

SEXUALITY

SEASON 2

SHIFT

WITH P. S. BLOSSOM



Narrative Change SHIFT with P.S. Blossom

The US has a complex history with race, reproduction, and class, which leads to negative health outcomes for women and other birthing people of color. Dominant public narratives surrounding these health outcomes do not always reflect the perspectives, voices, or lived experiences of women and other birthing people of color. The P.S. Blossom podcast explores issues at the intersections of reproductive justice and capital with a specific focus on the autonomy of women and other birthing people of color.

SHIFT with PS Blossom is a guide that accompanies each topic covered in the PS Blossom podcast. It provides a reproductive justice approach to controversial conversations. We encourage readers to actively participate in SHIFT-ing the Narrative by sharing personal stories and lived experiences in their communities.

Sexuality

Sexuality includes sexual orientation and expression, identity, self expression, sexual feelings, emotions and desires, and how they relate with others. A person's perception and approach to sexuality are different around the world and have changed throughout history. Some dominant narratives about sexuality are welcoming and inclusive, while others view sexuality as a tool for control and oppression. Being able to express one's sexuality is a vital part of understanding oneself and, in today's environment, is associated with living a fulfilling life. How we identify with our sexual and reproductive health shapes our relationship with how we view the community and how the community views us. Laws, educational systems, and religions play a key role in perpetuating dominant harmful narratives around sexuality, by establishing what a family should look like, how families should reproduce, and the type of romantic relationships that are socially accepted. These narratives can lead people who do not identify as monogamous and heterosexual to suffer trauma, shame, poor reproductive and mental health, discrimination, segregation, and legal invisibility.

“ **This world that has really tried to flatten us into one expression of ourselves is intrinsically false. We can continue to recreate ourselves, we can continue to rewrite the scripts and narratives that we've been given about our bodies, our worth, and our sexuality, our pleasure.** ” —@evyanwhitney

NARRATIVES AROUND SEXUALITY

Sometimes it is difficult to identify harmful dominant narratives, since they are deeply rooted in our culture. By identifying harmful dominant narratives, we can positively SHIFT social structures and behaviors.

Here are some examples of **harmful dominant narratives** around sexuality:

- “A woman should know her place, she must be a good woman, a good mother, and satisfy her husband's needs. She doesn't need anything else.”
- “A woman should not have many sexual partners, it makes her promiscuous, and no man would want her then.”
- “There's no such thing as gender identity, you are either a man or a woman.”

Here are examples of healthier **intersectional counter narratives** that can help SHIFT harmful dominant narratives:

- Sex is natural, and sexuality is a part of every person's life.
- You should not be ashamed of who you are just because you feel differently than others.
- Sexuality is much more than the person you love. It is part of who you are and identify as, and it is all right if that changes throughout time.



Andrea Barrica *(she/her)*

S2 EPISODE 4

Andrea Barrica is the CEO and founder of [O.school](#), a judgment-free educational platform to learn about sexuality and pleasure. As a queer woman of color, she's been fighting to bring more humanity to the tech industry, and her mission is to create the world's most trusted sexual wellness brand to help people increase their sexual health, power, and confidence. Previously, Andrea co-founded the leading financial solution for growing startups, [inDinero.com](#), which now employs 150+ employees globally. She also served as a venture partner at [500 Startups](#), a global venture capital fund, where she worked with hundreds of startup companies. Andrea was raised in a religious, conservative Filipino family that only taught abstinence and she only had fear-based sex education in public schools. Seeking support and information, Barrica could not find reliable resources and experienced harassment online. Determined that no one else should have to struggle like she did, Barrica launched [O.school](#) in 2017 to change the way people learn about sexuality.

“ You can't have sex positivity without also respecting and acknowledging that sex work is meaningful work for some people. ”

“ Sexuality is about everything. It's about being safe in your body. It's about knowing what the parts of your body do. I think that conversations about sex should happen literally as soon as someone can talk. ”

ON THE EPISODE

Sex education is dangerously lacking, and when it is taught, it's almost always from a place of fear, judgment, and shame. P.S. Blossom guest Andrea is inarguably valuable in the sexual wellness space discusses the role of sexuality in our lives. In [Sexuality & Adult Discomfort](#), she shares her personal sexual wellness journey and how it informed her work. We discuss the role of technology in sex education, the danger of centering adult discomfort in sex conversations, and the health benefits of sexual pleasure. Andrea shares her take on how to cultivate a healthy sex life, how sex education should be conducted, and how sex positivity can impact the world at large.

“ Where investment flows, you see innovation. If you don't get early-stage investment, then we don't get the innovative solutions that affect us. ”



“ I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, which is smack in the middle of the Bible Belt. A lot of my early experiences around gender, sexuality, and the way that I presented in the world centered on religion and dance. ”

Ailea Stites *(they/them)*

S2 EPISODE 5

Ailea Stites is a multi-disciplinary artist, writer, and storyteller whose work focuses on creating and translating antinormative narratives in academic and scientific spaces. In their role at Ci3 at the University of Chicago, Ailea builds youth-driven healthcare interventions and leads community engagement efforts through the lenses of reproductive justice and positive youth development. Using games, storytelling, and design, Ci3 gives young people access to high-quality resources to make informed decisions about their own bodies and creates interventions to address structural barriers to adolescent health and wellbeing. They also direct development and programming initiatives at the Making A Difference Dancing Rhythms Organization in historic Bronzeville, Chicago. In their free time, Ailea can be found reading in a tree or barefoot in a vegetable garden.

“ One's self-worth, one's value as a person, no matter what society may tell you, has nothing to do with how well you conform to arbitrary standards. ”

“ I don't have to uproot myself in order to be perceived the way that I want people to perceive me. These days, my external appearance, the way that I present, I craft it for me and not for anybody else. That includes my body hair. ”

ON THE EPISODE

In [The Beauty Standards of The Star Trek Princess](#), Ailea offers some insight into their personal journey with body hair, beauty standards, and the gender binary, which started as early as eight years old when they were instructed by a dance teacher to remove their armpit hair for a recital. For decades, body hair was only deemed "acceptable" if it was grown by men, while women have long been conditioned to shave their legs, armpits, and pubic hair. Thankfully, public perception about body hair is finally changing, led predominantly by the LGBTQ+ community. P.S. Blossom guest Ailea, shares their story of self-discovery and, ultimately, self-love as they learned to navigate puberty, young adulthood, and the societal expectations of what it means to be a “lady.” They encourage listeners to show up unapologetically as themselves and emphasize that there is no need to conform to arbitrary standards in order to be worthy.



“It is okay for us to take a break [from the healing process]. It is okay for us to take a pause and just feel into the complexity and the messiness of our humanity.”

Ev'Yan Whitney *(they/them)*

S2 EPISODE 6

Ev'Yan Whitney is a Sexuality Doula®, Sensualist, and Author of the book, *Sensual Self: Prompts and Practices For Getting in Touch With Your Body*. They are a somatic practitioner, openly queer and non-binary, and wholeheartedly enjoying their journey of self-discovery. Since 2011, Ev'Yan has been dedicated to sex education and sexual activism to help folks reclaim their authentic sexuality and reconnect to their sensual bodies on their own terms. Their work focuses on decolonizing, unshaming, and liberating sexuality at the intersection of identity, trauma healing, pleasure, and embodiment. From their wildly successful Sensual Selfie Challenge and Sensual Dance Meditations classes to their vulnerable essays and beloved podcast, *Sensual Self*, throughout her career, Ev'Yan has created resources and safe spaces that have encouraged folks to explore the nuances of their sexuality. They've been featured in places such as [Vogue](#), [Buzzfeed](#), [Rolling Stone](#), and more.

“It's been a really beautiful journey to smash those roles and to find my own personhood on my own terms, that is so counter to what I was given and the ways that I felt like I was allowed to be with myself.”

ON THE EPISODE

In [The Lifelong Journey of Self Liberation](#), Ev'Yan shares their powerful journey involving courage, forgiveness, and healing. Embarking on the journey of discovery that takes place within has its challenges and frustrations, but can also be joyful and liberating. Ev'Yan Whitney grew up in a conservative Christian home, attempting to live up to the “good girl” expectations that were instilled within them. “I signed my first purity contract when I was eight. And that contract basically said that I was to be a virgin and remain pure until marriage”. In their 20s, they came to realize that the only way to create new stories and narratives around their sexuality, their pleasure, and their body was to take responsibility for them. And that they did! Reminding us all that the process of self-liberation is a journey that takes time, patience, forgiveness, and healing.

“Coming to this understanding that nobody was going to save me, that nobody was going to heal me, that I had to step up and do that work myself, was very empowering. But it was also really frustrating.”

Reflection Questions

What was your first experience with sexuality?

Can you identify the effects of culture/religion/society standards on your sexual desires?

When did your perspective on sexuality shift?

How did you decide to move forward with your renewed perspective on your sexuality and desires?

How has your relationship with your own sexuality marked or determined decisions in your life?

Who has the narrative of sexuality historically been centered around? What has been the dominant messaging around sexuality?

Is pleasure an integral part of sexuality?

What is the role of the community in sexuality justice?

How do you stand against the harmful dominant narrative of sexuality and sexual desires?

Follow Our Guests

Andrea Barrica's [website](#)
X: [@abarrica](#)

Ailea Stites
[LinkedIn](#)

Ev'Yan Whitney's [website](#)
IG: [@evyan.whitney](#)

Guest Recommendations Topic

Listen to Andrea in [Sexuality & Adult Discomfort](#)

Listen to Ailea in [The Beauty Standards of The Star Trek Princess](#)

Listen to Ev'Yan in [The Lifelong Journey of Self Liberation](#)

Listen to Ev'Yan Whitney's podcast talk about [Sexual Liberation After Trauma](#)

Here are some [Sexuality Questions](#) answered!

Have you heard about [Sexuality Doulas](#)?

Let's talk about being [Asexual](#)

Changing the dominant narrative about [Sexuality](#)

Chicago University [Ci3](#)

[Sex Ed](#) for the real world!

[Be amazed](#) by children's and adolescent's perspectives

[O.school](#)

[Youth](#) in the US

Planned Parenthood helps [parents to talk](#) to their kids

Numbers from the [Census Bureau](#)

Relevant Social and Platform Links

Rhia Ventures is a social impact organization with a mission to advance reproductive and maternal health equity by intentionally leveraging capital to center the needs, experiences, and perspectives of historically marginalized people in decision-making.

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Check out the P.S. Blossom Podcast on [Amazon Music](#), [Apple Podcasts](#) and [Spotify](#)!

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Healing **Dominant Narrative** **Heteronormativity**
Narrative Change **Trauma** **Sexuality Doula®**
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Shame **Queer** **Sexual Healing** **Intersectional (**