume that at some point adults become adults. I don't know how old you have to be but we expect grownups to be mature and healthy, and all these things. But then at some point, as we become grownups ourselves, we go, "Oh, there is no adult graduation. Like one day where we all just become like this healthy, emotionally, stable version of ourselves." You can know someone who's 80 years old and they don't have any of their stuff figured out.

**Kait:** Exactly.

**Stephanie:** Same with a 20-year-old could be the most figured out person in the world. So the older you are doesn't necessarily mean that you're-

**Kait:** There's no formula.

**Stephanie:** ...that you're healthier or that you're more mature. That's work we all have to do in our adulthood. So it's looking person by person. Have you done this work in your life? It doesn't necessarily correlate to age like we think it does.

**Kait:** And something else that was interesting for JJ and I that I'll bring up now is not only do we have an age gap, but this can also happen in age gap, or just in general. But JJ had also never been in a relationship. And I have not only been in many relationships, but I'm also a dating coach. I research dating for a living. That's basically what I do is I study about dating.

That's another thing. That doesn't mean he should be disqualified. That doesn't mean he's not ready. And that's why I'm so glad I didn't eliminate him at all for even that factor. Which I did an episode on this recently on the podcast of what if I've never dated before because there's a lot of people that feel really behind and feel under qualified.

But I'll tell you what, JJ, through his life has built really great friendships, has picked up really great tools from his friendships, from seeing some of the family dynamic that he has and inner healing tools that he's grasped from like people in his family. And honestly, because he's a grower and a learner, that really is all that matters is that you know that this is a new thing you're going into. And so there's going to be weird and uncomfortable things that maybe sometimes I don't know how to handle, and I'm just gonna be willing to learn and grow.

And let me also flip that to say, even though I've been in a lot of relationships and I'm a dating coach, I still don't do this thing perfectly. I still also have to be growing. And there are so many areas in which JJ showed up way more knowledgeable and way more on point than I did in the relationship. I just want to throw that in there too.

**Stephanie:** That's so good. That's so good.

[00:35:16] <music>

**Sponsor:** Hey friends! I wanted to pop in for one quick second because our show would not be possible without our sponsors. So I wanted to take a quick second to thank the companies sponsoring us today. Our sponsor today is a company that I love. It's HelloFresh.

Now, I know that lots of y'all have heard of them. But just in case you haven't, HelloFresh is America's number one meal kit that shops, plans, and delivers your favorite step by step recipes in pre-measured ingredients so you can just cook, eat, and enjoy.

Now, you guys know this about me, but I'm not the best cook. Now, I've gotten better over the years but I still do not love meal planning or cooking. It is just not my gift. Plus spring is here. And if you're anything like me, as the weather gets warmer, your schedule starts to fill up quickly, and cutting down on meal prep and shopping time is absolutely necessary. And that's why I love HelloFresh.

First of all, with HelloFresh there's something for everyone, including vegetarian, calorie smart choices, and family-friendly recipes. One of the best meals I've made was their chicken sausage spaghetti Bolognese. I'm serious, it was so good. I'm still thinking about it.

And not only is their food delicious but the process of making it is so easy. All the ingredients come pre-measured in handy labeled meal kits so you know which ingredients go with which recipe. And that means there's less waste. And you guys know I'm a beginner in the kitchen and even I can cook these recipes. They're simple. They come outlined on pictured step by step instruction cards. They walk you all the way through it. And it actually kind of feels like a fun cooking lesson.

I'm also a huge fan of HelloFresh because it's actually 30% cheaper than shopping at grocery stores. And their pre-portioned ingredients help so that no food is wasted. This is great news for those of us on a budget. Of course, I love HelloFresh even more because they want to give you a promo code to get 16 free meals and three free gifts. That's crazy, right? 16 free meals.

If you go to [hellofresh.com/girlsnight16](https://hellofresh.com/girlsnight16) and use the code GirlsNight16, you can get up to 16 free meals and three free gifts. Again, that's [hellofresh.com/girlsnight16](https://hellofresh.com/girlsnight16) and use the Code GirlsNight16 for up to 16 free meals and three free gifts. HelloFresh, thank you so much for sponsoring our Girls Night. We just love having you.

Okay, without any further ado, let's jump back into my conversation with Kait.

[00:37:33] <music>

**Stephanie:** What about height? What are some of the trends that you found as you looked into this? And what are some things that we should think through as we're thinking about height preferences?

**Kait:** So good. So I did a poll on my Instagram last summer about height and it was kind of an impromptu thing. I was like, "Okay, this is talked about so much... I see it so much in conversation, but it's not talked about a lot publicly. So let's talk about it."

Over 7,000 people did the poll and they voted. Over 74% of people voted that they would prefer to date someone over 6' tall. So 74% of women said, "I prefer to date someone over six foot tall."



But then the reality is—I did the research—is that majority of men, the average height of a man in America is 5'6". So you have 74% of women wanting to date guys over 6' tall but the average height of guys is 5'9" which is an average right, Steph? Which means that there are guys under 5'9". In order for it to be an average, there has to be a healthy amount of guys that are under 5'9" and some over 5'9".

So I don't know the exact percentage, but the percentage of guys over 6' tall is very low. So you have 74% of women for the most part going for guys that are over 6' foot tall, which is a very small bucket. I'm just gonna say that buckets, probably between 5% to 10% of the guys are actually over 6' tall. Most likely.

So you have 74% of women going after five to 10% of guys. No wonder people are saying that there are no good guys out there because they're swiping left on all these guys on dating apps because of height. They're not considering the guy at church who's awesome just because he's a little shorter. He's either their height or a little lower or just very small, like small above them in height.

And I'll be honest, JJ is taller than me but I didn't know that. I didn't know that when I said yes to go on a date with him. Because all I had was an Instagram photo and some Instagram photos. And you can't tell a lot by the Instagram photos. I wasn't going to ask him early on like, "Hey, by the way, how tall are you?" I wasn't going to do that because I also don't really care. So I didn't know until a month in until we met in real life how tall he was. Because I got to see him in real life. And I was totally okay with that.

Meanwhile, I mentioned earlier there was another guy I was talking to, that guy was my exact height. He was older and he was my same height. I've actually dated a lot of guys that are a little shorter than me or the same height. I'm 5'7", which is maybe a little above average for women. So I dated a lot of guys that are roughly 5'7" or maybe 5'8". Average height of guys is 5'9".

And I like to wear heels or just platform shoes, whatever. And so I've dated a lot of guys that are like my height. And what I found for myself in that too, as we dive in deeper, is usually it has to do with a lot of these stereotypes that taller guys are bigger and stronger, and you're going to be more protected. I understand those have been some of the messaging, but it's just not necessarily true at all when you really get to know a guy.

And not only that. There were deeper layers, at least for me when I previously dated guys around my height that came up for me that made me feel insecure. It

had nothing to do with the guy. It had everything to do with me and I felt big. It had to do with my own issues with body shame and how I saw myself.

So I think that there's a lot of women that default to like, "I'm not gonna date a guy my height," or just a little bit taller or whatever, because I feel weird. I would feel too big or I wouldn't feel comfortable." While that may be valid, it's also a really good opportunity to say, what's underneath that for you? What kind of body shame work do we need to do around loving your body?

I'm just really speaking to all the under 5'9" guys out there who there are plenty of. Half of America are 5'9" or below. And these are awesome guys that, especially when you get on a dating app, us women, we're just swiping left, swiping left because we see the height, or we've already filtered out the height because you can do that on some of these apps. And then we're not even seeing these guys. We're swiping left, because "Oh, this guy looks good. Oh, he's 5'7", 5'6", no, no, no, swipe left."

So you're not going to find the person you're looking for if over 74% of women or roughly 74% of women are looking for a guy over 6' tall. And that's only about five ish percent of guys. So we have to challenge ourselves. Height is a preference. It shouldn't be a non-negotiable.

**Stephanie:** That's so good. It's so good. I'm so glad that you said the thing about like, it brings up an insecurity in us because I think that that's really true. That's a really good opportunity for us to dig deeper.

I think if we think about it the opposite way, if we think... We've talked about this, but I'm 5'9" so I'm above average for women. And if some guy like swipes left on me because I was too tall, we would all think that that was mean and terrible. My first thought would be, are you kidding me? Like that's, one, something I can't control. Two, that's a gift about me. This is how I was made. And there's nothing wrong with me.

Then also you're going to miss out on literally every other great thing about me because I'm too tall for you? That's insane. So just the same amount of indignation that I think we would feel if someone did that for us, I mean for any reason, it's the same we're missing out on some really wonderful people because of just a random fact about them.

I completely agree with you. I know that it can bring up some insecurities but I think that those things can be gotten over. And should be. We need to be working on that in our own hearts. And then the reward is awesome.

**Kait:** Yeah. And I'm not saying the preference to want a taller person is bad. This is not about anything being good or bad. It's just to say if you have been eliminating people on dating apps quite often mainly because of things like height or age and you haven't had that much success in dating, then what would it look like to just challenge? Date the unexpected, see what happens. You could be surprised.

JJ, again with height, he is taller than me. But like the age thing, the long-distance thing is another thing. People often won't consider a long distance. They're like, "That's not for me." I'm like, Well, there's so many great people out here that you could meet if you were just willing to expand your boundaries.

So what would it just look like to say yes to the guy that asked you out that's 5'9" or below. Have open expectations. Don't go into the date if you do say yes, saying, "I'm not gonna like this guy. He's not my type. I'm not attracted to him." Because if you say that to yourself, then it will be a self-fulfilling prophecy more than likely.

So you just give the guy a fair shot. Be like, "I'm excited. This is a fun challenge. I'm gonna be open. and see what happens. And let God do work in me potentially." And you may not end up marrying the guy that's 5'9" or below. And that's okay. I'm not saying you have to.

But I do think that there's a beauty that happens when we challenge ourselves. Either we may be led to somebody that actually is the best for us or we get to be challenged in ourselves and things that we think about ourselves or some of the messaging that we're sending that is in our brains about men and the culture of single men. There's a lot of good guys out there. They just may not be tall enough for you right now. So why don't you just give it a shot and see what happens?

**Stephanie:** All right, the next one is a little more sensitive. I know for... I mean, we feel this way as women. I'm gonna speak for all of us. But the next one is about weight differences. I think for a lot of us in the same way that we find ourselves swiping left either in person or on an app or something when someone is too short, if they have a different body type than what we're looking for, I think a lot of times we discount them. So what did you find out about this? Talk to us about body differences.

**Kait:** This one is really sensitive. I just want to say that I'm going to do my best to cover this topic right now, because it is really sensitive. I'll lead with my own vulnerability, that in the past I really struggled majorly with body dysmorphia. I couldn't even look people in the eyes. I was so afraid of them looking at my face. I was so insecure about what my face looked like specifically, that I couldn't even look people in the face.

It got so bad for me at a point that I wouldn't go out. Like if I was invited to go to a dinner or had a friend's birthday, unless I liked and felt really confident in what my face looks like and my body looked like that day, I would actually cancel and not show up to events just because I didn't want to be seen by people and I didn't want a photo to be taken of me. So it was really crippling for a real pretty long season in my life.

Most people didn't know me back in the day, but I used to wear so much more makeup than I wear now. Right now I'm wearing very little, but I used to have fake eyelashes full-blown, eyeliner, eyeshadow, lipstick, bright red, or some bright color every day, like caked-on lots of makeup.

And if you're a makeup girl, I'm not shaming you with the makeup. For me, just what is your relationship with makeup? For me, it was to hide. And because I did not feel good with what my face looked like without all the makeup. So I had to have all the layers. And I could never let anybody see myself without makeup. For me, I really struggled.

Also, I've struggled for the past seven or more years at this point with chronic illness, almost eight years of varying degrees, which means my body fluctuates in weight often. Like I could gain up to seven or more pounds sometimes in a week or in a few weeks. And it's very jarring for me, or it has been in my life. What does it look like to love myself whether or not I have an inflammatory response to something? That has been a huge, huge challenge for me.

So I'm just bringing all of those things up to say I don't understand everyone's journey but that's my experience in this category of weight and body image. And it's actually why I started my book out writing about body image because I think there's a lot of self-rejection within this. So I just want to try to be as sensitive as possible.

But I do know, we have to admit the fact that there are a lot of messages out there about quote-unquote, "ideal body types." And it's driven by media. It's driven by

what we've heard growing up. And it's created this idea within our minds of what is desirable.

And then it brings up this question of what we define as healthy. Healthy is a very subjective term actually. I found out through doing this poll and really discovering on Instagram, a lot of people have a lot of different definitions of what healthy looks like for them.

Some people, healthy is a skinny person that goes to the gym all the time. But also some people don't think that's healthy. Some people are like, well, that person could actually be unhealthy in ways because they could have unhealthy relationship with their body and they may be obsessed with going to the gym.

Some people may define it by BMI and the amount of times you go to the gym and what food they eat. Some people categorize it as how much water they have, how much sleep they have, what kinds of food they're nourishing their body with. Not like limiting their diets, but what kinds of foods are they eating?

All of those things combined, less about actual body shape, but do they have a good relationship with... Are they hydrating their body? Are they sleeping? Are they in a good relationship with food? Those things.

So healthy is very subjective. We all have this different frame of what we think is healthy, and then mix coupled that, with what we think is quote-unquote, "desirable" in terms of body shape.

So I would just say we need to individually do the own work for ourselves of if we have eliminated people because of their weight or whatever, their body's shape, we need to ask ourselves, why. What is that? What's coming up for us?

Is it because we think that the person that is that weight isn't healthy? Is it because we were told somewhere that that's not desirable? Why are you drawn to or repelled to the things that you're drawn to or repelled to? We need to know the answers to those questions for ourselves individually, so then we can challenge ourselves within that.

Because here's the thing. Somebody who may be a different body type than you or a body type that maybe previously you wouldn't have considered saying yes or going on a date with, somebody with that body type, you have no idea what their story is. You have no idea about their journey with their weight or the about their body type. You don't know their story. You don't know what they struggle with.

One in three people have a chronic illness. That is a lot of people. And chronic illness actually is a high contributor to weight gain, and to unexplainable weight gain. So if that's one in three people, that's a lot of people that have unexplainable weight gain.

I'm one of those people. In certain areas of my life, it's just been so hard and so frustrating. So I would hate it if somebody wrote me off because I gained 10 pounds, and they were like, "Oh, Kait clearly is unhealthy," when it was an inflammatory response to chronic illness.

I would just say, get curious. Ask yourself, what's under these layers of why I'm eliminating people because of their weight? And is it possible to challenge myself in that and say yes, and then get curious on their journey of just finding more about this person's story?

I think this topic, of all of them, is really, really hard because women do it to guys, and guys definitely do it to women. This is Girls Night podcast, we know as women that it is a struggle based on what is put out there as ideal for women and what we are fighting against. I haven't met one woman in my life that's never struggled with body image or body shame. So this is such a real topic.

And there are guys because of society, because of porn, because of certain things that they are programmed to think X thing is ideal, or they fetish on certain things. None of that is right. None of that is right.

And so for the women that are here to saying like, "Hey, I have this body type, and I feel like I'm always overlooked and always not considered," I am so sorry.

Here's what's going to be the game-changer for you and for every woman listening. Heal yourself as much as you can. Learn to truly embrace yourself, your body, who you are, as much as you can. Because the guy that is going to want you and is going to be with you, he's not going to be fazed by that.

You don't want to try to get the guy who's so programmed by these ideal body images. You don't want that guy. You don't want to convince him to like you or your body. You want the guy that is open and is curious and loves the way you look. And there are guys out there.

But guess what exudes more than just the physical? It is also the interior. I've met gorgeous women, quote-unquote, that you would just look at them and be like, "Oh

my gosh, they're like a supermodel looking," that are so unconfident and are unhealthy. And it breaks my heart. I've known guys have gone on dates with them and they're like, "Actually, I didn't enjoy it at all because they weren't even confident."

So what exudes more than anything is the woman who truly knows who she is, loves who she is, and is exuding confidence. And it's hard on dating apps, you can only do so much. All we can do is hope and pray that the right guy is gonna not judge my exterior and he's gonna just get excited by seeing who I am. And guess what? He's gonna think you are beautiful.

Okay, none of this is about you not being beautiful compared to somebody else. You are beautiful. I think beauty is defined by God. And God defined all of us as good and made in His image. Beauty is that. We are beautiful because God created us as such. And yet, there's all these messages telling us that we aren't or that we should be this and we shouldn't be that.

It's a hard world out there. So instead of us focusing on "will this guy like my body, will he approve of me? Will guys ever change how they see women?" We will work on that as much as we can. But all you can control, my friend, is you. And all you can control is how you're showing up to the plate, and how you see yourself and how much you're valuing your body and how much you love just who you are and what you look like. That's where the work needs to be done.

Now, if you are having trouble on a dating app saying that I won't date this guy because he looks like this, that's on you as well. What's in you that is holding this specific ideal body type as an idol? This is such a long answer. But I think it's so nuanced that I just want to be as kind with it as possible, that there's work to be done here on an individual level.

I think we get lost in worrying so much why somebody won't consider us because of our body shape, or what we look like, or physical appearance. And I think we need to both work on that for ourselves and then do the courtesy of being open with why we are not considering another guy. If he's not the hottest guy you've ever seen, in your opinion, but he seems like he is a really interesting personality or maybe he has one or two of your core non-negotiables saying yes, and see what happens.

The guys that seem mediocre-looking could end up being the most attractive to you. You have no idea. I'm gonna wrap that up with JJ. Because at first I was like, "I don't know, I'm not attracted to this guy. I don't really know." And then look at I

marrying the guy because I am attracted to him. I am both physically attracted to him, because that definitely happened. But I'm attracted to him and all these other areas as well, which only drives the physical even more. That was a long-winded answer, my girl.

**Stephanie:** I love it so much. I like yes, yes, yes to every single thing that you just said. It's so good. Thank you, Kait.

I want to ask about two more. There is a giant list of things that we could talk about, and I have a list, but I'm trying to narrow it down a tiny bit. Let's do this one. This one might be a little easier. Talk to us about political views. Because that has, I would say that probably five years ago, six years ago, I don't know. Let's not get specific because I need to really think through that. But I don't think people thought about this as much. But in the last however many years, it's become a real thing.

I mean, I feel like families are... You know how different people in your family voted and you know how that impacts your relationship with them. So this is a much bigger thing now than ever... Maybe not ever, historically. But it's a big thing bow.

**Kait:** It's a big thing.

**Stephanie:** Talk to us about what you found out about this?

**Kait:** Well, right now in America, specifically, politics are very polarizing. I've never shared my political affiliation because what happens when you do that is people just immediately categorize you. And that's what I don't believe is fair. Because we lose our level of curiosity and we just immediately start judging people when we find out about how they voted or their political affiliation.

So I never have and I most likely, I don't know, can't say never, but I most likely will not share it because I just don't think it's a fair assessment of a person. It's not black and white. A lot of people that I know voted a certain way and it was a hard and painful and very thoughtful process for them.

So we really need to do our best to know that even if somebody across the table from you voted differently, it may be for them... maybe it was a hard and painful and very thoughtful process as well. And maybe it wasn't. But then if it wasn't a thoughtful process and it was just like an easy black or white decision, there's also curiosity to be had.



I don't think that we should eliminate people automatically based on political affiliation. Because I really do believe that based on where you live and based on the influences around you, even your church, all the things, it could very much influence the way you're showing up politically.

And that doesn't tell the full picture of a person's story. It's just part of it. It just informs the influences around them. Again, it's like get curious. At the end of the day, I don't think you should necessarily eliminate somebody based on their political affiliation. I think rather than that you should get curious about this person and their values because that's more important.

You may vote differently politically. And JJ and I, I found out, we have voted differently and different political voting things in the last several years. And that's okay. That is okay. Because at the end of the day, we still have the same values.

Even in areas that we disagree that are harder and more hot topic issues, I'm not going to name them, we have healthy dialogue. We have healthy dialogue. And my mission is to not convince him to be on my side, and neither is his.

That is where we get in a really sticky situation. We treat politics more important than our relationship with God sometimes. We almost would rather have somebody of our same political affiliation than somebody who deeply loves God. I'm sorry. I just have to say that. We really, really are focused so much more on that, and we make it so so so important. I'm like, "This is only one part of a person.

Now, if somebody is making politics their everything, that's a red flag to me. If politics is their everything, if they can't sit there at a conversation without being right and getting their point across and making everyone at the table agree with them or hear them, then that to me is unhealthy, and is a red flag.

But I think if as long as the person isn't racist or completely against females... And this is not any specific political party. It's just to say, I wouldn't be with somebody who was racist. I wouldn't be with somebody who was a misogynist, in general. I just wouldn't.

Obviously, look at those things. But outside of that, it's okay if they voted differently as long as you both are willing to come to the table with curiosity. Our identity is not in politics. Our identity is in Jesus. Our identity is in Christ.

This is a challenging thing because a lot of people their identities right now are wrapped up in politics. But I believe you can healthily date someone who has a

different political opinion than you. I just think you both have to be coming to the table with curiosity, grace, and not attaching your identity to politics. Which also means not attaching your identity to whether or not that person comes over to your side with your thoughts and opinions, if that makes sense.

**Stephanie:** It's definitely a tricky thing. I think how you vote is like the flower in but it's grown out of something in the ground. And those are your, I mean, often should be, maybe your values. And so you want to be with someone who values the same things in life as you do. But you can't necessarily tell that right off the bat by what party someone is affiliated with.

**Kait:** Yes, exactly.

**Stephanie:** I think the other thing is it takes time to figure out how someone's values show up in their life. If they are the kind of person who's like, "I'm going to beat you down with my opinion until you come onto my team," well, that's a red flag for a person. Period. That's something that they need to work on in every area of their life. That's gonna be an issue in all kinds of different arenas.

I think right off the bat, we don't know as much about a person as maybe we think we do just by how they vote or what political party they affiliate themselves with. Getting to know someone, then you get to figure out more of what they value, and do you value the same things? And are you looking for the same things in life? And then also that is a great...

You know, there's... For some reason I want to say Maya Angelou said this. But that might be a total... We'll have to look this up.

**Kait:** Love her.

**Stephanie:** Someone, maybe Maya Angelou, I don't know why I think that, said something about how you can tell the quality of a person's character by seeing how they react to untangling Christmas lights. It's things like that. You can tell if you want to hire someone on your team if you could sit in an airport on a layover with someone or like, you know, just different frustrating moments that bring out kind of the core of us.

And so I think, seeing how someone handles something that's as hot as politics, it teaches you, what is that person's temper like? Or how does that person interact with people who are different from them? And how is that person when you guys disagree? I think those things are really important things to look at. But again, you

don't know any of those things just based off of, you know, whatever you can see on an app.

**Kait:** I think just a huge life skill that I try to implore more and more, more is just curiosity. Getting curious with people and why they believe the things they do, why they stand for the things they do, why they love the things they do, getting curious.

Here's the thing for people listening who may think, "Oh my gosh, I could never go on a date with somebody who's the opposite political affiliation?" What if you just went on a date with them and it wasn't a marriage proposal and you just got curious? Can I genuinely sit across the table with somebody who voted differently from me, and get to know this person, and just who they are.

I think you'd be so magically and beautifully surprised, if you come to it with the right posture, at what God will show you. I wish we had more of that right now. Right now, we have so many opposites of people in groups with very like-minded people, and like-minded people on each side. And not a lot of crossover of people willing to sit at the table is somebody who thinks a little different or voted differently.

And just ask questions and get curious and not come with an agenda. But just be open to see like, if this person is claiming they love God, then I'm curious to know more about them and how they came to the things that they did in their life. I think we just need all of them more.

And with that, we have to also bring to the table a spirit of not personalizing our own opinions and needing our opinions to be known. When you do that, that's when you squash curiosity and connection. Curiosity is not "I need to be known and need for them to know everything I think and be on my team." It's a curiosity for the other person and then a curiosity for yourself.

If you are a person that needs your opinion to be known, and you often have fiery conversations with politics, there's an opportunity and an invitation for yourself to get curious on why is that. And so I just think we need more of that as a society right now.

**Stephanie:** More dinner. Kait, the last one I want to ask you about is, depending on what our past looks like, I think a lot of us have things on our must-have list in terms of what someone else's past to look like. Talk to us about that. I haven't made XYZ mistakes in my life and so I don't want to be with someone who has either. Talk to me about that.

**Kait:** A lot of this comes up with the area of our sexual past. If I'm dating somebody and they have a very colored sexual past, they have a lot of sexual experience, what does that bring up in me if I'm a person that has never had any sexual experience?

I really think when we start judging people based on their past, we are forgetting the whole point of the cross. We are forgetting the whole point of Jesus, who literally was here, came to wipe away our sins and say, "It is covered. It is finished. I have done it. You are loved, you are forgiven. You are renewed and made whole."

If we are sitting here and going to be the people that are like, for example, I'm a virgin... This is an example because I'm not a virgin. My past is not that. But if I'm sitting here and I'm like, "I'm a virgin, and I need to be with somebody who was also a virgin," I really want to know why. I really, really want to know.

Because to me the desire to have that very specific thing, not that it's a bad desire, but it's sounding if you are not even to consider somebody who has a past, a sexual past, it sounds like that's more rooted in your own pride than it is in grace and the love of God. Because if you really believe the gospel, then you know that God makes us new. That is the point. So if we are truly going to be as Christians then we have to see people with those same eyes.

Now, there's a difference between, I'm dating somebody with a sexual past, and I'm dating somebody who was currently sexually active and having sex with people all the time. Those are two different things, okay. You don't have to date the person that's currently having sex with lots of people at this moment. They need to figure that out.

But if they have a sexual past, and you are going to eliminate them, gosh, that's not a "them" thing. That's a "you" thing. And that's something you need to work through.

Similarly, without just sexual history, but trauma wounding, I would say, the biggest thing when it comes to trauma wounding overall, which I have a lot of, and a lot of people do, is to look and get curious on whether or not they know about their trauma wounding and how much they've worked on it. That's the most important thing.

Because there are a lot of people out here that have never worked through their trauma wounds. You don't necessarily want to date somebody who's never worked through any of their trauma woundings, never before.

If they say that "my dad passed away when I was really young, or my parents got a divorce early on and then I was in two chaotic households" and they've never worked through that kind of trauma that felt sense of like... that would create a lot of ambivalence in a child to be one way over here and another way over here, if the two households were very different. And that causes a lot of trauma and attachment wounding to the young child. And if they've never worked through that, that would be a red flag.

But if they're telling you these things, and then they are sharing their journey of healing, and what they've learned, and how they're continuing to be on that journey of healing, that's a really, really good sign.

I know plenty of friends that have a history of trauma, of drugs, of alcohol, of sex, of so many things. And they're some of the most profound Christians I know today. Because because of the hard things they endured, and because of the healing and the newfound love that they found through Christ, they are just like on fire.

So if those people were eliminated because of their really hard path, it would be such a shame, because they are some of the most profoundly in love with Jesus people that I've ever met. And so it doesn't matter as much as their story. What matters is how much they have chosen to work through and understand and heal from the things that have happened to them.

So I think that you're never gonna really know that by day one, either. This is a journey. But it really is important for you as you are on a date and asking questions and something comes up about sexual history or trauma in their past if you immediately... If something is going off in you that says, "Ooh, oh, this person is broken. Ooh, I can't do that," then, ooh, that's a good challenge for you. That is a good challenge for you.

If you immediately write someone off right then and there, that's a really good challenge for you to instead of doing that, ask them questions, get curious, find out where they are today. Like, what is their journey of growth and healing look like? Those are the things that matter way more than what's happened in their past.

I say that from a very personal and intimate place as well, because I do have a lot of sexual things in my past. I have a lot of trauma in my past. I have dated guys that have made me feel really bad about that. And it's been super hard, because I'm like, I've worked through a lot of these things and you've just tried to shame me for the

things that I've actually worked through. You've judged me." And that's been so painful, but also really clarifying that they're definitely not my people.

But if somebody eliminated me, if JJ eliminated me because he found out about some of my history, of my past, it would be so sad because we wouldn't be here where we are now. So that's just very personal for me. I think there's a lot of work we can do there personally on the questions we're asking and the judgments we're making.

**Stephanie:** That's so good. I'm so glad you said that because I'm right there with you. I would hate to have been eliminated from my past. And I really was by some people. But it's a tragedy when someone sees you for your past instead of seeing what God's done in your life since then. They're missing out on the best part of the story

**Kait:** Yeah.

**Stephanie:** Kait, can you give us just one last piece of encouragement for women as they're, you know, maybe hopping on a dating app tonight, and they're thinking about maybe making some different choices with who they swipe right or left on. I'd love just the last piece of encouragement from you yet.

**Kait:** Don't do it mindlessly. Be intentional to pay attention. Think about what you're thinking about. So when you're swiping left on a guy, think about why you're swiping left. Like genuinely, am I swiping left because of his height? Am I swiping left because he's not quote-unquote attractive enough for me? Why are you swiping left? Or are you swiping left because they have seven mirror selfies and a lot of shirtless pics. Okay, fine. Swipe left. That's all good. Why are you swiping left?

Be more mindful. Think about what you're thinking about and have in the back of your head just me saying "date the unexpected." God just may do the unexpected. You never know.

And remember, if you have a lot of trauma wounds, for somebody with trauma wounds, healthy relationships look pretty boring. Healthy people look really boring. We aren't always attracted to them. There's something in us that wants the unhealthy person. That's normal to us.

And we wouldn't say that. It's just intrinsically there is something wired in us that is a little more attracted oftentimes to the unhealthy person. They're more exciting. They're more interesting. They hold love away from us. They're very charismatic, whatever it looks like.

Just know if you have a lot of trauma in your past, a lot of times unhealthy is actually more attractive to you without knowing it. So challenge yourself, date the unexpected. And I'm just excited for you. Because this last year with me challenging people to do this, not only has it been my story of being able to meet my now almost-husband but it's also I've read countless stories of how people have started to date the unexpected. The guy that was younger than them or older than them, the guy that was shorter.

I've heard a lot of height stories of like, "I gave this guy a shot that I never would have before and he is now my fiancé," or "we're getting married." And I'm like, "Oh my gosh." There's countless stories of people dating the unexpected and being like, "There was this awesome guy or a friend of mine that I never considered before because I just didn't think I was attracted enough to him. And you know what? I said yes. And actually, we're dating and it's amazing." And I'm like, "Look at that. So date the unexpected and just see what happens.

**Stephanie:** I love that. Kait, thank you.

**Kait:** Thank you. This has been so much fun. Thanks for having me.

[01:16:28] <music>

**Outro:** You guys, isn't Kait amazing? I just love her and I love this conversation. And I am so happy I got to share it with you.

One thing I wanted to mention quickly is I know we talked about a lot in today's episode. And so if you want to find the links for any of those things, all you have to do is go to our show's website. It's [girlsnightpodcast.com](http://girlsnightpodcast.com). And for every episode, we have a blog post with the show notes. All the links will be there for everything we talked about, including all of Kait's contact info so you guys can follow along with her and so y'all can be friends.

The other thing I wanted to mention is if you haven't had a chance yet, it would mean so much to me if you would take just a second to leave us a rating and a review on iTunes. We've gotten so many amazing five-star reviews from y'all and you've left the sweetest comments. I can't tell you how much it means to me, but also it helps out the podcast more than you can imagine. So if you haven't yet, please take just one quick second to leave us a rating and review. Thanks so much.

All right friends, that's all we have for today. But we'll be back next week with another episode of Girls Night. And this next one is such a good one. I'll see you then.