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

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

So, guys, I'm so excited to be back for season 16 with the Girls Night Podcast. And to kick off this season, we're doing something a little bit different. Since registration for my online course, Love Your Single Life, is opening back up in just a few weeks, I thought it would be fitting to revisit a few of the amazing Girls Night episodes we've had over the years, all having to do with singleness and dating and how to navigate it all.

To start out with, we are going all the way back to Episode 7 of the podcast to a conversation I had with my very best friend Michelle. In this conversation, we're talking about breakups, how to make it through a breakup, and how to put your heart back together after one.

Michelle and I have both been through our fair share of breakups more than our fair share, I would say, and we've learned so much along the way: what to do, what not to do, what helps, what doesn't, things that comforted us along the way, things that helped us get over it and more.

First of all, we're going to be talking about God's redemption in all of this, how He's able to transform these broken pieces of our lives into something beautiful. He's done that for me, He's done that for Michelle, and we know that He wants to do that for you too.

One thing I wanted to say before we jump in is that I know that lots of y'all have been through breakups but I also know that some of you may have broken hearts in different ways. Maybe you just lost a job or had a falling out with a friend. Maybe you're mourning the death of a dream or even a loved one.

Well, in this episode, we're going to be talking about breakups from romantic relationships but these ideas and principles apply to so many different types of broken hearts. So no matter what you're going through right now, I'm so glad you're here.

My prayer is that this conversation brings you so much comfort as you know that you're not alone in what you're going through; peace, as you're reminded that you will make it through; and hope as you read to see that God never leaves things broken for long.

Okay, but before we dive in, as I mentioned, registration for my online course, Love You Single Life, is opening up again on October 17th. You guys, I'm so excited about this and I would love to have you join us. I've been teaching this course for seven years to almost 7,000 women and I am just blown away at the ways that God has used it in women's lives and in my life too.

If this is your first time hearing about the course, I want to tell you just a little bit about it. So Love You Single Life is a four-week course that teaches a step-by-step plan to savor, enjoy, and truly make the most of your single life, all while setting yourself up for amazing relationships and marriage in the future.

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

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

Like I said, registration for the course only opens up twice a year, and the next time is on October 17. You can find out all about the course and get your name on the waiting list at loveyoursinglelife.com. Again, that's loveyoursinglelife.com. And that link will also be in our show notes.

The other thing I wanted to say is I know that some of you guys may be listening to this after October or during a different time of the year. And that's totally fine. Head to the website anyway, put your name on the waiting list and you'll be the very first to know next time the course opens back up. I can't wait to share this with you.

Okay, you guys ready? Let's jump into our conversation with Michelle.

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Stephanie: Guys, I feel like I can't even find the words to tell you how excited I am for what we have going on today. You guys are about to get to meet my best friends in the whole world. My very best friend. Oh, my gosh, I'm so excited.

So today I have my very best friend here on the podcast, Michelle. And if you're wondering, "Is this Lipstick Gospel Michelle? Is this the Michelle you cannot stop talking about, Stephanie?" Yes, this is the Michelle. And it's so exciting because I talked about you all the time, you've inspired so many of the things I've written and you've had such a big impact on my life and I get to talk about that a lot. But, Mitch, like they haven't gotten to meet you yet. And so today's a really big day. I'm so excited.

So can you just, to kick this off, introduce yourself to us? Like who are you? What do you do? Where do you live? Maybe a fun fact. Honestly, you can [inaudible 00:04:47] for the fun fact and what it is.

Michelle: Okay. So yes, my name is Michelle. I've known Stephanie since we were 12.

Stephanie: What? Eight.

Michelle: No, wait, eight. Eight. Whoa, sorry.

Stephanie: There's a math problem right here.

Michelle: We went to a Gifted and Talented writing camp.

Stephanie: We did. I think it shipped us off on like fall break.

Michelle: Actually, I think that I was the nerdy kid that like asked if I could go to the writing camp on fall break.

Stephanie: You know what? You might be right. I think that we were willing participants in this.

Michelle: Oh, yeah. I think that I was stoked to go to school on fall break. Our school district had some extracurricular fall break writing workshop that Steph and I met at when we were both eight.

Stephanie: So crazy. So crazy.

Michelle: So that means we've technically known each other for 20 years now, because we're actually more than 20 years because we're 29 now.

So yeah, my name is Michelle. I live in Denver, Colorado, which I absolutely love. I am an immigration paralegal. So I work in a law office where we help people get a visa and green cards and work permits. So I spend all day talking to people from all over the world and helping them get into the United States legally.

I am married to a wonderful man named Alan, who is great. He's a brewer.

Stephanie: So cool. So cool.

Michelle: So we love beer. We love beer and we love music. My biggest hobby is music. I go to shows-

Stephanie: All the time.

Michelle: All the time. One of my biggest passions. And my fun fact, which I thought about because you told me you were gonna ask me this... And I have two. Is that okay?

Stephanie: Yeah. You can do it however you want. You're my best friend. You can do it however you want.

Michelle: Number one, I have shook two President's hands. Two separate presidents' hands. Did you know that?

Stephanie: Not the same president two hands. I think I did know that. But remind me which ones.

Michelle: So I was in a children's choir growing up and it was a touring children's choir. We did shows and stuff. Like we performed the symphony and like, blah, blah. Being in Colorado, there's a lot of mountain towns where old retired presidents live. And we'd like go to their house and sing at their nonprofit event or whatever. So I've shook Gerald Ford's hand and I've shook Jimmy Carter's hand.

Stephanie: That's awesome. What's your second fun fact?

Michelle: The second... Wait, sorry, were you gonna say something?

Stephanie: I was gonna say I'm gonna add a fun fact. You guys, this is totally off the rail. I was telling Carl earlier today, I was like, "Michelle and I have never talked and had our conversation recorded. So I maybe apologize for whatever is about to happen but I have a fun fact about you after this.

Michelle: My next fun fact?

Stephanie: Yeah.

Michelle: So my next fun fact is that I met my husband in Spain, which we'll get into. But, you know, a lot of our friends got married a few years after college and I was kind of flipping out because I was still single and had this opportunity to live abroad for a year and I thought that living abroad would only postpone my ability to meet a man.

And then I was like, "You know what? Whatever, Spain's awesome. I don't need to meet a dude, whatever." And then I went to Spain, and I ended up meeting Alan there, which I would have never ever, ever, ever anticipated happening.

Stephanie: I love that.

Michelle: It's funny, though. I mean, he's American, but he was [inaudible 00:08:21] a Spanish student in Spain, but no [inaudible 00:08:25] like the one American guy.

Stephanie: And you know what's funny is I tell that story all the time because I think that we all have this idea that if we go and chase our dreams, or pursue passions or something, especially if they take us away from home, I think we all have this idea that we're postponing meeting our person, whoever a person is.

I thought the same thing about going on The World Race. I was like, My husband clearly lives in Denver, Colorado because that's where I live. So if I leave Denver, Colorado in my mid-20s when you're in your prime husband finding years or whatever, I thought that I would totally miss out on meeting him.

And it's funny because you thought the same thing. And I've so many other friends that thought the same thing. And in the process of pursuing that passion or whatever, I met Carl because of The World Race. You met Alan in Spain. I think that when we are pursuing our passions we meet really awesome people. And that's just really cool.

Michelle: Because a lot of the time they're pursuing similar passions, and you just end up like doing the same things. So you think that you're this singular person, but you end up running into people that, you know, align with your heart and what's important to you. And so yeah, no.

Stephanie: I love that. I'm gonna do one more fun fact.

Michelle: Okay.

Stephanie: Now I don't know if it's funny. But about that meeting presidents, I was picturing you being in Washington DC. One fun fact about Michelle is that when she was in Washington, DC, in this children's choir, she had this question about... It was one of those things where they had a built-in breakfast at the hotel. And one of the things was... So Michelle had always wondered, "Why do you only get two pieces of bacon?" When you get-

Michelle: Like when you go to a diner or you go to IHOP, like why do they only give you two pieces of bacon? I spent my entire childhood wondering why I couldn't have more bacon.

Stephanie: So then you get to a buffet and what happened?

Michelle: So I'm 12 and I'm like, "Oh man, it's a buffet, I can eat as much bacon as I want." So I probably easily put 15 pieces of bacon on a plate by itself and just thought it was like popcorn and just ate it all as a 12-year-old. And it's funny because I got incredibly sick. Like so sick. And people always ask me if I've been to DC, which technically is true, but I never left the hotel room. And-

Stephanie: Because of bacon poisoning.

Michelle: Oh, yeah. As an adult, I don't even want to think about how much fat I consumed. And now I'm like, "Oh, that's why they don't give you more than two pieces of bacon. Because it's a large, you know... I don't even know. It's just like full of fat.

Stephanie: I feel like we solved the mystery for people today.

Michelle: Yeah. If you're ever wondering what it's like the 15 pieces of bacon, I can tell you it's not good.

Stephanie: It's not as good as you think it's gonna be. Oh, my gosh. So we could just hang out forever, which we're to do that.

So the reason I'm really excited to have Michelle here today is because my heart for this space is that it feels like, you know, Girls Night is your best friend's house. We're just navigating life and we're doing it together.

And Michelle, you and I feel like learned how to do that together, learned how to be best friends, learned how to walk through life together, learned how to cheer each other on and support each other and pick each other up. Like sometimes, you know, literally we've picked each other up from some really, really hard situations in life.

So that's my heart for this space is just for all of the awesome women in our community to know that they're not alone in what they're going through. And for us to just get to walk with them through this season to just encourage them and let them know that they're okay and they're going to be okay. And to just share what we've learned along the way.

Because that kind of best friend wisdom, like, "I've been there and here's what worked for me" is so powerful. And I know it's been in my life. And I know in yours, too.

So today I'm really excited for us to get to talk about something that I know a lot of the women in our community have experienced or are currently experiencing. And that's heartbreak. That's breakups. I feel like it's weird for me to keep saying I'm excited to have you here because of this, but I know that that's something you and I have both really walked through.

We've both been through our total fair share of breakups, maybe more than our fair share of breakups. The good thing is we've walked through them together. And so we're gonna have to really talk about this from a really... Like, Michelle has been there every time my heart's been broken and vice versa.

Michelle: Yeah, Amen.

Stephanie: So, I'm really excited to talk about this today. My hope is that, you guys, if your heart is hurting for any reason, that you guys walk away feeling like you're not alone, you're not crazy for feeling the way that you're feeling, with just some like tools kind of in your pocket to make this season a little bit easier, and let's just hope for the future about what this can look like.

So we're going to talk about breakups. But I wanted to kind of say this like a little caveat in the beginning. If you are not going through a breakup right now, if your heart isn't broken for that reason, your heart might be broken for other reasons.

I know that our hearts get broken for lots of reasons: losing someone we love, you know, the loss of a dream, the loss of a future plan. Michelle and I both also totally know what it's like to lose jobs like really suddenly. And so I think that feels like a total heartbreak.

So my hope is that if your heart is hurting for any reason, that this is helpful. We're going to talk about the ending of romantic relationships, but totally feel free to apply this to whatever you're going through right now.

Michelle: Amen.

Stephanie: So, Mitch, tell us a little bit about breakups in your life. I sort of left this open to... Again, it's funny because Michelle and I have never recorded our conversations. And also we know so much about each other's life. So I want to kind of leave it open to you. Just tell us the story of some breakups in your life and what that's like.

Michelle: Okay. I'm, like I said, 29. I think I had my first breakup when I was 17 or 18 with a high school boyfriend that I dated. We're older and wiser now, but I think your first romantic heartbreak is always the hardest, whether you're like 16, or 28, or 35, or whatever. I think nothing really prepares you for that kind of feeling. Because especially your first relationship you kind of run-in with this reckless abandon. You don't actually think that anything wrong could happen.

When I think about entering the relationship with my husband, and even you Steph with Carl, we had so much more kind of caution and... I don't want to say hesitation because I think we both entered really good healthy relationships. But we didn't just like have this crazy 16-year-old mania.

Stephanie: No, totally. I completely agree.

Michelle: So I think the thing that was really hard about my first breakup was... You know, it's like your first boyfriend is your best friend. And I think in high school, too, because you're in such a contained environment, you have all the same friends and you have all the same activities and life gets into this rhythm. And then when you break up it's like everything changes, and your friend group changes, and the places you want to go change. You still have to go to school and you have to see them.

I just remember like that was just so hard for me. I think the thing that made it even harder was because I felt like our friend group was completely transformed. The unfortunate thing was, you know, he ended the relationship and was in probably a better place than I was. And, in that situation, it's easier to be friends with the one who's okay. So I felt really isolated from a lot of my friends in high school.

So the combination of being like an angsty teenager who did not practice good, emotional, or physical boundaries, and then losing friends, and then being a senior in high school, that was just so hard for me.

I think I probably would have gotten over it a little sooner if it was like someone that I didn't have to see all the time or be reminded of all the time. But I just remember just being incredibly depressed and really lost and you know, just had to really deal with a lot of changes.

And I think the other thing was it really brought up a lot of stuff in me that I probably should have been dealing with in my whole life up to that point. I just felt really out of control. It took a while to get better.

I think the other thing that's hard about first breakups is you don't realize, because you've gone through it that you can get out of it. So it just feels like, "Oh, my gosh, my life is always gonna be like this. I'm always gonna be sad. I'm always gonna be isolated and depressed." But you know, it got better.

I think the thing that was especially hard for me was, you know, that was senior year of high school and I ended up going to college, and my high school ex-boyfriend and his new girlfriend actually ended up going to the college that I went to and joining the college ministry that I was in.

And so it was kind of this constant... And I also for the most part was single in college. For the most part, I was single. It wasn't till I got out of college that I really started dating a lot more. I was total girls' girl, total sorority girl, just hanging out my chics. And it was always kind of reminder that I was the one that didn't get someone new, or get a boyfriend or whatever.

Stephanie: And you have to see them all the time.

Michelle: I would see them pretty regularly, yeah. Which, again, I think so much of like the residual pain was just the fact that it didn't just like disappear. It was kind of a thing for me personally. I didn't become a Christian until college. And so through that breakup, when I look back at that breakup, I just think of having no idea who my identity was. I mean, being a teenager is so difficult. And it's just a lot of growing and stretching and growing and pains.

But I got to college and a friend of mine introduced me to Jesus. I accepted Jesus at that college ministry because of an invitation that I got from a friend to go. So really embracing Jesus really helped me out in that situation. And in the whole last region that I was in at that time of kind of like finding my identity in Christ and finding my identity in following Him and embracing what He calls us to do. So that was really helpful.

Then I later in college actually got another boyfriend, college boyfriend, who, you know... I think the funny thing about these two breakups is like one I was 16, reckless, angsty Michelle in high school with my Emo shoes and mustard dress.

Stephanie: I hardly had Emo shoes. I'll tell you, that's never been my scene in my life. And I'm the worst music friend for Michelle. Like at some point, I just was like, "You need to find some other friends for this. I cannot relate." But for a while I wore a trucker

hat and skater shoes, and a studded belt. And like I crowd surfed at concerts, and I was in mosh pits and stuff, mostly just to be around Michelle and be a good friend to hang out with her. But I never fit in ever. I was famous for being like, "Whose this band again? What do they sing?" I don't know any other words. I'd like read them ahead of time for the concert. Anyway.

Michelle: Oh, yeah. That theme was so good and bad for me at the time, because it was almost cool to be like, "So sad and like your life is so hard." So I don't know if it was necessarily good or bad. And I listened back to that music now and I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, they're so whiny."

Stephanie: Okay. So the college relationship, how was that different?

Michelle: So the college relationship was different because I had for years of really growing in my faith, because, again, this was senior year of college. So by this time I was, I would say, really rooted in my faith in Jesus.

I was such a prayer warrior. I always thought that my spiritual gift was prayer because I just could see God moving in big ways through prayer. I was also on staff at a church at that time and leading a Bible study. So you would think, like, "Okay, this girl's got it together. She has her feet under her." And that's very much how it felt.

And then when I entered the relationship, you know, it was also like we were very healthy, had good boundaries. He was a Christian, his dad was a pastor. I don't know, it's like I hit the jackpot. You know, like the Christian lottery or whatever.

And that relationship ended. I mean, he broke up with me. I think the big difference was I was in a much better place with my faith. But in terms of I had hope in it and I trusted God's plan, especially because I had so much time in prayer, like I really trusted God. But with that being said, it was still so hard. I just remember being so sad. It took me maybe a year to get over that relationship. Just being so sad.

But the good thing was, number one... And this had so much... So let me loop you in, Steph. So when this college boy broke up with me, Steph was basically there. Because he brought with me in a Facebook message.

Stephanie: Oh my gosh. No. I forgot about that. I forgot about that. I remember the phone call but I forgot the Facebook.

Michelle: We're talking almost 10 years ago now. But he broke up with me in a Facebook message, which now I'm kind of like... At the time, I was like, Facebook message. Oh, yeah. He also broke up with me on April Fool's Day, which was-

Stephanie: Very confusing.

Michelle: ...which was confusing because a lot of people didn't believe that we had actually broken up, but no, we really had broken up.

Stephanie: Oh, my gosh. You guys talked on the phone after the Facebook message and I was there. We were in the car together.

Michelle: [inaudible 00:23:33] next to me because I was in a car like inconsolable. I was so upset. And Stephanie, I think I had called her as soon as I got the Facebook message. I was like, "You need to come over now." And then when she came over, we ended up talking on the phone.

Steph, whoa, I also remember during... Again, 10 years ago. But I remember being so upset and feeling this need to like throw words at him to make him really hurt for breaking up with me. And I'll never forget you looking at me and just mouthing, "Stop and hang up the phone."

Stephanie: Oh, I don't remember that.

Michelle: It was just totally what I needed. Because I think sometimes when you're being hurt by someone your first reaction is to just tear them apart because you know them so well to really know what can just get them. And I think you saw that I was going down that road and you just were like, "Okay, stop." And I did.

Stephanie: This is so... I don't know. I have so many feelings right now. I have so many feelings right now thinking back to all these things. So I want to kind of stop here because I want to go into some of the things that didn't help and some of the things that did.

If you've read *the Lipstick Gospel*, you guys know the story of my worst breakup. And I got to be there for Michelle in this one but Michelle also got to be there for me in all of mine. But if you've read *The Lipstick Gospel*, which if you haven't, let's get you a copy. But if you've read it, Michelle was able to do the exact same thing for me. I called her and was like, "Listen, you need to come over." And she did.

I remember you crawling into bed with me and just being like, "Okay, let's talk about it." I mean, you quite literally picked me up off the floor after so many breakups. But I think that breakups are so many things all in one. They're so hard for so many reasons.

I like how you touched on those because I think that's really important. I think it's really tempting for us to downplay how hard breakups are to say, like, "Well, I mean, it was just a boyfriend," or whatever, or to like think that there's something wrong with us for really hurting.

But like you said, it took you a year to get over the college one. It took a long time to get over the high school one. And that's how it was for me too. I had a big high school relationship. My senior also. I guess we broke up kind of in the summer between high school and college. But I mean, that was brutal.

And like you said, with first loves, you're not sure you're going to survive because you're hurting so bad. It's like you hurting your fingers. I mean, it radiates everywhere and it seeps into all corners of your life. I mean, it just is so brutal. And in the first one you don't know you're gonna survive.

But I remember thinking in the second one... There was this moment and it was right after that relationship was completely done, and I ran up to my room and I flopped down on my bed, and I looked at the ceiling. And I remember having two thoughts.

One was, "I will survive this. I know I will survive this. I'm not sure how, but I've been down this road before." And having that kind of in my back pocket, I knew I was gonna survive it, I knew at some point I'd feel better.

The second thing-

Michelle: Oh, it's interesting... I mean, again, not to interrupt you. Sorry. One of the most helpful things that I carry to this day is the fact when you came over when my college relationship ended and I was so upset. I had gotten off the phone with him and was just like a puddle of emotion.

I just remember you like holding my hands and looking in my eyes and saying, "It's hard to believe this, but you need to know that one day you will not feel like this anymore." And it's so true. And I think that was kind of what I needed to know.

And honestly, kind of what you touched on earlier, Steph, with like heartbreak in general, I mean, you and I have both had a lot of other things going on in our life that have been heartbreaking. Like we've had family members die, family members have health issues, losing jobs and stuff.

And even just that, like kind of knowing, Okay, I can be in complete despair, and I know that at some point I will heal from this.

Stephanie: I think that's so important. And I feel like if y'all listening, walk away with anything, I think that's probably what we would hope you walk away with, is that how you're feeling right now, you won't always feel this way. Like this will get better.

Michelle: And I think the other thing that's good to know, too, with that being said, and again, with any kind of despair that you're feeling, is the only thing that can heal it is time. Putting one foot in front of the other and just living. Because there's not really a lot you can do to super speed up the process. I mean, you can give tips of what's healthy and what you should, you know, every day do to feel better. But at some point, the only way through it is through it.

Stephanie: Totally. I completely agree. I do want to talk about a couple of things that helped and hurt in the process as we were kind of getting through it. My hope is to give just a couple tools for surviving this. But then Mitch, I want to talk about how we've thrived through this because of these breakups... I mean, the worst I've ever heard like, I mean, absolutely like they just... Because it's attached to your identity, like you said, it's attached to your friend group.

Like when my... I always call him my Lipstick Gospel boyfriend because it's easy. So when my Lipstick Gospel boyfriend and I broke up, I mean, my friend group completely changed. Like there was nowhere in the city that I could go without being reminded of him. I mean, exactly like you said, so many parts of my life. I was so deeply lost and insecure and unsure. I felt like my future was like a race. I mean, there was so many things.

Breakups are hard because they radiate out all these other parts of our lives. They're just not concentrated. But I know that you and I have really been able to not only survive them but thrive. I know we would both say, one, we wouldn't undo those breakups. Like we would not wish them away.

Michelle: Oh my gosh! Have you seen my husband?

Stephanie: No, seriously, we're gonna talk about that. So before we get there, I want to talk about just some things that helped and some things that didn't like in the aftermath. Because yes, the only way to get there is time. But there are some things that I think may prolong the process and some things that I think make the process more... not quicker necessarily, but more efficient.

So, for me, I can kind of take one for the team here and say I did some things really wrong in both breakups, but primarily my college one. I felt like I had more vices at my disposal in college than I did in high school. I didn't really get in very much

trouble in high school, but I definitely did a lot more in college. So I made a lot of mistakes in the aftermath.

And so I feel like a couple of things that really didn't help. One, drinking. I think that there's sort of this cultural thing where it's like you get dumped, you go out and get drunk. And I did that for possibly a year. Really like did that for a really long time.

I was trying to run from my pain and I was trying to make feel better, I was trying to kind of get back out there, I don't know, yeah, get through it and numb how hurt I was. But one, drinking yourself stupid never adds anything good to your life.

Two, it brought out all of my emotions. There are so many instances I can think of where I would be in public out with my friends trying to have a good time, and I would drink too much and I would end up crying and have to go home or have someone take me home because my emotions were like waves pounding against a floodgate. And then you would have me drink and all my inhibitions would come down, and I would just sob in public.

Michelle: Well, I think the other thing too, is, you know, one thing you have to ask yourself when it comes to like the drinking, or if your first thought is to run it into drinking or something destructive. One thing that I always kind of had to ask myself is, "Is this how you're going to deal with problems in your life?" Like when you look at yourself in the mirror, be like, "Okay, this is my coping mechanism?" Do you want that to be your coping mechanism? Because I think most people wouldn't.

And so at some point you need to kind of accept that that's a disruptive way to deal with problems in general and also look at yourself in the mirror, like, "This is not how I'm going to deal with this. I don't want to be the person that does this."

Stephanie: Yeah. Because at some point you need to learn those habits of how to deal with hard things. And that's something that breakups do in our lives is teach us how to deal with pain and loss and conflict.

Michelle: Totally.

Stephanie: These are the moments where we learn these lessons that we carry into adulthood.

Michelle: 100%.

Stephanie: It's not like at some point you go to class and they teach you how to deal with conflict. Like this is class. This is where-

Michelle: Amen. Yeah, totally. Again, I mean, we both only have had to make mistakes through this. You were a little bit better than me because... No, I mean, because I was in a Christian sorority I wasn't allowed to drink. So in college, you know, Stephanie and I were in different sororities. I was in the Christian sorority, she was in like the cool sorority. So-

Stephanie: I love that the girls are getting to hear... I feel like you should always be on. They just would get to know me so much better. I feel like they are getting to know me.

[00:33:23] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Our sponsor for today's episode is a company I love called [Modern Fertility](#). Modern Fertility is an easy and affordable way to test your fertility hormones at home with their simple finger prick. So you don't even have to go into a doctor's office.

You mail it in with a prepaid label and you'll get your personalized results within 10 days. Their tests will give you insight into things like your hormone levels, your ovarian reserve, which is how many eggs you have compared to other women your age, and other important fertility factors.

If you're thinking you might want to have kids today or maybe one day in the future, having clinically sound information about your body can help you make decisions that are right for you. Now, you may or may not know this, but one in six couples struggle with infertility. And my husband and I happened to be one of them.

Carl and I, the planners that we are, spent years talking about every aspect of what it would look like to have kids before we ever started trying. We talked about how many kids we might want and when we wanted to start trying and how babies would impact our lives and how our lives would impact babies and so much more.

We did everything we could to gather all the information possible so we could make wise decisions about such an important part of our lives. I remember specifically asking my doctor if there was any test or exam or something that we should do before starting to try, just to make sure that everything was working the way that it should.

And we were told, "Nope, go ahead and start trying. And if it doesn't happen within the first 12 months, we'll start doing some tests." Honestly, I really wish we had had more information sooner.

Friends, there aren't many decisions bigger than deciding to have a baby. But for many women, their fertility is a gigantic question mark. Modern Fertility believes that knowledge is power. And when you know more you can have informed conversations with your doctor and make better decisions for your body, your health, and your future.

Right now Modern Fertility is offering our listeners \$20 off the test when you go to modernfertility.com/girlsnight. That means that your tests will cost \$179 instead of the hundreds or thousands it could cost at the doctor's office. Again, you can get \$20 off your fertility test when you go to modernfertility.com/girlsnight. Again, that's modernfertility.com/girlsnight.

Modern Fertility, thank you so much for sponsoring our girls night. We just love having you.

[00:35:33] <music>

Stephanie: Hey friends! I wanted to take a quick pause for my conversation with Michelle to thank our sponsor for today. Our sponsor for today's episode is an amazing company called [Prose](#). Now, most of you have probably heard me sing the praises of Prose, the world's most personalized haircare.

But for those who haven't, I want to tell you about the incredible results I've been seeing since using my customized Prose products. Prose has given over 1 million consultations with their hair quiz. And that's how the process started for me.

The quiz was so much fun. It felt like one of those magazine quizzes I used to love. It was easy, but also totally in-depth. They asked me questions that I wouldn't have thought to answer, like, "How much does your hair shed?" The answer is a lot. Anyone else? Or is your hair oily at the ends or just near your scalp?

So I did the hair quiz and I placed my order, and just a few days later the package showed up on my doorstep. I have a pre-shampoo mask, shampoo and conditioner. I've been using these products for a while now and it's made such a difference. My hair feels silky and soft and looks even shinier.

And the other thing I like is that you can continuously customize your formula. They'll help you tweak things depending on your lifestyle changes or even changes in the weather. Prose is also focused on providing clean and responsible products. Every product is free of parabens, sulfates, phthalates, mineral oils, GMOs, and is always cruelty-free.

Also, if you're not 100% positive that Prose is the best haircare you've ever had, they'll take the products back no questions asked. But I have a feeling that won't be an issue for you.

Friends, Prose is the healthy hair regimen with your name all over it. You can take your free in-depth hair quiz and get 15% off your first order today. Just go to prose.com/girlsnight. That's prose.com/girlsnight for your free in-depth hair quiz and 15% off. Prose, thank you so much for sponsoring our girls night. We just love having you.

[00:37:26] <music>

Stephanie: The other thing that I think we tend to do in the aftermath of a breakup is we tend to run to someone else. And we tend to get in rebound relationships or just rebound hookups. I want this to be a vulnerable space, so I'm gonna tell the story. I'm going to try to... I don't know. I have a whole lot. A whole lot.

[crosstalk 00:37:52]

Stephanie: Oh, my gosh. So the night that my Lipstick Gospel boyfriend broke up—this didn't make it into the book, which maybe it should have, but it's not in there—I called Michelle and I-

Michelle: It was also like late, I thought.

Stephanie: It was really late. It might have been mid-breakup. I talked about the day when you came over after it really was over. So this might have been kind of mid-breakup. But it was really late. I'm sure that there was drinking involved. I'm positive there's drinking involved. And I called you and I asked you to take me to my high school ex-boyfriend's school. Because my reaction was to run from this pain and run into most recent other comforting arms I could find. You and I were talking about this earlier. I was so upset that you didn't know what else to do. I was so-

Michelle: I think the other thing was I think you were really, really, really upset. I knew that I wanted to be with you, like I wanted to stay with you, but I think I also knew the only way that we could have a conversation is if I just started driving. "Okay, well, then we're gonna go but I'm gonna spend the whole time talking about how bad of an idea this is. This is a really, really bad idea."

Stephanie: And she said it all the way there but I made her drop me off. So that's where I spent that night. I think that we tend to do that. We look for anyone else to... We just look for all these places to hide our pain and bury our pain. And I think that that totally

exacerbates the problem. That makes you go from one heartbreak to two. Like now you have doubled your heartbreak because that relationship...

Like my high school relationship didn't work out for a great many reasons. That was so unhealthy and it just added to the mess in my heart. So I completely agree with what you said, like, What kind of person do you want to be in handling conflict? And when you said "the only way through it is time," I think that when we do those things, it doubles our time.

Michelle: Yeah.

Stephanie: Like you're not healing, you're hiding. And so until you start feeling the things you're feeling, that's the only way through. That's the only way through.

Michelle: So we had talked about yesterday also, like, one thing that I really had to deal with, while Stephanie dealt more with like kind of the destructive drinking or running and to other dudes was like my anger was all in feeling like they owed me something, and that I couldn't get past it unless either, A, I could hurt them back, or B, they like realized how much they had wronged me.

In the last decade of me having relationships, romantic relationships, I've realized that that honestly in my opinion doesn't happen. You need to get to a place where you need to be okay with the fact that you probably will never get an apology, and they probably are fine, and they don't have to be as sad as you are. And it's not your responsibility to make them as sad as you are.

I mean, at some point, and this is actually one of the biggest lessons I've ever learned because it comes in so much more in any kind of relationship or life circumstance is, like, you got to really surrender something sometimes. And you need to accept that.

Like, for example, Stephanie and I when we were talking about this yesterday, I was talking about how, you know, a few years after my high school boyfriend and I broke up at college and we were kind of running in the same circles and seeing each other a lot, we somehow decided to have a conversation like three years later.

We went to go get coffee or something to kind of talk it out. And I think part of me was like, "Okay, when we talk, I'm gonna go home, and I'm going to feel like this enormous weight off my shoulders, and I'm just going to feel so much better. And this whole kind of ugliness that I feel about this whole situation will just go away."

And the truth is the conversation was fine but I didn't feel better afterwards. I don't know, people could disagree with me, and I don't know if you agree with me,

Steph, but I don't actually believe in closure 100%. I think when you're in a breakup and you're with a person that you care about a lot and then that relationship ends, sometimes you just kind of gotta leave... I don't know, you just got to kind of leave it be.

Stephanie: I think it's less like an open door that needs to be closed and more something's been cut off. It's more of a healing process. I completely agree like those conversations don't always happen. I remember I called my Lipstick Gospel boyfriend a while after we broke up and I thought plenty long enough for him to be able to see, one, that he wanted me back and two, that he... at least be able to acknowledge what we had and talk through it with me and apologize and stuff.

And I called him thinking that's what was going to happen. In that conversation, he was not ready to have it. He was not in a good place. And wounded me more in that conversation than he even had in the breakup.

I think that we just can't put our ability to heal or our... We can't prolong our healing process or hold off on starting to heal until someone else is in a healthy place where they can apologize to us. Because sometimes it takes forever for them to get to a healthy place. Or sometimes they're not a healthy person in the first place and they're not going to come to that place. There's a lot of variables in that.

I think I totally have felt that way and I know you have too where it's like, I mean, I'll be able to heal once this happens, or I'll feel this is closed and I'll be able to move on once this happens. And you taught that this is something you really learned I know and you taught me closure needs to be something you decide on.

Michelle: Amen.

Stephanie: Like, "Okay, I'm gonna start healing now." I really want to talk about kind of the thriving bit and the redemption that's come out of these things in our lives. But I just wanted to kind of list off some things that I know have been really helpful for both of us in the wake of a breakup or a broken heart. Just when your heart is hurting, these are some things that I know have helped both of us.

One is taking care of yourself. I know you're really good at this. I know you especially when were in college, just knowing that you needed rhythms in your life. Like you were really good about going to the gym and eating healthy. And I know that those things seem disconnected but there's something about caring for yourself and taking care of your other needs.

It's like when someone... I don't know. This is maybe a terrible example. But like when someone has a baby, you can't do very much to take care of the baby but you

can make sure that their house is cleaned or they have food delivered. You know, you can do all these. You can run errands for them. When people are sick, you can't heal them but you can do all these other things for them. So I think that taking care of our other needs is really important. And showing ourselves love is really important too.

Michelle: Well, I think a lot of the things that you mentioned too, like working out or eating healthy or like you think about your everyday life and the things that make you happy. Like I'm happy when I'm getting enough sleep. I'm happy when I'm exercising. I'm happy when I'm listening to music. I'm happy when I'm around people that I love.

So even if you're in a place of complete unhappiness, and kind of making yourself get out of the house and making yourself get out of bed, and like... You know, I think the big thing for me, like you said, was getting to the gym. Again, because my choices is either to lay in bed and be sad and probably cry or wipe my face, put on some sweats, and go to the gym. It always made me feel better. Always. Always make me feel better.

Stephanie: It's just helping a part of it.

Michelle: Exactly.

Stephanie: It's like if you can fix a small, tiny part of it. Other things that were really big for me are journaling was really helpful. Just getting all your feelings out. And when we talked about closure, something that was really helpful for me was writing letters to the person and not sending them because there are a lot of things that you want to say and feelings.

I think sometimes we make the mistake of really sending those letters, and if they're not received the way we hoped they're going to be, they make the situation worse, or you know, things like that. But I think getting your thoughts and your feelings out is really good.

And also, it's really beautiful to be able to look back. I have very specific journals from these times in my life. And I can look back and remember how much I was hurting and I can see how much God's done in my life since then. And that's really cool.

Michelle: Yeah, totally.

Stephanie: There's kind of three more things I want to mention. We can talk about these forever. One was therapy. You started seeing a counselor in high school after that

heartbreak. And I remember that being so helpful for you. And I feel like seeing you do that gave me permission to seek the same thing, because I really...

And I think that we think that you should only go to therapy if something crazy, tragic has happened in your life, or you know, I don't know. I think we have these weird caveats or weird requirements. You should only go to therapy if things are really bad. I don't know about you, but breakups feel really bad. So I can't think of a better time to have someone help you through what you're going through.

Michelle: Well, therapy, I think everyone should go to therapy, whether you... I would hope that the caveat behind therapy would just kind of disappear, because I think it's helpful for absolutely everyone, whether you have a really, really, really big issue like drug addiction or whatever, even just to normal everyday life, I think therapy is really helpful. I've benefited greatly from therapy.

And probably should mention that at this time I was going through a breakup, but I also had a lot of other stuff going on. I was depressed and was struggling with anxiety. On top of a breakup, that was really hard. So I ended up going to therapy for about a year.

And a lot of the stuff that I learned in therapy I still apply today. Like, "Is this how you want to deal with stuff?" thing. Like I remember my therapist looking at me and being like, "Do you want to be known as the person that goes and does this destructive behavior?" Or "Do you want to be the person that did it in a healthy way?" That was kind of a question that was in my head.

She also helped me a lot with the whole like realizing that my desire for, you know, some sort of punishment to the people that had wronged me... she really, really helped me with that. And that was a much bigger issue that I had going on even before the breakup was just feeling like if you wronged me, I'm gonna hit you back twice as hard.

Stephanie: A lot of people feel that way. But I completely agree. This is kind of what I want to talk about next is the beauty of therapy and doing these certain things in the midst of a breakup is that they are not only helping to heal you from where you've been, but actually are setting you up to be a far healthier person down the road.

I mean, that's one of the biggest things that breakups have done for me is that they bring up all of your junk. They just like yard sale your crap.

Michelle: Amen.

Stephanie: They really do. They forced you to deal with everything. And I think when we can do that in really healthy ways and really make good choices in the midst of it, it makes us healthier people than we even were before the relationship started. And that's a really cool thing.

The last couple things I wanted to mention on just getting through it and things that really helped our one girlfriend. I mean, Michelle and I have told you that we... I mean I was holding her hand in the midst of a breakup, and she was just picking me up off the floor through so many breakups.

I think that we have this tendency to want to pretend like things aren't hurting us or downplay, pretend like we're fine, but I just don't think that does us any favors. When we invite our girlfriends into our pain, it allows us to not be alone in it, and to learn from what they've learned.

Like I was able to give you that advice about breakups because I had walked through my own. And that was helpful to you. But you had been able to give me advice during that breakup because you would walk through your own. So we get to just hand advice back and forth.

And like when we invest in our friendships, even when it's after a breakup, and even in a time where it's like, "I really need you," that intimacy happens in friendships in those times. So our friendship is stronger because of the hard times we've walked each other through. And so surrounding yourself with girlfriends is huge.

And then the last one I feel like is last but absolutely not least, is diving into our relationship with the Lord. I think maybe sometimes we feel like we offend God by coming to him more when we're really broken.

You know like, "Lord, I haven't talked to you in a while but now I'm really broken, so now I need you." But you know what I do not think God cares a single bit. He's so happy to talk to you and loves you and knows exactly what you're going through and wants to be close to you. This is the perfect time to get closer to Him and to really connect with Him.

And we do those things when we work through our junk and when we invest in our girlfriends, and when we invest in our relationship with God, and when we really care for ourselves and our bodies in our lives. That sets us up not only to get through this breakup well but it makes us better for the rest of life. And I know that you and I are totally better in our lives because of the way that we let breakups work in us.

Michelle: So I was telling Stephanie the story yesterday. So Stephanie and I were involved in this college ministry called The Annex, which I don't know... Do you call it The Annex in the book?

Stephanie: I think I do. If you guys are in Boulder, Colorado, and you are in college, go to The Annex. Our best friend is currently the assistant director there. She's amazing. We love the people there. It's an awesome college ministry. Get involved with The Annex.

Michelle: Both me and Stephanie basically met Jesus through this college ministry, which we absolutely loved. A lot of our friends even today come from that ministry. But anyway. So every year they had Christmas talent show where you could sign up and like... I think they had auditions too. So it was like super legit.

Stephanie: I put it on one year and I had to be the one auditioning people.

Michelle: So you have like acapella groups and drum circles and soloists and dancers and like all the stuff. So it's like the big last annex before Christmas break. Like I said, my high school ex-boyfriend and his new girlfriend attended The Annex. They were singers. Like they sang together.

So every year, I think, freshman, sophomore, junior and senior year, they performed a Christmas on 16th Street together. They would sing something. And it was always like, you know, I'd really love to go. Like I also said, I was single in college for the most part. Like very single.

And I think that that was always really hard for me. Like the comparison thing, and also loving The Annex, but also being like, I'm sitting in this giant room with a whole bunch of people and I have to see my ex and his new girlfriend singing a song. It was always like I hated it. It was just kind of an annoying thing.

I think it was like my junior year they were singing... It was Christmas on 16th Street, which was the name of the talent show and they were singing in. And I think I just kind of hit a wall. Like I think I kind of was in my head, like, threw my fist down and was like, "That's it."

I was like, "How many years do I have to do this?" And I got really upset in my head. And I'm like sitting there and I'm just getting more and more angry. And in my head I'm like, "I'm just gonna leave. I don't need to be here." I can just leave. But I was like, "You know what, Michelle? Just pray. Just pray."

So I started praying to God and I started asking for this feeling of anger to evaporate. And after a minute or so of prayer, it just lifted. I felt the Holy Spirit in a really strong way. It lifted and I was comfortable.

And I remember it's like one of the very few times that I think that God spoke to me. I remember Him saying something like, "What makes you think that I won't do something in your life that makes all of this worth it?" And I was really fortunate because I feel like I took that with me for... You know, I didn't mean my husband for another eight years or something but I had this hope.

The important thing to note is he did not mention, "I will bring you a man that will make this worth it." The words was... I mean, I definitely hoped that's what it meant but I wasn't like, "Oh, well, God's gonna bring me a superhero because of all the pain that I've, you know, gone through or whatever." But I definitely had this hope that all of this was not completely unnecessary. I had this hope that God doesn't do anything without a reason.

And that pain, not even just with them, but I took that message with me for years. And the whole time I really struggled with singleness a lot because coming from a Christian sorority, a lot of my friends got married right out of college.

And, you know, going through a lot of weddings and being single and just kind of wondering, like, "What about me?" But I just always remembered knowing that God told me that He had something big for me. God told me that this was... Because I think at that point it seemed so unnecessary. Like I was like, "God, three years in a row of just seeing these people that I was-

Stephanie: And this ended in high school.

Michelle: Yeah. I was like, "What am I doing?"

Stephanie: So here's my question. I'll totally let you brag about Alan in a second. So Alan aside, like you heard God. God said that to you. He comforted you without saying, "Listen, I'm gonna redeem this."

I feel like some of the girls listening may be like, "Well, God didn't tell me that, that He will do that for me." But you know what? He did. That is all over scripture, that God brings dead things to life, that He brings beauty out of ashes. He is a God that redeems broken things and makes them better than they were before. So that is a promise not just for Michelle. He just reminded her of a promise that He's given all of us in that moment.

So that's true for you, too. There is not a single way in the whole world that this is going to be broken forever. This is not too broken for God to redeem or repair or heal. And who our God is, is that He makes things better than they were before. So He won't just heal this. He will make this better than it was.

So Alan aside, Mitch, I would love just for us to talk really quick about how has God done that in your life? Alan aside. And then we can talk about him in a second. How has He redeemed this in your life, these breakups?

Michelle: Well, I think all despair is an opportunity for us to learn about ourselves and to learn how to get through it. I am in a super happy place in my life. I'm incredibly content at this moment. But because of the things I've gone through, I know that I will have hope when more despair comes.

And it also gave me... You and I've talked about this, but being single was really hard, especially you know, you get broken up with, and then on top of that you struggle with singleness, right? Which is a whole other thing.

But we both got to do some really beautiful things in our singleness. I've always said, if you meet the love of your life at, you know, 20 or whatever, that's great. That's a huge blessing. You met your best friend so early that you're gonna get married, and you're gonna have the best time, you're gonna adventure together. And that's your story.

Our story was that we didn't meet our husbands till a little later in our 20s. Me and Stephanie got to do some awesome things. Like I lived abroad for a year. I lived in Costa Rica, I lived in Spain. I lived alone when I was leaving the United States. I got to dive into my girlfriendships. I've always said I'm a girls' girl. I love my husband, but my girlfriends are it for me.

And I feel like because I was single I was able to really invest in my friendships. And now that I'm not single, I'm realizing that it is much harder to really dive in and be 100% present when you're sharing your life with another person. So when I look back at it, I think the timing for both of us was so perfect. And I wish that I could go back and tell myself to just chill, that everything would happen in its own time.

But I think at the same time, one thing that was a huge blessing about the hope that you and I had, Steph, was yeah, we knew we were single, but we also saw blessings in the singleness. We were like, Okay, well, I can go on The World Race. I can go to Spain. I won't be missing anyone. I can be 100% present in every moment of any adventure that I pick because it's just me.

So when I look back at the breakups and stuff, for example, how much my college boyfriend hurt me, because I think when you have a college boyfriend you think you're gonna marry them, because you could potentially.

Stephanie: Totally. 12 when you met.

Michelle: Exactly. You're not an eighth grader. You're like actually could maybe marry then. I'm happy that that didn't happen. I'm happy that when I entered the world of the post-grad that I had this incredible freedom. And for me, that was a huge blessing. It doesn't have to be a blessing for everyone but it was a huge blessing for me.

Stephanie: I agree. And I think that through being single in our 20s, I mean, yeah, you and I had the best adventures together. We have the best friend time. Like you and I both have such strong, wonderful female friendships. And you're right. We have more time to invest in those. And those friendships have carried into our marriages.

And we had time to figure out who we are and what we believe. We had time to root ourselves in our faith in God. Which I always say this, but like Godly marriages don't start once you get married, godly marriages are when two godly people get married.

We were able to figure out what we're passionate about. We were able to take steps forward in our careers. We were able to pick up and travel whenever. We were able to live alone. We are able to adventure in our city. We were able to figure out who we are. We're able to work through a lot of our junk in our life.

In all of those things, I can see the fruit of all of... the women we were able to become in our 20s as we were single, I can see the fruit of... And all the hard work we did post breakups. Because again, it brings all your stuff out. So if you kind of deal with it... I can see the fruit of those decisions and how we live that way in our marriages tens of thousands. I absolutely can.

And I know for me I wouldn't take back one of those breakups at all. And if you would have told me in those moments like, "You'll be happy. This happened one day," I would have maybe punched you.

I mean, he probably would have gotten a hold of me somehow. But I wouldn't have become a Christian when I did without that breakup. I met Jesus through that breakup. And I know that your breakups totally led you to Jesus also. Like I'm way closer in my relationship with God because, again, a broken heart brings you to your knees fast. And God's like, "That's okay. I'm not mad."

I'm much more confident in my skin because breakups make you so insecure. And you have to like put that back together, you know? And I'm put back together so much... like more whole and confident than I could have been otherwise.

Yeah, I worked through so much of my junk and my past and my insecurities, and just everything. I learned so much about relationships. And all those things came from these breakups.

I mean, I got to write *The Lipstick Gospel* because I went through that breakup. That was a story I learned the hard way. But I'm so glad that I was able to live through that and see God's faithfulness and His redemption in that because now I can turn around and say, "Hey, guys, you're going to survive this, you're going to be okay. God is so good. He has a plan for your life that is so much bigger than you can even imagine." And none of those things would have happened without those breakups.

The other thing is I think that when we're going through a breakup, we worry that we have just lost the best person we'll ever find. And I know that I worried that at every turn. That every time I was like, "This was my person and I lost them. I'll never be happy again. And I'll never find someone new."

Actually, I was on *The World Race* and I was kind of going through a bit of a breakup on *The World Race*, and I really thought, I thought, I had met my person, I thought he was the best person I'd ever find and I thought that like I've lost them. And that's a whole new level of despair.

Well, so I'm sitting on this rooftop in Malaysia and I'm talking to my friend Christian who's just super wise. I'm gonna have to tell him to listen to this. Well, I'm gonna have to tell his mom because this was through his mom.

He goes, "Steph," he was like, "My mom always tells me this. You're gonna marry the coolest person you've ever met. The person you marry will be the coolest person you've ever met." And I was like, "How do you know?" And he was like, "Steph, are you really gonna marry someone who's less than someone else like in the past? It just doesn't work that way."

Like, all of the people that I met along the way were really good people. I had some crappy boyfriends, but also I had some really good ones. But they weren't right for me in a whole lot of ways. And I wasn't able to see that in the moment, like in the midst of it, but looking back, I can totally see why they weren't right for me and why they weren't the best fit for me.

They did teach me so much about what I wanted in a relationship. And each person I'm like, "I learned this about myself through that relationship. I learned this about God through that relationship. I grew in this way through that relationship," or "this showed me what I was really looking for long term." And each person kind of had a little piece of it.

But I mean, Christian was absolutely right. His mom was absolutely right that God does not give crappy gifts. God is not like, "I'm going to take this great guy away in order to give you someone who stinks." Our God does not work that way.

And I know like for me, and I can't wait to hear from you, I know for me, Carl is absolutely hands down the coolest person I've ever met. He is all of those boyfriends mixed together times a bazillion. I'm not missing anything by not being with those other people.

And so the breakups were so hard, but they taught me so much. And really the process of going through them and trying to really go through them healthfully, in the process of living my single life to the full, that whole thing, I mean, God just brought like... By the time God and I walked through all of that together, by the time I bumped into Carl Wilson, I was so ready, and I was totally the person I wanted to be when I met him.

Our relationship is so much healthier and better and more fun because of all the things we've both learned along the way. And really I absolutely am married to the coolest guy I've ever met.

Michelle: You never told me... Okay, first of all, I wish you told me that little tidbit about marrying the coolest person ever met. This the first time I've ever heard you say that.

Stephanie: I should have told you that earlier. I'm sorry.

Michelle: I mean, it's definitely true. But if I knew I was gonna marry the coolest person ever met back then, I would have been like, "Sweet. Okay, cool."

Stephanie: That's so good for you. Alan-

Michelle: Yeah. It's funny because I referred to my college boyfriend... And again, we've talked about our big breakups. I've had a number of boyfriends. But my college boyfriends, that was, like I said, really hard. It took me like a year to get over it.

And then even after I was kind of over it, I always referred to him as the one that got away. The Katy Perry song *The One That Got Away*, I was like, "Oh, that's him. Oh, I'm gonna grow up and I'm just gonna be old."

If anyone's seen the Katy Perry music video for *The One That Got Away*, she gets really old and is thinking about this romance that she had when she was in her 20s or something. And I was like, "That's gonna be me. This is gonna be the guy that got away and I'm gonna marry someone else who's not as cool, and then I'll just be thinking about my college boyfriend for the rest of my life."

Stephanie: I totally felt the same thing.

Michelle: And it's funny too, because right before my husband and I started actually being more than friends... My husband and I we were friends for a few years before we started dating, but I actually, again, got together with my college boyfriend because we ran into each other after not seeing each other for four years. We had a beer or something.

And it was after like three years of being like, "He was the one that got away," I kind of was like, "Okay, he's not. He's a normal person. He's not for me. This didn't work out for a reason. This sucks." But then I started dating Alan like a month later. So the timing was great. Because by the time I was entering a relationship with Alan, this other guy was no longer like the romanticized version of whatever I thought.

Stephanie: Totally.

Michelle: But it's so true. I literally am married to the best man I've ever met. When I first met Alan... This is no joke. I met Alan in Spain. But you know, when you meet an American in Spain, you're like, "I don't know what your trajectory is. Are you going back to the United States? Are you staying in Europe forever?"

I think when I met Alan my initial thought was not "I'm going to date this man," or "I'm going to this man." I'm more just was like, "This guy is so nice. He just treats everyone so well." He impressed me so much just by how he treated me and how he treated other people. And I literally went home and I have this today. Like I have it. I journaled and I was like, "Thank you Lord for showing me that men like this exist. The woman that marries this man will be the luckiest woman in the world.

Stephanie: And it happened to be you.

Michelle: I know. Which is just so weird. I actually mean I legit did not think it was gonna be me. Like I'm more was like, "Then he'll go on with his life and then I'll go back to

my world." I thought we were like passing ships in the night. You know when you're traveling in Europe, you like meet random people and you just think you'll never see them again. And it's so true. Like why would you marry someone that you didn't think was the coolest person?

Stephanie: Yes, yes. There's so much hope. And I think that that's just what I hope that girls can walk away with right now. Like one it is so okay that you're hurting breakups are brutal and they just are and they take time. They do. They just take time.

But when we can make some intentional decisions to choose positive things, to surround ourselves with good people, to dig through the junk that's like being pulled up by this breakup, and even to really live our single lives as fully as possible, it just sets us up so well for a really, really good life. There's so much hope there, and so much goodness ahead.

And really God is so good. He loves us to pieces. And that promise that you heard that day is so true for all of us. Like, it just is. He has such good things for us.

If you could go back and tell yourself something in the midst of your breakups, in the midst of your broken heart, what would you go back and tell her?

Michelle: I think I would tell her that she has a lot more freedom than she knows, if that makes sense. Like when I think of freedom, I think... I think when you're broken up with you feel so powerless and you feel so helpless and that you don't have any control.

And part of me wishes that I could go back and be like, "You're going to do some great, powerful, amazing things, and they're going to come from you and from God. Like you're going to travel, you're going to fall in love, you're gonna be hurt again. So just hold on tight. But it's gonna be good and you're gonna love it." That's what I would say.

The other thing is, life is just so beautiful. The possibilities are endless. I wish I could tell her... Because I think the other thing is when you're heartbroken, your vision is so narrow and you can't really see past what's going on. And I think to have someone come in that situation and remind you like, "Okay, life is gonna go on, and it's gonna be beautiful.

And right now all you can see is this thing right in front of you, but there's so much more out there. That's what I think I would say.

Stephanie: I love that. I love that. Well, Michelle, I really honestly can't believe I didn't cry in this conversation because really, one, you know, I'm such a crybaby. I'm such a crybaby. Well, I'm such a crier. I'm not a baby.

But really it means so much to me to get to share you with my girls. I'm so honored to get to introduce them to you and you to them. I mean, you know this, but you are huge in my life. You have made such a difference in my life, and you are my person who is not my husband. That's made things more complicated. You know, you have to be like, "You're my best friend that's a girl." Really you are my person. Everything I've learned about life and God and myself, I've learned either from you or alongside you. And so thank you for being here.

[01:12:39] <music>

Outro: You guys, isn't Michelle amazing? I just love her and I love her story. Don't forget that if you ever want to find the links for anything we talked about in our Girls Night episodes, you can always find those on our in our show notes. Just head over to girlsnightpodcast.com and you'll find links for everything.

And don't forget registration for my online course, Love Your Single Life, is opening up soon—October 17th. Registration is only open for a few days each year. And so make sure to head to loveyoursinglelife.com and get your name on the waiting list so you don't miss it. Again, that's loveyoursinglelife.com.

All right friends, that's it for today's episode, but we have so much good stuff ahead this season. And with that in mind, now is the perfect time to make sure you're subscribed. Subscribing to the show is the best way to make sure you never miss an episode. It won't send you an email or anything. It just makes sure your phone downloads the latest episode when a new one is released.

And I did want to take a quick second to ask y'all a favor. If you enjoyed this episode or if you've been a Girls Night fan for a while now, would you take just two quick seconds to leave us a rating and a review on iTunes? Those reviews help out our podcasts so much and it really would mean the world to me. So if you take two quick seconds to do that, I'd be so grateful.

Friends, thanks so much for joining me for Girls Night. I will see you next week.