

Friendship Village 8.23.20

This is 96.9FM, KMRD-LP, Madrid, New Mexico. I'm Marlee Grace and this is Friendship Village.

[Music]

That was Jackie Shane with Comin' Down, welcome to Friendship Village, advice and music with me, Marlee Grace. If you have a question about love, being alive, creativity, identity, whatever you want to talk about, give a call while the music is playing. You can also email me at friendshipvillageradio@gmail.com. We've got some great questions today, can't wait to share them with you. Here's Del Shannon with "Runaway."

[Music]

You're listening to Friendship Village, we have our first advice question! I have been one whole year sober while also spending that entire time single, with no interest in dating - until I met my now partner, anyways. This past year, reflecting on past relationships/myself, I imagined whoever I dated in the future would also be sober. Boy, oh boy! Guess what? The person I am tenderly in love with drinks AND smokes. Do you have any general advice/insight/thoughts on navigating relationships with this dynamic?" Yes, dear caller, I do. My current partner, Jackie, is also a sober alcoholic and in my 9+ years of not taking a drink, she's actually the first and only person I've dated who's also sober, so it's actually really new to me to be in sober relationship with someone and I really love it, it's a really sacred part of our partnership to know that we both make this choice that for us is also related to wellness and staying alive. But I was married in a partnership for five years and that person drank and everyone I dated after that person until Jackie drank. I will say that I don't, it doesn't feel super safe for me to date someone who dates alcoholically or in a way that's triggering to me. But I also want to be clear that someone can have half a beer, and that can be triggering for me. For me my recovery coming first is how I can be in any relationship with someone who is drinking, whether they drink a lot or a little. Your recovery, your emotional sobriety is however you do it - 12 step meetings, smart recovery, a Buddhist recovery path, you know, there's so many different places online and in real life to get and stay sober, however you do it whether through an organization or on your own. I want to say that I think that has to be strong, that daily, to quote some 12 step vibes, that daily spiritual reprieve has to be strong in order to be around drinking. To me, I've definitely had to set boundaries or ask for boundaries and that did get easier with more time sober. I remember being sober around 7 years and dating someone where I was like, it's really hard to see the liquor on the top of the fridge, can it be in a cupboard? Playing with where do I need to ask for boundaries and where do I need to take care of myself? And be honest with yourself about your triggers - what's triggering, what's not. I've had really successful long-term relationships with people are not sober, and I think it's absolutely possible. I certainly have friends and people who stay in my home who are not also sober. We live in a not sober world. If you're in partnership with someone who's not sober and you are - in some ways it's not that different than the day to

day relationships we have that are platonic, in the workplace or out in the world with our neighbors and people we see - and it is a lot more intimate. I remember with my ex, we started dating very soon after I got sober in 2011 and it was really hard to kiss and smell alcohol on his breath. It was a boundary to be like, can you brush your teeth? I can't kiss you and taste that at the same time. It has to be so specific to you - only you can carve out the boundaries, what you need, and do it in alignment with your truth and not manipulating. And I say that because I know that can be hard for me - especially if you're new to sobriety, it's ok to feel some resentment speaking up like, why do they get to drink? When you see those and they come up for you, I think start to take that inventory, start to see what's missing in my own emotional sobriety that might help me relate to this person in a less resentful way. Many blessings to you and your partnership, I absolutely wholeheartedly believe that sober people and date people who drink. I just think that it takes a lot of communication, especially if it's new for you. Sending lots of love as you navigate that. This song goes out to you, dear listener. If you have a question, call in!

[Music]

That was Alabama with Song of the South, before that we heard Tim McGraw, Selena Gomez, and we started out with Little Joy's song "Brand New Start." This is Marlee Grace, you're listening to Friendship Village here on KMRD. And I wanted to remind you about the Changing Times radio series. Over the course of many months in 2019, a group of KMDR DJs and volunteers created a four-part radio series investigating the cultural and economic changes upon our community. Featuring the voices and talents of dozens of locals, the series Changing Times in Madrid, New Mexico aired on KMRD in October. The four episodes addressing housing, gentrification, labor, and law and order. If you missed the broadcast or would like to revisit one or more episodes, the series is archived at kmrdr.fm/changingtimes. Thank you for listening! What a great thing to listen to. So yeah, so many of us are quarantined and wishing for something to connect us to our neighbors and the greater world so I thought I'd share that. It also brings us to our next advice question. They say "in this moment when so much organizing, sharing, and connection is taking place virtually, I'm feeling really excited about the opportunity to connect more widely than I usually have the chance to, but I'm feeling stuck about how to start branching out. I've loved going to some readings or talks by artists I already know of and follow, but I feel like I'm slipping into a kind of internet-info crack— the kinds of intimate and community-driven events or online classes I feel excited by aren't super easy to find on the first couple pages of Google, for example, but I also don't follow many people on social media and I'm curious about ways to connect and build community that don't rely on those platforms. I think these are questions you've thought about too, and I'm wondering if you have advice about how or where to find thoughtful/queer/imaginative/connection-rich spaces, online classes, etc. when I don't already have go-to spaces and teachers." Wow, I need to take a sip of water after that beautiful question. So, gosh. I'm flooded with emotions at this question. Yes, I'm constantly thinking about how do we create community? That's why I was so excited to talk about the Changing Times radio series because I'm always thinking about how important getting to know where we are is, and also that in this current times of Covid019 and pandemic and depending on where you live, we are being called into digital relationship more than ever before. And so

the question of where do we find it is - my short answer is, I don't know and I'm looking and doing my best to create it, and I really, really don't know how we find it if not for social media. I've been experimenting with not logging on, not looking, I can't help but feel like, but where do I find this information? Like you said, I think a lot about, ya know, like - I don't want to call it "radical" but the information that I want from my community about different actions I can take, places I can redistribute funds. I was thinking about all the actions that we can take as a community around holding Breonna Taylor's murderers accountable. That's just not what you see when you look into Google, people aren't still talking about her murder. People in a broader sense. Which is helpful to put into perspective in some ways to be like "oh wow, I'm sometimes tricked as I see my social media community really taking charge and action and organizing when I don't think a lot of the rest of the world is acting and organizing in those ways. A little bit of a tangent, but that's also when I'm thinking about my own work, promoting my own classes, in my writing, when I want to find other people's - there's a few online communities I'm a part of right now and yes, I found them through social media. I want to answer this question and not use social media as the answer and I'm humbled and frustrated that I'm not entirely sure how to answer that without it. Again, I don't know where you live so I'm definitely thinking about if you have neighbors, your own local community radio station, if you have places where you can talk to people. I'm taking a really amazing anti-racism online course right now that's a really powerful digital community, the course is specifically for white people looking to collectively end white supremacy and I found out about it through a friend who forwarded an email to me. Through a friend who knew I was maybe ready for that type of work or open to that space. So part of me is like, just tell your friends, open up to your current friends more, whether writing them a letter or texting or on the phone, say this is what I'm interested in, these are the kind of spaces I want to be in. Because they clearly exist. I'm going to pivot and answer in a way of using social media, but again if you don't have a lot of go-to teachers. I often on my social media share - I just took my friend Liz's flower essence class, I shared that there a few times. You might look at people you follow and see what classes they're taking, who do they follow, whose work are they sharing? Yeah. I think some of it is like, how - I think the only way we as a community and people, a breathing human species, are going to start finding out information off of social media is literally to spread information off of social media. Beginning to ask questions to your community members off of those spaces, to say "who are you interested in right now?" This is really random but I feel like I've been on a big On Being kick lately, our beloved Krista Tippett, and thinking about whose voices we're listening to. So many of her guests lately have sparked so many different ideas and thought pathways of where do I want to go with my own learning and what do I want to get more excited about and look towards? Start exploring podcasts! Open up conversations with your friends, what are they listening to? Even if those guests or podcast hosts aren't teaching online themselves, they might spark an idea in you that sends you down. Maybe they'll be less following into that internet crack and into more skills to jump over the crack to find where the people are who are teaching and doing things. God, it's just making me think so much about the days of the lesbian newsletter. And I shouldn't even say it like that, a lesbian newsletter is forever! What's the one called - maybe a town gay can call in and tell me, but there's one that's really current, widely syndicated, maybe it's called the Lesbian Connection or something better than that but you know, I feel like we really saw in the 70s through the 90s, the

newsletter. The gay newsletter. And as a self-identified lesbian I'm thinking about that specifically but just like the calendar of events and the places to go and the way to find people and clearly it was less about digital spaces then, but still that kind of togetherness and finding the information through paper. That's something I'm thinking about, just wanted to share that. I hope that in some way answers the question. Maybe I'm a little hopeless in the question too. Maybe the last thing I'll say which I feel like I say with so many question is ask for what you want! Ask people if they know of the exact digital space you want to be in, maybe it's a reading group, maybe it's a knitting circle, maybe a writing or poetry class, and just see what comes up. Subscribe to people's newsletter, there's a few people who have newsletters that they share other people's things, etc. etc. I feel like I just listed a lot of things, I'll include them in the show notes. marleegrace.space/home. You're listening to Friendship Village, I'm so happy to be of service to all your advice needs. Shoot me an email or call while the music is playing!

[Music]

That was the Marcell's with Blue Moon, before that we heard Frankie Valli, Beach House, Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers, Neil Sedaka. I'm Marlee Grace, you're listening to Friendship Village. We have another question. This caller says, I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about how you deal with the normalization and privileging of freakin cis heteronormativity. I'm feeling intensified bitterness about the social ease with which straight people are recognized and celebrated as a couple (not "friends" or "sisters" or "roommates"), get engaged, get married, have babies, etc. As a queer couple, none of those steps are taken for granted or come easily. So many public encounters are rife with microaggressions (ie when the farmers market friend is recognizing us as queer aka "thanks, ladies!" she's also misgendering my non-binary partner). I love the queer life and beautiful queer/chosen family friendships but am feeling down about the challenges especially as they relate to contact with extended family and the outside world. Do you have any coping mechanisms or balms against heterosexism?" What a great question. You know I think part of it - I've been thinking about this with a lot of different things in my life. I was hearing someone today talk about the wanting to - not being able to practice their spiritual traditions in real life now but it's so easy for them to slip into gratitude as "I have to stay grateful, my family's healthy, I have the tools" but actually there's a lot of grief in that. I think for me being queer that comes up sometimes. I definitely relate to the "what a gift to be out," it always takes hold of my heart to think about how many people aren't out even to themselves or don't feel safe to be out in public. I think sometimes that gratitude of I feel so grateful to be out and have such a bright, beautiful, abundant queer family that I can forget to just feel the feelings. And so, I think that's part of it. Good job writing the email, asking the question, venting about it. I think it's good to write about it in your journal or morning pages, to just - I'm picturing you boxing, getting into boxing or something. Maybe I'm speaking of myself too, I have a lot of rage built up that in my work, whether in my writing or radio show or friendship, so much of my work is to turn that rage and discomfort into gratitude and life lessons that I think for me sometimes I forget to follow the feeling all the way through. And yeah, that's a rageful feeling! I think it can be easy when you have been out for a long time or in the same partnership or in queer community to forget that there's a large part of the world that either doesn't agree with that or support that or is

actively against it - or just the ease that we will never have walking through the world as queer people instead of heteronormativity and the privileges that people who walk through the world as straight will always have. I definitely relate to the "is this your sister" question. Nope, don't have a sister, never have had one of those. And there's humor in it. It's a little bit of both/and. How do you move towards that grief of this is actually really uncomfortable and can be really sad sometimes and knowing that that will pass and there might be certain situations where a sister comment, noticing these microaggressions, to just be like "ok, we got another sister comment." How can it be playful or how can you notice that to be like, what are some activities that make us - either you as individuals or as a couple - feel really confident and good in your queerness, and really seen? Whether that's sending a picture of the two of you to a friend or I don't know, like putting on Cher together and dancing or something. I don't know why I chose Cher. Oh, I know why. Because I've been reading Cher's Twitter lately and it is brilliant, brilliant performance art. For anyone listening, side topic please look at Cher's Twitter. It's just a miracle. Anyways, put on some Cher! Put on some music that makes you feel good or makes you dance it out or - there's so many great physical activities that you can do. I'm thinking about dancing a lot because I think music can hold so much power for queer people, whether the artist is queer or it's like Cher where it's been co-opted by queer culture, ut anything that maeks you recommit to that strength. Really letting yourself feel the feelings of dang, we live in a world where it's easier to be straight. Ok, the other thing - well, I shouldn't say it's "easier" to be straight, well, yes, there's privileges that make it easier, that's a fact, sorry - the other thing I'm thinking about which is maybe a call to myself as well is like how do we make it easier? I'm asking myself that because I'm thinking about, like in Grand Rapids where I'm from there's a Pride Center. I often give them money because I think about wow, if I had more access to someplace like that as a kid, as a teen, as someone in my early 20s, would I have come out earlier? But I'm thinking about mentorship, maybe you mentor queer youth, maybe you organize an event for queer youth, I don't know why queer youth is coming to me but yeah, something to think about it. My new question to myself and to us is whether it's - some of it is just energetically how the world was built and we might not see this in our lifetime, but we have already seen a huge change in laws and energy and spaces in what's available and gay bars close all the time and we lose spaces, too. That's just an open-ended question - what would it look like to change that fear or frustration or anger into service that does serve you and serves future queer people? Many freaking blessings, I love that question, I love that all these questions are making me think for myself, what do I need right now, what do I need in my life? And naturally, now, on Friendship Village, I'm going to play us some Cher.