



**PREVENT
RESIST
SUPPORT**
podcast

**Season 3 Episode 5:
Bad Dates**
with Julie Lalonde



University
of Windsor | Office of Sexual Violence Prevention,
Resistance, and Support

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Anne Rudzinski: Hi everyone, I'm Anne Rudzinski and you're listening to Season Three of Prevent Resist Support, a podcast by the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance, and Support at the University of Windsor.

Music: I got your back my dear and I know that you got mine. I feel that hope and fear but I know we'll hold the line. Keep your head up. Keep your hand out when your breath is feeling short. Prevent, Resist, Support.

Anne: Hi, everyone. Welcome to our episode today. Today we have a return guest, Julie Lalonde. You might remember Julie from Season Two Episode Seven: Remembering the Ecole Polytechnique Massacre. We are so lucky to have Julie back for another episode today. And this episode is about bad dates. So what is a bad date? We'll get into that discussion today with Julie. But when we're talking about bad dates, that means that our discussion might include some discussion of harassment or violence. And so be aware that that content might be present in our episode today. With that said, let's hop right into our discussion with Julie Lalonde. Welcome, Julie, Welcome back.

Julie Lalonde: Thanks so much for having me again.

Anne: So exciting to have you back on the podcast.

Julie: Thanks. I'm so glad to be here.

Anne: And I'm excited because today we're talking about bad dates.

Julie: Yeah, something that is relatively new for me in terms of dating, but definitely a conversation that you and I have had it's and something that I think is just not talked about enough when you're talking about just women's issues at large, but also gender based violence and all of those pieces. So I'm glad that we're cracking open this conversation.

Anne: Yeah, super exciting. You already gave your like long backstory on our last podcast episode. So like people, please go listen to Julie's other podcast episode with us. Can you give us like a really brief snapshot of some of the things that you have done that have brought you to where you are today?

Julie: Yeah. So I'm based in Ottawa currently, but I'm from rural northern Ontario. And I've spent the last this is actually my 20th year of working to end gender based violence in Canada. And most of my work is around prevention. So bystander intervention, community care, supporting folks when they come forward, I've created a bunch of different campaigns. And I've also been quite public about my experience of being stalked by an abusive ex partner. And so I've created a lot of resources around stalking in Canada. And yeah, that's why I have a real interest in thinking about stalking and what that looks like. Because I think it's an intersection of the conversation that's not within gender based violence. That's not addressed enough, certainly. But definitely, when you're talking about dating and putting yourself out there. It's a huge part of that conversation.

Anne: Yeah, so obviously, not all of the times that people are stalked it is a partner, but sometimes that's the case, right?

Julie: So yeah, nine out of 10, stalkers in Canada are men, and the vast majority of victims are women. And the vast majority of those are stalked by a former partner, and also just by an acquaintance. So that also includes like, I went on one date with you once and we didn't vibe or even just we matched. And then I didn't like how you talk to me when we were texting, and then you pursued me. So it doesn't even necessarily have to

be like a full on ex partner, it could literally just be that we were like two ships in the night, and you became fixated on me.

Anne: Okay, so very relevant then the like stalking and the bad dates hand in hand. And we've had some really great chats like the chat, we had to plan this episode was so fun. And so I thought I would ask to start like, what is a bad date? What makes a date bad? What makes, yeah, what makes it a bad time? There's such a range, but I think we're talking about like, some specifics here.

Julie: Yeah, for sure. I mean, there's everything from you lied about a part of who you are, like, and that could be like your age, you know, it's not just like, oh, this person doesn't look like their photo, but you know, saying that you're older or younger than what you really are. But also just as to use like Gen Z parlance, like bad vibes. So like feeling like you are violating my boundaries, feeling like you're not listening to me, you're talking at me, or you're trying to extract information out of me from not a place of curiosity, but a place of like trying to gather ammunition or something like this very weird sort of extractive process that can happen, or what I hear many, many, many women say, especially women who date men, is I feel like I'm interviewing you because you're not asking me any questions. You're not curious about me as a person. And so I feel like if I'm not asking you questions, then this conversation is going to be in dead silence. And those are really interesting to me because when that happens, and then men leave and say like, Oh, I really felt like, I really liked you when we were really vibing. It's like, you literally don't know anything about me. You just liked the fact that I let you talk at me for two hours, which I think says a lot about gender dynamics in dating for sure.

Anne: Yeah, absolutely. Definitely. The the question thing is the thing I've seen a lot on Tiktok lately. And they call it like, are we doing an interview or conversation today? Which I think is so funny.

Julie: Yeah. It's annoying. It's certainly annoying. But I do think it does veer into the bad dates territory, because then it feels like you're not seeing my full humanity, which is somebody who has their own interests and hobbies and things that they like to talk about. And instead, you're like, how does this serve me? And it's related to things like how, you know,

research has found, did you see that research around a sense of humor and dating? Did you see this stuff, Anne?

Anne: I think so. This sounds familiar.

Julie: Yes. This was a study that just dropped like a couple months ago, I think, certainly in the last year, which said that when women say they like a sense of humor in a partner, what they mean is like someone who's funny, who will make them laugh. And when men say they like a woman with a sense of humor, what they actually mean is a woman who laughs at their jokes. They don't actually mean a woman who is funny, in and of itself isn't both bananas, but also feel like ring real true.

Anne: Yeah, like that. Yeah, that does make a lot of sense. And I think that that's really related to like, the ways that we think about gender and dating. There's that really famous, like kind of meme or quote about like, a bad date for a woman is blank, but a bad date for a men is blank. Yeah. And I'm wondering if you want to talk about that? What is a bad date for women versus like, what is a bad date for men? Like, what are the things we hear about the most commonly?

Julie: Yeah, so for men, it's things like, Oh, she didn't look like her picture, like typically around body size. Or, you know, all she clearly puts a lot of filters on her photos, because she doesn't look that great in real life. Or, you know, she expected me to pay or she expected me to do XY and Z. And for women, it's like, he didn't ask me a single question. I felt like he was violating my boundaries. I was at risk. Like, I was terrified that if I said no to this man, that he was going to lose his mind. Like he insulted me. He made derogatory comments, and I genuinely feared for my safety, like, it's just not even comparable, between men and women's experiences. When it comes to like, it's, it's bananas to me that it's 2023. And we're still in this place where I'm sure my grandmother felt the same way when she was dating. But it's the reality, right, is that oftentimes for men, their concerns are very surface level and shallow, which they're entitled to. But you can't even compare that to one's experience of like, do I trust this person enough to give them my full name? Do I even trust them enough to give them my phone number? Are we just gonna keep this in the apps? Because then I can block you

on the app? Like, would I even let this person drive me home? But I get in a car with this person? Am I telling four of my friends where I'm going at all times? And where they're, you know, sending them this guy's picture? Like, it's just all of the precautions that women put into it. And then for men, it's like, she was kind of chubby. It's so wild.

Anne: Yeah. Which is not to say I think anything like neither of us are saying this. I know that you don't believe this. But like, obviously, men can feel unsafe on dates also. But there is like a very gendered breakdown of what this typically looks like.

Julie: Yeah, like, I think there's like these typical scripts around, you know, like you said, referencing Tiktok, like, there's all these videos of like, oh, you know, like, I'm not a bank account for women. And I don't take women out on dates, just so they can get a free meal. And it's true. Like, I can't imagine being a man how it would feel to feel like you're being used for a free dinner by someone who's not actually invested in you. That sucks, period. And there's no but to that, it just sucks. I just think it's important for us to talk about how women's concerns come from legitimate fear for our safety, and not just in the, I'm gonna go on a date with this person, and they're gonna push my boundaries. But also, if we're not vibing, how can I articulate that to this person without it escalating and then getting revengeful? Frankly.

Anne: Yeah I think this is such a relevant conversation, because you and I both do some work with the Flip the Script with EAAA program.

Julie: Mhm.

Anne: And that talks a lot about dating and norms, and like gender norms, but also like, how we think about dates and how we think about relationships. And so I'm wondering if you can talk about some dating norms or tropes that we have right now that are really unhelpful for women, but particularly around women's safety? Is there anything that we think of as like super normal or like a like a standard part of dating that like maybe is actually making us a little unsafe?

Julie: Yeah. So if the person insists on picking you up, which is seen as chivalrous, but again, you are now beholden to that person to make sure they take you where they say they're going to take you and now they know where you live, that if they do pay then you want to believe it's just a nice treat and this person is you know, being generous, but instead it can feel like oh, there's an obligation, I owe you something now in return, and just the overall sense within heterosexual and like even queer women who are dating men, that assumption that like men pursue, right, men are the ones who are chasing you. And so therefore, they're the ones who are initiating both the date itself, a follow up date, but also any kind of sex, any kind of physical anything needs to be initiated by him, which, you know, best case scenario for women feels like discouraging if they are the ones who want to be, you know, pursuing in that moment, it's like, oh, I have to wait for him to make the move if I really like him. But also, there's a sense that I have to just thwart an advance because it's just sort of understood that this person is going to make an advance. And so it creates a lot of anxiety around even a date that you didn't think was necessarily that bad. But like, I don't know about you,, Anne, but I've definitely been in that position where I'm either being walked home, and I feel perfectly safe, or I'm being driven home, and I feel perfectly safe. But then I started to feel intense amounts of anxiety of like, Oh, we're at my door now. Is this person gonna, like jump me? Are they going to try to make out with me, even though I'm not feeling that vibe? Like there's just so much anxiety in that moment because it's this trope that men initiate everything, and women are passive and just kind of go along with it.

Anne: I think that and also like, that moment, it is stressful, it would not be as stressful if we just had norms around being like, Can I kiss you?

Julie: Yes. Yeah.

Anne: I think then we wouldn't feel a bit like the intense feelings of like, Oh, my God, is it coming like and when is it coming? And what are the signals and trying to figure out like, when the things are happening if we just asked to do the things and I know that sounds really unsexy. And I think that's, that's the norm, you know, is that it's not sexy to ask.

Julie: Yeah, and I think, you know, in my workshops like yours, right, we we've named that awkwardness of like, but it feels inorganic, and it doesn't feel sexy. And it's like one then up your game, like, find a way to make it hot. But also, it's only awkward presently, because it's a relatively new norm. Like I, you know, I'm not old and I wasn't raised to ask for explicit consent in any context ever. None of the men in my life were raised in that context. And so it's just, it's, we're building new muscle memory. And so yeah, initially, it might feel kind of awkward, but like we just said, it's already awkward, because they're like, will they won't they energy is in the air. So you might as well just cut the tension and be like, so I've been wanting to kiss you all night. Can I? Or like, just gotta say, you look really great. Can I kiss you? Like, there are ways there are scripts that we can write, to alleviate that tension.

Anne: Also that's so hot, like, I've been wanting to kiss you all night, but like that's

Julie: Oh my God.

Anne: I think that's good.

Julie: Yes, I would never be I that wouldn't give me the ick, right. If I didn't like you then I that it gives me an opportunity to be like, Oh my gosh, like, that's so sweet. But I just I'm not feeling a connection. Like it gives you an opportunity to let them down gently. But yeah, if you're bold vibe, and then you're just like, great. I also have been wanting to kiss you all night. So let's go, no?

Anne: Yeah.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: Desire is so fun and sexy.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: So I think there's a lot there's a lot there.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: Yeah, I think this also relates to like, something that we talked about relating to just like how comfortable we are to say no.

Julie: Mhm.

Anne: And I think it can be hard to say no, I know, we talked about the fear of rejection, because rejection is hard.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: We have a hard time in our culture with rejection. But I also think, I mean, you brought up this really great point when we were planning the episode that also there's like a fear of doing the rejecting and like, where do you think that comes from? What do you think that's about?

Julie: I think it comes from the reality of you're walking down the street, someone catcalls you with like, hey, like, Oh, my God, you're so hot duh duh duh duh duh. And then you either don't respond, or you respond with, don't talk to me that way. And the person says, typically, the man will say, You know what, you weren't that hot anyway. So there's like, kind of like, like, low level nastiness in terms of rejection. But then there's also the reality of women who've been killed for saying no to men. We know that when women reject men in terms of breaking up in a relationship that was abusive, that they are at heightened risk of being killed when they're fleeing that relationship, because that man has taken that rejection as like a personal attack on him. And so he needs to like avenge his honor. I think it's so important that we talk about, like, why women are so afraid of rejecting men, because it's dangerous, like full stop. And I think for victims of stalking in particular, we are always acutely aware of what that could lead to, even because stalking by definition, is pursuing somebody pursuing communication with someone who has told you not to communicate with them. So in Canada, you have to prove that it was persistent. It was unwanted, and it made you fear for your safety. And so if that has happened to you, if you've been stalked, of course you're going to be terrified to start dating again because you're thinking, what if I meet somebody and we don't

vibe and I tell them I'm not interested and then now I've just signed up to be pursued by this person for years and years and years? That's not irrational. That is not like paranoia. That is a perfectly rational feeling about an experience. And so that was absolutely my experience of, you know, and now that I'm dating and doing all those things, for the first time in years, it's been such a mind bender for me to be like, everyone's like, Oh, man, putting your like dating is just really putting yourself out there and just getting rejected over and over and over again. And I'm like, I don't have a big ego. But I'm like, not afraid to be rejected. My fear is, what if I meet somebody, and I'm not feeling them? And they're not taking no for an answer, or they think, no means try harder and like, try different angles and different ways? And so that's actually what stopped me from putting myself out there more than anything is the, what if I meet somebody, and they really liked me, and I don't like them in the same way, or I'm not looking for the same things, and they get angry, or they get persistent? And we know that persistence is a danger cue. And so there's some great conversations happening around dating and gender based violence, but I really think that piece is missing. And yet every time I talk about it, women I know, are just like emphatically nodding and being like, yes, yes. Like, and so I'll try to be gentle about it, or I'll just ghost completely, or I'll try to do something. And then people get mad that you ghost them. But also, how do I know? Like, it's just it's such a mess. And I think in large part, it's because we just don't, we just don't name it.

Anne: Yeah, and I think just to, like, connect it to to like some of the other work that I see happening, or like some of the work that I do on campus with survivors, it's also really hard for survivors of sexual assault to date because it's like, what if this person's bad at consent?

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: You know, like, what if I open myself up and like, become vulnerable with somebody? And they're also doing the shitty consent things? Like.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: You know, like, Yeah, I think that's, that's really felt, I think, whether you are a survivor or not, I think dating can be really stressful for women in our current climate.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: Yeah, it's hard.

Julie: But I think like you said, oftentimes, we only think about how like, oh, for a survivor, sex must be difficult. But we don't actually think about how like dating can be difficult, and how you know, all the things that you learn with Flip the Script that you know, is based on the research of what we know is like, if someone is ignoring your boundaries in one context of, you know, ordering for you, telling you where we're going to eat and making all the plans and just being very like, no, no, it's my way or the highway, and ignoring your own requests, or your own suggestions, then that person is absolutely going to continue that pattern in the bedroom like that, that is an extension of their power and control. And we need to name that not just the, Yeah, of course, sex must be hard for people who've been raped. Instead be like, let's pull back and look at all of the ways that dating and romance, and courtship and all that stuff is messy, when you are going into every interaction thinking, what if they don't hear my no, like in every context.

Anne: Yeah, I love that it's really important to talk about, let's put a pin in the piece about dating and survivorship. I want to talk through some of the like red flags that you've mentioned, and kind of like it get a little bit more in depth into those things. And then we'll come back to the like, overarching piece about survivors if that's cool. So let's take it right back to dating apps. People are meeting a lot on dating apps. I think dating apps obviously, were very popular before the pandemic, but were like, especially popular during the pandemic, when people couldn't go places. People have a lot of feelings about dating apps, pro dating app, anti dating app, what are some red flags that people could notice on an app that might be a signal that somebody is not a safe person to date?

Julie: If somebody is very persistent, again, that's going to be the word of the hour is someone who is messaging constantly getting a little bit snarky

or upset if you don't respond it promptly. If you don't match with them, depending on which app you're on, they chose you, you didn't choose them. And they start messaging you anyway. messaging you on other platforms. So that's another big one is like you didn't match with them on Bumble, but then all of a sudden, you're seeing that they followed you on Instagram, and they followed you on this and followed you on that and message you on various platforms. That's another huge flag. Then, you know, there's the other usual stuff about like, they don't have a picture or they're wanting to escalate things very quickly, even on apps where it's very clear that you're looking for casual that you're maybe just looking for a hookup you know, if you're on Feeld, for example, which is like for kink and polyamorous folks like even in those contexts, even when people are being very explicit of only wanting a hookup, you shouldn't ignore their humanity and their full personhood. So anyone who becomes very sexually aggressive very quickly when that wasn't negotiated, assumptions made about like what people are into sexually based on on what they look like, or just your own bizarre projections, these are things that come up a lot. And then of course, including like, Hi, here's a picture of my dick. I mean, that's obviously another big one. But even beyond the unsolicited nudes, I think the broader persistence, and the getting really sexually aggressive, very, very quickly, is like a huge red flag that I would encourage listeners to not ignore or dismiss or minimize,

Anne: I think also, like, you can get really sexual early on an app, if you just ask

Julie: Yes.

Anne: Hey, I'm here looking for something really specific sexually, can I tell you what it is? Or no?

Julie: Yes.

Anne: Like you could within four messages be sharing nudes, you could be within a few messages like talking dirty with this person. Absolutely. But your starting point, can't be Hi, duh duh duh duh duh. Or really fetishizing people without their consent. Let's another big one that I see a lot as someone who is a femme, who has an extensive shoe collection,

and who loves high heels and who loves dressing up. The fact that there are men, not even on dating apps, like I'm not even on apps, who are within just sending me their unsolicited thoughts and feelings about how they have a kink for feet, or they have a kink for shoes, or they have a kink for lipstick, or whatever it is. It's like I wasn't soliciting feedback on what the kinks are of the various men's on the social media platform. If you want to share your kink with me, ask me yeah, maybe that's my jam. And maybe like if your starting point is like, well, this woman has put pictures of shoes on the internet, so she must want to hear from men about their feelings on feet. Like, no.

Anne: So this happened to me. I went on vacation last semester. And I like posted a photo on my like, Instagram story. My Instagram is private. I only have friends on it. And it was like a photo of my feet like up on this balcony and you could see the ocean. And I had a cup of coffee. It was like a cute like morning, like cup of coffee and like it's sunny and beautiful. And, and somebody responded to and they were like, Oh, you're posting feet on Main,

Julie: Ugh.

Anne: Which is, and I, they're a part of my body. Like, I'm not allowed to like post pictures of my feet on the internet because people are going to sexualize them like yeah, I get that. Yeah, it's just I was like, Oh, now I can't even post. It was a lot.

Julie: Yes, no. And I know this is a whole other side piece. But I cannot agree with you more. And it makes me extremely upset because I I love shoes and I post and what's so interesting is like people assume because I post pictures of shoes that my whole thing is I'm trying to like thirst trap foot fetishes. And what's so funny is it's like if you actually look at my DMs, it's overwhelmingly femmes being like, where did you get those shoes? Are they comfortable? Those look really great. Were they expensive? Like it's actually like me chatting with other femmes about like our love of style. But so often it's actually women who will reach out to me thinking they're doing me a solid being like, you shouldn't put feet pics for free and duh duh duh duh duh. And it's like, I don't know why we decided that feet are the only thing that people fetishize, but

like I post pictures of my face. I'm sure people fetishize that I'm sure. You know, I've had people tell me that they're into the fact that I wear glasses, or that I'm blonde or that I'm tall, or that I do weightlifting. Like people will fetishize whatever the heck they want to fetishize. And the idea that as a woman, I should only post pictures of myself if I can commodify them is not the feminist liberation that people think is like, it's very weird that I'll post a picture of like, here's my new manicure. And I'm sure that someone's kink. I'm sure that someone's kink. I've heard from men who are like, I love long nails. But no one's saying don't post those pictures for free, Julie. It's like, it's so weird. And I hate it so much. And so yeah, because then that makes you feel self conscious of like, I can't just express myself like, yeah, like you said, like, how many times when you're at a beach and you're lying on the beach, you're just like, here's a picture of my legs and the beautiful ocean and my wonderful view. And now you've just ruined it with like, someone's jerking off to this picture. And it's like, people are jerking off to all kinds of things that have nothing to do with me. And I can just live my life. That is like the quintessential living under the male gaze, and I won't do it I refuse.

Anne: I like that we went from like, dating can be bad sometimes to like justice for feet pics, like justice for our feet on the internet.

Julie: Let me just express myself. It's just so weird. Like, I used to work as a nude model, and I get less beef from people than when I say when I like post a picture of a nice pair of heels on Instagram. Like people have more feelings about that than they do about like, my history as a model. It's so weird. But again, I think it does speak to this broader issue of like, there are scripts that women need to follow and that is if you're gonna put your body on the internet, you better commodify it or you better be expecting unsolicited comments from men because obviously that's what they're going to do. And I think not only is that offensive to women, but I think it's also super misandrist to assume that men see things they like in women and can't help, but like hurl it at them, right? Like there are lots of men who I'm sure who saw pictures of you or me and thought, ou, but kept it to themselves. Like, it's not inevitable that men are going to be this way.

Anne: I think, yeah, what it just comes back to for me, it's like your kink is fine. That's not the problem. It's how you're going about it. Just ask with consent.

Julie: 100%. And like, yeah, it's not about yucking people's yums. It's about respecting people's boundaries. And again, even in contexts where the purpose is casual, like even back in the day before the apps when it was like people on Craigslist, still, like, even if you're posting an ad on Craigslist, you're still a human being, who needs to negotiate your limits with that person. But this idea that you forfeit your right to do that, when you're looking for sex, or you're looking for a relationship is part of these scripts, right, which is like women shouldn't be asking for anything. They should be thwarting men, or being grateful for the attention of men.

Anne: Yeah. And I think this also like kind of ties into something that I'm thinking about when we talk about this is that just because you've posted like sexy pics on the dating apps doesn't mean that you're inviting specific kinds of comments. It's not asking for it.

Julie: Yeah, exactly. And so again, it sets women up to fail, because it's like you need to be the purpose of an app is you're kind of selling yourself as someone that people would want to date or hook up with, or whatever the case may be. And so as a woman, you're stuck in this, like, well I should post a flattering photo, or else I'm gonna get hear nasty comments about how I'm ugly or whatever. But then if I post the photos that are too nice, then it's like, okay, well, now you're just asking for people to send you unsolicited dick pics. And you're like walking this bizarre balance, when in fact, as you said earlier, like we'd all benefit from clarity, right? Don't say don't go on an app and say you're looking for long term, but really, you just want to run through 10 people a week. Right? Similarly, like, if you're saying I am looking for casual, that's okay. That doesn't mean I'm asking to be degraded or dehumanized by this person. We can have a filthy, kinky hookup and never speak again and still treat each other with basic human decency. Like, I don't know why this is such a controversial take.

Anne: Yeah, no, I love it. So the next thing is you've gone on the date. And we've kind of talked about, like some of the red flags on dates, the persistence, one is a big one.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: What are some other things?

Julie: Yeah, so like, cutting someone off, and really not listening to them, either. Because you're just straight up not asking them questions, or cutting them off to like one up them or make it about them or finding, you know, negging, which, unfortunately, is still a thing, which is like, how would you explain negging, Anne? What's the easiest way to explain that?

Anne: Oh, god, it's like when you say something that's like kind of a compliment and kind of not a compliment. It's like something that you are noticing about somebody that's nice, but also mean. Like the one that I think is the classic one that people always talk about is like, Hey, Julie, I love your hair. It's so blonde. Are you a natural blonde? Because it looks like maybe you dyed it. Like there's like something mean in there? You know, like

Julie: Yes.

Anne: I'm telling you something nice about yourself. But there's also something mean in there.

Julie: Yeah. So it's like backhanded compliments, or giving people multiple put downs, and then throwing them one compliment to kind of like, keep them and it's literally like, this is intentional. It was a term that was created by pickup artists in the early 2000s, which is unfortunately, like when I was starting university, so it was really the pickup artists, you could just spot them at bars over and over and over again. Because all of a sudden, people were doing these same techniques that we were like, when I was in high school, I didn't hear men talk this way. And this still happens, right? So the idea of like, and the idea behind it, the quote unquote logic behind it is like throw women a bone and then they're

just like, basically cut down their self esteem and then throw them a bone. And then they'll be like, Oh my God, because they'll try to fight for the tiny crumbs that you're giving them. And so I just, I think about women I know who are now thankfully either partnered or thankfully very happily single. But some of the stories that they would tell me were just wild like, Oh, I'm glad you look like your picture because I don't fuck fat chicks is like what some guy said to my friend first date opening line. And again, thought this was a compliment. Another who, you know, did ask her some questions found out that she did work on missing and murdered indigenous women, found out that she was involved in that kind of work. And then the date was going well. So they were going to go from you know, drinks to dinner or something like that kind of go to another location. And it wasn't far. So she's like, oh, let's just walk and he's like, no, no, I can drive us and she's like, No, I'm just gonna walk. And he's like, Well, you won't get my car with me? What do you think I'm a serial killer or something? And she's like, did you not just hear me when I said I do work on missing and murdered indigenous women? Like I'm not getting into a car with a stranger but just because we had a good chat for an hour. And then this like mocking her on the sidewalk and really kind of making her feel embarrassed that she would put her foot down like that. Like those are examples of, you know whether or not they're violent in and of themselves, but are like clearly a sign of trying to make her feel awful for inconveniencing this man by not accepting a ride with him. Also clearly didn't listen to her when she talked about what she did for a living like it was just so I mean, no one should be treated like that. But in her case, it was just so meta to be like, well, you seemed really interested in my work and then are like, Oh, I'm not a serial killer, just like that's something a serial killer would say. Yeah,

Anne: Yeah, geeze.

Julie: Right, like just wild stuff like that.

Anne: Yeah, I have friends have told me that, like, they will say, you know, like, oh, let's meet in public because you know, and they'll make the joke like, oh, you might be a murderer, which is like, the funny way of being like, I'm actually just trying to be safe. And then they'll get the response from guys being like, yeah, you might also be a murderer.

Julie: Well, I mean, oh, it's better than, like, denying it outright, I guess are being are being upset by it. Right. Like, I just think good dudes are out there. I know, because I've dated them. And I've been related to them. And like, I have a great dad, I have a great brother, like good dudes are out there and good dudes get that it's not personal. Like, I think that's my message. I know. That's my message when I talk to young men all the time is that it's not personal. Like if a woman is setting a boundary or wanting to take things really slow, which is kind of my speed. And men get impatient or men get defensive or whatever. It's not about you, you, if you're good dude, you'll be a good dude, three months from now. So like, just, you know, wait, and if I'm not great, and you like me so much, then like, you'll wait, you know what I don't just mean like, wait to like, sleep with them, but wait to be closer or to really commit or to really get invested? Because we're, I'm guarded, right, because of my experiences. And I think women have a right to have a starting point that's guarded. And, you know, I wish that wasn't the case. But like, good dudes understand that it's not about you specifically, it's about a history of really nasty experiences, and near misses, you know, like, it wasn't bad, but it was clearly about to be, you know, like, that's, every woman I know, has at least a story like that. Of I can sense it was going down a dark path. And so I like dodged a bullet, you know?

Anne: Yeah, speaking of dodging bullets, we were going to talk a little bit about ghosting. I think it gets a really bad rap. Or we pro ghosting anti ghosting, how do you feel about ghosting? How does that relate to the conversation?

Julie: I would say generally, like ghosting, my rule is ghosting sucks, be mature about it, unless you're afraid for your safety. And then in which case, absolutely feel free to just ghost, block, move on. Like, I mean, I've been ghosted, and it's always perplexing. And it's always very odd. And then, you know, six months later, the person will get in touch and be like, Well, I was it wasn't about you, I was going through something blah, blah, and you're like, okay, but you could have been an adult about it. So I get why people are pissed about ghosting, like I get it. But also, there are very valid reasons why women are afraid of just being explicit with I'm not interested in you, I don't feel a connection duh duh duh duh

duh like women and queer people are trying to survive. And sometimes the easiest way to do that is to just break off all contact. So that's kind of my, yeah, and I get it, I get that it sucks, because I've been on the receiving end of it, but also recognizing that people got to do what they got to do. So yeah, what are your like, when you hear about ghosting, what are your like, what comes up for you?

Anne: No, I think that covers it. It's contextual. Like it depends on like, what's going on, in the moment? What's going on in the situation? Is it a situation where you don't feel safe to say no, or you don't feel safe to give somebody feedback on their behavior? Obviously, like, I think that open honest communication is super important, and that we should treat everyone like human beings. And that's really great. I have heard some folks say like, it's not my job to tell you that you are super gross and creepy on that date. People might people might say like, yeah, you know, if somebody's making you uncomfortable, like you should tell them that so that they know that they were being gross and creepy. But it's also like, is that my job, though, to tell somebody? And if I tell them like, Hey, you are being gross and creepy does that open me up to more, you know, like, are they going to be shittier to me because of that? So.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: Yeah, I just there's a lot of different perspectives. And I think it really depends on like, what's happening in that situation. And you probably have, like, a gut sense about how to handle it, you know, like, you probably know, in your gut, like, what can I do here?

Julie: Yeah, and I think, I think if you've been ghosted, regardless of your gender, if you've been ghosted, and you genuinely are baffled as to why one, like replay things in your head, and if you still are like, I don't get it, but I think it's okay to send a message to be like, Hey, I get that, you know, we're that you weren't vibing whatever language you want to use, but I'm just wondering if, you know, you can provide me with some feedback, or I'm just wondering if you can tell me what happened because I thought we were really vibing and I respect the fact that you weren't feeling that way. But you know, I'm just wondering, like, you can

ask that doesn't mean the person has to tell you but if You do actually want that feedback, you can ask for it. But in my experience, people ghost because they're either cowardly, and don't want to just sort of be upfront about how they weren't feeling it or are going through something and are not in a good place. But there's also a lot of women and non binary people that I know who are like, I just blocked and deleted. And I'm going to forget this person and hope I never run into them ever again, because they were unbelievably creepy, or rude. pushy, like, you know, so many reasons when people are just like, that's a hard no for me.

Anne: Yeah, I think, yeah, it's hard. But I also think, you know, people got to do what they got to do to keep themselves safe. I think you said it so well.

Julie: Yeah. And honestly, if someone goes to you, and you really truly did nothing wrong, and they ghosted you, what I just keep telling myself all the time is like, the garbage just took itself out, you know what I mean? Like, it was like, Well, you just extracted yourself from my life rather than me later on having to be like, Oh, we're not a good match. And now I have to be the one to initiate, like, just take it as the gift that it is, which is like, okay, but I do regardless of your gender, I do encourage everybody to do self reflection. I certainly did when I ghosted I was like, oh, did I say something rude? Or, you know, I can I can tease people, Did I take it too far, or you know, anything like that, like, do that self reflection, but ultimately, respect that the person is just not wanting to communicate with you anymore. Or not communicate with you in that way, Right? Like, they just truly want to be friends who runs into each other at events and says, Hi, and that's it, you know?

Anne: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So I guess another question that I have that's on the list is, you know, if you're talking to somebody on a dating app, or you're going on some dates with them, sometimes it feels a little bit scary when you have a bad date. Are there any like kind of things that might tip you off that somebody might be beginning to stalk you? Or that that's a risk like that there's risk for that kind of behavior? Is there anything like that kind of specific to that? Are there any red flags, for stalking specifically?

Julie: Yeah. So I would say the level and the types of communication. So if they are now sending you multiple texts per day, or you know, a lot of good mornings, and good evening texts, or they've added you on every social media platform, they comment on all of your stories, like they're just putting, they're just coming at you really, really hard to try to overwhelm you, whether they're conscious of it or not, I would say that's absolutely a flag of obsession, and fixation, which is really what stalking is, is just becoming obsessed with someone, either because you're in love with them, or because you absolutely hate them. But it's a fixation that is really important to make note of, also, frankly, like, if you are just coincidentally running into that person a lot, that's also something to be aware of, of like, huh was I really running into this person before we went on that date, or before we matched or, you know, that isn't necessarily proof of anything, but it's certainly something that I would say, keep your antenna up, if you just keep accidentally running into this person, if you find out that they're asking other people about you. So if you have mutual friends, or you're in community with this person, and they're asking around about you, that would also be something that I would be really acutely aware of that that could be a sign that this person is really fixating on you and also just adding you to multiple platforms. You know, the classic, I'm sure, you know, you've had this happen to you where somebody likes an Instagram photo from, like, 75 weeks ago, and you're like, ooh, someone was really going through all of the things. That again, makes you think, okay, like, you're, you're up at 2am. And you're like, haunting my Instagram page. That's a problem. And also, I've had these experiences where people know, really specific details about my life. And that I've remembered that I either said it at some point publicly on a podcast, or I tweeted about it or something. But I'm like, Oh, that's really strange that you know, this, like, very particular thing about me, which means you've been deep diving into my content, which I find, yeah, quite creepy. And again, doesn't necessarily mean anything in and of itself. But I think if it's part of a broader pattern of like, this person is coming at me from every possible angle. Yeah, and the biggest one is if I tell you, I'm not interested, or I tell you, I just want to be friends. Or in my case, if I say, I'm not really dating men right now, and they take that as a challenge. Oh, that's a flag.

Anne: I think this is interesting, because to me, some of those things are very contextual to like, if somebody's texting you a lot. Are they texting you a lot without responses?

Julie: Yes.

Anne: Like are you responding to those texts? Like are they just like texting you a lot because you're both texting a lot and it's very exciting, or are they asking about you because they're trying to like learn more about you or like I ask about, if I go on a date with a man, like I'm asking mutual friends like hey, do you know this guy? Is he safe? Like are we good? So what's the, you know, how do you how do you know when it when it's crossed the line? Like, does that make sense as a question?

Julie: Yeah, absolutely. It's to me, it's the reciprocity of it if like, I'm a very communicative person, and I love, like my biggest like who, woo, like, get the vapors is like consistency. So like, consistency is great. I love if someone is being consistent in their communication. And that is they can only answer me at night because they have a busy day job or it's good morning, good evening, whatever. But if it's the, you know, good morning, good evening, Hey, I saw this article that made me think of you, hey, so and I'm not responding. Or I'm giving you one word answers. And you are just like, adamantly peppering me with questions and tagging me in things and sending me memes and doing all this stuff. Like, if it's unbalanced, right? Similarly, like, Yeah, I absolutely do background checks on people before I even, like, give them my phone number to maybe explore going on a date. So I'm absolutely calling people, if I find out that you dated one of my friends, or someone I know, I'm calling her, I want to know what her thoughts and feelings on you, for sure. But if I've gone on a date with you, or a couple dates where we met or matched and we've been chatting, and I'm not feeling you, and I'm saying no to a date, or I'm saying I'm not sure. And then I find out that you're asking a bunch of people about me, then that would feel creepy to me. Because you're you're ignoring my No. And you're basically trying to make a case for why I should go on a date with you or go on another date with you, or why you should date you and be your girlfriend, you know, like that idea of like building a case is something I've experienced, and it's really scary. And I remember once asking, I was

doing work with young boys. And I remember asking men that I knew I think I tweeted and I was like men, if the feminist consent lady came to your school, when you were in grade eight, grade nine, what would you have wanted to hear? And my friend shared with me that he was like, you can't convince somebody to be attracted to you. And it's so simple. But it was a really elucidating moment for me about like, yeah, that's that's what this pattern has been in my life. It's like these, especially with men, I've only had it happen with cis men who are initially are like, Oh, I, she's made it clear that I'm not her type, or she's made it clear duh duh duh duh but it's like, let me build a case like we're going to court. And it's like a debate that where the win winner is has to go. You don't I mean, like it's this weird. And it's born from this notion of like, no means try harder, no means convince me, that women just need to be convinced. And in particular, let me show her all the ways in which we are compatible, which I think Hollywood has made to seem really romantic. But an actual reality is really disturbing. Like, it's quite creepy, it feels like honest to goodness, it feels like the equivalent of like those serial killer walls where like, I'm afraid I'm gonna go into your house, and you're gonna have like, 45 pictures of me on the wall with all these notes. Like, that's what it feels like to me when you're like presenting a case for why I need to go on a date with you. But I think a lot of people view that in that kind of rose colored romantic comedy lens of like, look at that, like he really means it when he says he likes you. And you're like, in real life does not play out that way.

Anne: I love that. So just to end off on like a positive note, because I think we've talked a lot about like the red flags associated with dating and some of the pieces about how it can be difficult for survivors. What are some things people can do to make themselves feel a little bit safer when they're going on dates?

Julie: Yeah, so I mean, I think all the traditional stuff about letting your friends know where you're going, choose a place that that you feel comfortable with, if you if they're if they're making plans, which you know, women also say like, we want men to make plans. So I'm you making plans, you saying, hey, let's meet Friday at seven at this particular bar. Like, that's hot to me, you're making plans, I'm not having to put all the effort in, I like it. So but as the person on the receiving end of that, I will absolutely

look up where that venue is, I'll make sure that I know like how to get myself there and back on my own if I need to, I'll make sure I have money to get a cab or I know where public transit is whatever. And then yeah, making sure that I let people know in my life where I'm going any information I have on that person. And for me, what I find helpful too, is just like setting an intention before I leave of like, am I in this space? Am I well enough? Like, am I in a good headspace? Where I feel like if we're vibing, yeah, I'm gonna go back to their place. I feel comfortable, or is it like, you know what, even if we are vibing, I don't think I'm in a good, I'm in the right place today to hook up with that person or take it further. And just kind of check in with yourself about what your boundaries are, because then you're less likely to be coerced later if like when you left your house, you were 100% confident, like positive that you're like I want to get I'm giving this person two hours and two drinks, and then I'm going home. And if I thought that through before I went out the door that I'm less likely to have them be like, no, no, you want to and then I'm like, do I want to I haven't thought about it prior to this conversation, you know, I think those are really good precautions to put in place. And I also think it's good to look at green flags. Like if you're thinking of like Green flag on a first date, Anne, like, what would that be? In the other person?

Anne: Oh, like, I mean, the one that you've mentioned so many times they ask questions that feel genuine.

Julie: Yes.

Anne: Like just genuine questions and interest.

Julie: Yeah. So like, if someone is curious about me as a person, Oh, love that, because I'm sure like, I know you, Anne, you're the same way, right? Like I meet someone even in a totally platonic work setting. And I'm like, What's your story? What's your background? Let's chat. Like I just love learning about people. And so that's a huge green flag. If the person is genuinely curious, from a place of like, I just want to get to know you. That's a green flag of awesomeness. If you've set a boundary and that person is like, yeah, no problem, like, you know, offer to pick me up and I say, No, I'd rather get there on my own. And they're like, Okay, cool.

Instead of why I can just come get you. I know. We're in the same neighborhood, right? Like, but rather that like, okay, yeah, no, awesome. No problem. Being communicative making an effort also.

Anne: Yes.

Julie: When you make an effort, if you roll up in a wrinkled, gym shirt, and sweatpants, and I'm like, bringing my A game, like, already, I feel like you're not making an effort, and you're disrespectful, I think it's disrespectful, and I don't think it's classist at all. It's not vain. It's the principle of I bring my A game when I go on a date. And I expect the same from the other person.

Anne: I think also, I like options. Do you want to go to this bar? Or this bar? Would you like to go for drinks or dinner? Like, they can still have put the effort into making the plan and lining up the options, but I like the are you more comfortable with this kind of thing? Or this kind of thing?

Julie: Yes.

Anne: Like the offer of an option?

Julie: Love that.

Anne: And when somebody demonstrates that they have their own boundaries I'm very excited about that. When they're like, Oh, I can't go out on Sunday nights because I work on Mondays and I need Sundays to like, do all my self care. But like, these are the other days that I could see you like some demonstration of that, I think is really great.

Julie: Oh, that's such a good one. Yeah, that's such a great green flag. Because yeah, if you have your own boundaries, then that means you understand how important boundaries are, and are more likely to respect mine when I set them. Yeah, that's such a good one.

Anne: We have another episode on like good dates. Bad dates episode, good dates episode. Yeah.

Julie: I just think it's so important to, yeah, to name, the bad dates and to name the fears that we have that are 1,000% legit, but also to not just be looking for red flags to also be looking for green flags. And I think that is especially the case. You know, speaking as a survivor, I'm attuned to looking for danger. That's part of having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is I have what's called hyper vigilance. And I'm always aware of, I had to have my back to the wall. And I have to do this, and I have to do this. But it's essential to my literal sanity and to my nervous system that I also give myself the space to be like, what are the indicators that I am safe? What are the indicators that I can take a breath and I can trust this person? Because I don't think the alternative is that like women just be guarded for the rest of our lives. Like that's, that's not serving us, certainly. And so I think attuning ourselves to seeing basically seeing what's in front of us, and not what we want to be in front of us. Right. And I know, this is something we all have to work on. I know I'm working on it. In every aspect of my life, where I like, date, get into relationships with, work with, people's potential, instead of what's actually in front of me. And part of that is seeing all of the flags, the green ones, the yellow ones, the red ones, but we got to stop dating people's potential and instead date who was actually in front of us.

Anne: Yeah, because we don't just deserve like an absence of red flags. We also deserve like the presence of green flags.

Julie: Yeah, yeah. Like people who make an effort and who see our full humanity. And you know, like, understand, yeah, that we might that it's not personal if we're guarded, right.

Anne: Yeah.

Julie: Those are those are good people that we want to want to keep around.

Anne: Yeah. So just to wrap up, are there any like last messages you have for survivors of stalking, or sexual assault or anything when it comes to dating? Because we've talked about that a lot like what it's like to be somebody who has had an experience and then is trying to date again, is there any like kind of message you would like those people to hear?

Julie: Yeah, I would say, again, from personal experience. Don't date and put yourself out there if you don't feel like you're at a place where you can trust your gut, about anything. But for so many survivors, the real trauma of that experience was that they lose the ability to trust their gut, because they're like, Well, I thought I didn't want that. But now this person is telling me I do, you know, so, I would say that is, you know, all that stuff about like you can't love other people until you love yourself, blah, blah, blah. I don't buy any of that. But I do definitely buy that if you are not in a place where you can just quietly ask yourself, Is this giving me a no feeling or yes feeling? If you can't, if you're not at a place yet where you're healed enough to be able to really listen to your gut, then I think you're not ready to put yourself out there, and I think working on that will allow you to put yourself out there and, and be better prepared to see those flags and to take care of yourself and not be coerced into doing things that you might not want to do , but you couldn't trust that no feeling, you know?

Anne: I love that. I love that. Are you feeling a no feeling or Yes, feeling? That's helpful.

Julie: Yeah.

Anne: Yeah.

Julie: I think it's just so important because it's also out of respect for the other person. Like I put myself out there way too early, and I was a mess. And I didn't think I was a mess, but I was. And so it's also just respectful to the other person, that you're not making promises that you can't keep. You're not setting expectations that you can't reach. You're just being really real about where you're at. Good and bad, right.

Anne: Yeah, absolutely. Well, thank you so much for spending some time with me today and having this wonderful chat. We'll have to do another one about good dates.

Julie: Yeah. Thanks so much for having me. And I hope everyone listening to this gets a string of great dates.

Anne: Great dates, not even good dates, but great dates. And we'll talk about that next time. And I will make sure to put all of your info in our episode description so if folks are looking to like hear more from Julie or check out her book, which is the best selling novel right now in Canada, right?

Julie: Thank you. Yeah. It's a memoir. Yes, yes.

Anne: Yes, a memoir , but it's an award winning memoir.

Julie: Yes, I've won awards. It was a bestseller. Yes.

Anne: Incredible.

Julie: Thank you.

Anne: So we'll make sure everybody has all the info to find those things. If you want to hear more from Julie, because how could you not.

Julie: Thank you.

Anne: So that was the amazing Julie LaLonde again, so grateful to have her on our podcast today. If you'd like to learn more about Julie's work, we'll make sure that all of the information about the things that she does is accessible via the description of this episode and also on our website. As always, thanks for listening, folks. Thanks for listening to Prevent Resist Support. We'd love if you liked, subscribed, followed or even just give us a follow on our Instagram. Then you can see up to date information on our episodes and our events and workshops. Give us a follow at @preventresistsupport. If you need support and you're a member of our UWindsor community, you can reach out to us the Office of Sexual Violence Prevention, Resistance and Support. You can reach us by email at svsupport@uwindsor.ca or you can check out our website at www.uwindsor.ca/prevent-resist-support. You can contact us through the website or view a list of resources on our UWindsor campus and in our Windsor community. If you're not at UWindsor, you can learn about supports in your community through the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres. Their website is sexualassaultsupport.ca.