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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

christmas, home, thanksgiving, people, family, talking, holidays, kids, relatives, told, parents, good, year, transgenders, laurie, madison avenue, transsexual, child, grew, defensive

## SPEAKERS

Sarah DePalma

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**S** Sarah DePalma 00:02  
Funny how when you get ready to tell people, often that pretty much figured it out? Yeah. When I told my mother for example, Her response was, you're being transsexual makes more sense than you're ever having getting gotten married. I didn't understand you're getting married, actually.

**i** 00:18  
Well, yeah. When I came out to my mom when I was 13, she was like, Duh.

**S** Sarah DePalma 00:25  
Like, I didn't know this already. Well, now, if you're if I was talking about some tips about how to get through the holiday here for my car, there was

**i** 00:36  
no no by a good friend, a car.

**S** Sarah DePalma 00:40  
Anybody who wants to do need a Mercedes to

**i** 00:45  
even handle and aspire at this point?

S

Sarah DePalma 00:49

My first piece Meyer does something literally, no, my first piece of advice to people is don't let yourself get trapped. by that. I mean, if you're going home for the first time after coming home coming out, don't stay at your parents house. Or for even better, get a hotel room get some reservations, so that if the pressure becomes very bad, or things turned in tents, you have an escape valve. Yeah,

U

01:15

yeah. And provide your own transportation. So that you can like leave,

S

Sarah DePalma 01:21

and not see, that's what Laurie and I are doing. We're going to rent a hotel room while we're up in Connecticut. So that so that my father has never been told her his his wife after six years. Okay. So we've got a hotel room, so he can come and see me for the first time and get over it. Without the pressure of having to have his wife right there too.

U

01:42

That's good idea.

S

Sarah DePalma 01:43

So we're assuming we're doing stuff like that. So I guess that would be my first piece of advice is if you're going to go home have an escape route.

U

01:53

Yeah, that's very good advice.

U

01:55

One of the things I'd suggest to some people, whoever this might apply to is don't force yourself in to the situation of of going home if you if you really deep down believe that it ain't gonna work. Don't do it. I'm saying it's good or bad because my my distinguishing between relatives and family here, my relatives, it's always been a very disjointed family even growing up they would try to do that inherent thing. And if you're a fly on the wall, you fly would say what the hell are these people do it they don't like each other. They sit around sit around the turkey and just start pitching each other and it just even if it was just me, my mom, my sister and me just four people at some point everyone realized we don't want to be here. We're we're

trying to force ourselves into a mold that isn't there. And if it was any other parts of the family and there it was even worse and my parents don't know about this yet. And I'm not ever going to force myself from the situation and spending time around either one of them around the holidays because they're they've they've since divorce. This Thanksgiving was I told you this on Thanksgiving. I consider it to be a been my first real Thanksgiving around family. Not not well chosen

S

Sarah DePalma 03:25

family not blood relatives. Yes.



03:29

I mean, yes, pat robertson would not agree of them how I want my Thanksgiving. For



03:37

more transexuals a GiGi and a copy of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. Hey, what kind of what better Thanksgiving could there be?



03:52

More fun than me? Yeah, as long as you're around people like we invited



03:55

you, dear. You know, I just had to I had to do the relative obligation thing.



04:00

You could have waited until Priscilla was over. Actually.



04:04

I spent Thanksgiving with RJ Well, it's like I went over to epigram my grandparents house and Livingston. And, you know, we were hanging out. And you know, I love my grandparents, I love to go visit them and everything. But I just, you know, don't really have a lot in common with them as people. You know, it's like, I love him to death. They're my family, all that. But we don't really have that much in common to talk about now.

S

Sarah DePalma 04:28

I think Katrina's got a good point, though. If you're not ready yourself to go home, then don't. Oh, yeah. If you haven't dealt with your own with your own shame and guilt issues beforehand. Don't go home and think you're gonna deal with it with your family because it ain't gonna happen. Yeah, that's a that's the I think that's a great point. Katrina wouldn't have thought of that. Yes, you're right. Yeah,



04:49

yeah, mine was right across town. And we are fairly close to the point where when I was growing up, pretty much every holiday we We're all getting together. But Thanksgiving and Christmas was pretty special because both my grandmother's I'm blessed to have both of them still alive and kicking and, and one would take Thanksgiving, the other would cook on Christmas Day. And the next year they'd flip flop Finn the rest of the holidays, were up for grabs and arrested her relatives around. So that first that first year was pretty devastating to me. Because yeah, I'd never been used to just being home alone. But I got up to Bob, I time I finally got over it and started realizing, look, you know, there's a possibility I may never be able to go back home. We look, I lucked out one year when Michelle had a little think, New Year's Eve party for a bunch of us, about six of us got together. But and and yeah, you remember that one? Yeah. We're about six or seven of us got together at Michelle's for our New Year's Eve that night.



06:02

Oh, it's fine. Yeah, videos and Trivial Pursuit.



06:05

Yeah, remember that?



06:09

I don't know why people get so worked up about the holidays anyway. That's because you because you can't avoid it. It's that whole Madison Avenue, Gene programming thing goes on



Sarah DePalma 06:19

the radio, you got it on the television. You can't you can't run away from it. You know, it's it's on every channel. You know, you got all these little Christmas specials, and you got Frosty the Snowman. And I don't see that any of those things apply to the gay lesbian community or the or the transgender community? That's not the reality of our



06:37

life. It's not the reality of the



06:41

application.



06:43

Exactly. Which is why I like to totally kind of reject the whole notion of most holidays, because they just don't have any real meaning to me. Well, yeah,



06:50

I mentioned our good buddy, Pat Robertson earlier, the thing that annoys me most about the Madison Avenue aspect of it is all of that caused me to actually agree with something he said once he went he was, he was commenting about how that really doesn't have anything to do with the true meaning of Christmas. Of course, most of what he does has nothing to do with the trimming. You know, he's right. I mean, 18 Santa Clauses and one one department store and all just every other thing you can imagine. Christmas decorations that fall in September. Give me a break. Yeah.



Sarah DePalma 07:28

Yeah, it seems to me, I guess, I guess my second piece of advice, really is if is, if you're going to go home, don't allow yourself to be put on the defensive. If you're going home, regardless of whether you're gay, lesbian, transgender, whatever the case is here. Don't allow them to put you on the defensive, you have nothing to be ashamed of. Now, that's a lot easier said than done. Because many parents are very, very good at making you feel like a kid again, especially if you're in their house. Oh, brother, right. You know. So it seems to me, that's the next piece of advice. First of all, so far, the advice that we've got here is give yourself an escape route. And the second piece of advice now is don't let yourself get put on the defensive. Be aware of the territory you're in, if you're in their house, they're going to be a lot more aggressive. Go don't get defensive about this.



08:24

And something I've been at Thanksgiving is I have two cousins that are very supportive. And they made sure they were there with me at my parents house with my brothers and stuff, Thanksgiving as kind of a flight guard as you will just to keep fire control or whatever. In case there was a scene or something, they were there to help and lend support and help whoever was having troubles. So I think that helped a lot.



Sarah DePalma 08:55

I think it's a great idea.



08:56

Yeah. One thing you have to do is you have to know who you're dealing with. And you have to play it the right way. My mom loves to go out to dinner. And so I told her two days after Christmas. You know, my God, I took my sister along, and we went down and we talked to her and I talked to her for about an hour and a half. And I was still dressed and drab. So she didn't you know, she hadn't gotten the full full brunt of it yet. So when we were finished talking, I said, Well, hey, Mom, you want to go out to eat? And she said, Oh, yeah, that's a good idea. Because she loves to always go out to eat. And I said, Oh, okay, where do you want to go? She said, Oh, let's do the Olive Garden. And I said, okay, but we have to go back to girls and pick up the kids. So we went back, the girls picked up the kids. I went upstairs, Michelle came down and we all went out to dinner.

S

Sarah DePalma 09:58

And they were cool with this and they were cool with it. Or Yeah, that's great.



10:04

Yeah. Because she was getting to go out to dinner. Every Oh, yeah. That's useful. Yeah. And at work,

S

Sarah DePalma 10:19

Laurie had an interesting incident with her parents. So this is where we're talking about and how parents don't like to let kids grow up. Florida tell the story about the restaurant when you tried to pay for dinner. When we were at dinner, and you weren't you wanted to pay for your parents dinner and they wouldn't let you do it.



10:38

Oh, the bail. We were super sad Super Saturday. Yeah, so please, it's the bill was something like \$11 total for the four of us. So maybe just for my folks and me, and they absolutely would not allow me to pay and after we got out and said, Oh, you know, you're still a little girl, baby girl. I'm 40 years old and the youngest of three girls and the middle child. I'm always the baby girl. But it go up some Yeah. And

S

Sarah DePalma 11:04

and I didn't exactly help matters because I turned to him and said, wouldn't you when you get alert, let her grow up. And as soon as I said, Sarah, shut the hell up. But it was too late. Because they were treating her like she was six. And I was really offended.



11:18

You know, they didn't let us buy them Subway sandwiches next year. That's right. They did. On the subway, they thought it but they let us buy this.



Sarah DePalma 11:27

And it's something you need to be aware of. And that is the kind of role that family will put you in, excuse me, just one second. This is It is time for our station break. This is



11:37

KPFA Houston and ke O 's College Station, you're listening to after hours career radio with attitude. Our number is five to 65738.



Sarah DePalma 11:50

Okay, thank you. Jimmy just leaned over my shoulder thought this is kind of nice. Parents are very good at training put you back in your childhood roles. Oh, and so, you know, everybody's shaking their heads here. So you're gonna go if you're going home for the first time, after you've come out to your family, or after you've made your transition, now you're going home, you need to be aware that your parents will try and do that and be ready for it. Because that's tough. And they may not even mean to do it. But it's such a natural thing. They're the parent and you're the child, you may be 52 which are the child you know, and so it seems to me that something you prepare for and it's not always easy to be aware that it's happening to you until you're willing to discussion then you find yourself saying how did that how did we get into this?



12:41

Yeah, that's even worse because I have like a Catholic mother. In the guilt trips are kind of amazing, but



12:50

you know, like mother inviter?



12:52

Yeah



12:57

So wait, she's got a Christmas

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Sarah DePalma 13:01

I'll Be Home For Vitor.



13:05

I'll be driving through Vitor, we're

S

Sarah DePalma 13:07

gonna we're gonna take a little music break and then we come back we're going to talk about this more because we're getting some real good phone calls from people out there. And and people are really getting into this program and I can understand it. So Jimmy, what do we have queued up here? This



13:21

is a strange group called the Kinsey six. Ks. And the name of the album is drag apella But, and it's all kind of fun music it really is great. How could that not be fun, really serious one on it. And it really, really kind of fits into what we're talking about.

S

Sarah DePalma 13:44

An absolutely beautiful piece of music that is called I wish I knew how it would feel to be free. Isn't that nice? Beautiful? That is a hunter this group is called on drag drag apella which is a just a great name. There's one title on here. I don't I've never heard I haven't heard this before. Go home. I gotta find out. This is called men are pigs but why keep kosher? Oh, I don't know what the song is about, but it's a fabulous title. Okay, well we're gonna turn the microphones back on in the studio in here. Okay, and I think we've got Jimmy went in there and got on his hands and knees and tried to get the microphones working.



14:30

I didn't have my camera ready.

S

Sarah DePalma 14:34

We have been getting some terrific feedback from listeners out there. Tonight. We got we got a note from someone that said the year the show was really helping. It's It's so true. It's hard being gay at Christmas time. And I know is you bet. We have another one said that we're having a wonderful show tonight. I had a lover for 11 years and it takes time for a family to



accept but it will happen so I'm glad that we're that the listeners are enjoying this tonight. That's what we're here for the listeners. Let's talk a little bit about about how about the education process? Now maybe you're going home for the first time you've sent notes. I've seen pictures, but now you're getting off the plane in there you are. Now they're going to have a bunch of questions. How are you going to handle it?



15:29

I don't know, because I didn't really deal with that.



Sarah DePalma 15:31

No, you did. That's true. That was pretty much



15:34

handled by other family members. You know, after I had told my mom, she kind of like told the rest of the family and they dealt with it. And by the time I saw them, they had dealt with it and they were cool with it. And they were using the right pronouns and everything.



15:50

And that probably one or that particular type of problem either, as my parents live pretty close to me, I'm really having the opposite problem trying to keep it a secret until I can break it at just the right time.



Sarah DePalma 16:01

Well, my I guess this is way of saying that seems to me that if here's a case where being gay and lesbian is maybe applause, and I would say that if you're a gay or lesbian person out there, get yourself some material from PFLAG to go home with some PFLAG material in your hand. have it available. Then if you really want to do something good for your family. Make sure that you know where the local PFLAG representatives are. Give them phone numbers. Now they're probably not going to do this right away. But just the fact that they know they're not alone is going to be a plus. Now for transgenders that's a lot tougher because we don't have a PFLAG group for transgenders. So go home with some material from



16:48

I don't know from where you try the internet. Yeah,



Sarah DePalma 16:51

that's true. The internet's a good place. Yeah,



16:53

cuz I just the other day I was. I was surfing the net, and I found an open letter to the family members, friends of transsexuals, and transgenders. It was a Dinah, it's about four pages long. And I ran a copy of it. And I sent it to an hour after I read it to a couple of my girlfriends up in New York and Portland, they wanted copies of it. So it since they aren't online, but it had some done, it basically covered the bases, what the process was and what the transition process is all about. The question of, you know, the gender question, you know, the definition of gender and sexual orientation, it was pretty dynamite letter and about four pages.



Sarah DePalma 17:39

You said something in our interview that I never forgot, when when I interviewed you. You said your parents said that they thought this being transsexual was a white thing. Yeah. And they were really shocked. And it never occurred to me that being a transgender of color, I would think now, especially Christmas has got to be a double whammy going home. Yeah, cuz



17:57

it turns out, like I mentioned earlier, our families tend to be a lot closer and, and fairly more conservative on certain issues. Which is, which amazes me in a nice his case, it was a good thing, because it amazes me that most of those ministers came out for a nice to begin with, but consider what



Sarah DePalma 18:19

was the alternative? Yeah, there



18:21

was no alternative. You're not kidding. There was no alternative in this case. So we knew she was the most qualified college. That's another story. But But, but it's a good one. In terms of Yeah, because they made that comment. And I had to turn around. Well, that put me on the defensive when you were talking earlier about don't let yourself be put on the defensive. Yeah, yeah, I got tagging on that. When I called it being screamed at in stereo on that.



18:54

It's funny, though, it's like if you don't react to that, the way they expect you to it really puts them off balance. It sure did.



19:02

I was gonna this is Jennifer. I, for me, a year and a half ago was when I first told my siblings my mother and father passed on. And so I told them in last Christmas was the first Christmas we spent together. And they, you know, had never met Jennifer before. And that was the first Christmas they knew about her but hadn't met Jennifer. And everything was there was an air of tension, but somewhat of acceptance or acknowledgement. But within a couple of months, you know, it started to come unglued. Now over the last year. I've been able to build bridges by educating first one sister than the other. And Thanksgiving was the first time they got to know who Jennifer really was. And to find out that Jennifer was just another version of their brother and more comfortable in peaceful version and not a threat? No. And I wouldn't go to make you know, I didn't have anything contagious.



20:09

Better wardrobe.



Sarah DePalma 20:12

Much better, much better. Well, we know we've been pretty much talking about parents, but we haven't talked at all about kids. You know, lots of transgendered people have children. And lots of gay and lesbian parent kid, folks have nieces and nephews, they also may have very well have children. And chances are they've come up with the you know, if you've come out to their children or their nieces or nephews or whatever, over the course of the year, some cases they may be very young. I remember a friend telling me once about a six year old niece who came up to them and said, Are you going to marry so and so now another guy? And he said, Yes. And she said, Oh, that's great. But my mommy thinks you're a fag. You know, and I never and I never forgot that story. Because literally told me a lot about the dangers of going home and Christmas. You can get blindsided from the most unusual places. Yeah,



21:09

cuz the girlfriend I mentioned in Portland, she has an 11 year old daughter, and her daughter accepts her. But she has a problem with the mother. And the mother of her child is basically in another relationship now and this person is just flat out just transphobic. Probably he'd probably get along with Pat Robertson and his crew very well. And yeah, some very some. So I talked to my girlfriend a couple of days ago. And so luckily, daughter, Micah's daughter is very intelligent, young lady. So when she wants to go see Mikoshi and hop on a bus or call Mike as other sisters in Portland area, and they'll pick her up, bring her over there. But it gets real hard for during the holidays. So I make it a special point to try and send Christmas cards up there or call her and just let her know, I'm thinking about or whatever, just, you know, just one day just set up there just started a blue just decide to send her a postcard and she just left me a message on my answering machine said, you know, Thanks for just being there was, you know, if you know, someone else just cares about when



Sarah DePalma 22:31

I was trying to make is, it seems to me if you're going to go home, you need to be prepared to deal with kids and kids issues. Because that's going to come up in a wide range of ways. And



22:41

kids don't sense or what they say as much as adults do. That's



Sarah DePalma 22:45

right. That's right. And it seems to me if you're going home, then you better be prepared to deal with this, whether it's a little brother, or whether it's a child of your own, or three niece or nephew or three, this kind of stuff is going to come up and who's there's no telling what they have heard, or in what context they heard it faux



23:03

pas. Kids in one way are no different than a lot of other people who simply aren't familiar with this, they probably just have some genuine questions too. And of course, you have to phrase them phrase the answers a little bit differently, depending on how, how old the kid is. But that's that's just something to think about. I haven't had to deal with this because I don't have any children. And but one one of my friends that I've told, had, has, has a very young child and I this was one of the first people I told I had no idea how she was going to take it because she didn't she had made that I caught her totally by surprise. And she said that both her and her husband would be extremely accepting but they they would prefer that I not show up as Katrina around the kid yet. Now just by chance they live out of town. So situation never came up. I haven't been over to see him yet. But I I'm I can be reasonable in that because the kid I think at the time was three, and it only known me as my male self. And I can see little little confusion in the eyes of a child that age. Without you any any bigotry in there. Just a kid can be confused. Actually,



24:18

I wonder if the kid really is confused because I would think three years old, you haven't really made much of a distinction between people just as they are it could be part



24:30

of it. And a friend of mine has a little kid and I've come after them and I went from being uncle to an r1 you know real quick and he sat there and he was really easy gone with it and was real happy he goes but and I just don't understand why would you want to be a girl he had no problems with what was going on. It was



24:57

just and then we went

S

Sarah DePalma 24:58

and talked to uh huh. 100 people, many of whom were training to be doctors or professional assistants, and they didn't understand it. Yeah. So you know, kids can't it's tough on a kid to get it.

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25:12

Well, like in my case to say, when I that Thanksgiving, that was one of my biggest issues, I was wondering how my cousins would take it, because I'm, like I mentioned, my cousins were four, probably two. And my, my male cousin hadn't even been born yet. When I was last, at my cousin's house, I have my cousin's house. And so that was the biggest worry I had when I came up there. Because I was even when I stepped out of the car, I was kind of like shaking a little bit when I knocked on the door, but I was there and I ended up spending the night over there. And then I really didn't have a problem with it this time.

S

Sarah DePalma 25:55

What about tote? What about total rejection? Oh, that let

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25:59

me speak to that. Yeah. Because I have that with with my brother. It seems in general that the girls in the family have been generally accepting of Jennifer, and have at least attempted to understand. But my brother after Christmas of last year sent me one of those dear Jennifer letters that not only is law, he didn't like nor understand what I was doing, and did not wish to find out. If, in general, just if he never wanted to have anything else to do with me. As long as I chose this quote, unquote, lifestyle, as if it was something I chose, like a new pair of shoes. Let

S

Sarah DePalma 26:49

me go out and choose the most difficult life in the world to live. Because I had nothing better to do. It was Thursday, and I was bored. So I said, What the hell? Let's change genders this week? Oh, yeah. Just, I every time I hear that, I just I wonder what, you know, what are people thinking? I didn't need to go up into the engine going?

i

27:07

Well, it's interesting that in, in the later conversations with my, especially my older sister, who is only a year of separating my brother and her, and she had said that it was like I had threatened him somehow, as as a male because of my choice. Which is ridiculous, of course, is

ridiculous. But how do you compete with that? How do you how do you talk about it, because this is something this has everything to do with him and nothing to do with me in that respect.



27:46

I now but to me, my approach was always if people cannot deal with this, I am certainly not going to force them to do but by the same token, I am not going to put myself in a situation where I have to be around people who are going to respond negatively to me. And when they are ready to deal with it, they will and they did and most males take that. Yeah, males tend to be about male to female transsexuals, they tend to be much more resistant. Because and the converse is true of female to males. They seem to experience the reverse phenomenon wherein females tend to respond more negatively.



Sarah DePalma 28:22

If you're going to be alone this Christmas. Let me give a couple piece of advice here because I've done I've gone through this. It's extremely hard to be sitting at home, when you know that your reason your home is because your family rejected you. And there's no two ways about it. There is no no soft way for me to put this. If you're home, and you know that your family is all gathered around the tree and you're not there. It sucks. I mean, that's it. There is no other way to put it. Having said that, though, my advice to you is getting out of your house. Yes. I've spent several Christmases in the AIDS Foundation or doing things of that kind helping others on Christmas morning. And it's not a case of misery loving company. It's a case of getting out of the house kept me sane.



29:14

Yeah, just don't drink and drive. Well, yeah.



Sarah DePalma 29:18

That's right, just drink. But it is true that in our community, in the queer community on Christmas Eve, and on Christmas Day, there are going to be churches, and they're going to be doing carols and there's going to be songs. And there are going to be a 1000s of people who want to be at home because their families have rejected them. The other piece of advice I would say and it's a little late to be doing this now but build it so that you don't have this problem again next Christmas. Start building a family that has nothing to do with your blood. Yeah, you can have family and it doesn't have to be a blood relative. Absolutely.



29:54

And I agree with that. 100% Because when you think about it, It's the family that you choose. That is, you know, the most important because these are people that you don't have to be with. These are people you choose to be with.



30:09

That's that's the point I was getting earlier the difference between relatives and family Exactly. Since since I've started coming up, not all the way there yet, but um, since in the last two years or so that I've been involved with not only the gay lesbian community, but the transgender community. I mean, I now have family. I've never really never felt that before. I have some relatives, I'm closer to Ben, Ben, some others. But the closeness was more more along the lines of friendship. But again, I can't say I can't say this enough that Thanksgiving this year, at Sarah's place that's that was the first time I was really around family on a Holiday Inn met a lot.



30:55

Well, in the blood relatives, to me, that I feel closest to are the ones that I have genuine friendships with like my mom, I have a genuine friendship with my mom. And that's why I care so much about her, you know, not because of the accident of being born her daughter. Yeah,



31:12

and with the people who are genetically related to me. Both of my parents come from another large group of kids and they all scattered around the country. There's, there's some that I get along with great, there are some heavy duty bigoted Bible beggars in there. And there are also some people who just do nope, no fault of either myself or themselves, themselves that I simply never met. You know, and when people start talking about family values, you gotta get together with these people. I've never met them, and what they probably never will.



31:46

And why should that be of paramount concern? They share genetic makeup with you,



Sarah DePalma 31:53

Laurie, and I like to say about our house that our house that we may live there was a community house.



32:00

This is what I'm going to be a second Christmas together. I think since we've been together.



Sarah DePalma 32:03

We've been together five years. It's only our second Christmas together. Right?



32:07

And I'm looking forward the next year, maybe they were gonna come down for Christmas because my whole family is going to be there. And even though my sister Lisa is 45 now I think 46 she still gets up and sneaks. stalking.



Sarah DePalma 32:24

I told people we just recently had to get the other for Dr. Cole and I was telling people Dr. Cole, Laurie gave me what I consider to be my first Christmas. I was I was really grieving for never having been a little girl you know have never never had that socialization. It was just really eating me up. And Laurie came in she's jumping up and down the bed and she sent me Santa Claus is here. Santa Claus is here and I was like, oh, you know it's seven o'clock in the morning. I don't care if they're walking and water later. And you know, it says no, no Santa is here. We went out and she had given me a little girls Christmas. There was a buggy with a little baby in it in there was a little tea set and dolls and teddy bears and it was just smart oven. No no Easy Bake ovens.



33:15

I don't know Barbie Dream



Sarah DePalma 33:18

we live Danielle know but but and you know the funny thing is it fixed it. I got over the grief because I finally had had that Christmas and then I felt better. And the thing that I learned from that as much as anything else is that Christmas can be what you make it mean new in I know that's that's hard if you're sitting home when you're feeling miserable. But get out of the house. Go go find something to do find others to help and pledge to yourself and really mean it that this coming year you're going to build a family around you. And I don't mean relatives. I mean people who know you love you understand you prided yourself that next Christmas, you will make it different. And you really can.



34:05

One of the things is I wanted you to touch on what you said was that you've got to tell other people about what's going on. After I came back from Thanksgiving and not because of me, but because of circumstances we won't have in our family, the family get together where everyone travels from here and there to to get together for Christmas. But that's okay. What I'd started to do was to tell other people that this Christmas, I didn't have a place to go and I started getting invitations to come join them. On those days. It was amazing to find out how many people would open their homes to you on that day knowing exactly how you feel. But you've got to ask you've got to you've got to risk and show people



Sarah DePalma 34:56



that's a real good point because



34:57

that second that next year I was invited to Thanksgiving dinner by my electrologist who's Lebanese? Yeah, it was very interesting. It wasn't very interesting.



35:11

Now is she Lebanese or lesbian? No?



35:19

Checking. Yes,



Sarah DePalma 35:21

I heard a real terrible, terrible joke when someone saw me saying thespian, they thought you Dini, she thought they were Ellen DeGeneres is a nun. Now, there's a difference. That's been listening. But that's a different story. Well, I think this is really been this has been good stuff. I hope that we have helped some people out there. Basically, I think our advice is, first of all, if you're going home, give yourself an escape route. Definitely have an escape route. Number two, be aware of your surroundings. And don't let yourself be turned into being defensive. Yeah, number three, could come armed with information. Yeah, whether it's from PFLAG, or what's in e or internet or whatever, come armed with information. If you're not, if you're going to have to spend Christmas alone this year, get out of the house, find something to do. Vanessa sitting here I was telling the audience really about your Thanksgiving and going down and helping with the Salvation Army. And how smart I thought that was. Because that's because that means that that that's, that's a it's a good way of getting over the sense of aloneness, it puts you as part of a community and I thought that was very, that was a great way to handle it. And in most of all, if you are going to end up alone, this this Christmas, trying and use it as the building block toward making a better Christmas next year, and build family around you. There's nothing to do with relatives.



36:57

If you're on the internet or any of the BBS is, and you're home alone, get on if you're going to someone else saying environment go out meet him someplace, have have Christmas with perhaps when you've never met, make a new friend. And that way you can both be out in the same day.



Sarah DePalma 37:12

And I and you know, I always hesitate to say this, but in this case, I will. There are many

churches who have get togethers and Christmas Day. I know MTCR usually has had one of the Unitarian Church has won, it might be a good day for you go out, meet some new people and maybe find a new family that way. You know, I know it's really hard when you're sitting home alone in this and there's a sense that maybe you want to feel who's gonna sit around be miserable. But that isn't gonna get you anywhere. No,



37:41

I heard earlier, when I was driving into the studio. One of the things that was said it about this about the media and how they hype Christmas so much. Oh, yeah, they sell it to one of the things is not to let our expectations get too high, about what to expect out of Christmas. Be realistic, be realistic, and also expectations about going home to family. Don't expect them to welcome you with open arms, if they do great. But don't go there expecting that if you do, you won't be prepared for what happens no matter what it is. Well,



Sarah DePalma 38:17

yeah, that's



38:17

a good point to my way of saying is you are responsible to a large degree with how much emotion you invest in the whole concept of Christmas. You know, it's like, you can either, you know, focus upon Oh, it's Christmas, this is what society says I should be doing on Christmas. Or you can say, you know, it's Christmas. Yeah. But what does it really mean to me? And, you know, why does it have to be this major pressure to have this family thing or whatever.



38:48

In essence, it's just another day. If you look at it, it's you don't have all of your export expectations fulfilled. It's no great loss. That's not the point of it. And point of it is to divert your attention to do something. If you can't make yourself happy at least try and make someone else happy. And somehow indirectly it will at least improve your mood by Microsoft diversionary eating well



39:17

and we're like Kristen, even on Thanksgiving she usually spends the day alone makes herself like a nice meal and just spends the day just by herself and when she tells people this they go Oh, you poor thing. You know, she's like, No, not Oh, you poor thing. It's like this is my day you for me to set aside for myself to do what I want to do. And I think that's cool.



39:42

Myself, yeah. There's nothing wrong with that. A lot of it is just I think a lot of people's expectations and what they are used to, if they have grown up having a holiday each holiday, then I guess they kind of come to expect it. I I've never really, I guess had that per se. So at least some years, whenever, you know, we didn't have holidays, per se, it wasn't that big of a deal to me, it just you know, was just something that you had to get over, it was another day, you still had to go to work, you still had to do what you had to do. But you got over it. And after a bit, it gets to the point where you realize that a lot of this is kind of Madison Avenue hype. You're, I guess, feeling artificially better about yourself in in the hopes of, I guess maybe gaining, you know, oh, whatever it is that you're looking for out of the holidays, be it you know, some kind of gifts or some kind of, you know, family or whatever it is that your expectations are. But the thing is just not to build up your expectations. So they won't be dashed. If you have low expectations going in, then you're not going to be disappointed. Regardless, have you ever make something? Have you

S

Sarah DePalma 40:59

ever had actually had chestnuts roasted open or an open fire? It's like eating cardboard?

i

41:05

I don't think I've ever even seen a chestnut.

S

Sarah DePalma 41:08

I grew up in I grew up in New England.

i

41:12

I would warn you against saying things like that, sir. Because you know, my tendency to burst into song.

i

41:19

Oh, God, what I just stepped into your microphone. Oh, no, I'd be cutting out a microphone off. Nevermind. Well,

S

Sarah DePalma 41:27

this has been terrific. Terrific stuff. I hope that we've been helpful. Vanessa, before we go, I want to ask you what Jimmy and I were talking about the about a nice Parker's campaign. Yes. And we had said at the time that I didn't know anybody who worked harder at Denise's campaign than the new did that you practically live there. And I was wondering if you would talk a little bit about now. Now the campaign is over to talk a little bit about the campaign and how it went. I know we get toward the end especially got lots of volunteers.



42:02

Well, actually, we were kind of wondering about that. Before. The very last week of the campaign, it seemed like the volunteers were kind of failing a little bit. We weren't getting quite as much enthusiasm, and it was worrying us a little. But they did start picking up that last week, especially right before the election, the momentum started up again. And it was basically just a matter of trying to keep things together and keep focused on what our task was at hand. And we all did that. And I gotta admit, I was very fortunate to work with the staff and all the people that I worked with. I really met a lot of great people there and it's an experience I'll never forget working with



Sarah DePalma 42:47

Deborah Bell and she's passionate McElveen they're two of the best people around.



42:52

Even grant Martin, the campaign manager firm for starting out is my first time politically active and volunteering on a campaign. I gotta admit, there was no better campaign to pick and no better time to pick them. This particular one